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Avis au lecteur

Cette publication contient des questions écrites par les membres du Parlement européen avec les réponses données par l'institution européenne concernée.

Pour chaque question et réponse, la version en langue originale est présentée avant une traduction éventuelle.

Dans certains cas, il est possible que la réponse soit donnée dans une autre langue que celle de la question. Cela dépend de la langue de travail de l'organisme chargé de fournir la réponse.

Ces questions et réponses sont publiées selon les articles 117 et 118 du Règlement du Parlement européen.

Il est possible d'accéder à toutes les questions et réponses sur le site du Parlement européen (Europarl) sous la rubrique «Questions parlementaires»:

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

SIGNIFICATION DES ABRÉVIATIONS DES GROUPES POLITIQUES

PPE	groupe du Parti populaire européen (Démocrates-chrétiens)
S&D	groupe de l'Alliance Progressiste des Socialistes & Démocrates au Parlement Européen
ALDE	groupe Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe
Verts/ALE	groupe des Verts/Alliance libre européenne
ECR	Conservateurs et Réformistes européens
GUE/NGL	groupe confédéral de la Gauche unitaire européenne/Gauche verte nordique
EFD	groupe Europe de la liberté et de la démocratie
NI	non-inscrits

IV

(Informations)

INFORMATIONS PROVENANT DES INSTITUTIONS, ORGANES ET ORGANISMES DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE

PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN

QUESTIONS ÉCRITES AVEC RÉPONSE

Questions écrites par les membres du Parlement européen avec les réponses données par l'institution européenne concernée

(2014/C 216/01)

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(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-008207/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 juillet 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Retour à la peine de mort au Nigeria

Il est fait état de la pendaison de quatre hommes dans la prison de la ville de Benin, dans le sud du Nigeria, par les autorités de l'État d'Edo. Ce sont les premières exécutions dont on ait connaissance dans ce pays depuis 2006.

Un cinquième homme risque d'être exécuté d'un moment à l'autre.

Ces exécutions marquent un retour soudain et brutal à l'application de la peine de mort au Nigeria et font de cette date un jour sombre pour les droits humains dans ce pays.

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante compte-t-elle exhorter les autorités nigérianes à cesser immédiatement les exécutions et à rétablir le moratoire sur celles-ci?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(15 octobre 2013)

L'UE entretient un dialogue constant avec les autorités nigérianes afin de promouvoir l'abolition de la peine de mort. Ce fut notamment le cas lors de la dernière réunion organisée dans le cadre du dialogue UE-Nigeria en matière de Droits de l'homme, qui s'est tenue à Abuja en mars 2013, et lors de la réunion ministérielle, qui s'est déroulée à Bruxelles en mai 2013.

En octobre 2012, lorsque le gouverneur de l'État d'Edo a signé deux mandats d'exécution, la délégation de l'UE et certains États membres ont déployé des efforts considérables pour instaurer un dialogue avec les autorités fédérales et étatiques. Dans une déclaration locale, l'UE a engagé les autorités nigérianes, et en particulier le gouverneur de l'État d'Edo, à revenir sur leur décision et à respecter le moratoire de fait sur la peine de mort.

À la suite des exécutions du 24 juin dernier, la haute représentante/vice-présidente a publié une déclaration invitant les autorités nigérianes à cesser les exécutions et à rejoindre le courant abolitionniste, qui prévaut sur le continent africain.

Les efforts engagés auprès du ministre des affaires étrangères et de la présidence seront poursuivis afin de réaffirmer la position de l'UE, qui est conforme à ses orientations concernant la peine de mort, et d'empêcher de nouvelles exécutions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-008207/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Return to the death penalty in Nigeria

It has been reported that four men were hanged in Benin City Prison, in the south of Nigeria, by the Edo State authorities. These are the first reported executions in the country since 2006.

A fifth man risks being executed at any time.

These executions mark a sudden, brutal return to the use of the death penalty in Nigeria, a truly dark day for human rights in the country.

Does the Vice-President intend to urge the Nigerian authorities to end all executions immediately and return to the moratorium on the death penalty?

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

The EU has constantly engaged with the Nigerian authorities to promote the abolition of the death penalty, including during its last session of the EU-Nigeria Human Rights Dialogue held in Abuja in March 2013 and the Ministerial meeting in Brussels in May 2013.

In October 2012, when the Governor of Edo signed two execution warrants, the EU Delegation and some of the EU Member States conducted extensive reach out efforts to the Federal and State authorities. A local EU statement was published calling on the Nigerian authorities, and in particular on the Governor of Edo state, to review their decision and to respect the de facto moratorium.

Following the executions on 24 June the HR/VP issued a statement calling on the Nigerian authorities to refrain from further executions and to join the abolitionist trend prevailing on the African continent.

Efforts towards the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency will be maintained in order to continuously convey the EU's position, in line with the EU Guidelines on death penalty, in order to prevent further executions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-008791/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Foro social por la paz

El pasado 27 de mayo, el Foro Social por la Paz en el País Vasco presentó públicamente un documento donde se recogen doce recomendaciones para avanzar en el proceso de paz del País Vasco. El Foro ha estado animado y coordinado por las asociaciones sociales Lokarri y Bake Bidea.

Las doce recomendaciones se pueden consultar en el siguiente sitio web: http://www.forosocialpaz.org/recomendaciones/recomendaciones-2/. Las recomendaciones abordan los diferentes aspectos relativos al proceso de paz y pueden considerarse como una importante aportación.

1. ¿Tiene la Comisión noticia de dichas recomendaciones?

2. ¿Apoya financieramente la Comisión iniciativas de este tipo, como lo hace en Irlanda del Norte a través del Programa PEACE III?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-006720/2013 de la Sra. Grèze.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-008791/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 July 2013)

Subject: Social Forum for Peace

On 27 May 2013, the Social Forum for Peace in the Basque Country presented a document containing 12 recommendations to advance the peace process in the Basque Country. The forum has been led and coordinated by the social associations Lokarri and Bake Bidea.

The 12 recommendations can be viewed at the following website:
http://www.forosocialpaz.org/recomendaciones/recomendaciones-2/ .The recommendations address the different aspects of the peace process and can be seen as making a valuable contribution.

1. Is the Commission aware of these recommendations?

2. Does the Commission provide financial support for initiatives of this type, as it has done in Northern Ireland through the PEACE III programme?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006720/2013 by Ms Grèze.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009989/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(9 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατάσταση στη Μέση Ανατολή

Δύο και πλέον χρόνια έχουν περάσει από την Αραβική Άνοιξη και τις μεγαλειώδεις εξεγέρσεις των λαών των χωρών της Βόρειας Αφρικής και της Μέσης Ανατολής. Οι αγώνες όμως για ανατροπή, των επί δεκαετίες δυναστών, δεν φαίνεται να έχουν φέρει τα επιθυμητά αποτελέσματα.

Στην Αίγυπτο η πτώση του καθεστώτος Μουμπάρακ και η άνοδος στην εξουσία της Μουσουλμανικής Αδελφότητας προκάλεσε ένα «θρησκευτικό πόλεμο» που είχε ως αποτέλεσμα πραξικόπημα. Ενώ στη Συρία η εμπλοκή της χώρας σε εμφύλιο έχει προκαλέσει μια χαοτική κατάσταση.

Ως αποτέλεσμα των πιο πάνω, ολόκληρη η περιοχή της Μέσης Ανατολής αποτελεί ανοικτό πολεμικό μέτωπο με πιθανές ανεξέλεγκτες συνέπειες ευρύτερα.

Εν όψει του σοβαρού ενδεχόμενου επικείμενης ανάληψης στρατιωτικής δράσης από δυνάμεις των ΗΠΑ, σε συνεργασία ενδεχομένως και με ευρωπαϊκές χώρες, ζητείται όπως η Επιτροπή τοποθετηθεί στα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

— Πώς επηρεάζεται η ίδια η ΕΕ από την κατάσταση στη Μέση Ανατολή και ειδικά οι γειτνιάζουσες με την περιοχή χώρες μέλη, Ελλάδα και Κύπρος;

— Ποια μέτρα λαμβάνονται σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, στα πλαίσια της Κοινής Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής και Πολιτικής Ασφάλειας, για σταδιακή εξομάλυνση της κατάστασης;

— Ποια στάση θα ακολουθήσει η ΕΕ σε περίπτωση «ταχείας στρατιωτικής επέμβασης» των ΗΠΑ;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Οι συγκρούσεις και η πολιτική αστάθεια στη Μέση Ανατολή έχουν επιπτώσεις στην ΕΕ, αν και, μέχρι στιγμής, είναι κατά κύριο λόγο έμμεσου χαρακτήρα. Έχει σημειωθεί αύξηση της παράνομης μετανάστευσης, μεταξύ άλλων σε σχέση με τη συνεχιζόμενη σύγκρουση στη Συρία, και συναφείς μαζικές εκροές προσφύγων, οι περισσότεροι από τους οποίους φιλοξενούνται επί του παρόντος σε γειτονικά κράτη. Η συνεχιζόμενη αστάθεια στην Λιβύη έχει ως αποτέλεσμα την αύξηση των ροών παράνομων μεταναστών που διέρχονται από την εν λόγω χώρα (αλλά προέρχονται από το Κέρας της Αφρικής) με σκοπό να μεταβούν δια θαλάσσης στην ΕΕ.

Η ΕΕ δρομολόγησε το καλοκαίρι του 2013 αποστολή συνοριακής συνδρομής με στόχο την παροχή συμβουλών και τη συμβολή στην οικοδόμηση ικανοτήτων των λίβυων συνοριοφυλάκων. Εν τω μεταξύ, η ΕΕ είναι με μεγάλη διαφορά ο σημαντικότερος χορηγός στο πλαίσιο των προσπαθειών που καταβάλλονται για να βοηθηθούν οι γειτονικές χώρες της Συρίας στην αντιμετώπιση της μαζικής εισροής προσφύγων. Η ΕΕ υποστηρίζει ενεργά μια διπλωματική λύση στη σύγκρουση στη Συρία. Ύστερα από την τραγική βύθιση ενός σκάφους με μετανάστες κοντά στην Λαμπεντούσα, στις 3 Οκτωβρίου 2013, δρομολογήθηκε Ειδική ομάδα «Μεσόγειος», υπό την προεδρία της Επιτροπής και με τη συμμετοχή της Ευρωπαϊκής Υπηρεσίας Εξωτερικής Δράσης, των κρατών μελών και των σχετικών οργανισμών της ΕΕ, για την υποβολή έκθεσης σχετικά με τις ενέργειες που θα μπορούσε να αναλάβει η ΕΕ για την αποτροπή παρόμοιων τραγικών περιστατικών στο μέλλον. Η έκθεση συζητήθηκε στο Συμβούλιο Δικαιοσύνης και Εσωτερικών Υποθέσεων στις 5 και 6 Δεκεμβρίου 2013 και θα υποβληθεί στο Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο στις 19-20 Δεκεμβρίου 2013.

Δεν υπάρχει προς το παρόν καμία ένδειξη για τυχόν σχεδιαζόμενη «ταχεία στρατιωτική επέμβαση» των ΗΠΑ στην περιοχή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009989/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(9 September 2013)

Subject: Situation in the Middle East

Over two years have elapsed since the Arab Spring, which unleashed a wave of insurrection in the countries of Northern Africa and the Middle East. However, the struggle to overturn decades of tyranny does not appear to have secured the hoped-for results.

In Egypt, the fall of the Mubarak regime and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood has led to sectarian violence and a coup d'état, while Syria is becoming more deeply mired in chaos and civil war.

As a result, the entire Middle East is turning into a battle zone, something which is likely to have incalculable consequences on a wider scale.

Given the serious possibility of imminent US military intervention, possibly together with European countries, can the Commission give its views on the following:

— How is the situation in the Middle East affecting the EU, especially Greece and Cyprus, which are situated in close proximity?

— What measures are being taken by the EU under the common foreign and security policy in a bid to tackle the problem?

— What stance will be adopted by the EU in response to any 'rapid military intervention' by the USA?

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

Conflict and political instability in the Middle East are having an impact on the EU, even if so far, it is mostly of an indirect nature. Increases in illegal migration have been noted including in relation to the ongoing conflict in Syria and associated massive outflows of refugees, most of whom are presently accommodated in neighbouring states. Continued instability in Libya has resulted in increased flows of illegal migrants transiting that country (but originating from the Horn of Africa) to travel by sea to the EU.

The EU launched a Border Assistance Mission in summer 2013 to advise and help build capacity of the Libyan Border Guards. Meanwhile, the EU is by far the largest donor in efforts to assist neighbouring countries accommodate the massive influxes of Syrian refugees. The EU is actively supporting a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria. After the tragic sinking of a migrant vessel off Lampedusa on 3 October 2013, a Task Force Mediterranean was launched, chaired by the Commission and with the participation of the European External Action Service, Member States and relevant EU agencies, and will report on what EU actions could be taken to prevent such tragic incidents in future. The report was discussed at the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 5-6 December 2013 and will be presented to the European Council on 19-20 December 2013.

There is no indication at the moment of any planned 'rapid military intervention' by the USA in the region.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010162/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(11 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Spose bambine in Yemen

Un rapporto di Human Rights Watch del 2011 spiega in cifre i dati del fenomeno delle spose bambine in Yemen:

— il 14 % viene dato in matrimonio prima dei 15 anni;

— il 52 % viene dato in matrimonio prima dei 18 anni.

La maggior parte di esse è costretta dalla famiglia a sposare uomini adulti, spesso per motivi economici, oppure è venduta per saldare un debito.

Le tradizioni e la mancata applicazione delle leggi per la tutela dei minori (o addirittura l'assenza di tali leggi), portano questo paese ad avere un'elevata percentuale di abusi sui minori, che, spesso per la troppo giovane età, muoiono in seguito alle violenze subite.

Considerando gli ultimi avvenimenti e le denunce che ci arrivano da questo paese, compreso l'episodio più recente del 6 settembre scorso, riguardante la morte di Rawan, la bimba yemenita di otto anni morta di un'emorragia letale causata da un rapporto avuto la prima notte di nozze con il marito quarantenne;

considerando il ruolo che l'UE intende assumere quale attore globale che prefissa, tra i suoi obiettivi, quello della tutela dei diritti umani;

intende la Commissione, alla luce degli ultimi avvenimenti, adottare azioni a sostegno delle varie campagne di sensibilizzazione o porre in essere un dialogo con le autorità yemenite, al fine di contrastare il fenomeno evidenziato?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011676/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(14 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Matrimoni infantili nello Yemen

Nella prima settimana del mese di settembre 2013 si è diffusa rapidamente la notizia della morte di una ragazza yemenita di otto anni, deceduta per un'emorragia interna dopo aver sposato un uomo con un'età cinque volte superiore alla sua. La bambina è stata portata in ospedale, ma i medici non hanno potuto fare nulla per salvarle la vita.

Nel Medio Oriente i matrimoni infantili sono molto comuni e stando alle stime di Human Rights Watch il numero complessivo sarebbe superiore ai 67 milioni. Oltre il 50 % delle ragazze che vivono nella regione si sposano prima dei 18 anni, nelle zone rurali invece sono obbligate a sposarsi anche all'età di otto anni. A quest'età le bambine non sono ancora fisicamente o mentalmente pronte per il matrimonio, i rapporti sessuali o la gravidanza e hanno più probabilità di soffrire sotto il profilo fisico, mentale e sociale. Secondo Human Rights Watch la ragazza yemenita non sarebbe il primo caso di morte di una bambina sposa. Nel 2010 una bambina sposa di 12 anni è morta per un'emorragia interna a seguito di un rapporto sessuale con un uomo più adulto, e prima di tale episodio era morta un'altra bambina sposa dopo diversi giorni di travaglio nel tentativo di partorire.

1. In quale misura il Servizio europeo per l'azione esterna sta sottolineando l'importanza degli impegni internazionali dello Yemen, come ad esempio nell'ambito della Convenzione sull'eliminazione di tutte le forme di discriminazione contro le donne (CEDAW) e della Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia (UNCRC), per quanto concerne la messa al bando del matrimonio infantile?

2. È comprensibile che la baronessa Ashton abbia esortato il governo yemenita a bandire imatrimoni infantili, ma quali passi si stanno compiendo per dare attuazione concreta a talepolitica, non soltanto nello Yemen, ma anche in tutte le aree del mondo in cui imatrimoni infantili sono usuali?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(7 gennaio 2014)

Il 14 settembre l'AR/VP ha rilasciato una dichiarazione in cui si esprimeva con la massima fermezza in merito alla notizia del decesso di una bambina di otto anni dovuto alle lesioni riportate durante la prima notte di nozze. Visto che il fenomeno delle spose bambine è molto diffuso nello Yemen, la dichiarazione ha permesso all'AR/VP di sollevare globalmente la questione e di ricordare allo Yemen i suoi obblighi in quanto firmatario della convenzione ONU sulla tutela dei diritti dei minori.

La dichiarazione dell'AR/VP e gli intensi contatti della delegazione UE di Sana'a con tutte le parti interessate hanno contribuito a rilanciare il dibattito sul ripristino di un'età minima per il matrimonio. La delegazione dell'UE accoglie quindi con favore la proposta del ministro yemenita dei Diritti umani di fissare l'età minima per il matrimonio a 18 anni. A quanto pare, il gruppo di lavoro della conferenza del dialogo nazionale sui diritti e sulle libertà nello Yemen sarebbe largamente orientato a fissare l'età minima per il matrimonio a 18 anni. Ci auguriamo che questo sia uno dei risultati del dialogo nazionale e che tutte le parti interessate si adoperino in modo costruttivo per garantirne l'applicazione effettiva in tutte le regioni del paese. L'UE è pronta a sostenere il governo yemenita in tal senso.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010162/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(11 September 2013)

Subject: Child brides in Yemen

A report published by Human Rights Watch in 2011 provided data, supported by statistics, to describe the practice of allowing child brides in Yemen:

— 14% of girls are married before the age of 15;

— 52% of them are married before the age of 18.

Most of them are forced by their families to marry adult men, often for financial reasons, or else they are sold to settle a debt.

Tradition and failure to apply the laws on child protection (or even the lack of such laws) mean that this country has a high rate of abuse against its children who, often because they are too young, die as a result of the violence they have been subjected to.

In view of the latest events and the reports we are hearing from this country, including the most recent incident on 6 September, involving the death of Rawan, the eight-year-old girl who bled to death on her wedding night as a result of intercourse with her husband in his 40s, and in view of the role which the EU is meant to play as a global player whose objectives include the protection of human rights:

Does the Commission intend, in light of the latest events, to take any action to support the various campaigns for raising awareness or to establish a dialogue with the Yemeni authorities with the aim of tackling the highlighted practice?

Question for written answer E-011676/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Barbara Matera (PPE)
(14 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Child marriage in Yemen

News that an eight-year-old Yemeni girl died from internal bleeding after marrying a man five times her age spread like wildfire in the first week of September 2013. The child was taken to hospital but doctors were unable to save her life.

Child marriage is very common in the Middle East, with Human Rights Watch estimating that the total number of child marriages exceeds 67 million. Over 50% of girls in the region are married before the age of 18, and in rural areas girls are forced into marriage as young as eight. Girls of this age are not physically or mentally ready for marriage, sex or pregnancy and are more likely to suffer physically, mentally and socially. According to Human Rights Watch, the Yemeni girl was not the first child bride to die. In 2010, a 12-year-old Yemeni bride died from internal bleeding following intercourse with an older man and, prior to that, another child bride had died after spending several days in labour struggling to give birth.

1. To what extent is the European External Action Service stressing the importance of Yemen's international obligations, such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as regards the ban on child marriage?

2. It is understandable that Baroness Ashton has urged the Yemeni Government to ban child marriage but what is being done to ensure that this policy is actually implemented, not just in Yemen but in all areas of the world where child marriage is commonplace?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(7 January 2014)

On 14 September HR/VP issued a very firm statement in reaction to the reports of the death of an 8 year old girl from injuries sustained on her wedding night. Since child marriage is a spread practice in Yemen, the statement was the occasion to address the general issue of child marriage in Yemen and to remind the obligations that Yemen has as a signatory to the UN Convention on the protection of the rights of the child.

The HR/VP's statement and the intensive engagement of the EU Delegation in Saana with all stakeholders have contributed to revive the debate on reinstating a minimum age at marriage. Thus, the EU Delegation welcomes the proposal of the Yemeni Minister for Human Rights of defining the age of 18 as a minimum age for marriage. There seems to be general agreement within the Yemen National Dialogue Conference's Working Group for Rights and Freedom to set the minimum age at marriage at 18. We are hopeful that the setting of a minimum age at marriage will be one of the outcomes of the National Dialogue and we hope that all the stakeholders work constructively towards an effective implementation in all regions of the country. The EU is ready to support the Yemeni government in this regard.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010603/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Intento de censura en televisión en el País Vasco

El delegado del Gobierno español en el País Vasco, Carlos Urquijo, ha enviado una carta a la directora de la televisión transfronteriza EITB (Radiotelevisión pública vasca), Maite Iturbe, pidiéndole que no incluya en la programación de ETB (Televisión pública vasca) un programa de los payasos Pirritx eta Porrotx. Además, ha enviado copia de la misma al Ararteko (Defensor del Pueblo del País Vasco) para que actúe, si lo ve oportuno, en virtud de su función de protección de los derechos de los menores.

En primer lugar, en el marco de la política audiovisual de la Unión, se toman en cuenta las indicaciones del Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos y, especialmente, el artículo 10 sobre la libertad de expresión, ya que son recordados tanto por el juez de la Unión como por el artículo 6, apartado 2, del TFUE.

En segundo lugar, hay que precisar que si, en principio, la cultura forma parte de las competencias de los Estados miembros, la Unión puede también tener alguna competencia en materia de política cultural. En efecto, el artículo 167, apartado 1, del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea (TFUE) afirma que la Unión contribuye al desarrollo cultural de los Estados miembros, respetando las diversidades regionales y promoviendo el patrimonio cultural común.

Por último, la Directiva 89/552/CEE del Consejo tiene por objetivo la promoción de la libre circulación en materia cultural en el marco del mercado común. Así, afirma que «las emisiones a través de las fronteras realizadas gracias a las diferentes tecnologías son uno de los medios que permiten perseguir los objetivos de la Comunidad». El capítulo V de esta Directiva se dedica a la protección de los menores. Precisa que los Estados miembros pueden intervenir y adoptar medidas cuando una emisión incluya «programas que puedan perjudicar seriamente el desarrollo físico, mental o moral de los menores y, en particular, programas que incluyan escenas de pornografía o violencia gratuita» o si notan una «incitación al odio por motivos de raza, sexo, religión o nacionalidad». Sin embargo, las emisiones de los payasos no han mostrado en ningún caso ese tipo de perjuicios y el Estado español jamás ha aportado una justificación argumentada de su actuación apoyándose en el capítulo V de la dicha Directiva.

Vista la Directiva 89/552/CEE, ¿considera la Comisión que la actuación del Gobierno español es conforme con dicha Directiva y, en particular, con el principio de libre circulación de los servicios en materia audiovisual?

¿Considera la Comisión que el Estado español cumple las condiciones descritas en el capítulo V de dicha Directiva?

Respuesta de la Sra. Kroes en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

La Directiva de servicios de comunicación audiovisual ([1]), que modifica la también Directiva 89/552/CEE, establece un marco reglamentario para la prestación de dichos servicios en la EU. Según sus disposiciones, los Estados miembros tienen jurisdicción sobre los proveedores de esos servicios que estén establecidos en su territorio y son, por lo tanto, responsables de garantizar con medidas de seguimiento y ejecución que tales proveedores cumplan lo dispuesto en la Directiva. Esta, por lo demás, garantiza la protección de los intereses generales y, entre ellos, la necesaria protección de los menores.

Según afirma Su Señoría, el delegado del Gobierno español ha pedido a la televisión pública vasca que suspenda la emisión de un programa que supuestamente infringe las disposiciones en materia de protección de menores transpuestas al Derecho nacional. Sin embargo, dado que en la pregunta parlamentaria que formula Su Señoría no se facilita la información necesaria para poder evaluar si el programa en cuestión infringe o no las disposiciones de la Directiva en la materia, los servicios de la Comisión no pueden en esta fase determinar si ha habido o no infracción de dichas disposiciones.

([1]) Directiva 2010/13/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 10 de marzo de 2010, sobre la coordinación de determinadas disposiciones legales, reglamentarias y administrativas de los Estados miembros relativas a la prestación de servicios de comunicación audiovisual (Directiva de servicios de comunicación audiovisual).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010603/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(17 September 2013)

Subject: Attempt to censor television in the Basque Country

The Spanish Government's representative in the Basque Country, Carlos Urquijo, has sent a letter to the director of cross-border broadcaster EITB (Basque Public Radio and Television), Maite Iturbe, asking her not to include the clown show, Pirritx eta Porrotx, in the programming schedule of ETB (Basque Public Television). He has also sent a copy of the letter to the Ararteko asking him, in his capacity as the Basque Country Ombudsman, to take any appropriate action to safeguard the rights of minors.

The Union's audiovisual policy takes account of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, in particular Article 10 on freedom of expression, as recognised by the European Court of Justice and enshrined in Article 6(2) of the Treaty on European Union.

Although culture is in principle a Member State competence, the Union does have some powers in the area of cultural policy. Article 167(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the EU should contribute to the cultural development of the Member States, while respecting regional diversity and promoting common cultural heritage.

Council Directive 89/552/EEC seeks to promote the free movement of cultural goods in the common market. It states that 'broadcasts transmitted across frontiers by means of various technologies are one of the ways of pursuing the objectives of the Community.' Chapter V of the directive concerns the protection of minors. It states that the Member States can intervene and take measures when a broadcast includes 'programmes which might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of minors, in particular those that involve pornography or gratuitous violence'. The clown programmes, however, have never included potentially damaging scenes of this kind and the Spanish Government has not provided a reasoned justification for its actions with reference to Chapter V of the directive.

Does the Commission think that the Spanish Government's actions are consistent with Directive 89/552/EEC and, in particular, the principle of the free movement of audiovisual services?

Does it think that Spain is acting in compliance with the conditions laid down in Chapter V of the aforementioned directive?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2013)

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([1]) (AVMS Directive), amending the directive 89/552/EEC sets a regulatory framework for the provision of the audiovisual media services in the EU. Accoridng to its rules a Member Sates has jurisdiction over a media service provider established on its territory and consequently is responsible to ensure, through monitoring and enforcement activities that media service providers under its jurisdiction comply with the provisions of the directive. At the same time the directive gurantees the protection of general interests, such as protection of minors.

The Honourable Member of the European Parliament refers to the situation where Basque Public Television was requetsed by the Spanish Government's representative to stop broadcasting a programme that allegedly infringed provisions on protetcion of minors as trasposed in the national law. The parliamentary question by the Honourable Member does not provide sufficient information to assess whether the programme in question indeed had infringed the above mentioend provisions of the Diretcive. Therefore, the Commission services are not able at this stage to state whether indeed the provisions of the AVMS Directive were infringed.

([1]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media Services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010699/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(19 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Expediente de regulación de empleo (ERE) de Catalunya Banc

Como parte de la gran reestructuración que está viviendo el sector bancario español, aquellos bancos que han recibido ayudas públicas están reduciendo su número de oficinas y empleados con el objetivo de reducir las pérdidas.

En este contexto se enmarcan el ERE de Bankia ([1]) y el de Catalunya Banc (en curso), que significan el despido de miles de personas. Entidades sindicales representantes de trabajadores de esta última reivindican que el trato recibido no está siendo el mismo que en otras entidades reestructuradas ([2]).

Según el ERE de Bankia, los trabajadores menores de 54 años reciben una indemnización equivalente al salario de 30 días por año trabajado, con un límite de 22 mensualidades. En cambio, los trabajadores de Catalunya Banc recibirían 20 días por año trabajado, con un máximo de 12 mensualidades ([3]).

¿Está monitoreando la Comisión los programas de despidos en el contexto de la reestructuración bancaria en España?

¿Cumple el plan de reestructuración de Catalunya Banc con el Derecho comunitario, en particular con la Directiva 98/59/CE del Consejo relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros relativas a los despidos colectivos?

¿Considera la Comisión que todos los trabajadores afectados por los diferentes programas de despidos en España relacionados con las condiciones del memorando de entendimiento son tratados de igual manera?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión no monitorea específicamente los programas de despidos en el contexto de la reestructuración bancaria en España. La Comisión monitorea la aplicación de los planes de reestructuración de los bancos españoles que han recibido ayudas públicas. Dichos planes incluyen, entre otras cosas, objetivos relativos a sucursales, niveles de empleo y estructura de costes. Dichos objetivos están estrechamente vinculados con los planes de despido que llevan a cabo los bancos. Sin embargo, corresponde a los bancos alcanzar esos objetivos de la manera más efectiva y respetando plenamente la legislación vigente.

La Comisión no está en condiciones de evaluar los hechos ni de juzgar si una empresa privada ha cumplido o no las disposiciones nacionales destinadas a aplicar las Directivas de la UE, y más en concreto la Directiva 98/59/CE ([4]). Corresponde a las autoridades competentes nacionales, incluidos los tribunales, garantizar que el empresario en cuestión aplica correcta y eficazmente la legislación nacional que transpone la Directiva, teniendo en cuenta las circunstancias específicas del caso.

No existe ninguna legislación de la UE relativa a la igualdad de trato para todos los trabajadores afectados por los distintos programas de despidos en los bancos españoles. Con arreglo a la Directiva anteriormente mencionada, el empresario tiene que informar y consultar a los representantes de los trabajadores antes de tomar la decisión de llevar a cabo despidos colectivos. En dicha consulta deben tratarse los medios para evitar o reducir los despidos colectivos y atenuar sus consecuencias mediante medidas sociales de acompañamiento. Esto último puede variar en función de las diferentes empresas.

([1]) http://www.ccoocx.com/EROs/Bankia.pdf
([2]) http://www.eldiario.es/catalunyaplural/eldiarideltreball/LERO-Catalunya-Caixa-preveu-acomiadaments_6_166643345.html
http://www.ugt.cat/index.php/40-serveis/4522-els-treballadors-de-catalunya-banc-es-manifestaran-dema-contra-l-ero-plantejat
([3]) http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/58158/catalunya/banc/presenta/ero/2453/acomiadaments
([4]) Directiva 98/59/CE del Consejo, de 20 de julio de 1998, relativa a la aproximación de las legislaciones de los Estados miembros que se refieren a los despidos colectivos, DO L 225 de 12.8.1998.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010699/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(19 September 2013)

Subject: Redundancy programme at Catalunya Banc

As part of the major restructuring under way in the Spanish banking sector, banks which have received state aid are closing branches and cutting back staff in an effort to stem their losses.

The redundancy programmes at Bankia ([1]) and Catalunya Banc (ongoing), which are part of this process, will see thousands of people lose their jobs. Trade unions representing staff at Catalunya Banc claim that the employees there are not being treated the same as employees in other companies undergoing restructuring ([2]).

Under the redundancy programme at Bankia, staff below the age of 54 are receiving compensation equivalent to 30 days pay per year worked, up to a maximum of 22 monthly payments. In contrast, staff at Catalunya Banc are to receive 20 days pay per year worked, up to a maximum of 12 monthly payments ([3]).

Is the Commission monitoring redundancy programmes related to the restructuring of Spanish banks?

Does it consider the restructuring of Catalunya Banc to comply with EC law, in particular Council Directive 98/59/EC on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies?

Does it think that equal treatment is being provided for all the workers affected by the various redundancy programmes in Spain linked to the terms of the memorandum of understanding?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2013)

The Commission does not specifically monitor redundancy programmes related to the restructuring of Spanish banks. The Commission monitors the implementation of the restructuring plans of the Spanish banks which received state aid. The plans include *inter alia* targets in terms of branches, employment levels and cost structure. These targets are clearly linked to the redundancy measures put in place by the banks. It is however up to the banks to achieve these targets in the most efficient way and in full respect of existing legislation

The Commission is not in a position to assess the facts or state whether a private company has or has not complied with any national provisions which serve to implement EU Directives, in particular Directive 98/59/EC ([4]). It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing the Directive is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

There is no EC law providing for equality of treatment for all workers affected by the various redundancy programmes in Spanish banks. Under the aforementioned Directive, the employer has to inform and consult employees' representatives before he/she decides to carry out collective redundancies. Such consultation covers ways of avoiding or reducing the number of collective redundancies and of mitigating their consequences through accompanying social measures. The latter may vary from one company to another.

([1]) http://www.ccoocx.com/EROs/Bankia.pdf
([2]) http://www.eldiario.es/catalunyaplural/eldiarideltreball/LERO-Catalunya-Caixa-preveu-acomiadaments_6_166643345.html
http://www.ugt.cat/index.php/40-serveis/4522-els-treballadors-de-catalunya-banc-es-manifestaran-dema-contra-l-ero-plantejat
([3]) http://www.naciodigital.cat/noticia/58158/catalunya/banc/presenta/ero/2453/acomiadaments
([4]) Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010842/13
au Conseil
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(24 septembre 2013)

Objet: Position du Conseil concernant la situation en Syrie

Aux origines de la construction européenne a été inscrite la volonté de favoriser la paix et d'éviter les conflits armés au sein de l'Union et à l'extérieur de celle-ci.

La majorité des pays européens et de leurs opinions publiques ne souhaitent pas participer à une intervention contre le régime syrien, préférant une solution diplomatique et de destruction des armes chimiques, telle que préconisée avec succès par la Russie. Le dialogue entre le gouvernement syrien et les opposants de l'intérieur est toujours préférable à la prise de pouvoir par les mouvements islamistes, qu'il s'agisse des Frères musulmans ou des Salafistes.

Quelle proposition le Conseil serait-il disposé à faire pour poursuivre dans cette voie diplomatique plutôt qu'encourager une «réponse forte» — selon les termes du Président de la Commission — ou des «mesures de dissuasion» impliquant le recours à la violence, selon les termes de la résolution adoptée par le Parlement, mesures qui pourraient aggraver la situation en Syrie?

Réponse
(23 décembre 2013)

L'UE ne cesse de soutenir une solution pacifique au conflit syrien. Dans les conclusions du Conseil du 21 octobre 2013, «l'UE se félicite de l'appel lancé par le secrétaire général des Nations unies, Ban Ki-Moon, en faveur de l'organisation d'une conférence de paix à Genève avant la fin novembre. Elle appelle instamment toutes les parties au conflit à répondre positivement à cet appel et à se déclarer publiquement favorables à une transition politique crédible fondée sur la pleine mise en œuvre du communiqué de Genève. L'UE répète que l'objectif de la conférence doit être l'établissement rapide, sur la base du consentement mutuel, d'un organe de gouvernement transitoire doté des pleins pouvoirs exécutifs et contrôlant toutes les institutions de l'État et de sécurité. L'UE considère en outre que, conformément au communiqué de Genève, les parties devront se mettre d'accord, au cours de la conférence, sur des mesures claires et irréversibles ainsi que sur un calendrier serré pour la transition politique. Les participants internationaux à la conférence de Genève 2 devraient se conformer aux principes énoncés dans le communiqué de Genève».

Dans les dernières conclusions du Conseil, datées du 18 novembre 2013, «[r]appelant les conclusions du Conseil d'octobre 2013 sur la Syrie, l'UE se félicite de l'attitude positive adoptée récemment par la coalition nationale des forces de la révolution et de l'opposition syrienne quant à la participation à la conférence, qui constitue un progrès encourageant. Seule une solution politique débouchant sur une Syrie unie, démocratique et sans exclusive pourra mettre fin à la terrible effusion de sang et à la menace sans précédent qui pèse sur la stabilité régionale».

L'UE a maintenu des contacts de haut niveau avec toutes les parties concernées afin de mobiliser la communauté internationale et l'opposition en faveur de la conférence de Genève 2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010842/13
to the Council
Philippe de Villiers (EFD)
(24 September 2013)

Subject: Council position on the Syria situation

The desire to promote peace and to prevent armed conflicts, both within Europe and beyond, is one of the cornerstones of the European project.

Most European countries and their peoples want no part in a military intervention against the Syrian regime. Rather, they would prefer to see a diplomatic solution found and chemical weapons destroyed, as advocated successfully by Russia. Dialogue between the Syrian Government and its domestic opponents is still preferable to Islamist movements seizing power, be they members of the Muslim Brotherhood or Salafists.

What proposal would the Council be willing to make to keep diplomatic avenues open, rather than encouraging the 'strong response' referred to by the President of the Commission or the 'deterrent measures' cited in the resolution adopted by Parliament, which would involve the use of force and which might exacerbate the situation in Syria?

Reply
(23 December 2013)

The EU has consistently supported a peaceful solution to the Syrian conflict. In the conclusions of the Council dated 21 October 2013, 'the EU welcomes the call of UNSG Ban Ki-Moon for a peace conference in Geneva […] before the end of November. It urges all sides of the conflict to respond positively to this call and to adhere publicly to a credible political transition based on the full implementation of the Geneva Communiqué. The EU reiterates that the objective of the Conference must be the swift establishment, by mutual consent, of a transitional governing body (TGB) with full executive powers and control of all governmental and all security institutions. The EU also considers that, in full conformity with the Geneva Communiqué, the parties will have to agree during the Conference on clear and irreversible steps and a short timeframe for the political transition. International participants of Geneva II should adhere to the principles included in the Geneva Communiqué.'

In the latest conclusions of the Council dated 18 November 2013, 'recalling the October 2013 Council conclusions on Syria, the EU welcomes the recent positive stance of the National Coalition of the Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (SOC) towards participation in the Conference as an encouraging step. Only a political solution that results in a united, inclusive and democratic Syria can end both the terrible bloodshed and the unprecedented threat to the regional stability'.

The EU has maintained high-level contacts with all relevant stakeholders to gather international and opposition support for the Geneva II Conference.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010879/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παροχή βοήθειας σε παιδιά προσφύγων από τη Συρία μέσω της εκπαίδευσης

Ο πρώην Βρετανός Πρωθυπουργός Gordon Brown και η Rania Al Abdullah, Βασίλισσα της Ιορδανίας, ζήτησαν τη συνολική αύξηση των δαπανών στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης, ειδικότερα για παιδιά σε καταστάσεις κρίσεως. Η Βασίλισσα Rania πιστεύει ότι η εκπαίδευση είναι ουσιώδης για τα εν λόγω παιδιά, δεδομένου ότι η μάθηση μπορεί να τους παράσχει το αίσθημα της φυσιολογικής ζωής, επιτρέποντας σε αυτούς να αντιμετωπίσουν τις δύσκολες καταστάσεις τις οποίες πρέπει να υπομείνουν. Περαιτέρω, ο κ. Brown υπογραμμίζει το δικαίωμα των παιδιών στην εκπαίδευση, ένα δικαίωμα το οποίο θα πρέπει να είναι διασυνοριακά εγγυημένο και να τίθεται ως προτεραιότητα, έτσι ώστε να φέρει ελπίδα και να προσφέρει ευκαιρίες στα παιδιά των προσφύγων από τη Συρία, πρόσφυγες των οποίων ο αριθμός ανέρχεται περίπου σε ένα εκατομμύριο.

Σύμφωνα με την ανθρωπιστική οργάνωση Save the Children, μόνο 1,4% της συνολικής ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας χρησιμοποιήθηκε για εκπαιδευτικούς σκοπούς το 2012, μειωμένο σε σχέση με το 2,14% του προηγούμενου έτους.

Ενόψει των ανωτέρω, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις:

1. Γνωρίζει την έκκληση που έχει απευθύνει ο κ. Brown και η Βασίλισσα Rania; Έχει αναληφθεί οιαδήποτε δράση εκ μέρους της ΕΕ προκειμένου να βελτιωθεί αυτή η κατάσταση;

2. Ποιές επιπλέον ενέργειες απαιτούνται προκειμένου να υπάρξει εγγύηση ότι τα παιδιά των προσφύγων από τη Συρία θα είναι σε θέση να ασκούν το δικαίωμα σε εκπαίδευση και μάθηση;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η ΕΕ γνωρίζει την έκκληση και συμφωνεί απόλυτα ως προς τη σημασία ενίσχυσης της εκπαίδευσης για τα παιδιά, ιδίως σε καταστάσεις κρίσης.

Η ΕΕ αποτελεί έναν από τους βασικούς υποστηρικτές της εκπαίδευσης ως ανταπόκριση στην κρίση στη Συρία και έχει διαθέσει από την αρχή της κρίσης 167 εκατομμύρια ευρώ για τη στήριξη της εκπαίδευσης τόσο στη Συρία όσο και σε γειτονικές χώρες που πλήττονται από την κρίση.

Στην περίπτωση της Ιορδανίας, η ΕΕ διέθεσε 65 εκατομμύρια ευρώ για να στηρίξει την παροχή εκπαιδευτικών υπηρεσιών σε Σύριους πρόσφυγες και σε κοινότητες υποδοχής. Από το ποσό αυτό, 30 εκατομμύρια ευρώ χορηγήθηκαν μέσω του προϋπολογισμού για την εκπαίδευση με στόχο την ενίσχυση του συνολικού εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος για την αντιμετώπιση της εισροής προσφύγων. Επίσης, 35 εκατομμύρια ευρώ διατίθενται για τη στήριξη της εκπαίδευσης μέσω της Unicef και της Unesco.

Στην Τουρκία, η Unicef συνεργάζεται στενά με τις αρμόδιες τουρκικές κρατικές αρχές (4,75 εκατομμύρια ευρώ) και προσφέρει ευκαιρίες για εκπαίδευση σε παιδιά προσφύγων από τη Συρία σε καταυλισμούς.

Στην περίπτωση του Λιβάνου, 70 εκατομμύρια ευρώ διατίθενται σε δράσεις σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση για την αντιμετώπιση της κρίσης στη Συρία μέσω υπηρεσιών του ΟΗΕ και ΜΚΟ ([1]), με κύριο στόχο τη βελτίωση της πρόσβασης στην εκπαίδευση και σε υπηρεσίες βρεφονηπιακών σταθμών για τους πρόσφυγες και τις κοινότητες υποδοχής σε περιοχές που πλήττονται περισσότερο από την εισροή Σύριων προσφύγων.

Περίπου 27 εκατομμύρια ευρώ διατέθηκαν επίσης στο εσωτερικό της Συρίας, προκειμένου να αποκτήσουν πρόσβαση στην εκπαίδευση παιδιά εσωτερικών προσφύγων και Παλαιστίνιων προσφύγων.

Η ΕΕ αναμένει να διαθέσει πρόσθετα κεφάλαια το 2014 ειδικά για την αντιμετώπιση των επιπτώσεων της εισροής Σύριων προσφύγων.

Σήμερα, πολλές διεθνείς πρωτοβουλίες θέτουν στο προσκήνιο την εκπαίδευση των παιδιών (π.χ. πρωτοβουλία «καμία χαμένη γενιά»). Η ΕΕ δεσμεύεται να συνεχίσει τη στήριξη στον τομέα της εκπαίδευσης στη Συρία και στις χώρες που φιλοξενούν επί του παρόντος μεγάλο αριθμό Σύριων προσφύγων.

([1]) Μη κυβερνητικές οργανώσεις.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010879/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(25 September 2013)

Subject: Helping Syrian child refugees through education

Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Rania Al Abdullah, Queen of Jordan, have called for a global increase in spending on education, particularly for children in crisis situations. Queen Rania believes that education is essential for these children, given that learning can provide them with a sense of normality, enabling them to cope with the difficult situations which they have had to endure. Furthermore, Mr Brown stresses the right of children to an education — a right which should be guaranteed across borders and prioritised so as to bring hope and opportunities to Syrian child refugees, whose numbers have reached almost one million.

According to the humanitarian organisation Save the Children, just 1.4% of global humanitarian aid was spent on education in 2012, down from 2.14% in the previous year.

In light of the above, could the Commission answer the following:

1. Is it aware of the appeal made by Mr Brown and Queen Rania? Has any action been taken by the EU to aid this situation?

2. What more can be done to guarantee that Syrian child refugees will be able to exercise their right to learning and an education?

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

The EU is aware of the appeal and shares the importance of supporting education for children, particularly in crisis situations.

The EU is one of the main supporters of the education response to the Syrian crisis and has provided, since the crisis began, EUR 167 million to support education in Syria and in neighbouring countries affected by the crisis.

In the case of Jordan, the EU has made available EUR 65 million to support the provision of education services to Syrian refugees and host communities. Out of this amount, EUR 30 million are allocated through budget support on education aimed at assisting the overall education system to cope with the refugee influx. EUR 35 million are also supporting education through Unicef and Unesco.

In Turkey, education opportunities for Syrian refugee children in camps are developed through Unicef working closely with relevant Turkish governmental authorities (EUR 4.75 million).

In the case of Lebanon, the amount allocated to education-related actions in response to the Syria crisis is EUR 70 million through UN agencies and NGOs ([1]), focused on improving access to education and childcare services for refugees and host communities in areas most affected by the influx of Syrian refugees.

Around EUR 27 million were also allocated inside Syria to allow internally displaced and Palestine refugee children to access education.

The EU expects to allocate additional funds in 2014 specifically targeting the impact of Syrian refugees.

There are currently various international initiatives which put the spotlight on child education (e.g. 'no lost generation initiative').The EU is committed to continue support in the field of education in Syria and in the countries which are currently hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees.

([1]) Non-governmental organisations.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-010926/13
till kommissionen
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(26 september 2013)

Angående: Felaktig användning av biståndsmedel

Enligt uppgifter presenterade av Sveriges Radio Ekot ([1]) har den svenska biståndsministern samt statssekreteraren fått sin lön betald från de pengar som räknas in under ODA. Det rör sig om över 20 miljoner kronor som utbetalats under fyra års tid. Anser kommissionen att det här förfarandet är förenligt med EU:s åtagande att öka sitt stöd till utvecklingsländerna till 0,7 % av sitt BNI till 2015?

Svar från Andris Piebalgs på kommissionens vägnar
(16 december 2013)

Enligt rapporteringdirektiven ([2]) (avsnitt II.1) från OECD:s biståndskommitté DAC utgör vissa administrativa kostnader offentligt utvecklingsbistånd. Dessa kostnader beaktas därför vid bedömningen av framstegen mot att nå åtagandena avseende BNI för det offentliga utvecklingsbiståndet.

Varje medlem i OECD:s biståndskommitté ansvarar för sin egen rapportering av det offentliga utvecklingsbiståndet (inklusive administrativa kostnader).

Kommissionen hänvisar till biståndskommitténs onlinedatabas *"Credit Reporting System"* ([3]). Detaljerad information om biståndskommitténs alla givarländers administrativa kostnader finns under sektorkod 910 *(Administrative Costs of Donors)*.

([1]) http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=5654325
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DCD-DAC(2013)15-FINAL-ENG.pdf
([3]) http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010926/13
to the Commission
Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Misuse of aid funds

According to information presented by Radio Sweden's programme *Ekot* ([1]), the Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and the State Secretary had their salaries paid from funds classed as official development assistance (ODA). This relates to more than SEK 20 million paid out over a four-year period. Does the Commission consider this to be compatible with the EU's commitment to increase its aid to developing countries to 0.7% of its GNI by 2015?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

According to the current OECD/DAC (Development Assistance Committee) Reporting Directives ([2]) (section II.1), some administrative costs do constitute Official Development Assistance (ODA). These costs are therefore taken into account when assessing progress towards reaching ODA/GNI commitments.

Every OECD/DAC Member is responsible for its own ODA reporting (including on administrative costs).

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the online OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System database. ([3]) Detailed information on the administrative costs of all OECD/DAC donors is available under Sector Code 910 (Administrative Costs of Donors).

([1]) http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=5654325
([2]) http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/documentupload/DCD-DAC(2013)15-FINAL-ENG.pdf
([3]) http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-010955/13
a Bizottság számára
Kósa Ádám (PPE) és Romana Jordan (PPE)
(2013. szeptember 26.)

Tárgy: A fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogai

Adatok igazolják, hogy az Európai Unióban a fogyatékossággal élő személyeket aránytalan mértékben sújtják a számos tagállamban végrehajtott költségvetési szigorítások, melyek hosszú távú hatásai országonként eltérőek. Ez súlyosan sérti a fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogait, melyeket a fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogairól szóló ENSZ-egyezmény, az Európai Unió Alapjogi Chartája, az Európai Szociális Charta, valamint egyéb olyan elfogadott jogi normák és egyezmények is garantálnak, amelyeknek az EU részes fele.

Milyen konkrét intézkedéseket tesz a Bizottság a trojka tagjaként, illetve az európai szemeszter folyamata keretében és országspecifikus ajánlások szintjén annak biztosítására, hogy az EU eleget tegyen az említett normák keretében tett kötelezettségvállalásainak, és teljesüljenek a 2010–2020 közötti időszakra vonatkozó európai fogyatékosságügyi stratégia célkitűzései? Hogyan tervezi a Bizottság felmérni azokat a közkiadások átszervezéséből eredő kockázatokat, melyek a fogyatékossággal élőket hátrányosan érinthetik?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. december 18.)

A Bizottság kellő figyelmet fordít a fogyatékos személyek helyzetére és általánosabb értelemben az uniós országokban végrehajtott költségvetési konszolidációs intézkedések szociális hatására.

A szociális szolgáltatások és politikák elsősorban a tagállamok hatáskörébe tartoznak, a Bizottság azonban arra ösztönzi a tagállamokat, hogy megfelelő reformok végrehajtásával védjék a legkiszolgáltatottabbakat a válság következményeitől a fogyatékos személyek társadalmi befogadása, foglalkoztathatósága és képzésének előmozdítása révén az európai fogyatékosságügyi stratégia 2010–2020 ([1]), az Európa 2020 stratégia, az európai szemeszter és a szociális beruházási csomag ([2]) keretében. A fentiekben említett politikai kereteken belül meghozott intézkedések nem lehetnek ellentétesek a fogyatékossággal élő személyek jogairól szóló egyezménnyel, amelynek az EU részes fele.

Az európai szemeszter keretében a Bizottság nagy hangsúlyt fektet a munkaerőpiacról leginkább kiszorulók felzárkóztatására. Ezzel összefüggésben 2012–2013-ban számos országspecifikus ajánlás kiemelten foglalkozik a fogyatékos személyekkel.

A szociális beruházási csomag kiemeli annak szükségességét, hogy a tagállamok humántőkét növelő szolgáltatásokba ruházzanak be, növeljék az emberek lehetőségeit a társadalmi és gazdasági életben való részvételre, valamint megerősítsék az emberek képességét a kockázatok hatékony kezelésére. Az Európai Szociális Alapról szóló bizottsági rendeletjavaslat ([3]) ezzel a politikai hozzáállással összhangban a megfizethető, fenntartható és minőségi szolgáltatásokhoz, köztük az egészségügyi szolgáltatásokhoz és a közérdekű szociális szolgáltatásokhoz való hozzáférés biztosítását a társadalmi befogadással és a szegénység elleni küzdelemmel kapcsolatos célkitűzés teljesítésére szolgáló hat beruházási prioritás egyikeként azonosította.

([1]) COM(2010) 636 végleges.
([2]) COM(2013) 83 végleges.
([3]) COM(2011) 607.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-010955/13
za Komisijo
Ádám Kósa (PPE) in Romana Jordan (PPE)
(26. september 2013)

Zadeva: Pravice invalidov

Obstajajo dokazi, da invalidi v Evropski uniji trpijo nesorazmerne posledice zmanjševanja javne porabe v številnih državah članicah, čeprav se dolgoročne posledice po državah razlikujejo. To močno vpliva na pravice, ki so jim zagotovljene s Konvencijo OZN o pravicah invalidov, Listino EU o temeljnih pravicah, Evropsko socialno listino ter uveljavljeno zakonodajo in konvencijami, ki zavezujejo EU.

Kako konkretno Komisija ukrepa v vlogah, ki jih ima v trojki in evropskem semestru ter pri priporočilih za posamezne države, da bi zagotovila izpolnjevanje obveznosti EU po teh instrumentih in uresničevanje ciljev evropske strategije za invalide 2010–2020? Kako namerava oceniti tveganja, ki jim utegnejo biti invalidi izpostavljeni med prerazporejanjem proračunske porabe?

Odgovor Viviane Reding v imenu Komisije
(18. december 2013)

Komisija namenja ustrezno pozornost položaju invalidov in bolj na splošno socialnim posledicam ukrepov za proračunsko konsolidacijo v državah EU.

Socialne storitve in politike so predvsem v pristojnosti držav članic EU, vendar Komisija z Evropsko strategijo o invalidnosti 2010–2020 ([1]), strategijo Evropa 2020, evropskim semestrom in svežnjem o socialnih naložbah ([2]) poudarja pomembnost socialne vključenosti, zaposljivosti in izobraževanja invalidov ter tako države članice spodbuja, da sprejmejo ustrezne reforme za zaščito najranljivejših pred posledicami krize. Ukrepi, ki se sprejmejo v teh političnih okvirih, ne smejo biti v nasprotju z namenom in ciljem Konvencije Združenih narodov o pravicah invalidov, h kateri je pristopila tudi EU.

V okviru evropskega semestra Komisija posebno pozornost namenja vključevanju oseb, ki so najbolj oddaljene od trga dela. Tako so bila v letih 2012 in 2013 številna priporočila za posamezne države povezana z invalidi.

Sveženj o socialnih naložbah poudarja, da morajo države članice vlagati v storitve, ki krepijo človeški kapital ter izboljšujejo zmožnost ljudi za sodelovanje v družbi in gospodarstvu, pa tudi njihovo sposobnost obvladovanja tveganj. V skladu s tem pristopom predlog Komisije za uredbo o Evropskem socialnem skladu ([3]) opredeljuje „dostop do cenovno sprejemljivih, trajnostnih in visoko kakovostnih storitev, vključno z zdravstvenimi in socialnimi storitvami splošnega interesa“ kot eno od šestih prednostnih naložb za doseganje cilja socialne vključenosti in boja proti revščini.

([1]) COM(2010)0636 final.
([2]) COM(2013)0083 final.
([3]) COM(2011)0607.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010955/13
to the Commission
Ádám Kósa (PPE) and Romana Jordan (PPE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Rights of persons with disabilities

Evidence shows that persons with disabilities in the European Union are being disproportionately affected by public spending cuts in many Member States, the long-term effects of which differ from one country to another. This is having a serious impact on the rights of persons with disabilities guaranteed under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Social Charter, and other established laws and conventions to which the EU is bound.

What concrete measures is the Commission taking in its role both as part of the troika and in the European Semester process and country-specific recommendations to ensure that the EU`s commitments under these instruments and the goals of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 are being met? How does the Commission plan to assess the risks that people with disabilities may face during the reallocation of public spending?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2013)

The Commission pays due attention to the situation of people with disabilities and more generally to the social impact of budgetary consolidation measures in EU countries.

While social services and policies are primarily the competence of EU Member States, the Commission encourages Member States to undertake adequate reforms to protect the most vulnerable from the consequences of the crisis by promoting social inclusion, employability and education of people with disabilities through the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([1]), the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Semester and the Social Investment Package ([2]). The actions undertaken within these policy frameworks cannot go against the purpose and object of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which the EU is a Party.

In the context of the European Semester, the Commission puts considerable emphasis on inclusion of those furthest from the labour market. In this context, a number of Country Specific Recommendations in 2012-2013 focus on persons with disabilities.

The Social Investment Package underlines the need for Member States to invest in services that enhance human capital, raise people's capacity to participate in society and the economy and strengthen people's capability to cope with risks. In line with this policy approach, the Commission's proposal for the European Social Fund Regulation ([3]) identifies 'access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services including healthcare and social services of general interest' as one of the six investment priorities for achieving the objective of social inclusion and combating poverty.

([1]) COM(2010) 636 final.
([2]) COM(2013) 83 final.
([3]) COM(2011) 607.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010987/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 de septiembre de 2013)

Asunto: Redes sociales y perfiles de fallecidos

El fenómeno de las redes sociales está planteando nuevos problemas que requieren soluciones adecuadas.

Uno de esos problemas es la eliminación de los perfiles de las personas fallecidas de las redes. En la situación actual, todo el material textual o audiovisual subido por la persona fallecida a la red queda ahí al alcance de cualquiera, situación que puede ser desagradable y penosa para sus familiares.

Los familiares de las personas fallecidas pueden intentar borrar el rastro de su pariente en las redes sociales, pero es un proceso largo y complicado que muchas veces no llega a buen fin.

¿Es consciente la Comisión del problema?

¿Piensa impulsar la Comisión alguna normativa que facilite el borrado de los perfiles de las personas fallecidas de las redes sociales?

Respuesta conjunta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Sus Señorías a su respuesta a la pregunta parlamentaria E-007232/2012.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-011003/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26. september 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 dokumenter digitalt. Det er en god og sikker opbevaring, men det er næsten for sikkert.

En dansk afhandling af Astrid Waagestein fra IT Universitetet beskriver, hvordan fotos, breve, dagbøger med mere går tabt, når mennesker dør uden at have givet adgangskoder videre.

Vi er i disse år i gang med at opbygge en kæmpe digital arv, som vi ikke kan sikre de pårørende, 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 digital arv?

Er det noget Kommissionen mener, den kommende databeskyttelsesforordning tager hånd om?

Samlet svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Viviane Reding
(4. december 2013)

Kommissionen henviser de ærede medlemmer til sit svar på forespørgsel E-007232/2012 fra Europa-Parlamentet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010987/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Social networks and profiles of deceased persons

The social networking phenomenon is posing new problems that require solutions.

One of these problems is the removal of the profiles of deceased persons from the networks. Currently, all textual and audiovisual material that deceased persons have uploaded to the network remains available to everyone, which may be unpleasant and painful for their families.

Members of the deceased person's family can try to erase traces of their relative in social networks, but this is a long, complicated process, often ending in failure.

Is the Commission aware of this problem?

Does the Commission intend to instigate legislation of some kind to facilitate the deletion of deceased persons' profiles from social networks?

Question for written answer E-011003/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Safeguarding our digital heritage

People have increasingly embraced digitisation. This is a positive thing, but it also presents challenges. People increasingly store photographs, personal papers and documents in digital format. This is a sound and secure form of storage, but it is almost too secure.

A Danish thesis by Astrid Waagestein from the IT University of Copenhagen describes how photographs, letters, diaries, etc. are lost when people die without passing on the access codes.

We are currently in the process of building up an enormous digital heritage, which we cannot safeguard for family members because we have no legislation in this area.

Is this something that the Commission is aware of, and are there any legislative initiatives on the horizon to safeguard our digital heritage?

Does it think this something that the forthcoming Data Protection Regulation will address?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Members to its reply to EP Question E-007232/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011012/13
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Prioritising farm safety

There are over 550 fatal accidents in farming across the EU each year and when these figures are examined further it becomes apparent that 6% of the workforce is suffering more than 30% of the tragedy in terms of fatalities.

The farm is not a typical work place and, as such, standard health and safety regulations are not always suitable or relevant. Factoring in the long hours in all weathers, the wide variety of hazards facing farmers — mechanical, electrical, chemical, biological, as well as respiratory disease and zoonosis, coupled with the isolated nature of the work — it is apparent that health and safety concerns in agriculture are not the same as in other sectors. The risk factors are higher and more frequent, and when it is considered that farms are often not just a place of work but also a family homestead the risks are multiplied.

It is disappointing that efforts to undertake an own-initiative report in the Parliament on improving farm safety have been halted, despite the joint commitment of the Agriculture and Employment committees. Given the importance of this issue for the farming sector and the need to constantly reform health and safety guidelines to reflect best practice in farming, what measures will the Commission take to improve the health and safety situation for Europe's farmers?

Does the Commission consider it beneficial to create a list of indicators to determine how farm safety can be improved and to facilitate a review of risk assessment measures regarding best farm practices?

In practical terms, could the Commission ensure that agricultural machinery operators increase safety features on all farm machinery, and particularly the PTO shaft?

What is the Commission's position on the establishment of a fund under the common agricultural policy to assist families affected by farm accidents, and to provide aid to farmers disabled as a result of farm accidents in terms of the adaption of farm equipment and machinery?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(18 November 2013)

The Commission notes with concern the high risk nature of farming across the EU and agrees it is a key sector of concern. A substantial quantity of good practice can be found on the DG EMPL and EU-OSHA websites ([1]) ([2]). It should be noted that the Commission has launched a comprehensive review of the 24 EU health and safety Directives. The Commission will inform the other EU institutions and bodies of the results (available by the end of 2015) and of any suggestions on how to improve the operation of the regulatory framework.

Investment under Rural development would allow farmer to have access to modern and safe mechanical equipment. Training activities to reduce work related accidents as well as advice to individual farmers covering occupational safety standards could also be funded. The uptake of these funding opportunities is only possible when Member States or regions include these measures in their Rural Development Programmes.

Concerning the safety features of mechanical equipment, the Commission is currently developing the implementing measures for the approval and market surveillance of agricultural and forestry vehicles, that will be adopted by 31 December 2014, according to the provisions of the regulation (EU) 167/2013 on the approval and market surveillance of agricultural and forestry vehicles ([3]). Those implementing measures include the safety requirements for the risks related to tractors (T and C category vehicles) at their workplace; in particular the ones corresponding to PTO shaft are covered through standards. Most of the workplace risks related to other agricultural machinery (R and S category vehicles) are covered by the directive 2006/42/EC ([4]).

([1]) https://osha.europa.eu/en/sector/agriculture
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6785&type=2&furtherPubs=yes
([3]) OJ L 60, 2.3.2013.
([4]) OJ L 157, 9.6.2006.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011014/13
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(26 septembre 2013)

Objet: Négociations secrètes autour du grand marché transatlantique (GMT)

Les négociations sur l'accord transatlantique, entamées dans le plus grand secret par la Commission européenne, font l'objet de comptes rendus, tout aussi secrets. En effet, seuls les députés membres de la commission du commerce international (INTA) peuvent avoir accès aux comptes rendus des négociations, au cours d'une réunion se tenant à huis clos, sans ordre du jour et en anglais uniquement, sans interprétation dans les langues officielles de l'Union, ni même dans les autres langues de travail de la Commission (français, allemand).

Pourquoi la Commission se soumet-elle aux exigences de «confidentialité» du gouvernement états-unien, qui nous espionne par ailleurs?

La Commission attend-elle la signature des accords pour informer les représentants des citoyens de leur contenu?

Pourquoi ces comptes rendus secrets ne sont-ils rédigés que dans la langue des États-Unis? Devons-nous nous attendre à ce que l'anglais devienne prochainement la langue unique de l'Union européenne?

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

La manière dont les négociations en vue d'un partenariat transatlantique sur le commerce et l'investissement (PTCI) se déroulent ne diffère pas d'autres négociations commerciales. Toute négociation internationale, en particulier en présence d'intérêts économiques importants, requiert un certain niveau de confidentialité. Mais confidentialité ne signifie pas secret et rien n'empêche la Commission d'informer le public sur les principaux éléments des négociations. C'est le cas pour le PTCI: pour répondre à l'intérêt suscité dans le public, la Commission a fait des efforts tout particuliers, par exemple en créant un site web consacré au PTCI ([1]), contenant des informations en plusieurs langues de l'Union. Pour la toute première fois, la Commission a publié des documents présentant la position initiale de l'Union européenne ([2]). Tout au long des négociations, la Commission est en contact avec les entreprises, les groupements de consommateurs, les syndicats, les organisations non gouvernementales et la société civile au sens large, y compris dans le cadre de ses dialogues avec la société civile. C'est dans ce contexte que la Commission a organisé une réunion à l'issue du premier cycle de négociations afin d'informer la société civile et de lui donner la possibilité d'interagir avec les négociateurs ([3]). La Commission tient les États membres, au sein du Conseil, et le Parlement européen soigneusement informés de l'évolution de la situation.

En communiquant ces informations au Parlement européen, la Commission respecte strictement l'accord-cadre conclu avec le Parlement européen en 2009 (articles 23 et 24, annexes 2 et 3) et tient la commission compétente (INTA) dûment informée ([4]). Le Parlement reçoit par ailleurs tous les documents qui sont communiqués au Conseil. La Commission informe la commission INTA avant et après chaque cycle de négociation. Les négociations en vue d'un PTCI représentent un élément de l'exercice de la démocratie: à l'issue des négociations, il reviendra au Conseil, c'est-à-dire aux représentants des gouvernements élus des États membres, et au Parlement européen d'adopter ou non l'accord.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/
([2]) Ces documents sont des documents techniques présentés par la Commission à ses homologues américains au cours de la première série de négociations (à Washington, du 8 au 12 juillet 2013). Ils peuvent être consultés à l'adresse suivante: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=943
([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151656.pdf
([4]) «Les informations sont, en règle générale, fournies via la commission parlementaire compétente et, le cas échéant, en séance plénière. Dans des cas dûment justifiés, ces informations sont fournies à plusieurs commissions parlementaires».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011014/13
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Secret negotiations on the Transatlantic Free Trade Area (TFTA)

Records are being kept of the TFTA agreement negotiations, which have been embarked on by the Commission in the utmost secrecy. Those records are equally secret. Indeed, only MEPs on the Committee on International Trade may see those records — at meetings held in camera with no agenda, in English only, and with no interpretation into the EU's official languages or even into the Commission's other working languages (French and German).

Why is the Commission submitting to the demands of the United States' Government for 'confidentiality' — a government which, I might add, is spying on us?

Is the Commission waiting for the agreement to be signed before informing the public's representatives what is in it?

Why are the secret records being drawn up only in the language of the United States? Is English soon to become the EU's sole language?

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

The way in which the negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) are conducted does not differ from any other trade negotiations. International negotiations, especially where they concern important economic interests, imply a certain degree of confidentiality. But confidentiality does not mean secrecy and does not prevent the Commission from informing the public of the main elements in the negotiations. This is the case for TTIP, where given the level of public interest, the Commission has made specific efforts, such as a dedicated TTIP website ([1]) with information in various EU languages. In an unprecedented step, the Commission has published the EU's initial position papers. ([2]).Throughout the negotiations, the Commission communicates with industry, consumer groups, trade unions, NGOs and civil society at large, including via its civil society dialogues. As such, the Commission organised a meeting after the first round of negotiations to inform civil society and enable them to interact with the negotiators. ([3]) The Commission keeps Member States, in the Council, and the European Parliament (EP) thoroughly informed of developments.

In sharing information with the EP, the Commission is strictly abiding by its 2009 Framework Agreement with the EP (art. 23-24, annexes 2 and 3) by providing all relevant information to the responsible Committee (INTA). ([4]) The EP also receives all the documents that are shared with the Council. The Commission briefs INTA before and after each negotiating round. The TTIP negotiations are part of a democratic process: at the end of the negotiations, it is the Council, i.e. representatives of elected Member States' governments, and the EP, that will approve or reject the agreement.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/

([2]) These papers are technical documents that the Commission has presented to its US counterparts during the first negotiating round (Washington, 8-12 July 2013). They are available at http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=943

([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151656.pdf

([4]) 'Information shall, as a general rule, be provided through the responsible parliamentary committee and, where appropriate, at a plenary sitting. In duly justified cases, it shall be provided to more than one parliamentary committee'.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011015/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(26 september 2013)

Betreft: Steun aan FEMYSO

Verleent de Commissie enige financiële of andere steun aan het „Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations" (FEMYSO)? Zo ja, hoeveel bedroeg deze steun in 2011 en 2012?

Antwoord van mevrouw Vassiliou namens de Commissie
(22 november 2013)

FEMYSO heeft in het kader van het programma „Jeugd in actie" (2007-2013) drie subsidies ontvangen: twee exploitatiesubsidies (26 932 EUR in 2007 en 35 000 EUR in 2010) en één subsidie voor een actie in het kader van het Europees Vrijwilligerswerk (4 522 EUR in 2007).

In 2011 en 2012 heeft het programma geen subsidie aan deze organisatie verleend.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011015/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Support for the Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (FEMYSO)

Does the Commission provide any financial or support for FEMYSO? If so, what amount of support was provided in 2011 and 2012?

(Version française)

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

Dans le cadre du programme Jeunesse en Action (2007-2013), Femyso a reçu trois subventions: deux subventions de fonctionnement (26 932 euros en 2007 et 35 000 euros en 2010) et une subvention à l'action dans le cadre du Service volontaire européen (4 522 eros en 2007).

Le programme n'a pas financé de subvention à cet organisme en 2011 ni en 2012.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011016/13
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) oraz Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(26 września 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Problem Natury2000 w Polsce na przykładzie Doliny Bobrzy

Natura2000 poprzez, co podnoszą znawcy problemu, rozbieżności w stanie faktycznym ostoi obszarów chronionych i braku właściwej pielęgnacji stanowi ogromny problem dla wielu mieszkańców Polski. Doskonałym tego przykładem jest obszar Natury2000 „Dolina Bobrzy" w województwie świętokrzyskim. Z ekspertyzy (w której jesteśmy posiadaniu), przeprowadzonej przez specjalistę świadczącego usługi ekologiczne wynika, że ekspresowe, w tym przypadku w okresie pół roku, wyznaczanie cennych przyrodniczo obszarów obejmowało zaledwie jeden, niepełny sezon wegetacyjny, natomiast niezwykle urozmaicony, cenny przyrodniczo obszar województwa świętokrzyskiego, jak i wspomniany krótki czas, „musiał odbić się na jakości merytorycznej wyznaczonych ostoi". W miejscu tym należy też wskazać na fakt, gdzie specjaliści twierdzą, że w „Dolinie Bobrzy" swoje walory bezpowrotnie utraciła niepielęgnowana w ramach programu Natura2000 przyroda. Dodatkowo należy także podnieść, że Natura2000 często burzy układ przestrzenny w części z gmin, na terenie których występuje oraz wprowadza chaos inwestycyjny.

1. Czy Komisja ma wiedzę na temat problemów związanych z rozbieżnościami w stanie faktycznym ostoi obszarów Natury2000 w Polsce?

2. Czy Komisja jest świadoma, że obszary Natury2000 w Polsce często nie są pielęgnowane, przez co bezpowrotnie utraciły swoje walory przyrodnicze, tak jak w przypadku Natury2000 „Dolina Bobrzy"?

3. Czy Komisja widzi możliwość ingerencji w pewną część obszarów Natury2000 „Dolina Bobrzy", w sytuacji gdy de facto Natura2000 może na wspomnianym obszarze nie występować w dokładnie pierwotnie naniesionych obszarach, dodatkowo bezpowrotnie utraciła swoje walory przyrodnicze, a w sposób jednoznaczny szkodzi ona ważnemu interesowi społecznemu mieszkańców, w związku z zakładanymi inwestycjami infrastrukturalnymi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Janeza Potočnika w imieniu Komisji
(21 listopada 2013 r.)

Komisja nie ma informacji na temat żadnych poważnych błędów w sposobie wyznaczania obszarów Natura2000 w Polsce. Komisja jest świadoma, że w niektórych przypadkach, w wyniku wyznaczenia takich obszarów w stosunkowo krótkim czasie, ich granice nie w pełni odpowiadają miejscu występowania danego typu siedlisk lub siedlisk gatunków będących przedmiotem zainteresowania Wspólnoty. Polskie władze naprawiają jednak takie błędy – granice obszarów są często korygowane w trakcie opracowywania planów zarządzania obszarami Natura2000 (tzw. planów zadań ochronnych). Zgodnie z informacjami dostępnymi Komisji taki plan jest obecnie przygotowywany dla obszaru „Dolina Bobrzy". Jeżeli władze lokalne uznają, że granice należy poprawić, mogą się w tej sprawie skontaktować z Regionalną Dyrekcją Ochrony Środowiska w Kielcach. Należy jednak zauważyć, że wszelkie takie korekty muszą się opierać wyłącznie na przesłankach naukowych.

Komisji nie są znane żadne szczególne problemy dotyczące zarządzania obszarem „Dolina Bobrzy". Wiadomo jednak, że wiele obszarów Natura2000 rzeczywiście wymaga aktywnego zarządzania. Finansowe wsparcie takich działań można otrzymać z funduszy europejskich, przede wszystkim z EFRROW, funduszy strukturalnych i spójności oraz funduszy LIFE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011016/13
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD) and Tadeusz Cymański (EFD)
(26 September 2013)

Subject: Trouble with Natura 2000 in Poland, for example in Dolina Bobrzy

Experts assert that the Natura 2000 programme is resulting in inconsistencies on the ground in protected areas, that it is neglecting such areas, and that this represents a major problem for many Poles. A good example of this is the 'Dolina Bobrzy' Natura 2000 site in Świętokrzyskie province. We have obtained an analysis from an ecological services expert which shows that the swift designation of that valuable wildlife area, which in this case was carried out within six months, only took account of a single, incomplete growing season. Yet the designation of that exceptionally diverse and ecologically valuable region of Świętokrzyskie province, as well as the time frame within which it was carried out, ought to have reflected the specific characteristics of the sites. Furthermore, experts point out that the natural characteristics of Dolina Bobrzy have been irreversibly damaged due to neglect under the Natura 2000 programme. It should also be added that Natura 2000 often has an adverse effect on the layout of host communities and on investments.

1. Is the Commission aware of the problems caused by inconsistencies at Natura 2000 sites in Poland?

2. Is it aware that Natura 2000 sites in Poland are often neglected, resulting in their natural characteristics being irreversibly damaged, as has happened in Dolina Bobrzy?

3. The programme has damaged the natural characteristics of the site and it is harming theresidents' community interests by impacting on planned infrastructure investments. Willthe Commission, therefore, consider intervening with respect to certain parts of theDolina Bobrzy site, given that this Natura 2000 site is *de facto* able to extend beyond theoriginally designated area?

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

The Commission is not aware of any serious inconsistencies regarding designation of Natura 2000 sites in Poland. The Commission is aware of the fact that the designation process, carried out over a relatively short time, resulted in some cases in designation of the sites for which the boundaries do not necessarily precisely correspond to location of the habitat types or habitats of the species of Community interest. The Polish authorities, however, are rectifying this problem and boundaries are often corrected in the process of preparing Natura 2000 management plans (plany zadań ochronnych). According to information available to the Commission such a plan is being prepared for the site 'Dolina Bobrzy'. If the local authorities consider that the boundaries should be corrected they may contact the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection in Kielce. It has to be noted, however, that any such correction must be based solely on scientific considerations.

The Commission is not aware of any particular problems related to a lack of management on the 'Dolina Bobrzy' site. It is recognised, however, that many Natura 2000 sites indeed require active management measures. European funds, particularly EAFRD, structural and cohesion as well as LIFE funds can contribute to financially supporting such measures.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011086/13
an die Kommission
Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE)
(30. September 2013)

Betrifft: Gutachtertätigkeit von Europol-Direktoren

Laut Nachrichtensendung Zeit im Bild 2 des Österreichischen Rundfunks (ORF) vom 26. September 2013 hat der vormalige Direktor von Europol Gutachten für die Regierung von Kasachstan verfasst. Laut ORF-Bericht werden in diesen Gutachten auch für die Europäische Union sicherheitspolitisch relevante Sachverhalte erörtert. Für einen bedeutenden österreichischen Staatsrechtler könnte diese Gutachtertätigkeit durchaus eine Verletzung der Pflicht zur Amtsverschwiegenheit sowie die Unterstützung eines „fremdennachrichtlichen Dienstes zu Lasten Österreichs" darstellen.

Daraus ergeben sich folgenden Fragen:

Lässt sich diese Gutachtertätigkeit des ehemaligen Europol-Direktors mit seinem früheren Amt vereinbaren?

Wie sehen die Cooling off- bzw. Amtsverschwiegenheits-Regeln für Europol-Direktoren aus?

Welche Stelle ist bei derartigen Vorwürfen für die Klärung der Frage zuständig, ob hier eine Unvereinbarkeit vorliegt?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(9. Januar 2014)

Der ehemalige Direktor war 2005 vom Rat für einen Zeitraum von vier Jahren als Direktor von Europol ernannt worden. Er schied aus dem Amt aus, nachdem er in dieser Position nicht wiederernannt wurde. Nach seinem Weggang von Europol arbeitete er als deutscher Regierungsbeamter weiter. Im Jahr 2010 trat er in den Ruhestand. Die von ihm nach seiner Pensionierung ausgeübten beratenden Tätigkeiten, insbesondere seine Aufgaben und Pflichten als pensionierter Polizeibeamter, unterliegen in erster Linie dem deutschen Verwaltungsrecht und müssten insbesondere vor diesem Hintergrund bewertet werden.

Jeder Europol-Beamte ist in Bezug auf bedeutende Informationen, die der Geheimhaltung unterliegen, zu Verschwiegenheit und Geheimhaltung verpflichtet. Dies gilt auch nach seinem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst, es sei denn, diese Informationen sind bereits veröffentlicht oder der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich. Gemäß Artikel 16 des Statuts ist der Beamte nach dem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst verpflichtet, bei der Annahme bestimmter Tätigkeiten oder Vorteile ehrenhaft und zurückhaltend zu sein ([1]).

Für den Fall eines Verstoßes gegen die genannten Pflichten durch einen ehemaligen Bediensteten von Europol enthält Anhang IX des Statuts Bestimmungen über Disziplinarverfahren. Gemäß dem Beschluss des Verwaltungsrates von Europol (dem die Kommission als Mitglied angehört) können gegen Mitglieder des Europol-Direktoriums ([2]) zusätzliche Verfahren angestrengt werden.

Da es sich bei dem betreffenden Beamten um einen deutschen Beamten handelt, ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass im Falle eines Verstoßes gegen die genannten Aufgaben und Pflichten die deutschen Rechtsvorschriften über die während des Ruhestands ausgeübten Tätigkeiten Anwendung fänden. Zudem ist die Kommission nicht zuständig für Interessenkonflikte in Agenturen, auch wenn sie in ihrer Eigenschaft als Mitglied des Verwaltungsrats von Europol für die Anwendung der genannten Vorschriften mitverantwortlich ist.

([1]) Artikel 16.
Der Beamte ist nach dem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst verpflichtet, bei der Annahme bestimmter Tätigkeiten oder Vorteile ehrenhaft und zurückhaltend zu sein.
Ein Beamter, der beabsichtigt, vor Ablauf von zwei Jahren nach seinem Ausscheiden aus dem Dienst gegen Entgelt oder unentgeltlich eine berufliche Tätigkeit aufzunehmen, muss sein Organ hiervon in Kenntnis setzen. Steht die Tätigkeit in Zusammenhang mit der Tätigkeit, die der Beamte in den letzten drei Jahren seiner Dienstzeit ausgeführt hat
und könnte sie zu einem Konflikt mit den legitimen Interessen des Organs führen, so kann die Anstellungsbehörde unter Berücksichtigung des dienstlichen Interesses beschließen, dem Beamten die Aufnahme dieser Tätigkeit zu untersagen, oder vorbehaltlich von ihr als angemessen angesehener Auflagen ihre Zustimmung erteilen. Das Organ teilt dem Betreffenden nach Anhörung des Paritätischen Ausschusses seine Entscheidung binnen 30 Arbeitstagen nach seiner Benachrichtigung mit. Wird eine Entscheidung nicht binnen 30 Arbeitstagen mitgeteilt, so gilt dies als Zustimmung.

([2]) Beschluss vom 4. Juni 2009 (ABl. L 348 vom 29.12.2009, S. 3).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011086/13
to the Commission
Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Advisory work of Europol directors

According to the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation's (ORF's) news programme *Zeit im Bild 2* broadcast on 26 September 2013, the former director of Europol has drawn up advisory reports for the Government of Kazakhstan. According to the ORF report, these advisory reports also discussed matters of relevance to European Union security policy. A renowned Austrian public law expert is of the opinion that this advisory work could well constitute a violation of the duty of secrecy and the supporting of a 'foreign information service to the detriment of Austria'.

This raises the following questions:

Is this advisory work by the former Europol director compatible with his previous office?

What are the cooling off or secrecy rules for Europol directors?

In the event of allegations of this nature, which agency is responsible for investigating whether there has been a violation in this case?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2014)

The Director was appointed by the Council in 2005 for a four-year period as Director of Europol. He left office after not being reappointed in this position. Following his departure from Europol, he continued to work as a German Government official. He retired in 2010. Any of his advisory activities undertaken after his retirement, in particular his duties and obligations as a retired police officer, are primarily governed by German administrative law and would have to be assessed notably against this background.

Every Europol official has a duty of discretion and confidentiality relating to information significant enough to require confidentiality, even after termination of office, unless this information has been made public or accessible to the public. According to Article 16 of the EU Staff Regulations an official, after leaving the service, continues to be bound by the duty to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance of certain appointments or benefits ([1]).

In case of breach of these duties by a former Europol employee, Annex IX of the EU Staff Regulations provides for rules on disciplinary proceedings. Additional procedures can be brought against members of the Europol Directorate according to the decision of the Management Board of Europol ([2]).

It is important to note as the official in question was a German civil servant, it is German law on activities carried out during retirement that would apply in the case of any breach of those duties and obligations. Furthermore, the Commission is not responsible for issues of conflict of interest arising in agencies, although it does share responsibility for applying the aforementioned rules in its capacity as a member of the Europol Management Board.

([1]) Article 16.
An official shall, after leaving the service, continue to be bound by the duty to behave with integrity and discretion as regards the acceptance of certain appointments or benefits.
Officials intending to engage in an occupational activity, whether gainful or not, within two years of leaving the service shall inform their institution thereof. If that activity is related to the work carried out by the official during the last three years of service and could lead to a conflict with the legitimate interests of the institution, the Appointing Authority may, having regard to the interests of the service, either forbid him from undertaking it or give its approval subject to any conditions it thinks fit. The institution shall, after consulting the Joint Committee, notify its decision within 30 working days of being so informed. If no such notification has been made by the end of that period, this shall be deemed to constitute implicit acceptance.

([2]) (Of which the Commission is a member) decision of 4 June 2009 (OJ L 348/3 of 29.12.2009).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011089/13
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Misure sanitarie adottate da regioni italiane in contrasto con la direttiva sull'assistenza sanitaria transfrontaliera

La Regione Campania, mediante decreto n. 156 del 31 dicembre 2012, pubblicato sul Bollettino ufficiale regionale n. 19 dell'8 aprile 2013, ha subordinato la possibilità per i cittadini campani di accedere a determinate prestazioni sanitarie presso strutture o professionisti operanti in regioni confinanti con la Campania alla previa acquisizione di un'autorizzazione dell'azienda sanitaria locale di appartenenza.

Altre regioni italiane, tra cui la Regione Molise, per uscire dal deficit sanitario in cui versano, contemplano, tra le soluzioni ipotizzate dal tavolo tecnico governativo, di varare all'interno dei propri discutibili piani sanitari di rientro misure protezionistiche tese a contingentare il flusso di mobilità transfrontaliera regionale dei pazienti.

In Italia ben otto regioni sono al momento sottoposte a piani di rientro finalizzati a verificare la qualità delle prestazioni e a raggiungere il riequilibrio dei conti dei servizi sanitari regionali, e pertanto altre regioni potrebbero utilizzare azioni tese alla chiusura delle proprie «frontiere sanitarie regionali» come pseudo-soluzioni ai disavanzi esistenti.

Simili misure protezionistiche potrebbero creare pericolosissimi precedenti normativi, ai quali altre regioni o paesi europei potrebbero far riferimento in futuro, in contrasto con l'articolo 114 TFUE, il cui scopo è di migliorare il funzionamento del mercato interno e la libera circolazione di merci, persone e servizi.

Non ritiene la Commissione doveroso monitorare se tale fenomeno sia conforme con la libertà di scelta e di spostamento dei pazienti, conformemente alle normative comunitaria in tema di tutela della salute?

Non ritiene la Commissione doveroso impedire che la crisi economica possa determinare scelte protezionistiche di tale tipo da parte di amministrazioni pubbliche?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(3 gennaio 2014)

La Commissione rinvia l'Onorevole deputato alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-007562/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011089/13
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Healthcare measures adopted by Italian regional authorities in violation of the directive on cross-border healthcare

Under Decree No 156 of 31 December 2012, published in the Official Journal of the Region of Campania No 19 of 8 April 2013, the people of Campania must obtain permission from their local health unit before accessing certain health services provided in facilities or by practitioners located in neighbouring regions.

To find a way out of the health budget deficit in which they find themselves, other Italian regional authorities, including that of Molise, are considering, from the solutions put forward by the governmental technical panel, introducing protectionist measures in their questionable financial recovery plans for healthcare, in order to impose a quota on the flow of patients across regional borders.

In Italy, as many as eight regions are currently subject to financial recovery plans intended to ascertain the quality of services and to rebalance regional health service budgets, and therefore other regions could use measures to close their 'regional healthcare borders' as a pseudo solution to existing imbalances.

Such protectionist measures could set very dangerous legal precedents to which other EU regions or countries could refer in the future in violation of Article 114 TFEU, which aims to improve the functioning of the internal market and the free movement of goods, persons and services.

Does the Commission not believe that it must monitor whether such a practice is in line with patients' freedom of choice and movement, in accordance with EU health protection legislation?

Does the Commission not believe that it must prevent the economic crisis from giving rise to protectionist choices of this kind by governments?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 January 2014)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007562/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011103/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Sanzioni verso i paesi che non tutelano le minoranze religiose

Dopo la crisi a Nairobi, col commando di fondamentalisti islamici che hanno preso d'assalto il centro commerciale Westgate di Nairobi, in Kenya, lo scorso 21 settembre, provocando 52 vittime, e l'attacco kamikaze in una chiesa storica di Peshawar, in Pakistan, lo scorso 22 settembre, che ha provocato oltre 100 feriti, si fa sempre più pressante la problematica della vulnerabilità delle minoranze cristiane ai vili attacchi terroristici a cui sono esposte anche per via della scarsa protezione di cui godono nei rispettivi paesi.

Chiedo quindi all'Alto Rappresentante:

1. se le istituzioni europee possono condannare con fermezza queste stragi di cui, ancora una volta, sono vittime persone di religione cristiana e altre minoranze religiose;

2. che l'UE prenda urgentemente dei provvedimenti nei confronti di quei paesi che non tutelano le minoranze religiose e si dimostrano deboli e tolleranti nei confronti delle organizzazioni criminali terroristiche.

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(18 dicembre 2013)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente rammenta le sue dichiarazioni del 22 ([1]) e del 23 settembre 2013 ([2]), nelle quali condannava fermamente entrambi gli attentati, nonché la lettera che i presidenti della Commissione e del Consiglio europeo hanno inviato al presidente kenyota il 23 settembre 2013 ([3]) per esprimere la solidarietà dell'Unione europea e ribadirne l'impegno costante.

Come ricordato nei recenti orientamenti dell'UE in materia di libertà di religione e di credo ([4]), gli Stati svolgono un ruolo di primo piano nel garantire tale libertà, ponendo in essere misure efficaci volte a prevenire o sanzionare le violazioni e a garantire la responsabilità. L'UE sostiene le iniziative avviate da tali paesi per contrastare la radicalizzazione e prevenire gli atti di terrorismo.

Il Consiglio Affari esteri del giugno 2013 ha ribadito l'impegno dell'UE a collaborare con il Pakistan per combattere il terrorismo, anche assicurando i colpevoli alla giustizia. L'Unione europea, partner di lunga data del Corno d'Africa nella lotta al terrorismo, collabora altresì con tutti i paesi della regione. Essa mantiene stretti rapporti con i partner internazionali per potenziare il sostegno e le azioni di follow-up contro la radicalizzazione e il finanziamento del terrorismo, sia in Kenya che nella regione.

Nell'ambito del programma a lungo termine dello strumento per la stabilità 2013 l'UE sta già sostenendo le iniziative del Pakistan (5 milioni di euro) e del Corno d'Africa (2 milioni di euro) contro l'estremismo violento, in collaborazione con autorità locali, comunità, università, ONG ([5]) e i media.

In un più ampio contesto, l'UE è membro del Forum internazionale per la lotta contro il terrorismo, che ha istituito un centro specifico per la lotta contro l'estremismo violento ad Abu Dhabi e un gruppo di lavoro ad hoc sulla questione. Il suo obiettivo principale consiste nel sensibilizzare al problema della radicalizzazione, intensificare la ricerca e promuovere il dialogo a tutti i livelli. L'UE coopera inoltre con le Nazioni Unite e, in particolare, con l'Alleanza delle civiltà, che si occupa del dialogo interreligioso.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130922_01_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138792.pdf
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-811_en.htm
([4]) Libertà di religione o di credo.
([5]) Organizzazioni non governative.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011103/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Sanctions for countries that do not protect religious minorities

After the crisis in Nairobi on 21 September 2013, in which a group of Islamic fundamentalists stormed the Westgate shopping centre in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 52, and the suicide attack on a historic church in Peshawar, Pakistan, on 22 September 2013, which left over 100 inured, the vulnerability of Christian minorities to the vile terrorist attacks to which they are exposed, including as a result of the little protection offered to them in those countries, is an increasingly pressing issue.

1. Can the European institutions firmly condemn these attacks which once again victimised Christians and members of other religious minorities?

2. Will the EU take urgent action against those countries that do not protect religious minorities and are powerless and tolerant of criminal terrorist organisations?

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

The HR/VP points to her statements of 22 ([1]) and 23 September 2013 ([2]), strongly condemning both attacks, as well as the letter sent by the President of the Commission and the President of the European Council to the Kenyan President on 23 September 2013 ([3]), expressing the EU's solidarity and continued commitment.

As recalled in the recent EU guidelines on FoRB ([4]), States have a primary role in ensuring FoRB. They must put in place effective measures to prevent or sanction violations of FoRB and ensure accountability. The EU support these countries' efforts to tackle radicalisation and to prevent acts of terrorism.

The June 2013 Foreign Affairs Council reiterated the EU's commitment to working with Pakistan to address terrorism, including bringing perpetrators to justice. A longstanding partner of the Horn of Africa in facing terrorism, the EU also cooperates with all countries of that region. The EU is liaising with international partners to increase support and follow-up action to combat radicalisation and financing of terrorism, both in Kenya and in the region.

Under the Instrument for Stability long-term programme in 2013, the EU is already supporting efforts in Pakistan (EUR 5 million) and Horn of Africa (EUR 2 million) to counter violent extremism, working with local authorities, communities, universities, NGOs ([5]) and media.

On a broader scale, the EU partners with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, which has a specific centre on countering violent extremism in Abu Dhabi and a dedicated working group on this issue. Its key focus is to promote awareness on radicalisation, increase research and promote dialogue at all levels. The EU also cooperates with the UN, and notably the Alliance of Civilisations, that addresses inter-religious dialogue.

([1]) http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130922_01_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/138792.pdf
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-811_en.htm
([4]) Freedom of Religion or Belief.
([5]) Non-governmental organisations.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011104/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Utilizzo indebito dei dati del sistema Swift e violazione delle libertà fondamentali dei cittadini europei

La stampa internazionale ha dato notizia dell'apertura, da parte delle autorità competenti di Bruxelles, di un'inchiesta volta a verificare la natura di alcune intrusioni illegali nel sistema della Belgacom, il più grande gestore di telecomunicazioni telefoniche e via Internet attivo nella capitale d'Europa. Dai primi resoconti sembrerebbe che si sia trattato di un'attività di spionaggio in cui sarebbe stata coinvolta anche la *National security agency* (NSA) statunitense. Se la ricostruzione fosse confermata dagli inquirenti, ci troveremmo di fronte all'ennesimo caso di violazione della sovranità europea nonché delle libertà fondamentali dei suoi cittadini e delle sue imprese. Inoltre, sono emerse serie preoccupazioni in merito al possibile utilizzo indebito da parte degli Stati Uniti d'America dei dati di carattere finanziario trasferiti dal sistema Swift in seguito all'accordo UE-USA. Dopo il caso *Echelon* e il più recente scandalo relativo al sistema PRISM, la vicenda Belgacom dovrebbe dimostrare l'esistenza di un grave pericolo per la riservatezza delle comunicazioni telematiche e telefoniche in Europa. Tutte le vicende ricordate, compreso l'allarme relativo all'utilizzo del sistema Swift, hanno come copertura legale la lotta al terrorismo internazionale.

Premesso ciò, si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se intende rivedere gli accordi UE-USA sul trasferimento dei dati finanziari del sistema Swift;

2. quali provvedimenti ha intenzione di attuare per garantire una maggiore tutela della riservatezza delle telecomunicazioni in Europa;

3. se ritiene opportuno proporre la costituzione di una commissione d'inchiesta speciale per fare piena luce sul caso PRISM e le vicende affini.

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(7 gennaio 2014)

Per quanto riguarda l'accordo sul trattamento e il trasferimento di dati finanziari nell'ambito della lotta al terrorismo (TFTP) tra Unione europea e Stati Uniti, la Commissione ha svolto consultazioni in virtù dell'articolo 19 dell'accordo per valutare se la sua attuazione risultasse compromessa; poiché da tali consultazioni non sono emersi elementi che indicassero una violazione dell'accordo da parte degli Stati Uniti, la Commissione non intende proporre la sospensione dell'accordo.

Sulla questione della protezione dei dati personali, in particolare nel contesto del trasferimento di tali dati tramite telecomunicazioni, la Commissione si rallegra della votazione nella commissione LIBE sul pacchetto di riforma in materia di protezione dei dati, considerandolo un importante segnale di progresso nella procedura legislativa, ed è determinata a far sì che tale riforma sia rapidamente adottata prima della fine della legislatura.

La Commissione rinvia inoltre l'onorevole parlamentare alla sua precedente risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-009773/13.

In seguito all'adozione della riforma sulla protezione dei dati, la Commissione valuterà se occorra ancora rafforzare le disposizioni specifiche riguardo alla riservatezza delle comunicazioni, quali attualmente previste dalla direttiva 2002/58/CE relativa alla tutela della vita privata nel settore delle comunicazioni elettroniche. La Commissione ha altresì proposto una direttiva recante misure volte a garantire un livello comune elevato di sicurezza delle reti e dell'informazione nell'Unione ([1]), che è attualmente oggetto di prima lettura in seno al Parlamento europeo e al Consiglio.

([1]) COM(2013)48 def., 2013/0027 (COD), 7.2.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011104/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Misuse of Swift system data and violation of the fundamental freedoms of European citizens

According to international press reports, the competent authorities in Brussels have launched an investigation to determine the nature of a number of illegal intrusions into the system of Belgacom, the largest telephone and Internet telecommunications operator in the capital of Europe. Initial findings seem to suggest it is espionage involving the US National Security Agency (NSA). If the reconstruction were to be confirmed by the investigators, we would be facing yet another case of EU sovereignty being violated, not to mention the fundamental freedoms of its citizens and businesses. In addition, a number of concerns have been raised over the possible misuse by the US of financial data transferred from the Swift system under the EU-US agreement. After the Echelon case and the latest scandal over the PRISM system, the Belgacom affair is set to prove that the confidentiality of online and telephone communications in Europe is seriously at risk. All the events referred to, including the alert over the use of the Swift system, are covered by international anti-terrorist legislation.

1. Does the Commission intend to review EU-US agreements on the transfer of financial data from the Swift system?

2. What steps will it take to ensure greater protection of the confidentiality of telecommunications in Europe?

3. Does it think it should propose setting up a special investigation committee to get to the bottom of the PRISM case and similar incidents?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(7 January 2014)

With regard to the EU-US TFTP Agreement, the Commission conducted consultations under Article 19 of the Agreement in order to assess whether the implementation of the Agreement might have been affected. These consultations have not revealed any elements indicating a breach of the Agreement by the US side. The Commission is therefore not going to propose suspending this Agreement.

On the issue of protection of personal data, including when transferred through telecommunications, the Commission welcomes the vote in the LIBE Committee on the data protection reform package. The Commission considers that the vote is an important signal of progress in the legislative procedure and is committed to ensuring a swift adoption of the data protection reform before the end of this parliamentary term.

The Commission further refers the Honourable Member to its previous reply to Written Question E-009773/13.

Following the adoption of the Data Protection Reform, the Commission will consider whether there remains a need to strengthen the specific provisions regarding confidentiality of communications as currently set out in Directive 2002/58/EC on privacy and electronic communications. To enhance the security of network and information systems across Europe, the Commission has proposed a directive concerning measures to ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union ([1]). The proposal is undergoing first reading before Parliament and Council.

([1]) COM(2013) 48 final, 2013/0027 (COD), 7.2.2013.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-011111/13
Komisi
Jan Březina (PPE)
(30. září 2013)

Předmět: Prohlášení pana Tajaniho ohledně politiky EU v oblasti změny klimatu

Komisař pro průmysl Antonio Tajani ve svém nedávném projevu řekl, že „potřebujeme novou energetickou politiku. Musíme přestat předstírat, protože nemůžeme obětovat evropský průmysl cílům v oblasti boje proti změně klimatu, které nejsou realistické a nejsou uplatňovány po celém světě."

1. Jak hodlá pan Tajani tato slova uplatnit v praxi? Jaká konkrétní opatření přijme na pomoc evropskému průmyslu?

2. Je pan Tajani připraven bojovat proti snahám o stanovení nových cílů pro boj proti změně klimatu na rok 2030?

3. Jaké má pan Tajani v Komisi pro své prohlášení spojence? Sdílí jeho názor většina členů Komise, nebo se jedná spíše o prohlášení jednotlivce bez širší podpory v daném orgánu?

Odpověď Antonia Tajaniho jménem Komise
(17. prosince 2013)

Zvyšování konkurenceschopnosti evropského průmyslu je požadavkem nezbytným pro vyřešení mnohých společenských otázek, mezi něž patří úspěšný boj proti změně klimatu.

Strategie Komise „Evropa 2020" zejména zmiňuje – jako dvě vzájemně se posilující priority – udržitelný růst založený na účinném využívání zdrojů a nízkouhlíkové a konkurenceschopné hospodářství. Mezi konkurenceschopností, snižováním emisí uhlíku a účinným využíváním zdrojů není totiž žádný vnitřní rozpor. Nákladově efektivní zvyšování energetické účinnosti může být například tzv. opatřením „no regret" v balíčku opatření, která jsou nutná k tomu, abychom pokročili na cestě ke konkurenceschopnému nízkouhlíkovému hospodářství. Adekvátní politiky v oblasti klimatu a energetiky mohou přispět k zatraktivnění investic a mohou podnítit vznik pracovních míst i růst v odvětví nízkouhlíkových a energetických technologií.

V loňském sdělení o průmyslové politice Komise vyjmenovala šest prioritních aktivit na trzích, které by mohly významně přispět ke splnění cílů v oblasti klimatu a energetiky.

Zelená kniha Komise z března 2013 o rámci politiky v oblasti klimatu a energetiky do roku 2030 nastínila řadu klíčových otázek, mezi jinými také to, jak politiky v oblasti klimatu a energetiky definovat tak, aby podpořily konkurenceschopnost hospodářství EU. Nadcházející rámec do roku 2030 se také bude zabývat konkurenceschopností a zejména tím, jak může EU podpořit vlastní konkurenceschopnost v rámci politik v oblasti klimatu a energetiky a s přihlédnutím k mezinárodní účasti v boji proti změně klimatu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011111/13
to the Commission
Jan Březina (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Antonio Tajani's statement on the EU climate change policy

In a speech recently given by the Commissioner for Industry, Antonio Tajani, it was stated that 'we need a new energy policy. We have to stop pretending, because we can't sacrifice Europe's industry for climate goals that are not realistic, and are not being enforced worldwide.'

1. How is Antonio Tajani going to put these words in practice? What concrete steps will he take to help European industry?

2. Is Antonio Tajani ready to fight against the efforts to set new climate change goals for 2030?

3. Who supports Antonio Tajani's statement in the Commission? Is his approach shared by the majority of Commission members or does it represent an isolated activity without the broader support of that Institution?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2013)

Improving Europe's industrial competitiveness is an important requirement for the solution of many societal challenges, including successfully tackling climate change.

The Commission's 'Europe 2020' strategy has in particular put forward, as mutually reinforcing priorities, sustainable growth based on resource efficiency and a low carbon and competitive economy. Indeed, there is no intrinsic contradiction between competitiveness, decarbonisation and resource efficiency. For instance, cost-efficient improvements of energy efficiency can be 'no regret' measures in the package of measures necessary to make progress on our path towards a competitive low carbon economy. Adequate climate and energy policies can help to incentivise investment and can create jobs and growth in low-carbon and energy technologies.

In last year's industrial policy Communication the Commission identified six priority action lines on markets which could make substantial contributions to climate and energy objectives.

The Commission's Green Paper on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies of March 2013 outlined a number of key issues, including how climate and energy policies can be defined to foster the competitiveness of the EU economy. The upcoming 2030 framework will also include competitiveness considerations, notably how the EU can foster its competitiveness as part of its climate and energy policy framework, and taking into account international participation in the fight against climate change.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011113/13
à la Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(30 septembre 2013)

Objet: Moyens d'action dont dispose la Commission à l'égard d'Israël

En réponse à ma question P-002683/2013, la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante déclarait: «L'UE n'encourage pas le recours aux sanctions commerciales dans ses relations bilatérales avec Israël. (…) Il convient de n'envisager d'adopter des sanctions commerciales que si tout autre instrument fait défaut, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans le cadre des relations bilatérales de l'UE avec Israël».

Pouvez-vous décrire chacun des moyens d'action autres que des sanctions commerciales dont l'Union dispose et dont elle a fait usage au cours des vingt dernières années pour amener Israël à modifier sa politique en vue de la mettre en accord avec le droit international suite aux nombreuses demandes formelles, écrites ou orales, que lui a faites l'UE, et décrire les effets concrets que l'utilisation de ces moyens d'action a eus sur la politique d'Israël?

Pouvez-vous expliquer pourquoi, malgré l'utilisation par l'UE de chacun de ces instruments, Israël n'a en rien modifié sa politique en matière de Droits de l'homme, de droit international humanitaire, et ne s'est pas conformé aux demandes de l'UE quant aux fait suivants: la poursuite de la construction de colonies; la poursuite de la construction du mur de séparation dans le territoire palestinien occupé ainsi que le refus d'indemniser les Palestiniens pour les dommages résultant de la construction du mur; la poursuite du blocus de Gaza et des restrictions imposées aux pêcheurs palestiniens; la poursuite de la démolition d'habitations palestiniennes et de la politique consistant à ne pas délivrer suffisamment de permis de bâtir aux Palestiniens, la destruction des citernes et puits palestiniens, l'accaparement des ressources aquifères de Cisjordanie au bénéfice de quelque 350 000 colons, l'expulsion de Palestiniens résidant légalement à Jérusalem-Est; la poursuite de la détention administrative d'un grand nombre de prisonniers palestiniens, parmi lesquels des mineurs d'âge, sans possibilité de contrôle judiciaire.

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(17 décembre 2013)

L'UE a déclaré, de manière ferme et constante, que les colonies sont illégales au regard du droit international, constituent un obstacle à la paix et risquent de ne pas permettre d'aboutir à une solution fondée sur la coexistence de deux États. Cette ligne politique, qui fait l'unanimité parmi les États membres, est servie de façon optimale par un engagement constant auprès des autorités israéliennes à tous les niveaux, qui permet de répercuter systématiquement les inquiétudes de l'UE face à la question des colonies et au respect des Droits de l'homme, tant en Israël que dans les territoires occupés. Ces discussions se tiennent, au niveau politique, au sein du conseil d'association UE-Israël et, au niveau des groupes de travail, au sein du sous-comité «Dialogue et coopération politiques» et du groupe de travail informel sur les Droits de l'homme. Ce dialogue politique à tous les niveaux ainsi que les démarches diplomatiques et les décisions et déclarations officielles de l'UE ont suscité un vif intérêt en Israël, débouchant sur des débats politiques importants, comme ce fut le cas dernièrement au sujet des lignes directrices de l'UE visant à empêcher les entités établies dans les colonies et les activités qu'elles y déploient de bénéficier des programmes de l'UE. La réponse à la question écrite E-007961/2013 ([1]) précédemment posée expose en détail les résultats tangibles obtenus grâce à ces instruments de politique étrangère, qu'il conviendrait de continuer à utiliser à l'avenir. L'UE a clairement fait savoir à Israël qu'un approfondissement des relations bilatérales sera fondé sur des valeurs communes et s'inscrira dans le contexte de la résolution du conflit israélo-palestinien par la mise en œuvre de la solution fondée sur la coexistence de deux États.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011113/13
to the Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Remedies at the Commission's disposal with regard to Israel

In response to my Question P-002683/2013, the VP/HR stated, 'The EU does not promote the use of trade sanctions in the context of bilateral EU-Israel relations. (…) trade bans could only be considered when there is no other instrument at reach, which is not the case on bilateral EU-Israeli relations.'

Can you please describe each of the remedies, aside from trade sanctions, which the European Union has at its disposal and has made use of over the last twenty years to make Israel alter its policies with regard to complying with international law following the numerous formal requests, written and oral, made to it by the EU, and describe the concrete effects that the use of these remedies has had on Israel's policies?

Can you explain why, despite the EU's use of each of these instruments, Israel has not altered its policies in any respect as regards human rights and humanitarian international law, and why it does not comply with any EU requests on the following matters: the pursuit of the construction of settlements; the pursuit of the construction of the separation wall in occupied Palestinian territory as well as the refusal to compensate Palestinians for the damage resulting from the wall's construction; the pursuit of the Gaza blockade and the restrictions imposed on Palestinian fishermen; the pursuit of the demolition of Palestinian homes and the policy of not issuing sufficient building permits to the Palestinians, destroying Palestinian tanks and wells, monopolising water resources in the West Bank in aid of some 350 000 settlers and expelling Palestinians legally residing in East Jerusalem; the pursuit of the administrative detention of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including minors, with no possibility of judicial supervision.

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

The EU has consistently and firmly stated its position that settlements are illegal under international law, constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible. This policy, unanimously agreed by Member States, is best served by a constant engagement at all levels with Israeli authorities, enabling to systematically convey EU concerns on the settlement issue and on the respect for human rights both within Israel and in the occupied territories. These discussions take place at political level, within the EU-Israel Association Council and, at working level, within the Sub-Committee on Political Dialogue and Cooperation and the Informal Working Group on Human Rights. This political dialogue at all levels, together with diplomatic demarches, EU public statements and decisions, have generated considerable attention in Israel where they provoked important political debates, as recently illustrated by the EU Guidelines to prevent Settlement-based entities and activities to benefit from EU programmes. The answer to previous Written Question E-007961/2013 ([1]) details concrete results brought by such foreign policy instruments which should be used continuously in the future. The EU has clearly indicated to Israel that an upgrade in bilateral relations will be based on shared values and seen in the context of the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict through the implementation of the two-State solution.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011115/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(30 settembre 2013)

Oggetto: Abilitazione dei docenti di scuola media inferiore e superiore

Il decreto legislativo 206/07 emanato in Italia per recepire la direttiva 2005/36/CE prevede che un laureato abilitato all'insegnamento in Europa possa essere reclutato per l'insegnamento. Tuttavia, i decreti ministeriali attuativi prevedono una discriminazione fra coloro che hanno frequentato la Scuola di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario (SSIS) e coloro che hanno conseguito l'abilitazione in altri Stati europei. La Commissione ha già avviato una procedura di infrazione il 29/10/2010 (procedura n. 4038 del 2010).

Nel 2009, il Ministero per l'istruzione, l'università e la ricerca ha deciso di sospendere le SSIS e con il decreto ministeriale 249/10 le ha sostituite con il Tirocinio formativo attivo (TFA).

Il decreto ministeriale 572/2013 prende atto delle richieste della Commissione ma ignora completamente quest'ultima categoria di abilitati, lasciando gli organi preposti sprovvisti di strumenti giuridici per inserire tali risorse, formate e abilitate, nelle graduatorie ad esaurimento (unica alternativa al concorso).

Ritiene la Commissione che la mancata previsione di uno sbocco professionale per gli abilitati TFA, discriminati rispetto agli abilitati SSIS e agli abilitati in altri Stati membri dell'UE, sia conforme a quanto richiesto in chiusura della citata procedura di infrazione?

Risposta di Laszlo Andor a nome della Commissione
(7 gennaio 2014)

Il fatto di prevedere uno sbocco professionale in Italia per gli insegnanti che hanno seguito un tirocinio formativo attivo (TFA) non rientra nelle competenze della Commissione. Essa rinvia l'Onorevole deputata alla propria risposta all'interrogazione E-10278/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011115/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Qualifying as secondary school teachers

Legislative Decree No 206/07, issued in Italy to transpose Directive 2005/36/EC, specifies that a graduate who qualified to teach in Europe may be recruited as a teacher in Italy. However, the implementing ministerial decrees discriminate between those who attended a teacher-training college for secondary education (Scuola di specializzazione per l'insegnamento secondario (SSIS)) and those who gained their qualification in other European countries. The Commission has already launched an infringement procedure (No 4038 of 29 October 2010).

In 2009, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research decided to close SSISs and replaced them with Active Teaching Traineeships (Tirocinio Formativo Attivo (TFA)) under Ministerial Decree No 249/10.

Ministerial Decree No 572/2013 takes into account the Commission's requests, but completely ignores this latter category of qualified teachers, leaving the responsible bodies with no legal instruments to include these trained and qualified resources on teacher reserve lists (the only alternative to a competition).

Does the Commission believe that failure to provide a career route for TFA-qualified teachers, which is discriminatory with respect to teachers who qualified at SSISs and in other EU Member States, is in accordance with what was called for at the conclusion of the infringement procedure?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(7 January 2014)

The issue of providing a career route in Italy for teachers who have undergone a *tirocinio formativo attivo* (TFA or active teaching traineeship) does not fall within the competence of the Commission. It would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Question E-10278/2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011121/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Τα μέτρα οικονομικής λιτότητας υποβοηθούν την άνοδο ακροδεξιών φασιστικών οργανώσεων στην Ευρώπη

Η άνοδος ακραίων σωβινιστικών κινημάτων στην Ευρώπη δεν είναι καινούργιο φαινόμενο. Ωστόσο η συνολική μεγάλη αύξηση των ποσοστών τους είναι συνυφασμένη με την οικονομική ύφεση και τα σκληρά μνημονιακά μέτρα.

Ο φόβος και η απελπισία σπρώχνει τους Ευρωπαίους πολίτες προς ακραίες ακροδεξιές/νεοναζιστικές λύσεις, ενώ τα περιστατικά ακροδεξιάς βίας αυξάνονται συνεχώς. Τελευταίο παράδειγμα η δολοφονία του αριστερού ακτιβιστή Παύλου Φύσσα που έγινε στην Αθήνα στις 18.9.2013. Ο δράστης της δολοφονίας φέρεται να ανήκει στην ακροδεξιά οργάνωση Χρυσή Αυγή.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

Πώς το απασχολεί η άνοδος της ακροδεξιάς στην ΕΕ την ίδια στιγμή που έρευνες ([1]) και δημοσκοπήσεις δείχνουν πως τα σκληρά μέτρα λιτότητας που προωθούνται από την τρόικα οδηγούν τους πολίτες στην απαξίωση του ευρωπαϊκού οικοδομήματος καθώς και στην συσπείρωση των ακροδεξιών και εθνικιστικών τάσεων απ' άκρη σ' άκρη στην Ευρώπη;

Απάντηση
(23 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Το Συμβούλιο δεν έχει συζητήσει τα συγκεκριμένα θέματα που θίγει ο αξιότιμος κ. βουλευτής.

Γενικότερα, η ΕΕ και αρκετά κράτη μέλη έχουν λάβει τα τελευταία χρόνια μέτρα άνευ προηγουμένου για να αντιμετωπίσουν τις επιπτώσεις της οικονομικής κρίσης και να προλειάνουν το έδαφος για την επάνοδο στη βιώσιμη ανάπτυξη που θα δημιουργήσει θέσεις απασχόλησης. Το 2010, επιτεύχθηκε συμφωνία σχετικά με πρόγραμμα προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, προκειμένου να αντιμετωπισθούν οι προκλήσεις της κρίσης, λαμβανομένων υπόψη των επίμονων μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών και της επιδεινούμενης κατάστασης της ανταγωνιστικότητας της ελληνικής οικονομίας. Το πρόγραμμα αποτέλεσε αντικείμενο διαπραγματεύσεων μεταξύ της Επιτροπής, της ΕΚΤ και του ΔΝΤ αφενός και της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης αφετέρου. Η ιδιοποίηση του προγράμματος είναι ελληνική και η εφαρμογή του ευθύνη των ελληνικών αρχών. Σημειωτέον ότι η πολιτική για την απασχόληση και η κοινωνική πολιτική εμπίπτουν σε μεγάλο βαθμό στην εθνική αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών.

Όλα τα συμμετέχοντα όργανα έχουν αναγνωρίσει ότι το πρόγραμμα απαιτεί μεγάλες θυσίες από τον ελληνικό λαό και, δεδομένης της σοβαρής κατάστασης στην οποία βρίσκεται η χώρα, οι θυσίες αυτές είναι απαραίτητες για την οικονομική ανάκαμψη και θα συμβάλουν στη μελλοντική σταθερότητα και ευημερία της χώρας.

([1]) Standard Eurobarometer 79, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011121/13
to the Council
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(30 September 2013)

Subject: Economic austerity measures are fostering the rise of far-right fascist organisations in Europe

The rise of extreme chauvinistic movements in Europe is not a new problem. However, the overall jump in their ratings has been triggered by the recession and the harsh measures imposed under the memoranda.

Fear and desperation are pushing European citizens into the arms of extreme far-right/neo-Nazi parties and the number of incidents of violence by far-right groups is increasing constantly. The most recent example was the murder of the left-wing activist Pavlos Fyssas in Athens on 18 September 2013. He appears to have been murdered by a member of the far-right organisation Golden Dawn.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

How does it view the rise of the far right in the EU, given that surveys ([1]) and opinion polls report that the harsh austerity measures being imposed by the Troika are pushing citizens to turn their back on the European project and uniting far-right and nationalistic movements from one end of Europe to the other?

Reply
(23 December 2013)

The Council has not discussed the specific issues raised by the Honourable Member.

More generally the EU and many Member States have taken unprecedented steps over recent years to tackle the effects of the financial crisis with the aim of paving the way for a return to sustainable, job-creating growth. An agreement on the adjustment programme for Greece was reached in 2010 in order to address the challenges revealed by the crisis and considering the persistent macroeconomic imbalances and deteriorating competitiveness of the Greek economy. The programme was negotiated by the Commission, the ECB and the IMF with the Greek Government. The ownership of the programme is Greek and its implementation is the responsibility of the Greek authorities. It should be noted that employment and social policies fall very largely under the national competence of the Member States.

All the institutions involved have recognised that the programme demands great sacrifices from the Greek people and, given the serious situation facing their country, these sacrifices are indispensable for economic recovery and will contribute to the future stability and welfare of the country.

([1]) Standard Eurobarometer 79, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_first_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011207/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Nulidad del Plan Territorial Parcial de la Plataforma Logística del Sur de Tenerife

El Tribunal Supremo de España emitió el pasado 25 de septiembre una sentencia mediante la cual anula el Plan Territorial Parcial de la Plataforma Logística del Sur de Tenerife, plan que incluye el desarrollo del polémico Puerto de Granadilla.

El Gobierno de España y el Gobierno Autonómico de las Islas Canarias han impulsado la construcción de este puerto y sus infraestructuras anejas, pese al importantísimo impacto ambiental que conllevan, argumentando que era una infraestructura de especial interés. Sin embargo la Asociación Tinerfeña de Amigos de la Naturaleza (ATAN) interpuso una demanda contra el acuerdo de la Comisión de Ordenación del Territorio y Medio Ambiente de Canarias, del 12 de mayo de 2008, al considerar que dicho Plan Territorial Parcial era contrario a derecho.

La sentencia emitida por el Tribunal Supremo confirma que las autoridades canarias han estado operando en la construcción del puerto de Granadilla en completa ilegalidad. A partir de ahora, se tendrá que solicitar la nulidad de todas las actuaciones derivadas del Plan Territorial Parcial y detener el desarrollo del puerto y de todas las infraestructuras adjuntas.

Sin embargo, el inicio de las operaciones de construcción ya ha provocado en la zona importantes daños ambientales, que posiblemente sean de carácter irreversible, sin que ninguna administración haya asumido responsabilidad alguna. En su respuesta a mi pasada pregunta E-007041/2013 la Comisión afirmaba haber revisado el expediente y haber emitido observaciones en diferentes ámbitos, pero no parecía haber contemplado este recurso que ha supuesto la nulidad e ilegalidad del proyecto.

¿Conoce la Comisión la citada sentencia del Tribunal Supremo de España?

¿No considera la Comisión que el Gobierno de España debe detener inmediatamente las obras del Puerto de Granadilla ante la citada sentencia?

¿Piensa la Comisión instar a las autoridades españolas a que detengan dichos trabajos?

¿Se ha financiado con fondos europeos alguna parte de este proyecto ilegal?

Respuesta del Sr. Hahn en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha examinado la sentencia pronunciada por el Tribunal Supremo de España el 25 de septiembre de 2013, que anula el Plan Territorial Parcial de la Plataforma Logística del Sur de Tenerife.

De acuerdo con el principio de gestión compartida, corresponde al Estado miembro de que se trate asegurar el respeto de la legislación tanto de la UE como nacional y declarar exclusivamente como legales y regulares con respecto a los proyectos los gastos contraídos y pagados.

La Comisión considera que no es competencia suya interpretar la sentencia pronunciada por el Tribunal Supremo ni extraer conclusiones. Corresponde a las autoridades nacionales evaluar si deben pararse las obras del puerto de Granadilla e informar de ello a la Comisión.

Mientras tanto, la Comisión confirma que hasta la fecha no se han abonado fondos de la UE para el proyecto principal del Puerto de Granadilla.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011207/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Annulment of the Specific Local Development Plan for the South Tenerife Logistics Platform

On 25 September 2013 the Spanish Supreme Court handed down a judgment annulling the Specific Local Development Plan for the South Tenerife Logistics Platform, which included an expansion of the controversial port of Granadilla.

The Spanish Government and the Autonomous Government of the Canary Islands have consistently backed the construction of the port and its ancillary infrastructure, arguing that, despite its major environmental impact, the project had special interest status. On 12 May 2008, however, ATAN (the Tenerife Friends of Nature Association) challenged the decision by the Regional Planning and Environment Committee of the Canary Islands to authorise the project, claiming that the aforementioned Specific Local Development Plan was unlawful.

The judgment issued by the Supreme Court confirms that the building work being carried out on the port of Granadilla, as approved by the Canary Island authorities, is completely unlawful. From now on, all measures taken under the Specific Local Development Plan must be regarded as null and void and work on the expansion of the port and its ancillary infrastructure will have to be halted.

The initial construction work has already had a serious environmental impact which may be irreversible, however. No public authority has taken responsibility for this damage. In its answer to my previous Question E-007041/2013 the Commission stated that it had looked into the matter and commented on various issues, but it did not seem to have taken account of the appeal which led to the project being declared unlawful and annulled.

Is the Commission familiar with the judgment handed down by the Spanish Supreme Court?

Does the Commission not believe that, in the light of that judgment, the Spanish Government must halt work on the port of Granadilla immediately?

Does the Commission plan to put pressure on the Spanish authorities to halt the construction work?

Has any part of this illegal project received European funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2013)

The Commission has examined the judgment issued by the Spanish Supreme Court on 25 September 2013, which declares the annulment of the Plan for the South Tenerife Logistics Platform.

In line with the shared management principle, it is the responsibility of the Member State to ensure the respect of EU and national law and to declare only legal and regular expenditure incurred and paid with respect to projects.

The Commission considers that it is not for the Commission to interpret the judgment of the Supreme Court and draw conclusions. It is up to the national authorities to assess whether the works on the port of Granadilla should stop and inform the Commission accordingly.

In the meantime, the Commission confirms that to date no EU funds have been disbursed to the major project Port of Granadilla.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011216/13
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(2 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Gebrek aan handhaving EU-regels betreffende welzijn van varkens

Uit recente onderzoeken van de ngo „Compassion in World Farming" (CiWF) blijkt dat vrijwel geen enkele van de 45 onderzochte varkensboerderijen in Italië, Spanje, Polen, Tsjechië, Ierland en Cyprus voldoet aan de geldende dierenwelzijnsregels uit Richtlijn 2008/120/EG van de Raad. Uit eerder onderzoek van CiWF blijkt dat ook in 74 boerderijen in Duitsland, Denemarken, Hongarije, Spanje, het Verenigd Koninkrijk en Nederland regels uit dezelfde richtlijn worden overtreden. Varkens hebben hierdoor zwaar te lijden onder ruimtegebrek, vieze stallen, gebrek aan stalverrijking en de daaruit voortvloeiende ziektes en verwondingen.

1. Is de Commissie bereid om kennis te nemen van de zes recente onderzoeken van CiWF in Italië, Spanje, Polen, Tsjechië, Ierland en Cyprus?

2. Vindt de Commissie dat de situatie in de bezochte stallen in lijn is met Richtlijn 2008/120/EG?

3. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de implementatie van Richtlijn 2008/120/EG in de bezochte landen?

4. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie het feit dat EU-regels, die hun oorsprong vinden in 2003, tien jaar later nog steeds niet fatsoenlijk zijn geïmplementeerd?

5. Zijn er al inbreukprocedures gestart tegen lidstaten naar aanleiding van gebrek aan handhaving van Richtlijn 2008/120/EG? Zo nee, waarom niet? Zo ja, welke concrete stappen nemen lidstaten waartegen een procedure is gestart, momenteel om het welzijn van varkens zo snel mogelijk te garanderen?

6. Geven de bijgevoegde onderzoeken de Commissie aanleiding om verdere acties te ondernemen en daarmee te bewerkstelligen dat bestaande regelgeving wordt nageleefd? Zo ja, welke nieuwe acties zal de Commissie nu ondernemen?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(26 november 2013)

Wanneer gevallen van niet-naleving worden geconstateerd, zijn de lidstaten zelf in de eerste plaats verantwoordelijk voor de handhaving van het recht van de Unie binnen hun rechtsgebied. Hoewel de Commissie de handhaving van de bestaande wetgeving inzake dierenwelzijn van groot belang acht, kan zij alleen optreden wanneer duidelijk is dat een lidstaat stelselmatig nalaat die wetgeving te handhaven.

Eerder dit jaar zijn inbreukprocedures in verband met de groepshuisvesting van zeugen ingeleid. Wat de verstrekking van los materiaal en het vermijden van het couperen van staarten betreft, is voor een andere aanpak gekozen. De Commissie weet dat de situatie in sommige lidstaten onbevredigend is, maar de lidstaten moet actief bijstand worden geboden bij de toepassing van deze voorschriften door middel van capaciteitsopbouw.

Om die reden heeft de Commissie toegezegd om in nauwe samenwerking met de lidstaten richtsnoeren inzake afleidingsmateriaal voor varkens en staartbijten te ontwikkelen. Daarnaast biedt de Commissie nationale ambtenaren opleidingsprogramma's ([1]) aan om een gemeenschappelijk begrip van de wettelijke voorschriften te ontwikkelen. De meest recente opleiding over het welzijn van varkens vond plaats van 12 tot 15 november 2013. De Commissie zal dit beleid voortzetten en alleen in laatste instantie inbreukprocedures tegen de lidstaten inleiden.

([1]) Better Training for Safer Food; http://www.sancotraining.izs.it/joomla/index.php/training-activities-2013-2014/training-calendar.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011216/13
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(2 October 2013)

Subject: Failure to enforce EU pig welfare rules

Recent investigations carried out by the NGO Compassion in World Farming (CiWF) have highlighted that virtually not a single one of the 45 pig farms investigated in Italy, Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Cyprus complies with the current animal welfare rules stipulated by Council Directive 2008/120/EC. A previous CiWF investigation highlighted that rules stipulated by the same directive have also been breached by 74 farms in Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Spain, the UK and the Netherlands. This causes pigs to suffer from a lack of space, filthy stalls, a lack of stall enrichment and the illnesses and injuries resulting from this.

1. Is the Commission prepared to examine the six recent investigations carried out by CiWF in Italy, Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Cyprus?

2. Does the Commission think that the situation in the stalls visited complies with Directive 2008/120/EC?

3. How does the Commission view the implementation of Directive 2008/120/EC in the countries visited?

4. How does the Commission view the fact that EU rules which came about in 2003 are still not being implemented properly 10 years on?

5. Have infringement proceedings already been initiated against Member States due to their failure to enforce Directive 2008/120/EC? If not, why not? If so, what practical steps are Member States which have had proceedings initiated against them currently taking to guarantee the welfare of pigs as soon as possible?

6. Do the enclosed investigations provide the Commission with the opportunity to take further action to ensure compliance with existing regulations? If so, what new action will the Commission now take?

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

Member States' have the primary responsibility to enforce Union law within their jurisdiction when instances of non-compliance are discovered. Although enforcement of existing animal welfare legislation is important for the Commission, the latter can only intervene when it is clear that a Member State systematically fails to enforce such legislation.

Infringement proceedings were launched earlier this year as regards group housing of sows. A different approach has been chosen regarding the provision of manipulable material and avoidance of tail-docking. While the Commission is aware that in some Member States the situation is unsatisfactory, it is necessary to actively assist Member States in the application of these requirements through capacity building.

It is for this reason that the Commission has undertaken to develop guidelines on enrichment material for pigs and tail-biting in close collaboration with the Member States. Additionally, the Commission provides national officials with training programmes ([1]) to build a common understanding of the legislative requirements. The most recent training on welfare of pigs took place on 12-15 November 2013. The Commission will continue to proceed along these lines and will only use infringement proceedings as a last resort against Member States.

([1]) Better Training for Safer Food; http://www.sancotraining.izs.it/joomla/index.php/training-activities-2013-2014/training-calendar

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011242/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Independencia y objetividad de la autoridad competente

La resolución elaborada por el Secretario de Estado de Energía, Alberto Nadal, la cual se publicó en mayo de 2013 en el BOE, introduce «la posibilidad de que un tercero pueda subrogarse en las obligaciones y derechos del titular del almacenamiento en lo que se refiere a la adquisición de gas colchón». Este cambio jurídico permitirá que un tercero pueda adquirir para la empresa ACS dicho gas que, hasta ahora, sólo podía comprar la empresa Escal.

El proyecto Castor, el cual está terminado hace tiempo, pese a que no se había puesto en marcha hasta hace poco, se ha hecho en un contexto de sobrecapacidad en el sistema gasista, como consecuencia de la crisis y la burbuja de instalaciones. Se concibió para suministrar hasta un tercio de la demanda diaria del sistema durante 50 días. ([1])

Está la Comisión convencida de que se ha garantizado la independencia y objetividad de la autoridad competente con respecto a este cambio repentino de la ley?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2013)

A la luz de la información facilitada por Su Señoría, la pregunta planteada no parece guardar relación con la legislación europea y deberían responderla los organismos nacionales competentes sobre la base de la ley administrativa española pertinente.

([1]) http://boe.es/boe/dias/2013/05/13/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-4997.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011242/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Independence and objectivity of the competent authority

The resolution prepared by the Secretary of State for Energy, Alberto Nadal, which was published in May 2013 in the Spanish Official Gazette, introduces the possibility that a third party may be subrogated to the obligations and rights of the owner of the storage facility in respect of the acquisition of cushion gas. This legal change will allow a third party to acquire the aforementioned gas for the ACS company. Until now, only the Escal company could buy the gas.

The Castor project, which was completed some time ago but was not implemented until recently, has been carried out in the context of overcapacity in the gas system due to the crisis and a bubble in the number of facilities. It was designed to provide up to one third of the daily demand in the system for 50 days. ([1])

Is the Commission convinced that the competent authority's independence and objectivity have been guaranteed with respect to this sudden change in the law?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member, the question raised does not seem to relate to European law and should be answered by the national competent bodies in the light of the relevant Spanish administrative law.

([1]) http://boe.es/boe/dias/2013/05/13/pdfs/BOE-A-2013-4997.pdf

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-011256/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 oktober 2013)

Angående: Enhetlig patentdomstol

Den 26 juli 2013 lade kommissionen fram ett förslag ([1]) till förordning om ändring av förordning (EU) nr 1215/2012 om domstols behörighet och om erkännande och verkställighet av domar på privaträttens område (Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning)).

Enligt kommissionens motivering syftar förslaget främst till att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol ska kunna träda i kraft. Avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol är ett internationellt avtal som undertecknades av några medlemsstater den 19 februari 2013. Europeiska unionen är inte part till avtalet.

I artikel 89.1 i avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol fastställs att avtalet inte kan träda i kraft före ikraftträdandet av ändringarna av Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning) vad gäller förhållandet mellan de två instrumenten. Dessa ändringar har två syften. Det första är att se till att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol och Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning) är förenliga med varandra. Det andra är att ta itu med den särskilda frågan om domstols behörighet gentemot svarande som har hemvist i tredjeland.

Mot bakgrund av detta förslag till ändring av Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning) ombes kommissionen besvara följande frågor.

1. Håller kommissionen med om att avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol påverkar gemensamma regler eller ändrar räckvidden för dessa, särskilt Bryssel I-förordningen (omarbetning)?

Enligt artikel 3.2 i EUF-fördraget och domstolens rättspraxis ([2]) har EU exklusiv befogenhet att ingå internationella avtal som kan komma att påverka gemensamma regler eller ändra räckvidden för dessa.

2. Anser kommissionen därmed inte att det faktum att endast några medlemsstater har ingått avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol, utan att EU är part till avtalet, bryter mot EU:s exklusiva befogenhet att ingå ett sådant avtal?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(2 december 2013)

1. Ur rättslig synpunkt har EU:s lagstiftning företräde framför avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol, som är ett avtal mellan medlemsstaterna (utan medverkan av EU eller tredjeland).

För att säkerställa en kombinerad och konsekvent tillämpning av det ovannämnda avtalet och förordning (EU) nr 1215/2012 om domstols behörighet och om erkännande och verkställighet av domar på privaträttens område (den s.k. Bryssel I-förordningen) har det beslutats att Bryssel I-förordningen ska ändras så att förhållandet mellan dessa två rättsliga instrument klargörs. Dessutom har ikraftträdandet av avtalet om en enhetlig patentdomstol gjorts avhängigt av ändringen av Bryssel I-förordningen.

2. På de områden där EU har exklusiv befogenhet får medlemsstaterna endast anta rättsligt bindande akter efter tillstånd från unionen.

([1]) COM(2013)0554 – 2013/0268(COD).
([2]) Mål C-370/12, Thomas Pringle mot Irlands regering (27 november 2012), s. 101.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011256/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Unified Patent Court

On 26 July 2013 the Commission proposed ([1]) a regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 1215/2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I Regulation (recast)).

According to the Commission's explanatory memorandum, this proposal aims in the first place to enable the entry into force of the Unified Patent Court (UPC) Agreement. The latter is an international agreement which was signed by some Member States on 19 February 2013. The European Union is not a party to this agreement.

Article 89(1) of the UPC Agreement provides that the Agreement cannot enter into force prior to the entry into force of the amendments to the Brussels I Regulation (recast) regulating the relationship between the two instruments. The aim of these amendments is twofold: firstly, to ensure compliance between the UPC Agreement and the Brussels I Regulation (recast); and secondly, to address the particular issue of jurisdiction rules vis-à-vis defendants in non-EU countries.

Given this proposal to amend the Brussels I Regulation (recast):

1. Does the Commission agree that the UPC Agreement affects or alters the scope of existing common rules, and specifically the Brussels I Regulation (recast)?

According to Article 3.2 TFEU and Court of Justice case-law ([2]), the Union has exclusive competence for the conclusion of an international agreement which might affect common rules or alter their scope.

2. Does the Commission not therefore consider the conclusion of the UPC Agreement by some Member States only, without the EU being a party, to be in breach of the EU's exclusive competence to conclude such an agreement?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

1. From a legal point of view, EC law prevails over the Agreement on the Unified Patent Court (UPC agreement) which is an agreement between the Member States only (without participation of the EU or third states).

Yet in order to ensure the combined and coherent application of the UPC agreement and Regulation 1215/2012 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (Brussels I Regulation), it has been decided to amend the Brussels I Regulation clarifying the interrelationship between those two legal instruments. In addition, the entry into force of the UPC agreement has been made dependant on the amendment of the Brussels I Regulation.

2. In areas of exclusive competence, Member States may adopt legally binding acts if authorised by the Union.

([1]) COM(2013) 0554 — 2013/0268 (COD).
([2]) Case C-370/12, Thomas Pringle v Government of Ireland (27 November 2012), 101.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011277/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Guérir du cancer du sein en un jour

Une étude menée en France laisse espérer un traitement du cancer du sein en un jour: «Les avantages du traitement en un jour du cancer du sein sont nombreux. Il permet par sa simplicité de dédramatiser la maladie, d'obtenir une meilleure observance et d'augmenter l'offre de soins», explique l'oncologue radiothérapeute responsable à l'Institut du cancer de Montpellier (ICM). Cette technique s'appuie sur les derniers progrès médicaux réalisés. Chaque année, en Belgique, environ 9 400 cas de cancer du sein sont diagnostiqués. L'étude actuellement menée en France — dont l'ICM, très expérimenté dans ce domaine — pourrait apporter un nouvel espoir à 10 % des patientes atteintes.

La technique, explique-t-il, «consiste à délivrer pendant l'intervention chirurgicale, après l'exérèse (ablation) de la tumeur, une irradiation très ciblée permettant d'épargner les tissus sains environnants». Elle ne correspond pas à un traitement classique et n'est destinée qu'à certains types de cancers.

D'où la limite de 10 % des patientes. En l'occurrence, les cancers sensibles à l'hormonothérapie chez des femmes ménopausées, à condition d'un bon pronostic précoce, car chez les femmes jeunes, le risque de rechute locale est plus important.

Outre la «dédramatisation» de la maladie, ce traitement innovant vise à limiter l'emploi de la radiothérapie (plusieurs dizaines de séances) grâce aux progrès enregistrés dans ce domaine ces dernières années. Jusqu'à présent, c'est en chirurgie que les avancées les plus sensibles ont été réalisées, afin de limiter l'ablation (mastectomie) au profit de la chirurgie conservatrice.

D'autres pays européens, tels que la Grande-Bretagne ou l'Italie, ont déjà soigné des milliers de patientes par le biais de cette technique.

Quelle est la position de la Commission? Corrobore-t-elle les analyses et conclusions de cette étude?

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

La Commission a connaissance de l'étude clinique menée par l'Institut du cancer de Montpellier (ICM) concernant un traitement du cancer du sein en un jour, à laquelle fait référence l'Honorable Parlementaire ([1]).

Le traitement consiste à combiner l'ablation de la tumeur, l'irradiation du sein et la chirurgie esthétique en une seule opération. Les auteurs de cette publication sont parvenus à la conclusion que cette approche thérapeutique était réalisable dans le cas de cancers du sein détectés à un stade précoce chez des patientes présentant un excellent pronostic et un très faible risque de rechute.

Par principe, la Commission ne porte pas de jugement sur des publications individuelles de recherche qui ne sont pas directement liées à ses activités de financement.

Le programme-cadre pour la recherche et l'innovation «Horizon 2020» (2014-2020) ([2]) offrira la possibilité de mener des recherches sur les approches thérapeutiques du cancer, notamment dans le cadre du défi de société que représente «La santé, l'évolution démographique et le bien-être».

([1]) Lemanski et al. (2013) Radiation Oncology 8:191.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011277/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Curing breast cancer in a day

A study conducted in France is raising hopes for a one-day breast cancer treatment. There are many advantages to one-day breast cancer treatment. Its simplicity makes it possible to make the disease less alarming, to obtain better compliance and to increase treatment options, explains the radiation oncologist responsible from the Montpellier Cancer Institute (ICM). This technique is based on the latest medical advances. Around 9 400 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed every year in Belgium. The study currently under way in France — including ICM, which has a great deal of experience in this field — could give fresh hope to 10% of affected patients.

The technique involves delivering highly targeted radiation during surgery, after ablation of the tumour, making it possible to spare the surrounding healthy tissue. It is not a conventional treatment and is only intended for certain types of cancer; hence it is limited to 10% of patients. Specifically, it is intended for cancers sensitive to hormone therapy in menopausal women, provided there is a good early prognosis, as the risk of local recurrence is higher in young women.

As well as making the disease 'less alarming', this innovative treatment aims to limit the use of radiotherapy (several dozen sessions), as a result of advances made in this field in recent years. Until now, the most appreciable advances have been made in surgery, in order to limit ablation (mastectomy) in favour of conservative surgery.

Other European countries, such as the UK and Italy, have already used this technique to treat thousands of patients.

What is the Commission's view? Can it substantiate the analyses and conclusions of this study?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

The Commission is aware of the clinical study conducted by the Montpellier Cancer Institute (ICM) on a one-day breast cancer treatment referred to by the Honourable Member. ([1])

The treatment consists of combining the excision of the tumour, intraoperative breast irradiation and cosmetic surgery into one operation. The authors of this publication conclude that this is a feasible therapeutic approach for early breast cancer in selected patients with an excellent prognosis and a very low recurrence risk.

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

Through *inter alia* the 'Health, demographic change and well-being' societal challenge, Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([2]) will offer opportunities to address research on therapeutic approaches to cancer.

([1]) Lemanski et al. (2013) Radiation Oncology 8:191.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011278/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Reconnaissance de l'électrosensibilité

Sur les conseils de leurs ostéopathes, des citoyens européens viennent de troquer leur iPhone contre un autre type d'appareil, doté d'un rayonnement électromagnétique plus faible.

De nombreux Européens souffrent d'électrosensibilité.

1. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission face, d'une part, à cette anecdote et, d'autre part, à ce phénomène moins anecdotique?

2. Reconnaît-elle le chiffre de 5 % de la population qui serait hypersensible au rayonnement électromagnétique?

3. La Commission reconnaît-elle le syndrome d'hypersensibilité? Il se traduirait à peu près toujours par les mêmes symptômes: énervement, perte de sommeil, douleur lorsqu'on se trouve exposé à un niveau de micro-ondes même relativement faible, irritabilité, troubles de la sexualité, problèmes de peau (sensation de picotements, de tiraillements) parce que c'est dans les couches extérieures de l'épiderme que le rayonnement est le plus important.

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

L'électrosensibilité ([1]) est un problème de santé courant examiné sur le plan des champs électromagnétiques et, en particulier, de la radiofréquence. De nombreuses recherches ont été effectuées pour déterminer si l'exposition à ces champs peut causer des symptômes à court terme tels que maux de tête, fatigue et vertiges.

Le comité scientifique des risques sanitaires émergents et nouveaux, organisme indépendant, a un mandat permanent pour évaluer les risques des champs électromagnétiques, fondé sur de nouvelles preuves scientifiques. Lors de son dernier examen (2009) ([2]), le comité a constaté que plusieurs études ont examiné l'association entre l'exposition à la radiofréquence et l'apparition de symptômes, parmi lesquelles des études portant sur la population générale et sur les personnes ayant une hypersensibilité électromagnétique ou «électrosensitivité». Alors que certaines études montrent une association entre symptômes individuels et exposition à la radiofréquence, ces résultats ne présentent pas de cohérence. Le comité constate donc que «la conclusion que les études scientifiques n'ont pas établi la preuve d'une relation entre la radiofréquence et les symptômes est toujours valide».

Une actualisation de l'avis des comités est en cours et devrait être achevée avant la fin de 2013. Cet avis examinera toutes les études scientifiques publiées après 2009, y compris celles sur l'association entre radiofréquence et symptômes.

La Commission ne dispose pas de données sur le nombre de citoyens de l'UE qui affirment être hypersensibles au rayonnement électromagnétique. Elle n'intervient pas dans la reconnaissance de maladies ou syndromes spécifiques. Il s'agit d'une responsabilité nationale, qui relève de l'OMS au niveau international ([3]).

([1]) Aussi connue sous le nom « d'hypersensibilité électromagnétique» ou « d'intolérance environnementale attribuée aux champs électromagnétiques».
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf
([3]) Organisation mondiale de la santé.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011278/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Recognition of electrosensitivity

Some Europeans, acting on the advice of their osteopaths, have recently exchanged their iPhones for a different type of device producing less electromagnetic radiation.

Many Europeans suffer from electrosensitivity.

1. What is the Commission's response, firstly, to that anecdote and, secondly, to this less anecdotal phenomenon?

2. Does it recognise the figure of 5%, which is the percentage of the population said to be hypersensitive to electromagnetic radiation?

3. Does it recognise hypersensitivity syndrome? The symptoms seem to be almost always the same: restlessness, sleep loss, pain caused by exposure even to relatively low-level microwaves, irritability, sexual dysfunction, and skin problems (tingling sensation and tightness) due to the fact that the skin's outer layers are exposed to the highest radiation levels.

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

Electrosensitivity ([1]) is a common health concern discussed with regard to electromagnetic fields and in particular with Radio Frequency. Identifying whether exposure can cause short-term symptoms such as headaches, fatigue and dizziness has attracted a substantial amount of research.

The independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks has a standing mandate to evaluate the risks arising from exposure to electromagnetic fields based on new scientific evidence. In its latest review (2009) ([2]), the Committee noted that several studies had tested the association between Radio Frequency exposure and the onset of symptoms. These included studies relating to both the general public and to people with Electromagnetic Hyper-Sensitivity or 'Electrosensitivity'. While some studies reported an association between individual symptoms and Radio Frequency exposure, there was no consistency in these findings. The opinion therefore noted that 'the conclusion that scientific studies have failed to provide support for an effect of Radio Frequency on symptoms still holds.'

An update of the Committees opinion is ongoing and it is expected to be finalised by end 2013. This opinion will review all scientific studies published after 2009, including those on the association between Radio Frequency and symptoms.

The Commission has no data on the number of people who claim to be electro-hypersensitive in the EU. The Commission has no role in the recognition of specific diseases or syndromes. This is a national responsibility, and on the international level, through the WHO ([3]).

([1]) Also known as 'Electromagnetic Hyper-Sensitivity' or 'idiopathic environmental intolerance attributed to electromagnetic fields'.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf
([3]) World Health Organisation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011279/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Ikea vend du photovoltaïque chinois

Ikea, géant suédois spécialisé dans le secteur de l'ameublement et de la décoration, a annoncé lundi 30 septembre que ses magasins implantés en Grande-Bretagne avaient débuté la vente de panneaux solaires. Lancée dans le magasin de Southampton, cette «initiative nationale (…) va être déployée dans les 17 magasins de Grande-Bretagne lors des dix prochains mois», selon les dires du directeur du développement durable du groupe.

Pour lui, cette offre est un «prolongement logique: vous pouvez acheter tout ce qui consomme de l'énergie, alors pourquoi ne pas acheter quelque chose qui produit de l'énergie?». Fabriqués par une société chinoise, les panneaux photovoltaïques sont vendus au prix de 6 800 euros.

La Grande-Bretagne joue le rôle de marché-test. L'expérience pourrait être étendue à d'autres pays dans les 12 mois à venir. «Nous ne l'avons pas choisie pour une raison particulière (…), ce n'est pas le pays le plus ensoleillé du monde mais on peut absolument obtenir de l'électricité» grâce aux installations photovoltaïques, a-t-il précisé.

«Beaucoup de nos clients veulent vivre de manière durable, mais cela doit être facile, abordable et attrayant», a-t-il conclu; selon lui, les clients du groupe souhaiteraient s'équiper à condition de trouver des panneaux pour «un bon prix auprès d'une entreprise reconnue».

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission?

2. N'y a-t-il pas distorsion de concurrence avec les panneaux photovoltaïques européens?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(29 novembre 2013)

Tout détaillant est libre de vendre des produits et services dans l'Union, à condition de se conformer à la législation applicable. La Commission se félicite de l'amélioration de l'accès des consommateurs européens aux technologies liées aux énergies renouvelables, qui les aide à devenir des acteurs sur les marchés de l'énergie. Des stratégies novatrices de vente au détail peuvent y contribuer.

La Commission a procédé à une enquête antidumping sur les importations de panneaux solaires en provenance de Chine et a récemment conclu à l'existence d'un dumping et constaté que ces importations ont porté préjudice aux producteurs européens. Il n'en reste pas moins que les producteurs chinois ont fourni 80 % des panneaux solaires vendus dans l'Union européenne au cours des dernières années; une réduction draconienne des importations de panneaux solaires en provenance de Chine ne serait donc pas dans l'intérêt général de l'Union européenne.

Pour cette raison, la Commission a demandé et obtenu une solution à l'amiable (sous la forme d'un engagement de prix) avec les exportateurs chinois qui leur permet de continuer à exporter des panneaux solaires, mais à des prix ne faisant pas l'objet d'un dumping.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011279/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Ikea sells Chinese solar panels

Swedish furniture and decorating giant Ikea announced on Monday 30 September 2013 that it had started selling solar panels in its UK stores. Launched in the Southampton store, this nationwide initiative will be rolled out in all 17 stores across the UK within the next 10 months, according to the group's chief sustainability officer.

He claims that this offering is a 'logical extension': we can buy everything that consumes energy, so we should be able to buy something that generates energy, too. The solar panels, made by a Chinese company, retail at EUR 6 800.

The UK is being used as a test market, and the pilot scheme could be extended to other countries within the next 12 months. The chief sustainability officer said that there was no special reason why the UK was chosen, and that while 'it is not the sunniest country in the world, […] you can absolutely get a good amount of electricity' from solar panels.

He concluded that many of Ikea's customers want to live more sustainably, but that it has to be easy, affordable and attractive to do so. According to him, the group's customers would like to invest in solar panels, provided that they can buy them at a good price from a recognised company.

1. What is the Commission's position?

2. Is there not a distortion of competition with European solar panels?

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

Any retailer is free to sell products and services in the EU provided it complies with the relevant legislation. The Commission welcomes enhanced access of consumers in Europe to renewable energy technologies, which helps them becoming active participants in the energy markets. Innovative retail strategies may contribute thereto.

The Commission has carried out an anti-dumping investigation into imports of solar panels from China and recently concluded that they were dumped and have caused injury to the European producers. At the same time, Chinese producers have supplied some 80% of solar panels sold in the European Union in recent years years; a drastic reduction of solar panel supplies from China would not be in the overall interest of the Union.

For that reason, the Commission has sought and reached an amicable solution (in the form of a price undertaking) with the Chinese exporters that enables them to continue exporting solar panels but at non-dumped prices.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011281/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Berlusconi ravive la crise de l'euro

La dernière frasque de Berlusconi n'est guère appréciée par les marchés.

1. Comment la Commission réagit-elle à ces frasques?

2. La crise italienne peut-elle, selon vous, faire replonger la zone euro dans la crise?

3. La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis selon lequel il faudrait diminuer la valeur de l'euro pour que l'Europe puisse sortir la tête de l'eau?

4. Le rachat de bons du Trésor comme aux États Unis, même s'il s'agit d'une arme non conventionnelle, pourrait-il être une solution? Dans la négative, pourquoi?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(16 décembre 2013)

1. La Commission ne souhaite faire aucun commentaire sur les actions de tel ou tel décideur politique dans les États membres dans un contexte de politique intérieure.

2. Des épisodes récents d'incertitude politique dans certains États membres n'ont pas eu d'effets de contagion importants pour les marchés financiers d'autres pays, ce qui témoigne du renforcement de la résilience de la zone euro dans son ensemble. C'est là le résultat de plusieurs facteurs, dont les progrès enregistrés par les États membres dans leurs efforts de réforme, l'action de la BCE pour supprimer les risques de relibellement et le renforcement en cours du cadre de gouvernance de l'UEM.

3. Le taux de change de l'euro flottant librement sur les marchés des changes étrangers, il devrait, à terme, refléter les fondamentaux économiques de la zone euro dans son ensemble. La Commission n'émet aucun avis sur l'estimation de l'euro et ne prend aucune mesure pour intervenir sur les marchés des changes, pas plus qu'elle n'intervient dans les décisions de politique monétaire de la BCE, qui agit en toute indépendance.

4. Les décisions de politique monétaire dans la zone euro, concernant notamment les systèmes potentiels d'achat d'obligations par la Banque centrale, sont de la compétence exclusive de la BCE. La Commission n'est pas en mesure d'émettre des commentaires sur la gestion, par la BCE, de ses portefeuilles obligataires, l'indépendance de la BCE étant inscrite dans le traité.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011281/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Berlusoni reignites the euro crisis

Silvio Berlusconi's latest escapade has left the markets deeply unimpressed.

1. What is the Commission's response to these antics?

2. Could the Italian crisis precipitate a new eurozone crisis?

3. Does the Commission share the view that the euro should be devalued so that the European economy can get back on its feet?

4. Could a bond buyback scheme like that employed in the United States be a solution, even if it is an unconventional measure? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

1. The Commission does not wish to comment on the actions of individual policymakers in Member States within a domestic policy context.

2. Recent episodes of political uncertainty in some Member States have not led to significant cross-country spillovers on financial markets, testifying to the increased resilience of the euro area as a whole. This reflects several factors, including progress with reform efforts by Member States, action by the ECB to remove redenomination risks and the ongoing strengthening of the EMU governance framework.

3. The euro exchange rate floats freely in foreign exchange markets and, over time, it should reflect the economic fundamentals of the euro area as a whole. The Commission does not issue opinions on the valuation of the euro and does not take actions to intervene in currency markets nor does it intervene in the monetary policy decisions of the independent ECB.

4. Monetary policy decisions in the euro area, including potential bond-purchase schemes by the central bank, are the exclusive competence of the ECB. The Commission is not in a position to comment on the ECB's management of its bond portfolios, in respect of the ECB's independence as enshrined in the Treaty.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011282/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Shutdown américain

Faute d'accord politique trouvé au Congrès sur le relèvement du budget, certains services fédéraux américains ont été contraints de fermer leurs portes ce mardi. Il semblerait que chaque jour de blocage conduise à une perte financière importante pour le pays et ait donc des conséquences sur ses partenaires.

Selon certains économistes, la paralysie des services non essentiels de l'État fédéral américain pourrait, en effet, coûter jusqu'à 1,4 point de croissance au PIB américain au quatrième trimestre, si elle durait 3 à 4 semaines. Jusqu'ici, les analystes tablaient sur une hausse du PIB de l'ordre de 2,5 % sur les trois derniers mois de l'année.

1. Le *shutdown* américain est inquiétant pour l'Europe… Si cette situation devait durer, ne pourrait-elle pas freiner la reprise en cours?

2. L'Europe, dont les États-Unis sont un partenaire commercial important, pourrait être plus directement touchée par ce *shutdown*. À combien la Commission estime-t-elle cette perte journalière potentielle?

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

Le Congrès des États-Unis n'ayant pas été en mesure de prolonger les pouvoirs du gouvernement en matière de dépenses jusqu'à l'exercice budgétaire 2014, le fonctionnement de composantes «non essentielles» du gouvernement fédéral des États-Unis a été suspendu le 1er octobre 2013. L'accord qui a été dégagé au sein du Congrès le 16 octobre 2013 a mis un terme à cette suspension, en assurant le financement du gouvernement fédéral jusqu'au 15 janvier 2014 inclus, et relevé le plafond de la dette jusqu'au 7 février 2014.

1. Un consensus s'est dégagé sur le fait que les effets macroéconomiques directs de la suspension, qui a duré 16 jours, devraient être assez limités, en l'occurrence une contribution négative de l'ordre de 0,1 à 0,2 point de pourcentage à la croissance trimestrielle du PIB au quatrième trimestre. En conséquence, cette suspension pourrait faire reculer la croissance trimestrielle du PIB de 0,6-0,7 % (consensus avant la suspension) à 0,4-0,5 % au quatrième trimestre. En tant que telle, elle n'aura donc pas un grand impact sur la croissance du PIB en 2013.

2. La suspension n'a pas touché les canaux du commerce extérieur des États-Unis (ports et infrastructures aéroportuaires). La seule conséquence sur le commerce pourrait consister en un affaiblissement de la demande d'importations, y compris de biens de l'UE, aux États-Unis. Cependant, en raison de l'incertitude qui existe sur le type de conséquence, il est impossible d'identifier ex ante la diminution, en général, de la demande d'importations et, en particulier, de la demande de biens importés de l'UE, aux États-Unis. Néanmoins, étant donné que cette suspension a eu une très faible incidence sur le PIB des États-Unis, on peut raisonnablement affirmer que la demande d'importations n'a guère été touchée et, par conséquent, que les entreprises exportant vers les États-Unis, y compris les entreprises de l'UE, ne seront vraisemblablement pas affectées notablement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011282/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: US shutdown

As no political agreement could be found in Congress on the budget increase, some federal services in the United States were forced to close on Tuesday 1 October 2013. Each day of the shutdown would appear to incur a major financial loss for the country and therefore has consequences for its partners.

According to some economists, the paralysis of non-essential federal services could cost the US as much as 1.4 points in GDP growth in the fourth quarter, were the shutdown to last three to four weeks. Up to now, analysts have been forecasting a GDP increase of 2.5% over the last three months of the year.

1. The US shutdown is a cause for concern for Europe. Should this situation persist, could it not slow down the recovery that is under way?

2. Europe is a major trading partner of the United States and could be more directly affected by the shutdown. What figure would the Commission put on the potential daily losses?

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

Following the failure of the US Congress to extend the government's spending authority into the fiscal year 2014, 'nonessential' parts of the US Federal Government were shut down on 1 October 2013. The agreement reached in Congress on 16 October 2013 put an end to the shut-down by providing funding for the federal government through 15 January 2014 and raised the debt limit until 7 February 2014.

1. The consensus view is that direct macroeconomic effects of the 16-day shutdown will be modest, in the range of -0.1 to -0.2pp. taken off fourth-quarter quarter-on-quarter GDP growth. Therefore it may lower Q4 GDP growth from 0.6-0.7% q-o-q (the pre-shutdown consensus) to 0.4%-0.5%. As such it will not have a big impact on GDP growth in 2013.

2. The shutdown did not affect the US foreign trade channels (ports, airport infrastructure). The only impact on trade would occur through a weaker US demand for imports including EU goods. However, due to the uncertainty of the nature of the impact, it is impossible to identify *ex ante* losses to the US import demand in general and import demand for EU goods, in particular. Nevertheless, given a very limited impact of the shutdown on US GDP, it can be safely said that import demand was not affected to a big extent and therefore, companies exporting to the US, including EU companies, are not likely to be significantly concerned.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011283/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Fraude à la TVA via le Net

En principe, un site internet basé à l'étranger qui vend des produits, par exemple en Belgique, doit appliquer le taux de TVA belge, mais il n'y a pas de contrôles. Or un belge sur deux effectue ses achats sur internet.

Quelle parade prévoit la Commission pour entraver la démarche des entreprises qui profitent d'internet pour transgresser les lois fiscales?

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

L'organisation et la gestion de la fiscalité sont principalement de la compétence des États membres, ce qui signifie que le calcul, la collecte, le contrôle et le recouvrement de la TVA relèvent de leur responsabilité. C'est notamment le cas du contrôle des ventes sur internet (ventes à distance) qui incombe aux administrations fiscales nationales, même lorsque le vendeur opère dans plusieurs États membres.

Au niveau européen, nous n'avons connaissance d'aucune information qui montrerait que des États membres négligent le risque de fraude à la TVA lié aux ventes en ligne, qu'elles soient purement intérieures ou transfrontières.

Afin d'aider les États membres à lutter plus efficacement contre la fraude fiscale, la Commission fournit un cadre juridique leur permettant de coopérer sans heurts dans ce domaine et met à leur disposition des outils pour lutter contre la fraude transfrontière. Par exemple, le groupe chargé du projet d'audit informatisé, mis en place dans le cadre du programme Fiscalis, permet aux États membres de partager les bonnes pratiques dans les domaines du contrôle du commerce électronique ainsi que des outils de surveillance et de recherche sur internet.

En outre, afin de promouvoir et de faciliter la coopération multilatérale, en particulier dans la lutte contre la fraude à la TVA, le règlement (UE) n° 904/2010 ([1]) du Conseil a institué, en ses articles 33 à 37, à un réseau dénommé «Eurofisc» en vue de l'échange rapide d'informations ciblées entre les États membres. Ce réseau opère depuis le 1er novembre 2010.

([1]) Règlement (UE) n° 904/2010 du Conseil du 7 octobre 2010 concernant la coopération administrative et la lutte contre la fraude dans le domaine de la taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (refonte), JO L 268 du 12.10.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011283/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VAT fraud via the Internet

In principle, a website based abroad that sells products, for example, in Belgium, has to apply the Belgian VAT rate, but there are no checks. However, one in every two Belgians buys online.

How does the Commission plan to respond to thwart companies that take advantage of the Internet to flout tax laws?

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

The organisation and the management of tax systems is primarily the responsibility of the Member States; this means that the assessment, collection, auditing and the recovery of VAT fall under the responsibility of Member States. In particular, the control of sales over the Internet (distance selling) is the responsibility of national tax administrations, including situations where the seller operates across borders.

There exists no information at the European level that Member States neglect the risk of VAT fraud linked to the sales over the Internet, neither as regards pure domestic nor as regards cross-border sales.

In order to assist the Member States in their efforts to fight fraud more efficiently, the Commission provides the legal framework allowing Member States to smoothly cooperate in this field and it offers them the tools for combating cross border fraud cases. For example the E-audit project group set up under the Fiscalis programme enables Member States to share best practice on auditing e-commerce and on Internet monitoring and search tools.

Also, in order to promote and facilitate multilateral cooperation especially in the fight against VAT fraud, Council Regulation (EU) No 904/2010 ([1]) created (in Articles 33-37) a network entitled 'Eurofisc' to permit the swift exchange of targeted information between Member States. This network entered into force on 1 November 2010.

([1]) Council Regulation 904/2010 of 7 October 2010 on administrative cooperation and combating fraud in the field of value added tax (recast), OJ L 268, 12.10.2010.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011284/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Amélioration de l'aide accordée à la République démocratique du Congo (RDC)

Mardi, la Cour des comptes de l'Union européenne a demandé que l'Union européenne se montre plus exigeante envers les autorités de Kinshasa pour éviter l'évaporation des aides financières. En l'état, «l'efficacité du soutien de l'Union européenne à la gouvernance en République démocratique du Congo est limitée», a-t-elle encore affirmé.

1. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission?

2. Que compte faire la Commission pour que ces fonds soient injectés de manière plus efficace en RDC pour le bien du peuple congolais?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(6 décembre 2013)

1. La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la déclaration du commissaire chargé du développement sur le rapport de la Cour des comptes européenne relatif à l'aide de l'UE à la gouvernance en RDC, accessible sur le site web suivant:
http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/piebalgs/statement-by-eu-development-commissioner-andris-piebalgs-on-eca-report-on-eu-support-for-governance-in-drc/

2. Les projets de développement menés par l'UE en RDC visent à améliorer la situation de la population congolaise, principalement des Congolais les plus vulnérables et les plus nécessiteux. Le meilleur moyen de veiller à ce que nos fonds profitent à la population est de suivre et de contrôler étroitement la mise en œuvre des projets pour faire en sorte que les résultats escomptés soient atteints, même à un rythme lent.

La Commission, par l'intermédiaire de la délégation de l'UE en RDC, met déjà en place des mesures destinées à renforcer le contrôle des projets de l'UE afin d'assurer le suivi de la concrétisation des résultats escomptés et de mieux mesurer l'impact de notre coopération.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011284/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Improving aid granted to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

On Tuesday, the European Court of Auditors called on the EU to be more demanding of the authorities in Kinshasa to prevent financial aid vanishing into thin air. It was also claimed that, as things stand, 'the effectiveness of EU assistance for governance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is limited'.

1. What is the Commission's response?

2. What does the Commission plan to do so that these funds are injected more effectively into the DRC for the good of the Congolese people?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the Statement by the Commissioner responsible for Development on the report from the European Court of Auditors on EU support for governance in DRC which can be found in the following website: http://blogs.ec.europa.eu/piebalgs/statement-by-eu-development-commissioner-andris-piebalgs-on-eca-report-on-eu-support-for-governance-in-drc/

2. The EU's development projects in DRC are designed to improve the situation of the Congolese people mainly those most vulnerable and in need. The best way to ensure that our funds benefit the population is to closely follow and monitor the implementation of the projects to ensure the achievement, even at a slow pace, of the expected results.

The Commission, through the EU Delegation in the DRC, is already putting in place measures to further reinforce the monitoring of EU projects to follow up the achievement of the expected results and better measure the impact of our cooperation.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011285/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Prothèses PIP: Agence du médicament mis en cause

Mediapart a fait état, mardi 1er octobre, d'un rapport interne très critique de l'Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé (ANSM, ex-Agence française de sécurité sanitaire des produits de santé — Afssaps) sur l'absence d'alerte concernant les prothèses PIP, qui aurait été dissimulé à l'époque par le ministre de la santé. Le document date du premier trimestre 2012, et a été saisi lors d'une perquisition au siège de l'ANSM.

«La direction de l'agence n'a pas divulgué ce document interne dont elle avait connaissance, mais a diffusé un rapport officiel, remis à Xavier Bertrand en février 2012, expurgé des informations les plus gênantes pour l'Afssaps», écrit Mediapart, qui estime que «l'augmentation des ruptures pour les prothèses PIP est amorcée dès 2006» et que «l'Afssaps aurait dû réagir dès 2007 et au plus tard en 2008», alors que la recommandation d'un retrait préventif pour toutes les femmes a été annoncé par les autorités sanitaires françaises à la fin de 2011.

Plus de 16 000 femmes se sont fait retirer leurs prothèses mammaires PIP contenant un gel de silicone frauduleux, selon le dernier bilan arrêté à la fin du mois de mai par l'ANSM. Le taux de «défaillance» constaté sur les implants retirés est «à ce jour de 25,4 %», avec 7 186 implants défectueux sur les 28 276 retirés chez 16 426 femmes.

1. Comment réagit la Commission?

2. Compte-t-elle demander officiellement aux autorités françaises ou aux anciennes autorités de s'expliquer?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

Au début de 2012, à la suite du scandale des prothèses mammaires PIP et afin d'éviter que de tels cas se produisent de nouveau, la Commission européenne a proposé aux États membres de l'UE un plan d'action commun visant à renforcer rapidement les contrôles des dispositifs médicaux dans le cadre du système réglementaire actuel, en particulier en ce qui concerne le fonctionnement des organismes notifiés, la vigilance et la surveillance du marché.

Parallèlement à ce plan d'action, le 26 septembre 2012, la Commission a adopté deux propositions visant à réviser le cadre réglementaire européen sur les dispositifs médicaux ([1]) et les dispositifs médicaux de diagnostic in vitro ([2]). Ces propositions renforceront nettement les règles régissant les dispositifs médicaux et les dispositifs médicaux de diagnostic in vitro dans l'Union européenne.

Dès que les autorités françaises ont communiqué les mesures prises pour faire face au scandale des prothèses mammaires PIP, la Commission a organisé des réunions avec les autorités nationales dans le but de faciliter l'échange d'informations entre la France, les autres États membres et nos principaux partenaires internationaux. En outre, afin de fournir aux États membres et aux autres parties intéressées des preuves scientifiques fiables, la Commission a demandé au comité scientifique des risques sanitaires émergents et nouveaux d'émettre un avis sur la sécurité des prothèses mammaires PIP en silicone ([3]). Un premier avis a été adopté le 1er février 2012 et un avis préliminaire actualisé peut actuellement être consulté par tous (disponible uniquement en anglais) ([4]). À la lumière des données récemment communiquées par les États membres et des forums internationaux, l'avis scientifique actualisé sera finalisé et adopté au début de l'année 2014.

([1]) COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 541 final.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_o_034.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/scenihr_cons_14_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011285/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: PIP implants: Medicines Agency called into question

On Tuesday 1 October 2013, Mediapart revealed an internal report that is highly critical of the French National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (ANSM, formerly the French Agency for the Health Safety of Health Products — Afssaps) over its failure to issue an alert regarding PIP implants, which was concealed at the time by the Minister for Health. The document dates back to the first quarter of 2012, and was seized during a search of the ANSM's headquarters.

According to Mediapart, the agency's management did not disclose this internal document, which they were aware of, but circulated an official report, sent to Xavier Bertrand in February 2012, with the most embarrassing information for Afssaps redacted. Moreover, the increase in the number of ruptured PIP implants started as early as 2006 and Afssaps should have reacted in 2007, or 2008 at the latest, whereas the French health authorities announced their recommendation that all women should have their implants removed as a precaution in late 2011.

Over 16 000 women have had their PIP breast implants, which contained illegal silicone gel, removed, according to the latest count by the ANSM at the end of May. The 'failure' rate for implants taken out now stands at 25.4%, 7 186 defective implants of the 28 276 removed from 16 426 women.

1. What is the Commission's response?

2. Does it plan officially to call on the French authorities or the former authorities to explain themselves?

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

At the beginning of 2012, following the PIP breast implants scandal and in order to prevent such cases from happening in the future, the European Commission proposed to the EU Member States a joint action plan aimed at rapidly tightening controls on medical devices under the current regulatory system, especially with regard to the functioning of notified bodies, vigilance and market surveillance.

In parallel to this action plan, on 26 September 2012, the Commission adopted two proposals to revise the European Regulatory framework on medical devices ([1]) and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices ([2]). These proposals will considerably reinforce the rules governing medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices in the European Union.

As soon as the French authorities communicated the measures taken to address the PIP breast implants scandal, the Commission organised meetings with national authorities in order to facilitate the exchange of information between France, the other Member States and our main international partners. Furthermore, in order to provide Member States and other interested parties with sound scientific evidence, the Commission asked the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks to provide its opinion on the safety of PIP silicone breast implants ([3]). A first opinion was adopted on 1 February 2012 and a preliminary updated opinion is curently available for public consultation. ([4]) In the light of data recently made available from the Member States and international fora, the updated scientific opinion will be finalised and adopted in early 2014.

([1]) COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 541 final.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_o_034.pdf
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consultations/public_consultations/scenihr_cons_14_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011286/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Concessions de Google insuffisantes

La Commission a indiqué que les nouvelles concessions proposées par Google pourraient mettre fin à son enquête contre le géant de la recherche.

1. La Commission peut-elle donner plus de détails sur les concessions proposées et censées inclure des mesures pour rendre plus facile pour les internautes de voir les résultats des rivaux de Google? Si elle ne peut pas, quel intérêt y a-t-il à avoir déjà communiqué sur ce sujet?

2. Ces concessions signifient-elles la fin de toutes les poursuites? Sans aucune amende? Même symbolique pour le temps passé par les institutions sur cette affaire, mais aussi et surtout pour la manipulation dont ont été victimes des millions d'internautes?

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

La proposition révisée d'engagements de Google recouvre les quatre problèmes évoqués par la Commission dans son appréciation préliminaire du 13 mars 2013.

Les principales modifications apportées aux engagements proposés par Google peuvent être résumées comme suit:

— la proposition révisée concerne tous les points d'entrée des recherches effectuées sur Google, telles que les recherches vocales ou les recherches saisies dans les barres d'outils;

— l'espace réservé à l'affichage des liens concurrents est augmenté et s'inscrit dans un cadre visible. Ces liens concurrents seront accompagnés d'un icone et d'un texte dynamique. Ils peuvent également être ombrés pour mieux ressortir et s'afficher dans une autre couleur que celle utilisée pour les annonces;

— Google a modifié la granularité de l'enchère lors de la sélection de liens concurrents. Dans la proposition révisée de Google, la granularité sera la même que celle utilisée dans les enchères AdWords de Google;

— Google propose d'améliorer la granularité de l'option de refus (*opt-out*) dans le cas d'un contenu tiers en la portant à un niveau «sous-domaine par sous-domaine», ainsi que de renforcer la clause de non-rétorsion pour faire en sorte que le recours à l'option de refus n'ait aucune incidence sur le classement AdWords en plus du référencement naturel;

— Google propose de mettre en œuvre un principe général visant à ne pas empêcher le portage ou la gestion de données campagne des utilisateurs sur AdWords de Google ou le service d'annonces autre que Google.

Il est prématuré de préjuger de la décision qui sera adoptée en l'espèce. La Commission souhaite connaitre l'avis des opérateurs du marché sur la proposition révisée de Google. Les prochaines mesures à prendre seront arrêtées sur la base de l'appréciation de ces réactions. La Commission tient toutefois à attirer l'attention de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur le fait que dans le cas des décisions relatives aux engagements prises en vertu de l'article 9 du règlement (CE) n° 1/2003, aucune amende n'est infligée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011286/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Inadequate concessions from Google

The Commission has stated that the new concessions proposed by Google could bring an end to its investigation into the search giant.

1. Can the Commission provide more details about the proposed concessions, which supposedly include measures making it easier for Internet users to see the results of Google's rivals? If not, what is the point of already having made a statement on this issue?

2. Do these concessions spell the end for all prosecutions, with no fine? Not even a symbolic fine for the time the institutions have spent on this case, but especially for the manipulation to which millions of Internet users have fallen prey?

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

The revised proposal of Google's commitments cover the four concerns outlined in the Commission's Preliminary Assessment of 13 March 2013.

The main changes to Google's commitments proposal can be summarised as follows:

— The revised proposal covers all entry points for searches on Google such as voice searches and searches entered in toolbars.

— Rival links are displayed in a larger space, with a visible frame. They will be accompanied with an icon, and dynamic text. Rival links may also be shaded to be better highlighted, with a different colour than the one used for ads.

— Google has changed the granularity of the auction for the selection of rival links. In Google's revised proposal, the granularity will be the same as the one of Google's AdWords auctions.

— Google proposes to improve the granularity of the opt out option for third party content to a subdomain by subdomain level, as well as to tighten the non-retaliation clause to ensure that the use of the opt out has no impact on AdWords ranking in addition to natural search ranking.

— Google proposes to implement a general principle not to prevent porting or managing of user campaign data across Google AdWords and non-Google advertising service.

It is too early to prejudge the decision that wil be taken in this case. The Commission is seeking feedback from the market on Google's revised proposal. The next steps to be taken will be decided based on the basis of the assessment of that feedback. The Commission would however draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact that in commitments decisions pursuant to Article 9 of Regulation 1/2003 no fines are imposed.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011287/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: La lutte contre la pauvreté n'est pas prise au sérieux

La crise de la zone euro a conduit les Européens à réfléchir et à œuvrer au renforcement et à l'approfondissement de l'Union économique et monétaire. Jusqu'ici, les travaux se sont concentrés sur les volets budgétaire, financier et économique, la dimension sociale étant reléguée au second plan. En décembre 2012, les chefs d'État et de gouvernement de l'Union ont demandé à la Commission européenne de travailler sur ce chantier.

L'impact social de la crise s'est fait ressentir en 2013, déplore l'EAPN. Le réseau européen contre la pauvreté dénonce le fait que l'Union et ses États membres échouent à tenir les objectifs fixés par la stratégie EU 2020 en matière d'emploi, d'éducation et de réduction de la pauvreté. En cause: des politiques macroéconomiques qui continuent à donner la priorité à l'austérité, aux coupes dans les dépenses sociales, aux baisses salariales et aux privatisations. La consolidation budgétaire est la ligne directrice de toutes les politiques, alors même que ses effets vont tout à fait à l'encontre de la lutte contre la réduction de la pauvreté. Et les systèmes fiscaux sont tels que le fardeau est très inéquitablement partagé: ce sont les plus fragiles qui en supportent la plus lourde part.

Il faut défendre l'idée que les dépenses sociales sont un investissement, pas un fardeau.

1. Comment la Commission réagit-elle et que propose-t-elle face à ce terrible constat, selon lequel la pauvreté n'est pas prise au sérieux?

2. Il est aussi reproché à la Commission de prêter trop peu d'attention à l'impact social des recommandations qu'elle adresse à chaque État membre. Comment cette perception est-elle née?

3. Selon la Commission, la lutte contre la pauvreté ne devrait-elle pas faire partie d'une stratégie intégrée? Ne faudrait-il pas mettre en place une stratégie multidimensionnelle, au niveau européen, pour lutter contre la pauvreté? La crédibilité de l'Union passe, elle aussi, par la réalisation des objectifs que l'Union s'est elle-même fixés en matière de lutte contre la pauvreté!

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

La lutte contre la pauvreté est l'un des cinq grands objectifs de la stratégie Europe 2020. La plateforme contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion est l'élément phare conçu pour aider à atteindre l'objectif de réduction de la pauvreté et elle contribue à mettre en place de solides partenariats avec la société civile pour la conception et la mise en œuvre de réformes politiques. Le paquet Investissement social, qui a été adopté par la Commission en février, invite les États membres à améliorer l'adéquation et la durabilité des systèmes de protection sociale, et inclut une recommandation d'investir dans l'enfance pour briser le cercle vicieux intergénérationnel de l'inégalité. Le Semestre européen permet également des recommandations par pays (RPP) et 19 États membres ont reçu des recommandations spécifiques en 2013 pour lutter contre la pauvreté ou l'exclusion des personnes vulnérables. Enfin, les fonds de l'UE, comme le FSE, le FEDER, Progress et le nouveau Fonds européen d'aide aux plus démunis (FEAD) contribuent à promouvoir l'accès au marché du travail et soutenir les stratégies d'inclusion (actives) et aident à faire reculer la pauvreté.

La Commission est pleinement consciente de l'obligation, au titre de la clause sociale horizontale, de prévoir et d'évaluer soigneusement l'impact social, lors de la conception et de la mise en œuvre de ses politiques et de ses activités. Le système d'analyse d'impact prend en compte ces exigences, tandis que l'inclusion sociale et la protection sociale constituent l'un des domaines définis dans les lignes directrices de la Commission concernant l'analyse d'impact.

Ces lignes directrices clarifient les initiatives stratégiques pour lesquelles une analyse d'impact doit être effectuée. Les lignes directrices sont actuellement en cours de révision et le public sera consulté sur le projet de version révisée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011287/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Fight against poverty not being taken seriously

The euro area crisis has led Europeans to consider and work on strengthening and deepening economic and monetary union. Until now, work has focused on budgetary, financial and economic aspects, with the social dimension put on the back burner. In December 2012, the EU Heads of State or Government called on the Commission to work on this issue.

The social impact of the crisis was felt in 2013, according to the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPD). The EAPD points out that the EU and its Member Stats are failing to keep to the objectives set by the EU 2020 strategy on employment, education and reducing poverty. At stake are macroeconomic policies that continue to prioritise austerity, social spending cuts, wage cuts and privatisations. Budgetary consolidation lies at the heart of all policies, even though its effects are totally incompatible with the fight to reduce poverty. Moreover, tax systems are such that the burden is shared very unevenly: it is the weakest who bear the brunt.

The idea should be championed that social spending is an investment, not a burden.

1. What is the Commission's response and what does it propose in view of the appalling conclusion that poverty is not taken seriously?

2. The Commission also stands accused of paying too little attention to the social impact of the recommendations it makes to each Member State. How did this perception come about?

3. In the Commission's view, should the fight against poverty not be part of an integrated strategy? Should an EU-level multidimensional strategy not be put in place, to fight poverty? The EU's credibility depends on achievement of the objectives that the EU set itself on fighting poverty!

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

Tackling poverty is one of the five EU headline targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. The Platform against Poverty and Exclusion is the flagship designed to help achieve the poverty target and works to develop strong partnerships with civil society for the design and implementation of policy reforms. The Social Investment Package, adopted by the Commission in February, calls on Member States to improve the adequacy and sustainability of social protection systems, and includes a recommendation on Investing in Children to break intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. The European Semester also allows for country-specific recommendations (CSRs) and 19 Member States received CSRs in 2013 to address poverty or the exclusion of vulnerable people. Finally, EU Funds, such as the ESF, ERDF, PROGRESS and the new Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) help promote access to labour markets, support (active) inclusion strategies, and help to reduce poverty.

The Commission is fully aware of the obligation under the horizontal social clause to carefully anticipate and assess social impacts in the design and implementation of its policies and activities. The Impact Assessment (IA) system takes these requirements into account, while social inclusion and social protection is one of the domains defined in the Commission's impact assessment guidelines.

The Commission's IA Guidelines clarify for which policy initiatives an impact assessment has to be carried out. The Guidelines are currently under revision and the public will be consulted on the draft revision.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011288/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Réglementation sur les dispositifs médicaux

1. Les changements apportés récemment par la Commission à la réglementation sur les dispositifs médicaux sont-ils suffisants et protègeront-ils les patients diabétiques?

2. L'EASD a lancé un appel à la Commission pour créer une Agence centrale européenne des dispositifs, tout comme il en existe déjà pour les médicaments. Qu'en dit la Commission?

3. D'après l'EASD, les propositions révisées de la Commission portent principalement sur les dispositifs de classe III (surtout implantables), dans laquelle n'entrent pas ceux destinés au diabète. Les changements proposés semblent aller dans la bonne direction, mais ne laisseraient-ils pas des patients dans une position où ils ne seraient pas protégés contre d'éventuels dommages?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(22 novembre 2013)

Les propositions législatives de la Commission ([1]) adoptées le 26 septembre 2012 ont considérablement renforcé la réglementation sur les dispositifs médicaux et les dispositifs de diagnostic in vitro en Europe. Elles renforcent le système d'approbation, notamment pour les dispositifs à haut risque, introduisent des règles plus strictes pour les organismes notifiés, prévoient des exigences supplémentaires pour les preuves cliniques et radicalisent les règles sur la vigilance et la surveillance du marché. Ces améliorations du cadre réglementaire permettront de fournir aux patients des dispositifs plus sûrs et plus performants, y compris pour le diabète, tels que des appareils de mesure du glucose et des pompes à insuline.

L'option de créer une nouvelle agence réglementaire européenne pour les dispositifs médicaux a été rejetée dans l'analyse d'impact ([2]) accompagnant les propositions susmentionnées. La principale raison en était l'absence de preuves claires de sa valeur ajoutée pour la sécurité des patients. Il est aussi apparu contestable qu'une agence individuelle ait la masse critique en termes de gains d'efficacité.

Même si les dispositifs destinés aux diabétiques ne sont pas considérés comme des dispositifs à haut risque (classe III) et ne doivent pas, en tant que tels, être soumis à la nouvelle procédure d'approbation, la Commission ne doute pas que les améliorations globales du cadre législatif assureront pour tous les dispositifs un haut niveau de sécurité aux patients de l'Union.

([1]) COM(2012) 541 final et COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/medical-devices/files/revision_docs/revision_ia_part1_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011288/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Legislation on medical devices

1. Do the changes recently made by the Commission to the legislation on medical devices go far enough and will they protect diabetic patients?

2. The European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) has called on the Commission to create a European central agency for medical devices, as already exists for medicinal products. What does the Commission have to say about that?

3. According to the EASD, the Commission's revised proposals mainly concern class III devices (particularly implantable devices), a category that does not include devices intended for diabetics. The proposed changes appear to be a step in the right direction, but would they not leave patients in a position where they would not be protected against any harm?

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

The Commission legislative proposals ([1]) adopted on 26 September 2012 considerably strengthen the rules governing medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices in Europe. They reinforce the approval system in particular for high-risk devices, introduce stricter rules for notified bodies, reinforce the requirements for clinical evidence and strengthen the rules on vigilance and market surveillance. These improvements to the regulatory framework will allow for safer and better performing devices to reach patients, including devices intended for diabetes, such as glucose meters and insulin pumps.

The option to create a new European regulatory agency for medical devices was discarded in the impact assessment ([2]) accompanying the abovementioned proposals. The main reasons were a lack of clear evidence of the added value for patient safety of such agency. It also appeared questionable whether a separate agency would have the critical mass in terms of cost efficiencies.

Even though devices intended for diabetics are not considered as high risk devices (class III) and as such are not envisaged to undergo the new approval procedure, the Commission is confident that the overall improvements of the legislative framework will ensure a high level of patient safety in the Union for all devices.

([1]) COM(2012) 541 final and COM(2012) 542 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/medical-devices/files/revision_docs/revision_ia_part1_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011289/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Droits des robots

Des avocats planchent sur la création d'une «personnalité robot» et l'attribution d'un numéro de sécurité sociale; le ministère du redressement productif travaille sur un projet de charte éthique non contraignante, la Commission européenne envisage de leur conférer la personnalité morale… de manière protéiforme, le droit des robots semble émerger.

Des robots remplaçant des hommes, c'est ce que commence à faire la Commission européenne avec son projet Petrobot. Associée à un consortium de dix entreprises européennes dirigé par le pétrolier Shell, la Commission souhaite élaborer des robots pouvant se substituer aux êtres humains pour «l'inspection des cuves à pression et des réservoirs de stockage largement utilisés dans l'industrie du pétrole, du gaz et de la pétrochimie».

La Commission précise que le fait de «conférer un statut légal aux robots et aux systèmes intelligents est une option, mais c'est seulement une option».

1. Qu'en est-il vraiment?

2. Quel est le but?

3. Quel est le budget autour de cette thématique?

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

La technologie n'est pas encore prête à doter les robots d'une autonomie suffisante pour leur accorder une personnalité ou un statut juridique. Toutefois, la communauté des systèmes cognitifs artificiels et de la robotique se préoccupe bel et bien des questions éthiques, juridiques et sociétales liées aux futurs systèmes dotés d'une intelligence et d'une autonomie accrues.

La question de l'octroi de la personnalité juridique aux robots fait actuellement l'objet d'un débat académique, et la Commission finance des activités portant sur les aspects juridiques liés à la robotique, comme RoboLaw, par exemple (voir le rapport à l'adresse suivante: http://www.unipv-lawtech.eu/files/euRobotics-legal-issues-in-robotics-DRAFT_6j6ryjyp.pdf).

Il n'existe pas de systèmes entièrement autonomes à l'heure actuelle. Des tendances mondiales claires indiquent que de tels systèmes pourraient voir le jour à l'avenir. Il est donc important de se préparer à l'arrivée de ce type de systèmes pleinement autonomes, en réfléchissant aux conséquences juridiques et en envisageant les politiques à mener à cet égard.

Dans le cadre du 7^e^ programme-cadre de recherche, des projets de robotique ont été menés pour plus de 500 millions d'euros, ce qui en fait le plus gros programme de R&D en robotique civile. Plusieurs de ces projets ont consacré des ressources à l'analyse juridique et éthique.

Le projet Petrobot, financé par l'Union européenne, vise à éviter la présence d'opérateurs humains dans des environnements hostiles, en les remplaçant par des robots télécommandés. Cependant, un être humain serait encore responsable du contrôle au niveau supérieur, dans des conditions de travail meilleures et plus sûres. Les robots ne seront pas totalement autonomes. Même si certaines tâches de bas niveau peuvent être exécutées de manière autonome, l'objectif n'est pas de remplacer l'être humain, mais de l'assister. De nombreux travaux sont ennuyeux, dangereux et sales, et les robots, comme d'autres machines, peuvent faciliter la vie des travailleurs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011289/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Robots' rights

Robot law seems to be materialising in various ways, since lawyers are working on the creation of a 'robot personality' and on the allocation of robot social security numbers, France's Ministry of Productive Recovery is drawing up a non-binding draft charter of ethics, and the Commission is considering granting robots a legal personality.

Human-replacing robots are something that the Commission is starting to introduce with its Petrobot project. Together with a consortium of 10 European companies led by the oil company Shell, it is seeking to develop robots which can replace humans in 'inspections of pressure vessels and storage tanks widely used in the oil, gas and petrochemical industry'.

It says that granting legal status to robots and intelligent systems is an option and nothing more.

1. What is the reality of the situation?

2. What is the goal?

3. What is the budget for this policy area?

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

The technology is not yet ready to deliver the degree of autonomy to grant personality or legal status to robots. However the relevant ethical, legal and societal issues linked to future systems, endowed with more intelligence and autonomy, are seriously taken into account by the robotics and artificial cognitive systems community.

Granting robots a legal personality is an academic discussion at the moment, and the Commission is funding activities adressing legal issues related to robotics (e.g. RoboLaw; see report: http://www.unipv-lawtech.eu/files/euRobotics-legal-issues-in-robotics-DRAFT_6j6ryjyp.pdf).

Fully autonomous systems are not a reality now. There are clear worldwide trends indicating that we could see such systems in the future. Developing policy options and understanding the legal consequences of fully autonomous systems is thus important preparation for the future.

In the 7th Framework Programme for Research, there have been robotics projects for more than EUR 500 million, which makes it the biggest civilian robotics R&D programme. Several projects dedicate resources to legal and ethical analysis.

The EU-funded PETROBOT project aims to avoid the need for human operators to be present in harsh environments by sending a remotely operated robot. A human would however still perform the higher level control with better and safer working conditions. The robot will not be fully autonomous. Even if some low-level tasks can be executed autonomously, the goal is not to replace humans, but to assist them. Many tasks are dull, dangerous and dirty, and robots, like other machines, can make the job of humans easier.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011290/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Véhicules hybrides

La Commission a approuvé mercredi une aide de 20,5 millions d'euros accordée par la France à Renault pour un projet de recherche et développement dans le domaine des véhicules hybrides.

Ce projet, baptisé «Hydivu» et qui concerne le développement d'une technologie hybride diesel pour des véhicules utilitaires de type fourgon «est conforme aux règles de l'UE relatives aux aides d'État», indique la Commission dans un communiqué.

1. Quels sont les autres projets avancés ou aboutis subventionnés par la Commission en la matière?

2. Quelles sont les avancées réalisées?

3. La Commission possède-t-elle des objectifs chiffrés en la matière?

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

1. Le secteur des camionnettes et fourgonnettes à moteur diesel hybride a bénéficié d'une aide au titre du 6e PC ([1]) avec le projet Hiceps ([2]), et du 7e PC ([3]) avec le projet HCV. ([4]) Les deux projets étaient de grande envergure (financement total de plus de 20 millions d'euros) et impliquaient plusieurs fabricants. Dans le projet Hiceps, la technologie diesel pour les fourgonnettes a seulement été testée en laboratoire. Dans le projet HCV, des véhicules de livraison complets ont fait l'objet d'essais et de démonstrations dans plusieurs villes européennes, et d'autres activités de démonstration confirmeront à la fin du projet les améliorations obtenues (les objectifs étaient: 5 % de réduction des émissions de CO_2 et 40 % de réduction du coût du groupe motopropulseur par rapport aux moteurs diesel hybrides de la génération précédente). Les projets concernant les véhicules électriques au titre du 7e PC, tels que l'OpenER ([5]), contribuent à améliorer la performance des moteurs hybrides et à en abaisser le coût.

2. Bien que le projet HCV ne soit pas encore terminé, la Commission est en mesure de confirmer que, dans le domaine des groupes motopropulseurs hybrides de pointe, des progrès ont été accomplis dans la réduction du poids et du volume des moteurs et des transmissions connexes, de l'électronique de puissance, des batteries, des commandes et architectures des groupes motopropulseurs de pointe, en vue d'améliorer leur rendement énergétique et de réduire les émissions de CO_2 et les émissions polluantes. Plus de 30 % d'économies d'énergie peuvent être réalisées grâce à la propulsion électrique optimisée, à la valorisation énergétique et à la conduite en fonction du contexte («context-awareness»), comme l'a démontré le projet OpenER.

3. Toutefois, pour améliorer la pénétration sur le marché de ces technologies, la recherche doit encore se poursuivre. À cet égard, la recherche sur les groupes motopropulseurs hybrides électriques pour tous les types de véhicules, y compris les fourgonnettes, bénéficiera d'un soutien dans le cadre de la recherche sur les transports routiers au titre du programme «Horizon 2020». La recherche visera à améliorer encore de 20 % le rendement des groupes motopropulseurs, à diminuer de 20 % leur poids et leur volume et à réduire de 70 % la pollution atmosphérique par rapport aux limites de la norme Euro 6 qui entrera prochainement en vigueur.

([1]) Sixième programme-cadre pour des activités de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (6e PC, 2002-2006).
([2]) Système hautement intégré à propulsion électrique et combustion. http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/projects/items/hi_ceps_en.htm
([3]) Septième programme-cadre pour des activités de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (7e PC, 2007-2013).
([4]) Véhicules commerciaux hybrides http://www.hcv-project.eu/overview.shtml
([5]) http://www.fp7-opener.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011290/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Hybrid vehicles

On Wednesday the Commission approved the allocation of EUR 20.5 million of French aid to Renault for a research and development project in the field of hybrid vehicles.

In a press release, the Commission said that the 'HYDIVU' project, which involves the development of a diesel hybrid technology for vans, 'complies with the EU rules on state aid'.

1. What other advanced or completed projects on this subject have been granted aid by the Commission?

2. What progress has been achieved?

3. Does the Commission have performance targets in this regard?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2013)

1. The area of hybrid diesel light trucks and vans has been supported in FP6, ([1]) through the project HICEPS ([2]), and in FP7 ([3]) through the project HCV. ([4]) Both projects were large (total funding of more than EUR 20 million) and included several manufacturers. In HICEPS, the diesel van technology was only tested in the laboratory. In HCV, complete freight delivery vehicles have been tested and demonstrated in several European cities, while further improved demonstrators will confirm at the end of the project what improvements have been achieved (the targets were a 5% CO_2 reduction and a 40% powertrain cost reduction with respect to previous generation hybrid diesels). FP7 Electric Vehicle projects like OpenER ([5]) contribute to hybrid efficiency and cost reduction.

2. Although HCV is not yet completed, the Commission can confirm that in the field of advanced hybrid powertrains, progress was achieved in the reduction of the weight and the volume of motors and associated transmissions, power electronics, batteries, advanced powertrain controls and architectures in order to improve the energy efficiency and reduce CO_2 and polluting emissions. More than 30% energy saving can be gained thanks to optimised electric powertrain, energy recovery, and context-aware driving, as demonstrated by OpenER.

3. However, to improve market penetration of these technologies, further research is needed. In that regard, research for electric hybrid powertrains for all types of vehicles including vans will be supported in the area of road transport research in Horizon 2020. The aim of the research will be to achieve a further 20% powertrain efficiency improvement, a 20% powertrain weight and volume reduction, and a 70% reduction of air pollution below the upcoming Euro 6 limits.

([1]) Sixth Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP6, 2002-2006).
([2]) Highly Integrated Combustion electric Propulsion System. http://ec.europa.eu/research/transport/projects/items/hi_ceps_en.htm
([3]) Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7, 2007-2013).
([4]) Hybrid Commercial Vehicles http://www.hcv-project.eu/overview.shtml
([5]) http://www.fp7-opener.eu

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011291/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Quotas laitiers

La Commission a annoncé mardi que six États membres de l'Union européenne devront récupérer un total de 46 millions d'euros auprès de leurs producteurs laitiers pour dépassements des quotas entre 2011 et 2013.

Pour la campagne 2012/2013, les producteurs autrichiens sont les plus lourdement sanctionnés pour surproduction, avec des restitutions de 28,733 millions d'euros, suivis de leurs collègues allemands, avec 7,225 millions d'euros. Le Danemark devra récupérer 5,142 millions d'euros, la Pologne 4,112 millions et Chypre 343 000 euros.

Les Pays-Bas ont pour leur part dépassé leur quota de vente directe sur la campagne 2011/2012. Ils devront récupérer 301 000 euros auprès de la filière.

1. N'est-ce pas la preuve que, sans quotas laitiers, le marché sera impossible à réguler?

2. Ne serait-il pas sain et symbolique de reverser les amendes imposées par la Commission à la suite des dépassements des quotas à ceux qui ont respecté ces quotas plutôt que de les noyer dans le budget européen?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(18 novembre 2013)

1. Le nombre d'États membres dépassant leur quota laitier reste limité et la production excédentaire en cause représente 0,1 % de l'ensemble du lait livré ou concerné par les ventes directes. Au cours de l'année contingentaire 2012/2013, les livraisons totales de l'Union sont restées de 6 % inférieures aux volumes contingentaires totaux. Environ 22 États membres sont restés en dessous de leur quota de livraison, dont 13 dans une proportion supérieure à 10 %. De plus, on ne peut déduire des faits mentionnés que les quotas sont le seul moyen de réglementer le marché du lait.

2. En ce qui concerne le versement des prélèvements collectés aux producteurs qui sont restés en dessous de leur quota, il y a lieu de noter que le budget de l'Union finance avant toute chose les instruments disponibles dans le cadre de la politique agricole commune visant à atteindre les objectifs établis à l'article 39 du traité, et qu'il n'y a aucune base juridique qui permettrait de s'écarter du système. En outre, dans le cadre de la réforme de la PAC, aucune adaptation n'a été proposée dans ce sens, ni par le Conseil, ni par le Parlement européen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011291/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Milk quotas

The Commission announced on Tuesday that six EU Member States will have to recover a total of EUR 46 million from their milk producers because they exceeded their quotas between 2011 and 2013.

Austrian producers have been penalised the most for their surplus production during the quota year 2012/2013 and will have to pay back EUR 28.733 million. They are followed by their German colleagues, who owe EUR 7.225 million. Denmark will have to recover EUR 5.142 million, Poland EUR 4.112 million and Cyprus EUR 343 000.

The Netherlands, for its part, exceeded its direct sales quota for the quota year 2011/2012 and will have to recover EUR 301 000 from the sector.

1. Does this not prove that, without milk quotas, the market will be impossible to regulate?

2. Would it not be right and symbolic to pay the levies imposed by the Commission for quota overruns to those who adhered to the quotas, rather than allow them to be swallowed up by the EU budget?

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

1. The number of Member States exceeding their milk quotas remains limited and the concerned surplus production accounts for 0.1% of all milk delivered or covered by direct sales. In quota year 2012/13 the total EU deliveries remained 6% below the total quota volumes. Some 22 Member States remained under delivery quota, of which 13 at more than 10%. Moreover it cannot be derived from the facts mentioned that quotas are the only way to regulate the milk market.

2. As regards paying the collected levy to producers that have remained under quota, the EU budget pre-eminently finances the instruments, available in the framework of the common agricultural policy, aimed to attain the objectives set out in Article 39 of the Treaty and there is no legal basis to deviate. Moreover in the framework of the reform of the CAP no adaptations were proposed in this sense, nor by the Council, nor by the EP.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011292/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Méthylate de sodium

La Commission compte-t-elle interdire purement et simplement l'utilisation du mercure dans la fabrication du méthylate de sodium? L'Europe est la seule région du monde où on a encore le droit d'utiliser le mercure tel quel.

La Commission corrobore-t-elle l'information suivante: l'Allemagne est 20 % moins chère dans ce domaine, mais son activité a libéré 56 kg de mercure dans l'atmosphère en 2011?

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

Dans l'UE, le mercure est utilisé dans la production de méthylate de sodium dans deux usines seulement, situées l'une et l'autre en Allemagne. En 2011, les émissions de mercure dans l'air notifiées par ces deux usines dans le cadre du registre européen des rejets et des transferts de polluants ([1]) étaient de l'ordre de 200 kg, soit environ 0,01 % du total des émissions anthropiques dans l'air. La Commission a connaissance de la mise en service récente, en France, d'une installation de production de méthylate de sodium selon un procédé de remplacement sans mercure, avec un surcoût de 20 %.

Toutes les installations de production de méthylate de sodium sont assujetties à la législation de l'UE sur les émissions industrielles ([2]), qui leur impose de fonctionner en conformité avec un permis fondé sur les meilleures techniques disponibles visant à prévenir et, lorsque cela n'est pas possible, à réduire les émissions de tous les polluants en cause.

L'UE est fermement déterminée à réduire les émissions de mercure de tous les secteurs industriels concernés et joue un rôle primordial en la matière au plan international depuis l'adoption, en 2005, de la stratégie communautaire sur le mercure ([3]), révisée en 2010 ([4]).

Le 10 octobre 2013, l'UE a signé la convention de Minamata sur le mercure ([5]). Cette convention internationale comprend des mesures visant à réduire l'incidence environnementale du secteur en imposant une réduction de 50 % des émissions de mercure entre 2010 et 2020. La convention prévoit également l'élimination progressive du mercure dans un délai de dix ans à compter de son entrée en vigueur. La Commission examine actuellement les actions nécessaires pour que l'UE ratifie rapidement cette convention.

([1]) http://prtr.ec.europa.eu/
([2]) Directive 2010/75/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 24 novembre 2010 relative aux émissions industrielles.
([3]) COM(2005) 20 final.
([4]) COM(2010) 723 final.
([5]) http://www.mercuryconvention.org/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011292/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Sodium methylate

Does the Commission intend to impose an outright ban on the use of mercury in sodium methylate production? Europe is the only region in the world which still permits the use of raw mercury.

Can the Commission confirm the following information: Germany is 20% cheaper in this area, but 56 kg of mercury were released into the atmosphere in 2011 as a result of its activities?

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

In the EU, mercury is used in the production of sodium methylate in only two production plants, both in Germany. In 2011, mercury emissions to air from these two plants, as reported under the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register ([1]), were in the order of 200 kg, representing about 0.01% of global anthropogenic emissions to air. The Commission is aware that a facility has recently been inaugurated in France producing sodium methylate by an alternative mercury-free process, which is about 20% more costly.

All facilities producing sodium methylate are subject to EU legislation on industrial emissions ([2]), which requires them to operate in accordance with a permit based on the best available techniques aimed to prevent and, where that is not possible, reduce emissions of all relevant pollutants.

The EU is fully committed to reducing mercury emissions from all relevant industrial sectors and has been at the forefront internationally in this respect thanks to the Community Strategy Concerning Mercury adopted in 2005 ([3]) and revised in 2010 ([4]).

On 10 October 2013, the EU signed the Minamata Convention on Mercury ([5]). This International Convention includes measures aimed at reducing the environmental impact of the sector, by requiring a 50% reduction in mercury emissions between 2010 and 2020. The Convention also includes a target date for the phase-out of mercury use within 10 years of entry into force of the Convention. The Commission is examining the actions needed so that the EU can rapidly ratify the Convention.

([1]) http://prtr.ec.europa.eu/
([2]) Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions.
([3]) COM(2005) 20 final.
([4]) COM(2010) 723 final.
([5]) http://www.mercuryconvention.org/

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011293/13
à la Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Critères

Dans son rapport sur la compétitivité de l'industrie dans les États membres de l'Union, la Commission européenne publie, entre autres, un tableau sur l'environnement des entreprises qui donne des résultats bizarres.

Ainsi, la République fédérale d'Allemagne, pourtant championne du monde à l'exportation de produits industriels, n'arriverait qu'en huitième position, alors que le Royaume-Uni, pays produisant et exportant de moins en moins d'articles industriels, serait le plus attrayant.

La Commission indique que le classement résulte de ses calculs, basés sur les données du rapport «Doing Business» de la Banque mondiale.

La Commission peut-elle détailler les critères utilisés pour aboutir au résultat présenté, ainsi que leur pondération?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(29 novembre 2013)

L'environnement opérationnel des entreprises est multidimensionnel dans tous les pays et tous les indicateurs ne sont, par définition, que des estimations de la réalité. Néanmoins, la méthodologie bien établie de la Banque mondiale est largement utilisée et considérée comme l'un des indicateurs les plus fiables et les plus éclairants.

Il convient de souligner que, parce que les petites entreprises ont moins de ressources et d'expérience, l'environnement des entreprises a un effet plus important sur leurs activités. Par conséquent, l'indicateur est orienté sur les problèmes des petites entreprises.

L'indicateur composite sur l'environnement des entreprises utilisé dans le rapport comporte les sept sous-indicateurs suivants: création d'entreprise, octroi de permis de construire, transfert de propriété, obtention de prêts, protection des investisseurs, exécution des contrats et règlement de l'insolvabilité. Trois des indicateurs élaborés par la Banque mondiale n'ont pas été considérés comme pertinents dans le contexte des économies de l'UE intégrées dans le marché intérieur (raccordement à l'électricité, paiement des impôts et commerce transfrontalier). Ces sept sous-indicateurs ont un poids égal dans l'indicateur composite final (ils sont normalisés à un chiffre entre 0 et 1, 0 étant le plus mauvais résultat pour un État membre et 1 le meilleur). La note d'un pays pour une année donnée correspond à la moyenne des sept sous-indicateurs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011293/13
to the Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Criteria

The Commission's report on industrial competitiveness in the EU Member States includes a table on business environments, which gives some strange results.

For example, although Germany is the world's leading exporter of industrial products, it ranks only eighth, while the United Kingdom, which is producing and exporting fewer and fewer industrial products, is considered the most attractive country.

The Commission points out that the scoring was done using calculations based on World Bank Doing Business data.

Can the Commission explain which criteria were used to arrive at this result and how they were weighted?

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

The operating environment of businesses is multi-dimensional in all countries and all indicators are by definition only estimates of reality. Despite this, the long-established methodology of the World Bank is widely used and is considered to be one of the most reliable and illuminating indicator.

It should be emphasised that because small businesses have fewer resources and less experience, the business environment has a larger effect on their operations. Consequently, the indicator is geared towards the problems of smaller businesses.

The composite indicator on business environment used in the report includes the following seven sub-indicators: starting a business; dealing with construction permits; registering property; getting credit; protecting investors; enforcing contracts; and resolving insolvency. Three indicators compiled by the World Bank were not deemed relevant in the context of EU economies integrated in the internal market (getting electricity, paying tax and trading across borders). These seven sub-indicators have an equal weight in the final composite indicator (they are normalised to a figure between 0 and 1, where 0 is the worst possible Member State performance and 1 the best one). The country score for a given year is the average of the seven sub-indicators.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011294/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti a favore del Centro Culturale Gruppo Jobel

Il Gruppo Jobel di Roma è un centro di cultura, formazione e spettacoli dal vivo, che da oltre 10 anni opera su tutto il territorio nazionale ed internazionale. Tale centro è stato ideato come strumento operativo capace di rispondere a tutte le esigenze culturali, nazionali ed internazionali, ed oggi comprende diverse attività, tra le quali: spettacoli ed eventi; scambi culturali internazionali; formazione e avviamento professionale.

Il Gruppo Jobel rappresenta una solida realtà che si occupa dello studio tecnico e interpretativo della cultura scenica e letteraria. Tra le opere prodotte, una particolare attenzione è stata riservata alla scelta di tematiche dall'alto valore umano e sociale.

Il centro è dotato, inoltre, di un laboratorio di ricerca scenografica, di cinema e danza, che ha permesso fino ad oggi una fondamentale collaborazione con scuole, Enti culturali ed associazioni.

Grazie e queste attività, il Gruppo Jobel ha conseguito anche un prestigioso riconoscimento istituzionale da parte del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione:

1. fa sapere se vi sono programmi o finanziamenti per le attività svolte in generale dai centri culturali nella nuova programmazione 2014-2020?

2. fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(14 novembre 2013)

La Commissione informa l'onorevole parlamentare che il nuovo programma «Europa creativa» (2014-2020) ([1]) — che sostituirà gli attuali programmi Media e Cultura — sosterrà le organizzazioni culturali e creative a partire dal 2014.

In linea di massima, il centro culturale Gruppo Jobel dovrebbe poter presentare domande di finanziamento nell'ambito del nuovo programma, purché sussistano le condizioni per la partecipazione definite negli specifici inviti a presentare proposte, tra cui, in particolare, la partecipazione di partner provenienti da un certo numero di altri paesi. Va osservato che il processo di selezione — condotto con l'assistenza di esperti esterni indipendenti — è estremamente competitivo, e solo le migliori candidature riceveranno una sovvenzione.

Gli operatori culturali che intendono chiedere un finanziamento sono invitati a mettersi in contatto con il punto di contatto nazionale Cultura ([2]). Tali punti di contatto, presenti in tutti i paesi partecipanti al programma Cultura, sono incaricati di fornire assistenza gratuita ai potenziali beneficiari. È in corso la sostituzione graduale dei punti di contatto Cultura con i desk «Europa creativa», che forniranno supporto ai candidati nel quadro del nuovo programma Europa creativa.

([1]) Informazioni sul futuro programma Europa creativa sono disponibili al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm
([2]) I recapiti dei punti di contatto Cultura sono forniti al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/annexes-culture/your-contact-in-your-country_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011294/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Possible funding for the Gruppo Jobel Cultural Centre

Gruppo Jobel in Rome is a centre for culture, training and performances, operating in Italy and other countries for over 10 years. This centre was conceived as an operational instrument capable of meeting all national and international cultural needs, and today undertakes various activities, such as: shows and events; international cultural exchanges; training including basic vocational training.

Gruppo Jobel is a credible entity involved in the technical study and interpretation of theatrical and literary culture. Among the works it has produced, particular importance was given to choosing topics of high human and social value.

Furthermore, the centre has a research workshop for theatre, cinema and dance, which has enabled vital collaboration with schools, cultural bodies and associations.

Thanks to these activities, Gruppo Jobel has also received a prestigious institutional award from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities.

1. Can the Commission state whether there are any programmes or funding under the 2014-2020 programming period for activities carried out in general by cultural centres?

2. Can it provide an overview of the situation?

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

The Commission informs the Honourable Member that the new Creative Europe Programme (2014-2020) ([1]) — which is replacing the current Media and Culture Programmes — will provide support for cultural and creative organisations as of 2014.

It should in principle be possible for Gruppo Jobel Cultural Centre to apply for funding under the new programme, as long as the conditions for participation set out in the relevant calls for proposals are respected, including in particular the involvement of partners from a number of other countries. It should be noted that the selection process — carried out with the help of independent external experts — is highly competitive and only the very best applications will eventually receive a grant.

Cultural operators wishing to apply for funding are advised to get in touch with their national Culture contact point ([2]). These contact points exist in all countries taking part in the Culture Programme and are responsible for providing free assistance to potential beneficiaries. The Culture contact points are gradually being replaced by the Creative Europe Desks, which will assist applicants under the new Creative Europe Programme.

([1]) Information on the future Creative Europe programme can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm
([2]) Contact details of the Culture Contact Points are provided at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/annexes-culture/your-contact-in-your-country_en.htm

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-011302/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 oktober 2013)

Angående: Cert-EU och hackningen av Belgacom

Det har framkommit att Cert-EU (incidenthanteringsorganisationen för EU:s institutioner, organ och kontor) kan ha intressant information om de hackningar som den brittiska säkerhetstjänsten påstås ha genomfört mot Belgacoms nätverk ([1]). Kan kommissionen bestrida denna information? Kan information som bestyrker eller bestrider dessa påståenden göras tillgängliga för allmänheten? Om inte, vad är orsaken till det?

Svar från Maroš Šefčovič på kommissionens vägnar
(13 november 2013)

CERT-EU har av de belgiska behöriga myndigheterna informerats om de tekniska indikatorer för det påstådda sekretessbrottet i det fall som parlamentsledamoten hänvisar till. Kommissionen fick denna information för att kunna kontrollera om samma sabotageprogram

fanns i EU-institutionernas datanätverk. Dessa indikatorer gör det emellertid inte möjligt att härleda incidenten till en specifik grupp eller organisation.

CERT-EU har inte tillgång till någon information som gör det möjligt att härleda incidenten.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/british-spy-agency-gchq-hacked-belgian-telecoms-firm-a-923406.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011302/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: CERT-EU and the Belgacom hack

It has come to my attention that CERT-EU (the computer emergency response team for the EU institutions, bodies and agencies) might be in possession of relevant information pertaining to the alleged hacks by British security agencies of the Belgacom networks ([1]). Is the Commission in a position to deny this information? Could information that verifies or falsifies these allegations be made available to the public? If not, why not?

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

CERT-EU has received from the Belgian competent authorities information on the technical indicators of the alleged compromise in relation to the incident to which the Honourable Member refers. This information was provided in order to check whether the same malware exists in the internal data networks of the EU institutions. However, these indicators do not allow one to attribute the incident to a specific group or organisation.

CERT-EU is not in possession of any information related to the attribution of the incident.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/british-spy-agency-gchq-hacked-belgian-telecoms-firm-a-923406.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011303/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Simplifying acceptance of public documents in the EU

The Commission has recently proposed to simplify the acceptance of certain public documents in the EU.

What steps is the Commission taking to ensure, firstly, that its proposals fully take into account the administrative and financial cost to Member States if issuing agencies must provide national and EU documents in parallel, and secondly, that the risks of document fraud are minimised by clarifying the text around Member States' ability to insist on the provision of the originals of documents?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Honourable Member refers to the establishment of Union multilingual standards forms under the proposal for a regulation on promoting the free movement of citizens and businesses by simplifying the acceptance of certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012, of 24 April 2013 (COM(2013) 228), and to the costs that these provisions may bring about for Member State administrations. The Commission considered this issue in the impact assessment accompanying the proposal (SWD(2013) 144 final) and concluded that limited costs would be imposed on Member States as a result of the introduction of Union standard forms. These costs are expected to be circumscribed to the printing of forms, the creation of templates for computer usage and to minor training and promotion activities. These limited costs would be outweighed by the positive impact that the forms would have on the lives of EU citizens and businesses as well as on public administrations in terms of costs and time saved in understanding and translating public documents in cross-border scenarios.

Concerning the risk of document fraud, the Commission would inform the Honourable Member that the proposal aims not only at simplifying the lives of citizens and businesses but also at establishing more effective measures to prevent fraud through a system of administrative cooperation between Member States. Citizens and businesses should therefore have the choice to produce either the original of a public document or its certified copy, or a non-certified copy if presented together with the original. Under the proposal, this choice must be applied in a uniform manner and may not be constrained by Member States requiring original documents exclusively.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011304/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Definition of 'temporary' within the context of cabotage legislation

Concerns have been raised by constituents of mine with regard to the outworking of EU cabotage legislation. With regard to Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009, which states that cabotage operations should be carried out on a temporary basis, could the Commission state if and when guidance will be provided to define what constitutes 'temporary', and outline what engagements it has undertaken with Member States on this issue.

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

According to Article 2 (7) of Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 ([1]), cabotage operations are defined as 'either national road passenger services for hire and reward carried out on a temporary basis by a carrier in a host Member State, or the picking up and setting down of passengers within the same Member State, in the course of a regular international service, in compliance with the provisions of this regulation, provided that it is not the principal purpose of the service.'

The above definition should be read together with Article 15 of the same Regulation, which contains the following list of authorised cabotage operations :

'(a) special regular services provided that they are covered by a contract concluded between the organiser and the carrier;

(b) occasional services;

(c) regular services, performed by a carrier not resident in the host Member State in the course of a regular international service in accordance with this regulation (…)'

The expression 'on a temporary basis' contained in Article 2(7) of Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 is not relevant for the authorised cabotage operations mentioned under (a) and (c). In practice, it concerns only occasional services mentioned under (b) to be performed 'on a temporary basis', which is necessarily the case, given the nature of the latter services. In this limited part of the market (occasional services), the legislator decided to leave to the Member States the definition of what they consider to be 'services carried out on a temporary basis'.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 on common rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services, and amending Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, OJ L 300, 14.11.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011306/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Drug precursors

In light of recent proposals by the Commission to clamp down on the provision of drug precursors, can the Commission detail the steps it will take to ensure that Member States are not constantly one step behind the criminals producing these substances? What awareness campaigns or strategies has the Commission put in place to ensure that users of these substances are aware of the dangers they entail?

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

The European legislation on drug precursors places control measures on economic operators and national authorities, in order to avoid diversion of drug precursors from legal uses to the production of illegal drugs. On 23 October 2013, the European Parliament gave a positive vote on the revised legislation, which introduces a more flexible and rapid approach to new emerging trends in precursors diversion. In particular, the new proposals allow the Commission to add new substances to the list of scheduled substances by delegated acts (see new Article 15 of Regulation (EC) No 273/2004).

Furthermore, the legislative proposals have clarified that Member States may adopt national measures to enable their competent authorities to control and monitor suspicious transactions (see new Article 10(2) of Regulation (EC) No 273/2004).

In addition, the legislation provides for voluntary control measures for substances on the European voluntary monitoring list (see the unchanged Article 9(2)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 273/2004).

The Commission and the Members States' competent authorities regularly discuss strategies to communicate information to companies legally using drug precursors. The focus of awareness campaigns towards the general public should be on drugs rather than drug precursors, also to avoid spreading of information on how to manufacture those drugs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011307/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Plucking of feather and down from live geese

The plucking of feathers from live geese is forbidden by EU legislation on animal welfare. As Member States are primarily responsible for the implementation of EU welfare legislation, a number of concerns have been raised by constituents of mine who fear that this legislation is not being properly implemented. With this in mind, can the Commission clarify:

a. the nature and level of engagement with each Member State to monitor implementation of this legislation over the last five years;

b. the extent to which it is satisfied with the enforcement of the legislation regarding the plucking of feathers and down from live geese;

c. the number of breaches identified in each Member State over the last five years; and

d. the action taken once breaches of EU legislation on animal welfare with regard to the plucking of feathers from live geese have been identified.

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

Following the opinion ([1]) published by the European Food Safety Authority in 2010 on the practice of harvesting feathers from live geese, some monitoring and discussions occurred in 2011. According to the European Down and Feather Association 98% of the down and feathers processed by their industry are collected after the slaughter of birds. Very few Member States harvest feathers, i.e. remove feathers that are ripe due to the natural phenomenon of moulting. This practice is not illegal.

With regard to the number of breaches identified and possible action taken the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-9501/2013 ([2]).

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1886.htm
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011309/13
to the Commission
Ashley Fox (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Enforcement powers of the European Medicines Agency

I have been contacted by a constituent of mine regarding the lack of enforcement powers held by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) in relation to the labelling of medicines and medical leaflets for visually impaired people.

My constituent requires large-print patient advisory leaflets. If the medicine required is licensed in the UK he can contact the manufacturer to request large print, in accordance with Article 56(a) of Directive 2004/27/EC. If the manufacturer fails to provide these leaflets, then the UK Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has the power to enforce compliance with the relevant rules.

However, when my constituent used a medicine that was licensed through another European route, the manufacturer in question refused to provide large-print leaflets. He was advised that the EMA was responsible for the enforcement of that particular manufacturer's obligations, but upon contacting the Agency he was told that the EMA has no powers to pursue European drug manufacturers through the courts.

Could the Commission please clarify the enforcement powers held by the EMA as compared to the MHRA? How can my constituent ensure that he has access to an appropriate print-format relative to his needs, in accordance with Article 56(a) of Directive 2004/27/EC, if he is using medicines licensed through a European route?

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

The European Medicines Agency does not have enforcement power regarding the requirements provided by EU legislation ([1]) concerning the labelling and package information leaflet of medicinal products. The enforcement of such provisions is of the competence of National Competent Authorities regarding medicinal products placed on their market.

It must be emphasised that Article 56a to which the Honorable Member refers to in his question provides that the request to have formats appropriate for the blind and partially-sighted should come from patients' organisations and not individuals.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, of 28.11.2001, p. 67.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011310/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Sinergia Mării Negre

În ianuarie 2011, Parlamentul a adoptat o rezoluție în care invita Comisia și Serviciul European de Acțiune Externă să elaboreze o strategie a UE pentru regiunea Mării Negre. Aceasta a urmat lansării de către Comisie a Sinergiei Mării Negre în 2007.

Scopul strategiei era atât de a intensifica coordonarea dintre UE și programele sale din regiunea Mării Negre, cât și de a stimula relațiile dintre guvernele și sectoarele economice din această regiune și UE. Cu toate acestea, de la adoptarea sa în 2007, Sinergia Mării Negre a fost afectată de numeroase probleme și de lipsa unor rezultate consistente.

Au trecut doi ani de la adoptarea de către Parlament a rezoluției menționate și mai bine de șase ani de la adoptarea de către Comisie a Sinergiei Mării Negre.

1. Lucrează Comisia la elaborarea unei strategii a UE pentru regiunea Mării Negre?

2. Cum a evoluat situația din 2011 și ce măsuri au fost adoptate pentru a se asigura elaborarea și punerea în aplicare a Sinergiei Mării Negre?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(3 decembrie 2013)

Sinergia Mării Negre este o inițiativă de la bază la vârf care vizează consolidarea cooperării regionale prin intermediul unor inițiative concrete. Obiectivul este de a crea valoare adăugată pentru cetățenii din regiune, asigurând în același timp sustenabilitatea mediului. Așa cum se arată în Comunicarea din 2007 a Comisiei Europene, Sinergia Mării Negre cuprinde o serie de domenii de cooperare, printre care se numără mediul, politica maritimă integrată, rețelele de cercetare și inovare, cooperarea transfrontalieră, educația, energia și transporturile.

S-au înregistrat succese remarcabile în domenii precum mediul, cercetarea și inovarea și cooperarea transfrontalieră, însă Sinergia Mării Negre poate face mai mult; a venit momentul să reflectăm din nou asupra modului în care să ducem mai departe această inițiativă. UE ar trebui să își revigoreze abordarea luând în considerare diversitatea relațiilor sale în regiune și participând și la alte cadre de cooperare, inclusiv la Organizația Cooperării Economice a Mării Negre. De asemenea, aceasta ar trebui să valorifice mai bine avantajul de a dispune de o întreagă gamă de politici și instrumente interne și externe ale UE. În cadrul ședinței plenare a Parlamentului European din 17 aprilie 2012, comisarul pentru extindere și politica europeană de vecinătate și-a exprimat angajamentul de a prezenta o strategie UE pentru regiunea Mării Negre la momentul potrivit. În acest context, Comisia va verifica dacă s-a atins o masă critică în ceea ce privește cooperarea în mai multe sectoare prioritare și va colabora în continuare cu partenerii de la Marea Neagră pentru a pune bazele unei implicări mai intense în viitor.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011310/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Black Sea Synergy

In January 2011, Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Commission and the European External Action Service to prepare an EU strategy for the Black Sea region. This followed the launch of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) in 2007 by the Commission.

The strategy was intended both to increase coordination between the EU and its programmes in the Black Sea region and to promote relationships between the region's governments, economic sectors, and the EU itself. However, the Black Sea Synergy has been marred by multiple setbacks and a lack of sufficient results since its adoption in 2007.

Two years have passed since Parliament's resolution , and more than six years since its adoption by the Commission.

1. Is the Commission drawing up an EU strategy for the Black Sea?

2. What progress has been made since 2011, and what measures have been adopted in order to ensure the drafting and implementing of the Black Sea Synergy?

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

The Black Sea Synergy is a bottom-up initiative geared towards strengthening regional cooperation via concrete initiatives. The goal is to bring added value to the citizens of the region while ensuring environmental sustainability. As envisaged in the European Commission's 2007 Communication, the Black Sea Synergy encompasses a range of cooperation areas, including environment, integrated maritime policy, research and innovation networks, cross-border cooperation, education, energy, transport and others.

Despite notable successes in the areas of environment, research and innovation and cross-border cooperation, the Black Sea Synergy can do more, and the time has come to reflect anew on how to take the initiative forward. The EU should reinvigorate its approach by taking into account the diversity of its relationships in the region, and engaging with other cooperative frameworks including the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation. It should also take better advantage of the full range of EU internal and external policies and instruments. Speaking to the European Parliament's Plenary on 17 April 2012, the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy expressed the commitment to draft an EU Strategy for the Black Sea region at an appropriate time. With this in mind, the Commission will verify that a critical mass of cooperation in several priority sectors has been achieved, while working with Black Sea partners to lay the groundwork for more intense engagement in the future.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011311/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Ostatecii din tabăra de refugiați de la Ashraf deținuți de guvernul Irakului

La 1 septembrie 2013, forțele de securitate irakiene au atacat dizidenți iranieni aflați în tabăra de la Ashraf, din Irak, ucigând 52 de persoane și arestând șapte. La 13 septembrie 2013, Înaltul Comisariat al Națiunilor Unite pentru Refugiați (ICNUR) a informat că printre cei arestați se află și șase femei, care sunt deținute într-un loc neidentificat din Irak, riscând să fie retrimise în Iran. În conformitate cu Convenția de la Geneva, refugiaților li se recunoaște statutul de persoane protejate, iar trimiterea forțată a acestor persoane în Iran, unde pot fi persecutate datorită opoziției față de regimul iranian, constituie o încălcare gravă a dreptului internațional.

Tabăra Hurriya — unde au fost transferați în mod forțat ultimii 42 de refugiați din tabăra Ashraf și unde sunt deținuți în prezent peste 3 400 de dizidenți iranieni — nu este suficient de sigură și a fost ținta unor atacuri, cel mai recent înregistrându-se la 9 februarie 2013, în care au fost ucise cel puțin opt persoane, iar alte 100 au fost rănite.

1. Va vizita Înaltul Reprezentant tabăra de la Hurriya pentru a demonstra îngrijorarea Uniunii față de situația refugiaților de acolo?

2. Va solicita Înaltul Reprezentant Misiunii de Asistență a Națiunilor Unite în Irak (UNAMI) să securizeze tabăra Hurriya pentru a o proteja de atacuri din partea forțelor irakiene și a susținătorilor regimului iranian?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

1. ÎR/VP a efectuat o vizită în Irak în iunie 2013. Cu această ocazie, s-a întâlnit cu reprezentanți de înalt nivel ai guvernului irakian și a subliniat importanța de a garanta că drepturile minorităților și ale refugiaților sunt protejate în Irak.

2. Misiunea de asistență a ONU în Irak nu are un mandat pentru protecția taberei Hurriya. ÎR/VP va continua să solicite guvernului irakian să își îndeplinească îndatoririle și responsabilitățile prin garantarea siguranței locuitorilor taberei, în conformitate cu Memorandumul de înțelegere din 25 decembrie 2011 dintre Guvernul Republicii Irak și Organizația Națiunilor Unite. Recent, ÎR/VP a constatat cu satisfacție că au fost realizate anumite progrese în ceea ce privește protecția locuitorilor din tabăra Hurriya și că au fost luate măsuri de securitate suplimentare, inclusiv instalarea unor bunkere și ziduri de securitate (*T-walls*) sub supravegherea ONU.

ÎR/VP a subliniat în repetate rânduri sprijinul său deplin pentru procesul actual de relocare a locuitorilor taberei în țări terțe, pe care îl consideră singura soluție pașnică și durabilă. UE a avut cea mai importantă contribuție în cadrul acestui efort, cofinanțând operațiunea printr-un pachet financiar de 14 milioane EUR, alături de agențiile ONU implicate — în special ICNUR și UNOPS. Atacurile asupra taberei Ashraf și atacurile anterioare asupra taberei Hurriya ne reamintesc necesitatea urgentă de a accelera acest proces, cu cooperarea locuitorilor taberelor și a țărilor terțe care sunt dispuse să îi primească.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011311/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Camp Ashraf hostages held by Iraqi Government

On 1 September 2013, Iraqi security forces attacked Iranian dissidents in Camp Ashraf in Iraq, killing 52 people and detaining seven. On 13 September 2013 The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that among those detained are six women, and that they are being held at an unidentified location in Iraq and risk being returned to Iran. Under the Geneva Convention, hostages are recognised as protected persons, and so the forcible return of these people to Iran, where they might face persecution because of their resistance to the Iranian regime, constitutes a serious breach of international law.

Camp Hurriya — where the last 42 refugees from Camp Ashraf were forcibly transferred and where more than 3 400 Iranian dissidents are now held — is not sufficiently secure and it has been the target of attacks, the most recent of which occurred on 9 February 2013, killing at least eight and wounding a further 100.

1. Will the High Representative visit Camp Hurriya to show the Union's concern about the situation of the residents there?

2. Will the High Representative ask the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to secure Camp Hurriya so as to protect it from attacks by Iraqi forces and supporters of the Iranian regime?

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

1. The HR/VP visited Iraq in June 2013. On that occasion she met with senior representatives of the Government of Iraq and highlighted to them the importance of ensuring that the rights of minorities and refugees in Iraq were protected.

2. The UN Assistance Mission for Iraq does not have a mandate for the protection of Camp Hurriya. The HR/VP will continue to call on the Government of Iraq to fulfill its duties and responsibilities by ensuring the safety of the camp residents, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding of 25 December 2011 between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. She was pleased to learn recently that some progress is being made in the protection of the residents of Camp Hurriya and that additional security measures have been taken, including the installation of bunkers and T-walls under the United Nations' supervision.

The HR/VP has repeatedly stressed her full support to the ongoing process of resettlement of the camp residents to third countries as the only peaceful and durable solution. The EU has been the largest contributor to this effort, co-financing the operation with an envelope of 14 million euros together with the UN agencies involved — notably the UNHCR and UNOPS. The attacks on Camp Ashraf and the previous on Camp Hurriya, remind us of the urgency to accelerate this process, with the cooperation of both the residents and third countries that are ready to receive them.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011312/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Strategia Uniunii Europene pentru regiunea Dunării

Strategia Uniunii Europene pentru regiunea Dunării a fost adoptată în aprilie 2011, obiectivul ei fiind acela de a îmbunătăți eficacitatea, efectul de pârghie și impactul politicilor prin gestionarea acestora la nivel regional transnațional și crearea de sinergii între ele.

Dintre cele 14 țări care fac parte din regiunea Dunării, opt sunt state membre, în timp ce celelalte șase sunt țări candidate sau partenere ale Uniunii Europene. Acțiunile și proiectele desfășurate sub egida Strategiei Uniunii Europene pentru regiunea Dunării ar putea aduce beneficii țărilor din afara UE din regiune și ar putea sprijini procesele de integrare și cooperare dintre țările din regiune. Cele șase țări din afara UE participă deja la coordonarea zonelor prioritare și la grupurile de coordonare.

1. Ce măsuri are de gând Comisia să adopte pentru a facilita participarea acestor țări la Strategia UE pentru regiunea Dunării?

2. Ce tip de finanțare, disponibil pentru activitățile din cadrul strategiei pentru Dunăre, poate fi accesat și de țările din regiunea Dunării care nu fac parte din UE?

Răspuns dat de dl Hahn în numele Comisiei
(28 noiembrie 2013)

În cadrul strategiei UE pentru regiunea Dunării, statele membre ale UE și țările terțe cooperează la același nivel. Acestea împart sarcinile de coordonare a domeniilor prioritare, iar punctele naționale de contact din toate țările sunt implicate în aceeași măsură în totalitatea aspectelor și discuțiilor, ca de exemplu în cadrul Grupului la nivel înalt, o platformă de coordonare a tuturor celor 28 de state membre ale UE.

Principala diferență rămâne la nivelul finanțării. Această situație poate fi soluționată parțial apelând la fonduri private (a se vedea cazul ridicării epavelor în Serbia), implicând bănci și instituții de finanțare (așa cum se procedează în cadrul platformei pentru finanțare în regiunea Dunării) sau utilizând Instrumentul de asistență pentru preaderare. De exemplu, Serbia a alocat suma de 19 milioane EUR pentru proiecte specifice Strategiei în cadrul componentei de cooperare transfrontalieră a IPA 2011.

Propunerile de regulamente care vizează perioada 2014-2020 le solicită statelor membre să facă trimitere la prioritățile pentru cooperare și la strategiile macro-regionale în cadrul acordurilor de parteneriat și al programelor relevante. Urmând aceeași logică, beneficiarilor IPA li se solicită să elaboreze strategii naționale și regionale pentru Instrumentul de asistență pentru preaderare (IPA II), pe o perioadă de 7 ani, odată cu documentele indicative de strategie la nivel național sau la nivel multinațional. Pentru prima dată, țările participante vor putea negocia cu țările învecinate în ceea ce privește înglobarea unor elemente pe care le consideră esențiale, utilizând platforma Strategiei. În plus, viitorul program de cooperare transnațională pentru regiunea Dunării va acoperi aceeași arie ca și Strategia UE pentru regiunea Dunării. Țările din afara UE sunt parteneri cu drepturi depline, iar proiectele din aceste țări pot fi finanțate în cadrul programului.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011312/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region was adopted in April 2011 and its objective is to improve the effectiveness, leverage and impact of policies by handling them at a regional level transnationally and creating synergies between them.

Of the 14 Danube Region countries, eight are EU Member States, while the other six are candidate countries or partners of the European Union. Actions and projects carried out under the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region could benefit the non-EU countries in the region and they would support integration processes and cooperation between countries in the area. The six non-EU Member States already take part in Priority Area coordination and in Steering Groups.

1. What actions is the Commission taking to facilitate the participation of these countries in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region?

2. What kind of funding is available for Danube strategy activities, accessible to non-EU countries in the Danube region?

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

In the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, EU Member States and non-EU countries cooperate at the same level. They share coordination tasks of priority areas, and national contact points of all countries are equally involved in all settings and discussions, such as in the High Level Group, a steering platform of all 28 EU Member States.

The main difference remains in the level of funding. This can be partly addressed through private funds, as for example in the lifting of shipwrecks in Serbia, by involving financing institutions and banks, as done via the Danube Financing Platform, and through the use of the Instrument for Pre-Accession. For example, Serbia earmarked EUR 19 million for Strategy-specific projects in the 2011 IPA cross-border cooperation component.

In the 2014-2020 period, the proposed regulations require from Member States a reference to the priorities for cooperation and macro-regional strategies in their Partnership Agreements and relevant programmes. Following the same logic, IPA beneficiaries are requested to establish 7-year national and regional strategies for the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA II) with their country or multi-country indicative strategy papers. For the first time, the participating countries will be able to negotiate with their neighbours to take on board elements they consider vital, using the platform of the strategy. In addition, the future transnational cooperation programme for the Danube Region will cover the same geography as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Non-EU countries are full partners and projects from these countries can be funded within the programme.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011313/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE

Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE sunt singurele unități militare ale UE gata oricând pentru posibile operațiuni de reacție rapidă din partea Uniunii, însă au fost utilizate foarte rar. Există întrebări cu privire la fiabilitatea acestora, precum și cu privire la modul în care ar putea fi utilizate în mod flexibil împreună cu alte instrumente ale Uniunii.

În urma unei reuniuni informale a miniștrilor apărării din UE, din septembrie 2013, s-a hotărât ca viitorul summit european pe teme de apărare să abordeze și viitorul Grupurilor tactice de luptă ale UE.

Ce propuneri va prezenta Înaltul Reprezentant la summitul pe teme de apărare din decembrie 2013?

Cum poate fi îmbunătățită actuala Strategie de securitate a UE astfel încât Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE să fie utilizate într-un mod mai flexibil?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

Viitorul răspunsului militar rapid al UE, inclusiv al grupurilor tactice de luptă ale UE, reprezintă un subiect important în cadrul pregătirilor pentru Consiliul European privind securitatea și apărarea din decembrie 2013.

Argumentele în favoarea unor forțe extrem de bine instruite și interoperabile, disponibile în timp foarte scurt pentru operațiuni UE, sunt mai puternice ca niciodată. Grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE continuă să fie singurul instrument militar în stand-by pentru eventuale acțiuni de reacție rapidă în cadrul politicii de securitate și apărare comune (PSAC). Deși grupurile tactice de luptă ale UE au un rol esențial în sprijinirea consolidării eficacității și interoperabilității forțelor militare ale statelor membre, acestea nu au fost încă solicitate să intervină. După apelul de anul trecut al Consiliului European de a consolida capacitatea UE de utilizare a capabilităților corespunzătoare în mod eficient și rapid, s-au efectuat întreprins acțiuni ample menite să sporească solicitările de intervenție a tactice pe teren cu același nivel de ambiție (două grupuri tactice în stand-by).

În raportul final privind PSAC adresat președintelui Consiliului European, ÎR/VP a făcut o serie de propuneri concrete pentru a mări eficacitatea, vizibilitatea și impactul PSAC, inclusiv prin consolidarea capacității de desfășurare a forțelor existente la nivelul UE. Aceasta include dezvoltarea în continuare a răspunsului rapid al UE, în special folosind grupurile tactice de luptă într-un mod mai flexibil, dezvoltându-le modularitatea și consolidându-le nivelul de formare (exerciții/certificare) și capacitatea de reacție în contextul forței de reacție rapidă a UE. În paralel continuă eforturile de atenuare a decalajelor care persistă între statele membre în ceea ce privește lista de disponibilități pentru grupurile tactice ale UE, pe baza abordării de tip națiune-cadru convenite de statele membre în 2012, menită să conducă la completarea mai frecventă a listei de disponibilități. Condițiile financiare ale unor eventuale acțiuni ale grupurilor tactice de luptă ale UE au fost îmbunătățite. Se preconizează o discuție mai detaliată asupra aspectelor financiare și în contextul revizuirii periodice a respectivei decizii a Consiliului.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011313/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU Battlegroups

The EU Battlegroups are the only EU military units that are on standby for possible rapid response operations on the part of the Union, but they have been used very rarely. There are questions over their viability and over how they can be flexibly employed in conjunction with other Union instruments.

Following an informal meeting of EU defence ministers in September 2013, it was decided that the upcoming European Summit on defence matters should also address the future of the EU Battlegroups.

What proposals will the High Representative present at the December 2013 defence summit?

How can the current EU Security Strategy be improved so that the EU Battlegroups can be used in a more flexible way?

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

Within the preparations for the December 2013 European Council on security and defence, the future of the EU military rapid response, including the EU Battlegroups (BGs), features prominently.

The case for highly capable and interoperable forces, available at very short notice for EU operations, is stronger than ever. EU BGs remain the single military tool on stand-by for possible Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) rapid response actions. Whilst EU BGs are instrumental in helping strengthen the effectiveness and interoperability of Member States' (MS) military forces, they have yet to be deployed. Following last year's call from the European Council to strengthen the EU's ability to deploy the right capabilities efficiently and rapidly, extensive work has been carried out to increase the BGs' usability in the field — with the same level of ambition (two BGs in stand-by).

In her recent final Report on CSDP to the President of the European Council, the HR/VP has made a number of concrete proposals for increasing the effectiveness, visibility and impact of CSDP including through strengthening the EU's deployability. This encompasses further developing the EU Rapid Response, notably using the BGs in a more flexible way through developing their modularity and strengthening their training (exercises/certification) and responsiveness to the overall EU rapid reaction. Efforts continue in parallel to mitigate the persistent gaps in the EU BG roster, using the framework Nation approach agreed in 2012 by Member States and aimed at triggering more frequent offers to the roster.

Financial conditions for possible deployment of EU BG**s** have been improved. It is intended to further discuss financial aspects, also in the context of the regular revision of the respective Council Decision.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011314/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Legături între spălarea banilor și fotbal

Industria sportului este unul dintre numeroasele sectoare care atrag infractorii ca urmare a multiplelor tranzacții financiare și a numărului mare de persoane implicate în acestea. Fotbalul este de departe cel mai important sport din lume. Potrivit raportului anual privind finanțele în fotbal realizat de Deloitte, în 2012, piața europeană a fotbalului a generat o cifră de afaceri de 19,4 miliarde EUR și nu a fost afectată de recesiunea globală.

La 5 februarie 2013, Comisia a adoptat o propunere de revizuire a Directivei UE privind combaterea spălării banilor. În urma scandalurilor legate de meciuri aranjate în fotbalul european, Comisia a propus extinderea domeniului de aplicare a directivei pentru a acoperi și pariurile din domeniul fotbalului, nu numai cazinourile.

Totuși sistemele de spălare a banilor în fotbal nu se limitează la pariuri. Cele mai mari sume de bani sunt tranzacționate în contextul transferurilor de jucători, iar operațiunile financiare realizate între cluburi de fotbal camuflează uneori fraude fiscale sau spălarea banilor obținuți din activități infracționale.

Ce măsuri ia Comisia pentru combaterea sistemelor transnaționale de spălare a banilor care afectează în prezent fotbalul din Europa?

Răspuns dat de dl Barnier în numele Comisiei
(29 noiembrie 2013)

Comisia este conștientă de existența riscurilor de spălare de bani asociate sectorului fotbalului. Un raport publicat în iulie 2009 de Grupul de Acțiune Financiară Internațională analizează în mod specific spălarea de bani prin intermediul fotbalului și cuprinde exemple de astfel de cazuri. Scopul acestui raport și al altor rapoarte similare este să informeze autoritățile competente și entitățile obligate cu privire la riscurile de spălare de bani, astfel încât acestea să poată fi atenuate cu mai multă eficacitate. În conformitate cu standardele internaționale, în cadrul juridic pe care l-a propus, Comisia nu a sugerat ca sectorul fotbalului să facă obiectul unui tratament special: corupția este deja o infracțiune principală și toate veniturile ilicite rezultate din aceasta ar trebui să fie identificate prin sistemul de control existent (sectorul financiar, avocați, contabili, sectorul jocurilor de noroc etc.). Consolidarea abordării bazate pe riscuri din propunerea Comisiei ar trebui să ducă la tratarea mai atentă la riscuri a domeniilor cu risc mai ridicat, acestea fiind identificate ca urmare a noii obligații impuse statelor membre de a realiza evaluări ale riscurilor la nivel național.

În ceea ce privește riscurile de spălare de bani generate de transferurile de jucători, Comisia salută transparența sporită conferită tranzacțiilor legate de transferurile internaționale de adoptarea, de către FIFA, a sistemului de reglementare a transferurilor [*Transfer Matching System* (TMS)]; Comisia încurajează, la rândul său, autoritățile din sectorul fotbalului să instituie sisteme similare pentru transferurile naționale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011314/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Links between money laundering and football

The sporting industry is one of the many sectors that are attractive to criminals because of the numerous monetary transactions and the large number of individuals involved. Football is by far the biggest sport in the world. According to the Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, in 2012 the European football market was worth EUR 19.4 billion and was not affected by the global recession.

On 5 February 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal to review the EU's Anti-Money Laundering Directive. In the aftermath of the scandals involving match-fixing in European football, the Commission proposed broadening the scope of the directive beyond casinos, so as also to cover gambling on football.

However, money-laundering schemes in football are not limited to gambling. The biggest sums in football are exchanged in the context of transfers of players, and financial operations conducted between football clubs sometimes hide tax fraud or laundering of profits from criminal operations.

What action is the Commission taking against transnational money laundering schemes currently affecting football in Europe?

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

The Commission is conscious of the existence of money laundering risks associated with the football sector. A report published by the Financial Action Task Force in July 2009 looks specificially into money laundering through the football sector, and includes money laundering case examples. The purpose of this and similar reports is to inform competent authorities and obliged entities about money laundering risks, so that those risks can be more effectively mitigated. In line with international standards, the Commission has not singled out the football sector for particular treatment under its proposed legal framework: corruption is already a predicate offence, and any illicit proceeds deriving therefrom should be identified via the existing system of gatekeepers (the financial sector, lawyers, accountants, the gambling sector, etc.). The reinforcement of the risk-based approach in the Commission's proposal should result in more risk-sensitive handling of higher risk areas, with such areas being identified as a result of the new obligation on Member States to produce national risk assessments.

With regard to the risks of money laundering provoked by the transfers of players, the Commission welcomes the greater transparency brought into the transactions linked to international transfers by the adoption of FIFA's Transfer Matching System (TMS); the Commission also encourages football authorities to establish similar schemes for national transfers.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011315/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Noaptea Cercetătorilor

Noaptea Cercetătorilor din acest an, care, desfășurată la 27 septembrie 2013, a avut o acoperire scăzută în mass-media din Uniunea Europeană și nu a atras un număr mare de vizitatori. În unele state membre ale UE, cum ar fi România, Noaptea Cercetătorilor este un eveniment care atrage iubitorii de științe în muzee și se bucură de o largă acoperire în presă; însă, în alte state membre, foarte puțini oameni participă la activități.

Noaptea Cercetătorilor are loc anual în Europa, în a patra vineri a lunii septembrie. Conform DG Cercetare din cadrul Comisiei, au loc evenimente în 25 de state membre ale UE, precum și în Bosnia și Herțegovina, Insulele Feroe, Fosta Republică Iugoslavă a Macedoniei, Islanda, Israel, Muntenegru, Serbia și Turcia.

Evenimentul (al cărui cost total este de 7,5 milioane de euro) primește anual 4 milioane de euro din partea programului „Acțiunile Marie Curie" al UE, care promovează cariere în cercetare la nivel internațional. Instituțiile care doresc să participe la activități trebuie să completeze finanțarea din partea UE și au adesea dificultăți în găsirea de fonduri proprii.

1. Are Comisia în vedere o evaluare acțiunii Noaptea Cercetătorilor, pentru a identifica modalitățile de îmbunătățire a comunicării cu privire la acțiune și a participării publicului din UE?

2. Ce eforturi depune Comisia pentru a sprijini instituțiile participante în găsirea fondurilor suplimentare necesare pentru a beneficia de finanțările UE pentru Noaptea Cercetătorilor?

Răspuns dat de dna Vassiliou în numele Comisiei
(28 noiembrie 2013)

În martie 2013, Comisia a publicat evaluarea intermediară a acțiunilor Marie Curie ([1]) din cadrul celui de-al Șaptelea program-cadru al Comunității Europene pentru activități de cercetare, de dezvoltare tehnologică și demonstrative (2007-2013) ([2]). Concluziile privind activitățile organizate cu ocazia „Nopții cercetătorilor" au fost pozitive: „Dimensiunea europeană a evenimentului i-a sporit vizibilitatea și credibilitatea, asigurând astfel dinamismul necesar" ([3]). Cu toate acestea, evaluarea a propus măsuri suplimentare pentru a consolida potențialul de comunicare al „Nopții cercetătorilor", inclusiv cerința ca dimensiunea europeană să fie clar vizibilă la fiecare eveniment.

În urma acestor recomandări, Comisia propune ca activitatea să fie redenumită „Noaptea europeană a cercetătorilor" în cadrul acțiunilor Marie Skłodowska-Curie din Programul-cadru pentru cercetare și inovare Orizont 2020 (2014-2020) ([4]). Se va acorda mai multă atenție dimensiunii europene a acestui eveniment. De exemplu, organizatorii vor fi încurajați să facă apel la cercetătorii implicați în proiecte finanțate prin Orizont 2020.

„Noaptea europeană a cercetătorilor" din cadrul acțiunilor Marie Skłodowska-Curie din programul-cadru Orizont 2020 va permite organizatorilor să solicite, pentru prima dată, finanțare din partea UE pentru o perioadă de doi ani, astfel încât să poată sprijini două evenimente anuale. Această viziune pe termen mai lung ar trebui să permită organizatorilor „Nopții cercetătorilor" să obțină mai ușor finanțări suplimentare din alte surse.

În plus, este evident că „Noaptea cercetătorilor" se bucură deja de o acoperire mediatică semnificativă și de un nivel ridicat de participare peste tot în Europa. Ediția din septembrie 2013 a fost prezentată în 24 de reportaje TV și în 350 de articole de presă (maximum 45 dintr-o singură țară). La eveniment au participat 1,2 milioane de persoane, cu 20 % mai mult față de 2012.

([1]) „Evaluare intermediară a acțiunilor Marie Curie din cadrul PC7": http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/mariecurie/fp7report_en.pdf
([2]) DECIZIA NR. 1982/2006/CE A PARLAMENTULUI EUROPEAN ȘI A CONSILIULUI din 18 decembrie 2006.
([3]) „Evaluare intermediară a acțiunilor Marie Curie din cadrul PC7", pagina 143.
([4]) COM(2011) 808 final, 30.11.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011315/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Researchers' Night

This year's Researchers' Night, which was held on 27 September 2013, had little coverage in the media in the European Union and did not attract large numbers of visitors. In some EU Member States, such as Romania, the Researchers' Night is an event which attracts science lovers to museums and enjoys press coverage; however, in other Member States very few people attend the activities.

The Researchers' Night takes place every year across Europe on the fourth Friday of September. According to the Commission's DG Research, there are events in 25 EU Member States, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Faroe Islands, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

The event (whose total cost is EUR 7.5 million) receives EUR 4 million each year in support from the EU's Marie Curie Actions, which promote international research careers. Institutions wishing to participate in the activities must match the EU funding and often have difficulties in finding their own funding.

1. Is the Commission planning an evaluation of the Researchers' Night action, in order to identify ways of improving communication concerning the action and participation of the public in the EU?

2. What efforts is the Commission making to help participating institutions find the additional funding needed to receive European funding for the Researchers' Night?

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

In March 2013 the Commission published the Interim Evaluation of the Marie Curie Actions ([1]) under the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) ([2]). The findings regarding the Researchers' Night activity were positive, stating that 'The European nature of the event helped it gain visibility and credibility, thus ensuring the necessary dynamism' ([3]). However, the evaluation proposed additional measures to strengthen the communication potential of the Researchers' Night, including a requirement for the European aspect to be clearly visible at each event.

Following these recommendations, the Commission proposes to re-name the activity 'European Researchers' Night' under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([4]). More focus will be given to the European dimension of the Night. For example, organisers will be encouraged to involve researchers from Horizon 2020-funded projects.

The 'European Researchers' Night' under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions of Horizon 2020 will for the first time enable organisers to apply for two years of EU funding to support two annual events. This longer-term perspective should facilitate the task of Researchers' Night organisers in obtaining additional funding from other sources.

Furthermore, it is clear that Researchers' Night already has significant press coverage and high attendance throughout Europe. The September 2013 edition produced 24 TV reports and 350 press articles (no more than 45 from one country). 1.2 million people attended, a 20% increase from 2012.

([1]) 'FP7 Marie Curie Actions Interim Evaluation' http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/mariecurie/fp7report_en.pdf
([2]) Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006.
([3]) 'FP7 Marie Curie Actions Interim Evaluation', Page 143.
([4]) COM(2011) 808 final, 30.11.2011.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011316/13
adresată Comisiei
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Risipa de alimente

Se estimează că în Europa, în fiecare an, se risipesc până la 89 de milioane de tone de alimente. Această cifră echivalează cu 180 de kg de alimente aruncate de fiecare persoană care locuiește în UE.

Parlamentul European a adoptat la 19 ianuarie 2012 o rezoluție referitoare la evitarea risipei de alimente. În acest raport, Parlamentul a invitat Comisia să coopereze cu Organizația pentru Alimentație și Agricultură (FAO) la stabilirea de obiective comune pentru reducerea risipei de alimente la nivel mondial. Parlamentul a invitat Comisia să stabilească obiective specifice de prevenire a risipei de alimente pentru statele membre, în cadrul obiectivelor de prevenire a generării deșeurilor, care trebuie îndeplinite de statele membre până în 2014, conform recomandărilor Directivei-cadru privind deșeurile.

În ce fel a cooperat Comisia cu FAO în stabilirea de obiective comune de reducere a risipei de alimente la nivel mondial?

A stabilit deja Comisia obiectivele pe care statele membre trebuie să le îndeplinească până în 2014?

Răspuns dat de dl Potočnik în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

Comisia colaborează cu FAO pentru a găsi metode de combatere a risipei de alimente, însă până în prezent nu s-au stabilit relații oficiale de cooperare.

Resursele de hrană au fost incluse printre domeniile prioritare de acțiune ale inițiativei emblematice „O Europă eficientă din punctul de vedere al utilizării resurselor" din cadrul Strategiei Europa 2020, iar Foaia de parcurs către o Europă eficientă din punct de vedere al utilizării resurselor ([1]) stabilește ca obiective pentru 2020 reducerea cu 20 % a cantităților de resurse utilizate în lanțul alimentar și cu 50 % a deșeurilor alimentare comestibile.

Comisia a realizat recent o consultare publică privind o alimentație sustenabilă, care a analizat în detaliu modalitățile de reducere a risipei de alimente. S-au primit peste 630 de răspunsuri din partea unor asociații, inclusiv a unor asociații reprezentate la nivel mondial, a unor ONG-uri și din partea cetățenilor. În prezent, Comisia analizează cu atenție aceste contribuții și va examina problema stabilirii de obiective în contextul revizuirii legislației privind deșeurile, planificate pentru 2014.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final, 20.9.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011316/13
to the Commission
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Waste of food

It is estimated that up to 89 million tons of food are wasted in Europe every year. This figure amounts to 180 kg of food thrown away by every man, woman and child across the EU.

Parliament adopted a resolution on 19 January 2012 on how to avoid food wastage. In this report, Parliament urged the Commission to cooperate with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in setting common targets to reduce global food waste. Parliament called on the Commission to create specific food waste prevention targets for Member States, as part of the waste prevention targets to be reached by Member States by 2014 as recommended by the Waste Framework Directive.

How has the Commission cooperated with the FAO to set common targets for reducing global food waste?

Has the Commission already established the targets to be reached by the Member States by 2014?

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

The Commission is in contact with the FAO on how to tackle food waste, but as yet no formal cooperation has been established.

Food was identified as a priority area for action in the Resource Efficiency Flagship of the Europe 2020 strategy, and the Roadmap for Resource Efficiency ([1]) sets the milestones of achieving a 20% reduction of food chain resource inputs and a 50% reduction of edible food waste by 2020.

The Commission has recently run a public consultation on food sustainablity which looked in detail at how to reduce food waste. Over 630 responses were received from associations, including globally representative associations, NGOs and citizens. The Commission is now analysing these contributions in detail and will examine the issue of targets in the context of its waste review planned for 2014.

([1]) COM(2011) 571 final of 20.9.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011319/13
alla Commissione
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Compatibilità, con le norme europee in materia di diritti fondamentali, degli elementi probatori segreti, dei processi e delle procedure con elementi secretati

L'ordinamento giuridico del Regno Unito riconosce le cosiddette «procedure con elementi secretati» (closed material procedures, CMP), ossia l'utilizzo di elementi probatori segreti forniti dalle autorità ai tribunali, non accessibili all'imputato o al suo legale. A seguito dell'udienza, il tribunale può formulare una sentenza «secretata», unitamente a quella non secretata, e tale sentenza non è mai rivelata all'individuo o al suo legale, rimanendo completamente nascosta al pubblico.

Tale procedura è utilizzata presso la commissione speciale per i ricorsi in materia di immigrazione (Special Immigration Appeals Commission), che si occupa di espulsioni e cittadinanza. Può essere utilizzata anche per procedimenti relativi a individui sospettati di essere coinvolti in attività legate al terrorismo.

La legge sulla giustizia e la sicurezza del 2013 (Justice and Security Act 2013) di recente adozione, ha esteso ulteriormente l'utilizzo delle procedure con elementi secretati nel sistema giudiziario civile, nei casi che generano timori per la sicurezza nazionale. Il governo ha presentato degli emendamenti alle norme di procedura civile, allo scopo di attuare tali modifiche, lasciando poco spazio a discussioni e analisi, e senza pubblicare un progetto di modifica preliminare.

Il governo ha indicato 20 cause attualmente pendenti per le quali in futuro si potrebbe applicare una procedura con elementi secretati, tra le quali figura la causa civile intentata da Abdel Hakim Belhaj, che accusa il Regno Unito di coinvolgimento nella sua consegna e conseguente tortura in Libia. Nelle udienze preliminari, i legali del governo hanno chiarito che, qualora la causa dovesse proseguire, chiederanno che essa sia giudicata secondo una procedura con elementi secretati.

Gli organismi dell'ONU e le ONG hanno più volte manifestato le loro preoccupazioni in merito all'utilizzo, nel Regno Unito, di procedure con elementi secretati e di elementi probatori segreti.

È a conoscenza la Commissione del fatto che nel Regno Unito si utilizzano elementi probatori, processi e sentenze segreti? È la Commissione a conoscenza dell'utilizzo di tali procedure da parte di altri Stati membri? In caso affermativo, quali misure intende adottare? Non ritiene la Commissione che tali procedure costituiscano un grave scostamento dai requisiti fondamentali di equità nei procedimenti giudiziari, e quindi una violazione della direttiva 2012/13/UE sul diritto all'informazione nei procedimenti penali?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(19 dicembre 2013)

Il diritto a un ricorso effettivo e a un giudice imparziale è sancito dall'articolo 47 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea. Tuttavia, ai sensi dell'articolo 51, paragrafo 1, della Carta, le sue disposizioni si rivolgono agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione.

La Corte di giustizia si è già pronunciata ([1]) in un procedimento conclusosi dinanzi alla commissione speciale per i ricorsi in materia di immigrazione ([2]) stabilendo che il giudice nazionale deve assicurarsi che la mancata comunicazione all'interessato della motivazione sulla quale è fondata una decisione restrittiva nonché degli elementi di prova pertinenti sia limitata allo stretto necessario ([3]).

([1]) Sentenza della Corte del 4 giugno 2013 nella causa C-300/11, ZZ (non ancora pubblicata).
([2]) La causa riguardava il diritto di un cittadino francese di entrare nel territorio del Regno Unito e soggiornarvi.
([3]) La Corte ha inoltre stabilito che, in ogni caso, al cittadino dell'UE sia comunicata la sostanza di detti motivi in una maniera che tenga debito conto della necessaria segretezza degli elementi di prova.

La direttiva 2012/13/UE ([4]) dispone che le persone in stato di arresto o di detenzione hanno diritto di accesso alla documentazione sostanziale del caso ([5]). Un'eccezione di portata limitata a questo diritto è prevista solo se il rifiuto dell'accesso è strettamente necessario per salvaguardare un interesse pubblico rilevante, ad esempio nei casi in cui l'accesso potrebbe nuocere gravemente alla sicurezza nazionale degli Stati membri interessati. La Commissione europea seguirà da vicino l'attuazione della direttiva 2012/13/UE da parte degli Stati membri.

La procedura esperita dinnanzi alla commissione speciale per i ricorsi in materia di immigrazione e il ricorso a tali norme nel sistema giudiziario civile non rientrano nell'ambito di applicazione della direttiva 2012/13/UE ([6])

In ogni caso, spetta agli Stati membri e alle loro autorità giudiziarie garantire che i diritti fondamentali siano effettivamente rispettati e tutelati conformemente alle rispettive legislazioni nazionali e agli obblighi internazionali in materia di diritti dell'uomo.

([4]) Direttiva 2012/13/UE, del 22 maggio 2012, sul diritto all'informazione nei procedimenti penali (GU L 142 dell'1.6.2012, pag. 1). La direttiva dovrà essere recepita dagli Stati membri entro il 2 giugno 2014.

([5]) Articolo 7.

([6]) La direttiva si applica infatti esclusivamente ai procedimenti penali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011319/13
to the Commission
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Compatibility of secret evidence, trials and closed material procedures with European fundamental rights standards

The UK legal system allows for so-called 'closed material procedures' (CMP), i.e., essentially, the use of secret evidence provided by the authorities in courts and tribunals which is not accessible to the defendant or to his/her lawyer. Following the hearing the court may issue a 'closed' judgment together with an open one, and the secret judgment is never given to the individual or her/his lawyer, remaining completely hidden from public view.

This procedure is used in the Special Immigration Appeals Commission, which deals with deportations and citizenship. It can also be used in proceedings related to individuals allegedly involved in terrorism-related activity.

The recently adopted Justice and Security Act 2013 further extended the use of CMP across the civil justice system for use in cases that give rise to national security concerns. Amendments were tabled by the government to the Civil Procedure Rules in order to implement such modifications, with little time for debate and scrutiny and with no previously published draft.

The government has indicated that there are currently 20 cases pending to which a CMP may apply in the future, including the civil case brought by Abdel Hakim Belhaj, who alleges UK involvement in his rendition and subsequent torture in Libya. In preliminary hearings lawyers for the government have made it clear that if the case proceeds they will apply for it to be heard under CMP.

UN bodies and NGOs have repeatedly expressed concern at the growing use of CMPs in the UK and the use of secret evidence.

Is the Commission aware of the use of secret evidence, secret trials and secret judgments in the UK? Is the Commission aware of any other Member States with similar provisions and, if so, what measures will it take? Does the Commission not believe that such procedures mark a serious departure from the basic requirements of fairness in judicial procedures, thereby violating Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information in criminal proceedings?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2013)

The right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial is enshrined in Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. However, and according to Article 51(1), the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they implement Union law.

The Court of Justice already ruled ([1]) on a closed procedure before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission ([2]) that the national court has to ensure that the refusal to disclose to the EU citizen concerned the grounds on which a restrictive decision is based and to disclose the related evidence is limited to that which is strictly necessary ([3]).

Directive 2012/13/EU ([4]), provides that an arrested and detained person has the right of access to the materials of the case ([5]). A limited exception from this right is foreseen only if the refusal is strictly necessary to safeguard an important public interest, such as in cases where access could seriously harm the national security of the Member Stat concerned. The European Commission will closely monitor the implementation of the directive 2012/13/EU by Member States.

The procedure used before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission and the use of such rules in the civil justice system do not fall within the scope of Directive 2012/13/EU ([6]).

([1]) Judgment of the Court of 4 June 2013 in Case C-300/11 ZZ (not yet published).
([2]) The case concerned a right of a French national to enter the UK and reside there.
([3]) The Court also ruled that the EU citizen must be informed, in any event, of the essence of those grounds in a manner which takes due account of the necessary confidentiality of the evidence.
([4]) Directive 2012/13/EU of 22. May 2012 on the right to information in criminal proceedings, OJ. L 142 of 1.6.2012, p. 1-10. The directive has to be transposed by Member States by 2 June 2014.
([5]) Article 7.
([6]) It applies to criminal proceedings only.

In any event, Member States, including their judicial authorities, have to ensure that fundamental rights are effectively respected and protected in accordance with their national legislation and international human rights obligations.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011320/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Directiva de retorno y necesidad de garantizar el derecho a la vida de los migrantes

En respuesta a mis pasadas preguntas E-005391/2013 y E-005506/2013, Cecilia Malmström, Comisaria de Asuntos de Interior, sostenía que la Directiva de retorno (2008/115/CE) tan solo obliga a los Estados miembros a proporcionar atención sanitaria a los inmigrantes «que estén sujetos a procedimientos de retorno».

Esta exclusión implica que los Estados miembros no se ven obligados a velar por la salud de las personas migrantes que se encuentren dentro de sus fronteras. Este vacío legal permite que países como España estén negando de manera sistemática la atención sanitaria básica a inmigrantes «que no hayan sido interceptados y no estén sujetos a una decisión de retorno». Esto implica que determinados Estados miembros están negando de manera indirecta el derecho fundamental a la vida de las personas migrantes y violando el Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos.

Resulta significativo que esta Directiva de retorno, que suscitó tantos titulares y tan intenso proceso de negociación en las instituciones de la Unión Europea, haya pasado por alto la necesidad de proteger la vida de estas personas, que, pese a carecer de documentos, continúan teniendo los derechos universales entre los que se encuentra el derecho a la vida. Esta Directiva de retorno se muestra como el marco inhumano que permite ignorar los derechos humanos fundamentales de los migrantes para proteger los muros de la «Europa fortaleza».

Considerando los gravísimos casos citados, ¿estima la Comisión necesario emplear su iniciativa legislativa para que los Estados miembros sean obligados por el Derecho europeo a proteger el derecho a la vida de las personas migrantes?

¿Piensa la Comisión condenar públicamente la actitud de los países que, como España, estén violando sistemáticamente los derechos de la población inmigrante irregular recogidos en dicho Convenio?

¿De qué forma piensa la Comisión exigir que los Estados miembros que sean parte del Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos cumplan las obligaciones impuestas por el mismo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de diciembre de 2013)

El artículo 168 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea dispone que «se garantizará un alto nivel de protección de la salud humana». Del mismo modo, el artículo 35 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea dispone que «toda persona tiene derecho a acceder a la prevención sanitaria y a beneficiarse de la atención sanitaria». De conformidad con el artículo 51, la Carta está dirigida a los Estados miembros cuando apliquen el Derecho de la Unión.

La Directiva de retorno obliga a los Estados miembros a expedir una decisión de retorno contra un nacional de un tercer país que se encuentre ilegalmente en su territorio. Los Estados miembros podrán, en cualquier momento, decidir conceder un permiso o autorización que otorgue un derecho de estancia por razones humanitarias o de otro tipo. Tal y como se recoge en la respuesta a la Pregunta E-5391/2013, el acceso a la atención sanitaria por parte de nacionales de terceros países que se encuentren ilegalmente y que no estén cubiertos por las disposiciones de la Directiva sobre el retorno ([1]), es decir, los inmigrantes en situación irregular que no han sido detenidos y que tampoco han sido objeto todavía de una decisión de retorno, no ha sido armonizado a nivel de la Unión.

Cabe concluir por tanto que, en el asunto que nos ocupa, los Estados miembros no intervienen durante la ejecución de la legislación de la UE en el sentido del artículo 51 de la Carta. Por lo tanto, corresponde únicamente a los Estados miembros velar por el cumplimiento de las obligaciones relativas a los derechos fundamentales derivadas, en particular, del Convenio Europeo sobre los Derechos Humanos, cuyo artículo 2 garantiza el derecho a la vida, y de su normativa interna.

([1]) 2008/115/EC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011320/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The Return Directive and the need to guarantee migrants' right to life

In answer to my previous Questions E-005391/2013 and E-005506/2013, Cecilia Malmström, the Commissioner for Home Affairs, argued that the Return Directive (2008/115/EC) only requires Member States to provide healthcare to immigrants 'who are subject to return procedures'.

This exclusion means that Member States are not obliged to safeguard the health of migrants who are on their territory. This legal vacuum allows countries like Spain to systematically deny basic healthcare to immigrants 'who have not been apprehended and not made the subject of a return decision yet'. That means that some Member States are indirectly denying migrants' fundamental right to life and are in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights.

It is significant that this Return Directive, which gave rise to so many headlines and such intense negotiations in the European Union institutions, has overlooked the need to protect the lives of these people, who, despite lacking documentation, still have their universal rights, including the right to life. This Return Directive shows itself to be the inhumane framework for ignoring migrants' fundamental human rights in order to protect the walls of 'fortress Europe'.

In view of the serious cases referred to, does the Commission think it should use its legislative initiative to ensure that Member States are bound by European law to protect migrants' right to life?

Does it intend to condemn publicly the attitude of countries like Spain, which systematically violate illegal immigrants' rights, as enshrined in the Convention?

How does the Commission intend to require Member States that are party to the European Convention on Human Rights to fulfil the obligations laid down therein?

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

Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that a 'high level of human health protection shall be ensured'. Likewise, Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that 'everyone has the right of access to preventive healthcare and the right to benefit from medical treatment'. According to its Article 51, the Charter is addressed to the Member States when they are implementing Union Law.

The Return Directive obliges Member States to issue a return decision to a third-country national staying illegally on their territory. Member States may at any moment decide to grant a permit or authorisations offering a right to stay for compassionate, humanitarian or other reasons. As set out in the reply to Question E-5391/2013, the access to healthcare of illegally staying third-country nationals who are not covered by the provisions of the Return Directive ([1]) — i.e. those irregular migrants staying on Member State territory who have not been apprehended and not yet made subject of a return decision — is not harmonised at Union level.

It appears that in the matter referred to, the Member States do not act in the course of implementation of EC law within the meaning of Art. 51 of the Charter. It is thus for Member States alone to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights as resulting notably from the European Convention on Human Rights — whose Article 2 guarantees the right to life — and from their internal legislation are respected.

([1]) 2008/115/EC.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011321/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Infracciones medioambientales reiteradas por parte de Gibraltar

En reiteradas ocasiones he preguntado a la Comisión Europea por diversas prácticas medioambientales contrarias a la normativa europea llevadas a cabo por parte de las autoridades de Gibraltar ([1]). En la mayoría de las ocasiones la respuesta obtenida consistía en informar de la apertura de un proceso de información con las autoridades del Reino Unido, incluyéndose en algún caso la solicitud al Reino Unido de información de las medidas correctoras de dichas prácticas contaminantes ([2]). La respuesta obtenida a la pregunta E-007028/2013, sobre la posible utilización del puerto seco de Gibraltar para capturar varias toneladas de melva así como los rellenos de tierras no hace sino aumentar la preocupación de este eurodiputado. Las aguas jurisdiccionales españolas que rodean al peñón de Gibraltar cuentan con una doble protección medioambiental por parte de la UE, ya que tanto España (ES6120032 Estrecho Oriental) como el Reino Unido (UKGIB0002 Southern Waters of Gibraltar) han sido autorizadas por parte de la Comisión Europea para declarar dichas aguas como lugar de importancia comunitaria (LIC) dentro de la Red Natura 2000 e implementar las correspondientes medidas de protección medioambiental. Resulta sorprendente que los hechos denunciados en la referida pregunta sean calificados por la Comisión como un simple acto de pesca, fuera del alcance competencial de la Comisión en virtud del Acta de Adhesión de 1972.

La Asociación Verdemar-Ecologistas en Acción presentó el 14 de junio de 2013 una denuncia ante la Dirección General de Medio Ambiente de la Comisión Europea que detallaba los daños ecológicos que la práctica de los rellenos está provocando, las consecuencias en la fauna y flora marinas protegidas, la presencia de gasolineras flotantes y la utilización del puerto seco de Gibraltar para capturar melva.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión que el puerto seco de Gibraltar se habría utilizado como arte de pesca? ¿Considera compatible dicha actuación con la normativa europea?

2. ¿En qué estado se encuentra la tramitación de la citada denuncia presentada por organizaciones ecologistas? ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión Europea para garantizar la efectiva protección medioambiental de unas aguas declaradas LIC?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

Como se indica en la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta E-007028/2013, en virtud del Acta por la que se regula la adhesión del Reino Unido a las Comunidades Europeas, la normativa en el ámbito de la política pesquera común no es aplicable a Gibraltar. En este contexto, la Comisión no ha evaluado si en este caso se ha utilizado un puerto seco como arte de pesca y si, en caso afirmativo, esta utilización sería compatible con la normativa antes citada.

Efectivamente, la Comisión ha recibido la denuncia a que se refiere Su Señoría, la cual está siendo también estudiada en relación con otras alegaciones en materia de medio ambiente que una serie de agentes han presentado recientemente contra Gibraltar. Una vez se haya entablado contacto con las autoridades del Reino Unido, los denunciantes recibirán una respuesta meditada por parte de la Comisión.

([1]) E-4560/2011, E-12441/2011, E-007803/2012, E-007190/2013 y E-007437/2013.
([2]) Respuesta a la pregunta E-007437/2013 referida a los rellenos de tierras que realiza Gibraltar en aguas de la Bahía de Algeciras protegidas por la normativa de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011321/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Repeated environmental infringements by Gibraltar

I have asked the Commission many times about various environmental practices carried out by the Gibraltarian authorities in contravention of European legislation ([1]). In most cases, the answer has been to announce the opening of an information process with the United Kingdom authorities, including, in some cases, requesting the United Kingdom for information on the corrective measures for such polluting practices ([2]). The answer to Question E-007028/2013, on possible use of the Gibraltar dry dock to catch many tonnes of bullet tuna — as well as the issue of landfills — only adds to my concern. The Spanish waters surrounding the Rock of Gibraltar are under dual environmental protection from the EU, the Commission having authorised both Spain (ES6120032 'Estrecho Oriental') and the United Kingdom (UKGIB0002 Southern Waters of Gibraltar) to declare these waters a site of Community importance (SCI) within the Natura 2000 network, and to implement environmental protection measures accordingly. It is surprising that the Commission classifies the facts reported in the abovementioned question as a simple act of fishing, outside the Commission's scope of competence under the 1972 Act of Accession.

On 14 June 2013, the Verdemar Ecologists in Action Association submitted a complaint to the Commission's Environment Directorate-General detailing the ecological damage caused by landfill practices, the consequences for protected marine fauna and flora, the presence of floating petrol stations and the use of the Gibraltar dry dock to catch bullet tuna.

1. Does the Commission consider the Gibraltar dry dock to have been used as fishing gear? Does it consider such action to be in line with European legislation?

2. What is the current status of the processing of the complaint lodged by environmental organisations? What measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure effective environmental protection for waters declared an SCI?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

As noted in the Commission's reply to Question E-007028/2013, according to the Treaties regulating the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Communities the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy do not apply in Gibraltar. In this context, the Commission has not assessed whether a dry dock in this case has been used as a fishery gear and if so whether that use would be compatible with such rules.

The Commission has indeed received a complaint as referred to by the Honourable Member. This is being assess also with regard to the wider environmental allegations recently made against Gibraltar by a number of other actors. Once contact has been taken with the UK authorities, the complainants will receive the Commission's considered response.

([1]) E-4560/2011, E-12441/2011, E-007803/2012, E-007190/2013 and E-007437/2013.
([2]) Answer to Question E-007437/2013 on landfilling by Gibraltar in waters of the Bay of Gibraltar protected under EU legislation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011322/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Inobservancia de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea por parte de Hungría en lo relativo a ayudas sociales y las personas sin hogar

El Parlamento húngaro acaba de aprobar una ley que castiga a quienes viven en la calle con multas, trabajos para la comunidad y penas de prisión. El Gobierno de Orbán pretende con esta ley asegurar el orden en los espacios públicos, incrementar la seguridad y al mismo tiempo proteger la salud de las personas sin techo ante la llegada del invierno.

El Ejecutivo húngaro se atreve a ofrecer este tipo de explicación contraviniendo el criterio de su Tribunal Constitucional, que considera este tipo de medidas incompatibles con la protección de la dignidad humana, e ignorando el artículo 34 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea, que reconoce en su apartado 3 el derecho a la ayuda social como medio para combatir la exclusión social y la pobreza.

El Gobierno húngaro considera las medidas adoptadas muy acertadas y en modo alguno se plantea que la ayuda social sea insuficiente para las personas sin hogar; de hecho, ha insistido en que la ocupación mensual de los refugios en Budapest nunca es completa. Las ONG del país presentan una realidad bien distinta, insistiendo en la falta de plazas en esos refugios.

Es oportuno recordar que la trayectoria de Hungría durante los últimos meses no ha sido ejemplar, y que en el año 2012 puso en peligro el Estado de Derecho con la aprobación de una serie de leyes antidemocráticas que desencadenó la apertura de varios procedimientos de infracción a instancias del Ejecutivo europeo.

1. ¿Ha tenido la Comisión noticia de la aprobación de la mencionada ley?

2. ¿Vulnera una ley como ésta la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea en lo relativo al derecho a ayuda social de los ciudadanos?

3. ¿Recibe Hungría fondos procedentes de la Unión Europea destinados a ayudas sociales? ¿En qué cuantía?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(9 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-007293/2013.

En el marco del período de programación 2007-2013, a través del Programa Operativo de Renovación Social financiado por el FSE, se han publicado cuatro convocatorias de propuestas, con un presupuesto total de 17,733 millones de euros. Estos proyectos están destinados 1) al establecimiento de una sólida base metodológica para los profesionales que trabajan en ese ámbito, 2) al desarrollo ulterior de los centros de acogida (incluida la prestación de servicios innovadores) y 3) al fomento de la vida independiente y la empleabilidad de las personas sin hogar, así como a la mejora de su situación en el mercado laboral.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011322/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Hungary's failure to respect the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union with regard to social assistance for homeless people

The Hungarian Parliament has just passed a law punishing people who live on the streets with fines, community work and imprisonment. With this law, Mr Orbán's government intends to ensure order in public spaces, improve security and, at the same time, protect homeless people's health ahead of the approaching winter.

The Hungarian Government dares to offer such explanations, contravening the judgment of its Constitutional Court, which considers such measures incompatible with the protection of human dignity, and ignoring Article 34(3) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which recognises the right to social assistance as a means of combating social exclusion and poverty.

The Hungarian Government considers the measures adopted to be very fitting and does not consider the social assistance given to homeless people to be lacking in any way; in fact, it has insisted that shelters in Budapest are never at full occupancy from month to month. Non-governmental organisations in the country paint a very different picture, pointing out that there are not enough places in these shelters.

It should be pointed out that Hungary's track record in recent months has not been exemplary, and that in 2012 it threatened the rule of law by approving a series of anti-democratic laws that led the Commission to open several infringement proceedings.

1. Has the Commission been informed of the adoption of the abovementioned law?

2. Does such a law infringe the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union with regard to the right of citizens to social assistance?

3. Does Hungary receive funds from the European Union intended for social assistance? How much?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007293/2013.

In the framework of the 2007-2013 programming period, through the ESF-funded Social Renewal OP, 4 calls for proposals have been launched, with a total budget of EUR 17,733 million. The schemes aimed at 1) the establishment of a solid methodological background for the professionals working in this field, 2) the further development of the shelters (including the provision of innovative services) and 3) the promotion of the independent living and employability of the homeless people, as well as the improvement of their labour-market situation.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011323/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Softwareentwicklungs-Kosten der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 „Datenverarbeitungskosten" von 811 000 EUR vorgesehen. Davon sollen 437 000 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte (data processing equipment), 359 000 EUR für Softwareentwicklungskosten und 15 000 EUR für andere externe Dienste für Datenverarbeitung genutzt werden. Dies entspricht IT-Kosten von 9 011 EUR pro Mitarbeiter, davon 4 855 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte und 3 988 EUR für Softwareentwicklung.

1. Welche Software wurde beziehungsweise wird für die Agentur im Jahr 2013 entwickelt?

2. Welche Software wurde in den Jahren 2011 (251 720 EUR tatsächlich genutzt) und 2012 (275 000 EUR vorgesehen) für die Agentur entwickelt und warum kann diese Software nicht weiter genutzt werden?

3. Warum ist diese Software nötig? Warum kann diese Software nicht in-house entwickelt werden? Warum können keine auf dem freien Markt oder unter kostenfreien Lizenzen verfügbare Softwarelösungen genutzt werden?

4. Wie genau schlüsseln sich die Kostenpunkte auf? Für welche Software-Entwicklungsleistungen enthält welcher Dienstleister welche Summe?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011324/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Räumlichkeiten der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 Mietkosten von 528 000 EUR, Nebenkosten von 119 000 EUR und „Reinigungs- und Unterhaltskosten" von 290 000 EUR vorgesehen. In der Erklärung des Mietkostenpostens vermerkt der Plan, dass auch Ausstellungsflächen („storefronts"), Garagen, Lagerräume und Parkplätze angemietet werden.

1. Wie viele Büros mit welchen Grundflächen wurden von der Agentur in Österreich im Jahr 2013 angemietet? In welchen Städten beziehungsweise Stadtvierteln liegen diese Büros?

2. Nach welchen Kriterien wurden diese Immobilien ausgewählt?

3. Liegen die Mietkosten über oder unter dem durchschnittlichen Marktwert des entsprechenden Stadtviertels?

4. Verfügt die Agentur auch über Büros und Mitarbeiter außerhalb Österreichs?

5. Wie genau gliedern sich die Reinigungs- und Unterhaltskosten auf?

6. Wie viele Quadratmeter Ausstellungsflächen und Lagerräume mietet die Agentur an? Wofür werden die Ausstellungsflächen genutzt?

7. Wie viele Garagen und wie viele Parkplätze mietet die Agentur jeweils an und was kostet die Miete einer einzelnen Garage beziehungsweise eines einzelnen Parkplatzes durchschnittlich?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011325/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kommunikations-Ausgaben der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 Postgebühr- und Zustellkosten von 29 000 EUR sowie „verschiedene Ausgaben für Sitzungen" von 26 000 EUR vorgesehen. Für 2013 wurden Telekommunikations-Kosten von 124 000 EUR, demnach also pro Mitarbeiter monatliche Telekommunikations-Kosten von circa 115 EUR, vorgesehen.

1. Wofür fallen bei der Agentur Postgebühr- und Zustellkosten an? Wurde überprüft, ob die entsprechenden Kosten durch digitale Übermittlung der Informationen reduziert oder eingespart werden können?

2. Welche „verschiedenen Ausgaben" fallen für Sitzungen der Agentur an? Insbesondere für welche Sitzungen fielen diese Ausgaben an?

3. Wie genau schlüsseln sich die Telekommunikations-Kosten auf?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011326/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kosten der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte Datenverarbeitungsgeräte

Die „Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte" ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 „Datenverarbeitungskosten" in Höhe von 811 000 EUR vorgesehen. Davon sollen 437 000 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte (data processing equipment), 359 000 EUR für Softwareentwicklungskosten und 15 000 EUR für andere externe Dienste für Datenverarbeitung genutzt werden. Dies entspricht IT-Kosten von 9 011 EUR pro Mitarbeiter, davon 4 855 EUR für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte und 3 988 EUR für Softwareentwicklung.

1. Wie schlüsseln sich die Kosten für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte im Detail auf? Welche Kosten werden für Geräte pro Mitarbeiter und welche Kosten für gemeinsam genutzte Geräte ausgegeben?

2. Warum stiegen die vorgesehenen Kosten von 2012 (378 000 EUR) auf 2013 um 59 000 EUR?

3. Warum lagen die tatsächlich angefallenen Kosten von 459 398 EUR im Jahr 2011 weit über dem im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan 2011 vorgesehenen Betrag von 255 000 EUR?

4. Warum wurde für 2012 und 2013 ein Betrag vorgesehen, der unter den tatsächlichen Kosten des Jahres 2011 lag? Rechnet die Kommission beziehungsweise die Agentur damit, dass die Agentur die für 2012 und 2013 vorgesehenen Kosten für Datenverarbeitungsgeräte übersteigt?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011327/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Verwendung von Posten A 2 0 5 des Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplans der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte

Die Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte ist in Österreich angesiedelt und hat den Angaben auf ihrer Webseite zufolge 90 Mitarbeiter. Im Einnahmen- und Ausgabenplan der Agentur sind für das Jahr 2013 für die Haushaltslinie A 2 0 5 — Sicherheit und Bewachung von Gebäuden — Kosten von 95 000 EUR vorgesehen.

Laut der beigefügten Erklärung werden diese Gelder unter anderem für „Verträge zur Gebäudeüberwachung, Miete und Wiederauffüllung von Feuerlöschern, Kauf und Unterhalt von Feuerlöscheinrichtung, Erneuerung von Ausrüstung von Beamten und Bediensteten, die als freiwillige Feuerwehrleute arbeiten, sowie die Kosten gesetzlich vorgeschriebener Kontrollen" aufgewendet.

Für welche dieser Kategorien wurde welcher Anteil des Postens A 2 0 5 in den Jahren 2011 (90 417 EUR tatsächlich genutzt) und 2012 (75 000 EUR vorgesehen) ausgegeben?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011816/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(16. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Andere Sozialausgaben der Agentur für Grundrechte im Jahr 2014

Im Entwurf der Schätzung der Einnahmen und Ausgaben der Europäischen Agentur für Grundrechte für das Jahr 2014 ([1]) sind für den Haushaltsposten A 1 6 „Social Welfare" (Sozialleistungen) 489 000 EUR vorgesehen. Für das Jahr 2013 waren noch 455 000 EUR vorgesehen und im Jahr 2012 gab es tatsächliche Zahlungsverpflichtungen von 356 839,91 EUR. Dabei sollen die Gelder vor allem für die Unterposten A 1 6 1 0 „Social contacts between staff" (2014: 55 000 EUR, 2013: 55 000 EUR, 2012 genutzt: 2 193,91 EUR) und A 1 6 2 0 „Other welfare expenditure" (2014: 420 000 EUR, 2013: 386 000 EUR, 2012 genutzt: 340 646 EUR) verwendet werden.

Der Posten A 1 6 2 0 wird in der Kostenschätzung wie folgt definiert: „This appropriation is intended to cover assistance for families, new arrivals, legal aid, grants for children's associations, the grant to the secretariat of the parents' association, multilingual tuition for staff children".

1. Wie genau gliederten sich die Kosten im Jahr 2012 auf die genannten Kostenpunkte (Hilfe für Familien, neue Ankünfte, etc.) des Postens A 1 6 2 auf?

2. Wie genau gliedern sich die Kosten für die Jahre 2013 und 2014 schätzungsweise auf diese Kostenpunkte auf?

3. Welche Kinder- und Jugendorganisationen wurden in welcher Form gefördert?

4. Warum wird das Sekretariat einer Elternorganisation gefördert? Welche Elternorganisation ist dies, und welches sind ihre Funktionen und Tätigkeitsbereiche?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(22. November 2013)

Die Kommission hat die Europäische Agentur für Grundrechte um die Beantwortung der Fragen des Herrn Abgeordneten gebeten. Die Antwort der Agentur wird dem Herrn Abgeordneten so bald wie möglich von der Kommission zugesandt.

([1]) http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/mb_decision_2012_09_draft_budget_2014.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011323/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' software development costs

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes an appropriation of EUR 811 000 for 'data processing' costs. Of this, EUR 437 000 is to be used for data processing equipment, EUR 359 000 for software development costs and EUR 15 000 for other external services for data processing. This corresponds to IT costs of EUR 9 011 per member of staff, with EUR 4 855 of this being spent on data processing equipment and EUR 3 988 on software development.

1. What software has been or is being developed for the Agency in 2013?

2. What software was developed in 2011 (EUR 251 720 actually spent) and 2012 (EUR 275 000 allocated) for the Agency and why can this software not continue to be used?

3. Why is this software necessary? Why can this software not be developed in-house? Why is it not possible for software solutions available on the free market or with a free software licence to be used?

4. What is the exact breakdown of these costs? Which service provider receives what amount for what software development services?

Question for written answer E-011324/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Premises of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes appropriations of EUR 528 000 for rental costs, EUR 119 000 for amenity costs and EUR 290 000 for 'cleaning and maintenance' costs. In the remarks relating to the rental costs item it is stated that storefronts [sic], garages, off-site storage and parking facilities are also rented.

1. How many offices were rented by the Agency in Austria in 2013 and what is the base area of these offices? In which towns, cities or neighbourhoods are these offices located?

2. What criteria are used to select these properties?

3. Are the rental costs above or below the average market value for the neighbourhood in question?

4. Does the Agency also have offices and staff outside Austria?

5. How exactly are the cleaning and maintenance costs broken down?

6. How many square metres of storefront and off-site storage space does the Agency rent? What is the storefront space used for?

7. How many garages and how many parking spaces does the Agency rent and what is the average rental cost for a single garage or a single parking space?

Question for written answer E-011325/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Communications expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes appropriations of EUR 29 000 for postal and delivery charges and EUR 26 000 for 'miscellaneous expenditure for meetings'. For 2013, EUR 124 000 was allocated for telecommunications charges, corresponding to around EUR 115 in monthly telecommunications charges per member of staff.

1. What does Agency incur postal and delivery costs for? Has it been examined whether these costs could be reduced or saved by transmitting the information digitally?

2. What 'miscellaneous expenditure' is incurred for the Agency's meetings? In particular, for which meetings was this expenditure incurred?

3. What is the exact breakdown of these telecommunications costs?

Question for written answer E-011326/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: The data processing equipment costs of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. The Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 includes an appropriation of EUR 811 000 for 'data processing' costs. Of this, EUR 437 000 is to be used for data processing equipment, EUR 359 000 for software development costs and EUR 15 000 for other external services for data processing. This corresponds to IT costs of EUR 9 011 per member of staff, with EUR 4 855 of this being spent on data processing equipment and EUR 3 988 on software development.

1.Could the Commission provide a detailed breakdown of the costs for data processing equipment? How much is spent on equipment for each member of staff and how much on shared equipment?

2.Why did the appropriations rise by EUR 59 000 between 2012 (EUR 378 000) and 2013?

3.Why were the actual costs of EUR 459 398 incurred in 2011 far higher than the amount of EUR 255 000 allocated in the 2011 statement of revenue and expenditure?

4.Why were amounts allocated in 2012 and 2013 that were less than the actual costs for 2011? Does the Commission or the Agency expect the Agency to exceed the appropriations for data processing equipment for 2012 and 2013?

Question for written answer E-011327/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Use of item A-205 in the statement of revenue and expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is based in Austria and, according to its website, has 90 members of staff. In the Agency's statement of revenue and expenditure for 2013 costs of EUR 95 000 have been appropriated for budget line A-205 — Security and surveillance of buildings.

According to the explanation provided, these funds are intended to cover, among other things, 'contracts governing building surveillance, hire and replenishment of extinguishers, purchase and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment, replacement of equipment for officials and agents acting as voluntary firemen, as well as costs of carrying out statutory inspections'.

What proportion of item A-205 was spent on each of these categories in 2011 (EUR 90 417 actually spent) and 2012 (EUR 75 000 appropriated)?

Question for written answer E-011816/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(16 October 2013)

Subject: Other welfare expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2014

The draft estimate of revenue and expenditure of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for the financial year 2014 ([1]) contains an appropriation of EUR 489 000 for the budget item A 1 6 'Social Welfare'. For 2013, an appropriation of EUR 455 000 was provided for and in 2012 there was an actual committed expenditure of EUR 356 839.91. These funds are intended primarily to be used for the sub-items A 1 6 1 0 'Social contacts between staff' (2014: EUR 55 000, 2013: EUR 55 000, 2012 spent: EUR 2 193.91) and A 1 6 2 0 'Other welfare expenditure' (2014: EUR 420 000, 2013: EUR 386 000, 2012 spent: EUR 340 646).

Item A 1 6 2 0 is defined as follows in the estimate of expenditure: 'This appropriation is intended to cover assistance for families, new arrivals, legal aid, grants for children's associations, the grant to the secretariat of the parents' association, multilingual tuition for staff children.'

1. What is the exact breakdown of the costs for 2012 by the specified cost items (assistance for families, new arrivals, etc.) under item A 1 6 2?

2. How exactly are the costs for 2013 and 2014 estimated to be split between these cost items?

3. Which children's and youth associations were supported and in what form was this support provided?

4. Why is a grant given to the secretariat of a parents' association? Which parents' association is this and what are its roles and areas of activity?

Joint answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2013)

The Commission has asked the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency to provide a response to the question raised by the Honourable Member. The Agency's reply will be sent by the Commission to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

([1]) http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/mb_decision_2012_09_draft_budget_2014.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011328/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Förderung archäologischer Projekte

Archäologische Ausgrabungen und Forschungsprojekte enthüllen immer wieder neue Facetten der europäischen Geschichte und Kultur.

1. Wie viele archäologische Ausgrabungs- und Forschungsprojekte werden durch Kultur-, Forschungs- oder andere Fördermaßnahmen der Kommission in den einzelnen Mitgliedsländern gefördert?

2. Auf welche Summe beläuft sich die Förderung archäologischer Projekte durch die Kommission insgesamt?

3. Welche konkreten archäologischen Ausgrabungs- und Forschungsprojekte werden von der Kommission in Österreich gefördert? Wie hoch ist jeweils die Fördersumme?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2013)

Laut Vertrag ([1]) obliegen Erhaltung und Schutz des kulturellen Erbes in erster Linie den Mitgliedstaaten. Der Kommission ist die Wahrung des europäischen kulturellen Erbes jedoch ein wichtiges Anliegen, weswegen sie gezielte Fördermöglichkeiten anbietet.

Aus dem Kulturprogramm 2007-2013 flossen 6,4 Mio. EUR in zehn archäologische Projekte. Keines dieser Projekte befand sich in Österreich.

Auch von den drei mit dem EU-Preis für das kulturelle Erbe ausgezeichneten archäologischen Stätten lag keine in Österreich.

Im Zuge des Siebten Forschungsrahmenprogramms (2007-2013) erhielten vier archäologische Projekte EU-Mittel in Höhe von 8,7 Mio. EUR: ARROWS, SASMAP, WreckProtect und FIRESENSE. Die ersten drei Projekte sind dem Unterwasserkulturerbe gewidmet; bei FIRESENSE geht es um die Brandmeldung und den Brandschutz mithilfeeines Multisensorsystems. Keiner der Projektpartner kommt aus Österreich.

Im Rahmen bestimmter operationeller Programme in Österreich (2007-2013) können Kulturerbeprojekte durch den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (EFRE) zwecks Tourismusförderung im Rahmen von Regionalentwicklungsstrategien unterstützt werden. In dieser Kategorie gibt es jedoch nur wenige Aktivitäten. So finanzierte beispielsweise Tirol zwei Projekte des *Ötztaler Vereins für prähistorische Bauten und Heimatkunde* im Bereich Schutz und Aufwertung des natürlichen Erbes, für die der EFRE einen Beitrag von 525 300 EUR bewilligte. Der Herr Abgeordnete wird auf die Website der ÖROK ([2]), der öffentlichen Koordinierungsstelle für EFRE-Finanzierungen in Österreich, verwiesen, wo die einzelnen Projekte und Begünstigten getrennt nach Programmen aufgeführt sind.

([1]) Artikel 167 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union.
([2]) http://www.oerok.gv.at/eu-regionalpolitik/eu-strukturfonds-in-oesterreich-2007-2013.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011328/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Support for archaeological projects

Archaeological digs and research projects are continually revealing new facets of European history and culture.

1. How many archaeological digs and research projects are subsidised by cultural, research or other Commission support measures in the individual Member States?

2. What is the total amount of subsidies granted to archaeological projects by the Commission?

3. Which specific archaeological digs and research projects are subsidised by the Commission in Austria? What is the amount of the subsidy in each case?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

According to the Treaty, ([1]) the protection and renovation of cultural heritage are primarily a national responsibility. However, the Commission regards the safeguarding of European cultural heritage as an important issue and provides related funding opportunities.

The Culture programme 2007-2013 provided EUR 6.4 million in funding to ten archaeology-related projects. However, none of these projects were in Austria.

The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage awarded three medals to archaeology sites, of which none were in Austria.

Under the Seventh Research Framework Programme 2007-2013, four archaeology-related projects received EUR 8.7 million in EU funding-ARROWS, SASMAP, WreckProtect and FIRESENSE. The first three projects concern underwater cultural heritage, while FIRESENSE is about fire detection and management through a multi-sensor network. No partner from Austria is involved.

Under certain operational programmes 2007-2013 in Austria, projects of cultural heritage may be supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the framework of regional development strategies, in order to promote tourism. However, the number of operations in this category is small. For example, Tyrol funded two projects of the 'Ötztaler Verein für prähistorische Bauten und Heimatkunde Investition — Schutz und Aufwertung des natürlichen Erbes', with approved contributions from the ERDF of EUR 525 300. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the website of 'ÖROK', ([2]) the coordinating public body for ERDF funding in Austria, where individual projects and beneficiaries are listed under the different programmes.

([1]) Art. 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.
([2]) http://www.oerok.gv.at/eu-regionalpolitik/eu-strukturfonds-in-oesterreich-2007-2013.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011329/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Durchführungsmaßnahmen im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie

Im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie (2009/125/EG) werden für zahlreiche Produktgruppen einzelne Durchführungsmaßnahmen erlassen. Die Prozesse, die zu diesen Maßnahmen führen, ziehen sich oft über mehrere Jahre hin und umfassen verschiedene Schritte wie Studien und Konsultationen ([1]).

1. Welche Kosten fielen bisher insgesamt für die Durchführungsmaßnahmen und die dazugehörigen Prozesse im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie an?

2. Welche Kosten fielen durchschnittlich je Produktgruppe an? Was waren die jeweils höchsten und niedrigsten Kosten, die für eine Produktgruppe anfielen?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2013)

Die mit der Vorbereitung einer Ökodesign-Verordung verbundenen durchschnittlichen Kosten belaufen sich auf rund 400 000 EUR. Diese durchschnittlichen Kosten umfassen die Kosten der vorbereitenden Studie, der Folgenabschätzung und der Erstattung von Reisekosten für Vertreter der Mitgliedstaaten an die beratenden und abstimmenden Ausschüsse. Abhängig vom Zeitaufwand und der technischen Komplexität der Verordnung können die Kosten für eine bestimmte Verordnung im Rahmen der obengenannten Durchschnittskosten schwanken. Die Kostenunterschiede zwischen den verschiedenen Ökodesign-Verordnungen sind jedoch relativ gering.

Die obengenannten Durchschnittskosten werden durch einen Vergleich mit den geschätzten Energie- und den entsprechenden CO_2-Einsparungen aus den bisher angenommenen Ökodesign-Verordnungen relativiert. Der finanzielle Wert dieser Energie- und CO_2-Einsparungen ist häufig drei Größenordnungen höher als die obengenannten Kosten.

Beispielsweise dürfte die im Jahr 2011 angenommene Ökodesign-Verordnung über Industriegebläse in der EU bis 2020 für Einsparungen von rund 34 TWh pro Jahr oder von 16 Mio. Tonnen CO_2-Emissionen sorgen. Daraus ergibt sich für die Gesellschaft (bei 15 EUR pro Tonne CO_2) ein Wert von 240 Mio. EUR pro Jahr, wie es in der Folgenabschätzung dargelegt wird.

([1]) http://www.eceee.org/ecodesign/products

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011329/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Implementing measures within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive

Within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive (2009/125/EC) separate implementing measures are adopted for numerous product groups. The processes that lead to these measures often extend over several years and include various steps, such as studies and consultations ([1]).

1. What are the total costs incurred to date for the implementing measures and the associated processes within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive?

2. What are the average costs incurred per product group? What are the highest and lowest costs, respectively, incurred for a product group?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The average cost incurred in the preparation of an Ecodesign Regulation can be estimated at around EUR 400,000. This average cost includes the cost of the preparatory study, impact assessment study and reimbursements of travel expenses for Member States' representatives to the consultative and voting Committees. Depending on the time span and technical complexity of the regulation, the cost figure for a particular regulation can fluctuate around the abovementioned average, but the variance across different Ecodesign Regulations is relatively small.

The above average cost figure needs to be put in perspective by comparing it with the energy and corresponding CO_2 savings estimated in the Ecodesign Regulations adopted so far. The monetised value of these energy and CO_2 savings are often three orders of magnitude higher than the costs referred to above.

For instance, the Ecodesign Regulation for industrial fans adopted in 2011 should provide estimated savings of 34 TWh per year across the EU by 2020. This corresponds to 16 Mt of avoided CO_2 emissions, whose monetised value for society (at EUR 15 per tonne of CO_2) amounts to EUR 240 million per year, as indicated in the impact assessment.

([1]) http://www.eceee.org/ecodesign/products

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011330/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Projektstudie zu Toiletten und Urinalen

Das Institut für technologische Zukunftsforschung der gemeinsamen Forschungsstelle der Kommission betreibt in Kooperation mit der Beratungsfirma AEA Consulting eine Projektstudie zu Toiletten und Urinalen ([1]). Die Arbeiten dafür begannen bereits im Januar 2011 ([2]), seitdem wurden mehrere Analysen und Studien durchgeführt und verschiedene Entwürfe für ein EU-Ecolabel für Toiletten und Urinale veröffentlicht ([2]).

1. Welche Kosten fielen insgesamt für die Projektstudie an?

2. Welche Kosten fielen dafür jeweils in den Jahren 2011, 2012 und 2013 an?

3. Wer trägt die Kosten für die Projektstudie?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(18. November 2013)

Seit 2009 untersucht die Kommission, inwieweit Bedarf an einer Verringerung des Wasserverbrauchs bei wasserführenden Haushaltsgeräten besteht und welche Möglichkeiten es hierfür gibt. Die Gemeinsame Forschungsstelle (JRC) hat ermittelt, welche Haushaltsgeräte das größte Wassereinsparpotenzial bieten und für ein EU-Umweltzeichen oder die Erarbeitung von Kriterien für umweltorientierte öffentliche Beschaffung (GPP) infrage kommen.

Da Wasser in der Industrie bereits weitgehend effizient eingesetzt wird, befasste sich die Analyse insbesondere mit dem Wasserverbrauch in öffentlichen Gebäuden und in Privathaushalten. Auf die Wasserspülung in Toiletten und Urinalen entfallen 25 % des (Trink-)Wasserbrauchs in den Haushalten in der EU. Das sind 12 889 Mio. m^3 jährlich; das diesbezügliche Wassereinsparpotenzial wird auf etwa 20 % geschätzt. Dies ist nicht nur ein riesiges Potenzial zur Einsparung der Wasserkosten von Privathaushalten, sondern bringt auch erhebliche Vorteile für die Umwelt. Die Verbraucher haben jedoch keine zuverlässige Grundlage für die Auswahl der Produkte, die diese Einsparungen und Umweltvorteile bewirken.

Deshalb bat der Ausschuss für das Umweltzeichen der Europäischen Union (AUEU) die Kommission, ihm detaillierte Fakten als Entscheidungsgrundlage für die Erarbeitung von GPP-Kriterien für solche Produkte bereitzustellen.

Daraufhin wurde bei der Beratungsfirma AEA (Vereinigtes Königreich) eine Studie in Auftrag gegeben, um die Kommission bei der Prüfung von Toiletten und Urinalen zu unterstützen. Der Vertrag über einen Gesamtwert von 89 300 EUR wurde am 16. Dezember 2010 unterzeichnet.

Auf der Grundlage dieser Ergebnisse hat die Gemeinsame Forschungsstelle dem AUEU eine Reihe von Kriterien für ein Umweltzeichen einerseits und für umweltorientierte öffentliche Beschaffung andererseits vorgeschlagen.

Die Umweltzeichenkriterien für Toiletten und Urinale wurden im Juni 2013 vom Regelungsausschuss für das Umweltzeichen gebilligt und werden noch vor Ende 2013 im Amtsblatt veröffentlicht.

Es sind folgende Kosten angefallen:

2011: 53 580 EUR

2012: 35 720 EUR

2013: 0 EUR

Die Studie wurde aus Haushaltsmitteln der Europäischen Kommission finanziert.

([1]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/index.html
([2]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/docs/Ecolabel_criteria_decision_draft2_dec12.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011330/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Pilot study on toilets and urinals

The Commission Joint Research Centre's Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (JRC-IPTS), in cooperation with the AEA consultancy, is carrying out a pilot study on toilets and urinals ([1]). Work on this began back in January 2011 ([2]) and since then several analyses and studies have been carried out and various drafts concerning an EU ecolabel for toilets and urinals have been published ([2]).

1. What were the total costs incurred for the pilot study?

2. What were the costs incurred for this in each of the years 2011, 2012 and 2013?

3. Who bears the cost of the pilot study?

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

Starting in 2009 the Commission explored the demand and possibilities to reduce water consumption of water using products. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) identified products with the highest water saving potential which could be addressed through the EU Ecolabel or by means of developing Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria.

Given the already relatively efficient use of water in industry, the analysis focused on the public/domestic water consumption. Toilets and urinal flushing represent 25% of domestic (drinking standard) water consumption in the EU, 12 889 Mm^3 per year; the water saving potential is estimated at about 20%. This represents not only a huge potential saving on household water bills, but significant environmental benefits. However when buying these products consumers have no reliable basis for choosing products which will deliver such savings and benefits.

The EU Ecolabelling Board (EUEB) therefore asked the Commission to provide detailed evidence base for water using products which should form the information basis to decide on the implementation of Ecolabel and GPP criteria for these products.

A study was commissioned to the consultancy AEA (UK) to support the Commission in analysing toilets and urinals. The respective contract was signed in December 16^{th,} 2010 with an overall volume of EUR 89,300.

On the basis of these results, JRC proposed a set of Ecolabel criteria and a set of GPP criteria to the EUEB.

The Ecolabel criteria for toilets and urinals received a positive vote in the Ecolabel Regulatory Committee in June 2013 and will be published in the official journal before the end of 2013.

The costs incurred were:

2011: EUR 53,580

2012: EUR 35,720

2013: EUR 0

The study was financed from the budget of the European Commission.

([1]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/index.html
([2]) http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/toilets/docs/Ecolabel_criteria_decision_draft2_dec12.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011331/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Durchführungsmaßnahmen für Staubsauger im Rahmen der Ökodesign-Richtlinie

Am 13. Juli 2013 wurde die im Rahmen der Ökodesign Richtlinie (2009/125/EG) erlassene Verordnung (EU) Nr. 666/2013 zur „Festlegung von Anforderungen an die umweltgerechte Gestaltung von Staubsaugern" im Amtsblatt der EU veröffentlicht. Sie ergänzt die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 665/2013 zur „Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung von Staubsaugern". Der Prozess, der zu diesen Rechtsakten führte, begann bereits im Januar 2009 und umfasste zahlreiche Schritte wie Studien und Konsultationen .

1. Welche Kosten fielen insgesamt für den Prozess an, der zu den Verordnungen geführt hat?

2. Welche Kosten fielen dafür jeweils in den Jahren 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 und 2013 an?

3. Wie viele Beamte und Bedienstete der Kommission waren mit diesem Prozess befasst?

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

Zu den Fragen 1 und 2: Die Kommission hat die folgenden Arbeiten bezahlt:

— Eine vorbereitende Studie in Höhe von 199 596,90 EUR (59 879,10 EUR wurden im Jahr 2007, 79 838,80 EUR im Jahr 2008 und 59 879 EUR im Jahr 2009 gezahlt);

— Folgenabschätzungsstudien in Höhe von 52 765 EUR (11 104,50 EUR wurden im Jahr 2008, 25 910,50 EUR im Jahr 2010 und 15 750 EUR im Jahr 2012 gezahlt);

— Entwicklung von Mess-Normen: Bislang wurden 91 323,39 EUR gezahlt; es ist ein Höchstbeitrag der Kommission von 140 497,53 EUR vorgesehen.

Die Kommission erstattete die Auslagen für die folgende Anzahl von Vertretern der Mitgliedstaaten:

— 9 für das Ökodesign-Konsultationsforum vom 25. Juni 2010 (Sitzung in Verbindung mit einer Sitzung zu Haushaltswäschetrocknern);

— 16 für das Ökodesign-Konsultationsforum vom 8. September 2011;

— 24 für die Expertengruppe der Mitgliedstaaten für die Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung und für den Ökodesign-Regelungsausschuss vom 27. Februar 2013.

Die geschätzte Erstattung je Vertreter und Sitzung beträgt 510 EUR.

Zu der Frage 3: Ein Beamter der Kommission war für die Ausarbeitung der Ökodesign- und Energieverbrauchskennzeichnungsverordnungen für eine Reihe von Produktgruppen auf jeder Stufe des Verfahrens zuständig. Gelegentlich waren weitere Beamte der Kommission beteiligt.

Die Verordnungen für das Ökodesign und die Energieverbrauchskennzeichnung von Staubsaugern werden voraussichtlich zu einer Verringerung des Stromverbrauchs um 19 TWh pro Jahr bis 2020 führen, was für die Verbraucher in der EU Einsparungen in Höhe von rund 3,8 Mrd. EUR pro Jahr bedeutet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011331/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Implementing measures for vacuum cleaners within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive

On 13 July 2013, Regulation (EU) No 666/2013 laying down 'ecodesign requirements for vacuum cleaners', adopted within the framework of the Ecodesign Directive (2009/125/EC), was published in the Official Journal of the EU. It complements Regulation (EU) No 665/2013 on the 'energy labelling of vacuum cleaners'. The process that led to these legal instruments began back in January 2009 and involved numerous stages, including studies and consultations.

1. What costs were incurred for the process that led to these Regulations?

2. What costs were incurred in this regard in each of the years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013?

3. How many Commission officials and members of staff were involved in this process?

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

1. and 2. The Commission paid for the following work:

— A preparatory study of EUR 199 596.90 (EUR 59 879.10 paid in 2007, EUR 79 838.80 in 2008 and EUR 59 879 in 2009)

— Impact assessment studies of EUR 52 765 (EUR 11 104.50 paid in 2008, EUR 25 910.50 in 2010, EUR 15 750 in 2012)

— Development of measurement standards, so far EUR 91 323.39 has been paid; a maximum Commission contribution of EUR 140 497.53 is foreseen.

The Commission reimbursed the following numbers of Member State representatives:

— 9 for the Ecodesign Consultation Forum of 25 June 2010 (meeting combined with meeting on household tumble driers)

— 16 for the Ecodesign Consultation Forum of 8 September 2011

— 24 for the Energy labelling Member State expert group plus Ecodesign Regulatory Committee of 27 February 2013

The estimated amount of reimbursement per representative per meeting is EUR 510.

3. A single Commission official was charged with dealing with the ecodesign/energy labelling policy process for a number of other product groups at every stage of the process. Further Commission officials were occasionally involved.

The ecodesign and energy labelling regulations for vacuum cleaners are expected to lead to a reduction in electricity consumption of 19 TWh per year by 2020, saving consumers in the EU approximately EUR 3.8 billion per year.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011332/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Paralización del proyecto Castor debido a los seísmos

Desde 2009 se han formulado varias preguntas escritas a la Comisión sobre el proyecto Castor, la planta de almacenamiento submarino de gas en un antiguo pozo petrolero: E-007642/2013, E-007566/2013, E-004004/2013, E-004005/2013, E-005051/2012, E-005052/2012 y E-4299/2009.

La zona norte de la costa de Castellón ha registrado un total de 10 seísmos entre las 22.00 horas del martes 1 de octubre y las 7.00 horas del siguiente miércoles. El mayor alcanzó una magnitud de 4,2 grados en la escala de Richter y el menor, de 1,4 grados, según ha informado el Instituto Geográfico Nacional. Los seísmos afectaron a las costas valenciana y catalana.

La Generalitat de Catalunya ha exigido la paralización total de la actividad del proyecto Castor y ha puesto en duda que la empresa Escal UGS haya detenido efectivamente el proyecto, como le había ordenado el Ministerio de Industria el 26 de septiembre.

Por ese motivo, el Ministerio de Industria de España ha enviado a técnicos a Vinaròs (Castellón) para que examinen las instalaciones del proyecto Castor y estudien los persistentes episodios de pequeños movimientos sísmicos, a fin de determinar si los seísmos son producidos por el proyecto Castor.

¿Intervendrá la Comisión al respecto? ¿Garantizará el derecho a la información sobre el riesgo real para la población? ¿Abrirá un proceso de infracción a España por permitir el proyecto Castor a pesar de su impacto medioambiental?

¿Pedirá la Comisión al Banco Europeo de Inversiones que considere desinvertir el capital por tratarse de un proyecto insostenible dentro del marco comunitario?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011824/13
a la Comisión
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(16 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Proyecto Castor e inyección y extracción de hidrocarburos y gas

Desde mediados del pasado mes de septiembre se han registrado en el Delta del Ebro (Castellón y Tarragona) centenares de seísmos que llegaron a alcanzar los 4,2 grados en la escala de Ritcher y que están estrechamente asociados al llamado «Proyecto Castor».

El «Proyecto Castor», situado a aproximadamente 20 kilómetros de la costa de Vinarós junto a varias fallas activas, trata de aprovechar un antiguo pozo petrolífero para almacenar gas inyectándolo en estado líquido a una presión de trabajo de 421 atmósferas. Los seísmos se han producido después de que la empresa Escal UGS comenzara con las prácticas inyectivas de «gas colchón» (volumen mínimo de gas natural que debe haber en un almacén subterráneo para que se pueda extraer gas útil a la presión adecuada e introducirlo en la red) en el «Proyecto Castor».

Hay que recordar que próximos al «Proyecto Castor» se sitúan Zonas de Especial Protección Para las Aves (ZEPA) (Directiva 79/409/CEE del Consejo, de 2 de abril de 1979, relativa a la conservación de las aves silvestres), Lugares de Importancia Comunitaria (LIC) y Zonas Especiales de Conservación (ZEC) incluidas en la Red Natura 2000 (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): el Parque Natural de la Tinença de Benifassà, Serres de Cardó-El Boix, el Desert de les Palmes y el Parque Natural del Delta de l'Ebre.

Por otro lado, en la misma zona, se ha planteado la posibilidad de iniciar proyectos de prospección de hidrocarburos por perforación hidráulica (*fracking*), hecho que, unido a los acontecimientos de «Castor», está despertando la inquietud de las poblaciones colindantes. Teniendo en cuenta los hechos descritos:

¿Cree la Comisión que las prácticas inyectivas y extractivas de hidrocarburos y gas, como las del «Proyecto Castor», son compatibles con la preservación de Red Natura 2000 existente en la zona?

Habida cuenta de la peligrosidad de las prácticas inyectivas y extractivas de hidrocarburos y gas para el medio ambiente y vidas humanas, ¿contempla la legislación de la UE alguna prescripción al respecto o alguna obligación de evaluación sísmica de los proyectos? En caso negativo, ¿considera la Comisión que deberían llevarse a cabo evaluaciones previas y periódicas más exhaustivas que incluyan evaluaciones de riesgo sísmico?

Finalmente, por lo que respecta a los posibles proyectos de *fracking*, ¿puede la Comisión garantizar que no existe peligro alguno teniendo en cuenta que, si la inyección de gas del Proyecto Castor se ha realizado a 421 atmósferas y ha provocado seísmos, la incidencia sobre el subsuelo podría ser mucho mayor si se llegara a las 700 atmósferas como sucede con el *fracking*?

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

Por lo que se refiere a la conformidad del proyecto Castor con las Directivas sobre hábitats y sobre evaluación de impacto ambiental ([1]), la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas que dio a las preguntas escritas E-3789/2010 y E-11478/11. La Comisión recuerda que, tras la investigación realizada, no detectó ninguna infracción de la legislación ambiental de la UE.

En cuanto al seguimiento dado por el Banco Europeo de Inversiones a la inversión concedida a ese proyecto, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-011407/2013.

En relación con los supuestos riesgos de ese tipo de proyecto, la Comisión se remite a la respuesta conjunta que dio a las preguntas escritas E-011199/2013, E-011239/2013, E-011240/2013 y E-011243/2013.

Por último, con respecto al impacto potencial de los proyectos de fracturación hidráulica en el subsuelo, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-009201/2013.

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (texto codificado). DO L 26 de 28.1.2012.
Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres. DO L 206 de 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011332/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Suspension of the Castor project because of earthquakes

Several written questions have been submitted to the Commission since 2009 about the Castor project, an underwater gas storage plant in a former oil well: E-007642/2013, E-007566/2013, E-004004/2013, E-004005/2013, E-005051/2012, E-005052/2012 and E-4299/2009.

Ten earthquakes were recorded in the northern half of the Castellón coast between the hours of 10 p.m. on 1 October 2013 and 7 a.m. the next day. The strongest of these measured 4.2 on the Richter scale and the weakest 1.4, according to reports by the Spanish National Geographic Institute. The earthquakes were felt along the Valencian and Catalonian coast.

The Autonomous Government of Catalonia has demanded that all work on the Castor project be suspended and has cast doubts on whether Escal UGS, the company involved, actually halted the project as ordered by Spain's Ministry of Industry on 26 September 2013.

Spain's Ministry of Industry has therefore sent technical experts to Vinaròs (Castellón) to examine the Castor project's systems and to study the persistent minor seismic movement, in order to determine whether the earthquakes are caused by the Castor project.

Will the Commission intervene? Will it guarantee the right to information about the real risk to the population? Will it open infringement proceedings against Spain for allowing the Castor project to go ahead despite its environmental impact?

Will the Commission ask the European Investment Bank to consider disinvesting its capital, as this is an unsustainable project within the Community framework?

Question for written answer E-011824/13
to the Commission
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(16 October 2013)

Subject: The Castor Project and injection and extraction of hydrocarbons and gas

Since mid-September, hundreds of earthquakes have been recorded in the Ebro Delta (provinces of Castellón and Tarragona), reaching a force of 4.2 on the Richter scale and closely linked to the so-called 'Castor Project'.

The 'Castor Project', located some 20 kilometres off the coast of Vinarós, next to various active faults, aims to use an old oil well to store gas, injecting it in a liquid state at a working pressure of 421 atmospheres. The earthquakes occurred after the Escal UGS company began to use injection methods involving 'cushion gas' (the minimum volume of natural gas that an underground store must contain in order to be able to extract usable gas at the right pressure and put it into the grid) in the 'Castor Project'.

It should be recalled that near the 'Castor Project' there are Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs) (Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds), Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) included in the Natura 2000 network (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora):Tinença de Benifassà Natural Park, Serres de Cardó-El Boix, Desert de les Palmes and the Ebro Delta Natural Park.

The possibility of initiating hydrocarbon exploration projects by hydraulic drilling (fracking), in the same area, has also been proposed. This fact, coupled with the 'Castor' events, is arousing concern in surrounding towns. Given the facts described:

Does the Commission believe that practices of injecting and extracting hydrocarbons and gas, such as those used in the 'Castor Project', are compatible with the preservation of the existing Natura 2000 network in the area?

Given that practices of injecting and extracting hydrocarbons and gas are dangerous for the environment and human life, does EU legislation include any requirements in this regard or any obligation for the seismic assessment of projects? If not, does the Commission consider that more exhaustive prior and periodic assessments, to include seismic risk, should be carried out?

Finally, with regard to potential fracking projects, can the Commission guarantee that no danger whatsoever exists, taking into account that, if the gas injection in the Castor Project, carried out at 421 atmospheres, caused earthquakes, the impact on the subsoil could be much higher if this were to reach 700 atmospheres, as occurs in fracking?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

Regarding compliance by the Castor project with the obligations under the Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives ([1]), the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the replies given to Written Questions E-3789/2010 and E-11478/11. The Commission recalls that, after having carried out an investigation, it could not identify any breach of EU environmental law.

As regards the follow-up given by the European Investment Bank to its investment in this project, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the reply given to Written Question E-011407/2013.

With regard to the alleged risks of this type of project, Commission refers to the joint answer given to Written Questions E-011199/2013; E-011239/2013; E-011240/2013 and E-011243/2013.

Finally, as regards the potential impact on the subsoil of fracking projects, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the reply given to Written Question E-009201/2013.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification). OJ 28.1.2012.
Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. OJ 22.7.1992.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор P-011333/13
до Комисията
Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D)
(3 октомври 2013 г.)

Относно: Финансова подкрепа за справяне с бежанската криза

До края на 2013 г. се очаква общият брой на бежанците от Сирия да нарасне до 3,45 милиона души. Външните граници на Съюза са изправени пред сериозно предизвикателство да поемат този приток на хора. До момента ЕС и държавите членки са отделили 1 милиард евро за хуманитарна и нехуманитарна помощ във и извън Сирия.

Може ли ЕК да разясни с каква цел са изразходвани тези средства и кои са бенефициентите, възползвали се от тази сума?

Новият фонд „Миграция и убежище“ предвижда общо 3,869 милиарда евро за периода 2014—2020 г., от които повече от 80 % ще бъдат използвани от държавите членки за националните им програми.

По какъв начин държавите членки могат да използват тези средства? На какъв принцип ще бъдат разпределяни? За тази година ЕК е отпуснала на България над 10 милиона евро за защита на границите и около 2,5 милиона евро за посрещане на бежанци. Оказа се, че не са достатъчни. Ще получат ли допълнителни средства държавите членки, чиито граници се явяват външни за ЕС и които са подложени на най-силен бежански натиск и риск от хуманитарна криза?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Малмстрьом от името на Комисията
(22 ноември 2013 г.)

Досега за облекчаване на положението и за подпомагане на възстановяването ЕС и държавите членки са мобилизирали близо 2 милиарда евро. Хуманитарната помощ, предоставяна чрез партньорите на ЕС, т.е. организациите от ООН, движението на Червения кръст/Червения полумесец и международните неправителствени организации, е в подкрепа главно на животоспасяващи мерки за спешна медицинска помощ, осигуряването на основни лекарства, храни и продоволствие, питейна вода, канализация и хигиена, подслон, предоставяне на основни нехранителни продукти, както и минимално равнище на защита, за да се помогне на най-уязвимите семейства (вътрешно разселени лица, бежанци, приемащи общности).

В рамките на новия фонд „Убежище и миграция“ (ФУМ), по който все още текат преговори, средствата за национални програми ще се състоят от основни и различни по размер суми. Основните суми са определени в Регламента за ФУМ и се отпускат за целия период. Те ще бъдат използвани в подкрепа на действия, целящи засилването на Общата европейска система за убежище, интеграцията на граждани/легални мигранти от трети държави и ефективното управление на връщането. Различните по размер суми са допълнителни средства за конкретни дейности, за които държавите членки трябва да се ангажират (презаселване, преместване, специфични действия). Комисията не е предлагала стриктно обособяване на сумите, предназначени за различни области.

Комисията, заедно с Frontex и Европейската служба за подкрепа в областта на убежището, следи отблизо положението на място в България и в други държави членки, засегнати от пристигането на голям брой потенциални бежанци. Обсъждат се планове за действие при извънредни ситуации, в случай че ситуацията се влоши още повече. Бяха осъществени мисии за оценка на потребностите в България и в други държави членки. Комисията е готова да разгледа незабавно исканията за допълнителна финансова подкрепа от тези (и други) държави членки. За тази цел е мобилизирано допълнително финансиране в размер на 60 милиона евро.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011333/13
to the Commission
Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Financial support for coping with the refugee crisis

The total number of refugees from Syria is expected to reach 3.45 million by the end of 2013. Dealing with this influx of people poses a serious challenge at the European Union's external borders. To date, the EU and the Member States have directed EUR 1 billion to humanitarian and other aid within and outside Syria.

Can the Commission explain what this money has been spent on and who has benefited from it?

In the new Migration and Asylum Fund, a total of EUR 3.869 billion is earmarked for the period 2014-2020, of which more than 80% will be spent by Member States on their national programmes.

How can the Member States use this money? On what basis will it be apportioned? The Commission allocated more than EUR 10 million to Bulgaria this year for border protection and approximately EUR 2.5 million for the reception of refugees. That proved to be insufficient. Will additional funding be granted to those Member States whose borders are the external borders of the Union, where the pressure from incoming refugees is greatest, as is the risk of a humanitarian crisis?

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

The EU and the Member States have so far mobilised nearly EUR 2 billion in relief and recovery aid. The humanitarian assistance, channelled through EU partners, i.e. the UN family, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and INGOs, primarily supports life-saving medical emergency responses, the provision of essential drugs, food and nutritional items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, distribution of basic non-food items and protection to help the most vulnerable families (Internally displaced persons, refugees, host communities).

Under the new Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF), for which negotiations are still ongoing, resources for national programmes consist of basic and variable amounts. Basic amounts are established in the AMF Regulation and allocated for the whole period; they will be used to support action aiming at strengthening the Common European Asylum System, integration of third-country nationals / legal migration and effective return management. Variable amounts are top-up money for specific activities for which Member States have to pledge (resettlement, relocation, specific actions). The Commission did not propose to ring fence amounts for different areas.

The Commission, with Frontex and EASO, is closely following the situation on the ground in Bulgaria and other Member States affected by the arrival of large numbers of potential refugees. Contingency plans are discussed should the situation further deteriorate. Needs assessment missions to Bulgaria and other Member States took place. The Commission stands ready to examine without delay requests for additional financial support from those (and other) Member States. EUR 60 million of extra funding has been mobilised for that purpose.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor P-011334/13
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(3. listopada 2013.)

Predmet: Televizijski kanal u Bosni i Hercegovini na hrvatskom jeziku

Sukladno Ustavu Bosne i Hercegovine, Hrvati su jedan od tri sastavna naroda, međutim jedino oni nemaju TV kanal na svom jeziku.

Ako se jednakost za Hrvate ne osigura u okviru tri sastavna naroda te im se ne jamče temeljna prava, uključujući i televizijskim kanalom na hrvatskom jeziku, daljnja stabilnost i razvoj ove države, koja je na putu prema Europskoj uniji, neće biti mogući jer u EU-u čak i manjine imaju pravo na televizijski kanal na vlastitome jeziku.

Televizijski kanal na hrvatskom jeziku potreban je kako bi Hrvati postojali kao treći narod u Bosni i Hercegovini. Koji je smisao naroda ako on nema pravo koristiti svoj jezik, tradiciju i običaje?

S obzirom na pregovore pod pokroviteljstvom povjerenika Fülea te u očekivanju provedbe odluke u predmetu „Sejdić"–Finci, koje je mjere Komisija spremna poduzeti, i kada, kako bi pomogla Hrvatima u Bosni i Hercegovini očuvati njihov jezik i kulturnu jednakost te im osigurati televizijski kanal na hrvatskom jeziku?

Odgovor g. Fülea u ime Komisije
(15. studenog 2013.)

Komisija je na provedbu presude u predmetu Sejdić-Finci stavila poseban naglasak u svojem dijalogu s Bosnom i Hercegovinom. Tim se pitanjem pobliže bavila s državnim tijelima i političkim čelnicima te ga uključila u dijalog na visokoj razini u kontekstu pristupnog procesa. Provedbom te presude državljanima ove zemlje koji se ne izjašnjavaju kao Srbi, Hrvati ili Bošnjaci omogućilo bi se da budu odabrani za članove Predsjedništva i Doma naroda.

Pitanje pokretanja televizijskog programa na hrvatskom jeziku nije povezano sa slučajem Sejdić-Finci. U siječnju 2013. u Vijeću ministara Bosne i Hercegovine podnesen je nacrt zakona radi pokretanja program na hrvatskom jeziku, ali nije postignut dogovor te nacrt nije predan Parlamentu. Nadležna tijela u Bosni i Hercegovini trebaju postići konsenzus po tom pitanju. Komisija smatra da je poboljšanje javnog emitiranja radiotelevizijskih usluga neophodno i u interesu svih državljana Bosne i Hercegovine te svih etničkih skupina.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011334/13
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: TV channel in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Croatian language

According to the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croats are one of three constituent nationalities, yet they are the only ones who do not have a TV channel in their own language.

Unless equality for Croats is ensured between the three constituent nationalities and there is a guarantee of fundamental rights, including provision of a TV channel in the Croatian language, there will be no further prosperity and development for this country on its way to the European Union where even minorities have the right to a TV channel in their language.

A TV channel in Croatian is necessary in order for Croats to exist as a third nationality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What is the purpose of a nation if they do not have the right to practise their language, tradition and customs?

With regard to the negotiations under the auspices of Commissioner Füle and in expectation of implementation of the decision in the 'Sejdić'–Finci case, what action is the Commission willing to take, and when, in order to help Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina secure language and cultural equality and be guaranteed a TV channel in the Croatian language?

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

The Commission has placed the implementation of the Sejdić-Finci ruling at the heart of its dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has closely engaged on this with the country's authorities and political leaders including in the High Level Dialogue on the Accession Process. The implementation of this ruling would enable citizens of the country who do not define themselves as Serb, Croat or Bosniak to be elected to the Presidency and the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The question of creating a TV channel in the Croatian language is not linked to the Sejdić-Finci case. A draft law has been tabled in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in January 2013 in order to create a channel in Croat language, but no agreement was reached and the draft therefore not submitted to Parliament. It is for the competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to reach consensus on this issue. The Commission considers it essential to strengthen the public broadcasting in the interest of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all ethnicities.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-011335/13
à la Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Conséquences de l'entrée en vigueur du règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 sur l'agrément de certains dispositifs d'assainissement

Je souhaiterais avoir des précisions sur les conséquences de l'entrée en vigueur du règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 sur l'agrément pour la commercialisation et l'utilisation sur le marché français de certains dispositifs d'assainissement individuels.

Le texte de référence français est l'arrêté du 7 mars 2012, modifiant l'arrêté du 7 septembre 2009 afin notamment de prendre en compte l'entrée en vigueur au 1er juillet 2013 du règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 comme suit:

«Les installations d'assainissement non collectif qui peuvent être composées de dispositifs de prétraitement et de traitement réalisés in situ ou préfabriqués doivent satisfaire:

— le cas échéant, aux exigences essentielles de la directive 89/106/CEE susvisée relatives à l'assainissement non collectif, notamment en termes de résistance mécanique, de stabilité, d'hygiène, de santé et d'environnement. À compter du 1er juillet 2013, les dispositifs de prétraitement et de traitement précités dans cet article devront satisfaire aux exigences fondamentales du règlement n° 305/2011 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 9 mars 2011 établissant les conditions harmonisées de commercialisation pour les produits de construction et abrogeant la directive 89/106/CEE du Conseil»;

À priori, les «exigences fondamentales» du règlement correspondent à la norme CEN 12566-3 (en France: FR EN 12566-3), qui est déjà la norme de référence en France (anciennes «exigences essentielles» de la directive). Cependant, l'exigence de conformité des dispositifs à la norme CE ne les dispense pas de recevoir un agrément des autorités françaises en vertu de l'arrêté du 7 mars 2012.

La Commission peut-elle indiquer si l'entrée en vigueur du règlement va dispenser ces dispositifs d'un agrément des autorités françaises pour être utilisés et/ou commercialisés en France, à la condition qu'ils portent le marquage CE? Et si ce n'est pas le cas, l'arrêté du 7 mars 2012 est-il conforme?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(12 novembre 2013)

Le règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 concernant les produits de construction a précisé le principe de l'acceptation des produits munis du marquage CE dans les États membres. Il leur demande d'accepter la mise sur le marché des produits de construction, sur leur territoire national, à condition que les performances déclarées de ces produits correspondent aux exigences régissant leur utilisation prévue dans ces États membres.

En apposant le marquage CE, les fabricants indiquent qu'ils assument la responsabilité de la conformité du produit de construction aux performances déclarées ainsi que du respect de toutes les exigences applicables, fixées dans le règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 et dans d'autres législations d'harmonisation de l'Union pertinentes pour le produit concerné.

Pour les installations de traitement des eaux usées préfabriquées qui relèvent de la norme européenne harmonisée EN 12566-3 et qui sont mises sur le marché avec le marquage «CE», le fabricant indique, de ce fait, que l'efficacité déclarée du traitement des eaux usées de son produit a été déterminée à partir des méthodes d'évaluation définies dans la norme harmonisée.

Pour des raisons spécifiques (par exemple la protection d'un lac), les autorités d'un État membre peuvent demander un niveau minimum d'efficacité du traitement des eaux usées. Dans ce cas, il est prévu que le respect de cette exigence particulière de rendement soit vérifié à l'échelon local.

Toutefois, cette vérification ne confère pas à l'État membre le droit d'introduire des procédures supplémentaires de vérification des performances, en dehors des procédures de la norme harmonisée EN, ou d'autres exigences supplémentaires en matière d'agrément ou de certification.

Le règlement (UE) n° 305/2011 précise que ces agréments ou certifications nationaux ne sont plus exigés.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011335/13
to the Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Implications of the entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 for the approval of certain wastewater engineering devices

It is unclear what implications the entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 has for the approval of certain wastewater engineering devices for marketing and use in France.

The French reference text in this area is the decree of 7 March 2012 amending the decree of 7 September 2009 as follows in order to take account of the entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 on 1 July 2013:

'Individual wastewater installations comprising pre-treatment and treatment devices which are pre-fabricated or made in situ shall meet the following criteria:

— Where relevant, the essential requirements laid down in Directive 89/106/EEC for individual wastewater treatment systems, in particular as regards mechanical strength, stability, hygiene, health and the environment. From 1 July 2013, the pre-treatment and treatment devices referred to above in this article shall comply with the basic requirements of Regulation (EC) No 305/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products and repealing Council Directive 89/106/EEC;'

The 'basic requirements' of the regulation match those of CEN Standard 12566-3 (in France: FR EN 12566-3), which is already the reference standard in France (the old directive's 'essential requirements'). Even if devices comply with the EC standard, they still need to be approved by the French authorities under the decree of 7 March 2012.

Could the Commission say whether the entry into force of the regulation means that these devices no longer need to be approved by the French authorities in order to be used and/or marketed in France, provided that they carry the CE marking? And if it does not, can it say whether the decree of 7 March 2012 is compatible with the regulation?

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

Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 on construction products has clarified the principle for the acceptance of CE marked products in Member States. It requires them to accept construction products to be placed on the market, within their national territory, provided that the declared performances of such products correspond to the requirements for the intended use in these Member States.

By affixing the CE marking, manufacturers indicate that they take responsibility for the conformity of the construction product with the declared performance as well as for the compliance with all applicable requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 and in other European Union harmonisation legislation relevant to the product.

For prefabricated sewage treatment plants under the harmonised European standard EN 12566-3, placed on the market with the CE marking, the manufacturer thereby declares that the stated wastewater treatment efficiency of his product has been determined via the assessment methods laid down in the harmonised standard.

For specific reasons (e.g. protection of a lake) the authorities of a Member State can request a minimum level of wastewater treatment efficiency. In this case, it is expected that a verification of the satisfaction of this particular localised efficiency requirement takes place.

However, this verification does not entitle a Member State to introduce additional performance verification procedures outside the harmonised EN, or any additional approval or certification requirements.

Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 clarifies that such national approvals or certifications shall no longer be required.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011336/13
an die Kommission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Borreliose — Risiken und Forschungsstand in der EU

Ein Bürger und Arzt hat sich aufgrund seiner besorgten Patienten mit Fragen zur Krankheit Borreliose an mich gewandt.

Zu diesem Thema wird die Europäische Kommission um folgende Auskünfte ersucht:

1. Welche Dimension hat die Verbreitung der Borreliose in der EU? Wie viele Erkrankungen gab es in der EU in den letzten zehn Jahren in jedem Jahr?

2. Wie hoch ist das Ansteckungsrisiko in der EU?

3. Sieht die Kommission einen Bedarf, Maßnahmen zum Schutz vor Borreliose zu ergreifen? Wenn ja, welche wären das?

4. Wie hoch ist die Summe der Forschungsgelder, die die EU für die medizinische Forschung zur Verfügung stellt? Wie hoch ist die Summe der Forschungsgelder, die die EU in der jetzigen Finanzperiode für die Borreliose-Forschung zur Verfügung gestellt hat? Wie viel Fördermittel plant die EU in Zukunft für die Erforschung der Borreliose zur Verfügung zu stellen?

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

Schätzungsweise werden mehr als 65 000 Fälle von Lyme-Borreliose alljährlich europaweit durch die verschiedenen Überwachungssysteme gemeldet ([1]). Diese Zahlen sind jedoch möglicherweise aufgrund spezieller Schwierigkeiten bei der klinischen und labortechnischen Diagnose und einer fehlenden gemeinsamen Falldefinition von Lyme-Borreliose in Europa nicht ganz genau.

Das Infektionsrisiko hängt mit der Zeckenabundanz und der Zeckenexposition zusammen. Typische Lebensräume von Zecken in Europa sind Laub- und Nadelwälder, Heide- und Moorgebiete, Wiesen, Wälder und Stadtparks. Bei der Beurteilung des Infektionsrisikos spielen Faktoren wie Wohnort, Beruf (z. B. Waldarbeiter) oder Freizeitaktivitäten eine Rolle.

Derzeit gibt es keinen zugelassenen Impfstoff gegen Lyme-Borreliose; persönliche Schutzmaßnahmen, wie die Vermeidung von Zeckenstichen und die rasche Entfernung von Zecken nach einem Stich, gelten als wichtige Vorbeugungsmaßnahmen und sollten Bestandteil der Aufklärungs- und Sensibilisierungsmaßnahmen für die Öffentlichkeit sein.

Die Kommission hat 4,8 Mrd. EUR für Forschungsprojekte des 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramms zum Thema Gesundheit bereitgestellt.

Sie hat neun Projekte zum Thema „Lyme-Borreliose“ mit 15,6 Mio. EUR innerhalb verschiedener Programme des 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramms unterstützt: Gesundheit (2 999 785 EUR) ([2]), Umwelt (3 499 401 EUR) ([3]), Lebensmittel (2 999 994 EUR) ([4]), Marie Curie (3 126 642 EUR) ([5]), KMU (2 375 109 EUR) ([6]) und Europäischer Forschungsrat (684 000 EUR) ([7]). Das neue Forschungsrahmenprogramm Horizont 2020 (2014-2020) soll eine Reihe von Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten für Forschung über Infektionskrankheiten umfassen.

([1]) Rizzoli A., Hauffe H., Carpi G., Vourc H. G., Neteler M., Rosa R., Lyme borreliosis in Europe. Eurosurveillance. 2011 :16, 19906.
([2]) ANTIDOTE.
([3]) QWECI.
([4]) PIROVAC.
([5]) RICYSTVACANT2010, POSTICK, COSEATIBO.
([6]) HILYSENS — HILYSENS II.
([7]) EPIFOR.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011336/13
to the Commission
Michael Theurer (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Lyme disease — risks and state of research in the EU

A citizen and doctor has approached me with questions concerning Lyme disease on account of some patients he is caring for.

In relation to this issue, could the Commission provide the following information:

1. How widespread is Lyme disease in the EU? How many cases per year have there been in the EU over the last 10 years?

2. How high is the risk of infection in the EU?

3. Does the Commission consider there to be a need for measures to be taken to provide protection against Lyme disease? If so, what would these measures be?

4. How much in the way of research funds does the EU make available in total for medical research? How much in the way of research funds has the EU made available in the current financial period for Lyme disease research? How much in the way of aid is the EU planning to provide in future for research into Lyme disease?

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

It is estimated that over 65 000 cases of Lyme borreliosis are reported annually across Europe through various surveillance systems ([1]). However, these figures may not be fully accurate due to specific difficulties in clinical and laboratory diagnosis and because of the lack of a common case definition for Lyme borreliosis in Europe.

The risk of infection is linked to tick abundance and tick exposure. Typical tick habitats in Europe include deciduous and coniferous woodland, heathland, moorland, rough pasture, forests and urban parks. In assessing the risk of infection, factors such as the geographical area of residence, occupational factors (e.g. forestry workers) or recreational activities need to be considered.

No licensed vaccine is currently available to prevent Lyme borreliosis; thus, personal protective measures, avoiding tick bites and quick removal of the tick in case of bite are considered as important preventive measures of the disease, which should be part of public awareness and communication activities.

The Commission contributed EUR 4.8 billion to resaerch projects in the FP7 'Health' theme.

The Commission supported nine projects related to 'Lyme disease' with EUR 15.6 million under different programmes of FP7 as follows: under Health (EUR 2 999 785) ([2]), Environment (EUR 3 499 401) ([3]), Food (EUR 2 999 994) ([4]), Marie-Curie (EUR 3 126 642) ([5]), SMEs (EUR 2 375 109) ([6]) and EU Research Council Actions (EUR 684 000) ([7]). The upcoming new Framework Programme Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) is planned to offer a number of funding opportunities for research on infectious diseases.

([1]) Rizzoli A, Hauffe H, Carpi G, Vourc HG, Neteler M, Rosa R. Lyme borreliosis in Europe. Eurosurveillance. 2011 :16, 19906.
([2]) ANTIDOTE.
([3]) QWECI.
([4]) PIROVAC.
([5]) RICYSTVACANT2010, POSTICK, COSEATIBO.
([6]) HILYSENS — HILYSENS II.
([7]) EPIFOR.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011337/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Peligrosa situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en México

En 2010, la Delegación de la Unión Europea y las Embajadas de sus Estados miembros aprobaron un plan local para implementar las directrices de la UE sobre defensores de los derechos humanos en México. Desde este mismo año, México y la Unión Europea tienen una Asociación Estratégica que contempla entre otros un Diálogo de Alto Nivel sobre Derechos Humanos. Este diálogo se mantendrá por quinta vez a finales del 2013 en Bruselas.

Respecto a casos concretos de defensores que corren riesgos, según el informe 2013 de la Oficina del Alto Comisionado en México sobre defensores de los derechos humanos, el Estado de Oaxaca es nuevamente el de mayor riesgo para personas defensoras de los derechos humanos en México. Según varias organizaciones de la sociedad civil, la situación en el Estado se ha degradado a lo largo de los últimos meses. Ha aumentado el número de casos de agresión u hostigamiento contra defensores y se caracterizan por un alto grado de impunidad y la falta de implementación cabal de medidas de protección. La situación es especialmente crítica para defensores que acompañan procesos de resistencia a megaproyectos o inversiones a gran escala, de los que algunos cuentan con participación de empresas europeas.

Considerando las decisiones del Parlamento Europeo en junio del 2010 en favor de los defensores de derechos humanos, las directrices sobre los defensores de los derechos humanos, el Marco estratégico de la UE sobre derechos humanos y democracia y su Plan de Acción:

¿Prevé el SEAE abordar este tema y la situación concreta de los defensores comunitarios en el Estado de Oaxaca en el próximo diálogo sobre derechos humanos entre la UE y México?

¿Qué medidas concretas está tomando la delegación de la UE en México para implementar las Directrices de la UE sobre defensores de derechos humanos en el caso de los defensores que acompañan procesos comunitarios de resistencia a megaproyectos o inversiones a gran escala?

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

La alta representante y vicepresidenta está al corriente de la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en México y especialmente en el estado de Oaxaca.

La alta representante y vicepresidenta se ha congratulado de la adopción de la Ley para la Protección de Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas y de la creación subsiguiente del Mecanismo de Protección para Personas Defensoras de Derechos Humanos y Periodistas, y está muy atenta a los efectos positivos de esta nueva normativa. Además, se propone supervisar y apoyar su aplicación a través de los cauces regulares de interacción con las autoridades mexicanas.

El diálogo de alto nivel entre la UE y México en materia de derechos humanos incluyó un cambio de impresiones sobre la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos. El próximo diálogo está previsto a principios de 2014.

El plan de acción local por el que se aplican las Directrices de la UE sobre los defensores de los derechos humanos establece un marco de reuniones periódicas de la Delegación de la UE y las misiones de los Estados miembros con los defensores de los derechos humanos y de visitas sobre el terreno (incluida una visita a Oaxaca en 2011), además de plantear asuntos concretos ante el Gobierno Federal y los gobiernos locales.

La protección de los defensores de los derechos humanos es también una prioridad básica de la cooperación de la Delegación de la UE, tanto en el marco del futuro programa de cohesión social financiado por el Instrumento de Cooperación al Desarrollo (contribución global de la UE de 11 millones de euros) como en el del Instrumento Europeo para la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos (importe total de alrededor de un millón de euros).

Muchos Estados miembros han hecho referencia a la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos en el reciente examen periódico universal de México (octubre de 2013) y han presentado propuestas concretas sobre la aplicación efectiva de los mecanismos de protección establecidos por las autoridades mexicanas. La UE está a la espera de la respuesta del Gobierno mexicano a las recomendaciones.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011337/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Dangerous situation of human rights defenders in Mexico

In 2010, the European Union Delegation and the Member States' embassies in Mexico adopted a local plan to implement EU guidelines on human rights defenders in the country. Since that year, Mexico and the European Union have had a Strategic Partnership that includes high-level dialogue on human rights. This dialogue will be held for the fifth time at the end of 2013, in Brussels.

Regarding specific cases of defenders at risk, according to the 2013 report on human rights defenders issued by the Office of the High Commissioner in Mexico, Oaxaca is once again the Mexican state where people defending human rights are most at risk. According to various civil society organisations, the situation in the state has deteriorated over recent months. The number of cases of assault and harassment against defenders has increased, and these are characterised by a high degree of impunity and inadequate implementation of protective measures. The situation is especially critical for human rights defenders involved in resistance movements against mega-projects and large-scale investments, some of which involve European companies.

In view of Parliament's decisions in June 2010 in favour of human rights defenders, the guidelines on human rights defenders, the EU's Strategic Framework for human rights and democracy and its Action Plan:

Does the European External Action Service intend to address this issue — and the specific situation of community advocates in the State of Oaxaca — in the next dialogue on human rights between the EU and Mexico?

What concrete steps is the EU delegation in Mexico taking to implement the EU guidelines on human rights defenders in the case of those involved in community resistance against mega-projects and large-scale investments?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the situation of human rights defenders in Mexico and particularly in the state of Oaxaca.

The HR/VP has welcomed the adoption of the Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Protection Act and the subsequent establishment of a Human Rights Defenders and Journalists Protection Mechanism, and is following closely the positive impact this new legislative framework is expected to have. It intends to monitor and support the implementation through the regular channels of interaction with the Mexican authorities.

The EU-Mexico high-level dialogue on human rights has regularly included an exchange on the situation of Human Rights Defenders. The next dialogue is expected to take place in early 2014.

The local action plan implementing the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders provides a framework for the EU Delegation and Member States missions to meet regularly with Human Rights Defenders, carry out field visits (including a visit to Oaxaca in 2011), and raise individual cases with federal and local governments.

The protection of Human Rights Defenders is also a core priority of the EU Delegation's cooperation activities, both under the future social cohesion programme financed by the Development Cooperation Instrument (global EU contribution of EUR 11 million), and under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (total amount of circa EUR 1 million).

Many Member States referred to the situation of Human Rights Defenders in the recent Universal Periodic review of Mexico (October 2013). They made concrete proposals on the effective implementation of the protection mechanisms established by the Mexican authorities. The EU is looking forward to the response of the Mexican Government to the recommendations.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011340/13
an die Kommission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(3. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Bahamas

Presseberichten zufolge hat das ehemalige Kommissionsmitglied John Dalli vom 7. bis 8. Juli 2012 und im August 2012 die Bahamas besucht.

1. Wann hat die Kommission Kenntnis von diesen Reisen erhalten?

2. Wie hat die Kommission davon erfahren?

3. Hat die Kommission Kenntnis darüber, wer an dem Treffen teilgenommen hat?

4. Wurde die Kommission über den Zweck der Reise unterrichtet?

5. Hat das Kommissionsmitglied versucht, die Reisekosten über EU-Haushaltsmittelabzurechnen?

6. Wann?

7. Wie lautete die damalige Reaktion der Kommission?

8. Hat die Kommission OLAF eingeschaltet?

9. Wann?

10. Was hat die Kommission unternommen, nachdem sie von dem Treffen erfahren hat?

11. Wann hat OLAF von der Reise erfahren?

12. Was hat OLAF unternommen, nachdem das Amt von dem Treffen erfahren hat?

13. Welche Rolle spielte die Reise auf die Bahamas bei der Bewertung der Kommission, nachdem die Beschwerde über angebliche Bestechung durch ein schwedisches Unternehmen bei ihr eingegangen ist?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(20. Dezember 2013)

Fragen 1-2: Die Kommission wurde in einem Schreiben vom 1. Juli 2013, das Herr Dalli in Reaktion auf einen Presseartikel über diese Reise persönlich an die Mitglieder des Haushaltskontrollausschusses richtete, maßgeblich informiert.

Fragen 3-4-5: Nein.

Frage 6: Siehe Antwort auf Frage 5.

Fragen 7 und 10: Die Kommission hat Herrn Dalli um weitere Angaben ersucht und behält sich das Recht auf eine eingehendere Prüfung der Vereinbarkeit mit den Pflichten eines Kommissars (Artikel 245 Unterabsatz 2 AEUV) vor.

Fragen 8-9: OLAF wurde von der Kommission unterrichtet, bevor der ehemalige Kommissar um weitere Informationen ersucht wurde.

Fragen 11 und 12: Hier hat OLAF der Kommission mitgeteilt, dass es im November 2012, d. h. nach Abschluss seiner Untersuchung der von Swedish Match geäußerten Anschuldigungen, darüber informiert wurde, dass Herrn Dallis Familie ab dem 14. Juli 2012 für die Dauer eines Jahres eine Villa auf den Bahamas gemietet hatte. Da die Informationen über die gemietete Immobilie auf den Bahamas in keinem Zusammenhang mit der oben genannten Untersuchung des OLAF zu stehen schien, leitete OLAF diese Informationen im Dezember 2012 an die maltesische Polizei weiter. OLAF war zu diesem Zeitpunkt nicht über die Reise vom 7. und 8. Juli 2012 unterrichtet, über deren Einzelheiten am 1. Juli 2013 in den Medien berichtet wurde. OLAF prüft derzeit neue Elemente, die in diesen Medienberichten aufgetaucht sind.

13: Keine. Bei seiner Untersuchung der Anschuldigungen von Swedish Match hatte das OLAF keine Kenntnis von Herrn Dallis Reisen auf die Bahamas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011340/13
to the Commission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Bahamas

According to press reports, former Commissioner John Dalli visited the Bahamas on 7-8 July 2012 and in August 2012.

1. When did the Commissioner's trip become known to the Commission?

2. How did the Commission become aware of it?

3. Was the Commission informed as to who participated in the meeting?

4. Was the Commission informed about the purpose of the trip?

5. Did the Commissioner try to charge the European budget for the costs of the trip?

6. When?

7. What was the Commission's reaction at that time?

8. Did the Commission call on OLAF?

9. When?

10. What did the Commission do after receiving information about the meeting?

11. When did OLAF become aware of the trip?

12. What did OLAF do after receiving information about the meeting?

13. What role did the trip to the Bahamas play in the Commission's assessment after it received the complaint of alleged bribery from a Swedish company?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(20 December 2013)

1, 2. The Commission was authoritatively informed by a letter of Mr Dalli himself to the Members of the Committee on Budget Control dated 1st July 2013 reacting to a press article about this trip.

3, 4, 5. No

6. See answer to point 5

7, 10. The Commission requested further information from Mr Dalli and reserves its right to further assess the compatibility with the obligations of a Commissioner (Art 245.2 of TFEU).

8, 9. OLAF was informed by the Commission before requesting further information from the former Commissioner.

11, 12. For the purpose of answering this question, OLAF informed the Commission that, in November 2012, i.e. after the closure of the OLAF investigation into allegations from Swedish Match, it received information that Mr Dalli's family had rented a villa in Bahamas for a year from 14 July 2012 onwards. As the information about the Bahamas rental did not appear to be related to the aforementioned OLAF investigation, OLAF passed this information to the Maltese police in December 2012. At the time, OLAF was not aware of the trip of 7-8 July 2012, the details of which emerged in media on 1 July 2013. OLAF is currently looking into new elements that have surfaced in these media reports.

13. None. When carrying out its investigation into allegations from Swedish Match, OLAF did not know about Mr Dalli's trips to the Bahamas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011342/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Rape and gender-based violence in Asia

It has come to my attention through recent UN research available via *The Lancet*'s global health blog that more than one in ten men surveyed in six Asian countries admit to having raped a woman who was not their partner.

Having a responsibility for gender equality and the protection of victims of gender-based violence, could the Commission please outline the steps that are being taken at EU level to change attitudes towards women in Asia and to end all forms of gender-based violence?

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

Protection against gender-based violence/GBV is one of the priorities under the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy adopted in 2012 and in the EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls. The EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 contains commitments for all EU actors in terms of supporting developing countries' efforts to improve the situation of women. The EU and UN work closely on the implementation of the conclusions of the 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women on prevention and ending violence against women and girls.

EU projects have been developed in order to prevent violence; protect and support victims; prosecute perpetrators. Humanitarian aid projects often include assistance to survivors of GBV. Violence against women is raised in the framework of the Human Rights Dialogues or other political dialogues conducted by the EU with most of the countries mentioned in the question. Women's issues are also mainstreamed into the EU's development cooperation activities, e.g. education, health.

Amongst many concrete actions, in Bangladesh, Aceh and Cambodia, EU efforts have been also focused on access to justice so as to ensure that violence against women is punishable by law and that measures are taken to facilitate victims' access to justice. In the case of Papua New Guinea, combatting violence against women is at the top of EU Delegation actions. The recent Human Rights Dialogue with China offered the opportunity to raise the impact of the one-child policy, domestic violence and violence against sex workers. In Sri Lanka, the EU has been promoting mainstreaming gender across all programmes and offering support to specific actions aimed at combating GBV.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011343/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Drop in EU transport infrastructure investment

Public investment in transport infrastructure has, on average, been falling since the late 1970s across the EU. In 1975 investments in inland transport stood at 1.5% of GDP across the EU. By 2008, the level of such investments had fallen below 0.8% — a record low. Is the Commission concerned about this situation?

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

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's concerns on the decrease of public investment in transport infrastructure in the EU.

In its proposals for the new TEN-T guidelines ([1]) and on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) ([2]) the Commission noted that in the past decade infrastructure spending in the EU has been, on average, on a declining path. The Commission also felt that while this situation was partly due to the global economic downturn, the crisis has brought renewed interest in targeted infrastructure investments as an important part of stimulus recovery plans.

It is estimated that the completion of the TEN-T would require about EUR 500 billion by 2020, of which EUR 250 billion would be needed to complete missing links and remove bottlenecks in the core network.

While the national budgets are expected to play a major role in the financing of the required transport infrastructures, the EU budget will provide a significant contribution to ensure that EU infrastructure priorities are actually delivered. Under the upcoming 2014-2020 MFF, the transport component of the CEF will make available EUR 26.2 billion for projects of common interest, including EUR 11.3 billion transferred from the Cohesion Fund.

In order to optimise the impact of CEF funding the Commission will increase the recourse to financial instruments, building on the experience of e.g. the Europe 2020 Project Bond Initiative. Such instruments produce a multiplier effect in so far as they attract other public and private financing which leverage the EU and national contributions.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, COM(2011)0650 final/3.

([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, COM(2011)0665 final/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011344/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Encouraging small businesses to use the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The European Union finances projects through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), such as the Rural Tourism Business Support project in Scotland that aims to support creative marketing initiatives and enhance rural tourism business. Does the European Union monitor programmes linked to the ERDF? What does the EU do to encourage small businesses to take advantage of such initiatives?

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

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes are implemented under the 'shared management' principle. All programmes are subject to monitoring by both the EU and the relevant Member State authorities in terms of financial performance and achievements of results. The participation of businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is part of this monitoring.

Encouraging businesses, including SMEs, to make use of available EU funding is done on many different levels by both the Commission and the managing authorities including publishing calls for proposals, dissemination of information, annual publicity events, sharing best practices, open day events etc.

The latest data reported by the Member States to the Commission indicate that, between 2007 and 2012, 198 000 direct investment projects to SMEs have been supported by the ERDF across the EU, 73 500 start-ups have been supported and 263 000 jobs have been created in SMEs.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011345/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EU support to educate the public about domestic fire risks

On average over 5 000 people die in fires in the EU every year, with 80% of these fatalities occurring in the home. What initiatives does the EU support to educate the public about domestic fire risks?

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

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that domestic fire safety issues, including awareness campaigns about the usage of consumer products used at home for preventive or extinguishing purposes (e.g. smoke or carbon monoxide alarms, fire extinguishers, etc.), remain the competence of Member States.

At the same time, as part of the EU standardisation work, in early 2013 the Commission discussed with the Standing Committee under the Construction Products Regulation ([1]) a possible future harmonised European standard for self-standing battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The Committee agreed that CO detectors should undergo third-party product certification, in order to ensure their good functioning. The revised standard EN 50291 containing this requirement as well as a requirement for an end-of-life indicator is expected to be delivered by CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) in 2015 at the latest.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 305/2011. OJ L 88, 4.4.2011, p. 5.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011346/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: EU efforts to raise awareness of carbon monoxide poisoning

As winter approaches and heating systems are almost permanently switched on, the number of accidents caused by carbon monoxide poisoning increases. What is the EU doing to increase public awareness of this problem? Does the EU support the idea of every household owning a carbon monoxide alarm?

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

There is no legislation at the EU level that would regulate the installation of carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. The competence to regulate the installation of such devices rests with the Member States, whose authorities are also responsible for informing the citizens of the dangers of CO leaks e.g. from household appliances. Information campaigns already exist in several Member States.

As regards EU standardisation work regarding CO detectors, in early 2013, the Commission discussed with the Standing Committee under the Construction Products Regulation ([1]) a possible future harmonised European standard for self-standing battery operated CO detectors. The Committee agreed that CO detectors should undergo third-party product certification, in order to ensure their good functioning. The revised standard EN 50291 containing this requirement as well as a requirement for an end-of-life indicator is expected to be delivered by CEN (European Committee for Standardisation) in 2015 at the latest.

The Commission would also like to refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions P-000023/2013 and E-10563/2012 ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 305/2011, OJ L 88, 4.4.2011, p. 5.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011347/13
to the Commission
Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Introducing 4G capabilities in Scotland

What steps is the Commission taking to ensure the introduction of 4G capabilities in Scotland and across the EU in general?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2013)

While mobile networks are rolled-out on a commercial basis, and in general mobile network coverage is at a good level in the Member States, the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications provides the necessary tools for actively supporting 4G roll-out. For example, the Radio Spectrum Policy Programme mandated the assignement of the 800 Mhz band so that it could be used across Europe for high speed mobile networks, particularly in rural areas.

Furthermore, the EU regulatory framework foresees the need to ensure sufficient network coverage, for instance by obligations with regard to network coverage and roll-out when granting rights of use for radio frequencies. This has happened in Germany, Sweden and France, when 4G frequencies were assigned.

There is no specific EU funding to ensure the introduction of 4G capabilities. However, Scotland (or at least certain areas in Scotland) may benefit from EU funding that is available for broadband roll-out through programmes co-financed by the EU structural funds. Funding can also be provided at national level, in line with EU state aid rules. For example, in December 2012 the Commission cleared the UK Government's Mobile Infrastructure Project (MIP). Under the MIP, the UK is providing up to GBP 150 million to improve mobile coverage in areas where coverage is poor or non-existent. The implementing authority in the UK for the MIP is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-011348/13
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(3. lokakuuta 2013)

Aihe: Eläinten hyvinvointi transatlanttista kauppa- ja investointikumppanuutta koskevissa neuvotteluissa

1. Komission kauppapolitiikan pääosasto isännöi 16. heinäkuuta 2013 kansalaisyhteiskunnan kanssa käytyä vuoropuhelua, johon osallistui yli 150 kansalaisyhteiskunnan edustajaa. Vastauksessaan esitettyyn kysymykseen varapääjohtaja sanoi, että neuvotteluissa keskusteltaisiin eläinten hyvinvoinnista. Onko komissiolla konkreettisia suunnitelmia sisällyttää eläinten hyvinvointi vapaakauppasopimusten ([1]) terveys- ja kasvinsuojelutoimia koskevaan lukuun vai pitääkö se parempana yhteisymmärryspöytäkirjan allekirjoittamista kuten äskettäin Brasilian kanssa?

2. Työllisyys-, sosiaali- ja osallisuusasioiden pääosasto ei ollut edustettuna edellä mainitussa kokouksessa. Kuuluuko kyseinen pääosasto EU:n neuvotteluryhmään?

3. Eläimiin sovellettava bioteknologia ja kasvua edistävien aineiden kaltaiset välineet ovat kiellettyjä EU:ssa mutta sallittuja Yhdysvalloissa. Niillä on huomattava merkitys eläinten terveydelle ja hyvinvoinnille, sydän- ja verisuonitaudit sekä tuki- ja liikuntaelimistön sairaudet mukaan luettuina. Kuinka EU:n neuvottelijat varmistavat, että transatlanttisen kauppa- ja investointikumppanuuden avulla ei helpoteta sellaisten tuotteiden pääsyä Yhdysvalloista EU:n markkinoille, jotka ovat peräisin kloonattua aineistoa ja kasvunedistäjiä käyttävistä tuotantojärjestelmistä?

4. Aikovatko EU:n neuvottelijat laatia sääntelyn lähentämisen vuoksi Yhdysvaltojen kanssa yhteisen strategian, jolla pyritään vähentämään mikrobilääkeresistenssiä (esimerkiksi lihassa) sekä minimoimaan eläinten terveyteen ja hyvinvointiin kohdistuvat haitalliset vaikutukset?

5. Työpaikkoja ja kasvua käsittelevä korkean tason työryhmä on suositellut transatlanttisille kumppaneille, että ne käsittelisivät kaupan ja kestävän kehityksen ympäristö- ja työnäkökohtia. Kuinka paljon tässä kysymyksessä on tapahtunut lähentymistä? Ovatko EU ja Yhdysvallat halukkaita sopimaan yhteisistä ympäristö- ja sosiaalialan vähimmäisvaatimuksista kaikkia tulevia kolmansien maiden kanssa tehtäviä kauppasopimuksia varten?

Karel De Guchtin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(22. marraskuuta 2013)

EU pyrkii käynnistämään eläinten hyvinvointia koskevan yhteistyön osapuolten välillä transatlanttisesta kauppa- ja investointikumppanuudesta (TTIP) käytävissä neuvotteluissa, kuten muissakin kolmansien maiden kanssa käytävissä kauppaneuvotteluissa. Komissio aikoo tutkia mahdollisuutta päästä asiasta sopimukseen Yhdysvaltojen kanssa. Neuvotteluosapuolet voivat päättää mahdollisen yhteistyön ehdoista myöhemmin.

Terveys- ja kuluttaja-asioista vastaava pääosasto on osa EU:n neuvotteluryhmää ja johtaa yhdessä kauppapolitiikasta vastaavan pääosaston kanssa TTIP-neuvotteluja terveys- ja kasvinsuojelutoimiin sekä eläinten hyvinvointiin liittyvistä kysymyksistä.

Komissio pyytää arvoisaa parlamentin jäsentä tutustumaan kysymykseen E-002504/2013 ([2]).

Sääntelyn lähentämisen yhteydessä EU:n neuvottelijat aikovat tutkia mahdollisuutta laatia yhteinen strategia kaikille terveys- ja kasvinsuojelutoimien alaan kuuluville kysymyksille. Yhdysvallat ja EU vaihtavat jo parhaita käytäntöjä ja kokemuksia näistä kysymyksistä mikrobilääkeresistenssiä käsittelevässä transatlanttisessa työryhmässä (TATFAR).

EU noudattaa johdonmukaista käytäntöä sisällyttäessään kauppaa ja kestävää kehitystä koskevia lukuja vapaakauppasopimuksiin. Näin se pyrkii varmistamaan, että kaupan kasvu tukee ympäristönsuojelua ja yhteiskunnallista kehitystä ja päinvastoin eikä kasvu tapahdu ympäristön tai työntekijöiden oikeuksien kustannuksella. EU aikoo ottaa tämän kysymyksen esiin meneillään olevissa neuvotteluissa Yhdysvaltojen kanssa, kuten komission alustavassa kannanotossa esitetään ([3]).

([1]) Esimerkiksi EU:n ja Chilen sekä EU:n ja Korean välinen vapaakauppasopimus.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm
([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151626.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011348/13
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Animal welfare in TTIP negotiations

1. On 16 July 2013, DG Trade hosted a civil society dialogue which was attended by more than 150 participants representing civil society. In answer to a question posed, the EU Deputy Chief said that animal welfare would be discussed in the negotiations. Does the Commission have concrete plans to include animal welfare in the sanitary and physiosanitary measures (SPS) chapter of the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) ([1]), or would it prefer to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU), such as the one recently signed with Brazil?

2. DG SANCO was not represented at the above meeting. Is DG SANCO part of the EU negotiators team?

3. Banned in the EU but authorised in the US, biotechnology applied to animals and tools such as growth promoters have a significant impact on the health and welfare of animals, including cardiovascular and musculoskeletal problems. How are EU negotiators ensuring that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will not facilitate access to the EU market for US products that have come from production systems using cloned material and growth promoters?

4. On the topic of regulatory convergence, are EU negotiators planning to develop a joint-strategy with the US to reduce levels of antimicrobial resistance (such as in the case of meat), while minimising any adverse impact on animal health and welfare?

5. The High Level Working Group on Jobs and Growth has recommended to transatlantic partners that they address 'environment and labour aspects' of trade and sustainable development. What is the level of convergence in this regard? Are the EU and the US willing to agree on a common minimum set of environmental and social requirements for all future trade deals with third countries?

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

In the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership* (TTIP) negotiations, as in other trade negotations with third countries, the EU aims at establishing cooperation mechanisms on animal welfare between the Parties. The Commission will explore the possibilities to reach an agreement with USA on this issue and the Parties may decide at a later stage on the modalities of the possible cooperation.

Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs is part of the EU negotiatiors team and co-leads, with the Directorate General for Trade, TTIP negotiations on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) matters including animal welfare issues.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable member to Question E-002504/2013 ([2]).

In the framework of regulatory convergence EU negotiators will study possible ways of developing a joint strategy for all the matters falling under the SPS field. Under the transatlantic taskforce on antimicrobial resistance (TATFAR) initiative, US and EU are already exchanging best practices and experiences on the issue.

The EU has developed a consistent practice of including chapters on Trade and Sustainable Development in its Free Trade Agreements, aiming at ensuring that increased trade is mutually supporting environmental protection and social development, and does not come at the expense of the environment or of labour rights. The EU plans to address this issue under the current negotiations with the USA, as described by the initial position paper of the Commission ([3]).

([1]) Such as the EU-Chile FTA or EU-Korea FTA, for example.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm
([3]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/july/tradoc_151626.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011349/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Menace de boycott sur la coupe d'Europe de rugby (H-Cup)

Le rugby est un sport qui devient de plus en plus populaire en Europe et qui est désormais suivi par un nombre considérable de nos concitoyens. À titre d'exemple, la dernière finale de la coupe d'Europe de rugby à quinze (*H-Cup*) a réuni 4 millions de téléspectateurs. Le suivi de la coupe d'Europe de rugby participe sans conteste au renforcement de l'identité européenne et à la création d'une culture sportive commune en Europe.

Néanmoins, cette compétition est actuellement menacée. En effet, les clubs anglais se disent prêts à ne pas participer à la coupe d'Europe 2014-2015 si un nouvel accord n'est pas trouvé tant sur la formule de la compétition que sur les droits télévisuels. Les clubs anglais et français réclament notamment une meilleure répartition des recettes entre le Top 14, la *Premiership* et la Ligue celte, ainsi que la réduction des équipes qualifiées de 24 à 20, avec une qualification obligatoire pour tous, la formule actuelle étant considérée comme favorisant les provinces celtes.

En cas d'échec des négociations, la menace de boycott des clubs anglais serait alors très probablement suivie par les clubs français, ce qui signerait l'acte de décès de la coupe d'Europe qui a mis tant d'années à conquérir un public et une si forte audience.

Aussi, la Commission a-t-elle l'intention d'apporter son soutien au maintien de cette compétition européenne, qui suscite un engouement commun chez ses citoyens, en demandant la poursuite des négociations entre les clubs anglais et français d'un côté, et les clubs celtes de l'autre, afin de trouver un accord qui assurerait la survie de la *H-Cup*?

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

La question soulevée par l'Honorable Parlementaire ne relève pas des compétences de la Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011349/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Threat to boycott the European rugby cup (Heineken Cup)

Rugby is an increasingly popular sport in Europe and now enjoys a large following among our fellow citizens. To give an example, the last final of the European rugby union cup (Heineken Cup) attracted a TV audience of 4 million. The European rugby cup's following undoubtedly helps strengthen the European identity and helps to create a common sporting culture in Europe.

Nevertheless, this competition is currently under threat. British clubs claim that they are prepared to boycott the 2014-2015 European cup if no new agreement can be found regarding the format of the competition and television rights. Specifically, British and French clubs are calling for revenues to be shared more equally between the Top 14, the Premiership and the Celtic League, and for the number of qualified teams to be reduced from 24 to 20, with compulsory qualification for all, as the current format is felt to favour the Celtic provinces.

Were talks to break down, the French clubs would most likely follow the British clubs' lead in threatening a boycott, sounding the death knell for the European cup, which has taken so many years to win over the public and attract such a large audience.

Does the Commission plan to support the continued existence of this European competition, which arouses a shared passion among its citizens, by calling for talks to continue between British and French clubs on the one hand, and Celtic clubs on the other, in order to reach an agreement to ensure the survival of the Heineken Cup.

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

The question raised by the Honourable Member falls outside of the scope of the responsibilities of the Commission.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011350/13
a la Comisión
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) y Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Incumplimiento de la legislación de la UE sobre renovables y reforma energética en España: peajes al autoconsumo

La Comisión está siguiendo con preocupación la evolución de la ley de reforma energética en España y las posibles incoherencias entre esta ley y la legislación de la UE en materia de energías renovables. Además de haber emitido recientemente un dictamen motivado contra España por no haber comunicado la plena transposición de la Directiva 2009/28/CE (que ya lleva un retraso de más de dos años), la Comisión ha expresado sus dudas sobre el peaje al autoconsumo que pretende imponer el Gobierno español y que haría inviable la opción energética de muchos ciudadanos que habían decidido producir su propia energía con paneles solares o molinos eólicos.

Con esta nueva política energética, en la que se enmarcan el peaje al autoconsumo y los recortes en las primas a la energía solar ([1]), el Gobierno no solo está dando la espalda a todos los esfuerzos anteriores que habían llevado a España a ser líder en energías renovables, sino que está poniendo en peligro incluso el cumplimiento de los objetivos que se habían marcado el país y toda la UE para 2020. Por otro lado, el Real Decreto que impone el mencionado peaje al autoconsumo podría suponer también una discriminación a las energías renovables si entran en vigor las medidas planteadas en el Proyecto de Ley del Sector Eléctrico, que se encuentra en tramitación, y que suponen eximir de los peajes a las instalaciones de cogeneración hasta el 2020. Ello constituiría una vulneración del principio de igualdad y un trato de favor a una tecnología determinada, al fomentar su uso en detrimento de las energías renovables o la biomasa sostenible. En este sentido, cabe recordar a la Comisión que, en su respuesta a la pregunta E-0090038/2013, el Comisario Oettinger afirmaba que, aunque el Derecho de la UE no incluye disposiciones sobre el autoconsumo en la aplicación de gravámenes, sí que existe una prohibición general de discriminar la electricidad procedente de fuentes de energía renovables a la hora de establecer las tarifas de transporte y distribución.

A juicio de la Comisión, ¿qué elementos debe contener la respuesta al dictamen enviado a España para evitar que el expediente abierto se traduzca en una posible denuncia ante el Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea?

Teniendo en cuenta los hechos aquí descritos, ¿considera la Comisión que la aplicación de peajes al autoconsumo podría suponer algún tipo de incumplimiento adicional de la legislación de la UE?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2013)

1. La Comisión envió un dictamen motivado a España por no haberle comunicado la plena transposición de la Directiva sobre las energías renovables (Directiva 2009/28/CE). Los Estados miembros tenían que transponer esta Directiva antes del 5 de diciembre de 2010. Sin embargo, España todavía no ha comunicado a la Comisión todas las medidas de transposición necesarias para incorporar plenamente la Directiva a su legislación nacional. Si España no cumple su obligación jurídica en un plazo de dos meses, la Comisión podría tomar la decisión de llevar el caso ante el Tribunal de Justicia. Por tanto, la respuesta de las autoridades españolas deberá analizarse en este contexto. En esta fase del procedimiento, no hay otras quejas que añadir a la infracción. La Comisión no puede facilitar ninguna información adicional sobre procedimientos de infracción contra los Estados miembros que estén todavía en curso.

2. La Comisión remite a Sus Señorías a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-009038/2013 del señor Tremosa I Balcells.

([1]) Ref.: E-002527/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011350/13
to the Commission
Teresa Riera Madurell (S&D) and Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Failure to comply with EU legislation on renewable energy and energy reform in Spain: tolls on own consumption

The Commission is monitoring with concern the progress of the energy reform law in Spain and possible inconsistencies between this law and EU legislation on renewable energy. As well as recently issuing a reasoned opinion against Spain for not having reported full transposition of Directive 2009/28/EC (already delayed for more than two years), the Commission has expressed doubts about the toll the Spanish Government is seeking to impose on own consumption. This toll would make the energy option chosen by many citizens — to produce their own energy with solar panels or wind turbines — unworkable.

With this new energy policy, which includes the toll on own consumption and cuts to solar energy premiums ([1]), the Government is not only turning its back on all previous efforts made by Spain to be a leader in renewable energy, but even jeopardises fulfilment of the goals Spain and the entire EU set themselves for 2020. Meanwhile, the Royal Decree that imposes this toll on own consumption could come to discriminate against renewable energy if the proposed measures in the draft law on the electricity industry, which is currently being examined, were to come into force, since these would exempt cogeneration facilities from the tolls until 2020. This would constitute a breach of the principle of equality and preferential treatment of a particular technology, by promoting its use to the detriment of renewable energy and sustainable biomass. In this regard, the Commission should remember that, in his reply to Question E-009038/2013, Commissioner Oettinger stated that although EC law did not include any provisions on own consumption when levying charges, there was a general prohibition on discriminating against electricity from renewable energy sources when setting transmission and distribution tariffs.

In the Commission's view, what points should be included in the response to the opinion sent to Spain in order to prevent the case now open from possibly leading to a complaint being lodged before the Court of Justice of the European Union?

In view of the facts above, does the Commission believe that the application of tolls on own consumption might constitute some form of additional breach of EU legislation?

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

1. The Commission sent a reasoned opinion to Spain for not informing the Commission about the full transposition of the Renewables Directive (Directive 2009/28/EC). This directive had to be transposed by Member States by 5 December 2010. However, Spain had not informed the Commission of all the necessary transposition measures for fully transposing the directive into national legislation. If Spain does not comply with their legal obligation within two months, the Commission may decide to refer them to the Court of Justice. The reply of the Spanish authorities will have to be analysed in this context. At this stage of the procedure, no additional grievances can be added to the infringment. The Commission cannot give any further information on ongoing infringment procedures against Member States.

2. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to written question E-009038/2013 by M. Tremosa i Balcells.

([1]) Ref.: E-002527/2012.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011351/13
à la Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 octobre 2013)

Objet: Acte sur l'accessibilité

En 2003, l'Année européenne des personnes handicapées a permis de mettre en avant les discriminations dont souffrent les personnes handicapées et d'inciter les États membres à se mobiliser. À ce titre, l'Union européenne a lancé un plan d'action intitulé «Égalité des chances pour les personnes handicapées» pour la période 2003-2010, l'objectif étant de veiller à l'intégration des questions relatives au handicap dans toutes les politiques de l'Union européenne avec un impact potentiel sur la vie des personnes handicapées.

À l'issue de cette échéance, la Commission a renouvelé son engagement à travers une stratégie sur dix ans qui encourage l'égalité des chances pour les personnes en situation de handicap, la «stratégie handicap 2010-2020», qui couvre de nombreux domaines.

En 2011, le président de la Commission José Manuel Barroso s'est engagé à garantir le suivi adéquat de la Convention des Nations unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées (CNUDPH) au sein de la Commission européenne, convention ratifiée par l'Union européenne en 2011.

La commissaire européenne chargée de la justice et des droits fondamentaux, Viviane Reding, a déclaré à cette période qu'avant la fin de l'année 2012 des propositions en faveur des travailleurs handicapés seraient présentées, portant sur l'emploi rémunéré sur le marché du travail ordinaire, l'évolution de carrière, et apportant également le soutien de l'Union aux actions volontaires des entreprises («Acte sur l'accessibilité»).

À ce jour, la Commission n'a pas présenté de projet d'acte.

Parallèlement, et à plusieurs reprises, le Parlement européen a exprimé sa volonté d'obtenir de la Commission un texte fort, ambitieux, et contraignant (résolution adoptée fin 2011 sur la stratégie handicap 2010-2020, notamment).

La Commission envisage-t-elle de présenter une proposition d'ici la fin de la législature actuelle du Parlement?

Cet «Acte pour l'accessibilité» prendra-t-il bien la forme contraignante d'un règlement ou d'une directive?

Les personnes en situation de handicap mental seront-elles intégrées aux nouvelles propositions?

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

La Commission veille à mettre en œuvre les obligations qu'elle a assumées. Elle a donc réalisé des travaux préparatoires pour évaluer l'impact des mesures d'amélioration de l'accessibilité des biens et services dans le marché intérieur susceptibles d'être prises.

Pour une meilleure information du processus, la Commission a programmé pour décembre 2013 une réunion de haut niveau avec un certain nombre de dirigeants d'entreprises opérant dans des domaines clés de l'accessibilité comme l'environnement urbain, les transports et les technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Les conclusions de cette réunion enrichiront les travaux complémentaires des services de la Commission, ce qui permettra l'identification des mesures les plus aptes à améliorer l'accessibilité des biens et des services dans l'Union européenne. L'objectif consiste à présenter une proposition de mesures contraignantes qui amélioreraient à la fois l'accessibilité et le potentiel de croissance pour les entreprises de l'UE.

En droite ligne de la stratégie européenne en faveur des personnes handicapées 2010-2020 et de la convention des Nations unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées, la Commission veille à promouvoir une approche de «conception universelle», pour tous, dans ses initiatives pertinentes traitant de la conception, de la fabrication et de la fourniture de biens et de services dans le marché intérieur. Cette approche s'efforce de prendre également en compte les besoins des personnes souffrant de handicaps mentaux.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011351/13
to the Commission
Bernadette Vergnaud (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Accessibility Act

In 2003, the European Year of People with Disabilities highlighted the discrimination suffered by disabled people and encouraged the Member States to take action. In this regard, the European Union launched an action plan entitled 'Equal opportunities for people with disabilities' for the period 2003-2010, with the aim of ensuring disability issues would be taken into consideration in all EU policies with a potential impact on disabled people's lives.

When that period expired, the Commission renewed its commitment through a 10-year strategy to encourage equal opportunities for disabled people, the Disability Strategy 2010-2020, covering a range of matters.

In 2011, the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, undertook to ensure that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), ratified by the European Union in 2011, would be duly followed up within the Commission.

At that time, the European Commissioner for Justice and Fundamental Rights, Viviane Reding, said that provisions in favour of disabled workers would be tabled before 2012, with regard to paid employment on the open labour market, career development, as well as EU support for voluntary action by companies (Accessibility Act).

To date, the Commission has not tabled any draft act.

At the same time, Parliament has repeatedly expressed its desire for the Commission to come forward with a robust, ambitious and binding text (including in the resolution adopted in late 2011 on the Disability Strategy 2010-2020).

Does the Commission plan to table a proposal by the end of the current parliamentary term?

Will this 'Accessibility Act' take the form of a binding regulation or directive?

Will mentally disabled people be included in the new proposals?

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

The Commission is committed to implement the obligations it has assumed. Therefore it has carried out preparatory work to assess the impact of possible measures to improve the accessibility of goods and services in the internal market.

In order to further inform the process, a high level meeting is planned for December 2013 with the Commission and a number of CEOs of companies active in key areas for accessibility: the built environment, transport, and information and communication technologies.

The conclusions of this meeting will complement the complementary work of the Commission services and will allow the identification of the most appropriate measures for improving the accessibility of goods and services in the European Union. The objective is to present a proposal for binding measures that would combine both improvement of accessibility and growth potential for EU companies.

In line with the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Commission promotes a 'Design for All'/Universal Design approach in its relevant initiatives dealing with the designing, manufacturing and provision of good and services in the internal market. Such an approach is intended to take also the needs of persons with mental disabilities into account.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011352/13
alla Commissione
Silvia Costa (S&D) e Luigi Berlinguer (S&D)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Accessibilità dei libri per le persone con difficoltà di lettura

L'azione 65 del VI pilastro dell'Agenda digitale per l'Europa ha l'obiettivo di aiutare le persone disabili ad accedere a contenuti, in particolare libri e altre pubblicazioni. Diverse iniziative, tra cui la LIA (libri italiani accessibili), hanno portato alla creazione di un'infrastruttura atta a facilitare questo processo, dimostrando chiaramente i benefici di un simile approccio. Molte organizzazioni dei disabili visivi hanno dichiarato il loro interesse a replicare l'esperienza italiana. Queste iniziative necessitano però di estendere il loro ambito territoriale e affrontare tematiche irrisolte quali l'accessibilità dei libri dalla struttura complessa e i bisogni di altre categorie con difficoltà di lettura. Questo genere di esperienze ha tuttavia bisogno di essere incoraggiato e sostenuto.

Quali piani ha la Commissione per contribuire ulteriormente al raggiungimento di questi obiettivi?

Pensa di dover dare priorità agli obiettivi di cui sopra nei bandi relativi ai programmi di finanziamento che verranno aperti nell'immediato futuro?

Concorda sull'importanza di rendere prioritarie le iniziative dell'Agenda digitale volte ad accrescere l'accessibilità dei libri rispetto alle altre?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione si compiace per l'interesse mostrato dall'onorevole parlamentare nei confronti del lavoro della Commissione in materia di accessibilità dei libri e concorda sull'importanza della questione. La Commissione è impegnata a garantire la piena partecipazione delle persone con disabilità alla società dell'informazione, in particolare facilitando l'accesso a contenuti digitali.

La normalizzazione offre soluzioni in tal senso. La Commissione europea segue le attività di normalizzazione condotte a livello internazionale sulla portabilità e l'interoperabilità dei libri digitali, ovvero la norma ISO/IEC DTS 30135-1 a 30135-7.

Un problema di fondo è rappresentato dal trasferimento transfrontaliero di libri in formato accessibile all'interno dell'UE. Per risolvere la questione, nel 2010 è stato firmato un memorandum d'intesa sulla circolazione transfrontaliera di libri accessibili per le persone con difficoltà nella lettura di testi a stampa. Il memorandum ha l'obiettivo di garantire che i contenuti pubblicati in un formato accessibile in regime d'eccezione al diritto d'autore nazionale o dietro autorizzazione in uno Stato membro siano legalmente disponibili in tutti gli Stati membri. La scorsa estate la Commissione ha inoltre accolto con favore l'adozione del trattato di Marrakech volto a facilitare l'accesso alle opere pubblicate per le persone non vedenti, ipovedenti o con altre difficoltà nella lettura di testi a stampa ([1]).

Per quanto riguarda i programmi di finanziamento, la Commissione continua a sostenere progetti di ricerca su vasta scala sull'accessibilità dei contenuti online e delle tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione in generale ([2]).

([1]) http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=245323

([2]) Ad esempio il progetto Cloud4all fornisce alle persone con disabilità un accesso istantaneo e personalizzato a tutte le tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione, http://cloud4all.info/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011352/13
to the Commission
Silvia Costa (S&D) and Luigi Berlinguer (S&D)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Accessibility of books for people with reading difficulties

Action 65 of the Digital Agenda for Europe's sixth action area is aimed at helping disabled people to access content, in particular books and other publications. Various initiatives, including the Accessible Italian Books (LIA — libri italiani accessibili) initiatives, have begun creating an infrastructure that facilitates this process and clearly demonstrates the benefits of such approaches. Many organisations for visually impaired people have expressed an interest in replicating what has been done in Italy. The geographical reach of these initiatives needs to be widened and they need to address unresolved issues such as accessibility of structurally complex books and the needs of other groups with reading difficulties. However, this type of project should be encouraged and supported.

What plans does the Commission have to further contribute to achieving these goals?

Does the Commission think it should give priority to the abovementioned goals in the invitations to tender that will be sent out in the near future in the context of the funding programmes?

Does the Commission agree on the importance of making Digital Agenda initiatives aimed at increasing accessibility of books a priority in relation to other initiatives?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

The Commission welcomes the Honourable Member's interest in relation with the Commission's work on the accessibility of books and agrees with the importance of the issue. The Commission is committed to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to fully participate in the information society, in particular by having access to digital material.

Standardisation is a solution offered. The European Commission is following the ongoing international standardisation activities on the portability and interoperability of eBooks, namely standard ISO/IEC DTS 30135-1 through 30135-7.

One underlying problem is the cross-border transfer of accessible format books in the EU. To tackle this, in 2010 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on the cross-border circulation of accessible books for people with print disabilities. It aims to ensure that copyrighted and licensed material edited in accessible format under national copyright exceptions or licenses in one Member State is legally available in all Member States. Also, last summer the Commission welcomed the adoption of the Marrakech Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled ([1]).

In terms of funding programmes, the Commission has been supporting large-scale research projects addressing the accessibility of online content and ICT in general ([2]).

([1]) http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc_details.jsp?doc_id=245323
([2]) E.g. Cloud4All which provides instant and personalised access to all information and communication technologies for people with any disability, http://cloud4all.info/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011353/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Liquidità del dollaro e riserve auree

Forse non basta creare liquidità per vincere la crisi e rilanciare l'economia. La Federal Reserve, tuttavia, ha deciso di continuare ad immettere nuova liquidità nel sistema finanziario (85 miliardi di dollari al mese per comperare nuovi titoli del Tesoro e derivati ABS asset-backed-security). Questa politica continuerà fino a quando il tasso di disoccupazione negli Usa non scenderà sotto il 6,5 %. Si spera che ciò avvenga entro la fine del 2014, ragion per cui nel frattempo i mercati internazionali saranno invasi da 1 500 miliardi di nuovi dollari. Non tutti concordano sugli eventuali effetti benefici di questa invasione di dollari, mentre la Banca dei regolamenti internazionali ha sollevato forti dubbi e denunciato le conseguenze nefaste nelle economie emergenti, criticando, tra l'altro, l'impennata degli interessi obbligazionari. In questa situazione instabile è cresciuta l'immissione di bond e di prestiti nei settori finanziari più esposti e rischiosi, come accadde alla vigilia dell'esplosione della crisi finanziaria sistemica.

Le politiche monetarie dei paesi Brics ed emergenti tendono, invece, ad aumentare le proprie riserve auree, comprando quantitativi di oro di grande rilevanza, sapendo che il dollaro diventa ogni giorno più debole e instabile proprio per la continua immissione di liquidità sui mercati

1. Ritiene, la Commissione che in tempi più o meno brevi si arrivi già al famoso paniere di monete e di oro proposto dai Brics in sostituzione del dollaro?

2. Ha un'opinione sulla diffusa liquidità e sulle sue eventuali conseguenze per l'economia europea?

3. Ritiene plausibile l'ipotesi del paniere proposto dai Brics?

4. Cosa prevede in ogni caso per la tenuta dell'euro?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(19 novembre 2013)

1.+3. L'uso di una moneta a livello internazionale è condizionato dal mercato. La concretizzazione della proposta dei paesi BRIC dipenderà dallo sviluppo delle grandi economie negli anni a venire e, per i paesi BRIC, dallo spessore e dalla liquidità dei loro mercati finanziari.

2. In un quadro di mobilità dei capitali (conto capitale e finanziario aperto) le condizioni di liquidità nelle grandi economie possono avere effetti di ricaduta globali. A questo proposito la Commissione ricorda il rinnovato impegno dei leader del G20 a cooperare per garantire che le politiche a favore della crescita interna sostengano anche la crescita e la stabilità finanziaria globali nonché a gestirne le ricadute su altri paesi.

4. Commissione è convinta l'euro emergerà rafforzato dalla crisi, rispecchiando il consolidamento dei fondamentali nell'economia della zona euro dovuto alla correzione degli squilibri esterni e di bilancio, alle riforme strutturali degli Stati membri e alle riforme della governance a livello di zona euro (e a livello di UE).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011353/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Liquidity of the dollar and gold reserves

Creating liquidity may not be enough to overcome the economic crisis and revitalise our economies. However, the Federal Reserve has decided to continue injecting further liquidity into the financial system (USD 85 billion per month to buy new treasury bonds and asset backed securities). This policy will continue until the unemployment rate in the US falls below 6.5%. It is to be hoped that this happens before the end of 2014, as meanwhile the international markets will be flooded with 1 500 billion new US dollars. Not everyone agrees on the supposed positive impact of this invasion of dollars, while the Bank for International Settlements has raised strong doubts and warned of negative repercussions for the emerging economies, criticising among other things the sharp rise in interest rates on the bonds. In this unstable situation, bond issues and loans have increased in the most exposed and most risky financial sectors, as they did in the lead-up to the financial crisis.

Current monetary policy in the BRIC and emerging countries, on the other hand, tends to favour increasing their own gold reserves, by buying very significant quantities of gold, in the knowledge that the dollar is becoming weaker and more unstable by the day as a result of this continuous injection of liquidity into the markets.

1. Does the Commission think that sooner or later the much-discussed basket of currencies and gold proposed by the BRIC countries to replace the dollar will become a reality?

2. Does the Commission have an opinion about this excess liquidity and the impact it may have on Europe's economy?

3. Does it think that the basket of currencies proposed by the BRIC countries would be feasible?

4. Whatever eventuates, does the Commission think that the euro will hold its own?

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

1+3. The international use of a currency is a market-driven process. Whether the BRIC countries' proposal will materialise depends on how major economies develop in the years to come, and, in the case of the BRIC countries, on the depth and liquidity of their financial markets.

2. In a context of open capital and financial accounts, liquidity conditions in major economies may have global spillover effects. In this regard, the Commission recalls the G20 Leaders' reaffirmation to cooperate to ensure that policies implemented to support domestic growth also support global growth and financial stability and to manage their spillovers on other countries.

4. The Commission is confident that the euro is emerging from the crisis reinforced, reflecting the improving fundamentals in the euro area economy stemming from the correction of fiscal and external imbalances and structural reforms in Member States, as well as the governance reforms at euro-area (and EU) level.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011354/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(3 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Status oorlogsmisdadigers

Implementatie van Richtlijn 2011/51/EU leidt tot uitbreiding van de werkingssfeer van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG tot personen die internationale bescherming genieten. Dit houdt in dat degene die vijf jaar legaal in de EU verblijft voor de rest van zijn of haar leven de status „langdurig EU ingezetene" krijgt. Met de uitbreiding van de werkingssfeer krijgen nu ook de „personen die internationale bescherming genieten" deze status. Dit zijn erkende asielzoekers, maar ook vreemdelingen die gegronde redenen hebben om aan te nemen dat zij bij uitzetting een reële kans hebben te worden onderworpen aan executie, foltering of onmenselijke of vernederende behandeling.

Met deze uitbreiding van Richtlijn 2003/1009/EG vallen er nu ook voormalige oorlogsmisdadigers onder. Dezen genieten internationale bescherming tegen uitzetting en krijgen na een periode van vijf jaar de status van langdurige EU ingezetene. Dit houdt in dat de EU oorlogsmisdadigers, folteraars en/of beulen van verdreven regimes praktisch met open armen verwelkomt.

1. Is de uitbreiding van de werkingssfeer van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG tot voormalige oorlogsmisdadigers, moordenaars en/of beulen een bedoeld effect van richtlijn 2011/51/EU?

2. Zo ja, wat is de overweging van de Commissie geweest om deze oorlogsmisdadigers, moordenaars en/of beulen te „belonen" met de status van langdurig EU ingezetene?

3. Zo neen, welke stappen overweegt de Commissie te nemen om dit niet bedoelde effect van richtlijn 2011/51/EU teniet te doen?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(19 november 2013)

Richtlijn 2011/51/EU breidde de werkingssfeer van Richtlijn 2003/109/EG uit om personen die internationale bescherming genieten onder bepaalde voorwaarden langdurig ingezetenen te laten worden, met name na langdurig en ononderbroken verblijf van 5 jaar in de lidstaat die de bescherming verleent. De wijziging is gericht op de bevordering van de integratie van personen die internationale bescherming genieten en hun mobiliteit binnen de EU.

Het is in de eerste plaats de verantwoordelijkheid van de bevoegde nationale autoriteiten om internationale bescherming te verlenen in individuele gevallen, op basis van de gemeenschappelijke criteria die zijn vastgesteld in Richtlijn 2004/83/EG inzake de erkenning van onderdanen van derde landen en staatlozen als vluchteling of persoon die anderszins internationale bescherming behoeft, omdat zij vervolging of ernstige schade in hun land van oorsprong vrezen, onder meer wegens extreem geweld bij gewapende conflicten. Richtlijn 2004/83/EG bepaalt verder dat een persoon van een internationale-beschermingsstatus wordt uitgesloten wanneer er ernstige redenen zijn om aan te nemen dat hij ernstige misdrijven heeft gepleegd, zoals terroristische daden, of zich schuldig heeft gemaakt aan handelingen die strijdig zijn met de doelstellingen en beginselen van de Verenigde Naties. De verantwoordelijkheid om te onderzoeken of een bepaalde persoon moet worden uitgesloten van internationale bescherming, berust volledig bij de lidstaten, overeenkomstig hun internationale verplichtingen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011354/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Status of war criminals

Implementation of Directive 2011/51/EU leads to the extension of the scope of Directive 2003/109/EC to beneficiaries of international protection. This means that anyone who has been living in the EU legally for five years acquires 'long-term EU resident' status for the rest of his or her life. Following extension of the scope of the directive, 'beneficiaries of international protection' also now acquire this status. They include recognised asylum-seekers, but also foreign migrants who have good reason to presume that, if deported, they run a real risk of facing execution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment.

Following the extension of Directive 2003/109/EC, former war criminals are now also covered. They enjoy international protection from deportation and obtain EU long-term resident status after a period of five years. This means that the EU is welcoming war criminals, torturers and/or executioners from ousted regimes, practically with open arms.

1. Is the extension of the scope of Directive 2003/109/EC to former war criminals, murderers and/or executioners an intended effect of Directive 2011/51/EU?

2. If so, what was the Commission's thinking behind 'rewarding' such war criminals, murderers and/or executioners with EU long-term resident status?

3. If not, what steps does the Commission intend to take to reverse this unintended effect of Directive 2011/51/EU?

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

Directive 2011/51/EU extended the scope of Directive 2003/109/EC to allow beneficiaries of international protection to become long term residents under certain conditions, in particular after 5 years of legal and continuous residence in the Member State that granted the protection. The amendment aims at facilitating the integration of beneficiaries of international protection as well as their mobility in the EU.

It is the primary responsibility of the competent national authorities to grant international protection in individual cases, on the basis of the common criteria set out in Directive 2004/83/EC on the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection because they fear persecution or serious harm in their country of origin, including due to situations of extreme violence in cases of armed conflict. Directive 2004/83/EC further provides that a person is excluded from international protection status when there are serious reasons for considering that he has committed serious crimes such as terrorist acts or has been guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. The responsibility for the examination of whether a specific person is excluded from international protection rests entirely with the Member States, in line with their international obligations.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011355/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Multimodaal transport en de sluiting van een spoorterminal in de haven van Antwerpen

In de Belgische media verschenen onlangs berichten dat spoorvervoerder IFB, een dochteronderneming van NMBS Logistics, zijn Mainhub in de Antwerpse haven op 7 oktober zal sluiten. Deze hub is de grootste containerspoorterminal van de haven.

De federale regering gaf tot 30 juni een toelage voor intermodaal transport, per behandelde container, maar is daar nu mee gestopt. Die stopzetting leidt tot hogere prijzen, wat leidde tot het verplaatsen van de goederenstoom naar wegtransporteurs of andere havens zoals Rotterdam en dus de uiteindelijke sluiting van de hub. Naar schatting leidt dit tot 400 extra vrachtwagens per werkdag.

De Duitse overheid steunt de bouw van spoorterminals voor 80 %, waardoor het laden en lossen van de container er de helft goedkoper is. In Frankrijk gaat het om een derde van de kosten dat wordt terugbetaald en in Zwitserland geeft men een forfait per trein.

Vandaar volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat de verschillende regimes van steun in de lidstaten verenigbaar zijn met het Verdrag? Plant de Commissie een onderzoek naar die steunregimes in de verschillende lidstaten, om na te gaan of er geen verstoring van de mededinging is tussen de lidstaten?

2. Kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van de verschillende steunmaatregelen die gelden in de lidstaten?

3. Kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van het effect dat deze steunregimes hebben op het teweegbrengen van een modal shift?

4. Plant de Commissie nog initiatieven om lidstaten aan te zetten om multimodaal transport verder te ondersteunen? Multimodaliteit, en het verminderen van het aantal vrachtwagens op de weg is toch één van de absolute doelstellingen in het kader van meer duurzaam transport?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(28 november 2013)

Overheidssteun voor intermodaal vervoer en intermodale terminals moet door de Commissie worden goedgekeurd voordat de lidstaten de steun kunnen toekennen. Om na te gaan of deze steun met de interne markt verenigbaar is, beoordeelt de Commissie de aangemelde maatregel in de licht van de desbetreffende artikelen van het Verdrag en van haar beschikkingspraktijk. Iedere steunmaatregel kan mogelijk de mededinging tussen ondernemingen die in verschillende lidstaten zijn gevestigd, verstoren. De Commissie onderzoekt echter ook of de verstoring van de mededinging strijdig is met het gemeenschappelijk belang van de ontwikkeling van intermodaal vervoer waarbij het vrachtvervoer minder over de weg en meer over het spoor en de binnenwateren verloopt. De Commissie beoordeelt ook de gevolgen van de steun, in het bijzonder de vraag of redelijkerwijs kan worden verwacht dat de verschuiving van vervoer over de weg naar vervoer over het spoor en de binnenwateren groter zal zijn dan de verschuiving van de bestaande naar de ondersteunde hubs. Ook onderzoekt de Commissie of de steun noodzakelijk en evenredig is voor het streven naar een modal shift.

Sinds 2008 heeft de Commissie 19 maatregelen goedgekeurd ten gunste van intermodaal vervoer (zie bijlage).

De Commissie beschikt niet over gegevens inzake het effect van deze maatregelen op de modal shift. In haar Witboek over transport van 2011 ([1]) heeft de Commissie voorgesteld de multimodale logistieke ketens te optimaliseren door vaker energie-efficiëntere vervoerswijzen te gebruiken. De toekomstige verordeningen over TEN-V en CEF ([2]) zullen financiële middelen bevatten voor de verbindingen met en de ontwikkeling van multimodale logistieke platforms en havens. De overschakeling van vrachtvervoer over de weg naar andere vervoerswijzen moet worden afgewogen tegen de negatieve gevolgen van de verstoring van de mededinging.

([1]) „Stappenplan voor een interne Europese vervoersruimte — werken aan een concurrerend en zuinig vervoerssysteem" COM(2011) 144 definitief.
([2]) EU-richtsnoeren voor de ontwikkeling van het trans-Europees vervoersnet en de Connecting Europe Facility, COM(2011) 650 definitief en COM(2011) 665 definitief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011355/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 October 2013)

Subject: Multimodal transport and the closure of a rail terminal in the Port of Antwerp

According to recent reports in the Belgian media, rail carrier IFB, a subsidiary of SNCB Logistics [a rail freight company privatised from the freight division of SNCB — the Belgian national rail operator], is set to close its Main Hub terminal in the Port of Antwerp on 7 October. This hub is the port's largest container rail terminal.

Up until 30 June the Belgian Federal Government subsidised intermodal transport per container handled, but this practice has now stopped. Prices rose as a result, causing goods flow to switch to road haulage companies or other ports, such as Rotterdam, and leading to the eventual closure of the hub. This is estimated to have put an extra 400 lorries on the road each weekday.

The German authorities fund 80% of the construction costs for rail terminals, and as a result loading and unloading containers there costs half the price. In France a third of the costs are refunded and in Switzerland a fixed sum is provided for each train.

Consequently I have the following questions for the Commission:

1. Does the Commission feel that the various support mechanisms in the Member States are compatible with the Treaty? Is the Commission planning to look into the support mechanisms in the various Member States, to ascertain whether or not they amount to distortion of competition between the Member States?

2. Can the Commission provide an overview of the various support measures in force in the Member States?

3. Can the Commission provide an overview of the impact these support measures are having on bringing about a modal shift?

4. Is the Commission planning further initiatives to encourage the Member States to continue supporting multimodal transport? Does multimodality and the reduction of the number of lorries on the road remain one of the absolute targets in the framework of a more sustainable transport system?

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

State aid to intermodal transport and intermodal terminals must be approved by the Commission before the Member States can grant the aid. In order to ascertain whether such aid is compatibile with the internal market, the Comission assesses the notified measure under the relevant Treaty articles and in the light of its decision-making practice. Every state aid measure can at least potentially distort competition between undertakings located in different Member States. The Commission, however, assesses whether the distortion of competition is contrary to the common interest of developing intermodal transport and shifting cargo from road to rail and inland waterway. Within this assessment, the Commission looks into the effect of the aid, in particular whether it can be reasonably expected that more trafic will be attracted from road to rail and inland waterway than from the existing hubs to the supported hubs. The Commission also examines whether the aid is necessary and proportionate to achieve the objective of bringing about a modal shift.

Since 2008, the Commission has approved 19 measures in favour of intermodal transport (see annex).

The Commission is not in possession of data on the impact of these measures on modal shift. In its White Paper on Tranport of 2011 ([1]), the Commission proposed optimising multimodal logistic chains by making greater use of more energy-efficient modes. The upcoming Regulations on TEN-T and CEF ([2]), will provide funding for connections to and development of multimodal logistics platforms and ports. The shift of freight from road to other transport modes needs to be weighed against the negative effects of distortion of competition.

([1]) 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system'; COM(2011) 144 final.
([2]) Union Guidelines for the Development of the Trans-European Transport Network and the Connecting Europe Facility COM(2011) 650 final and COM(2011) 665 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011356/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili condotte fraudolente nella commercializzazione dei cosiddetti «wine kit»

Secondo quanto denunciato da un'inchiesta della trasmissione televisiva «Striscia la Notizia» ([1]), andata in onda lo scorso 30 settembre su una rete italiana, in Inghilterra continuerebbe la contraffazione di vini di qualità con storpiature dei loro nomi originali.

I cosiddetti «wine kit» sono dei preparati solubili in acqua che vengono venduti come prodotti tradizionali tra cui alcuni vini a denominazione di origine protetta e indicazione geografica protetta, come ad esempio:

il Valpolicella che diventa «Vinocella»;

il Barolo che diventa «Barolla»;

il Brunello di «Montalcino» che diventa «Montecino»;

il Chianti che diventa «Cantia».

L'Interpol ne ha bloccato la commercializzazione nel Regno Unito.

Il regolamento (CE) n.607/2009 della Commissione del 14 luglio 2009 recante modalità di applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 479/2008 del Consiglio per quanto riguarda le denominazioni di origine protette e le indicazioni geografiche protette, le menzioni tradizionali, l'etichettatura e la presentazione di determinati prodotti vitivinicoli ha di fatto impedito la commercializzazione dei predetti prodotti.

Orbene, il regolamento di cui sopra parrebbe essere stato raggirato, in particolare l'articolo 42, in quanto sarebbero stati reimmessi sul mercato gli stessi vini, caratterizzati soltanto da una diversa denominazione, foneticamente molto simile ad altri vini più noti.

Quali misure intende prendere la Commissione per assicurare la necessaria tutela nei confronti delle produzioni di eccellenza minacciate da prodotti contraffatti?

Intende sensibilizzare gli Stati membri per affrontare al meglio la problematica evidenziata, applicando maggiori controlli per la tutela dei prodotti DOP e IGP?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(28 ottobre 2013)

Come già indicato nella risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-001290/2013 ([2]), gli Stati membri sono a conoscenza dell'esistenza di pratiche illegali reltive all'etichettatura dei kit di fabbricazione di vini falsi in polvere.

Alla Commissione non risulta che gli Stati membri non adottino le misure necessarie per impedire l'utilizzo abusivo delle denominazioni di origine protette e delle indicazioni geografiche protette. La Commissione richiederà allo Stato membro in questione ulteriori informazioni sulla situazione descritta nell'interrogazione scritta, ricorderà agli Stati membri l'ambito di applicazione della protezione delle denominazioni di origine e delle denominazioni geografiche e, se necessario, richiederà agli Stati membri di adottare ulteriori misure opportune.

([1]) http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/videoextra.shtml?18065.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011356/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Suspicions of fraud in the sale of wine 'kits'

According to an enquiry by the Italian television programme 'Striscia la Notizia' ([1]) broadcast on 30 September 2013, the names of quality wines are still being distorted and used in England in the production of fake wine.

These so-called wine 'kits' take the form of water-soluble preparations which are marketed as traditional products and include some wines with protected designation of origin and protected geographical indication status:

Valpolicella, which becomes 'Vinocella';

Barolo, which becomes 'Barolla';

Brunello di Montalcino, which becomes 'Montecino';

Chianti, which becomes 'Cantia'.

Interpol has blocked their sale in the United Kingdom.

Indeed, the marketing of such products is prohibited under Commission Regulation (EC) No 607/2009 of 14 July 2009 laying down certain detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2008 as regards protected designations of origin and geographical indications, traditional terms, labelling and presentation of certain wine sector products (OJ L 193, 24.07.2009, p. 60).

However, that regulation — and in particular Article 42 thereof — would seem to have been bypassed, since the same wines appear to have been placed on the market once again, only with different names that sound very similar to other, better-known wines.

What steps will the Commission take to ensure that the necessary safeguards exist for fine wines which are under threat from fake products?

Will it raise Member States' awareness of this issue, so that they can address it as effectively as possible through closer monitoring aimed at safeguarding PDO and PGI products?

Answer given by M.Cioloș on behalf of the Commission
(28 October 2013)

As already mentioned in its answer to the Written Question E-001290/2013 ([2]), Member States are aware of illegal practices as regards labelling of kits for manufacturing fake wines from powder.

The Commission has no indication that Member States do not take the steps necessary to stop unlawful use of protected designations of origin and protected geographical indications. The Commission will request further information on the situation decribed in the written question to the concerned Member State, will recall the Member States the scope of the protection regarding protected designation of origins and protected geographical indications and, if necessary, will request Member States to take further appropriate actions.

([1]) http://www.striscialanotizia.mediaset.it/video/videoextra.shtml?18065
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011358/13
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Utilizzo dei fondi per le politiche dell'immigrazione, con particolare attenzione al problema degli sbarchi degli immigrati

A largo di Lampedusa si è assistito anche oggi al recupero di oltre 94 cadaveri di migranti somali e eritrei, morti a seguito dell'ennesimo tragico naufragio. I dispersi risultano sinora 250.

A bordo del barcone affondato si trovavano 500 migranti fra cui anche una donna incinta e 30 bambini.

Non si tratta di un avvenimento isolato in quanto nei mesi scorsi sono stati numerosi gli sbarchi di immigrati clandestini sulle coste italiane e altrettante le sciagure avvenute a largo del Mediterraneo, che hanno colpito migliaia di donne, uomini e bambini provenienti soprattutto dai paesi nordafricani.

Può la Commissione far sapere come sono stati usati finora i fondi stanziati per le politiche dell'immigrazione, cosa intende fare per risolvere il problema degli sbarchi degli immigrati e quali politiche intende attuare per regolare questo fenomeno?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(20 novembre 2013)

Fra il 2007 e il 2013 l'Italia ha ricevuto più di 500 milioni di EUR provenienti dai fondi stanziati nell'ambito del programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori».

Nel periodo 2008-2013 il Fondo europeo per i rifugiati ha cofinanziato con 26 milioni di EUR misure di emergenza per gestire rapidamente il crescente numero di richiedenti asilo che arrivano sulle coste italiane. Con una dotazione di 250 milioni di EUR, ricevuta a titolo del Fondo per le frontiere esterne nel periodo 2007-2013, l'Italia ha potuto finanziare investimenti in infrastrutture e attrezzature.

Nella gestione dei flussi migratori alle frontiere esterne le autorità italiane ricevono l'assistenza di Frontex e degli Stati membri. Frontex coordina e cofinanzia le operazioni congiunte Hermes e Enea, condotte dall'Italia. Il sistema EUROSUR, che dovrebbe diventare operativo in dicembre, migliorerà la capacità di individuare le piccole imbarcazioni, contribuendo sia a salvare delle vite sia a intercettare gli attraversamenti illegali delle frontiere. L'Italia è inoltre assistita dall'EASO che attua uno speciale piano di sostegno per aiutare le autorità a riformare il sistema di asilo.

La Commissione ha istituito una task force specifica per il Mediterraneo che riunisce tutti gli Stati membri e le agenzie competenti e che riferirà al Consiglio in dicembre per raccomandare nuove azioni volte a ridurre il rischio che tali tragedie si ripetano in futuro.

La Commissione ha rafforzato la collaborazione con i paesi limitrofi dell'Africa settentrionale. Dall'inizio della Primavera araba, l'UE ha avviato dialoghi su migrazione, mobilità e sicurezza con vari paesi della regione e in giugno ha concluso un partenariato per la mobilità con il Marocco. In Libia sono in corso programmi finanziati dall'UE per circa 30 milioni di EUR in settori quali la gestione di flussi misti e la gestione delle frontiere.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011358/13
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Use of funds for immigration policies, with a special focus on the problem of immigrant landings

Yet again, off the coast of Lampedusa, over 94 bodies of Somali and Eritrean migrants, who died as a result of yet another tragic shipwreck, have just been recovered. So far there are still 250 people missing.

500 migrants were on board the sunken boat, including a pregnant woman and 30 children.

This is not an isolated incident, as over the past few months there have been numerous landings of illegal immigrants on the Italian coast and an equal number of disasters at sea in the Mediterranean, which have stricken thousands of women, men and children, mainly from North African countries.

Can the Commission say how the funds earmarked for immigration policies have been used so far, what it intends to do to solve the problem of the immigrant landings and what policies it intends to implement in order to regulate this problem?

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

For 2007-2013, Italy received more than EUR 500 million from funds under the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'.

The European Refugee Fund has co-funded emergency measures for EUR 26 million over the period 2008-2013 to respond swiftly to the increasing number of asylum applicants arriving on Italian shores. With an allocation of EUR 250 million for 2007-2013 under the External Borders Fund, Italy was able to finance investment in infrastructure and equipment.

Frontex, with Member States (MS), assists the Italian authorities to handle migratory flows at external borders. Frontex coordinates and co-finances Joint Operations Hermes and Aeneas, hosted by Italy. Eurosur, expected to become operational in December, will increase the detection of small boats and help both to save lives and to intercept irregular border crossings. EASO is also implementing a Special Support Plan in Italy to help the authorities in reforming their asylum system.

The Commission has set up a dedicated Task Force for the Mediterranean. This Task Force brings together all Member States and relevant agencies. It will report in December to the Council, recommending new actions aimed at reducing the risk of such tragedies occurring in the future.

The Commission has strengthened cooperation with our neighbours in Northern Africa. Since the Arab Spring, the EU has opened Dialogues on Migration, Mobility and Security with a number of countries in the region and concluded a Mobility Partnership with Morocco in June. In Libya, approximately EUR 30 million of EU-funded programmes are underway on areas such as management of mixed flows and border management.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-011359/13
à Comissão
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Expulsão de 15 portugueses de uma residência social no Luxemburgo

Há poucos dias, 15 portugueses receberam por escrito uma notificação de despejo de uma residência social no Luxemburgo destinada a estrangeiros com dificuldades económicas. Entre eles encontram-se casos de invalidez e deficiência reconhecida e casos de cidadãos sem contrato de trabalho, o que os impede de conseguir um contrato de arrendamento.

As notificações de despejo surgem com um prazo de três meses, e sem nunca ter existido outro aviso prévio que lhes permitisse, tendo em conta a situação particular de cada um deles, encontrar uma alternativa adequada num prazo mais justo.

Tratando-se de uma situação delicada e aludindo ao artigo 2.° do Tratado de Lisboa, pergunta-se à Comissão se pretende continuar a fingir que estas situações não existem, ou se por sua vez instará os Estados-membros — neste caso particular o Luxemburgo — a reverem a forma como atuam perante casos como este e a encontrar um modo mais justo e solidário de atuação, que tenha em conta cada situação individual e que respeite a dignidade das pessoas.

De sublinhar que os cidadãos em causa se encontravam numa residência legalmente, que pagavam a sua renda e que nunca lhes foi dito que era uma situação provisória.

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(21 de novembro de 2013)

Por uma questão de princípio, os poderes da Comissão no que respeita aos atos e omissões dos Estados-Membros limitam-se ao controlo da aplicação do direito da UE, sob o controlo do Tribunal de Justiça.

Com base nas informações facultadas pela Senhora Deputada, não se afigura que, na questão referida, o Estado-Membro em causa tenha atuado no quadro da aplicação do direito da UE.

No que respeita mais particularmente às questões dos direitos fundamentais suscitadas pela Senhora Deputada, a Comissão gostaria de lembrar que, ao abrigo do artigo 51.°, n.° 1, da Carta dos Direitos Fundamentais, as disposições da Carta são dirigidas aos Estados-Membros, apenas quando apliquem o direito da União.

Em tais situações, incumbe aos Estados-Membros assegurar que as suas obrigações em matéria de direitos fundamentais, em conformidade com o direito nacional e internacional, são respeitadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011359/13
to the Commission
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Eviction of 15 Portuguese citizens from a state-run hostel in Luxembourg

Some days ago, 15 Portuguese citizens received a letter notifying them of their eviction from a state-run hostel for foreigners with financial difficulties in Luxembourg. Some of them are recognised as suffering illness or disability and some have no employment contract, which means that they are unable to sign a rental agreement.

The eviction letters gave them only three months notice, and they received no prior warning that would have given them more time to find a suitable alternative, bearing in mind the specific situation of each individual resident concerned.

Given that this is a difficult situation, and bearing in mind the principles set out in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon, will the Commission continue to pretend that such problems simply do not exist, or will it urge the Member States — in this case Luxembourg — to reconsider their approach in dealing with such cases and find a response that is more firmly based on the principles of justice and solidarity, takes account of each individual situation and respects human dignity?

It should be pointed out that the citizens involved were legally resident in the hostel, that they were paying rent and that they were never told that this was to be seen as temporary accommodation.

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

As a matter of principle, the Commission's powers regarding acts and omissions by Member States are limited to overseeing the application of EC law, under the control of the Court of Justice.

On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member, it would not appear that in the matter referred to, the Member State concerned had acted in the framework of implementing EC law.

Regarding more particularly the fundamental rights issues raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission would recall that, according to Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing EC law.

In such situations, it is for Member States to ensure that their obligations regarding fundamental rights, in conformity with relevant national and international law, are respected.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011362/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Modificación en la homologación de métodos de captura en Castilla-La Mancha

El pasado 18 de junio, el Gobierno autonómico de la Junta de Castilla-La Mancha publicaba en su diario oficial una norma legal con rango de orden que aprueba y homologa lazos en diversas modalidades y otras trampas de selectividad dudosa para el control de depredadores cinegéticos, cuyo uso podría poner en peligro a determinadas especies animales protegidas por directivas comunitarias (algunas, catalogadas en peligro de extinción, como el lince ibérico, Lynx pardinus) que se encuentran en la Comunidad y para las que se destinan fondos comunitarios a través de proyectos LIFE como Priorimancha o Iberlince, comprometiendo la viabilidad de las actuaciones de conservación que se realizan en ellos.

Dicha Orden (2013/8376) reglamenta y autoriza determinados tipos de trampas y lazos para control de depredadores de especies cinegéticas, siguiendo lo estipulado en la Ley nacional (42/2007), que obliga a la homologación de dichos mecanismos en base a los criterios de selectividad y bienestar animal fijados en los acuerdos internacionales. Sin embargo, la norma legal de Castilla-La Mancha homologa y permite el empleo de determinados tipos de lazos y trampas cuya selectividad es más que dudosa y que pueden causar la muerte de ejemplares de especies protegidas, ya que no discriminan suficientemente entre especies, de forma que no existen garantías para la protección efectiva de las especies protegidas. Según informaciones aportadas por asociaciones ecologistas y otras administraciones autonómicas, como Andalucía, este tipo de métodos no selectivos de control de depredadores suponen un grave riesgo para diez especies de carnívoros que habitan en diferentes zonas de la región. Entre estas, dos especies que se encuentran en peligro de extinción en la Comunidad: el lince ibérico y el lobo (Canis lupus signatus). Las trampas y lazos están pensados para presas carnívoras como zorros, perros, gatos, etc. Sin embargo, algunos de los métodos aprobados no son inocuos para las citadas especies en peligro de extinción. Es muy grave que se autoricen estos métodos cuya selectividad no está suficientemente probada en áreas críticas de lince y en zonas potenciales de hábitats de lobo (la primera cuenta con un plan de recuperación, pero esta última especie no cuenta, a fecha de hoy, con un plan de recuperación y por lo tanto, no tiene definida sus áreas críticas).

¿Conoce la Comisión la citada orden de Castilla-La Mancha? ¿Considera que el empleo de este tipo de trampas y lazos que no discriminan con cierta seguridad el tipo de especie objetivo garantiza la defensa de especies protegidas por la Directiva 92/43/CEE? ¿Planteará al Gobierno autonómico de Castilla-La Mancha la necesidad de modificar dicha norma legal para proteger efectivamente a las citadas especies, prohibiendo su uso en zonas con presencia actual o potencial de lince y lobo?

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

La Comisión ha estudiado la Orden de 18.6.2013, publicada en el Diario Oficial de Castilla-La Mancha el 9 de julio de 2013 ([1]).

Dicha Orden homologa cuatro métodos de captura de zorros (*Vulpes vulpes*) y de perros salvajes (*Canis lupus familiaris*), especies que no se encuentran protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre hábitats ([2]). Según los datos que figuran en la Orden, se llevaron a cabo proyectos de investigación que evaluaron cada uno de los métodos utilizados en relación con su selectividad, eficacia e impacto en especies no objetivo, además de tener en cuenta consideraciones sobre el bienestar animal. De acuerdo con esta información, la selectividad de estos métodos ha resultado ser superior al 80 %. Asimismo, la Orden prohíbe expresamente la utilización de estos métodos de captura en zonas con presencia estable y poblaciones reproductoras de lince ibérico o lobo ibérico, a menos que se haya llegado a acuerdos específicos con las autoridades regionales.

Considerando que los métodos aprobados por la citada Orden no van dirigidos a especies protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre hábitats, y que, según la información de que se dispone, la selectividad y el posible impacto en especies no objetivo han sido evaluados previamente, la Comisión no tiene motivos para concluir que la utilización de estos métodos pueda poner en peligro a las especies protegidas en virtud de la Directiva sobre hábitats. Puesto que no se ha constatado infracción alguna de la legislación de la UE, la Comisión no tiene intención de adoptar medidas adicionales a este respecto.

([1]) http://docm.jccm.es/portaldocm/descargarArchivo.do?ruta=2013/07/09/pdf/2013_8376.pdf&tipo=rutaDocm
([2]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011362/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Change to the type-approval of trapping methods in Castilla-La Mancha

On 18 June 2013, the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha published in its official gazette a legal regulation, in the form of an Order, authorising and type-approving various types of snares and other dubiously selective traps to control predators that hunt. The use of these traps could endanger certain animal species in the region that are protected by EU directives (some, such as the Iberian lynx, Lynx pardinus, being listed as endangered) and for which EU funds have been provided through LIFE projects like PrioriMancha and Iberlince, thus compromising the viability of the conservation action carried out under these projects.

This Order (2013/8376) regulates and authorises certain types of traps and snares to control predators belonging to hunting species, in line with the provisions of Spanish National Law No 42/2007, which requires such mechanisms to be type-approved in accordance with selectivity and animal welfare criteria established in international agreements. However, Castilla-La Mancha's legal regulation type-approves and permits the use of certain types of snares and traps whose selectivity is less certain, which may kill specimens of protected species because they do not discriminate sufficiently between species, meaning there are no guarantees that protected species will be effectively protected. According to information provided by environmental associations and other regional governments, such as Andalusia, these non-selective methods of predator control pose a serious risk to 10 carnivore species with habitats in different parts of the region. These include two of the region's endangered species: the Iberian lynx and the wolf (Canis lupus signatus). Traps and snares are designed for carnivorous hunters like foxes, dogs, cats, etc. However, some of the approved methods are harmful to species in danger of extinction. It is very serious that these methods, with inadequately proven selectivity, are authorised in critical areas for lynx and in potential wolf habitat areas (the former species has a recovery plan, but the latter has no such plan to date and, therefore, does not have any critical areas defined).

Is the Commission aware of this Order in Castilla-La Mancha? Does the Commission believe that the use of such traps and snares, which do not differentiate between target species with any certainty, ensures the protection of species protected by Directive 92/43/EEC? Will the Commission raise with the regional government of Castilla-La Mancha the need to amend its legal regulation to protect these species effectively, prohibiting the use of these snares and traps in areas with a current, or a potential, lynx and wolf presence?

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

The Commission has examined the Order of 18.6.2013, published in the official gazette of Castilla-La Mancha of 9 July 2013 ([1]).

The Order of 18/06/2013 type-approves four methods for capturing foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) and feral dogs (*Canis lupus familiaris*). These species are not protected under the Habitats Directive ([2]). According to the information contained in the Order, research projects assessed each of the methods used with regard to their selectivity, efficiency, and impact on non-target species, as well as animal welfare considerations. According to this information, the selectivity of these methods has proven to be higher than 80%. Furthermore, the Order explicitly prohibits the use of these methods of capture in areas with stable presence and breeding populations of Iberian lynx or Iberian wolf, unless specific arrangements are agreed with the regional authorities.

Considering that the methods to be approved by the Order do not address species protected under the Habitats Directive, and that, according to available information, the selectivity and possible impact on non-target species has been previously assessed, the Commission has no reasons to conclude that the use of these methods would jeopardise species protected under the Habitats Directive. Since no breach of EU legislation has been identified, the Commission does not intend to take any further steps on this matter.

([1]) http://docm.jccm.es/portaldocm/descargarArchivo.do?ruta=2013/07/09/pdf/2013_8376.pdf&tipo=rutaDocm
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011364/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εξαγωγές και γραφειοκρατία

Καθώς το κόστος της γραφειοκρατίας είναι δύσκολο να εκτιμηθεί σε όρους ΑΕΠ, διαθέτει η Επιτροπή πρόσφατα στοιχεία αναφορικά με τον χρόνο που απαιτείται για την εξαγωγή ενός προϊόντος από την Ελλάδα; Ποιος ο αντίστοιχος κοινοτικός μέσος όρος; Διαπιστώνει την τελευταία περίοδο η Επιτροπή πρόοδο όσον αφορά το νομοθετικό πλαίσιο στην Ελλάδα για την ενθάρρυνση των εξαγωγών;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η διευκόλυνση του εξωτερικού εμπορίου εντάσσεται στη δέσμη μέτρων του 2ου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, προκειμένου να δημιουργηθούν ευνοϊκές συνθήκες για την οικονομική δραστηριότητα και να βελτιωθεί το επιχειρηματικό περιβάλλον. Το Νοέμβριο του 2012, οι ελληνικές αρχές θέσπισαν έναν οδικό χάρτη για τη διευκόλυνση του εξωτερικού εμπορίου ([1]), ο οποίος αποσκοπεί στη μείωση του χρόνου για την εξαγωγή κατά 50% σε διάστημα 3 ετών. Η δέσμη των 25 δράσεων περιλαμβάνει την απλούστευση της διαδικασίας έκδοσης αδειών και πιστοποιητικών, τη βελτιστοποίηση των τελωνειακών διαδικασιών και την εισαγωγή αυτοματοποιημένων διαδικασιών. Κατά τη διάρκεια του 2013, οι τελωνειακές διαδικασίες διενεργούνται πλέον επτά ημέρες την εβδομάδα και σε εικοσιτετράωρη βάση (24/7) ή με διπλές βάρδιες, στα επιλεγμένα τελωνεία του αεροδρομίου των Αθηνών και του Λιμένα του Πειραιά.

Η Ελλάδα εφήρμοσε επίσης σύστημα που επιτρέπει την ηλεκτρονική υποβολή διασαφήσεων για εξαγωγές και έχουν αρχίσει εργασίες για την απλούστευση των προ-τελωνειακών διαδικασιών. Η μεταρρύθμιση υποστηρίζεται από σημαντική τεχνική συνδρομή από διεθνείς οργανισμούς, την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, η οποία συντονίζεται από την ειδική ομάδα δράσης της Επιτροπής για την Ελλάδα (Task Force).

Μολονότι είναι ακόμα πολύ νωρίς για να αξιολογηθεί πλήρως ο αντίκτυπος της εν λόγω υπό εξέλιξη μεταρρύθμισης, η Επιτροπή επισημαίνει ότι οι μεταρρυθμιστικές προσπάθειες έχουν ήδη συμβάλει στη βελτίωση του εξωτερικού εμπορίου για τις εξαγωγές, σύμφωνα με την έκθεση της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζα με τίτλο «Doing Business 2014» ([2]). Η έκθεση παρέχει μια μέτρηση ορισμένων παραμέτρων που σχετίζονται με το εξωτερικό εμπόριο, σύμφωνα με την οποία η Ελλάδα παρουσίασε βελτίωση στην παγκόσμια κατάταξη, περνώντας από την 62η στην 52η θέση μεταξύ 189 χωρών που συγκρίνονται στην έκθεση του 2013. Όσον αφορά πιο συγκεκριμένα το στοιχείο του απαιτούμενου χρόνου για την εξαγωγή, η μελέτη εκτιμά ότι χρειάζονται 16 ημέρες για την εξαγωγή ενός προϊόντος από την Ελλάδα (σε σύγκριση με 19 ημέρες στην έκθεση του 2013), ενώ ο αντίστοιχος μέσος χρόνος για την εξαγωγή αγαθών από τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ είναι 12 ημέρες ([3]).

([1]) http://www.mindev.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Greece_Trade_Facilitation_Strategy_Roadmap_Oct-2012.pdf
([2]) http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2014.
([3]) Η μεθοδολογία στην έκθεση «Doing Business 2014» για το εξωτερικό εμπόριο έχει εξελιχθεί σε σύγκριση με το 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011364/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Red tape and exports

Although the cost of red tape is hard to estimate in terms of GDP, does the Commission have any recent data on the time required for exporting a product from Greece? What is the corresponding Community average? Has the Commission seen any progress in Greece recently in relation to legislation for encouraging exports?

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

Trade facilitation is part of the comprehensive set of measures included in the 2nd adjustment programme for Greece in order to create favourable conditions for economic activity and improve the business environment. In November 2012, the Greek Authorities have adopted a trade facilitation reform roadmap ([1]), which aims to reduce this time for export by 50% within 3 years. The set of 25 actions includes simplifying the issuing of licences and certificates, optimising customs operations and introducing automated procedures. During 2013, customs operations have shifted to 24/7 or double-shifts for exports in the pilot offices of Athens airport and Piraeus Port.

Greece has also implemented a system allowing electronic submission of customs declarations for exports and work has been initiated to simplify pre-customs procedures. The reform is supported by important technical assistance from International Organisations, the European Commission and EU Member States, which is coordinated by the Commission's Task Force for Greece.

Although it is still too early to evaluate the full impact of this ongoing reform, the Commission would highlight that reform efforts have already contributed to an improvement in trading across borders for exports according to the World Bank's Doing Business 2014 report ([2]). The report provides measurement on a certain number of metrics related to trading across borders, according to which, Greece improved its ranking from 62nd to 52nd position out of 189 countries compared to the 2013 report. Regarding the specific item of time to export, the study estimates that 16 days are necessary to export a product from Greece (compared to 19 days in the 2013 report), whereas it takes 12 days on average to export goods from EU Member States ([3]).

([1]) http://www.mindev.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Greece_Trade_Facilitation_Strategy_Roadmap_Oct-2012.pdf
([2]) http://www.doingbusiness.org/reports/global-reports/doing-business-2014
([3]) The methodology in the Doing Business Report 2014 for trading across border has evolved compared to 2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011365/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εξυπηρέτηση πολιτών και γραφειοκρατία

Η Ελλάδα, το τελευταίο διάστημα, εντατικοποιεί την προσπάθειά της για τη βελτίωση της καθημερινότητας των πολιτών, με τη διεκπεραίωση χωρίς καθυστερήσεις των αιτημάτων τους προς τις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες. Η μείωση της γραφειοκρατίας, του χρόνου και του κόστους διεκπεραίωσης των αιτημάτων αυτών, πέρα από την προφανή εξυπηρέτηση των πολιτών, αναμένεται να συμβάλει θετικά και στην προσπάθεια ανάκτησης βιώσιμων ανταγωνιστικών ρυθμών για την χώρα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Διαθέτει στοιχεία αναφορικά με τον σημερινό μέσο χρόνο και το κόστος έκδοσης διοικητικών πράξεων στην Ελλάδα και διεκπεραίωσης αιτημάτων των πολιτών; Ποιες είναι οι αντίστοιχες επιδόσεις, κατά μέσο όρο, στην ΕΕ;

— Έχει στη διάθεσή της στοιχεία που να εκτιμούν το κόστος της γραφειοκρατίας για την ελληνική οικονομία; Ποιος είναι ο αντίστοιχος κοινοτικός μέσος όρος;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή (Eurostat) δεν συγκεντρώνει επίσημα στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τα θέματα αυτά. Το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου μπορεί να συμβουλευτεί τους Δείκτες Ρύθμισης της Αγοράς Προϊόντων του ΟΟΣΑ, που μετρούν τον βαθμό στον οποίο οι πολιτικές προωθούν ή εμποδίζουν τον ανταγωνισμό σε τομείς της αγοράς προϊόντων όπου ο ανταγωνισμός είναι βιώσιμος. Τα τελευταία διαθέσιμα στατιστικά στοιχεία αφορούν το 2008 ([1]), αν και αναμένεται να δημοσιευτούν σύντομα επικαιροποιημένα στοιχεία για το 2013. Το 2008, η Ελλάδα εμφανίζει ένα από τα υψηλότερα επίπεδα ρύθμισης της αγοράς προϊόντων μεταξύ των χωρών του ΟΟΣΑ, δημιουργώντας περιττούς ελέγχους και εμπόδια που παρακωλύουν την επιχειρηματικότητα, το εμπόριο και τις επενδύσεις. Όπως φαίνεται από τη μελέτη McKinsey ([2]) και άλλα διαθέσιμα αποδεικτικά στοιχεία, ο δείκτης αυτός έχει σε μεγάλο βαθμό αντιστρόφως ανάλογη σχέση με τα επίπεδα παραγωγικότητας.

Για τον λόγο αυτό, το πρόγραμμα προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα δίνει μεγάλη έμφαση στις διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις για τη βελτίωση του επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος και τη μείωση του διοικητικού φόρτου, βελτιώνοντας έτσι τον ανταγωνισμό και την ανταγωνιστικότητα. Μεταξύ αυτών συγκαταλέγονται τα οριζόντια μέτρα για την προώθηση της βελτίωσης της νομοθεσίας, έτσι ώστε να μειωθεί ο χρόνος και το κόστος για τη δημιουργία επιχειρήσεων, να απλουστευτούν οι διαδικασίες αδειοδότησης και οι διαδικασίες για τις εξαγωγές και τις εισαγωγές και να βελτιωθεί η λειτουργία του δικαστικού συστήματος.

Επιπλέον, ο ΟΟΣΑ εκτελεί επί του παρόντος ένα έργο για τη μέτρηση του διοικητικού φόρτου στην Ελλάδα. Στο πλαίσιο του έργου αυτού θα εξεταστούν νόμοι και κανονισμοί σε 13 τομείς της ελληνικής οικονομίας για να εντοπιστεί ο περιττός διοικητικός φόρτος και να προταθούν εναλλακτικές λύσεις. Το έργο θα βοηθήσει στην ανάπτυξη των ικανοτήτων της ελληνικής διοίκησης για τη μέτρηση του διοικητικού φόρτου, τόσο εκ των υστέρων όσο και εκ των προτέρων, στο πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας αξιολόγησης του αντίκτυπου των κανονιστικών ρυθμίσεων.

([1]) http://www.oecd.org/eco/reform/indicatorsofproductmarketregulationpmr.htm
([2]) http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/athens/GreeceExecutiveSummary_new/pdfs/Executive_summary_English_new.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011365/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Public service and red tape

Efforts have recently been intensified in Greece to improve citizens' everyday lives by processing the requests they make to the public services without delay. In addition to the obvious benefit to citizens of improved services, cutting red tape and the duration and cost of processing requests is expected to make a positive contribution to establishing viable and competitive practices in the country.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Does it have any data on current averages in terms of the time required and the cost for issuing administrative deeds and processing citizens' requests? What are the equivalent EU averages?

— Does it have the data to estimate the cost of bureaucracy to the Greek economy? What is the corresponding EU average?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The European Commission (Eurostat) does not collect official statistics on these issues. The Honourable Member can consult the OECD Indicators of Product Market Regulation, which measure the degree to which policies promote or inhibit competition in areas of the product market where competition is viable. Last available figures correspond to 2008 ([1]), although a 2013 update is expected to be published soon. In 2008 Greece exhibited one of the highest degrees of product market regulation among OECD countries, creating unnecesary controls and barriers to entrepreneurship, trade and investment. As shown by McKinsey ([2]) and other evidence available, this index has a strong inverse correlation with productivity levels.

For this reason, the adjustment programme for Greece places strong emphasis on structural reforms to improve the business environment and reduce administrative burden, thereby enhancing competition and competitiveness. These include horizontal measures to promote better regulation in order to reduce time and costs of company creation, to simplify licensing procedures and procedures to export and import, and improve the functioning of the judicial system.

In addition, the OECD is currently undertaking a project to measure administrative burden in Greece. The project will screen laws and regulations in 13 sectors of the Greek economy to identify unnecessary administrative burdens and propose alternatives. The project will provide assistance in building up the capabilities of the Greek administration to measure administrative burdens both *ex post* and *ex ante* as part of the Regulatory Impact Assessment process.

([1]) http://www.oecd.org/eco/reform/indicatorsofproductmarketregulationpmr.htm
([2]) http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/athens/GreeceExecutiveSummary_new/pdfs/Executive_summary_English_new.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011366/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Γλωσσομάθεια στην ΕΕ

Η 26η Σεπτεμβρίου είναι αφιερωμένη στις ευρωπαϊκές γλώσσες, με στόχο, μεταξύ άλλων, την προώθηση της γλωσσομάθειας των ευρωπαίων πολιτών, η οποία, εκτός από πολιτιστική σημασία, έχει και προφανή οικονομικά και επαγγελματικά πλεονεκτήματα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Είναι σε θέση να μου παραθέσει συγκριτικά στοιχεία αναφορικά με το ποσοστό των Ελλήνων πολιτών που ομιλούν τουλάχιστον μία ξένη γλώσσα, σε σχέση με τον κοινοτικό μέσο όρο;

— Καθώς η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, σε κοινή δήλωσή της με το Συμβούλιο (20.9.2011), είχε δεσμευτεί για την ανάπτυξη του ευρωπαϊκού δείκτη γλωσσικών δεξιοτήτων, παρατηρεί πράγματι να σημειώνεται πρόοδος την τελευταία διετία;

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

Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία της Eurostat για το 2011 ([1]) σχετικά με τις δεξιότητες σε ξένες γλώσσες, βάσει ιδίας δήλωσης, των ενηλίκων, το 42% των Ελλήνων δεν ομιλούν κάποια ξένη γλώσσα, ενώ ο αντίστοιχος μέσος όρος στην ΕΕ των 28 είναι 34% ([2]). Από την άλλη, το 2011 πραγματοποιήθηκε μελέτη εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής, με σκοπό την παροχή στοιχείων σχετικά με το επίπεδο ικανότητας της ευρωπαϊκής νεολαίας σε ξένες γλώσσες. Η μελέτη αυτή έδειξε ότι το 48% των ελλήνων μαθητών στη χαμηλότερη δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση είχαν επάρκεια σε μια ξένη γλώσσα. Ο μέσος όρος όλων των συμμετεχουσών χωρών ήταν 42% ([3]).

Η Επιτροπή έχει θέσει ως στόχο την προώθηση της διδασκαλίας ξένων γλωσσών. Τον Νοέμβριο του 2012 θέσπισε τη στρατηγική «Ανασχεδιασμός της εκπαίδευσης», στην οποία επισήμανε τη σπουδαιότητα που έχουν οι δεξιότητες σε ξένες γλώσσες για την απασχολησιμότητα και έδωσε οδηγίες στα κράτη μέλη σχετικά με τους παράγοντες που συμβάλλουν στην αποτελεσματική διδασκαλία γλωσσών ([4]).

Η στρατηγική «Ανασχεδιασμός της εκπαίδευσης» περιείχε επίσης την πρόταση της Επιτροπής για την καθιέρωση ενός σημείου αναφοράς της ΕΕ για την επάρκεια σε ξένες γλώσσες. Το σημείο αναφοράς βασίζεται στην πρόταση της συνόδου κορυφής της Βαρκελώνης του 2002 για την παροχή της δυνατότητας στους Ευρωπαίους να μαθαίνουν δύο ξένες γλώσσες από μικρή ηλικία. Η πρόταση θέτει ως στόχο ότι, έως το 2020, το 50% όλων των 15χρονων στην ΕΕ θα πρέπει να έχουν φτάσει στο επίπεδο ανεξάρτητου χρήστη για την πρώτη ξένη τους γλώσσα και το 75% των μαθητών στη δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση θα πρέπει να μαθαίνουν δύο ξένες γλώσσες. Αυτή τη στιγμή η Επιτροπή εξετάζει, από κοινού με τις μελλοντικές Προεδρίες του Συμβουλίου, το χρονοδιάγραμμα συζήτησης και καθιέρωσης του σημείου αναφοράς της ΕΕ.

([1]) Πρόκειται για το πλέον πρόσφατο στοιχείο που έχει στη διάθεσή της η Eurostat.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-26092013-AP/EN/3-26092013-AP-EN.PDF
([3]) Περαιτέρω πληροφορίες σχετικά με την έρευνα είναι διαθέσιμες στον δικτυακό τόπο: http://ec.europa.ey/languages/escl/docs/en/finbal-report-escl_en.pdf
([4]) Περαιτέρω πληροφορίες σχετικά με την εν λόγω στρατηγική είναι διαθέσιμες στον δικτυακό τόπο: http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/swd372_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011366/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Language learning in the EU

26 September has been declared European Day of Languages, with a view, among other things, to promoting language learning among European citizens, something which, apart from cultural importance, also has obvious economic and professional advantages.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Can it provide comparative data on the percentage of Greek citizens speaking at least one foreign language, compared to the Community average?

— As the Commission, in a joint declaration with the Council (20 September 2011), made a commitment to improving European language skills, has it seen any progress over the past two years?

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

According to Eurostat figures from 2011 ([1]) on self-reported knowledge of foreign language skills by adults, 42% of Greeks do not speak any foreign language, whereas this figure is 34% for the EU 28 average ([2]). On the other hand, a survey was conducted in 2011 on behalf of the Commission to provide information about the level of foreign language competence of European youth. This survey showed that 48% of Greek pupils in lower secondary education were able to use a foreign language independently. The average of all participating countries was 42% ([3]).

The Commission has set itself the objective of promoting the teaching of foreign languages. In November 2012, it adopted the 'Rethinking Education' strategy where it highlighted the importance of foreign language skills for employability and presented guidance to Member States about the factors contributing to effective language teaching ([4]).

Rethinking Education also included the Commission proposal for an EU benchmark on foreign languages proficiency. The benchmark is based on the 2002 Barcelona Summit proposal of providing Europeans with the opportunity of learning two foreign languages from an early age. The proposal sets as a goal that by 2020 at least 50% of 15-year-olds in the EU should attain the level of independent user in a first foreign language, and that at least 75% of pupils in lower secondary education should study two foreign languages. The Commission is currently discussing with the future Council Presidencies on the schedule for the discussion and adoption of the EU benchmark.

([1]) This is the latest figure that was available to Eurostat.
([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-26092013-AP/EN/3-26092013-AP-EN.PDF
([3]) You can find further information about this survey on this website: http://ec.europa.ey/languages/escl/docs/en/finbal-report-escl_en.pdf
([4]) You can find further information about this strategy at http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking/swd372_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011367/13
to the Commission
Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: European Health Insurance Card holders in Ireland

At present, only two out of five Europeans carry a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). For a country such as Ireland, it is very important that citizens obtain an EHIC in order to facilitate medical treatment when going on holiday, working or studying abroad. For example, in the 2011-2012 period a total of 1 963 students from Irish universities participated in the Erasmus programme, studying in other universities throughout Europe. In addition, over 50 000 Irish people emigrated during 2012, with many of these immigrants travelling to other places within the EU.

— Can the Commission confirm, both in percentage and numerical terms, how many Irish citizens carried an EHIC in 2012?

— How does this figure compare to the number of EHIC holders in other Member States?

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

In 2012, 380 864 new European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) were issued in Ireland to persons insured under the Irish statutory health insurance scheme, which made the total number of cards circulating in Ireland up to 1.254.160. The figures which are at the disposal of the Commission do however not distinguish according to nationality.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the recent press release IP/13/683 concerning the use of the EHICs. The annex of this document provides the number of EHICs and Provisional Replacement Certificates (PRCs) in circulation in 2012, as well as the percentages of EHICs in circulation for insured population, where such data is available: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-683_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011368/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Alternative la semnarea unui acord de asociere cu Azerbaidjanul

Azerbaidjanul joacă un rol regional important în domeniile securității energetice, geoeconomiei, geostrategiei şi culturii şi, spre deosebire de Armenia sau Belarus, este încă deschis unui parteneriat strategic cu un aliat politic gata să-l ajute să-şi refacă integritatea teritorială şi să-şi consolideze securitatea geopolitică, având în vedere că actuala sa neutralitate nu poate continua la nesfârşit.

De asemenea, regiunile în care Azerbaidjanul joacă un rol strategic sunt de o importanță strategică nu numai pentru UE, ci şi pentru alte puteri regionale.

În acest context, faptul că UE nu a finalizat negocierea unui acord de asociere cu Azerbaidjan, declarând că promovarea intereselor strategice ale UE ar trebui să aştepte până ce „valorile europene" au fost adoptate şi implementate, nu va ajuta UE să câştige în jocul geostrategic şi nici nu va promova valorile sale.

În consecință, VP/ÎR este rugat să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. În lipsa unui acord de asociere UE-Azerbaidjan finalizat, este UE pregătită să propună şi să semneze, în timpul summitului Parteneriatului estic de la Vilnius, un protocol sau un acord-cadru care să stabilească temeiul unui parteneriat strategic cu Azerbaidjanul, inclusiv o declarație de sprijin clar din partea UE pentru integritatea teritorială a Azerbaidjanului?

2. Este UE pregătită să semneze un acord de facilitare a obținerii vizelor şi de readmisie cu Azerbaidjanul şi îşi ia angajamentul să facă acest lucru?

Răspuns dat de dl Füle în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

Negocierile dintre UE şi Azerbaidjan privind încheirea unui acord de asociere sunt în curs din iulie 2010. Având în vedere că Azerbaidjanul nu este încă membru al OMC, condiție prealabilă pentru negocierile privind înființarea unei zone de liber schimb aprofundat şi cuprinzător, o revizuire a dispozițiilor comerciale ale actualului acord de parteneriat şi cooperare este în prezent în curs de negociere, în cadrul negocierilor privind încheierea unui acord de asociere, în vederea asigurării aplicării şi respectării normelor şi principiilor fundamentale ale OMC în cadrul schimburilor comerciale bilaterale.

De asemenea, au loc negocieri privind elaborarea unui document intitulat „Un parteneriat strategic pentru modernizare" (SMP). Acesta va completa procesul de negociere privind încheierea unui acord de asociere. Este prea devreme să se estimeze dacă negocierile privind SMP pot fi încheiate până la summitul Parteneriatului estic de la Vilnius. În orice caz, progresele privind SMP sunt legate de progresele din cadrul negocierilor privind încheierea unui acord de asociere.

Negocierile referitoare la acordul de facilitare a eliberării vizelor şi la acordul de readmisie au fost încheiate, acordurile menționate urmând să fie semnate în timp util de către ambele părți.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011368/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Alternatives to signing an association agreement with Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has an important regional role in the energy security, geoeconomic, geostrategic and cultural fields and, unlike Armenia or Belarus, is still open to a strategic partnership with a political ally prepared to help rehabilitate its territorial integrity and consolidate its geopolitical security, as its present neutrality cannot continue forever.

Moreover, the regions in which Azerbaijan plays a strategic role are of strategic importance not only for the EU, but also for other regional powers.

In this context, the EU's failure to finalise the negotiation of an association agreement with Azerbaijan, claiming that the promotion of the EU's strategic interests should wait until 'European values' have been adopted and implemented, will neither help the EU win the geostrategic game nor promote its values.

Accordingly, the VP/HR is kindly requested to answer the following:

1. In the absence of a finalised EU-Azerbaijan association agreement, is the EU prepared to propose and sign a protocol or framework agreement defining the basis of a strategic partnership with Azerbaijan, including a declaration of the EU's unequivocal support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius?

2. Is the EU prepared to sign a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with Azerbaijan, and is it committed to doing so?

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

The negotiations between the EU and Azerbaijan on an Association Agreement are ongoing since July 2010. Due to the fact that Azerbaijan is not a member of the WTO, which is a pre-condition to negotiate Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), an upgrade of the existing PCA trade-related provisions is currently being negotiated in the framework of the Association Agreement negotiations, with the view to ensure that fundamental WTO rules and principles are applicable and enforceable in the bilateral trade.

Negotiations are also taking place on a document with the working title 'Strategic Modernisation Partnership (SMP)'. This complements the Association Agreement negotiation process. It is difficult to judge whether the negotiations on the SMP can be finalised by the time of the Vilnius Summit. In any event, progress on the SMP is linked to progress in the negotiations on the Association Agreement.

The negotiations on the Visa Facilitation Agreement and the Readmission Agreement have been concluded and will be signed in due course by both sides.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011369/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Aderarea Armeniei la Uniunea Eurasiatică

UE a fost luată prin surprindere de decizia Armeniei de a se alătura unei uniuni politice și comerciale cu Rusia în detrimentul alternativei reprezentate de UE.

Decizia de la Erevan de aderare la Uniunea Eurasiatică este mai importantă din punct de vedere politic decât economic. Aceasta reprezintă o lovitură la adresa intereselor UE în regiune și ilustrează incapacitatea UE de a sprijini aceste interese prin acțiuni concrete.

Acest rezultat este încă un exemplu de fiasco al politicii estice a UE după punerea în aplicare a principiului eronat de „mai mult pentru mai mult". Acest principiu determină țările vecine care se confruntă cu amenințări și oportunități alternative să ofere mai mult celor care exercită în prezent o presiune mai mare asupra lor, mai degrabă decât celor care le promit mai mult într-un viitor nedefinit.

În lumina acestor evoluții și a presiunii din ce în ce mai mari pe care o exercită Rusia asupra țărilor din Parteneriatul estic, VP/ÎR este rugat să răspundă la următoarele întrebări:

1. Este VP/ÎR de acord cu faptul că decizia Armeniei de a adera la Uniunea Eurasiatică se datorează eșecului UE de a-și promova interesele vitale în vecinătatea estică prin intermediul unor acțiuni specifice, bazate pe considerații geopolitice?

2. Ce intenționează VP/ÎR să facă pentru a remedia situația actuală și a stopa destrămarea Parteneriatului estic?

Răspuns dat de Füle în numele Comisiei
(25 noiembrie 2013)

1. UE a oferit Armeniei un Acord de asociere ambițios, care include o zonă de liber schimb complex și cuprinzător (AA/ZLSCC), ale cărui negocieri au fost finalizate în iulie 2013. În septembrie, UE a luat notă de decizia suverană a Armeniei de a se alătura Uniunii Vamale conduse de Rusia, din care fac parte Belarus, Kazahstan și Rusia. Această decizie a Armeniei face imposibilă parafarea AA/ZLSCC, așa cum se preconizase, la Reuniunea la nivel înalt a Parteneriatului estic, care va avea loc la Vilnius. Instituțiile UE au fost informate de partenerii armeni că decizia Erevanului a avut la bază o serie de considerații, printre care legăturile profunde cu Rusia și contextul regional specific.

Cu toate acestea, autoritățile armene și-au anunțat în mod clar angajamentul de a continua pe acest drum, de a promova și de a consolida cooperarea cu UE, precum și de a avansa parteneriatul cu aceasta în toate domeniile în care este posibil acest lucru, ținând seama de opțiunile lor strategice recente. Acest angajament este împărtășit de UE. Întrucât, în prezent, AA/ZLSCC nu mai reprezintă o opțiune, ambele părți au convenit să lanseze un proces de reflecție cu privire la domeniul și temeiul juridic al relațiilor viitoare.

2. Situația Armeniei este unică în rândul țărilor Parteneriatului estic. Ucraina, Georgia și Republica Moldova continuă să-și demonstreze angajamentul pentru parafarea și semnarea AA/ZLSCC la Reuniunea la nivel înalt a Parteneriatului estic care urmează a avea loc la Vilnius, în pofida unor presiuni externe recente nejustificate, pe care UE le consideră inacceptabile. Prin urmare, UE nu se așteaptă la niciun „efect de domino" al recentei opțiuni strategice a Armeniei asupra relațiilor cu alte state membre ale Parteneriatului estic.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011369/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Armenia joining the Eurasian Union

The EU has been taken by surprise by Armenia's decision to join a trade and political union with Russia, rather than opting for the EU alternative.

Yerevan's decision to join the Eurasian Union is more important from a political point of view than an economic one. It represents a blow to EU interests in the region and illustrates the EU's incapacity to support those interests with concrete actions.

This outcome represents yet another example of EU eastern policy fiascos following the implementation of the misguided principle of 'more for more'. For neighbouring countries faced with threats and alternative opportunities, this principle is pushing them to give more to those who pressure them more in the present rather than to those who promise them more in an indefinite future.

In the light of these developments and the increasing pressure placed by Russia on the Eastern Partnership countries, the VP/HR is kindly requested to answer the following questions:

1. Does the VP/HR agree that it is the EU's failure to promote its vital interests in the Eastern Neighbourhood by means of specific action based on geopolitical considerations that has prompted Armenia to join the Eurasian Union?

2. What does the VP/HR intend to do in order to remedy the current situation and stop the unravelling of the Eastern Partnership?

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

1. The EU offered Armenia an ambitious Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (AA/DCFTA), the negotiations of which were finalised in July 2013. In September, the EU took note of the sovereign decision of Armenia to join the Russia-led Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia. This decision by Armenia has made it impossible to initial the AA/DCFTA as had been envisaged for the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. The EU institutions have been informed by the Armenian partners that Yerevan's decision was based on a number of considerations, including Armenia's deep ties with Russia and its specific regional circumstances.

Nevertheless, the Armenian authorities have clearly signalled their commitment to continue, promote and enhance their cooperation with the EU and to move forward the partnership in all possible areas, taking into consideration their recent policy choice. This commitment is shared by the EU side. Now that the AA/DCFTA is no longer an option, both sides agreed to launch reflections on the scope and legal basis for their future relations.

2. Armenia's situation is unique among Eastern Partnership countries. Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova continue to demonstrate their commitment for initialling and signing the AA/DCFTA at the upcoming Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, despite recent undue external pressure which the EU finds unacceptable. Thus, the EU does not expect any 'domino effect' of Armenia's recent policy choice as concerns the relations with other members of the Eastern Partnership.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011370/13
alla Commissione
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Regno Unito — eventuale uscita dalla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo

Il primo ministro del Regno Unito ha annunciato che presto il paese potrebbe uscire dalla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo (CEDU). Se tale ipotesi si realizza, può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. il Regno Unito dovrà cessare di essere membro del Consiglio d'Europa?

2. il Regno Unito dovrà cessare di essere membro dell'UE?

3. l'UE si troverà in una situazione di inosservanza della CEDU, qualora il RegnoUnito, dopo aver agito in tal senso, restasse membro dell'UE?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione non ritiene opportuno esprimersi su eventuali dibattiti nazionali riguardanti un'ipotetica uscita di uno Stato membro dalla Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011370/13
to the Commission
Gianni Vattimo (ALDE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Possible exit of the United Kingdom from the European Convention on Human Rights

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has announced that the UK may soon leave the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). If this were to happen, can the Commission confirm whether:

1. the UK would have to leave the Council of Europe?

2. the UK would have to leave the EU?

3. the EU would find itself in a state of non-compliance with the ECHR, if the UK remained in the EU after taking such action?

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

The Commission does not consider it appropriate to comment on any national discussions concerning a hypothetical situation concerning withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights by a Member State.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011371/13
alla Commissione
Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Immigrazione

Il 3 ottobre 2013 verrà ricordato come una delle giornate più tragiche sul fronte dell'immigrazione. Al largo dell'isola di Lampedusa, un barcone con a bordo 500 migranti ha preso fuoco e si è rovesciato in mezzo al mare. L'incidente ha provocato la morte di decine di persone (in questo momento il bilancio provvisorio parla di 90 morti e 250 dispersi), tra cui donne e bambini. I migranti hanno perso la vita nel disperato tentativo di salvarsi.

Gli sbarchi sulle coste italiane sono proseguiti senza soluzione di continuità, con centinaia di arrivi quotidiani, per tutta l'estate.

Le autorità italiane non si sono mai sottratte alle proprie responsabilità, accogliendo e prestando soccorso a chi, spesso, fugge da situazioni disperate.

In questo momento, con la particolare situazione politica di alcuni Stati arabi, il problema ha assunto dimensioni tali che risulta impossibile pensare che un singolo Stato membro possa garantire un'assistenza adeguata a tutti i migranti in arrivo.

Il Commissario Johannes Hahn ha detto che «L'UE deve vedere cosa fare per aiutare», confermando che quella delle tragedie del mare è una questione comunitaria.

Considerando il problema e le dichiarazioni di Hahn, si chiede:

1. Cosa intende fare la Commissione per rispondere efficacemente all'emergenza migranti?

2. Che provvedimenti intende adottare la Commissione per regolamentare e controllare il fenomeno dell'immigrazione?

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

La Commissione nutre profonda preoccupazione per la situazione di Lampedusa e ne è prova la visita sull'isola del 9 ottobre 2013 da parte del presidente Barroso e della commissaria Malmström, in seguito al tragico incidente che ha causato la morte di oltre trecento persone. In tale circostanza la Commissione ha ribadito il suo pieno sostegno agli Stati membri che devono sostenere complesse operazioni di ricerca e salvataggio e accogliere un elevato numero di migranti. Questo sostegno si tradurrà, tra l'altro, in uno stanziamento complessivo di 30 milioni di euro per rafforzare il pattugliamento e migliorare il sistema di asilo in Italia. Detto stanziamento verrà messo a disposizione per potenziare la presenza di Frontex nella zona. I fondi supplementari andranno ad aggiungersi alle attività già esistenti dell'UE di supporto all'Italia, come il piano di sostegno speciale attivato dall'Ufficio europeo di sostegno per l'asilo.

In linea con le conclusioni del Consiglio «Giustizia e affari interni», la Commissione ha inoltre istituito una Task Force per il Mediterraneo che riunisce tutti gli Stati membri e le agenzie competenti dell'UE. A dicembre saranno presentati al Consiglio i risultati del suo lavoro, comprese le iniziative volte a evitare che simili tragedie si ripetano in futuro.

La Commissione intensificherà il proprio impegno per punire i trafficanti di esseri umani e fornirà assistenza agli Stati membri. La Commissione e Frontex cercheranno inoltre di coordinare al meglio i rispettivi sforzi per pattugliare le frontiere e salvare vite umane. Gli Stati membri sono inoltre incoraggiati a partecipare più attivamente alle attività di reinsediamento. Infine, l'Unione europea intende rafforzare le relazioni con i paesi limitrofi. A seguito della primavera araba, l'UE ha intrapreso dialoghi con numerosi paesi in materia di migrazione, mobilità e sicurezza. La firma del partenariato per la mobilità con il Marocco è un importante risultato di questo impegno e apre la strada a un rafforzamento della cooperazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011371/13
to the Commission
Elisabetta Gardini (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Immigration

3 October 2013 will be remembered as one of the most tragic days in immigration history. A boat with 500 migrants on board caught fire off the island of Lampedusa and capsized in the middle of the sea. Dozens of people died in the accident, some of them women and children (the provisional death toll stands at 90 at present, with a further 250 missing). The migrants died while trying desperately to save themselves.

Boats have been landing along the Italian coast without interruption throughout the summer, with hundreds of people arriving every day.

The Italian authorities have never tried to shirk their responsibilities and have taken in and provided assistance for people who are often fleeing from desperate situations.

With the political situation in some Arab states, the problem has now reached such a point that a single Member State cannot possibly be expected to provide adequate help for all of the immigrants who are arriving.

Commissioner Johannes Hahn has said that 'the EU must look at what can be done to help,' confirming that the problem of these tragedies at sea is an EU problem.

1. What does the Commission intend to do to deal effectively with the immigration crisis?

2. What provisions does the Commission intend to make to regulate and control the problem of immigration?

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

The Commission is highly concerned with the situation of Lampedusa as shown by the visit President Barroso and Commissioner Malmström to the island on 9 October 2013 in the aftermath of the tragic event that led to the death of over 300 people. The Commission reiterated its full support to Member States having to undertake complex Search and Rescue operations and receiving large numbers of migrants, including by pledging a total of up to EUR 30 million for reinforcing patrols and strengthening the Italian asylum system. Funds will be made available to upgrade Frontex presence in the area. This will come on top of existing EU support for Italy, such as the Special Support Plan activated by the European Asylum Support Office.

In line with the conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, the Commission has also set up a Task Force for the Mediterranean bringing together all Member States and relevant EU agencies. The results of its work will be presented to the December Council, including actions to prevent similar tragedies in future.

The Commission will reinforce its efforts to target human smugglers and will provide assistance to Member States. The Commission and Frontex will also seek to a better coordination of efforts to patrol borders and save lives. Members States are also encouraged to take part in resettlement activities to a greater extent. Finally, the EU aims to strengthen the relationship with our neighbours. Since the Arab Spring, Dialogues on Migration, Mobility and Security have begun with a number of countries. The signing of the Mobility Partnership with Morocco is an important result of this effort and pave the way for increased cooperation.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011372/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Asistența acordată de UE pentru Somalia

La 24 septembrie 2013, primul ministru al Somaliei, în discursul său la Consiliul ONU pentru Drepturile Omului, a solicitat ajutor suplimentar în sprijinul combaterii amenințărilor grupului militant Al Shabaab, în urma raidului din țara vecină, Kenya. UE desfășoară în prezent trei inițiative ale Politicii comune de securitate și de apărare (PSAC) în zona Somaliei, și anume Operațiunea navală UE Atalanta, Misiunea de instruire a Uniunii Europene în Somalia (EUTM) și EUCAP NESTOR. UE oferă, de asemenea, asistență Somaliei în domenii precum dezvoltarea societății civile, ajutorul umanitar și educația.

1. Care este poziția UE cu privire la menținerea și/sau extinderea acestor programe?

2. Ce măsuri aplică în prezent UE pentru a preveni escaladarea amenințării teroriste reprezentată de gruparea Al Shabaab?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(20 noiembrie 2013)

UE monitorizează și analizează în mod regulat misiunile PSAC. Menținerea și/sau extinderea acestora se decide în funcție de impactul fiecărei misiuni. Mandatul EUTM se prelungește până în martie 2015. Mandatul EUNAVFOR Atalanta se încheie la sfârșitul anului 2014. EUCAP Nestor a fost lansată în iulie 2012, având un mandat inițial de doi ani; iar în prezent se realizează o evaluare strategică bazată pe criterii de referință și obiective cuantificabile.

Abordarea globală a UE cu privire la Somalia are ca scop, printre altele, să prevină agravarea amenințării pe care o reprezintă Al Shabaab. Aceasta se concentrează pe sprijinul acordat guvernanței și consolidării instituțiilor și își propune să contribuie la rezolvarea conflictelor în curs și la evitarea posibilelor conflicte din viitor; aceasta se concentrează, de asemenea, asupra minimizării efectelor insecurității, cum ar fi pirateria, asupra susținerii creșterii economice și a cooperării regionale. Abordarea reunește într-un cadru unic eforturile noastre politice legate de dezvoltare și de misiunea PSAC, în vederea obținerii unui impact maxim.

Astfel cum demonstrează atacul de la Nairobi, eforturile pentru stabilizarea regiunii, în special în Somalia, sunt importante. Eforturile depuse în prezent includ sprijinul acordat AMISOM de către UE, misiunea UE de formare pentru forțele de securitate somaleze, precum și activități politice și de dezvoltare. Conferința de la Bruxelles din 16 septembrie privind un nou acord pentru Somalia a reprezentat o etapă importantă în abordarea celor mai importante priorități politice, socio-economice și în materie de securitate din Somalia. În plus, vom continua să promovăm punerea în aplicare a Planului de acțiune al UE de combatere a terorismului în Cornul Africii/ Yemen. Proiectele de combatere a finanțării terorismului și a extremismului violent sunt la fel de importante.

La un nivel mai larg, Forumul mondial privind combaterea terorismului (FGCT) reprezintă un cadru potrivit pentru coordonarea măsurilor de combatere a terorismului luate în urma atacului Westgate. UE este hotărâtă să își continue activitatea desfășurată în calitate de copreședinte al grupului de lucru al FGCT pentru Cornul Africii.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011372/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU assistance to Somalia

On 24 September 2013, the Prime Minister of Somalia addressed the UN Human Rights Council, calling for further aid to help fight the threat of action by the militant group al Shabaab, in the wake of the raid in neighbouring Kenya. The EU currently has three Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) initiatives active in the Somalia region, namely the EU naval operation Atalanta, the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia, and EUCAP NESTOR. The EU also provides assistance to Somalia in the form of civil society development, humanitarian aid, and education.

1. What is the EU's stance on the maintenance and/or expansion of these programmes?

2. What measures is the EU implementing in order to prevent the escalation of the terror threat posed by al Shabaab?

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

The EU regularly monitors and reviews CSDP missions. Their maintenance and / or expansion is decided in view of the impact of each mission. EUTM's mandate extends to March 2015. EUNAVFOR Atalanta is mandated until the end of 2014. EUCAP Nestor was launched in July 2012 for an initial mandate of two years; a strategic assessment based on benchmarks and measurable achievements is ongoing.

The EU's comprehensive approach to Somalia aims, *inter alia*, to prevent the escalation of the threat posed by Al Shabaab. It focuses on support to governance and institution building, and aims to help resolve ongoing conflicts and avoid potential future conflict; minimise effects of insecurity e.g. piracy; support economic growth; and support regional cooperation. It bundles our political, development and CSDP efforts in a single frame for maximum impact.

As the attack in Nairobi demonstrates, efforts to stabilise the region, especially Somalia, are important. Ongoing efforts includes EU support to Amisom, the EU training mission for the Somalian security forces, and political and development work. The Brussels Conference on a New Deal for Somalia of 16 September was a milestone for addressing the most critical political, security, and socioeconomic priorities in Somalia. In addition, we will continue to promote the implementation of EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan on Horn of Africa/Yemen. Equally important are projects to counter the financing of terrorism and violent extremism.

At a wider level, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) will provide a good forum to coordinate counterterrorism measures in the aftermath of the Westgate attack. The EU is committed to continue the co-chairmanship of the GCTF Horn of Africa working group.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011373/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Poziția cu privire la decretul menit să protejeze politicieni indieni care au comis infracțiuni

La 24 septembrie 2013, Cabinetul Guvernului indian a emis un decret pentru a proteja politicienii condamnați pentru infracțiuni care merg de la delapidare până la luare de mită sau chiar crimă. Această măsură ar permite politicienilor recunoscuți vinovați să rămână în funcție și să participe la următoarele alegeri din mai 2014.

Un studiu realizat de către Asociația pentru reforme democratice a arătat că, de la ultimele alegeri generale din 2009, aproximativ 30% din oamenii politici ai Guvernului indian, de la nivel federal și statal, au fost acuzați de infracțiuni penale. În iulie 2013, Curtea Supremă a Indiei a prezentat un aviz conform căruia o mare parte a acestora ar fi trebuit demiși din funcție. Reacția partidului majoritar în Congres a fost de a încerca să impună un act legislativ prin care să-și protejeze membrii; deoarece Parlamentul nu s-a mișcat suficient de repede în acest sens, Cabinetul a hotărât să intervină.

1. Având în vedere această reformă, cum va evalua Înaltul Reprezentant în viitor programele de ajutor și de parteneriat cu Guvernul indian?

2. Care este poziția pe care Înaltul Reprezentant o va adopta cu privire la această reformă și la faptul că ea permite practici corupte?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant/ dna vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei
(21 noiembrie 2013)

La 2 octombrie 2013, guvernul indian a decis să retragă atât ordonanța, cât și proiectul de lege controversate vizând să protejeze parlamentarii și legiuitorii care făcuseră obiectul unei condamnări, la care se referă distinsul membru în întrebarea sa. La nivel parlamentar, procesul de retragere a proiectului de lege va avea loc în sesiunea de iarnă a Parlamentului Indiei.

Pe măsură ce India se dezvoltă și devine o țară cu venituri medii, UE elimină treptat ajutorul pentru dezvoltare bilaterală destinat țării, canalizat prin Instrumentul de cooperare pentru dezvoltare. Pentru perioada 2014-2020 nu sunt prevăzute noi angajamente financiare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011373/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Stance on executive order to protect criminal politicians in India

On 24 September 2013, the Cabinet of the Indian Government released an executive order to protect politicians convicted of crimes ranging from embezzlement to bribery and even murder. The measure would allow the convicted politicians to retain their positions and take part in the next election cycle in May 2014.

In a study produced by the Association for Democratic Reforms, around 30% of politicians at the federal and state levels of the Indian Government were found to have been charged of criminal offences since the most recent general election in 2009. In July 2013, the Supreme Court of India handed down an opinion that would have expelled many of these members from their seats. In response, the ruling Congress Party attempted to force through legislation protecting its members; as the parliament moved too slowly for its needs, however, the Cabinet decided to take action.

1. In light of this reform, how will the High Representative evaluate aid and partnership programmes with the Indian Government in the future?

2. What position is the High Representative going to take on this reform and the fact that it allows corrupt practices?

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

The Indian Government decided on 2 October 2013 to withdraw both the controversial ordinance and the Bill that sought to protect convicted parliamentarians and legislators, to which the Honourable Member refers in her question. At the parliamentray level, the process of withdrawing the Bill will be taken up during the Winter Session of the Indian Parliament.

As India develops to become a middle-income country, the EU is phasing out bilateral development aid to the country, channelled through the Development Cooperation Instrument. No new financial commitments are foreseen for the 2014-2020 period.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011374/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Regulation of fuel surcharge pricing

Could the Commission indicate how the pricing of airline fuel surcharges is regulated and implemented in the internal market?

Could the Commission further explain how discrepancies between fuel surcharge prices and fuel prices are monitored, whilst taking airline hedging positions into account, for the purposes of preventing abuses of this instrument to the detriment of consumers?

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

Air Services Regulation ([1]) (EC) 1008/2008 in its Articles 22-23 makes clear that air carriers have pricing freedom and imposes an obligation on air carriers to include the applicable conditions and display all taxes, charges, fees and surcharges — whether on fuel, security or other matters — which are unavoidable and foreseeable at the time of publication. The regulation does not restrict air carriers in setting price structure.

Hedging of fuel is a business matter. The Commission does not intervene in the contractual relationship between airlines and fuel suppliers or airlines and passengers in this respect and does not monitor the alleged discrepancies.

If a consumer has the view that such practice of air carriers is abusive, she/he is encouraged to contact the national enforcement bodies that have power to investigate the case.

([1]) OJ L 293, 31.10.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011375/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: European Schools system

Could the Commission indicate what action has been taken further to the European Ombudsman's finding of maladministration in his decision on complaint 814/2010/JF against the Commission, and to the conclusions of the 3239th Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting of 16 and 17 May 2003, at which a number of Member States expressed the view that 'there are serious underlying problems with the European School system's current model'?

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

The Commission sent its comments on the findings of the European Ombudsman in the case 814/2010/JF on 6 July 2012.

The Commission did not share the view that there was an instance of maladministration as found by the Ombudsman. The governments of the Member States (MS) of the EU govern jointly the European Schools (ES) in the Board of Governors (BoG). In the Board, the Commission has one vote and thus it cannot be held the sole responsible for the decisions concerning the ES.

The Commission informed the Ombudsman that numerous initiatives had already been taken in order to improve the management of the European Schools System (ESS). Amongst others, it was proposed to include the ES in the OECD PISA study which would present a basis for comparison with the MS' national education systems and evaluating the ESS according to the same criteria, and at the same time represent a cost efficient way of an external evaluation of the system.

Following the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting of May 2013, an extraordinary meeting of the BoG took place on 23 September 2013, where the Board discussed the issue of the cost-sharing. The Secretary-General of the ES proposed a structural solution, which was widely accepted by the MS. It is planned that the EYCS Council will discuss the proposal on 25 November 2013 if a compromise cannot be found before. The Convention of the ES foresees a possibility for a financial compensation by the MS. The Commission has actively participated in the process and insists on the necessity to find a sustainable solution. In the meantime, the Commission will also address short-term issues such as the length of contracts of locally recruited teachers.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011376/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Production and distribution of pornographic content in the EU

Could the Commission outline what provisions of the *acquis communautaire* are applicable to the production and distribution of pornographic content in the various media used?

What competence, scope and necessity does the Commission envisage for further action to be taken at EU level, in order to regulate this industry in general, as well as the production and distribution of pornographic material depicting the enactment of scenes of a violent nature?

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

As to the production of pornographic content, there are no specific rules at EU level. Concerning the distribution of such material, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) contains specific rules to protect minors. Concerning linear audiovisual media services the AVMSD provides a total ban for programmes which might seriously impair minors (i.e. pornography or gratuitous violence). Content which might simply be 'harmful' to minors can only be transmitted when it is ensured — by selecting the time of the broadcast or by any technical measure (e.g. encryption) — that minors will not normally hear or see them. When such programmes are not encrypted, they must be preceded by an acoustic warning or made clearly identifiable throughout their duration by means of a visual symbol.

As to on-demand services, programmes which 'might seriously impair' the development of minors are allowed, but they may only be made available in such a way that minors will not normally hear or see them ([1]). This could be done by the use of PIN codes or other age verification systems. The AVMS Directive does not define notions of pornography and gratuitous violence and the kind of programmes which are likely to impair the development of minors. This remains within the competence of the Member States, in line with the subsidiarity principle.

In response to the Commission's call on creating a CEO for a Better Internet for Kids coalition, 28 leading companies have committed to deliver concrete technological solutions by the end of 2013 in terms notably of parental control, privacy, content rating and effective reporting tools.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/tvwf/protection/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011377/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Gambling on board aircraft

Concerning the sale of lottery-type scratch cards on board aircraft, could the Commission indicate whether the national regulatory frameworks applicable to this service qualify it as gambling, and whether these frameworks are in compliance with EC law?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The directive on electronic commerce gives a definition of gambling as those activities which involve wagering a stake with monetary value in games of chance, including lotteries and betting transactions ([1]). Scratch cards can be considered as being covered by such definition. However, it is for the Member States, in full compliance with the principles established by the Court of Justice of the EU, to determine the organisation of the gambling offer. Member States can therefore establish rules governing lottery-type scratch cards on board of aircrafts which fall under their jurisdiction, provided that these rules are in line with EC law and in particular with the requirements of non-discrimination and consistency ([2]).

As far as EU consumer law is concerned Directive 2005/29/EC ([3]) prohibits traders from providing false or otherwise deceiving information to consumers in order to induce them to enter transactions they would not have entered otherwise. Furthermore, Annex I to the directive prohibits, in all circumstances, the practice of creating the false impression that the consumer has won or will win a prize if, in fact there is no prize or taking any action in claiming the prize is subject to the consumer uncurring a cost (No 31 of Annex I). In 2012, the Court of Justice clarified that scratch cards informing the consumer that he had won a prize and needed to call a premium rate number to claim it were breaching No 31, because the consumer had to incur a cost, even *de minimis* ([4]).

([1]) Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the internal market, Article 1 (5), under d.
([2]) Judgment of 8.9.2010 Stoß & Others, C-316/07 ECR [2010] I-8069.
([3]) OJ L. 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.
([4]) Judgment of 18 October 2012, Case C-428/11 Purely Creative.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011378/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Attentato terroristico contro la comunità cristiana in Pakistan

Il 22 settembre nella città di Peshawar in Pakistan, al termine della funzione domenicale in una chiesa anglicana, si è consumato un attacco terroristico contro i fedeli cristiani ad opera di due terroristi suicidi. Il bilancio ancora non definitivo è di 81 morti e oltre 145 feriti. L'attentato è stato rivendicato dal gruppo fondamentalista islamico Jandullah, legato al gruppo dei talebani del Pakistan e vicino all'organizzazione di Al Qaida.

Rivendicazioni successive all'attentato, provenienti dallo stesso gruppo, hanno reso noto che attacchi di questo tipo continueranno e avranno come obiettivi tutti i non musulmani in Pakistan.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti?

— Come intende agire per tutelare la comunità cristiana in Pakistan?

— Considerando l'attacco al centro commerciale Westgate a Nairobi perpetrato nello stesso giorno, ritiene che sia in atto una strategia congiunta mirata ad innescare una escalation negli attacchi contro le comunità cristiane nel mondo?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(19 novembre 2013)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è al corrente del tremendo attentato terroristico contro la comunità cristiana a Peshawar. L'AR/VP ha immediatamente rilasciato una dichiarazione di condanna, ha chiesto che i responsabili fossero perseguiti e ha espresso le sue condoglianze alle famiglie delle vittime.

La difficile situazione di tutte le minoranze in Pakistan è al centro del dialogo sui diritti umani tra l'UE e il governo pakistano. L'Unione continuerà a supportare gli sforzi del Pakistan per far fronte alla minaccia terroristica. Il Consiglio «Affari esteri» del giugno 2013 ha preso atto con preoccupazione del perpetuarsi di attentati terroristici in Pakistan e ha ribadito l'impegno deciso dell'Unione europea a cooperare con il Pakistan per affrontare la minaccia comune del terrorismo sia all'interno che all'esterno delle sue frontiere e perseguire i responsabili. L'Unione continuerà ad affrontare queste problematiche con le autorità pakistane.

L'AR/VP non ritiene che sia in atto una strategia congiunta mirata ad innescare un'escalation di attentati terroristici contro le comunità cristiane nel mondo e non è al corrente di alcun legame operativo tra gli eventi in Pakistan e in Kenya. Tuttavia molti gruppi terroristici continuano a prendere di mira le comunità cristiane, e altre comunità percepite come minoritarie, per cercare di provocare tensioni e violenze intercomunitarie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011378/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Terrorist attack against the Christian community in Pakistan

On 22 September 2013, two suicide bombers carried out a terrorist attack against Christian worshippers after a Sunday service in an Anglican church in the city of Peshawar, Pakistan. The as yet unconfirmed death toll was 81 people killed and more than 145 injured. The fundamentalist Islamist group Jandullah, which has links with the Pakistani Taliban and is close to Al-Qa'ida, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Claims made after the attack by the same group also stated that attacks of this kind would continue and would be targeted at all non-Muslims in Pakistan.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. What action will it take to protect the Christian community in Pakistan?

3. In view of the attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, carried out on the same day, does the Commission believe that a coordinated strategy is under way to escalate attacks against Christian communities in the world?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the appalling attack on Christians in Peshawar. She immediately issued a statement condemning it, called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice, and offered condolences to the bereaved families.

The vulnerable situation of all minorities in Pakistan is at the forefront of human rights concerns raised by the EU in dialogue with the Government of Pakistan. We are continuing to support Pakistan in its efforts to tackle the threat from terrorism. The June 2013 Foreign Affairs Council noted with concern the continuing terrorist attacks in Pakistan, and reiterated the EU's unequivocal commitment to working with Pakistan to address the shared threat from terrorism both inside and outside its borders, including bringing perpetrators to justice. We will continue to raise these issues with the Pakistani authorities.

We do not believe that there is a coordinated strategy to escalate terrorist attacks against Christian communities worldwide, and are not aware of any operational link between events in Pakistan and Kenya. However, many terrorist groups continue to target Christian communities, and other perceived minority communities, in order to try to provoke inter-communal discord and violence.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011379/13
al Consiglio
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio di solidarietà nelle politiche di immigrazione

Gli operatori del settore che gestiscono il fenomeno dell'immigrazione, i cittadini italiani e l'intero Paese si trovano per l'ennesima volta inermi di fronte all'ennesima tragedia che colpisce profughi al largo di Lampedusa.

Lo Stato Italiano, per bocca di tutti i suoi rappresentanti a tutti i livelli, ha più volte sottoposto la grave situazione all'attenzione dell'UE.

L'Italia è impossibilitata a evitare che ulteriori incidenti possano ripetersi in futuro.

Si tratta di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani, in particolare il diritto alla vita, che non attiene soltanto ai cittadini europei ma ad ogni essere umano, qualunque sia la sua nazionalità.

L'UE ha tra i suoi obiettivi il rispetto dei diritti umani.

Come ribadito in più occasioni, Lampedusa e l'intera area circostante non rappresentano solo il confine sud di un singolo Paese ma dell'intera Unione europea.

Non è più tollerabile l'insufficienza o l'inidoneità della risposta europea nella gestione di questi fenomeni e nel porre in essere le condizioni affinché ciò venga evitato, pena la credibilità stessa del progetto di integrazione europea.

La solidarietà non deve più restare un principio scritto e acclamato ma una risposta concreta ed efficace per la soluzione delle problematiche.

Lo scenario attuale ci mostra come il principio di solidarietà sia il punto debole dell'UE, non solo nelle politiche sull'immigrazione, ma anche nelle politiche di austerity.

Tutto ciò premesso, può il Consiglio far sapere:

1. se ritiene opportuno un atto di responsabilità da parte di tutte le Istituzioni competenti per individuare le soluzioni volte a risolvere i problemi contingenti e l'immediata messa a punto di una strategia a lungo termine davvero efficace che sia in grado di prevenire il fenomeno;

2. cosa ne pensa della proposta di avviare un immediato dibattito per stabilire come declinare il principio di solidarietà in termini pratici ed efficaci?

Risposta
(23 dicembre 2013)

Il Consiglio europeo ed il Consiglio hanno affrontato la questione del sostegno agli Stati membri che si trovano in prima fila alle frontiere esterne e sono confrontati ad una forte pressione migratoria, prestando particolare attenzione alla regione mediterranea.

Nel patto europeo sull'immigrazione e l'asilo ([1])il Consiglio europeo ha dichiarato che: «*Gli Stati membri esposti, per la loro situazione geografica, a un afflusso di immigranti o che dispongono di mezzi limitati devono poter contare sulla solidarietà effettiva dell'Unione europea*.»

Nel programma di Stoccolma ([2])il Consiglio europeo ha chiesto «*di elaborare un quadro politico dell'Unione esauriente e sostenibile in materia di migrazione e asilo che, in uno spirito di solidarietà, consenta di gestire in modo adeguato e intraprendente l'oscillazione dei flussi migratori e di affrontare situazioni analoghe a quella attuale alle frontiere esterne meridionali*.»

([1]) 13440/08 ASIM 72.
([2]) 5731/10 CO EUR-PREP 2 JAI 81 POLGEN 8.

Il 25 e 26 febbraio 2010 il Consiglio ha adottato conclusioni su 29 misure volte a rafforzare la protezione delle frontiere esterne e a combattere l'immigrazione clandestina ([3]) in cui il Consiglio ha sottolineato «*la necessità di condividere e valutare le analisi dei continui arrivi clandestini di migranti alle frontiere marittime meridionali, e alle frontiere terrestri orientali, come dimostrano gli ultimi avvenimenti nella regione del Mediterraneo, e del traffico di migranti, nonché della tratta di persone, con le tragiche conseguenze che spesso ne derivano; e di adottare immediatamente una serie di misure, nel breve e nel medio termine, per fronteggiare tali problematiche*». Il Consiglio ha sorvegliato l'attuazione delle 29 misure da parte dei vari interessati.

Nel 2011, all'epoca della primavera araba, il Consiglio ha adottato conclusioni relative alla gestione della migrazione dai paesi del vicinato meridionale ([4]). In particolare, per quanto riguarda la solidarietà, il Consiglio «*ribadisce la necessità di dimostrare solidarietà concreta e autentica agli Stati membri esposti più direttamente ai flussi migratori e chiede all'UE e agli Stati membri di continuare a fornire il necessario sostegno a seconda dell'evolversi della situazione, tra l'altro assistendo le autorità locali degli Stati membri più colpiti nell'affrontare le ripercussioni immediate dei flussi migratori sull'economia e sulle infrastrutture locali*».

Nel marzo 2012 il Consiglio GAI ha adottato conclusioni che istituiscono un quadro comune per una reale e concreta solidarietà nei confronti degli Stati membri i cui sistemi di asilo subiscono particolari pressioni, anche a causa di flussi migratori misti ([5]). In tali conclusioni si è concordato di istituire un quadro comune per una reale e concreta solidarietà basato sui seguenti principi applicabili tra gli Stati membri dell'UE: solidarietà attraverso responsabilità e fiducia reciproca; solidarietà attraverso un meccanismo di allarme rapido, di preparazione e di gestione delle crisi nell'ambito del sistema di Dublino; solidarietà attraverso la cooperazione preventiva; solidarietà in situazioni di emergenza; solidarietà attraverso la cooperazione rafforzata tra l'UESA e FRONTEX; solidarietà finanziaria; solidarietà attraverso la ricollocazione; solidarietà attraverso la direttiva sulla protezione temporanea; trattamento comune delle domande di asilo al livello UE come possibile strumento di solidarietà; solidarietà nel settore dei rimpatri e solidarietà attraverso il rafforzamento della cooperazione con i principali paesi di transito, di origine e di primo asilo.

Il quadro legislativo che il Consiglio e il Parlamento europeo stanno mettendo in atto, in particolare il sistema europeo comune di asilo e le misure adottate nel settore della gestione delle frontiere, contribuisce a sua volta all'attuazione del principio di solidarietà.

Il 2 dicembre 2013 il sistema europeo di sorveglianza delle frontiere (EUROSUR) ([6]) diventerà operativo alle frontiere esterne meridionali ed orientali dell'UE. EUROSUR fornirà l'infrastruttura e gli strumenti necessari per migliorare la conoscenza situazionale e la capacità di reazione degli Stati membri nell'individuazione e nella prevenzione dell'immigrazione clandestina e della criminalità transfrontaliera e contribuirà a garantire protezione e a salvare le vite dei migranti alle frontiere esterne.

Per quanto riguarda i fatti più recenti, nella sessione del 7 e 8 ottobre 2013, il Consiglio si è detto essere favorevole all'istituzione di una task force per il Mediterraneo il cui obiettivo è quello di valutare la situazione nella regione mediterranea e le necessità degli Stati membri alle frontiere esterne. La task force dovrà suggerire a breve termine misure concrete e operative per impedire il ripetersi di tali tragici eventi e, a medio termine, considerare i futuri sviluppi delle politiche.

Nella riunione del 24 e 25 ottobre 2013 il Consiglio europeo ha affrontato il caso di Lampedusa ed ha sottolineato che, sulla base dell'imperativo della prevenzione e della protezione e ispirandosi al principio di solidarietà e di equa ripartizione della responsabilità, occorre intraprendere un'azione decisa per prevenire la perdita di vite in mare e per evitare che tali tragedie umane si verifichino nuovamente. In tale contesto il Consiglio europeo ha chiesto di rafforzare le attività di Frontex nel Mediterraneo e lungo le frontiere sudorientali dell'UE. Ha altresì invitato la task force per il Mediterraneo, di recente istituzione, guidata dalla Commissione europea e comprendente Stati membri, agenzie dell'UE e il SEAE, a individuare — sulla base dei principi di prevenzione, protezione e solidarietà — le azioni prioritarie per un utilizzo a breve termine più efficiente delle politiche e degli strumenti europei. La Commissione riferirà al Consiglio nella sessione del 5 e 6 dicembre 2013 in merito ai lavori della task force al fine di prendere decisioni operative. La presidenza riferirà al Consiglio europeo a dicembre.

([3]) 6975/10 ASIM 33 FRONT 24 COMIX 158.
([4]) 8710/1/11 ASIM 33 COMIX 213.
([5]) 7115/12 ASIM 20 FRONT 30.
([6]) PE-CONS 56/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011379/13
to the Council
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Principle of solidarity in immigration policy

Once again, the professionals responsible for handling immigration, the Italian public and the whole country find themselves helpless in the face of the latest tragedy to hit refugees off the coast of Lampedusa.

The Italian Government has brought this serious situation to the EU's attention several times, via all of its representatives at every level.

Italy cannot prevent more incidents like this from occurring in the future.

These are serious violations of human rights, in particular the right to life, which belongs not only to European citizens but to all human beings, whatever their nationality.

Respect for human rights is one of the EU's objectives.

As has been stressed on many occasions, Lampedusa and the whole surrounding area constitute the southern border of the European Union as a whole, not just of one country.

The inadequacy and inappropriateness of the EU's response to managing these problems and taking steps to prevent their occurrence can no longer be tolerated and jeopardise the credibility of the European project itself.

Solidarity must not remain a principle in words and on paper only, but must be put into practice effectively to solve problems.

The current state of affairs demonstrates that the principle of solidarity is the EU's weak point, both in the area of immigration policy and in that of austerity policy.

1. Does the Council believe it would be appropriate for all of the relevant institutions to show some responsibility by finding solutions to the immediate problems and devising a long-term strategy immediately that would be genuinely effective and capable of preventing this problem?

2. Does the Council think that discussions should be started immediately to decide how the principle of solidarity should be expressed in real, practical terms?

Reply
(23 December 2013)

The European Council and the Council have addressed the issue of supporting those Member States in the front line at the external borders who face strong migratory pressure, devoting particular attention to the Mediterranean region.

In the European Pact on Asylum and Immigration ([1]) the European Council stated that 'Those Member States whose geographical location exposes them to influxes of immigrants, or whose resources are limited, should be able to count on the effective solidarity of the European Union.'.

In the Stockholm Programme ([2]), the European Council called 'for the development of a comprehensive and sustainable Union migration and asylum policy framework, which in a spirit of solidarity can adequately and proactively manage fluctuations in migration flows and address situations such as the present one at the Southern external borders.'.

([1]) 13440/08 ASIM 72.
([2]) 5731/10 CO EUR-PREP 2 JAI 81 POLGEN 8.

On 25 and 26 February 2010, the Council adopted Conclusions on 29 measures for reinforcing the protection of the external borders and combating illegal immigration ([3]) in which the Council stressed 'the need to share and assess analysis of the continuing illegal arrivals of migrants at the southern maritime borders, as well as the eastern land borders, as shown in particular by recent events in the Mediterranean area, and of the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, which often have tragic consequences; and to take a series of measures immediately, in the short term and medium term, in order to address the challenges'. The Council has monitored the implementation of the 29 measures by the different actors involved.

At the time of the Arab Spring in 2011, the Council adopted a set of conclusions on the management of migration from the Southern Neighbourhood ([4]). In particular as regards solidarity, the Council 'reaffirms the need for genuine and concrete solidarity towards Member States most directly concerned by migratory movements and calls on the EU and its Member States to continue providing the necessary support as the situation evolves, such as by assisting the local authorities of the most affected Member States in addressing the immediate repercussions of migratory flows on the local economy and infrastructure'.

In March 2012, the JHA Council adopted Conclusions establishing a Common Framework for genuine and practical solidarity towards Member States facing particular pressures on their asylum systems including through mixed migration flows ([5]). In these Conclusions it was agreed to establish a common framework for genuine and practical solidarity consisting of the following principles applicable among EU Member States: solidarity through responsibility and mutual trust; solidarity through a mechanism for early warning, preparedness and crisis management within the Dublin system; solidarity through preventive cooperation; solidarity in emergency situations; solidarity through strengthened cooperation between EASO and Frontex; financial solidarity; solidarity through relocation; solidarity through the Temporary Protection Directive; joint EU processing of asylum claims as a possible tool of solidarity; solidarity in the area of returns; and solidarity through strengthened cooperation with key countries of transit, origin and first countries of asylum.

The legislative framework that the Council and the European Parliament are putting in place, in particular the Common European Asylum System and the measures taken in the area of border management, also contributes to the implementation of the principle of solidarity.

On 2 December 2013, the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur) ([6]) will become operational at the EU southern and eastern external borders. Eurosur will provide the infrastructure and tools needed to improve Member States' situational awareness and reaction capability when detecting and preventing irregular migration and cross-border crime and will contribute to ensuring the protection and saving the lives of migrants at the external borders.

With reference to the most recent events, at its meeting on 7 and 8 October 2013 the Council expressed its support for the establishment of a Task Force for the Mediterranean which has the objective of assessing the situation in the Mediterranean region and the needs of the Member States at the external borders. The aim is for the Task Force to suggest concrete and operational measures in the short term to prevent such tragic occurrences from happening again and to consider future policy developments in the medium term.

At its meeting on 24 and 25 October 2013 the European Council addressed the Lampedusa case and stressed that, based on the imperative of prevention and protection and guided by the principle of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility, determined action should be taken in order to prevent the loss of lives at sea and to avoid such human tragedies happening again. In this framework, the European Council called for the reinforcement of Frontex activities in the Mediterranean and along the south-eastern borders of the EU. It also invited the newly established Task Force for the Mediterranean, led by the European Commission and involving Member States, EU agencies and the EEAS, to identify — based on the principles of prevention, protection and solidarity — priority actions for a more efficient short-term use of European policies and tools. The Commission will report to the Council at its meeting of 5 and 6 December 2013 on the work of the Task Force with a view to taking operational decisions. The Presidency will report to the European Council in December.

([3]) 6975/10 ASIM 33 FRONT 24 COMIX 158.
([4]) 8710/2/11 ASIM 33 COMIX 213.
([5]) 7115/12 ASIM 20 FRONT 30.
([6]) PE-CONS 56/13.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011380/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio di solidarietà nell politiche di immigrazione

Gli operatori del settore che gestiscono il fenomeno dell'immigrazione, i cittadini italiani e l'intero Paese si trovano per l'ennesima volta inermi di fronte all'ennesima tragedia che colpisce profughi al largo di Lampedusa.

Lo Stato Italiano, per bocca di tutti i suoi rappresentanti a tutti i livelli, ha più volte sottoposto la grave situazione all'attenzione dell'UE.

L'Italia è impossibilitata a evitare che ulteriori incidenti possano ripetersi in futuro.

Si tratta di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani, in particolare il diritto alla vita, che non attiene soltanto ai cittadini europei ma ad ogni essere umano, qualunque sia la sua nazionalità.

L'UE ha tra i suoi obiettivi il rispetto dei diritti umani.

Come ribadito in più occasioni, Lampedusa e l'intera area circostante non rappresentano solo il confine sud di un singolo Paese ma dell'intera Unione europea.

Non è più tollerabile l'insufficienza o l'inidoneità della risposta europea nella gestione di questi fenomeni e nel porre in essere le condizioni affinché ciò venga evitato, pena la credibilità stessa del progetto di integrazione europea.

La solidarietà non deve più restare un principio scritto e acclamato ma una risposta concreta ed efficace per la soluzione delle problematiche.

Lo scenario attuale ci mostra come il principio di solidarietà sia il punto debole dell'UE, non solo nelle politiche sull'immigrazione, ma anche nelle politiche di austerity.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ritiene che la strategia a lungo termine vada rivista, alla luce dei continui sbarchi e delle difficoltà che essi comportano per gli Stati membri interessati;

2. cosa ne pensa del fatto di stimolare un immediato dibattito nelle sedi competenti per stabilire come declinare il principio di solidarietà in termini pratici ed efficaci?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011381/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Principio di solidarietà nelle politiche di immigrazione

Gli operatori del settore che gestiscono il fenomeno dell'immigrazione, i cittadini italiani e l'intero Paese si trovano per l'ennesima volta inermi di fronte all'ennesima tragedia che colpisce profughi al largo di Lampedusa.

Lo Stato Italiano, per bocca di tutti i suoi rappresentanti a tutti i livelli, ha più volte sottoposto la grave situazione all'attenzione dell'UE.

L'Italia è impossibilitata a evitare che ulteriori incidenti possano ripetersi in futuro.

Si tratta di gravi violazioni dei diritti umani, in particolare il diritto alla vita, che non attiene soltanto ai cittadini europei ma ad ogni essere umano, qualunque sia la sua nazionalità.

L'UE ha tra i suoi obiettivi il rispetto dei diritti umani.

Come ribadito in più occasioni, Lampedusa e l'intera area circostante non rappresentano solo il confine sud di un singolo Paese ma dell'intera Unione europea.

Non è più tollerabile l'insufficienza o l'inidoneità della risposta europea nella gestione di questi fenomeni e nel porre in essere le condizioni affinché ciò venga evitato, pena la credibilità stessa del progetto di integrazione europea.

La solidarietà non deve più restare un principio scritto e acclamato ma una risposta concreta ed efficace per la soluzione delle problematiche.

Lo scenario attuale ci mostra come il principio di solidarietà sia il punto debole dell'UE, non solo nelle politiche sull'immigrazione, ma anche nelle politiche di austerity.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se ritiene opportuno un atto di responsabilità da parte di tutte le Istituzioni competenti per individuare le soluzioni volte a risolvere i problemi contingenti e l'immediata messa a punto di una strategia a lungo termine davvero efficace che sia in grado di prevenire il fenomeno;

2. cosa ne pensa della proposta di avviare un immediato dibattito in seno al Consiglio per stabilire come declinare il principio di solidarietà in termini pratici ed efficaci?

Risposta congiunta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione

(5 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione è profondamente preoccupata dai recenti avvenimenti a largo di Lampedusa, come hanno testimoniato il Presidente Barroso e la Commissaria Malmström recandosi sull'isola il 9 ottobre 2013, all'indomani della tragica morte di più di trecento migranti. In tale occasione la Commissione ha ribadito il suo pieno sostegno agli Stati membri che devono intraprendere difficili operazioni di ricerca e salvataggio, offrendo fra l'altro un importo totale di 30 milioni di EUR per rafforzare il pattugliamento e il sistema di asilo in Italia. Parte di questi fondi sarà impiegata per potenziare la presenza di Frontex nella zona. Questo aiuto si aggiungerà alle attività di sostegno dell'Unione europea già in corso specificamente destinate all'Italia, come il piano di sostegno speciale attuato dall'Ufficio europeo di sostegno per l'asilo.

In seguito alle discussioni svoltesi nell'ultimo Consiglio «Giustizia e affari interni», una Task Force specifica per il Mediterraneo ha iniziato a operare sotto la presidenza della Commissione, riunendo tutti gli Stati membri, le agenzie competenti dell'UE e altri responsabili. Tale Task Force affronterà la questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare. La Commissione presenterà i risultati dei suoi lavori al Consiglio GAI di dicembre.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011380/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Principle of solidarity in immigration policy

Once again, the professionals responsible for handling immigration, the Italian public and the whole country find themselves helpless in the face of the latest tragedy to hit refugees off the coast of Lampedusa.

The Italian Government has brought this serious situation to the EU's attention several times, via all of its representatives at every level.

Italy cannot prevent more incidents like this from occurring in the future.

These are serious violations of human rights, in particular the right to life, which belongs not only to European citizens but to all human beings, whatever their nationality.

Respect for human rights is one of the EU's objectives.

As has been stressed on many occasions, Lampedusa and the whole surrounding area constitute the southern border of the European Union as a whole, not just of one country.

The inadequacy and inappropriateness of the EU's response to managing these problems and taking steps to prevent their occurrence can no longer be tolerated and jeopardise the credibility of the European project itself.

Solidarity must not remain a principle in words and on paper only, but must be put into practice effectively to solve problems.

The current state of affairs demonstrates that the principle of solidarity is the EU's weak point, both in the area of immigration policy and in that of austerity policy.

1. Does the Commission think that its long-term strategy should be reviewed, in the light of the continuous boat arrivals and the problems that these entail for the Member States concerned?

2. Does the Commission think that discussions should be started immediately at the appropriate levels to establish how the principle of solidarity should be expressed in real, practical terms?

Question for written answer E-011381/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Principle of solidarity in immigration policy

Once again, the professionals responsible for handling immigration, the Italian public and the whole country find themselves helpless in the face of the latest tragedy to hit refugees off the coast of Lampedusa.

The Italian Government has brought this serious situation to the EU's attention several times, via all of its representatives at every level.

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The inadequacy and inappropriateness of the EU's response to managing these problems and taking steps to prevent their occurrence can no longer be tolerated and jeopardise the credibility of the European project itself.

Solidarity must not remain a principle in words and on paper only, but must be put into practice effectively to solve problems.

The current state of affairs demonstrates that the principle of solidarity is the EU's weak point, both in the area of immigration policy and in that of austerity policy.

1. Does the Commission believe it would be appropriate for all of the relevant institutions to show some responsibility by finding solutions to the immediate problems and devising a long-term strategy immediately that would be genuinely effective and capable of preventing this problem?

2. Does the Commission think that the Council should start discussions immediately, to decide how the principle of solidarity should be expressed in real, practical terms?

Joint answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission is deeply concerned by the recent events off the coast of Lampedusa, as demonstrated by the visit President Barroso and Commissioner Malmström paid to the island on the 9 October 2013 in the aftermath of the tragic death of over 300 migrants. On that occasion the Commission reiterated its full support to Member States having to undertake complex Search and Rescue operations including by pledging a total of EUR 30 million for the reinforcement of patrolling and the strengthening of the asylum system in Italy. Part of these funds will be used in order to upgrade the Frontex presence in the area. This will come on top of already existing EU support activities targeted at Italy such as the Special Support Plan being implemented by the European Asylum Support Office.

In line with the discussions in the last Justice and Home Affairs Council a dedicated Task Force for the Mediterranean has started its work under the chairmanship of the Commission. This Task Force brings together all Member States, relevant EU agencies and other stakeholders. It will address the issue raised by the Honourable Member. The Commission will present the results of the work in December to the JHA Council.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011384/13
an die Kommission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(4. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Bahnlärm — Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzung/Nachtfahrverbot von lauten Güterzügen

Welchen offiziellen Standpunkt vertritt die Kommission zu örtlich begrenzten Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzungen und Nachtfahrverboten für laute Güterzüge als Lärmschutzmaßnahmen?

Wären solche Maßnahmen grundsätzlich mit EU Recht vereinbar und wenn ja, unter welchen Umständen?

Was ist das Ergebnis der jüngsten Stellungnahme des Juristischen Dienstes der Kommission zu diesen Fragen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(18. November 2013)

Unter Berücksichtigung der geltenden Rechtsvorschriften der EU ist die Kommission der Auffassung, dass die nationalen Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung der Geräuschemissionen von Güterzügen wie Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzungen oder Fahrbeschränkungen zu bestimmten Tages- oder Nachtzeiten nicht gegen den Grundsatz des freien Verkehrs von Waren und Dienstleistungen verstoßen, wenn sie gleichermaßen für alle Betreiber von Güterzügen für Fahrten durch das nationale Hoheitsgebiet — unabhängig von der Herkunft dieser Betreiber — gelten und wenn sie keine erheblichen Auswirkungen haben, die den Grundsatz des freien Verkehrs infrage stellen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund müssen alle nationalen Regelungen im Einzelnen im Hinblick auf ihre Vereinbarkeit mit dem Unionsrecht geprüft werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011384/13
to the Commission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Rail traffic noise — speed limit/ban on loud freight trains running during the night

What is the official position of the Commission on local speed limits and a ban on loud freight trains running during the night as noise abatement measures?

Would such measures be compatible in principle with EC law, and, if so, under what circumstances?

What are the findings of the most recent opinion from the legal services of the Commission on this matter?

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

Taking the applicable EC law into account, the Commission is of the opinion that national measures to fight against the noise of freight trains, such as speed limits or restrictions to circulate at certain times of the day or night, do not violate the principle of free movement of services and goods if they apply equally to all operators of freight trains traveling through the national territory, regardless of the origin of these operators and if they do not have a substantial effect which puts the principle of free circulation in question.

In this regard, any national scheme must be analysed individually as to its compatibility with Union law.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011385/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχετικά με την ερώτησή μου αριθ. E-006740/13

Στην απάντηση του Επιτρόπου Andor στην πιο πάνω ερώτησή μου αναφέρονται, για την περίπτωση της Γερμανίας, μεταξύ άλλων και τα εξής: «ενώ οι πραγματικοί μισθοί παραμένουν μεν κάτω από το επίπεδο του 2000 (…), οι μισθολογικές ανισότητες έχουν αυξηθεί» και επίσης ότι η Επιτροπή παροτρύνει τη Γερμανία να «διατηρήσει τις συνθήκες αυτές που θα επιτρέψουν την αύξηση των μισθών ώστε να υποστηριχθεί η εγχώρια ζήτηση».

Εκ των γεγονότων δεν φαίνεται ότι η Γερμανία έχει λάβει υπόψη τις παροτρύνσεις της Επιτροπής. Επειδή η κατάσταση που επικρατεί στη Γερμανία επηρεάζει έμμεσα αλλά καθοριστικά και πολλές άλλες χώρες της Ένωσης, δημιουργώντας σοβαρές οικονομικές και κοινωνικές ανισότητες, ιδιαίτερα στις χώρες της περιφέρειας και του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Σε ποιο βαθμό έχει ανταποκριθεί η Γερμανία στις παροτρύνσεις της Επιτροπής αναφορικά με τις πολιτικές μισθών που ακολουθεί;

— Τι μπορεί και τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να βελτιωθεί η κατάσταση στον τομέα των εισοδημάτων στη Γερμανία, γεγονός που θα έχει ευρύτερες ευεργετικές συνέπειες στις χώρες του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου αλλά και σε ολόκληρη την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Το άρθρο 153 της Συνθήκης για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης θεσπίζει ρητά ότι οι «αμοιβές» εξαιρούνται από το σύνολο των τομέων στους οποίους η ΕΕ έχει αρμοδιότητα παρέμβασης. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί προσεκτικά τις μισθολογικές εξελίξεις στη Γερμανία καθώς και στα άλλα κράτη μέλη.

Στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου, η Επιτροπή πραγματοποιεί την άνοιξη κάθε έτους εκτενή ανάλυση των εθνικών προγραμμάτων μεταρρυθμίσεων που υποβλήθηκαν από τα κράτη μέλη και η λεπτομερής αιτιολόγηση των συστάσεων ανά χώρα του 2013 για τη Γερμανία διατίθεται στον ακόλουθο δικτυακό τόπο:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/deutschland/index_en.htm

Η Επιτροπή θα εξακολουθήσει να αναλύει θέματα των μισθών στη Γερμανία στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011385/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Concerning Question E-006740/13

Commissioner Andor's answer to the above question mentions the following, among other things, in relation to Germany: 'As real incomes, on the one hand, remain below the level seen in 2000 (…), pay inequalities have increased' and also that the Commission is urging Germany to 'maintain conditions that will allow pay to rise, in order to boost domestic demand'.

The facts show that Germany has ignored the urgings. As the situation in Germany has an indirect and decisive influence on many other EU countries, causing serious economic and social inequalities in the countries of the periphery and the European South in particular, will the Commission say:

— To what extent has Germany responded to the Commission's urgings in relation to the pay policies it is pursuing?

— What can the Commission do and what does it intend to do to improve the situation in the area of incomes in Germany, a factor that will have wider beneficial consequences in the southern European countries and also across the entire European economy?

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

Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union explicitly establishes that 'pay' is excluded from the set of fields in which the EU has competences to intervene upon. However, the Commission monitors carefully wage and income developments in Germany as well as the other Member States.

During the European Semester, the Commission carries out in spring of every year a comprehensive analysis of the National Reform Programmes presented by the Member States and the detailed justification of the country specific recommendations 2013 for Germany can be found under the following link:
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/deutschland/index_en.htm

The Commission will continue to analyse wage issues in Germany within the framework of the European Semester.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011386/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχετικά με την ερώτησή μου αριθ. E-006740/13

Στην απάντηση του Επιτρόπου Andor στην πιο πάνω ερώτησή μου αναφέρονται, για την περίπτωση της Γερμανίας, μεταξύ άλλων και τα εξής: «ενώ οι πραγματικοί μισθοί παραμένουν μεν κάτω από το επίπεδο του 2000 (…), οι μισθολογικές ανισότητες έχουν αυξηθεί» και επίσης ότι η Επιτροπή παροτρύνει τη Γερμανία να «διατηρήσει τις συνθήκες αυτές που θα επιτρέψουν την αύξηση των μισθών ώστε να υποστηριχθεί η εγχώρια ζήτηση».

Εκ των γεγονότων δεν φαίνεται ότι η Γερμανία έχει λάβει υπόψη τις πιο πάνω παροτρύνσεις. Επειδή η κατάσταση που επικρατεί στη Γερμανία επηρεάζει έμμεσα και καθοριστικά πολλές άλλες χώρες της Ένωσης, δημιουργώντας σοβαρές οικονομικές και κοινωνικές ανισότητες, ιδιαίτερα στις χώρες της περιφέρειας και του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου, ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

— Είναι ενήμερο για την κατάσταση που επικρατεί στη Γερμανία στην αγορά εργασίας, ειδικά όσον αφορά την εξέλιξη των μισθών; Συμφωνεί με τις εκτιμήσεις της Επιτροπής όπως περιγράφονται από τον Επίτροπο Andor στην απάντησή του στην πιο πάνω ερώτησή μου;

— Σε ποιο βαθμό έχει ανταποκριθεί η Γερμανία στις παροτρύνσεις της ΕΕ αναφορικά με τις πολιτικές μισθών που ακολουθεί;

— Τι μπορεί και τι προτίθεται να πράξει το Συμβούλιο ώστε να βελτιωθεί η κατάσταση στον τομέα των εισοδημάτων στη Γερμανία, γεγονός που θα έχει ευρύτερες ευεργετικές συνέπειες στις χώρες του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου αλλά και σε ολόκληρη την ευρωπαϊκή οικονομία;

Απάντηση
(2 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Στις συστάσεις ανά χώρα (ΣΑΧ) του 2013 προς τη Γερμανία, και πιο συγκεκριμένα στο πλαίσιο στη ΣΑΧ 2, το Συμβούλιο συνιστά στη Γερμανία να αναλάβει δράση κατά την περίοδο 2013-2014 προκειμένου: «*Να διατηρήσει τις συνθήκες που επιτρέπουν την αύξηση των μισθών προς στήριξη της εγχώριας ζήτησης. Προς το σκοπό αυτό, να μειώσει την υψηλή φορολογική επιβάρυνση και τις εισφορές κοινωνικής ασφάλισης, ιδίως των χαμηλόμισθων, και να αυξήσει τις εκπαιδευτικές επιδόσεις των μειονεκτούντων ατόμων. Να διατηρήσει τα κατάλληλα μέτρα ενεργοποίησης και ενσωμάτωσης, ιδίως υπέρ των μακροχρόνια ανέργων. Να διευκολύνει τη μετάβαση από άτυπες σχέσεις εργασίας, όπως οι "Minijobs", προς περισσότερο βιώσιμες μορφές απασχόλησης. Να λάβει μέτρα για τη βελτίωση των κινήτρων προς εργασία και για την αύξηση της απασχολησιμότητας των εργαζομένων, ιδίως όσον αφορά τα δεύτερα εργαζόμενα μέλη της οικογένειας και τους εργαζομένους χαμηλής ειδίκευσης, με σκοπό επίσης τη βελτίωση του εισοδήματός τους. Προς τον σκοπό αυτόν, να καταργήσει τα αντικίνητρα για τα δεύτερα εργαζόμενα μέλη της οικογένειας και να αυξήσει περαιτέρω τους διαθέσιμους παιδικούς σταθμούς πλήρους ωραρίου και τα ολοήμερα σχολεία*» ([1]).

Η σύσταση αυτή βασίζεται στην αιτιολογική σκέψη 14 των συστάσεων ανά χώρα του 2013 προς τη Γερμανία, στην οποία επισημαίνεται, μεταξύ άλλων, ότι «*Οι πραγματικοί μισθοί παραμένουν μεν κάτω από το επίπεδο του 2000, το οποίο συνέβαλε στη διαρθρωτική μείωση του ποσοστού ανεργίας από 8% σε 5,5%, όμως έκτοτε άρχισαν να αυξάνουν δυναμικά, χωρίς να θίγουν την ανταγωνιστικότητα. Συγχρόνως, οι μισθολογικές διαφορές έχουν αυξηθεί*» ([2]).

([1]) ΕΕ C 217 της 30.7.2013, σ. 35.
([2]) ΕΕ C 217 της 30.7.2013, σ. 34.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011386/13
to the Council
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Concerning Question E-006740/13

Commissioner Andor's answer to the above question mentions the following, among other things, in relation to Germany: 'As real incomes, on the one hand, remain below the level seen in 2000 (…), pay inequalities have increased' and also that the Commission is urging Germany to 'maintain conditions that will allow pay to rise, in order to boost domestic demand'.

The facts show that Germany has ignored the urgings. As the situation in Germany has an indirect and decisive influence on many other EU countries, causing serious economic and social inequalities in the countries of the periphery and the European South in particular, will the Council say:

— Is it aware of the prevailing situation on the German job market, especially in relation to pay developments? Does it agree with the Commission's estimates as described by Commissioner Andor in his written answer to the above question?

— To what extent has Germany responded to the EU's urgings in relation to the pay policies it is pursuing?

— What can the Council do and what does it intend to do to improve the situation in the area of incomes in Germany, a factor that will have wider beneficial consequences in southern European countries and also across the entire European economy?

Reply
(2 December 2013)

In the 2013 Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) addressed to Germany, and more specifically in CSR 2, the Council recommends that Germany take action within the period 2013-2014 to 'Sustain conditions that enable wage growth to support domestic demand. To this end, reduce high taxes and social security contributions, especially for low-wage earners and raise the educational achievement of disadvantaged people. Maintain appropriate activation and integration measures, especially for the long-term unemployed. Facilitate the transition from non-standard employment such as mini-jobs into more sustainable forms of employment. Take measures to improve incentives to work and the employability of workers, in particular for second earners and low-skilled workers, also with a view to improving their income. To this end, remove disincentives for second earners and further increase the availability of full time childcare facilities and all-day schools.' ([1])

That recommendation is based on Recital 14 of the 2013 Country-Specific Recommendations to Germany, which notes, *inter alia*, that 'While real wages are still below their level in the year 2000, which contributed to the structural reduction in the unemployment rate from 8% to 5,5%, they have started to grow dynamically since then, without adversely affecting competitiveness. At the same time, wage disparities have increased.' ([2])

([1]) OJ C 217, of 30.7.2013, page 35.
([2]) OJ C 217, of 30.7.2013, page 34.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011388/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 octobre 2013)

Objet: Surcharge de travail dans le secteur hospitalier

Temps de travail supérieur à 48 heures par semaine et périodes de repos insuffisantes font que certains médecins hospitaliers européens se plaignent de la surcharge de travail.

1. La directive limitant le travail après la prestation d'heures supplémentaires de nuit est-elle bien respectée partout en Europe?

2. Quels sont les pays transgressant la directive?

3. La Commission possède-t-elle des statistiques sur le nombre moyen d'heures prestées par pays?

4. Quelles sont les sanctions applicables?

Réponse donnée par M. Andor au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

La Commission ne collecte pas de statistiques sur le temps de travail moyen dans une activité spécifique où, en tout état de cause, la moyenne peut varier grandement.

Le rapport de la Commission ([1]) sur la mise en œuvre de la directive 2003/88/CE ([2]) énumère les États membres dans lesquels, selon les informations dont dispose la Commission, le droit interne ou les pratiques nationales concernant le temps de travail des médecins hospitaliers ne sont pas conformes à la directive. (Un certain nombre d'États membres autorisent des médecins hospitaliers à travailler au-delà de la moyenne limite de 48 heures, au titre de la dérogation prévue à l'article 22, paragraphe 1, de la directive).

La Commission a privilégié la procédure d'infraction lorsque le rapport relevait de graves non-conformités pour ce groupe et, en particulier, lorsque des éléments de preuve dûment étayés confirmaient que, dans la pratique, ils étaient obligés de travailler pendant un nombre excessif d'heures sans temps de repos approprié. À l'heure actuelle, un seul cas de ce genre a été clôturé après amendement de la législation nationale, deux cas pourraient être soumis à la Cour de justice, des avis motivés ont été envoyés à deux autres États membres et des lettres de mise en demeure ont été envoyées dans deux autres cas, tandis qu'une enquête préliminaire est en train de s'achever pour un cas supplémentaire. Tous ces cas sont publiés au stade approprié, conformément aux dispositions de la Commission en matière de procédures d'infraction.

Dans plusieurs de ces cas, l'État membre a présenté des propositions de modification de sa législation ou de ses pratiques pour se mettre en conformité ou améliorer celle-ci. Dans tous les cas similaires, les services de la Commission ont renforcé le dialogue afin d'aider l'État membre dans son action. La Commission se réserve néanmoins le droit de prendre toutes les mesures qui pourraient s'avérer nécessaires pour assurer la conformité, y compris (le cas échéant) de prendre des sanctions conformément à l'article 260, paragraphe 2, du TFUE.

([1]) COM(2010) 802 et document de travail des services de la Commission SEC(2010) 1611.
([2]) Directive 2003/88/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 4 novembre 2003 concernant certains aspects de l'aménagement du temps de travail (JO L 299 du 18.11.2003).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011388/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Excessive workloads for hospital doctors

With weekly working times in excess of 48 hours and insufficient rest periods, some hospital doctors in Europe are complaining of being seriously overworked.

1. Is the directive which limits the number of hours which may be worked immediately after nighttime overtime observed everywhere in Europe?

2. Which countries are failing to comply with this directive?

3. Does the Commission have at its disposal statistics on the average number of hours worked by hospital doctors in each Member State?

4. What penalties can be applied in the event of infringement of the directive?

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

The Commission does not collect statistics on average working time in a specific activity, where, in any event, large variations from the average are possible.

The Commission's Report ([1]) on implementation of Directive 2003/88/EC ([2]) sets out in detail the Member States where, on the information available to the Commission, national law or practice regarding the working time of hospital doctors did not comply with the directive. (A number of Member States allow hospital doctors to work hours exceeding the 48-hour average limit, under the derogation at Article 22.1 of the directive).

The Commission has prioritised infringement action where the report identified serious nonconformity for this group, and particularly, where substantiated evidence confirmed that they were in practice obliged to work excessive hours without adequate rest. Currently, one such case has been closed after national law was amended, two may be referred to the Court of Justice, reasoned opinions have been sent to two further Member States, and letters of formal notice have been sent in two other cases, while an additional case is completing preliminary investigation. All such cases are published at the appropriate point, in accordance with the Commission's infringement procedures.

In several of these cases, the Member State has put forward proposals to change its law or practice in order to achieve or improve conformity. The Commission services have intensified dialogue in all such cases in order to assist the Member State to do so. The Commission nevertheless reserves the right to take all measures which may be necessary to ensure compliance, including (where judged appropriate) seeking penalties in accordance with Article 260.2 TFEU.

([1]) COM(2010) 802 and accompanying Staff Working Paper SEC(2010) 1611.
([2]) Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, OJ L 299, 18.11.2003.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011389/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 octobre 2013)

Objet: Retirer les boissons énergisantes

La consommation de boissons «énergisantes» comme Red Bull, *Monster* ou *Burn*, est à éviter chez les enfants et les adolescents, mais aussi associée à de l'alcool, recommande l'agence sanitaire Anses.

Elle recommande également de ne pas y associer un exercice physique au cours duquel il est nécessaire de préserver un équilibre hydroélectrique, perturbé par les effets diurétiques de ces boissons.

1. La Commission partage-t-elle ces conclusions?

2. Si non, compte-t-elle mener une étude à ce sujet?

3. Compte-t-elle laisser sur le marché des produits considérés comme toxiques ou dangereux, même à petites doses?

4. Partage-t-elle l'avis selon lequel s'il s'agissait de médicaments, ils auraient déjà été retirés du marché?

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

La Commission examine actuellement les conclusions de l'agence sanitaire Anses et renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la réponse donnée à la question écrite précédente E-003646/2013 ([1]).

En ce qui concerne la troisième question, la Commission voudrait souligner que tout produit correspondant à la définition d'un «aliment» est couvert par les exigences du règlement général relatif aux denrées alimentaires (CE) n° 178/2002 ([2]). L'article 14 de ce règlement affirme comme principe fondamental qu'aucune denrée alimentaire ne doit être mise sur le marché si elle est dangereuse; une denrée alimentaire est définie comme dangereuse si elle est considérée comme préjudiciable à la santé ou impropre à la consommation humaine.

En ce qui concerne la dernière question, la Commission voudrait affirmer qu'il relève de la responsabilité des autorités nationales compétentes de décider, au cas par cas, de la classification des produits en tant que denrées alimentaires ou médicaments sur la base de la législation pertinente de l'UE, sur leur territoire ([3]).

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

([2]) Règlement (CE) nº 178/2002 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 28 janvier 2002 établissant les principes généraux et les prescriptions générales de la législation alimentaire, instituant l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments et fixant des procédures relatives à la sécurité des denrées alimentaires (JO L 31 du 1.2.2002).

([3]) Voir les arrêts de la CJE dans les affaires jointes C-211/03, C-299/03 et C-316/03 à C-318/03 et dans l'affaire C-319/05, paragraphe 55.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011389/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Taking energy drinks off the market

According to the recommendations of the Anses health agency, children and adolescents should not drink 'energy' drinks such as Red Bull, Monster or Burn, and such drinks should not be consumed with alcohol.

It also recommends not drinking them when undertaking physical exercise, during which a water-electrolyte balance needs to be maintained; the diuretic effects of these drinks upset that balance.

1. Does the Commission agree with these findings?

2. If not, is it planning to conduct a study on this issue?

3. Does it plan to leave products on the market that are considered toxic or dangerous, even in small amounts?

4. Does it agree that were these medicinal products, they would have already been taken off the market?

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

The Commission is currently studying the findings of the Anses health agency and it concurrently refers the Honourable Member to the answer given to the previous Written Question E-003646/2013 ([1]).

With regard to the third question, the Commission would like to point out that any product falling under the definition of 'food' is covered by the requirements of the General Food Law Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 ([2]). Article 14 of that regulation states as a core principle, that food shall not be placed on the market if it is unsafe; unsafe food is defined as either injurious to health or unfit for human consumption.

With regard to the last question, the Commission would like to state that it is the responsibility of the national competent authorities to decide, on a case by case basis, on the classification of products as foodstuffs or medicines, on the basis of the relevant EU legislation, within their territory ([3]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, OJ L 31, 1.2.2002.
([3]) Cf. rulings of the ECJ in joint Cases C-211/03, C-299/03 and C-316/03 to C-318/03 and in Case C-319/05, paragraph 55.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011390/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 octobre 2013)

Objet: Discrimination commerciale par Apple

Apple aurait-il dépassé le seuil du tolérable en matière de discrimination commerciale?

Si Base et Proximus tentent toujours de jouer la carte de la négociation avec la firme californienne pour qu'elle débloque l'utilisation de la 4G, Apple est fortement soupçonné de vouloir discriminer certaines entreprises.

1. N'est-il pas étonnant que l'accès de l'iPhone à certains réseaux, par exemple celui de Belgacom, soit toujours bloqué, alors qu'il est ouvert pour l'iPad?

2. En poussant l'analyse plus loin, nous constatons que la liste des réseaux débloqués par Apple et publiée sur son site internet ne reprend que les opérateurs avec lesquels Apple a conclu un accord de distribution. Il est difficile, dans ces conditions, de ne pas en conclure qu'Apple lie le déblocage de la 4G à un accord de distribution. La Commission trouve-t-elle cela normal? Compte-t-elle mener une enquête? L'exemple des tablettes iPad, pour lesquelles le déverrouillage du réseau de Proximus a été quasi immédiat, donne du crédit à cette thèse, attendu qu'il s'agit du même réseau pour l'iPhone ou l'iPad.

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

La Commission n'a reçu aucune plainte officielle concernant d'éventuelles restrictions d'utilisation des iPhones sur les réseaux 4G de certains opérateurs de réseaux mobiles et les pratiques d'Apple en matière de distribution.

Toutefois, dans le cadre de sa surveillance active de l'évolution du marché des téléphones intelligents et au vu de certaines informations qu'elle a reçues sur ce marché, la Commission procède actuellement à une enquête en ce qui concerne les restrictions et les pratiques susmentionnées.

La Commission interviendra si certains indices révèlent des comportements anticoncurrentiels contraires à l'article 101 ou à l'article 102 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011390/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Apple's commercial discrimination tactics

Has Apple gone too far with its commercial discrimination tactics?

At a time when Base and Proximus are still trying to hammer out a deal with Apple on opening up its 4G service to their users, there is strong evidence to suggest that the Californian company discriminates against certain businesses.

1. Does the Commission not find it astonishing that Belgacom users, for example, should be blocked from accessing the 4G service from an iPhone but not from an iPad?

2. Taking this a step further, the list of unblocked networks published on Apple's website consists solely of operators with whom Apple has a distribution agreement. The obvious conclusion, therefore, is that Apple links 4G access to its distribution agreements. Does the Commission find this acceptable? Does it intend to carry out an inquiry? The fact that the 4G service was almost immediately opened up to Proximus users accessing it through their iPad lends further credibility to the claims being made about Apple, since the network is the same, whether the connection is via iPhone or iPad.

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

The Commission has not received any formal complaints regarding possible limitations on the use of iPhones on the 4G networks of certain mobile network operators and on Apple's distribution practices.

However, in the context of the Commission's active monitoring of market developments regarding smartphones, and in view of certain market information it has received, the Commission is currently conducting a fact-finding exercise regarding the above limitations and practices.

The Commission will intervene if there are indications of anti-competitive behaviour contrary to either Article 101 or 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-011392/13
upućeno Komisiji
Ruža Tomašić (ECR)
(4. listopada 2013.)

Predmet: Ugrožena politička prava Hrvata u Bosni i Hercegovini — političkim inženjeringom od konstitutivnog naroda do nacionalne manjine

Poštovani,

trenutno se u Bosni i Hercegovini provodi prvi popis stanovništva nakon rata. Nažalost, ne radi se o pukoj statistici, već o prvoklasnom političkom pitanju na kojem se temelji budućnost BiH.

Rat je nakon Daytona nastavljen drugim sredstvima, a međunarodna zajednica je preko institucije visokog predstavnika često prednjačila u jednostranom miniranju potpisanih sporazuma.

Takva su rješenja dodatno doprinosila asimetričnosti državnog uređenja, čija su glavna žrtva Hrvati kao najmalobrojniji konstitutivni narod.

I ovaj će popis pokazati kako su Hrvati nestali ili nestaju iz većinski srpskih i bošnjačkih sredina, što nije slučajnost, već direktna posljedica odnosa međunarodne zajednice prema „hrvatskom pitanju u BiH" u ratu i nakon njega.

Stoga je moje pitanje Komisiji sljedeće — hoćete li stati u zaštitu političkih prava Hrvata u BiH? Jer riječ je o hrvatskim državljanima, a time i građanima EU-a.

Ovo je jedan od najvećih ispita za Europsku uniju, jer će vaša efikasnost u ovom slučaju pokazati koliko doista vrijedi biti građaninom EU-a i koliko je Unija spremna učiniti za zaštitu svojih građana u trećim zemljama.

Odgovor gospodina Fülea u ime Komisije
(27. studenog 2013.)

Komisija je svjesna ustavnih odredbi Bosne i Hercegovine u pogledu državljanstva i političkih prava njezinih konstitutivnih naroda. Nadležna tijela Bosne i Hercegovine odgovorna su za zaštitu tih prava. Nudeći perspektivu europske integracije, Komisija je potaknula tijela vlasti u Bosni i Hercegovini da iskoriste različite pristupe koji postoje unutar EU-a kako bi se osigurao jednak tretman svih etničkih skupina. Komisija ne mora nametati bilo kakvo posebno rješenje, nego bi nadležna tijela Bosne i Hercegovine trebala osigurati pravedan tretman svih konstitutivnih naroda i manjina u državi. U okviru bilo kojeg rješenja potrebno je provesti odluku Europskog suda za ljudska prava u predmetu Sejdić-Finci.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011392/13
to the Commission
Ruža Tomašić (ECR)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Political rights of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina threatened by political engineering from constitutive nationality vis-à-vis national minority

The first population census since the war is currently being carried out in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sadly, this is not a matter of mere statistics, but a political issue of the first order that will determine the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

War has been continued by other means since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, and the international community, by way of the institution of the High Representative, has often excelled at unilaterally undermining the agreements that were signed.

What is more, these agreements have helped to create an asymmetrical system of government whose main victims are the Croats, as the least numerous of the constitutive nationalities.

This census will show that Croats have disappeared or are disappearing from majority Serb and Bosniak areas. This is no coincidence, but rather the direct result of the manner in which the international community treated the 'Croatian question' in Bosnia and Herzegovina during and after the war.

I would therefore like to put the following question: does the Commission intend to stand up in defence of the political rights of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina? This is an issue that affects Croatian citizens who are also, therefore, citizens of the EU.

This is one of the greatest challenges facing the EU, since the effectiveness of your actions in this instance will show the true value of being an EU citizen and the degree to which the EU is willing to act in defence of its citizens in third countries.

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

The Commission is aware of Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional provisions related to the citizenship and political rights of its constitutive people. The responsibility to protect those rights lies with the competent authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. While offering a European integration perspective, the Commission has encouraged the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to draw on various approaches existing within the EU to ensure equal treatment of all ethnic groups. It is not for the Commission to impose any specific solution, but for the competent authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure a fair treatment of all constituent peoples and minorities in the country. Any solution needs to implement the Sejdić-Finci ruling of the European Court of Human Rights.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-012703/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(11 novembre 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Azioni UE per il rilascio degli attivisti di Greenpeace detenuti in Russia

Il 18 settembre scorso, 30 attivisti hanno inscenato un'azione di protesta non violenta contro i piani di sfruttamento delle risorse petrolifere artiche della *Gazprom*, la più grande compagnia russa ed il maggiore estrattore al mondo di gas naturale. Il gruppo di attivisti, composto da 28 militanti di *Greenpeace*, un fotografo e un operatore video freelance che erano a bordo della nave rompighiaccio *Arctic Sunrise*, è stato arrestato dalle autorità russe sotto accusa di pirateria, un reato per cui sono previste pene detentive fino a 15 anni. Anche se è stato comunicato che tale accusa sarebbe stata sostituita con quella di vandalismo — accusa che prevede un massimo di pena fino a 7 anni — l'equipaggio della nave *Arctic Sunrise*, che batte bandiera olandese, rimane accusato di entrambi i reati. Il 6 novembre, la polizia fluviale russa ha fermato altri quattro attivisti che, a bordo di gommoni, lungo il fiume Moscova, hanno manifestato per la liberazione dell'equipaggio dell'*Arctic Sunrise*. Il Tribunale internazionale del diritto del mare di Amburgo si dovrebbe pronunciare il prossimo 22 novembre sulla domanda presentata dall'Olanda, che chiede un arbitrato internazionale per la liberazione dei 30 attivisti detenuti nel carcere russo di Murmansk.

Può l'Alto Rappresentante per gli affari esteri e la politica di sicurezza dell'Unione europea, Catherine Ashton, precisare:

— Quali azioni diplomatiche sono state finora intraprese e quali intende intraprendere per garantire la rapida liberazione degli attivisti incarcerati? Può riferire chiaramente sulle azioni legali che verranno intraprese dall'UE?

— L'UE ha proposto di assistere le autorità degli Stati membri i cui cittadini sono stati incarcerati?

— Intende creare una posizione coordinata dell'UE durante il prossimo Consiglio «Affari esteri» il 21 novembre?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(6 gennaio 2014)

Le accuse, di pirateria o di teppismo, mosse dalla Russia all'equipaggio e ai giornalisti della nave di Greenpeace sono manifestamente sproporzionate e, nel caso dei giornalisti, sollevano altresì la questione della libertà di stampa. Sebbene il rilascio su cauzione dei membri dell'equipaggio rappresenti uno sviluppo positivo, desta preoccupazione il fatto che nessuno di loro possa ancora lasciare la Russia.

Poiché, fin dall'inizio, tutti gli Stati membri che annoverano cittadini tra i membri dell'equipaggio hanno trattato la vicenda come una questione di competenza consolare, la Commissione si è astenuta dal rilasciare dichiarazioni pubbliche, a parte quelle rese durante la sessione plenaria del Parlamento del 23 ottobre 2013, nel corso della quale è stata discussa la questione. Tuttavia, le preoccupazioni destate da questa deplorevole situazione vengono chiaramente espresse alle autorità russe nel corso dei frequenti contatti tra le parti.

La delegazione dell'UE a Mosca ospita spesso riunioni di coordinamento con i rappresentanti dei paesi che annoverano cittadini tra i membri dell'equipaggio. Durante la reclusione, sono state sorvegliate le condizioni di detenzione degli attivisti e sollevate questioni al riguardo con le autorità russe. Inoltre, sin dall'inizio l'UE si è tenuta in contatto con rappresentanti di Greenpeace.

Su richiesta dei Paesi Bassi, il 22 novembre 2013 il Tribunale marittimo Internazionale ha ordinato il rilascio dell'equipaggio e il dissequestro della nave previo pagamento di un deposito cauzionale di 3,6 milioni di euro. Sebbene la Russia abbia contestato la competenza del Tribunale nel caso della «Arctic Sunrise», c'è da sperare che la situazione si sblocchi consentendo a tutti i membri dell'equipaggio di far presto ritorno alle proprie case e alle proprie famiglie.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011393/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(4 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Obywatele państw członkowskich UE aresztowani w Rosji

18 września aktywiści Greenpeace International płynący na statku „Arctic Sunrise" pod banderą holenderską zostali zatrzymani na Morzu Barentsa przez rosyjską straż graniczną w trakcie protestu przeciwko wydobyciu ropy naftowej na Arktyce. Próbując powstrzymać akcję ekologów rosyjscy strażnicy oddali w kierunku statku „Arctic Sunrise" kilkanaście strzałów ostrzegawczych.

Rosyjskie władze zatrzymały 30 osób, w tym również obywateli państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej: Polski, Wielkiej Brytanii, Francji, Holandii, Szwecji, Finlandii oraz Danii. Wszyscy aresztowani są podejrzewani o „napad i próbę zajęcia platformy wiertniczej Prirazłomnaja", za co grozi im do 15 lat więzienia. Niepokojący jest fakt, iż sąd w Murmańsku przedłużył o dwa miesiące areszt 21 z 30 zatrzymanych osób.

W tej sprawie już wypowiadały się międzynarodowe organizacje zajmujące się prawami człowieka, m.in. Amnesty International, Dziennikarze bez Granic, OBWE oraz Moskiewska Grupa Helsińska. Organizacja Dziennikarze bez Granic nazwała uwięzienie rosyjskiego fotografa relacjonującego akcję protestu i współpracującego z Greenpeace, „pogwałceniem wolności informacji, która jest nie do przyjęcia".

W związku z tym pragnę zapytać czy Komisja Europejska posiada informacje w sprawie postępowania przeciwko obywatelom Unii Europejskiej zatrzymanym w Rosji? Czy Komisji wiadomo o warunkach w jakich są oni przetrzymywani? Czy Komisja obserwuje sytuację celem niedopuszczenia do łamania praw człowieka w trakcie procesu? Czy środki stosowane przez rosyjskie władze są adekwatne do popełnionych czynów?

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-012615/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(7 listopada 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Zatrzymanie statku Greenpeacu na Morzu Barentsa

19 września na Morzu Barentsa straż przybrzeżna Rosji zatrzymała statek „Arctic Sunrise" należący do „Greenpeace". Statek z załogą odholowano następnie do portu w Murmańsku. Załoga znalazła się w areszcie. Jej członkom najpierw przedstawiono zarzuty terroryzmu, a następnie złagodzono je i obecnie załoga ma zarzut chuligaństwa. Przedstawiciele „Greenpeace" nie zgadzają się z tymi zarzutami. Robert Cyglicki, dyrektor programowy polskiego Greenpeace, stwierdził: „Greenpeace ma za sobą 42 lata w pełni pokojowego aktywizmu i takie oskarżenia są niczym więcej jak próbą pomówienia aktywistów. Należy też pamiętać, że to nasz statek został przejęty przez ludzi uzbrojonych w noże i broń palną. Nasi aktywiści, załoga statku i dziennikarze, to nie chuliganie, tak samo jak nie są piratami. Nowa kwalifikacja nadal jest nieproporcjonalnie ostra i wiąże się z potencjalną karą do 7 lat więzienia. To obraza dla idei pokojowego protestu. Ci dzielni ludzie zdecydowali się popłynąć do Arktyki uzbrojeni w nic więcej ponad pragnienie, by pokazać światu prawdę o bezwzględnym biznesie paliwowym. Powinni być teraz ze swoimi rodzinami, a nie w areszcie w Murmańsku" Statek „Arctic Sunrise" pływa pod banderą holenderską. W sumie zatrzymano 27 ekologów, w tym obywateli Unii Europejskiej (wśród nich jest obywatel Polski Tomasz Dziemianczuk, pracownik Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego).

Czy Komisja i Europejska Służba Działań Zewnętrznych monitoruje sprawę zatrzymanych aktywistów „Greenpeace"?

Jakie kroki podjęła Europejska Służba Działań Zewnętrznych, by udzielić pomocy zatrzymanym?

Jakie kroki podjęła Europejska Służba Działań Zewnętrznych, by uwolnić zatrzymanych?

Czy Wysoki Przedstawiciel Unii do Spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa poruszył lub poruszy tę kwestię w trakcie spotkań z przedstawicielami Federacji Rosyjskiej?

Wspólna odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji

(6 stycznia 2014 r.)

Rosyjskie zarzuty postawione członkom załogi Greenpeace i dziennikarzom, czy to za piractwo, czy „chuligaństwo", są rażąco nieadekwatne, a w przypadku dziennikarzy podnoszą również kwestie związane z wolnością prasy. Choć z zadowoleniem przyjęto możliwość zwolnienia załogi za kaucją, niepokój budzi fakt, że żaden z jej członków nie może w dalszym ciągu opuścić Rosji.

Wszystkie państwa członkowskie, których obywatele należą do załogi, od początku potraktowały tę sprawę jako kwestię konsularną. W związku z powyższym Komisja wstrzymała się od publicznych oświadczeń idących dalej niż te złożone w dniu 23 października 2013 r. podczas sesji plenarnej Parlamentu, na której omawiano tę kwestię. Obawy wynikające z tej trudnej sytuacji są jednak wyraźnie komunikowane władzom rosyjskim podczas wielokrotnie nawiązywanych kontaktów.

Delegatura UE w Moskwie często organizuje spotkania koordynacyjne z przedstawicielami krajów, których obywatele należą do załogi. Przez cały okres pozbawienia wolności członków załogi warunki ich przetrzymywania były monitorowane, a związane z nimi kwestie omawiane z władzami rosyjskimi. Ponadto od początku UE pozostawała w kontakcie z przedstawicielami Greenpeace.

Dnia 22 listopada 2013 r., na prośbę Niderlandów, Międzynarodowy Trybunał Prawa Morza nakazał zwolnienie załogi i statku za kaucją w wysokości 3 600 000 EUR. Chociaż Rosja zakwestionowała kompetencje Trybunału w sprawie „Arctic Sunrise", należy mieć nadzieję, że wszyscy członkowie załogi będą mogli niebawem wrócić do swoich domów i rodzin.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011393/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: EU citizens arrested in Russia

On 18 September Greenpeace International activists on board the Dutch-registered *Arctic Sunrise* were arrested in the Barents Sea by Russian border guards during a protest against oil drilling in the Arctic. As part of their attempt to stop the environmentalists' protest, the Russian border guards fired several warning shots in the direction of the *Artic Sunrise*.

The Russian authorities detained 30 people, including EU nationals from Poland, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. All of those arrested have been accused of 'assault and attempting to take over the Prirazlomnaya oil platform', and face a maximum of 15 years in prison. The court in Murmansk has extended by two months the detention of 21 of the 30 individuals, which is a cause for great concern.

International human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, the OSCE and the Moscow Helsinki Group, have already spoken out on this matter. Reporters Without Borders has called the detention of a Russian photographer reporting on the protest and cooperating with Greenpeace 'an unacceptable violation of freedom of information'.

With regard to this matter, does the Commission have any information concerning proceedings against EU citizens detained in Russia? Is the Commission aware of the conditions in which these people are being held? Is the Commission monitoring the situation to prevent any violation of human rights during the trial? Does the Commission consider the measures taken by the Russian authorities to be appropriate to the activities in question?

Question for written answer E-012615/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(7 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — seizure of Greenpeace vessel on the Barents Sea

On 19 September Russian coastal guards on the Barents Sea seized the 'Arctic Sunrise', a vessel belonging to Greenpeace. The vessel and its crew were towed to a port in Murmansk and the crew was arrested. Its members were initially charged with terrorism, although the charges were later commuted to hooliganism. Greenpeace representatives are opposed to these charges. According to Robert Cyglicki, Programme Director at Greenpeace Poland, 'Greenpeace has a 42-year history of entirely peaceful activism and these charges are nothing less than attempted libel against the activists. It should not be forgotten that our boat was seized by people armed with knives and firearms. Our activists, the ship's crew and the journalists are no more hooligans than they are pirates. The commuted charges are still disproportionately harsh and carry a prison sentence of up to seven years, which is an insult to the idea of a peaceful protest. These courageous people decided to sail to the Arctic armed with nothing more than a desire to show the world the truth about the ruthless oil business. They should now be with their families, not under arrest in Murmansk.' The 'Arctic Sunrise' sails under a Dutch flag. A total of 27 environmentalists are being held, including EU citizens such as the Polish citizen Tomasz Dziemianczuk who is employed by the University of Gdansk.

Are the Commission and the European External Action Service monitoring the situation of the detained Greenpeace activists?

What steps have been taken by the European External Action Service to help the detainees?

What steps have been taken by the European External Action Service to bring about the release of the detainees?

Has the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy raised this issue during meetings with representatives of the Russian Federation, and if not are there plans to do so?

Question for written answer P-012703/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(11 November 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU efforts to secure the release of Greenpeace activists held in Russia

On 18 September 2013, thirty activists staged a non-violent protest against the projected exploitation of Arctic oil resources by Gazprom, the largest Russian company and the world leader in natural gas extraction. The 28 Greenpeace activists aboard the *Arctic Sunrise* icebreaker, together with a photographer and freelance cameraman, were arrested by the Russian authorities and charged with piracy, which carries a 15-year maximum sentence. Despite an announcement that the charges would be altered to vandalism, which carries a seven-year maximum sentence, the crew of the Dutch-flagged Arctic Sunrise is now being charged with both. On 6 November, four other activists, who had taken to the Moskva River in inflatable dinghies calling for the *Arctic Sunrise* crew to be set free, were arrested by the river police. In the meantime, the Dutch Government is seeking international arbitration to secure the release of the 30 activists being held in the Russian Murmansk prison. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg is due to deliver a ruling on 22 November.

In view of this:

— Can the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy indicate what diplomatic action has been taken and what action is being envisaged to secure the rapid release of the activists? Can she indicate clearly the legal procedures to be followed by the EU?

— Has the EU offered its assistance to the authorities of the Member States whose citizens are being held?

— Does the High Representative intend to establish a coordinated EU position at the next Foreign Affairs Council on 21 November?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 January 2014)

The Russian charges against Greenpeace crew members and journalists, be they for piracy or 'hooliganism', are manifestly disproportionate and, as far as the journalists are concerned, also raise questions relating to freedom of the press. The release on bail of the crew was a welcome development, but the fact that none of them may yet leave Russia is a source of concern.

All Member States with citizens among the crew have from the outset dealt with this situation as a consular matter. Accordingly, the Commission has refrained from public statements going beyond those made during the 23 October 2013 Parliament plenary session which discussed the issue. However, the concerns that this unfortunate situation gives rise to are made clearly known to Russian authorities during the frequent contacts that take place.

The EU Delegation in Moscow hosts frequent coordination meetings with representatives of the countries having citizens among the crew. During the detention of the crew, detention conditions were monitored and issues in that respect raised with Russian authorities. Furthermore, the EU has from the outset been in contact with Greenpeace representatives.

At the request of the Netherlands, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea has on 22 November 2013 ordered the release of crew and ship against bail set at EUR 3 600 000. Although Russia has challenged the competence of the Tribunal in the 'Arctic Sunrise' case it is to be hoped that developments will soon allow all crew members to return to their homes and families.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011394/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(4 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Sprawa Parku Narodowego Wirunga w Demokratycznej Republice Konga

Park Wirunga to najstarszy park narodowy w Afryce, położony w Demokratycznej Republice Konga. Ponadto jest on wpisany na Listę Światowego Dziedzictwa Przyrodniczego UNESCO. Żyją tam setki gatunków zwierząt, w tym zagrożone wyginięciem goryle górskie.

Jeden z koncernów paliwowych planuje rozpocząć poszukiwania ropy naftowej. Taka działalność zawsze wiąże się z bardzo dużym zagrożeniem dla życia ludzi i zwierząt, ponieważ możliwe są nie tylko wycieki ropy, ale także zniszczenia związane z dostosowaniem parku do potrzeb koncernu – wybudowanie dróg i rurociągów. Zagrożone skażeniem będzie również Jezioro Edwarda, które jest kluczowym źródłem wody dla społeczności lokalnej.

W związku z tak dużym niebezpieczeństwem organizacje pozarządowe apelują o rezygnację z tych planów koncernu.

Czy Komisja jest świadoma zagrożenia istniejącego w Parku Narodowym Wirunga?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Andrisa Piebalgsa w imieniu Komisji
(13 listopada 2013 r.)

Od końca 2010 r Unia Europejska oraz główni darczyńcy działający w dziedzinie ochrony środowiska w Republice Demokratycznej Konga wielokrotnie interweniowali w celu zapobieżenia wydobywaniu ropy naftowej w Parku Wirunga, które jest sprzeczne z kongijskim prawodawstwem i podjętymi przez Republikę Demokratyczną Konga międzynarodowymi zobowiązaniami.

Przedstawiciele delegatury UE w Kinszasie spotkali się z ministrem środowiska celem przedyskutowania problemu nacisków ze strony przemysłu naftowego na Park Wirunga. Temat ten jest często podnoszony w ramach unijnego dialogu politycznego z tamtejszym rządem.

Na początku 2011 r., na propozycję partnerów Republiki Demokratycznej Konga i za zgodą kongijskich władz, Unia Europejska wydała zgodę na sfinansowanie strategicznej oceny oddziaływania na środowisko w zakresie działań dotyczących poszukiwania i eksploatowania złóż ropy naftowej na całym obszarze doliny Rift Albertin obejmującym Park Wirunga.

Aktualnie wspomniana ocena jest w trakcie realizacji, a Unia Europejska wraz z innymi darczyńcami śledzi jej przebieg, przy czym ze szczególną uwagą traktowana jest kwestia Parku Wirunga. Decyzja o niepodejmowaniu eksploatacji ma zostać podjęta przez władze i ludność Konga na zasadzie dobrowolnej, wcześniejszej i świadomej zgody. Kwestia środowiskowego i prawnego statusu Parku Wirunga jest oczywiście jednym z podstawowych elementów, jakie są analizowane w ramach strategicznej oceny oddziaływania na środowisko. Ze względu na skrupulatny sposób jej prowadzenia ocena ta jest dla rządu instrumentem bardzo pomocnym w procesie podejmowania decyzji. Wraz z europejskimi programami pomocy dla Parku Wirunga stanowi ona najlepszą gwarancję na zapewnienie ochrony, poprzez analizę obiektywnych elementów należących do oceny oddziaływania na środowisko.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011394/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: The Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the largest national park in Africa. It is also on Unesco's list of natural world heritage sites. The park is home to hundreds of species of animals, including critically endangered mountain gorillas.

An energy company is planning to begin prospecting for oil. Drilling for oil always poses a major threat to the lives of people and animals, not only from oil spills but also as a result of the scope for serious damage caused by making changes in the park to suit the needs of the oil company — for example by building roads and pipelines. Lake Edward, a vital source of water for the local population, will also be at risk from pollution.

In the face of this grave danger, NGOs are calling for the oil company's plans to be withdrawn.

Is the Commission aware of this threat to the Virunga National Park?

(Version française)

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

Dès fin 2010, l'Union européenne et les principaux bailleurs de fonds œuvrant dans le domaine de la conservation en RDC sont intervenus à maintes reprises pour éviter une exploitation pétrolière dans le Parc des Virunga qui soit contraire à la législation congolaise et aux engagements internationaux pris par la RDC.

La Délégation de l'UE à Kinshasa a échangé sur le problème des pressions pétrolières sur le Parc de Virunga avec les autorités congolaises et notamment le ministre de l'environnement. Le sujet est souvent discuté dans le cadre de notre dialogue politique avec le gouvernement.

Début 2011, l'Union européenne, sur proposition des partenaires de la RDC et avec l'approbation des autorités congolaises, a donné son accord pour financer une évaluation environnementale stratégique (EES) de l'exploration-exploitation du pétrole dans l'ensemble du Rift Albertin incluant le Parc des Virunga.

Aujourd'hui, l'EES est en cours et l'Union européenne, conjointement avec les autres donateurs, suit le processus et une attention particulière est portée aux Virunga. La décision de non-exploitation doit être prise par les autorités et la population congolaises, sur base d'un consentement libre, informé et préalable. Naturellement, le statut environnemental et juridique du Parc des Virunga fait partie des éléments essentiels à analyser dans l'évaluation environnementale stratégique. Menée rigoureusement, cette EES, est un outil des plus élaborés d'aide à la décision pour le Gouvernement. Elle représente, avec les programmes européens d'appui au Parc des Virunga, la meilleure garantie d'en assurer la sauvegarde, par l'analyse d'éléments objectifs qui ressortiront de l'évaluation environnementale stratégique.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011395/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(4 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Ataki Al-Szabab w Westgate w Kenii

W sobotę, 21 września członkowie somalijskiej radykalnej islamistycznej organizacji militarnej Al-Szabab wtargnęli do centrum handlowego Westgate w Nairobi. W wyniku tego ataku do tej pory zginęło ok. 70 osób, 175 jest rannych, 63 zaginionych. Wśród poszkodowanych znajdują się obywatele między innymi Wielkiej Brytanii, Francji, Kanady, Chin, Indii, RPA i Ghany. Ten brutalny atak jest częścią somalijskiej wojny domowej i próby odzyskania północnych terenów Kenii.

Od dłuższego czasu Westgate było wymieniane, jako potencjalne miejsce ataku terrorystycznego. Oznacza to, że ochrona nie była wystarczająca oraz, że członkowie somalijskiej organizacji są dobrze przygotowani do podobnych zamachów.

Eksperci przewidują, że nie jest to ostatni taki zamach przeprowadzony przez Al-Szabab.

Jakie środki zamierza podjąć Komisja w tej sprawie?

Czy Komisja zamierza wywrzeć presję na rząd kenijski, by zintensyfikował swoje wysiłki w celu przeciwdziałania kolejnym próbom zamachów?

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

Natychmiast po ataku, Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca zwróciła się do urzędnika wysokiej rangi, aby pojechał do Kenii w celu zbadania możliwości przyszłego wsparcia wraz z władzami lokalnymi. UE rozważa obecnie różne warianty. Ponieważ bezpieczeństwo Kenii jest nierozerwalnie związane z bezpieczeństwem jej sąsiadów, ważne są nieustające wysiłki w celu ustabilizowania sytuacji w regionie, a w szczególności w Somalii. Obejmuje to wsparcie UE na rzecz AMISOM ([1]), misji Unii Europejskiej mającej na celu przyczynienie się do szkolenia somalijskich sił bezpieczeństwa, jak również prace polityczne i rozwojowe. Konferencja pod hasłem „Nowy ład dla Somalii", która odbyła się w Brukseli dnia 16 września 2013 r., stanowi kamień milowy w realizacji priorytetów w zakresie polityki, bezpieczeństwa oraz kwestii społeczno-gospodarczych w Somalii. Ponadto w dalszym ciągu stosowany będzie unijny plan działań przeciwko terroryzmowi w Rogu Afryki/Jemenie.

Równie ważne są projekty mające na celu przeciwdziałanie finansowaniu terroryzmu i brutalnego ekstremizmu oraz zwiększające zdolność władz kenijskich do zapobiegania takim sytuacjom kryzysowym i odpowiedniego na nie reagowania.

Aby te konkretne propozycje miały trwały charakter, niezbędne będzie określenie efektów synergii wynikających z połączenia tych projektów z ogólnym wsparciem unijnym dla obszaru zarządzania, a w szczególności wsparciem na rzecz promowania przejrzystości i przeciwdziałania bezkarności. Powinny one być także postrzegane w kontekście ogólnego wsparcia UE na rzecz promowania zrównoważonego rozwoju w Kenii i regionie, które umożliwia likwidowanie pierwotnych przyczyn terroryzmu, co jest najskuteczniejszym sposobem jego zwalczania.

W szerszej perspektywie, w następstwie ataku w Westgate, globalne forum zwalczania terroryzmu (GCTF) stworzy odpowiednią platformę do koordynowania środków zwalczania terroryzmu. UE jest zdeterminowana, by wraz z Turcją w dalszym ciągu współprzewodniczyć grupie roboczej GCTF ds. Rogu Afryki.

([1]) Misja Unii Afrykańskiej w Somalii (AMISOM).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011395/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Attacks by Al-Shabaab at the Westgate shopping mall in Kenya

On Saturday, 21 September, members of Al-Shabaab, a radical Islamist militant group from Somalia, stormed the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. To date, around 70 people are known to have died in the attack, with 174 injured and 63 missing. The injured include citizens from the United Kingdom, France, Canada, China, India, South Africa and Ghana, among others. The brutal attack is part of Somalia's civil war and efforts to reclaim areas in the north of Kenya.

The mall had long been talked about as a possible terrorist target; it was inadequately defended, and Al-Shabaab's members are well drilled in such attacks.

Experts predict that this will not be the last attack of this kind to be carried out by the organisation.

What action does the Commission intend to take in response to this attack?

Does the Commission plan to put pressure on the Kenyan government to step up its efforts to prevent further terrorist attacks?

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

Immediately after the attack, the HR/VP asked a high level official to visit Kenya to explore future support together with the local authorities. The EU is now considering different options. As Kenya's security is intrinsically linked to that of its neighbours, continued efforts to stabilise the region and in particular Somalia are important. This includes EU support to Amisom ([1]), the EU training mission for the Somalian security forces, and political and development work. The Brussels Conference on a New Deal for Somalia of 16 September 2013 was a milestone for addressing the most critical political, security, and socioeconomic priorities in Somalia. In addition, the EU Counter Terrorism Action Plan on Horn of Africa/Yemen will continue to be implemented.

Equally important are projects to counter the financing of terrorism and violent extremism, and to strengthen the capacity of Kenyan authorities to prevent and to respond to such crises.

For these specific proposals to be sustainable, synergies will have to be found with the EU's overall support to the governance area, and in particular to promote transparency and counter impunity. They should also be seen in the context of general EU support to promote sustainable development in Kenya and the region, which allows addressing of the root causes of terrorism, the most effective way to counter terrorism.

At a wider level, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) will provide a good forum to coordinate counterterrorism measures in the aftermath of the Westgate attack. The EU is fully committed to continue the co-chairmanship of the GCTF Horn of Africa working group together with Turkey.

([1]) African Union Mission in Somalia.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011396/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Luta dos trabalhadores dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo em defesa da empresa

Esta semana, os trabalhadores dos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC) realizam mais uma importante ação de luta em defesa da empresa e dos seus postos de trabalho.

Na resposta à pergunta E-005205/2013, de junho de 2013, sobre a situação dos estaleiros, a Comissão reconhece que, ao contrário do que chegou a ser veiculado nalgumas notícias, não existia à data nenhuma decisão sobre a alegada obrigatoriedade de devolução de uma verba de 181 milhões de euros, recebidos como ajudas de Estado.

Solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Qual o ponto de situação deste processo? Já concluiu a avaliação que estava em curso?

2. Está disponível para apoiar um plano de viabilização dos ENVC, que permita a manutenção de todos os postos de trabalho e a concretização da atual carteira de encomendas, no quadro da manutenção do caráter público da empresa?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(22 de novembro de 2013)

Tal como indicado na sua resposta à pergunta E-005205/2013, a Comissão decidiu, em 23 de janeiro de 2013, dar início ao procedimento formal de investigação em relação a um certo número de medidas, alegadamente concedidas por Portugal aos Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo, S.A. («ENVC») no passado. Desde então, a Comissão teve diversas trocas de correspondência com as autoridades portuguesas e está presentemente a avaliar as informações apresentadas por essas autoridades. Além disso, a Comissão está a acompanhar de perto a mais recente evolução da situação dos ENVC.

Ao avaliar a compatibilidade das medidas, a Comissão terá em conta todos as disposições da UE aplicáveis em matéria de auxílios estatais. No entanto, como já foi mencionado na sua resposta à pergunta E-005205/2013, a Comissão não pode ainda tomar uma posição sobre se as medidas são compatíveis ou incompatíveis com o mercado interno.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011396/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Fight of the workers of Viana do Castelo Shipyard to save the company

This week, the workers at Viana do Castelo Shipyard (ENVC) took an important step to save the company and their jobs.

In its answer Question E-005205/2013 of June 2013 on the situation of the shipyard, the Commission acknowledged that, contrary to some reports, no decision had yet been taken as to whether the EUR 181 million received as state aid would have to be returned.

1. What is the state of play? Has the assessment that was under way been completed?

2. Is the Commission prepared to support a plan to make ENVC viable, making it possible to save all the jobs and to strengthen the current order book, as part of keeping the company publicly owned?

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

As indicated in its reply to Question E-005205/2013, the Commission decided on 23 January 2013 to initiate the formal investigation procedure in relation to a number of measures allegedly granted by Portugal to Estaleiros Navais de Viana do Castelo (ENVC) in the past. Since then, the Commission has had several exchanges of correspondence with the Portuguese authorities and is currently assessing the information submitted. In addition, the Commission is closely following the latest developments in relation to ENVC.

In assessing the compatibility of the measures, the Commission will have regard to all applicable EU State aid rules. However, as already indicated in its reply to Question E-005205/2013, the Commission cannot yet take a view on whether the measures are compatible or incompatible with the internal market.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011397/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Pressões da administração da empresa Delphi em Braga sobre os trabalhadores

Através da estrutura representativa dos trabalhadores, tivemos conhecimento de que a administração da empresa Delphi, em Braga, está a pressionar e a coagir os trabalhadores a aceitarem a redução de direitos consagrados no contrato coletivo, a deterioração das condições de trabalho e o aumento da exploração.

Em face do exposto, solicitamos à Comissão que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Tomou alguma medida ou efetuou alguma diligência após anteriores denúncias de desrespeito dos direitos dos trabalhadores por parte desta multinacional, por exemplo no que se refere à limitação de acesso a fundos comunitários?

2. Que outras queixas recebeu, até à data, relativas ao Grupo Delphi e, em particular, a esta empresa de Braga?

3. Que medidas podem ser tomadas para garantir todos os direitos dos trabalhadores, designadamente salariais, conhecendo-se a situação de profunda crise social na região, o aumento do desemprego e da precariedade laboral?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(26 de novembro de 2013)

1. Na sua resposta à pergunta E-6962/2012 ([1]), a Comissão comunicou que a Delphi tinha recebido financiamentos no montante de 2 907 769,53 euros do Fundo Social Europeu (FES) durante o atual e os anteriores períodos de programação. A referida empresa não beneficiou de qualquer outra subvenção desde essa altura. Tanto a Comissão como a Autoridade de Gestão nacional do FSE estão atentas à situação.

2. A Comissão não recebeu nenhuma outra queixa relativa ao Grupo Delphi.

3. O controlo e a execução das condições de trabalho e de emprego e a remuneração efetiva dos trabalhadores são questões da competência dos Estados-Membros, que possuem entidades de execução especializadas para levar a cabo essas verificações e definir as medidas corretivas adequadas. Incumbe às autoridades nacionais competentes, incluindo os tribunais, garantir que a legislação nacional de transposição das diretivas da UE é aplicada correta e eficazmente.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-006962&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011397/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Management pressure by the Delphi company in Braga on its workers

We have been made aware by workers' representatives that the management of the Delphi company, in Braga, is putting pressure on the workers and coercing them to accept fewer rights under the collective agreement, poorer working conditions and increased exploitation.

1. Has the Commission taken any steps or any action in response to previous complaints involving violation of workers' right by this multinational, for example by limiting access to EU funds?

2. What other complaints has it received to date concerning the Delphi Group and, in particular, this company in Braga?

3. What steps can be taken to safeguard all the rights of the workers, particularly relating to pay, in view of the deep social crisis in the region, increased unemployment and job insecurity?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

1. In its answer to Question E-6962/2012 ([1]), the Commission reported that Delphi received funding amounting to EUR 2.907.769,53 from the European Social Fund (ESF) during the current and previous programming periods. No other funding has been granted to this company since then. Both the Commission and the National ESF Managing Authority are attentive to the situation.

2. No other complaint has been received by the Commission concerning the Delphi Group.

3. The monitoring and enforcement of working and employment conditions and the actual remuneration of workers fall within the competence of the Member States, which have specialised enforcement bodies to conduct such verifications and determine the appropriate corrective measures. It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing the EU Directives are correctly and effectively applied.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-006962&language=EN

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011398/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Medidas de apoio ao setor do pequeno comércio e comércio tradicional

A Direção da Federação Europeia do Comércio Urbano («Vitrines d'Europe») produziu recentemente um documento sobre a péssima situação em que se encontra o comércio urbano, situação que afeta muitos milhares de micro, pequenos e médios empresários. No documento são também avançadas medida específicas que, a par da imprescindível alteração profunda das políticas macroeconómicas vigentes na generalidade dos países da UE, com especial destaque para aqueles, como Portugal, que se encontram sob um programa UE-FMI, poderiam dar um novo fôlego ao setor e ajudar a manter postos de trabalho, numa altura em que o desemprego atinge níveis nunca vistos. Uma das medidas propostas é a criação dum plano europeu de apoio ao setor do comércio.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Tem conhecimento deste documento?

2. Considera a possibilidade de propor um plano com as características referidas, de apoio ao setor do comércio, que permita a manutenção de postos de trabalho no setor? Em caso afirmativo, quais as características desse plano?

3. Que fundos europeus poderão apoiar, a partir de 2014, a implementação de Programas de Regeneração/Requalificação Urbana que contribuam para a captação de mais habitantes, a melhoria da qualidade de vida e da qualidade das zonas comerciais e sua integração dinâmica nas cidades?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(29 de novembro de 2013)

1. Não, a Comissão não tem conhecimento do documento mencionado pelos Senhores Deputados, mas gostaria de receber uma cópia do mesmo.

2. A Comissão não dispõe de dados suficientes sobre o assunto para poder investigar o problema levantado, pelo que não está em condições de responder à pergunta neste momento, mas solicita aos Senhores Deputados que lhe enviem mais pormenores.

3. De uma forma geral, a União Europeia não tem competência em matéria de planeamento urbano. Em conformidade com o princípio da subsidiariedade, os Estados-Membros são as entidades responsáveis pelo desenvolvimento urbano. No entanto, os Fundos Estruturais e de Investimento Europeus apoiarão medidas destinadas a responder aos desafios económicos, ambientais, climáticos, demográficos e sociais das cidades. No período 2014-2020, pelo menos 5 % dos recursos do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER) serão afetados em cada Estado-Membro a ações integradas para o desenvolvimento urbano sustentável nas cidades.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011398/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Support measures in the small and traditional retail sector

The European Federation for Urban Retail (Vitrines d'Europe) recently produced a document on the dire situation faced by retailers in towns and cities, a situation that affects many thousands of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The document also suggests specific measures that, like the vital profound change of macroeconomic policies in force in most EU countries, with particular emphasis on those that, like Portugal, have received an EU-IMF bailout, could give a new boost to the sector and help preserve jobs, at a time when unemployment is reaching unprecedented levels. One of the proposed measures is the creation of a European plan to support the retail sector.

1. Is the Commission aware of this document?

2. Does it think it is possible to propose a plan as described above, to support the retail sector, which makes it possible to preserve jobs in the sector? If so, what are the features of this plan?

3. What EU funds could support, from 2014, the implementation of urban regeneration/rehabilitation programmes to help attract more residents, improving the quality of life and the quality of shopping areas and their dynamic integration into cities?

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

1. No, the Commission is not aware of the document mentioned by the Honourable Member, but would welcome receiving a copy thereof.

2. The Commission does not have sufficient details on the matter to be able to investigate the problem raised and is not therefore in a position to answer the question at this point. The Commission would ask the Honourable Member to provide more details.

3. In general there is no competence for urban planning on European level. According to the principle of subsidiarity Member States are the responsible bodies for urban development. Nevertheless the Structural and Investment Funds will support measurers in cities addressing economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges. In the period 2014-2020 at least 5% of the European Regional Development Fund resources (ERDF) shall be allocated in each Member Stated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development in cities.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011399/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Defesa da gestão pública da água, gás e eletricidade — Reversão de concessões a privados

A população de Hamburgo, a segunda cidade da Alemanha, votou favoravelmente, em referendo, a municipalização das redes de gás e de eletricidade, atualmente geridas pelas empresas EON (alemã) e Vattenfall (sueca), respetivamente.

O referendo teve lugar após um conjunto de organizações ecologistas, de defesa do consumidor, sindicatos e igrejas locais terem lançado em 2010 uma iniciativa popular visando o regresso ao universo municipal destes serviços essenciais, no final do prazo da concessão.

No próximo dia 3 de novembro será a vez da população de Berlim se pronunciar sobre a aquisição pelo município da rede elétrica, também aqui nas mãos da Vattenfall.

A iniciativa partiu de um movimento de cidadãos, encorajados pelo êxito recente do referendo que determinou a remunicipalização da rede de água e saneamento.

De resto, o movimento em prol da remunicipalização das redes de eletricidade, gás e água tem vindo a ganhar expressão em toda a Alemanha, demonstrando os prejuízos sentidos pelas populações com a passagem destes importantes setores para privados. Populações que agora exigem que os poderes públicos assumam diretamente a gestão do gás e da eletricidade.

Segundo a Federação de Serviços Municipais (VKU), citada pela AFP, desde 2007 já se efetuaram duzentas operações de aquisição deste tipo de infraestruturas pelos órgãos municipais.

Em face do exposto, e tendo em conta as pressões da UE para a privatização de empresas do setor da água e da energia, em países sujeitos a programas UE-FMI, como é o caso de Portugal, perguntamos à Comissão Europeia:

1. Que avaliação faz destes processos de luta das populações em defesa da gestão pública da água, gás e eletricidade e da reversão de concessões a privados, que têm tido lugar em diversos países? Que medidas pensa tomar?

2. Pretende continuar a exercer as pressões supramencionadas, no sentido da privatização destes setores nos países sujeitos a programas UE-FMI?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(6 de dezembro de 2013)

Em conformidade com o princípio de neutralidade do Tratado no que se refere ao regime da propriedade nos Estados-membros (artigo 345.° do TFUE), a UE não tem uma política geral a favor das privatizações. Assim, a privatização de uma empresa é uma opção política económica que, em si, é, em princípio, da competência dos Estados-Membros.

Os países podem considerar a privatização das empresas públicas, no setor dos serviços públicos, como uma opção política para promover a eficiência dos serviços em causa e a sustentabilidade dos níveis de défice e de dívida públicos.

No caso de estas empresas públicas terem problemas significativos em matéria de governação, de dívidas e de financiamento o processo de privatização pode aumentar a sua eficiência e atrair novos investidores nomeadamente através de investimento direto estrangeiro, o que contribui para a competitividade de todo o país. Estes efeitos favoráveis são reforçados sempre que a escolha de privatização for cuidadosamente efetuada no âmbito de reformas estruturais abrangentes, incluindo a criação de um quadro regulamentar adequado para preservar, entre outros, o interesse público e o pleno acesso para todos os cidadãos.

Os países teriam de fazer as suas escolhas tendo em conta as circunstâncias específicas da empresa pública, o setor de serviços públicos e a situação económica do país. Na perspetiva da UE, as regras em matéria de auxílios estatais devem ser respeitadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011399/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Protecting public control of water, gas and electricity — reversing privatisation

The people of Hamburg, Germany's second city, have voted in favour of making the gas and electricity networks, which are currently run by EON (German) and Vattenfall (Swedish) respectively, publicly-owned utilities.

The referendum was held after a group of environmental and consumer protection organisations, unions and local churches launched a popular initiative in 2010 to return these essential services to municipal control, at the end of the concession period.

The next day, on 3 November, the people of Berlin voted in favour of the municipal authorities taking over the electricity network, also run by Vattenfall.

The initiative started from a movement of citizens, encouraged by the recent outcome of the referendum that led to the water and sanitation network returning to municipal control.

Moreover, the movement in favour of returning the electricity, gas and water networks to municipal control has been gaining momentum throughout Germany, showing that people felt aggrieved when these important sectors were privatised; people who are now calling for public authorities to take direct control of gas and electricity.

According to the Federation of Municipal Services (VKU), as quoted by AFP, there have been 200 such acquisitions of infrastructure by municipal authorities since 2007.

In view of the EU's push to privatise water and energy companies in countries receiving EU-IMF bailouts, such as Portugal:

1. What is the Commission's assessment of these popular struggles to protect the public ownership of water, gas and electricity and to reverse privatisation, as has happened in several countries? What action will it take?

2. Will it continue to push for privatisation of these sectors, as mentioned above, in countries receiving EU-IMF bailouts?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

In line with the Treaty principle of neutrality with regard to the system of property ownership (TFEU Art. 345), the EU does not have a general policy favouring privatisation. Hence the privatisation of a firm is an economic policy choice which, in itself, falls in principle within the competence of Member States.

Countries may consider privatisation of state-owned-enterprises (SOEs) in the public utility sector as a policy option to promote the efficiency of the services in question and the sustainability of public deficit and debt levels.

In case these SOEs have significant governance, debt and funding issues, privatisation has the potential of increasing their efficiency and attracting new investors including through foreign direct investment, contributing to the competitiveness of the country as a whole. These benign effects are supported when the choice for privatisation is carefully made within the context of comprehensive structural reforms, including putting in place an appropriate regulatory framework to preserve, *inter alia*, the public interest and full access for all citizens.

The country would make its choice taking into account the specific circumstances of the SOE, the public utility sector and the wider economic situation of the country. From the EU perspective, State aid rules need to be respected.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011400/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Não utilização e reafetação de verbas do Eixo 7 do POPH relativo à Igualdade de Género

São conhecidos os efeitos da crise sobre a situação das mulheres. Vítimas preferenciais do desemprego, dos baixos salários e da precariedade, as mulheres confrontam-se ainda com um aumento do trabalho «extra» em casa, realidade documenta por um estudo do Eurofund ([1]).

Em Portugal, numa altura em que esta situação se agrava assiste-se simultaneamente à não utilização das verbas do Eixo 7 do POPH, relativo à igualdade de género.

Solicitamos à Comissão Europeia que nos informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Tem conhecimento do grau de execução, por Portugal, das verbas relativas ao Eixo 7 do POPH, relativo à igualdade de género?

2. Tem conhecimento do desvio de montantes deste Eixo para outras finalidades? Participou nalguma reafetação destes recursos ou recebeu alguma solicitação por parte do Governo Português nesse sentido? Em caso afirmativo, quais os montantes envolvidos e qual o seu destino?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(22 de novembro de 2013)

De acordo com as informações recebidas da autoridade de gestão do Programa Operacional Potencial Humano (POPH), as autorizações financeiras relacionadas com a igualdade entre homens e mulheres (eixo 7 e medidas correspondentes nos eixos 8 e 9) ascendem a 67 242 297,68 euros, o que representa 87 % da contribuição total do Fundo Social Europeu (FSE) para esta prioridade.

Os recursos financeiros afetados ao eixo 7 não foram reatribuídos. Além disso, a Comissão não recebeu qualquer proposta de alteração ao POPH do Estado-Membro.

A Comissão gostaria de sugerir ao Senhor Deputado que contacte a autoridade de gestão portuguesa do POPH para obter mais informações sobre esta questão:

POPH — Programa Operacional Potencial Humano
Av. Infante Santo, n.° 2 - 2.°
PT-1350-346 Lisboa
Tel: (+ 351-21) 394 48 00
Fax: (+ 351-21) 394 46 36
Endereço eletrónico: geral@poph;qren.pt
Sítio Web: http://www.poph.qren.pt/

([1]) http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2013/02/PT1302039I.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011400/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Non-use and reallocation of funds under Axis 7 of the Human Potential Operational Programme relating to gender equality

The effects of the crisis on the situation of women are well known. Women are bearing the brunt in terms of unemployment, low pay and job insecurity, and they are facing more 'extra' work at home, a situation documented by a Eurofound study (http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2013/02/PT1302039I.htm).

At a time when this situation is getting worse in Portugal, funds under Axis 7 of the Human Potential Operational Programme, relating to gender equality, are simultaneously going unused.

1. Is the Commission aware of the extent to which Portugal uses funds under Axis 7 of the Human Potential Operational Programme, relating to gender equality?

2. Is it aware of money under this Axis being diverted for other purposes. Has it participated in any reallocation of these resources or has it received any request from the Portuguese Government in this regard? If so, what were the sums involved and what were they earmarked for?

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

1. According to information received from the HPOP (Human Potential Operation Programme) Managing Authority, the financial commitments related to Gender Equality (Axis 7 and corresponding measures in Axis 8 and 9) amount to EUR 67 242 297.68, representing 87% of the total ESF contribution to this priority.

2. Resources assigned to axis 7 have not been reallocated. Furthermore, the Commission has not received any amending proposal to the HPOP from the Member State.

The Commission would suggest to the Honourable Members to contact the HPOP Managing Authority Portuguese for further information:

POPH — Programa Operacional Potencial Humano
Av. Infante Santo, nº 2 — 2º
1350-346 Lisboa
Tel: +351.21 394 48 00
Fax: 21 394 46 36
E-mail: geral@poph;qren.pt
Website: http://www.poph.qren.pt/

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011401/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Apoios da UE a fundações e partidos políticos europeus e em países terceiros

A Comissão Europeia cofinancia um projeto da Rede Europeia de Fundações Políticas (ENoP), que recentemente publicou um estudo sobre «apoio a partidos políticos para a democracia».

Perguntamos à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento de que montantes (oriundos do Orçamento da UE) foram, até à data, canalizados para financiar fundações políticas europeias ou partidos europeus?

2. Tem conhecimento de situações de financiamento de partidos políticos em países terceiros por parte de fundações políticas europeias ou partidos políticos europeus? Em caso afirmativo, quais os montantes em causa, quais os seus destinatários e qual a sua origem?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(22 de novembro de 2013)

O projeto de Rede Europeia das Fundações Políticas (ENoP) é cofinanciado pelo objetivo n.° 3 do programa temático «Intervenientes não estatais e autoridades locais» (Instrumento de Cooperação para o Desenvolvimento — ICD), que visa reforçar a cooperação e a coordenação de redes da sociedade civil europeia no domínio do desenvolvimento. A ENoP é uma plataforma de 70 fundações políticas emanentes de 25 partidos criada em 2006.

1. O Regulamento (CE) n.° 2004/2003 ([1]) relativo ao estatuto e ao financiamento dos partidos políticos a nível europeu, com a redação que lhe foi dada em 2007, permite o financiamento de fundações e partidos políticos europeus a partir do orçamento da UE. O regulamento é administrado pelo Parlamento Europeu. Além disso, a Comissão não concede apoio financeiro a partidos políticos europeus. A Comissão apenas financia fundações através de convites à apresentação de propostas para atividades de projetos específicos principalmente em países terceiros.

2. O Instrumento Europeu para a Democracia e os Direitos Humanos (IEDDH) prevê apoio local à democracia em 107 países ([2]). Não é permitido financiamento direto aos partidos políticos no âmbito do IEDDH e outros fundos da UE, a fim de garantir uma abordagem imparcial. A UE financia atividades implementadas por fundações, nomeadamente através do IEDDH, que proporcionam formação, intercâmbio e plataformas de diálogo entre os partidos políticos. Os programas de assistência eleitoral da UE centram-se igualmente no apoio ao desenvolvimento de quadros legislativos relacionadas com partidos políticos.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 2004/2003 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 4 de novembro de 2003, relativo ao estatuto e ao financiamento dos partidos políticos a nível europeu (JO L 297 de 15.11.2003).

([2]) Para mais informações sobre os projetos IEDDH geridos a nível de cada país, consultar o relatório IEDDH *ad hoc* «Realizar a democracia», janeiro a junho de 2011, disponível em:
www.eidhr.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011401/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: EU support of European and third-country political foundations and parties

The Commission co-finances a project of the European Network of Political Foundations, which recently published a study on support for political parties for democracy.

1. Is the Commission aware of how much money (from the EU budget) has been channelled into funding European political foundations or European parties to date?

2. Is it aware of situations where political parties in third countries are funded by European political foundations or European political parties? If so, what are the sums involved, where does the money go and where does it come from?

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

The European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) project is co-financed under objective 3 of the non-state actors and local authorities Thematic Programme under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) instrument which aims to strengthen coordination and cooperation of European civil society networks in the area of development. ENoP is a platform of 70 political foundations from 25 parties established in 2006.

1. Regulation (EC) 2004/2003 ([1]) on political parties at European Union level as amended in 2007 allows funding from the EU budget for European political parties and foundations. The regulation is administered by Parliament. Beyond this, the Commission does not provide financial support to European political parties. The Commission only funds foundations through calls for proposals for specific project-activities primarily in third countries.

2. The European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR) provides local support to democracy in 107 countries ([2]). Direct funding to political parties is not allowed under the EIDHR and other EU funds in order to guarantee a non-partisan approach. The EU funds activities implemented by foundations, notably through the EIDHR, that provide training, exchanges and platforms for dialogue between political parties. The EU electoral assistance programmes also focus on support to the development of legislative frameworks related to political parties.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 2004/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 on the regulations governing political parties at European level and the rules regarding their funding, OJ L 297, 15.11.2003.

([2]) For more information on EIDHR projects managed at country-level, please refer to the ad hoc EIDHR Report 'Delivering on democracy', January-June 2011, available at www.eidhr.eu

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011402/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Inclusão das águas do Sara Ocidental no âmbito do Acordo de Pescas UE-Marrocos

O protocolo negociado pela Comissão com as autoridades do Reino de Marrocos, tendo em vista a celebração de um novo Acordo de Pescas UE-Marrocos, prevê, à semelhança do protocolo anteriormente existente, a possibilidade de pesca nas águas do Sara Ocidental. Todavia, à luz do direito internacional, Marrocos não tem soberania sobre o território do Sara Ocidental e sobre os seus recursos pesqueiros, conforme decisão do Tribunal Internacional de Justiça de Haia, de outubro de 1975.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Por que razão não foram excluídas destes Acordo as águas situadas a sul do paralelo 27°40'?

2. Tendo em conta que outros países, como por exemplo os EUA, nos acordos que têm com Marrocos excluem explicitamente do seu âmbito o território do Sara Ocidental e os produtos oriundos desse território, por que razão não faz a UE o mesmo? Por que razão reconhece implicitamente a soberania de Marrocos sobre um território ilegalmente ocupado?

3. Considera a possibilidade de corrigir esta posição?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011405/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Participação dos representantes legítimos do povo sarauí na negociação de um novo Acordo de Pescas

Tendo em conta que:

— O protocolo negociado pela Comissão com as autoridades do Reino de Marrocos, tendo em vista a celebração de um novo Acordo de Pescas UE-Marrocos, prevê a possibilidade de pesca nas águas do Sara Ocidental;

— O Sara Ocidental é um território não autónomo, ilegalmente ocupado por Marrocos desde 1975 (de acordo com a decisão do Tribunal Internacional de Justiça de Haia, de Outubro de 1975);

— O povo sarauí tem representantes legítimos, que participam nas negociações em curso no quadro da ONU;

— Sucessivas resoluções da Assembleia-Geral das Nações Unidas sobre a soberania dos povos de territórios não autónomos sobre os seus recursos naturais exigiriam, no mínimo, um envolvimento dos representantes legítimos do povo sarauí na negociação de um Acordo que inclui as águas territoriais do Sara Ocidental.

Solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

Foram os representantes legítimos do povo sarauí (Frente Polisário) ouvidos nas negociações supramencionadas? Em caso negativo, porquê? Em caso afirmativo, em que momentos decorreu essa auscultação e quem foram os interlocutores da Comissão?

Resposta conjunta dada por Maria Dimanai em nome da Comissão
(3 de dezembro de 2013)

A Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para as suas respostas à pergunta escrita E-007185/2013 e às perguntas escritas dos Senhores Deputados Raül Romeva i Rueda — P-011571/2012, Willy Meier — E-003516/2013 e Michał Tomasz Kamiński — E-010678/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011402/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Inclusion of Western Saharan waters in the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement

The protocol negotiated by the Commission with the Moroccan authorities, with a view to concluding a new EU-Morocco fisheries agreement, like the previous protocol, provides for the possibility of fishing in Western Saharan waters. However, under international law, Morocco does not have sovereignty over the territory of Western Sahara or its fisheries resources, in accordance with the decision of the International Court of Justice of October 1975.

1. Why have the waters south of 27° 40', not been excluded from these agreements?

2. Considering that other countries, such as the US, explicitly exclude the territory of Western Sahara and products from that territory from agreements they have with Morocco, why does the EU not do likewise? Why does it implicitly recognise Morocco's sovereignty over an illegally occupied territory?

3. Is it considering changing is stance?

Question for written answer E-011405/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Participation of the legitimate representatives of the Sahrawi people in negotiations for a new fisheries agreement

The protocol negotiated by the Commission with the Moroccan authorities, with a view to concluding a new EU-Morocco fisheries agreement, provides for the possibility of fishing in Western Saharan waters.

The Western Sahara is a non-self-governing territory, which has been illegally occupied by Morocco since 1975 (according to the decision of the International Court of Justice of October 1975).

The Sahrawi people have legitimate representatives who are participating in the current UN negotiations.

Successive resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the sovereignty of the people of non-self-governing territories over their natural resources require, as a minimum, the legitimate representatives of the Sahrawi people to be involved in the negotiation of any agreement that includes the territorial waters of Western Sahara.

Were the legitimate representatives of the Sahrawi people (Polisario Front) heard at the above negotiations? If not, why not? If so, when was this hearing and who spoke on behalf of the Commission?

Joint answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007185/2013 and to its answers to written questions P-011571/2012 by Mr Raül Romeva i Rueda, E-003516/2013 by Mr Willy Meier, and E-010678/2013 by Mr Michał Tomasz Kamiński.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011403/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Promoção do uso da bicicleta como meio de transporte utilitário e recreativo nas cidades

Numa reunião recente com a MUBi — Associação pela Mobilidade Urbana em Bicicleta, fui alertado para muitos dos problemas e dificuldades que obstaculizam o uso da bicicleta como meio de transporte utilitário e recreativo nas cidades.

Entre as várias propostas avançadas pela MUBi para promover o uso da bicicleta para deslocações em meio urbano estão os sistemas de partilha de bicicletas («bikesharing») em meio urbano, de cariz essencialmente utilitário, pensados como alternativa ou complemento a outros meios de transporte.

Algumas tentativas de implementação destes sistemas (ditos de terceira geração) têm sido frustradas em face dos custos extremamente elevados envolvidos.

Assim, em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que programas e medidas poderão apoiar a implementação de sistemas de partilha de bicicletas («bikesharing») em meio urbano, de terceira geração?

2. Que programas e medidas poderão apoiar a realização de estudos sobre a viabilidade de implementação destes sistemas?

3. Quais as taxas de cofinanciamento previstas em cada caso?

4. Que outras medidas da UE podem apoiar o uso da bicicleta como meio de transporte utilitário e recreativo nas cidades?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(18 de novembro de 2013)

A iniciativa Civitas ([1]) promove o desenvolvimento e a avaliação de novas abordagens para a segurança dos ciclistas nas cidades (orçamento: 200 milhões de euros desde 2002). Foram aplicadas mais de 120 medidas relativas ao uso da bicicleta nas 62 cidades Civitas, incluindo 16 medidas públicas no domínio do uso da bicicleta e da partilha de bicicletas («bikesharing») em 14 cidades. O nível habitual de cofinanciamento para a iniciativa Civitas é de cerca de 50 %.

O programa STEER ([2]), o pilar dos transportes do Programa Energia Inteligente — Europa, também concedeu 14 milhões de euros a 12 projetos-piloto europeus relacionados com o uso da bicicleta.

No atual período de programação, foram afetados 7,82 mil milhões de euros (9,63 % do total do FEDER e do Fundo de Coesão no domínio dos transportes) aos transportes urbanos e à promoção de transportes urbanos limpos. Para o próximo período de programação a promoção da mobilidade urbana multimodal sustentável pode ser apoiada pelos Fundos Estruturais e de Investimento Europeus (EIE) no caso de as medidas contribuírem para objetivos com baixas emissões de carbono ou de medidas ligados a ações integradas de desenvolvimento urbano sustentável. A elegibilidade dos projetos concretos depende do objetivo da medida e da sua integração num conceito mais lato. As taxas de cofinanciamento dependem do tipo de região (regiões mais desenvolvidas, regiões em transição, região menos desenvolvidas).

([1]) http://www.civitas-initiative.org/thematic-categories/public-bicycles-bicycle-sharing
([2]) http://www.managenergy.net/

Por último, na competência da UE no domínio do turismo ([3]), vários projetos de ações de sensibilização e de criação de redes em favor do desenvolvimento de itinerários de circuitos ciclistas de longa distância, foram cofinanciados pela a ação preparatória «turismo sustentável», bem como pelo programa «Competitividade e Inovação» ([4]).

A Comissão gostaria de remeter o Senhor Deputado para a resposta que deu à Pergunta E-009884/2013 ([5]).

([3]) O Tratado de Lisboa confere à União competência para desenvolver ações destinadas a apoiar, coordenar ou completar a ação dos Estados-Membros na área do turismo. No entanto, a competência no domínio das infraestruturas de turismo corresponde às autoridades regionais/nacionais.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/iron-curtain-trail/year-2/index_en.htm e http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_en.htm
Além disso, a Comissão apoiou com subvenções projetos relacionados com a coordenação central da rede Eurovelo e a promoção de itinerários verdes.

([5]) Disponível em: http://www.cc.cec/basil/business/viewQuestions.do?listType=nolist&questionId=105049&projectNumber=1&showTab=project

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011403/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Promoting cycling as a practical and recreational means of urban transport

At a recent meeting with the Urban Bicycle Mobility Association (MUBi), I was made aware of the many problems and difficulties facing cycling as a practical and recreational means of urban transport.

The various proposals made by MUBi to promote cycling for urban travel include urban bike-sharing schemes, which are essentially practical in nature, to replace or complement other modes of transport.

Attempts to implement such 'third-generation' schemes have been thwarted by the extremely high costs involved.

1.What programmes and measures could support the implementation of third-generation urban bike-sharing schemes?

2.What programmes and measures could support feasibility studies for the implementation of such schemes?

3.What levels of co-financing are envisaged in each case?

4.What other EU measures can support cycling as a practical and recreational means of urban transport?

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

The CIVITAS Initiative ([1]) promotes the development and evaluation of new approaches to safe cycling in cities (budget: EUR 200 million since 2002). Over 120 cycling-related measures have been implemented in the 62 CIVITAS cities, including 16 public bicycle and bicycle-sharing measures in 14 cities. The usual level of co-funding for CIVITAS is around 50%.

The STEER Programme ([2]), which is the transport pillar of the Intelligent Energy-Europe programme, has also provided EUR 14 million to 12 European pilot projects related to cycling.

In the current programming period, EUR 7.82 billion (9.63% of the total ERDF and Cohesion Funds for transport) are allocated to urban transport and the promotion of clean urban transport. For the next programming period the promotion of sustainable multi-modal urban mobility can be supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) in case measures contribute to a low-carbon objective or measures that are linked to integrated actions for sustainable urban development. The eligibility of concrete projects depends on the objective of the measure and the integration in a wider concept. Co-funding rates depend on the type of region (more developed region, transition region, less developed region).

Finally, within the competence of the EU in the field of tourism ([3]), several awareness-raising and networking-building projects for the development of long-distance cycling routes have been co-financed by the Preparatory Action 'Sustainable Tourism' as well as by the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme ([4]).

The Commission would also like to refer the Honourable Member to its reply to the Question E-009884/2013 ([5]).

([1]) http://www.civitas-initiative.org/thematic-categories/public-bicycles-bicycle-sharing
([2]) http://www.managenergy.net/
([3]) The Lisbon Treaty grants the Union the competence to carry out actions to support coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States in the tourism field. However, the competence for tourism infrastructure lies within regional/national authorities.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/iron-curtain-trail/year-2/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/sustainable-tourism/index_en.htm The Commission supported with grants projects related to the EuroVelo Network central coordination as well as to greenways' promotion.
([5]) Available at http://www.cc.cec/basil/business/viewQuestions.do?listType=nolist&questionId=105049&projectNumber=1&showTab=project

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011404/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Incumprimento da legislação sobre disposições especiais aplicáveis aos veículos destinados ao transporte de passageiros

Numa reunião recente com a Associação Portuguesa de Deficientes (APD) fui alertado para o incumprimento generalizado da Diretiva 2001/85/CE, de 20 de novembro de 2001, relativa a disposições especiais aplicáveis aos veículos destinados ao transporte de passageiros com mais de oito lugares sentados além do lugar do condutor. De acordo com esta associação, são muitos os veículos que não estão dotados dos equipamentos auxiliares de embarque, como rampas, elevadores ou sistemas de rebaixamento, impedindo assim, ou limitando fortemente, o acesso aos cidadãos com mobilidade reduzida.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que avaliação faz da aplicação da referida Diretiva e dos seus impactos na melhoria da independência e da qualidade de vida dos cidadãos com mobilidade reduzida? Que medidas pensa tomar neste domínio?

2. Recebeu, até ao momento, alguma queixa motivada pelas razões supramencionadas? Em caso afirmativo, que diligências foram efetuadas até ao momento?

Resposta dada por Antonio Tajani em nome da Comissão
(25 de novembro de 2013)

A Diretiva 2001/85/CE estabelece prescrições técnicas harmonizadas para a homologação de novos autocarros e camionetas de passageiros. Esta diretiva substituiu os requisitos nacionais a partir de 29 de outubro de 2011 no que respeita à venda na UE de todos os novos autocarros e camionetas de passageiros.

De acordo com o artigo 3.°, n.° 1, todos os autocarros urbanos de piso rebaixado devem ser acessíveis a passageiros com mobilidade reduzida. Os requisitos de conceção aplicáveis a esses veículos estão previstos no anexo VII da diretiva ([1]). Em especial, os requisitos em matéria de acessibilidade só são obrigatórios para os autocarros urbanos de piso rebaixado e não para outras categorias de veículos ([2]). Além disso, antes de 29 de outubro de 2011 era possível vender autocarros urbanos que não respeitassem os requisitos harmonizados da Diretiva 2001/85/CE. Por conseguinte, a situação quanto à acessibilidade nos autocarros urbanos tende a melhorar à medida que a frota vai sendo renovada.

A Comissão analisa regularmente a legislação da UE, de forma a satisfazer melhor as necessidades das pessoas com deficiência e com mobilidade reduzida. Por exemplo, em dezembro de 2011, a Comissão apresentou uma proposta de enquadramento jurídico para incluir sistemas de alerta sonoro em veículos elétricos, de forma a alertar os peões com deficiências visuais para a aproximação de um veículo. Em 2012, propôs clarificar que os utilizadores de cadeiras de rodas têm acesso prioritário em relação aos carrinhos de bébé nos autocarros urbanos. Por último, em 2012, a Comissão apresentou uma proposta para harmonizar os requisitos de aprovação de veículos privados adaptados para passageiros utilizadores de cadeiras de rodas. As propostas referidas estão atualmente na fase final de adoção, devendo entrar em vigor em 2014.

Os serviços da Comissão consideram que a Diretiva 2001/85/CE prevê um enquadramento eficaz no que respeita à melhoria no que respeita à acessibilidade dos autocarros urbanos. A Comissão não tem conhecimento de qualquer aplicação incorreta desta diretiva.

([1]) Incluindo sistemas de rebaixamento, altura dos degraus, corrimãos, rampas, etc.
([2]) Por exemplo, autocarros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011404/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Non-compliance with legislation on special provisions for vehicles used for the carriage of passengers

At a recent meeting with the Portuguese Association of Disabled Persons (APD), I was made aware of widespread non-compliance with Directive 2001/85/EC of 20 November 2001 relating to special provisions for vehicles used for the carriage of passengers comprising more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat. According to the association, many vehicles are not fitted with boarding aids, such as ramps, lifts or kneeling systems, thus preventing, or severely limiting, access for people with reduced mobility.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the above Directive and its impact on improving the independence and quality of life of people with reduced mobility? What steps will it take in this area?

2. To date, has it received any complaints on the above grounds? If so, what action has been taken up to now?

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

Directive 2001/85/EC sets out harmonised technical prescriptions for the type-approval of new buses and coaches. This directive replaced national requirements from 29 October 2011 for the sale in the EU of all new buses and coaches.

According to Article 3(1), all urban low-floor buses shall be accessible for passengers with reduced mobility. The design requirements applying to these vehicles are laid down in Annex VII of the directive ([1]). Accessibility requirements in particular are only mandatory for low floor urban buses and not for other categories of vehicles ([2]). Furthermore, before 29 October 2011, it was possible to sell urban buses not meeting the harmonised requirements of Directive 2001/85/EC. Therefore the situation on the accessibility of urban buses improves as the vehicle fleet is renewed.

The Commission reviews EU legislation on a regular basis to better meet the needs of people with disabilities and with reduced mobility. For instance in December 2011, the Commission proposed a legal framework to include sound alert systems in electric vehicles in order to warn visually impaired pedestrians that a vehicle is approaching them. In 2012, it proposed to clarify that wheelchairs users always have priority access over prams in urban buses. Finally, in 2012 the Commission proposed to harmonise the approval requirements of private cars adapted for passengers using wheelchairs . These proposals are currently in their final phase of adoption and should enter into force in 2014.

The assessment of the Commission's services is that Directive 2001/85/EC provides a satisfactory framework for the improvement of urban buses' accessibility. The Commission is not aware of any incorrect implementation of this directive.

([1]) Including kneeling system, height of steps, handrail, ramp, etc.
([2]) e.g. coaches.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011406/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Precariedade laboral no setor dos espetáculos e do audiovisual

Numa reunião recente com sindicatos representativos do setor dos espetáculos e do audiovisual, fui alertado para a existência e progressiva generalização de situações de grande precariedade laboral entre estes trabalhadores, situação que no caso português se agravou sobremaneira deste a aplicação do programa UE-FMI.

Tendo em conta os financiamentos da UE atribuídos a projetos na área da cultura e do audiovisual, solicito à Comissão Europeia que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Está a atribuição de financiamentos da UE nestes domínios condicionada ao respeito pelos direitos dos trabalhadores e, designadamente, à existência de vínculos laborais estáveis e seguros?

2. Que garantias tem a Comissão de que não é atribuído financiamento da UE a projetos ou agentes que promovem o recurso a trabalhadores precários e o aumento da precariedade laboral?

3. Pensa tomar alguma medida a este respeito, para evitar este tipo de situações?

Resposta dada por László Andorem em nome da Comissão
(26 de novembro de 2013)

A Comissão Europeia apresentou no ano passado a Comunicação «Promover os Setores Culturais e Criativos ao Serviço do Crescimento e do Emprego na UE». Estes setores representam cerca de 4,5 % do total da economia empresarial na Europa. Contando com mais de três milhões de pessoas (artistas, profissionais da cultura e outros) a trabalhar em quase um milhão de empresas, o potencial dos setores culturais e criativos, incluindo as indústrias do entretenimento e do audiovisual, está ainda por explorar plenamente. Por esta razão, a Comissão Europeia acredita que investir na cultura, sem reduzir o seu financiamento, é um investimento inteligente no crescimento e em empregos com futuro, especialmente na difícil conjuntura atual de restrições orçamentais que afeta muitos países europeus.

Através dos seus diferentes fundos e programas, todos dotados dos seus próprios objetivos e especificidades, a União Europeia tem a possibilidade de apoiar projetos dos setores audiovisual e do espetáculo, desde que para tal preencham os critérios de elegibilidade estabelecidos nas respetivas bases jurídicas e subsequentes convites à apresentação de candidaturas ([1]). A forma como esses projetos se traduzem concretamente nos contratos ou acordos de subvenção celebrados com os candidatos selecionados é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros, no caso de programas de gestão partilhada, como o Fundo Social Europeu, ou da Comissão, tratando-se de programas que são da sua responsabilidade direta, como o programa MEDIA ([2]).

No que diz respeito aos programas operacionais que competem diretamente à Comissão, é exigido aos candidatos e concorrentes selecionados o cumprimento de todas as obrigações legais que lhes sejam aplicáveis, nomeadamente as decorrentes da legislação vigente em matéria laboral, fiscal e social.

([1]) http://europa.eu/about-eu/funding-grants/index_pt.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/about/who-can-i-contact_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011406/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Job insecurity in the entertainment and audiovisual sector

At a recent meeting with unions in the entertainment and audiovisual sector, I was made aware that serious job insecurity was becoming increasingly common among these workers, a situation that, in the case of Portugal, has got significantly worse since the implementation of the EU-IMF programme.

In view of EU funding allocated to projects in the cultural and audiovisual field:

1. Is the allocation of EU funding in these areas conditional upon the respect of workers' rights and, in particular, the existence of stable and secure employment conditions?

2. What guarantees does the Commission have that EU funding has not been allocated to projects or agents that promote the use of casual workers and increased job insecurity?

3. Is it planning to take any action in this regard, to avoid this kind of situation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The European Commission presented last year a communication on 'Promoting the cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU'. These sectors represent nearly 4.5% of the total business economy in Europe. With over three million people (artists, culture and other professionals) working in almost one million enterprises, the potential of the cultural and creative sectors, including entertainment and audiovisual, has yet to be unleashed in full. This is why the European Commission believes that investing in culture, not curtailing its funding, is a smart investment in growth and jobs with a future, especially in the present difficult times of budget constraints that many countries across Europe experience.

Through its various funds and programs, which all have their own specificities and aims, the European Union can support projects in the entertainment and audiovisual sectors, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria established in the legal bases and the subsequent calls for proposals ([1]). How the latter are concretely translated in the contracts or grant agreements with the successful applicants is the responsibility of either the Member States for shared managed programs such as the European Social Fund or the Commission for the programs which fall under its direct responsibility, such as the Media program ([2]).

As regards programs falling under the direct responsibility of the Commission, successful applicants and tenderers are asked to comply with any legal obligations incumbent on them, notably those resulting from employment law, tax and social legislation.

([1]) See http://europa.eu/about-eu/funding-grants/
([2]) See http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/about/who-can-i-contact_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011407/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(4 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Paralización del proyecto Castor por riesgo de accidente nuclear

Considerando las preguntas sobre el proyecto Castor: E-007642/2013, E-007566/2013, E-004004/2013, E-004005/2013, E-005051/2012, E-005052/2012, E-4299/09 y la presentada el 2 de octubre 2013;

Considerando que la zona norte de la costa de Castellón registró un total de 12 seísmos entre las 22.00 horas del martes 1 de octubre y la mañana del 3 de octubre, el mayor de una magnitud de 4,2 y el menor de 1,4 grados en la escala de Richter, según ha informado el Instituto Geográfico Nacional; considerando que los seísmos afectaron a la costa valenciana y catalana;

Considerando que los responsables del proyecto Castor y el Ministro de Industria, Energía y Turismo han admitido que los temblores tienen una relación directa con la inyección de gas en el almacén subterráneo Castor;

Considerando la proximidad de las centrales nucleares de Ascò y Vandellòs al epicentro de los seísmos y el antecedente del accidente nuclear de Fukushima en marzo de 2011;

Considerando la Directiva 2009/71/Euratom sobre seguridad nuclear y las recomendaciones del European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) para España, en las que se contempla el riesgo de accidente nuclear debido a seísmos, así como la propuesta de modificación de la Directiva de junio 2013 para aumentar la seguridad nuclear, la cual aclara que «también compete a los Estados miembros aplicar las recomendaciones. En caso de retraso o no aplicación de las recomendaciones, la Comisión Europea puede organizar una misión de verificación en el Estado miembro.»;

¿Exigirá la Comisión la paralización del proyecto Castor y el cierre de las centrales nucleares anteriormente citadas por los riesgos sísmicos registrados en la zona, especialmente después de la tragedia de Fukushima? ¿Abrirá un proceso de infracción a España por permitir la presencia del proyecto Castor a pesar de su impacto medioambiental y los riesgos indirectos derivados? ¿Pedirá la Comisión al Banco Europeo de Inversiones que empiece una investigación independiente sobre los seísmos y considere la posibilidad de desinvertir el capital por ser un proyecto insostenible bajo el marco comunitario? ¿Cree que las recomendaciones europeas «post-fukushima» deberían ser vinculantes para los Estados miembros?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(29 de noviembre de 2013)

1. El control de la seguridad de las centrales nucleares es responsabilidad de las autoridades reguladoras nacionales, quienes, de conformidad con la Directiva sobre seguridad nuclear ([1]), deben tener competencias para suspender la actividad de la central en caso necesario. En el marco de las pruebas de resistencia, las centrales nucleares de Ascó y Vandellós fueron sometidas a una evaluación de riesgos sísmicos. La autoridad de seguridad nuclear española (el CSN) llegó a la conclusión de que el cierre de estas centrales no estaba justificado ([2]).

2. En cuanto a la conformidad del proyecto Castor con la Directiva sobre la evaluación del impacto ambiental ([3]), la Comisión se remite a sus respuestas a las preguntas escritas E-3789/2010 ([4]) y E-1478/2011 ([5]). Tras llevar a cabo una investigación, la Comisión no pudo determinar la existencia de una infracción de la normativa ambiental pertinente.

([1]) Directiva 2009/71/Euratom del Consejo, de 25 de junio de 2009, por la que se establece un marco comunitario para la seguridad nuclear de las instalaciones nucleares, DO L 172 de 2.7.2009, pp. 18-22.

([2]) No obstante, se indicaron algunas acciones de mejora. Para más información sobre los resultados de las pruebas de resistencia en España y el seguimiento que se ha realizado de las mismas, se remite a Su Señoría a la siguiente página web del sitio del Grupo Europeo de Reguladores de la Seguridad Nuclear (Ensreg): http://www.ensreg.eu/EU-Stress-Tests/Country-Specific-Reports/EU-Member-States/Spain, en particular al Informe final nacional y al Plan de acción nacional.

([3]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente, DO L 26 de 28.1.2012, p. 1.

([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-3789&language=ES

([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2011-011478&language=ES

3. El Banco Europeo de Inversiones (BEI) es consciente de la suspensión de la inyección de gas en la zona del proyecto tras el registro de actividad sísmica y de las medidas tomadas por las autoridades españolas. El BEI entiende que se están llevando a cabo estudios técnicos suplementarios y que estos serán revisados por las autoridades españolas. Una vez se conozcan sus conclusiones, el BEI las examinará y reaccionará en consecuencia. Por tanto, el BEI no puede pronunciarse sobre las posibles consecuencias financieras en este punto.

4. La Comisión tiene previsto presentar un informe, en 2014, sobre la aplicación de las recomendaciones de las pruebas de resistencia, en asociación con las autoridades reguladoras nacionales que se han encargado de la elaboración de los planes de acción nacionales. Las enseñanzas extraídas de las pruebas de resistencia también se incorporaron a la propuesta de la Comisión de revisión de la Directiva sobre seguridad nuclear ([6]), según la cual se establecería un sistema obligatorio europeo de evaluaciones por pares periódicas y se garantizaría la aplicación de cualquier recomendación técnica que fuera surgiendo. Dicha propuesta está siendo debatida en el Consejo.

([6]) Propuesta de Directiva del Consejo por la que se modifica la Directiva 2009/71/Euratom, por la que se establece un marco comunitario para la seguridad nuclear de las instalaciones nucleares, COM(2013) 715.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011407/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Suspension of the Castor project because of the risk of a nuclear incident

Previous questions E-007642/2013, E-007566/2013, E-004004/2013, E-004005/2013, E-005051/2012, E-005052/2012, E-4299/09 concerned the Castor project, as well as the question submitted on 2 October 2013.

Twelve earthquakes were recorded in the area of the northern coast of Castellón between the hours of 10 p.m. on Tuesday 1 October 2013 and the morning of 3 October, the strongest of them measuring 4.2 and the weakest 1.4 on the Richter scale, as reported by the Spanish National Geographic Institute. The earthquakes struck the coasts of Valencia and Catalonia.

Those in charge of the Castor project and the Minister for Industry, Energy and Tourism have admitted that the tremors are directly related to the injection of gas into the Castor underground storage facility.

The Ascó and Vandellòs nuclear power plants are close to the epicentre of the earthquakes, bringing to mind the precedent of the Fukushima nuclear incident in March 2011.

Directive 2009/71/Euratom on nuclear safety and the recommendations of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) for Spain consider the risk of nuclear incidents due to earthquakes, and the proposal of June 2013 to amend the directive in order to increase nuclear safety clarifies that 'Member States are also responsible for implementing the recommendations. In case there is a delay or recommendations are not implemented, the European Commission can organise a verification mission to the Member State.'

Will the Commission demand the suspension of the Castor project and the closure of the aforementioned nuclear power plants, due to the risk of earthquakes in the area, especially after the Fukushima tragedy? Will it open an infringement proceeding against Spain for permitting the Castor project to go ahead despite its environmental impact and the indirect risks associated with it? Will the Commission ask the European Investment Bank to launch an independent investigation into the earthquakes and to consider divesting its capital, as this is an unsustainable project within the Community framework? Does it believe that 'post-Fukushima' European recommendations should be binding on Member States?

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

1. The supervision of the safety of nuclear power plants (NPPs) is the responsibility of national regulators, who, in accordance with the Nuclear Safety Directive (NSD) ([1]), should have powers to suspend the operation of the plant if necessary. As part of the stress tests, the Ascó and Vandellòs NPPs were subject to an evaluation against earthquake risks. The Spanish nuclear safety authority (CSN) concluded that it was not warranted to close either plant ([2]).

2. Regarding the compliance of the Castor project with the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive ([3]), the Commission refers to the replies given to Written Questions E-3789/2010 ([4]) and E-1478/2011 ([5]). Following an investigation, the Commission could not find a breach of the relevant environmental legislation.

3. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is aware of the suspension of gas injection at the project site following seismic activity and of the actions taken by the Spanish authorities. The EIB understands that additional technical studies are being performed and will be reviewed by the Spanish authorities. Once their conclusions are known, the EIB will examine and react to them accordingly. Therefore it is not possible for the EIB to comment on possible financial consequences at this point.

([1]) Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom of 25 June 2009 establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations, OJ L 172, 2.7.2009, p. 18-22.

([2]) Certain improvement actions were however identified. For more information on the results of and the follow up given to the stress tests in Spain, the Honourable Member is referred to the following webpage on the website of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators' Group (ENSREG): http://www.ensreg.eu/EU-Stress-Tests/Country-Specific-Reports/EU-Member-States/Spain, in particular to the final National Report and to the National Action Plan.

([3]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1.

([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-3789&language=EN

([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2011-011478&language=EN

4. The Commission intends to report on the implementation of the stress test recommendations in 2014, in partnership with national regulators who have developed national action plans. The lessons learnt from the stress tests were also incorporated into the Commission's proposal for a revision of the NSD ([6]), which would set up a mandatory EU system of periodic peer reviews and ensure the implementation of any technical recommendations that arise. The proposal is being discussed in the Council.

([6]) Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2009/71/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations, COM(2013)715.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011408/13
a la Comisión
Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Josefa Andrés Barea (S&D) y Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(4 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Defensa de la sanidad vegetal de la UE

En noviembre de 2012, la UE anunció medidas contra el riesgo de infección de las plantaciones europeas, debido a la importación de cítricos con Guignardia citricarpa (Black Spot) procedentes de Sudáfrica. La Comisión reaccionaba así al incremento registrado del número de intercepciones desde 2011 y a la falta de colaboración por parte de la administración sudafricana. En consecuencia, la Comisión anunció medidas drásticas, como la paralización de las importaciones de cítricos de la mencionada procedencia, en caso de que se llegara a una quinta interceptación y en tanto en cuanto la administración sudafricana no aportara suficientes garantías de seguridad.

Sin embargo, habiéndose producido esa quinta interceptación a finales de agosto, la Comisión sigue sin reaccionar alegando que nos encontramos al final de la campaña, «analizando la situación» o evaluando posibles medidas.

¿Por qué razón no procede la Comisión al cierre cautelar inmediato de la frontera a estas importaciones, cuando los riesgos para la sanidad vegetal de la UE están ya más que probados?

¿Existen nuevos elementos para que la Comisión no actúe según sus propias directrices, anunciadas en el mes de marzo?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de noviembre de 2013)

En la presente temporada de exportación, la Comisión ha estado siguiendo con suma atención las interceptaciones de cítricos procedentes de Sudáfrica debido a la presencia de *Guignardia citricarpa*, causante de la mancha negra de los cítricos. Asimismo, ha estado regularmente en contacto y se ha reunido con las autoridades sudafricanas y con las partes interesadas, tanto de ese país como de la UE.

La Comisión y las autoridades sudafricanas se han reunido después de la quinta interceptación de cítricos afectados, a principios de septiembre, a fin de aclarar posibles factores atenuantes y medidas alternativas. Al mismo tiempo, Sudáfrica se comprometió a poner en vigor un protocolo mucho más estricto para la certificación de los cítricos. Ante este compromiso se decidió que la UE no tomaría nuevas medidas inmediatamente. No obstante, hasta entonces, varias partidas que ya habían salido del territorio sudafricano resultaron estar infestadas a su llegada a la Unión Europea. Por esta razón, la Comisión está estudiando los próximos pasos. Cualquier posible medida debe ser debatida y aprobada por los Estados miembros en el Comité Permanente.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011408/13
to the Commission
Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Josefa Andrés Barea (S&D) and Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Protecting EU plant health

In November 2012, the EU announced measures to combat the risk of infection to European plantations, due to imports of citrus fruit with *Guignardia citricarpa* (black spot) from South Africa. This was the Commission's response to the increase recorded in the number of cases detected since 2011 and the lack of cooperation from the South African authorities. Consequently, the Commission announced drastic measures, such as the suspension of imports of citrus fruit from South Africa were a fifth case to be detected and were the South African authorities to continue not to provide sufficient safety guarantees.

However, despite this fifth case having been detected at the end of August, the Commission has still not reacted, claiming that the season is ending and it is 'analysing the situation' or evaluating possible measures.

Why does the Commission not immediately close the border to these imports as a precaution, when the risks to EU plant health have already been very clearly demonstrated?

Is there any new information to explain why the Commission does not act according to its own guidelines, announced in March?

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

For the current export season, the Commission has been monitoring very closely the interceptions of citrus fruit from South Africa due to the presence of 'Guignardia citricarpa' or citrus black spot. In addition, the Commission has been in regular contact and met the South African authorities and South African and EU stakeholders.

The Commission met South African authorities after the fifth interception of citrus black spot at the beginning of September to clarify mitigating factors and alternative measures. At that time South Africa committed to put in place a much stricter protocol for the certification of citrus fruit. Given this commitment, it was decided that the EU should not immediately take further measures. However, by that time, several consignments that had already left the South African territory were found infested at their arrival into the European Union. For that reason, the Commission is considering the next steps. Any potential measures need to be discussed and approved by Member States in the Standing Committee.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011410/13
à la Commission
Agnès Le Brun (PPE) et Françoise Grossetête (PPE)
(4 octobre 2013)

Objet: Oignon et échalote

En réponse à la question écrite E-005028/2013 concernant l'inscription de certaines variétés d'allium au catalogue officiel de l'échalote, la Commission a indiqué que l'Office communautaire des variétés végétales (OCVV) n'exerçait aucun contrôle sur l'inscription de nouvelles variétés au catalogue commun des espèces agricoles, conformément aux dispositions de la directive 2002/55/CE.

Par ailleurs, la Commission a déclaré qu'elle prendrait contact avec les autorités compétentes en France et aux Pays-Bas afin d'évaluer la nécessité de se pencher sur le protocole technique s'appliquant aux variétés d'échalote.

1. Si l'OCVV n'exerce aucun contrôle sur l'inscription de nouvelles variétés au catalogue commun des espèces agricoles, quelle institution ou quel organe de l'Union européenne est compétent pour effectuer ce contrôle et faire respecter la directive 2002/55/CE ainsi que le protocole de reconnaissance des échalotes établi en 2005? La Commission estime-t-elle que ce contrôle est suffisant?

2. Dispose-t-elle aujourd'hui de plus amples informations concernant les défaillances qui ont conduit à l'inscription de variétés d'oignons au catalogue officiel de l'échalote? S'il est avéré que certaines variétés inscrites au catalogue officiel de l'échalote sont en réalité des variétés d'oignons, comment envisage-t-elle de faire respecter la directive 2002/55/CE et le protocole de reconnaissance des échalotes?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(11 novembre 2013)

Les États membres sont responsables de la mise en œuvre des dispositions de la directive 2002/55/CE ([1]), et en particulier de l'admission de variétés aux catalogues nationaux. La Commission adopte les règles régissant l'admission de ces variétés et applique pour ce faire les divers protocoles adoptés par l'Office communautaire des variétés végétales (OCVV). Le protocole de l'OCVV s'appliquant aux échalotes est le TP 46/2 du 1er avril 2009.

Les services de la Commission sont conscients des questions soulevées en ce qui concerne les caractéristiques des variétés d'oignons et d'échalotes. C'est pourquoi ils ont demandé à l'OCVV d'examiner ce point de manière approfondie. Sur la base des observations formulées par l'OCVV, la Commission déterminera les suites à donner.

([1]) Directive 2002/55/CE du Conseil du 13 juin 2002 concernant la commercialisation des semences de légumes (JO L 193 du 20.7.2002, p. 33).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011410/13
to the Commission
Agnès Le Brun (PPE) and Françoise Grossetête (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Onions and shallots

In answer to Question E-005028/2013 on the inclusion of certain allium varieties in the official shallot catalogue, the Commission stated that the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) had no control whatsoever over the inclusion of new varieties in the Common Catalogue of Agricultural Plant Species pursuant to the provisions of Directive 2002/55/EC.

Moreover, the Commission stated that it would contact the competent authorities in France and the Netherlands to assess the necessity of working on the technical protocol for shallot types.

1. If the CPVO has no control over the inclusion of new varieties in the Common Catalogue of Agricultural Plant Species, what institution or what body is responsible for this control and for enforcing Directive 2002/55/EC as well as the protocol recognising shallots established in 2005? Does the Commission think that this control is sufficient?

2. Does the Commission now have more information on the failings that led to the inclusion of onion varieties in the official shallot catalogue? Were it to be shown that some varieties included in the official shallot catalogue were actually onion varieties, how does the Commission plan to enforce Directive 2002/55/EC and the protocol recognising shallots?

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

Member States are responsible for the implementation of the provisions of Directive 2002/55/EC ([1]), and in particular, the acceptance of varieties in their national catalogues. The Commission adopts rules for the acceptance of those varieties, following the respective protocols adopted by the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO). The CPVO protocol for shallots is TP 46/2 of 1 April 2009.

The Commission is aware of the issues raised concerning the characteristics of onion and shallot varieties. Therefore, they have asked the CPVO to examine the matter further. On the basis of input from the CPVO, the Commission will determine its further actions.

([1]) Council Directive 2002/55/EC of 13 June 2002 on the marketing of vegetable seed, OJ L 193, 20.7.2002, p. 33.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011411/13
à la Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(4 octobre 2013)

Objet: Situation des sans-abri en Hongrie et en Europe

La Hongrie vient d'adopter une loi qui pénalise les sans-abri avec des sanctions drastiques (amendes, travaux pour la communauté et peine de prison). Les personnes sans domicile seront bannies des zones d'intérêt touristique en vertu d'une loi destinée à «protéger l'ordre public, la sécurité, la santé et les valeurs culturelles». Ce qui est sous-jacent avec cette nouvelle loi, qui est entrée en vigueur le 1er octobre, c'est la criminalisation de la pauvreté sous toutes ses facettes.

En Europe, au cours des dernières années, le nombre de sans-abri est en augmentation, renforcé par la crise. De plus en plus de gens sont touchés par la précarité. Il est alors difficile de trouver un toit. Un nombre grandissant d'Européens passent la nuit dans leur voiture, dans de petits hôtels ou toutes sortes de logements provisoires. Les jeunes, les immigrants, les femmes et les travailleurs pauvres sont les catégories les plus touchées, mais aussi les enfants en sont victimes.

Le Parlement s'est prononcé afin que des mesures soient prises au niveau européen contre l'exclusion sociale qu'engendre le sans-abrisme et avait fixé l'objectif de régler définitivement ces problèmes d'ici à 2015.

1. Quelles mesures la Commission compte-t-elle prendre afin de protéger les droits fondamentaux des personnes sans domicile touchées par une loi qui va à l'encontre de la liberté de circulation et des Droits de l'homme?

2. Quelles mesures la Commission a-t-elle prises afin de lutter contre l'exclusion sociale sous toutes ses formes afin de préserver les droits des personnes touchées par ce phénomène?

3. Où en est la Commission quant à l'objectif fixé de régler définitivement le problème des sans-abri d'ici 2015? Où en sont les États membres dans ce domaine?

4. Quels seront les fonds prévus pour atteindre l'objectif de «personne sans abri en 2015»?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(6 décembre 2013)

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se reporter à sa réponse à la question écrite E-007293/2013 ([1]).

Il existe des fonds de l'UE destinés à financer des actions visant à renforcer l'intégration sociale des personnes sans abri, et notamment à améliorer l'accès à des services de qualité et au logement social. Au titre du prochain cadre financier pluriannuel, la Commission a proposé d'augmenter encore le budget alloué à la promotion de l'inclusion sociale et à la lutte contre la pauvreté.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011411/13
to the Commission
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Homelessness in Hungary and Europe

Hungary recently passed a law which discriminates against the homeless by imposing drastic penalties on them (fines, community service and prison sentences). Homeless people will be banned from tourist areas under the terms of a law which aims to 'protect public order, safety, health and cultural values'. Implicit in this new law, which entered into force on 1 October, is the criminalisation of poverty in all its forms.

The number of homeless people in Europe has been on the rise in recent years, a trend exacerbated by the crisis. More and more people have no secure job, making it difficult for them to find housing. More and more people are being forced to spend the night in their cars, in small hotels and in all kinds of temporary accommodation. Young people, immigrants, women and low-paid workers are the hardest hit, but children are also being affected.

Parliament has called for measures to combat social exclusion resulting from homelessness to be taken at European level and has set a target of resolving these problems once and for all by 2015.

1. What measures does the Commission intend to take to protect the fundamental rights of homeless people, who are being targeted by a law which is at odds with freedom of movement and human rights?

2. What measures has the Commission taken to combat social exclusion in all its forms and to protect the rights of those affected by this phenomenon?

3. What is the Commission doing to achieve the target of resolving the plight of the homeless by 2015? What progress have Member States made in this area?

4. What funds will be allocated in an effort to achieve the target 'no more homelessness by 2015'?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007293/2013 ([1]).

EU Funds are available to finance actions for better social integration of homeless people, including improved access to quality services and social housing. The Commission has proposed, under the next multiannual financial framework, to further increase funds to promote social inclusion and combat poverty.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011412/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Cattura di uccelli in Veneto con mezzi vietati dalla direttiva Uccelli

Dal 1994 la Regione Veneto autorizza, richiamando il regime di deroga previsto dall'articolo 9 della direttiva Uccelli 2009/147/CE, la cattura con reti di uccelli da utilizzarsi come richiami vivi nella caccia delle specie Allodola, Cesena, Merlo, Tordo bottaccio e Tordo sassello.

In contrasto con la norma comunitaria detta attività viene attuata in assenza di «condizioni rigidamente controllate» e senza selettività del prelievo. Viene ancora consentita la cattura dell'Allodola (Alauda arvensis) classificata «vulnerabile» nella lista rossa degli uccelli nidificanti in Italia e in declino da 30 anni in tutta Europa. La guida interpretativa sulla direttiva Uccelli ([1]) al punto 3.5.40 specifica che le deroghe non devono essere concesse per specie o popolazioni il cui stato di conservazione è insufficiente e la cui consistenza numerica è in diminuzione.

Con delibera n.1099 del 28 giugno 2013 ([2]) la Regione Veneto ha autorizzato ben 37 impianti per la cattura di 14.000 uccelli senza specificare: 1) luoghi di cattura, 2) numero di uccelli da catturare per ciascuna specie, 3) i tempi di cattura, 4) il numero di controlli per ciascun impianto di cattura.

L'ISPRA ([3]) con lettera del 24 maggio 2013 ha dato parere sfavorevole alla Regione Veneto alla cattura in deroga per la stagione 2013/2014, sottolineando la necessità di metodi alternativi quali l'allevamento degli uccelli in cattività e l'assenza di dati certi sul fabbisogno di richiami vivi per i cacciatori.

In data 11 ottobre 2012 la Commissione, rispondendo ad una interrogazione dello scrivente, comunicava che:

1. avrebbe valutato la questione nell'ambito di un'indagine in corso avviata nel dicembre 2010 concernente la cattura di uccelli da utilizzarsi come richiami in alcune regioni italiane compreso il Veneto,

2. stava esaminando tutte le informazioni disponibili nell'ambito di questa indagine per decidere successivamente i provvedimenti da adottare.

Poiché nulla è cambiato e l'ISPRA (che è autorità abilitata a dichiarare se le condizioni stabilite sono soddisfatte e a decidere quali mezzi, impianti o metodi possano essere utilizzati, entro quali limiti e da quali persone ([4])), continua a dare parere sfavorevole, può la Commissione riferire quali provvedimenti intende adottare per far applicare la direttiva 2009/147/CE e quando?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(15 novembre 2013)

La Commissione ha avviato un'indagine sulla cattura di uccelli da utilizzare come richiami vivi in alcune regioni italiane, tra cui il Veneto, e intende esaminare in questo ambito la delibera adottata dalla citata regione nel giugno 2013 nonché altre questioni critiche menzionate dall'onorevole deputato. Una volta terminata la valutazione, la Commissione deciderà in merito alle misure idonee per garantire che siano pienamente rispettate le disposizioni pertinenti della direttiva 2009/147/CE (direttiva Uccelli) ([5]).

([1]) Guida alla disciplina della caccia nell'ambito della direttiva 79/409/CEE sulla conversazione degli uccelli selvatici — 2008.
([2]) Pubblicata sul Bollettino Ufficiale della Regione Veneto n. 58 del 12 luglio 2013.
([3]) Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale.
([4]) Art. 9 comma 2 lettera d) direttiva 2009/147/CE.
([5]) GU L 20 del 26.1.2010, pag. 7.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011412/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Capture of birds in the Veneto Region using methods prohibited under the Birds Directive

Since 1994, the Veneto regional government has authorised the use of nets to catch birds for use as live decoys for skylark, fieldfare, blackbird, song thrush and redwing hunting, citing the derogations provided for under Article 9 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC).

However, the activity is not carried out in compliance with EU legislation, as it is not done 'under strictly supervised conditions' and is not selective as to the birds caught. It is still permitted to catch skylarks (Alauda arvensis), even though they are classed as 'vulnerable' on Italy's red list of breeding birds and have been in decline throughout Europe for the last 30 years. Point 3.5.40 of the guidance document on the Birds Directive ([1]) specifies that derogations should not be granted for species or populations with an unfavourable conservation status or whose numbers are declining.

By Decision No 1099 of 28 June 2013 ([2]), the Veneto Region authorised the capture of 14 000 birds by 37 installations, without specifying: (1) where they could be caught; (2) how many birds could be caught per species; (3) when they could be caught; (4) how many inspections would be carried out on each trapping installation.

In a letter of 24 May 2013, ISPRA ([3]) gave the Veneto Region a negative opinion regarding captures by way of derogation from the Birds Directive for the 2013/2014 season, stressing the need for alternative methods, such as the breeding of birds in captivity, and pointing out that there were no reliable data regarding hunters' requirements for live decoys.

On 11 October 2012, the Commission replied to a question of mine, stating that:

1. it would assess the measure in the framework of the ongoing investigation launched in December 2010 concerning the capture of live birds to be used as decoys in some Italian regions, including Veneto;

2. it was assessing all the information available in the framework of this ongoing investigation, and would decide on the next step to be taken.

The situation has not changed and ISPRA (the authority empowered to declare that the required conditions obtain and to decide what means, arrangements or methods may be used, within what limits and by whom ([4])) continues to issue negative opinions.

What provisions does the Commission therefore intend to adopt to ensure that directive 2009/147/EC is implemented and when will it do so?

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

The Commission has launched an investigation on the capture of birds to be used as live decoys in some Italian regions, including Veneto. The resolution adopted by Veneto in June 2013 concerning the capture of birds to be used as live decoys, as well as the critical points raised by the Honourable Member will be assessed in this context. Once this assessment is finalised, the Commission will decide on the appropriate steps to ensure that the relevant provisions of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC ([5]) are fully complied with.

([1]) Guidance document on hunting under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds, 2008.
([2]) Published in the Official Gazette of the Veneto Region, No 58 of 12 July 2013.
([3]) Institute for Environmental Protection and Research.
([4]) Article 9(2)(d) of Directive 2009/147/EC.
([5]) OJ L 020, 26.1.2010.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011413/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Effetti del consumo di bibite energizzanti e di alcolici

Il consumo di bibite energizzanti è in continua crescita. Si tratta di stimolanti del sistema nervoso che occorrerebbe consumare con cautela. Ciò che desta più preoccupazione è però l'utilizzo combinato di tali bibite con l'alcol. Studi recenti dimostrano che in Europa il 56 % degli adulti e il 53 % dei ragazzi tra i 10 e i 18 anni consumano tale miscelazione di bibite energizzanti e alcol.

I potenziali rischi rappresentano, secondo gli esperti, un rilevante problema di salute pubblica.

Il mix risulta pericoloso in quanto si altera la capacità di percepire il proprio stato di ebbrezza, mentre la riduzione dei sintomi sgradevoli dell'alcol porta ad aumentarne l'assunzione, innestando un pericoloso circolo vizioso. Un numero crescente di indagini epidemiologiche mostra inoltre che l'associazione fra i due tipi di bevande può spingere a compiere gesti pericolosi (guida in stato di ebbrezza, comportamenti violenti, ecc.) con una frequenza maggiore rispetto a quanto farebbe l'alcol da solo.

Considerato che:

— il ruolo che le bibite energizzanti hanno nell'accrescere l'effetto dell'alcol è stato oggetto di pochi studi;

— le ricerche che sono state effettuate sono state finanziate prevalentemente dalle stesse aziende produttrici;

— gli studi sono stati effettuati considerando bassi dose di alcol e bibite energizzanti senza analizzare le conseguenze di quantità maggiori,

può la Commissione far sapere:

— se è a conoscenza dei rischi legati al consumo diffuso di questa combinazione di bibite;

— se ritiene che debbano essere elaborate indagine approfondite da parte di organismi indipendenti non finanziati dalle aziende produttrici?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole deputato alla risposta alla precedente interrogazione scritta E-002322/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011413/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Effects of the consumption of energy drinks and alcohol

Consumption of energy drinks is on the rise. These drinks are central nervous stimulants and should be consumed with caution. However, the most worrying aspect is the use of these drinks together with alcohol. Recent studies have shown that in Europe, 56% of adults and 53% of children aged between 10 and 18 consume this kind of energy drink and alcohol mix.

According to health experts, the potential risks constitute a significant public health problem.

This mix is dangerous because it reduces a person's ability to perceive how drunk they are. At the same time, it dampens the unpleasant effects of alcohol, thus leading to increased consumption and therefore to a dangerous vicious circle. A growing number of epidemiological studies are also demonstrating that it is more common for people to act dangerously (drink driving, violent behaviour, etc.) after drinking a mix of these two drinks than after drinking alcohol alone.

— Little research has been done into the role of energy drinks in heightening the effects of alcohol.

— The research that has been done has been funded predominantly by the drinks companies themselves.

— The research carried out has looked at low doses of alcohol and energy drinks and has not studied the effects of higher quantities.

— Is the Commission aware of the risks associated with the widespread consumption of this drink combination?

— Does the Commission believe that in-depth studies should be conducted by independent bodies not funded by the drinks companies?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answer given to the previous Written Question E-002322/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011414/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Violenze e condizione delle donne in Pakistan

La Repubblica Islamica del Pakistan con una popolazione di circa 180 milioni di abitanti è il sesto paese più popoloso al mondo e il secondo maggiore Stato musulmano. Il livello di povertà in cui versa il paese è elevato, pur possedendo un potenziale di sviluppo. In particolare, la provincia del Belucistan è ricchissima di risorse minerarie ed è il principale fornitore di gas naturale del Paese, dopo il Sindh. Tuttavia si tratta di una delle ragioni più scosse dai conflitti di tutto l'Est asiatico.

Il Pakistan è afflitto da innumerevoli problematiche, tra cui il basso livello di alfabetizzazione e l'instabilità politica. In un tale contesto la condizione delle donne è estremamente drammatica. La maggior parte di esse versa in condizione di povertà, considerato che il 75 % della popolazione vive sotto la soglia di povertà e la maggior parte sono donne soggette ad abusi e violenze di ogni tipo: delitti d'onore, lapidazioni, utilizzo dell'acido (8000 casi nel 2010), violenze domestiche (che spesso non sono ritenute un crimine), uccisioni tramite roghi.

Il Pakistan è inoltre uno dei paesi più pericolosi al mondo per le donne le quali spesso non hanno voce.

Le elezioni nazionali dello scorso maggio sono state funestate da molteplici attentati, nel corso delle quali gli estremisti hanno impedito in particolar modo alle donne di esprimere il proprio voto.

Esiste infine un programma bilaterale EU-Pakistan che prevede l'utilizzo di 200 milioni di euro per il periodo 2007-2010 e di 213 milioni di euro per il periodo 2011-2013 con l'obiettivo tra gli altri, di tutelare i diritti umani garantendo la giustizia ai gruppi vulnerabili, tra cui le donne.

Può la Commissione riferire:

— quali passi sono stati effettuati in collaborazione con il governo pakistano per assicurare la stabilità politica e la tutela delle donne;

— quali azioni sono state intraprese per monitorare l'utilizzo di questi fondi europei;

— se si prevede di stanziare ulteriori fondi per i prossimi anni?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(27 novembre 2013)

1. I diritti delle donne sono un tema prioritario del dialogo sui diritti umani tra l'UE e il Pakistan L'UE si è impegnata fermamente a promuovere i diritti delle donne nelle sue relazioni esterne ed esorta il governo del Pakistan a prendere urgentemente provvedimenti per garantire la loro sicurezza fisica e tutelare i loro diritti.

Attraverso i suoi strumenti di cooperazione allo sviluppo l'UE finanzia una serie di progetti e attività di sensibilizzazione per aumentare la capacità degli organi di contrasto di individuare, prevenire e rispondere agli atti criminali contro le donne. L'UE collabora inoltre con le autorità e la società civile per garantire la riabilitazione delle donne sopravvissute alla violenza e promuovere l'empowerment e i diritti sociali ed economici delle donne, nonché il loro ruolo nella costruzione della pace.

L'UE collabora con il Parlamento federale del Pakistan e estenderà il suo sostegno ai parlamenti provinciali al fine di migliorare il funzionamento delle istituzioni democratiche del paese. L'assistenza fornita in tale ambito riguarderà anche la legislazione in materia di genere e il relativo controllo.

2. Tutte le azioni di aiuto esterno sono soggette ad audit e monitoraggio. I partner esecutivi devono inviare regolarmente relazioni finanziarie e operative a cui è subordinato l'esborso di ciascuna tranche. Gli audit finanziari esterni finali eseguiti da revisori accreditati rientrano nella procedura standard.

3. L'UE sta riflettendo sulla possibilità di includere la democrazia, i diritti umani e l'attività di contrasto fra i settori prioritari. La promozione dei diritti delle donne, la riduzione delle disuguaglianze di genere e l'accesso alla giustizia sarebbero componenti importanti in tale ambito. Altri settori prioritari potrebbero essere l'istruzione, con particolare attenzione alle iscrizioni scolastiche delle bambine e delle ragazze, e lo sviluppo rurale, nel quale una migliore erogazione dei servizi a livello comunitario e lo sviluppo delle competenze contribuiranno a migliorare la situazione delle donne.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011414/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Violence against women and the situation of women in Pakistan

With a population of approximately 180 million, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has the sixth highest population in the world and is the second largest Islamic state. Levels of poverty in the country are high; however it does have potential for development. Balochistan province in particular is extremely rich in mineral resources and is the country's main supplier of natural gas after Sindh province. However, Pakistan is one of the regions worst affected by conflict in East Asia.

The country suffers from a huge number of problems, such as low literacy levels and political instability. Against such a backdrop, the situation of women is dire. Most women are living in poverty, given that 75% of the population lives below the poverty line. Most women are subjected to all kinds of abuse and violence: crimes of honour, stoning, acid attacks (8 000 cases in 2010), domestic violence (often not considered a crime), women burnt to death.

Pakistan is also one of the most dangerous countries for women in the world and they often do not have a voice.

Last May's national elections were marred by a large number of attacks, in which women in particular were prevented from casting their vote by extremists.

The EU-Pakistan bilateral programme currently in place provides for EUR 200 million for the period 2007-2010 and EUR 213 million for the period 2011-2013, one of its aims being to protect human rights by ensuring justice for vulnerable groups, including women.

1. Can the Commission state what steps have been taken in collaboration with the Pakistani Government to bring about political stability and to protect women?

2. What action has been taken to monitor the use of these European funds?

3. Does the Commission plan to set aside further funds for the next few years?

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

1. Women's rights are a priority in the EU's human rights dialogue with Pakistan. The EU is fully committed to promoting women's rights in its external relations and encourages the Government of Pakistan to take urgent measures to ensure their physical security and protect their rights.

Through its development cooperation instruments the EU funds a range of projects and awareness raising activities to increase the capacity of law enforcement agencies to detect, prevent and respond to crimes against women. The EU also works with the authorities and civil society to rehabilitate women survivors of violence and to promote women's social and economic empowerment and rights, as well as women's role in peace building.

The EU works with the Pakistan Federal Parliament and will extend its assistance to the Provincial Parliaments with the aim of enhancing the functioning of Pakistan's democratic institutions. This includes assistance in the area of gender related legislation and oversight.

2. All external aid interventions are subject to auditing and monitoring. Regular financial and operational reporting is required from the implementing partners and conditions the release of each subsequent instalment. Final external financial audits by accredited auditors are standard procedure.

3. The EU is considering having Democracy, Human Rights and Law Enforcement as a focal sector. Promotion of women's rights, reducing gender inequality and access to justice would be important components. Other focal sectors could be education, with an emphasis on girls' enrolment, and rural development, where better service delivery at community level and skills development will contribute to improving the situation of women.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011415/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Obesità infantile e strategie pubblicitarie rivolte ai bambini

L'obesità infantile è un problema sempre più diffuso in Europa: un quarto dei bambini in età scolare è in sovrappeso oppure obeso. Recentemente l'OMS Europa ha realizzato una ricerca in cui si evidenzia come i bambini siano sempre più spesso soggetti a pratiche di marketing finalizzate alla vendita di cibi non salutari (ossia con elevati contenuti di grasso, zuccheri, sale). La televisione risulta essere il media più utilizzato a questo scopo e si evidenzia come i bambini effettivamente modifichino il loro comportamento in base alla pubblicità scegliendo i prodotti pubblicizzati.

L'avvento di Internet ha però portato all'utilizzo di nuove forme di marketing: oltre all'utilizzo di banner nei siti più frequentati dai minorenni, si segnalano l'*advergaming* (ossia l'utilizzo di videogiochi all'interno dei quali vi è il prodotto da reclamare), il *viral marketing* (un passaparola apparentemente spontaneo ma in realtà innescato dall'azienda) e lo *user-generated marketing* (attraverso il quale si invita il cliente a interagire con l'impresa, ad esempio indicando le proprie preferenze sul prodotto).

A livello di *mobile marketing*, si evidenzia l'utilizzo di *app* per *smartphone* pensate per un pubblico giovane in cui sono presenti pubblicità di prodotti alimentari. Secondo il rapporto dell'OMS, infine, attività di marketing di cibi non salutari sono anche condotte nelle scuole e in ambito sportivo.

Si prevede che in Europa il numero di bambini in sovrappeso o obesi aumenterà ogni anno di oltre un milione. L'obesità infantile comporta un rischio molto elevato di diventare obesi anche in età matura con un forte aumento della predisposizione a contrarre malattie cardiovascolari, diabete, pressione alta, ipercolesterolemia.

Nell'UE, soltanto 6 paesi (Danimarca, Francia, Norvegia, Slovenia, Spagna e Svezia) hanno implementato leggi specifiche, che si affiancano a strategie concordate fra istituzioni, aziende e codici di autoregolamentazione, mentre negli altri paesi la regolamentazione è del tutto inadeguata.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

è a conoscenza delle conseguenze che tali strategie pubblicitarie provocano sulla salute dei bambini?

Prevede di elaborare una normativa europea che ponga un freno a queste pratiche di marketing?

Intende promuovere una campagna di educazione alimentare destinata a un pubblico giovane?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

La strategia europea sugli aspetti sanitari connessi all'alimentazione, al sovrappeso e all'obesità ([1]) prevede, tra le priorità, un'azione mirata rivolta ai bambini.

La direttiva sui servizi di media audiovisivi ([2]) esorta ad adottare un approccio di autoregolamentazione nel settore della pubblicità di alimenti rivolta ai bambini. La Commissione si è impegnata a sostenere iniziative relative alla pubblicità e al marketing responsabili di alimenti ricchi di grassi, sale e/o zuccheri per i bambini. In questo settore le strategie di regolamentazione e di autoregolamentazione sono complementari e, tenendo conto dei rapidi sviluppi tecnologici e delle nuove forme di marketing, si individua la necessità di regolari revisioni e aggiornamenti. Il Libro verde «Prepararsi a un mondo audiovisivo della piena convergenza: crescita, creazione e valori» ([3]) e la successiva consultazione pubblica (terminata il 30 settembre 2013) hanno riunito opinioni sulle sfide da affrontare nell'ambito della regolamentazione della pubblicità e hanno individuato l'eventuale necessità di aggiornare il quadro normativo in vigore. L'analisi delle risposte aiuterà a valutare la situazione.

([1]) COM(2007)279 def.
([2]) Direttiva 2010/13/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 10 marzo 2010, relativa al coordinamento di determinate disposizioni legislative, regolamentari e amministrative degli Stati membri concernenti la fornitura di servizi di media audiovisivi (direttiva sui servizi di media audiovisivi) (Testo rilevante ai fini del SEE). GU L 95 del 15.4.2010, pag. 1-24.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0231:FIN:IT:PDF.

L'«EU Pledge» ([4]) è un esempio di un impegno della piattaforma d'azione europea per l'alimentazione, l'attività fisica e la salute ([5]), in cui le aziende del settore alimentare hanno convenuto di non fare pubblicità rivolta a bambini di età inferiore ai 12 anni.

Recentemente, il gruppo ad alto livello sulla nutrizione e l'attività fisica ([6]) ha avviato lo sviluppo di un piano d'azione comune per lottare contro l'obesità infantile, in cui particolare attenzione sarà dedicata alla pubblicità e al marketing.

Infine, tramite il programma dell'UE «Frutta nelle scuole» ([7]) e una serie di progetti pilota ([8]), sostenuti dal Parlamento europeo, la Commissione contribuisce a campagne educative mirate, volte a promuovere abitudini alimentari più sane tra i bambini.

([4]) http://www.eu-pledge.eu/
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_it.htm
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_it.htm
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_it.htm
([8]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/key_documents/tender_pilot_project_fresh_fruits_vegetables_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011415/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Childhood obesity and advertising strategies aimed at children

Childhood obesity is an increasingly widespread problem in Europe: a quarter of all school-age children are either overweight or obese. WHO/Europe recently conducted a study highlighting the fact that children are being increasingly subjected to marketing promoting unhealthy foods (in other words those containing high levels of fat, sugar or salt). Television is shown to be the media format most widely used for this purpose and the report highlights that children do change their behaviour on the basis of marketing, choosing products that they see advertised.

However, the Internet has brought with it new forms of marketing: in addition to banner adverts on popular sites visited by children, the report points to advergaming (the use of videogames which contain a product to claim), viral marketing (seemingly spontaneous word-of-mouth recommendations which in reality are initiated by the company) and user-generated marketing (where customers are invited to interact with the company, for example by stating their preferences about a product).

In terms of mobile marketing, the report highlights the use of smartphone apps designed for a young audience which contain food advertisements. Lastly, according to the WHO report, unhealthy foods are also marketed in schools and sports environments.

The number of overweight or obese children in Europe is forecast to rise by over one million every year. Childhood obesity carries a very high risk of obesity in adulthood, with a high increase in risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Only six countries in the EU (Denmark, France, Norway, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) have introduced special legislation, alongside coordinated strategies between the public and private sector and industry self-regulation. Regulation is completely inadequate in all the other countries.

1. Is the Commission aware of the impact that advertising strategies of this nature can have on children's health?

2. Does the Commission plan to introduce European legislation to keep these marketing practices in check?

3. Does it intend to promote a food education campaign aimed at a young audience?

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

The EU Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues ([1]), foresees action targeting children as a priority.

The Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([2]) calls for a self-regulatory approach in the field of food advertising to children. The Commission is committed to supporting initiatives related to responsible advertising and marketing of foods high in fat, salt and/or sugar to children. Regulatory and self-regulatory approaches are complimentary in this area and, taking into account the rapid technological developments and new forms of marketing, there is a need of regular reviews and updates. The Green Paper 'Preparing for a fully converged audiovisual world: growth, creation and values' ([3]) and the subsequent public consultation (which ended on 30 September 2013) sought views on challenges for advertising regulation and possible need for an update of the current regulatory framework. The analysis of the replies will help assess the situation.

The EU Pledge ([4]) is an example of a commitment of the Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health ([5]), whereby food companies have agreed not to advertise to children under the age of 12.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.
([2]) Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (Text with EEA relevance). OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1-24.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0231:FIN:EN:PDF
([4]) http://www.eu-pledge.eu/
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform/index_en.htm

Recently, the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity ([6]) started the development of a common Action Plan to tackle childhood obesity, in which advertising and marketing will be a key focus area.

Finally, through the EU School Fruit Scheme ([7]) and a number of pilot projects ([8]), supported by the European Parliament, the Commission contributes to targetted educational campaigns establishing healthier eating habits among children.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group/index_en.htm
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sfs/index_en.htm
([8]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/key_documents/tender_pilot_project_fresh_fruits_vegetables_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011416/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibile cartello nel mercato del trasporto di container via mare

Recentemente le tre maggiori compagnie mondiali per il trasporto di container via mare (*Maersk*, *Msc* e *Cma-Cgm*) hanno deciso di stringere un accordo per porre a fattore comune 256 navi giganti impegnate su 29 servizi su tre rotte principali del traffico marittimo mondiale.

L'interscambio mondiale di container rappresenta oggi, per valore delle merci nei container, più del 60 % della ricchezza in movimento merci sul pianeta e vanta un giro di affari pari a circa 57,7 miliardi di euro. Oltre il 90 % di questi scambi avviene via mare sulle grandi rotte di traffico marittimo su cui operano le navi giganti delle compagnie in oggetto. Dette compagnie, combinando le proprie forze, creeranno un cartello con capacità di trasporto eguagliabile alla capacità che si ottiene sommando le 18 flotte successive nel ranking mondiale.

Un cartello di queste dimensioni sarebbe potenzialmente in grado di incidere sui flussi di trasporto e sui costi che gravano sulle produzioni di merci oggetto di interscambio mondiale.

Non solo la concorrenza interna al settore sarà sempre più problematica, ma la creazione di un soggetto dominante del mercato renderà difficile anche le trattative con i produttori di merci che saranno costretti a subire variazioni di prezzi ingiustificate.

Due delle tre compagnie in parola dispongono di quote di capitale di provenienza statale di un membro dell'Unione (rispettivamente *Maersk* — Danimarca e *Cma-Cgm* — Francia).

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

intende approfondire la questione e fornire informazioni in merito a possibili infrazioni quali l'abuso di posizione dominante?

Intende approfondire la questione e fornire ragguagli in merito a possibili infrazioni come la concessione di aiuti di Stato diretti alle compagnie sopracitate?

Risposta di Joaquín Almunia a nome della Commissione
(5 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione è al corrente del consorzio proposto tra le compagnie di trasporto marittimo di linea Maersk, MSC e CMA CGM.

Un consorzio marittimo è una forma abbastanza usuale di cooperazione commerciale tra le compagnie di trasporto marittimo di linea. In generale, i consorzi possono risultare efficaci, in termini di servizi forniti, e apportare benefici agli utenti (maggiori frequenze, più ampia copertura dei porti). Questo è il motivo per il quale il regolamento n. 906/2009 relativo a talune categorie di accordi, di decisioni e di pratiche concordate tra compagnie di trasporto marittimo di linea (consorzi) autorizza la maggior parte dei consorzi quando la quota di mercato globale delle compagnie partecipanti non supera il 30 %.

Nei casi in cui tale soglia venga oltrepassata — come apparentemente accade nel caso del consorzio cui si riferisce l'onorevole parlamentare — spetta alle parti del consorzio effettuare un'autovalutazione per verificare se siano soddisfatte le condizioni di cui all'articolo 101, paragrafo 3, del TFUE e quindi anche per accertare che l'accordo contribuisca a migliorare l'efficienza garantendo al contempo ai consumatori una quota consistente dei benefici che ne risultano. Nel caso in esame, la Commissione è in contatto con le tre società, ma non ha avviato alcun procedimento formale. La Commissione esaminerà con la massima attenzione tutti gli elementi concernenti tale cooperazione che le verranno eventualmente segnalati.

Quanto al fatto che Stati membri dell'UE detengano quote di capitale in due delle tre compagnie, le norme in materia di aiuti di Stato non lo proibiscono. Inoltre, conformemente alle disposizioni degli orientamenti comunitari in materia di aiuti di Stato ai trasporti marittimi (GU C 13 del 17.1.2004), le compagnie di navigazione possono usufruire di incentivi fiscali, segnatamente mediante la sostituzione dell'imposta ordinaria sulle società con una più favorevole imposta sul tonnellaggio. La Commissione ha autorizzato regimi di aiuti di Stato di questo tipo in Francia e in Danimarca. La Commissione non ha ricevuto informazioni in merito a eventuali aiuti incompatibili concessi alle società in questione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011416/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Potential cartel in the maritime container shipping sector

The three largest container ship operators (Maersk, Msc and Cma-Cgm) recently decided to sign an agreement to pool 256 giant ships used on 29 service loops on three of the world's main maritime trade routes.

Global container trade calculated by the value of the goods carried currently accounts for more than 60% of the world's wealth in movement of goods and boasts a turnover of around EUR 57.7 billion. Over 90% of this trade takes place by sea over the major maritime routes, which the giant vessels of the shipping lines in question use. By joining forces, these operators will create a cartel with transportation capacity equivalent to that of the next 18 largest fleets in the world ranking put together.

A cartel of this size could have an impact on shipping trade and on the cost burden for producers of these globally traded goods.

Not only will internal competition within the sector become increasingly difficult, but the creation of a dominant player in the market will also put goods producers in a difficult negotiating position and they will be forced to accept unjustified price variations

EU Member States hold equity in two of the three operators' companies (Denmark in Maersk and France in Cma-Cgm).

1. Does the Commission intend to look into and provide information on the issue of possible illegal practices such as abuse of market position?

2. Does it intend to look into and provide information on the issue of possible illegal practices such as direct state subsidies to the abovementioned operators?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the proposed consortium between liner shipping companies Maersk, MSC and CMA CGM.

A maritime consortium is a rather standard form of commercial cooperation between liner shipping companies. In general, consortia may generate efficiencies to the benefit of users, in terms of services provided (higher frequencies, wider coverage of ports). That is why the Consortia Block Exemption Regulation No 906/2009 authorises most consortia when the joint market share of the participating companies does not exceed 30%.

Beyond that threshold — which appears to be the case for the consortium referred to by the Honourable Member — it is for the parties to the consortium to self-assess whether the conditions set out in Article 101(3) TFEU are met, including that the agreement contributes to improve efficiency while allowing consumers a fair share of the resulting benefits. In this particular case, the Commission is in contact with the three carriers but no formal procedure has been launched. All relevant issues concerning this cooperation brought to the attention of the Commission will receive its full attention.

As regards the fact that EU Member States hold equity in two of the P3 parties, State aid rules do not prohibit this per se. Moreover, in accordance with the provisions of the Community Guidelines on state aid to maritime transport (OJ C 13 of 17.01.2004), shipping companies might benefit from fiscal advantages, notably the replacement of the normal corporate tax by a more favourable tonnage tax. The Commission authorised such state aid schemes notably for France and Denmark. The Commission does not have information on possible incompatible aid which might be given to the companies concerned.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011417/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Richiesta di interruzione del programma EC SQUARE

Nelle regioni Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte e Umbria è in corso il progetto EC-SQUARE per l'eradicazione dello scoiattolo grigio.

Secondo EC-SQUARE, gli scoiattoli grigi, di origine americana, minaccerebbero gli scoiattoli rossi, autoctoni, in quanto più robusti e quindi in competizione vittoriosa per il cibo, e in quanto portatori sani di un virus letale per gli scoiattoli rossi. Inoltre danneggerebbero i boschi e le coltivazioni. Lo sterminio sarebbe infine necessario per rispettare le indicazioni della Convenzione di Berna e quindi evitare pesanti sanzioni da parte dell'Unione europea.

Il 22 maggio 2013, il ministero dell'Ambiente ha presentato ufficialmente la «lista rossa» degli animali considerati a rischio di estinzione in Italia e lo scoiattolo rosso non vi figura. Lo scoiattolo rosso non è a rischio di estinzione ma semplicemente in calo, sia in Europa che in Asia, dove però lo scoiattolo americano è assente (la causa principale della diminuzione degli scoiattoli rossi è infatti la distruzione del loro habitat da parte dell'uomo). Oltretutto, da una recente ricerca effettuata da zoologi londinesi è emerso che gli scoiattoli rossi stanno cominciando a mostrare segni di immunità esattamente come gli scoiattoli grigi.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

intende approfondire la questione e fornire informazioni in merito all'effettiva pericolosità dello scoiattolo grigio e alla relativa necessità di controllarne la popolazione?

Alla luce di quanto emerso, intende rivedere il progetto EC-SQUARE per l'eradicazione dello scoiattolo grigio?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(14 novembre 2013)

L'importazione nell'UE dello scoiattolo grigio, considerato una specie esotica invasiva che minaccia le popolazioni autoctone di scoiattoli rossi, è attualmente vietata a norma dei regolamenti sul commercio delle specie di flora e fauna selvatiche ([1]). La Commissione europea ha recentemente proposto alcune misure per contrastare il problema delle specie esotiche invasive nell'UE ([2]), misure intese a garantire l'istituzione di un meccanismo unionale per individuare le specie che richiedono interventi. Una valutazione dei rischi su base scientifica consentirà di individuare tali specie determinando l'impatto che potrebbero avere su quelle autoctone. In tale contesto saranno esaminate anche le specie esotiche invasive di cui è vietata l'importazione nell'UE a norma dei regolamenti sul commercio delle specie di flora e fauna selvatiche.

Il progetto di conservazione della biodiversità EC-SQUARE (LIFE09NAT/IT/000095) intende salvaguardare lo scoiattolo rosso e limitare la diffusione dello scoiattolo grigio in Italia e nell'Europa continentale. Nel 2012 il Ministero italiano dell'Ambiente ha vietato il commercio dello scoiattolo grigio sul territorio nazionale con un apposito divieto che interessa tre specie di scoiattoli esotici (*Sciurus carolinensis*, *Sciurus niger*, *Callosciurus erythraeus*). Questo progetto, oltre a contribuire al controllo della diffusione dello scoiattolo grigio e alla sua eventuale eradicazione in diversi contesti socioecologici di tre regioni italiane (Lombardia, Piemonte e Liguria), attuerà specifiche misure di conservazione intese a migliorare la qualità degli habitat e/o ad aumentare la connettività per lo scoiattolo rosso. Il progetto dovrebbe concludersi entro marzo 2015 e la Commissione non ha motivi al momento per riesaminarlo.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1997:061:0001:0069:IT:PDF
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:212:0001:0092:IT:PDF
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:169:0001:0021:IT:PDF

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/docs/proposal/it.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011417/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Request to halt the EC-SQUARE programme

The EC-SQUARE programme to eradicate and control the grey squirrel is under way in Liguria, Lombardy and Piedmont.

The premise behind the EC-SQUARE programme is that grey squirrels, originally from America, threaten native red squirrels because they are stronger and therefore compete more successfully for food and because they are healthy carriers of a virus that kills red squirrels. Supposedly they also damage woodland and crops. The cull is also said to be necessary in order to abide by the guidelines of the Berne Convention and therefore avoid heavy sanctions by the European Union.

On 22 May 2013, the Ministry of the Environment presented the official 'red list' of animals considered to be under threat of extinction in Italy. The red squirrel is not on that list. The red squirrel is not threatened with extinction but is simply declining in numbers, both in Europe and in Asia, even though there are no American squirrels in Asia (the main cause of the decline in red squirrels is actually the destruction of their habitat by human beings). Furthermore, a recent study by London zoologists has shown that red squirrels are beginning to show signs of immunity, just like grey squirrels.

Does the Commission intend to look into the issue and provide information on whether grey squirrels are genuinely dangerous and whether their population therefore needs to be controlled or not?

In the light of the information that has come out, does it intend to review the EC-SQUARE programme to eradicate the grey squirrel?

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

The grey squirrel is currently listed as a species whose import into the EU is banned through the Wildlife Trade Regulations ([1]) as they are considered to be an invasive alien species, with an impact on the native populations of red squirrels. The European Commission has recently proposed measures to address the issue of invasive alien species in the EU ([2]). The legislation is designed to ensure that there will be an EU mechanism in place to assess which species will require action to be taken. This will be determined on the basis of science based risk assessments of the impact such species have on native species. In this framework, the invasive alien species banned for import under the Wildlife Trade Regulations will also be examined.

The EC-SQUARE biodiversity project (LIFE09NAT/IT/000095) aims to protect the red squirrel and limit the spread of the grey squirrel in Italy and continental Europe. The Italian Ministry of Environment included the grey squirrel in a national trade ban of three alien squirrel species (*Sciurus carolinensis*, *Sciurus niger*, *Callosciurus erythraeus*) in 2012. Beyond the control and possible eradication of grey squirrels in different socio-ecological contexts in 3 Italian regions (Lombardy, Piedmont and Liguria), this project will also implement specific conservation measures in order to improve habitat quality and/or connectivity for red squirrel. This project is scheduled to end in March 2015 and the Commission has no grounds at the present time to review it.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1997:061:0001:0069:EN:PDF
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:212:0001:0092:EN:PDF
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:169:0001:0021:EN:PDF

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/docs/proposal/en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011418/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Azioni in favore della natalità in Europa

In Europa si registra il continuo aumento della fascia della popolazione anziana, mentre il tasso di natalità si attesta a livelli sempre più bassi. Il rapporto demografico giovani vecchi sta diventando sempre più preoccupante. Analizzando le statistiche relative all'indice di vecchiaia si evince che l'Italia è seconda solo alla Germania per la percentuale di persone in età superiore ai 65 anni ogni 100 giovani di età inferiore ai 15 anni. Questi dati presentano seri interrogativi sulla tenuta del sistema sociale europeo vigente, destando particolare preoccupazione per la sostenibilità del sistema pensionistico e i costi legati alla sanità pubblica.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

— se intende presentare un piano d'azione continentale per il rilancio del tasso di natalità in Europa;

— quali misure ha intrapreso o è interessata a intraprendere al fine di favorire il tasso di natalità in Europa;

— se, visti i tassi di natalità e mortalità, è in grado di stimare la reale sostenibilità futura del welfare state europeo, indicando i settori nei quali intravede le maggiori difficoltà?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(25 novembre 2013)

La Commissione attribuisce grande importanza alle sfide demografiche, come già indicato nella comunicazione del 2006 ([1]) che mette in luce cinque settori politici al fine di arginare il declino demografico e sviluppare le nostre risorse umane.

La Commissione ha osservato che in generale i giovani adulti dell'UE vorrebbero avere più figli di quelli che hanno ([2]). Nei limiti delle sue competenze, la Commissione promuove la comprensione delle difficoltà (come, ad esempio, attraverso il progetto REPRO ([3])), le opportunità per i giovani adulti (come nel pacchetto per l'occupazione giovanile ([4])), alla conciliazione tra lavoro, famiglia e vita privata (in particolare controllando la conformità alla direttiva sul congedo parentale ([5])), nonché l'innovazione sociale e le buone pratiche ([6]) in questo campo. Il pacchetto di investimenti sociali ([7]) ha riconosciuto l'importanza di affrontare le sfide demografiche e ha sollecitato investimenti nel capitale umano nell'intero arco della vita, a partire dalla prima infanzia. Infine, la strategia per la parità tra donne e uomini 2010-2015 ha sottolineato che le misure destinate a conciliare la vita professionale e la vita privata possono avere un effetto positivo sulla fertilità.

Nel 2009 la Commissione ha trattato il tema della sostenibilità dello stato sociale nella sua comunicazione «Gestire l'impatto dell'invecchiamento della popolazione nell'Unione europea» ([8]). Essa ha inoltre approfondito la sua analisi nella relazione 2012 sull'invecchiamento demografico ([9]) e nella relazione 2012 sulla sostenibilità di bilancio ([10]). Da tali relazioni emergono problematiche particolari nei settori delle pensioni e della sanità e la Commissione controlla regolarmente la situazione degli Stati membri nell'ambito della sorveglianza multilaterale dell'UE ([11]). La Commissione ha inoltre pubblicato il Libro bianco sulle pensioni ([12]) che ne affronta l'adeguatezza e la sostenibilità.

([1]) Cfr. «The demographic future of Europe — from challenge to opportunity» http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=502&langId=en
([2]) Cfr. http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/edrp_2_2012.pdf (da un'indagine Eurobarometro del 2011).
([3]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/projects/429_en.html
([4]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1731
([5]) Cfr. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:068:0013:0020:EN:PDF
([6]) Cfr. http://europa.eu/epic/index_en.htm
([7]) Cfr. COM(2013)83.
([8]) Cfr. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009DC0180:EN:NOT
([9]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm
([10]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/fiscal-sustainability-report_en.htm
([11]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm
([12]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=752&langId=en

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011418/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Initiatives to boost the birth rate in Europe

Records show that the elderly age group is continuing to grow in Europe, whilst the birth rate continues to decline. The demographic ratio of young to old is becoming an increasing concern. The old-age index statistics show Italy to be second only to Germany in terms of the number of people aged over 65 for every 100 young people aged under 15. These data raise serious questions about the sustainability of the current European social system, especially in terms of pressure on the pension system and costs associated with public health.

1. Does the Commission intend to propose an EU-wide action plan to boost the birth rate in Europe?

2. What measures has it taken or is it considering to promote a higher birth rate in Europe?

3. In the light of the birth and death rates, is the Commission in a position to assess the sustainability of Europe's welfare state, and to state which sectors will pose the greatest problems?

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

The Commission attaches great importance to demographic challenges, as already outlined in its 2006 Communication ([1]), highlighting five policy areas to stem demographic decline and develop our human resources.

The Commission observed that young adults in the EU would generally like to have more children than they actually have ([2]). Within its competence, the Commission fosters understanding of the difficulties (as, for instance, via the REPRO project ([3])), opportunities for young adults (as in the Youth Employment Package ([4])), reconciliation between work, family and private life (in particular by monitoring compliance with the Parental Leave directive ([5])), and social innovation and good practices ([6]) in this area. The Social Investment Package (SIP) ([7]) recognised the importance of addressing demographic challenges and called for human capital investment over the life cycle, starting from early childhood. Finally, the 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015' stressed that 'measures to facilitate work-life balance can have a positive impact on fertility'.

In 2009, the Commission addressed welfare state sustainability in its communication 'Dealing with the impact of an ageing population in the EU ([8])'. It further deepeneed its analysis in the 2012 Ageing Report ([9]) and the Fiscal Sustainability Report 2012 ([10]). These reports reveal a particular challenge in the fields of pension and healthcare and the Commission monitors regularly the Member State situation within the EU multilateral surveillance. ([11]) Moreover, addressing pension adequacy and sustainability, the Commission has published its White Paper on pensions ([12]).

([1]) See 'The demographic future of Europe — from challenge to opportunity' http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=502&langId=en
([2]) See http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/edrp_2_2012.pdf based on a 2011 Eurobarometer.
([3]) See http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/projects/429_en.html
([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1731
([5]) See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:068:0013:0020:EN:PDF
([6]) See http://europa.eu/epic/index_en.htm
([7]) See COM(2013) 83.
([8]) See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009DC0180:EN:NOT
([9]) See http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm
([10]) See http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/fiscal-sustainability-report_en.htm
([11]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm
([12]) See http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=752&langId=en

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011419/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Celebrazioni del centenario della Prima guerra mondiale

Nel 2014 si celebrerà il centenario dell'inizio della Prima guerra mondiale, scoppiata nel 1914. Il conflitto, noto come la Grande guerra, è stato un momento di drammatica lacerazione del continente europeo ed è costato la vita a milioni di giovani europei provocando incalcolabili danni alle popolazioni e alle città.

Il Nord-est dell'Italia, e in particolar modo il Veneto, è stato uno dei teatri principali della Prima guerra mondiale e oggi ospita importanti siti storici come il Sacrario dell'Armata del Grappa a cima Grappa, l'Ossario del Pasubio e il Sacrario militare di Redipuglia in Friuli Venezia Giulia. Questi importanti luoghi della memoria rappresentano il simbolo delle sofferenze patite dagli europei nei momenti più bui della storia del nostro continente e dovrebbero essere attentamente valorizzati in previsione del centenario del 2014.

Ciò premesso, si chiede alla Commissione europea:

quali azioni ha intenzione di intraprendere al fine di celebrare il centenario della Prima guerra mondiale?

È in grado di sostenere la pubblicazione di studi storici rivolti alle scuole medie e superiori al fine di promuovere una visione comune della Prima guerra mondiale come «Guerra civile europea»?

Ha programmato lo stanziamento di risorse economiche al fine di restaurare e promuovere i siti storici dedicati alla Grande Guerra in previsione del centenario del 2014?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(20 novembre 2013)

Per quanto concerne la commemorazione del centenario della Prima guerra mondiale, la proposta di regolamento che istituisce il programma «Europa per i cittadini» per il periodo 2014-2020 intende estendere la portata delle iniziative sulla memoria ai momenti decisivi della storia europea moderna, compresa la Prima guerra mondiale.

Tale proposta consentirà il sostegno di progetti tra cui la promozione di siti storici e la pubblicazione di studi destinati alle scuole medie e superiori, intesi a promuovere una visione comune della Prima guerra mondiale.

Ad oggi non è stato stanziato alcun finanziamento per il recupero dei siti storici della Prima guerra mondiale in vista delle celebrazioni del centenario. Il programma Cultura sostiene tuttavia un progetto ([1]) che cercherà di far rivivere attraverso la musica corale moderna le poesie legate a uno dei più turbolenti periodi della storia europea. Una rete di cori da camera professionali collaborerà con i partner che coordinano le attività dedicate alla commemorazione della Prima guerra mondiale e i partner responsabili della conservazione del patrimonio letterario di quel periodo. La durata prevista del progetto, che coinvolge 13 partner provenienti da 10 diversi paesi, è di 5 anni.

([1]) www.tenso-vocal.eu

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011419/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Celebrating the centenary of the First World War

2014 will mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. Known as the Great War, the conflict tore Europe apart and cost millions of young lives. Untold damage was done to the peoples and cities of Europe.

North-west Italy, and the Veneto region in particular, was one of the main theatres of the First World War, and today it is home to some of the most important historical sites from that period. These include the Mount Grappa Military Shrine, the Ossario del Pasubio war memorial and the Redipuglia Military Shrine in Friuli Venezia Giulia. These sites are central to our collective memory, symbolising the suffering endured by Europeans during some of the darkest moments in our continent's history. We should therefore pay special attention to them in the lead-up to the centenary.

In the light of this:

How does the Commission plan to celebrate the centenary of the First World War?

Will the Commission support the publication of historical studies, aimed at secondary-school pupils, which are intended to promote a shared vision of the First World War as a 'European Civil War'?

Has any funding been allocated for the restoration and promotion of historical sites from the First World War in preparation for the centenary celebrations?

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

As concerns commemoration of the centenary of the First World War the proposal for a regulation establishing the Europe for Citizens programme for the period 2014-2020, aims to broaden the focus of remembrance to defining moments in modern European history, including World War One.

This will allow supporting projects including the promotion of historical sites, the publication of historical studies, aimed at secondary-school pupils, which are intended to promote a shared understanding of the First World War.

So far, no funding has been allocated for the restoration of historical sites from the First World War in preparation for the centenary celebrations. However, the Culture Programme has supported a project ([1]) that will seek to bring alive poems from one of the most turbulent periods in European history in new choral music. A network for professional chamber choirs will work with partners who coordinate the activities around the commemoration of World War I and partners who preserve the heritage of literature from that period. The project, involving 13 partners from 10 different countries, is expected to last 5 years.

([1]) www.tenso-vocal.eu

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011420/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(4 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Aanbevelingen nationale hervormingsprogramma 2013 België — energie

Eerder dit jaar formuleerde de Commissie aanbevelingen over het nationale hervormingsprogramma 2013 van België. De vierde aanbeveling vermeldt dat de werking van de energiesector verbeterd moest worden door de distributiekosten terug te schroeven en de retailkosten te monitoren.

Volgens een studie in België van Test-Aankoop is de distributiekostprijs verantwoordelijk voor een „disproportioneel" deel van de finale energiefactuur, namelijk gemiddeld 41 procent. Voor een gemiddeld verbruik van 3 500 kWh/jaar kunnen de distributienettarieven variëren van 228 euro tot 535 euro.

Test-Aankoop vraagt het aantal distributienetbeheerders in België (een 30-tal) te beperken om ook zo de kostprijs voor de consument te laten dalen.

1. Welke beste praktijken kan de Commissie naar voor schuiven als voorbeeld voor België?

2. Is de Commissie van mening dat er inderdaad te veel distributienetbeheerders in België zijn om kostenefficiënt te werken?

3. Welke andere maatregelen zou de Commissie voorstellen om deze situatie te verbeteren?

4. Wat is het oordeel van de Commissie over semi-publieke distributie zoals momenteel voorzien in België?

5. Welke maatregelen raadt de Commissie België aan om meer concurrentie te creëren in de distributie?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(28 november 2013)

1, 3 en 5) Voor het beheer van distributienetten gelden regels. Volgens het derde energiepakket ([1]) zijn het de onafhankelijke regelgevende autoriteiten van de lidstaten die volgens transparante criteria de distributietarieven of de methodes daarvoor vastleggen of goedkeuren. De Commissie benadrukt hoe belangrijk het is dat de lidstaten het derde pakket volledig omzetten. De omzetting van de communautaire regelgeving houdt in dat de bevoegde regelgevende autoriteiten van de lidstaten de nodige middelen en instrumenten moeten ontvangen om hun tarieven volledig onafhankelijk vast te leggen..

De Commissie verzamelt en beoordeelt samen met belanghebbenden de informatie over de rol van de distributienetbeheerders. Uit informatie, die verder wordt onderzocht, blijkt dat de lidstaten aanzienlijk verschillen wat betreft de distributienetwerkkosten.

2) Op basis van de beschikbare informatie is er geen bewijs gevonden waaruit blijkt dat het aantal distributienetbeheerders gerelateerd is aan de distributiekosten.

4) De Commissie heeft geen mening over de eigendomsstructuur van de distributienetbeheerders, zolang deze (ten minste) functioneel en wettelijk onafhankelijk zijn van elk elektriciteitsbedrijf (met uitzondering van de distributienetbeheerders met minder dan 100 000 aangesloten afnemers die van deze voorschriften kunnen worden vrijgesteld).

([1]) Richtlijn 2009/72/EG en 2009/73/EG van 26/2/2009 (PB L 211 van 14.8.2009).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011420/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Recommendations — Belgian 2013 National Reform Programme — Energy

Earlier this year the Commission made recommendations on Belgium's 2013 National Reform Programme. The fourth recommendation indicates that the functioning of the energy sector must be improved by reducing distribution costs and monitoring retail costs.

According to a study conducted in Belgium by consumer watchdog Test-Aankoop/Test-Achats, distribution costs account for a 'disproportionate' share of the final energy bill — 41% on average. With an average household consumption of 3 500 kWh/year, distribution rates may vary from EUR 228 to EUR 535.

Test-Aankoop/Test-Achats is calling for limits on the number of distribution operators in Belgium (of which there are some 30), to bring down costs for the consumer.

1. What best practices can the Commission propose as a model for Belgium?

2. Does the Commission feel that there really are too many distribution operators in Belgium for the system to function cost-efficiently?

3. What other measures would the Commission suggest for improving this situation?

4. What is the Commission's view on semi-public distribution, as currently envisaged in Belgium?

5. What measures does the Commission recommend that Belgium should take to stimulate more competition in distribution?

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

1, 3 and 5. The operation of distribution systems is a regulated business and, according to the Third Energy Package ([1]), the independent regulatory authorities of the Member States are responsible to fix or approve, in accordance with transparent criteria, distribution tariffs or their methodologies. The Commission stresses the importance of full transposition, by Member States, of the Third Package. The transposition of the relevant provisions implies that the competent regulatory authorities of the Member States must be granted the necessary resources and tools to execute their tariff setting tasks in full independence.

The Commission is collecting and assessing with stakeholders information on the role of DSOs. Our information, that is being analysed further, shows large variations in distribution network costs across Member States..

2. Based on the information available, no evidence has been found that shows that the number of DSOs is related to the costs of distribution.

4. The Commission has no view on the ownership structure of DSOs, as long as they are (at least) functionally and legally independent from any supply undertaking (with the exception of DSOs serving less than 100.000 connected customers that may be exempted from these requirements).

([1]) Directive 2009/72/EC and 2009/73/EC, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011421/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Accesul persoanelor cu dizabilități la patrimoniul cultural și turistic

Accesul la patrimoniul cultural, turistic, artistic sau tradițional al regiunilor europene, indiferent unde este situat, trebuie să fie posibil pentru orice cetățean, chiar și în cazul persoanelor care suferă de mobilitate redusă sau de deficiențe de vedere sau auditive.

Accesul acestor persoane la patrimoniul cultural sau la diferite evenimente și manifestări culturale și artistice vizează atât evenimentul ca atare, cât și deplasarea și accesul la locul unde are loc evenimentul și serviciile adiacente destinate persoanelor cu deficiențe vizuale și auditive.

În ultimii ani s-au înregistrat progrese în statele membre în ceea ce privește accesul persoanelor cu dizabilități motorii, dar există încă restanțe la capitolul mijloace de informare și semnalizare vizibilă, tactilă și sonoră pentru persoanele cu deficiențe vizuale sau auditive.

Ce măsuri are în vedere Comisia pentru a sprijini eforturile autorităților locale și regionale pentru realizarea de progrese în ceea ce privește informarea persoanelor cu deficiențe auditive și vizuale în muzee, case memoriale, expoziții temporare, oficii de turism, precum și în instituțiile publice de orice fel?

Răspuns dat de dl Tajani în numele Comisiei
(4 decembrie 2013)

Comisia implementează, în prezent, acțiunea pregătitoare „Turismul pentru toți", finanțată de Parlamentul European până în 2014. Acțiunea are ca scop sensibilizarea publicului și creșterea ofertei de servicii turistice accesibile pentru toate persoanele cu nevoi speciale, inclusiv pentru cele care suferă de deficiențe senzoriale. Comisia recomandă distinsei membre a Parlamentului European să consulte răspunsul său la întrebările E-010568/2013, E-010569/2013 și E-010570/2013 formulate de dna Rosa Estaras Ferragut.

În plus, în 2013, Comisia a lansat un apel privind cofinanțarea de propuneri care să includă experiențe turistice accesibile tuturor călătorilor. Pe lângă serviciile de bază, cum ar fi cazarea și alimentația, itinerariile ar trebui, de asemenea, să includă activități și servicii care să permită călătorului potențial să beneficieze pe deplin de oferta culturală a unei destinații și de bogăția sa naturală. Propunerile se află, în prezent, în curs de evaluare și vor fi implementate pe o perioadă de 18 luni. Comisia se așteaptă ca, prin această acțiune, să contribuie la crearea unei „mase critice" de servicii accesibile de-a lungul lanțului de aprovizionare din sectorul turismului, oferind astfel tuturor călătorilor, indiferent de capacitățile lor fizice, o gamă mai variată de opțiuni și un nivel mai ridicat de calitate.

Comisia este implicată în punerea în aplicare a Convenției Organizației Națiunilor Unite privind drepturile persoanelor cu handicap ([1]) (la care UE este parte din ianuarie 2011) prin intermediul acțiunilor din cadrul Strategiei europene 2010-2020 pentru persoanele cu handicap ([2]). Aceste acțiuni includ atât inițiative la nivelul UE, cât să sprijin pentru inițiativele luate la nivel național, regional și local.

Între timp, în zilele de 3 și 4 decembrie 2013, cu ocazia Zilei europene a persoanelor cu handicap, Comisia va organiza o conferință pe tema turismului accesibil în Europa.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/convention/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/news/justice/101115_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011421/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Access for people with disabilities to cultural heritage and tourist sites

Any citizen must be able to have access to cultural heritage, tourist, artistic or traditional sites in Europe's regions, regardless of their location, even including people with reduced mobility or visual or hearing impairments.

Providing these people with access to cultural heritage sites or to different cultural and artistic events and performances means not only access to the event itself, but also travel and access to the location where the event is taking place, as well as support services for people with visual and hearing impairments.

Progress has been made in recent years in Member States in terms of access for people with motor disabilities, but the situation is still lagging behind in terms of resources for providing people with visual or hearing impairments with information and messages in visible, tactile and audible form.

What measures does the Commission envisage for supporting the efforts of local and regional authorities in making progress on providing information to people with hearing and visual impairments in general museums, house museums, temporary exhibitions, tourist offices, as well as in any kind of public institution?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission is implementing the Preparatory Action 'Tourism for All', financed by the European Parliament until 2014. The action aims at raising awareness and enhancing the supply of accessible tourism services for all people with special needs, including those suffering from sensory disabilities. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to questions E-010568/2013, E-010569/2013 and E-010570/2013 by Sra. Rosa Estaras Ferragut.

Furthermore, in 2013, the Commission launched a call to co-finance proposals encompassing tourism experiences, accessible to all travellers. In addition to basic services such as accommodation and catering, the itineraries should also market activities and services that will allow the potential traveller to fully enjoy the cultural offer of a destination and its natural richness. The proposals are currently being evaluated and will be implemented over a period of 18 months. With this action, the Commission expects to contribute to the creation of a 'critical mass' of accessible services along the tourism supply chain, thus providing wider choices and better quality for all travellers, regardless of their physical abilities.

The Commission is engaged in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([1]) (to which the EU is a party since January 2011) through the actions of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([2]). These actions include both initiatives at EU level and support for initiatives at national, regional and local levels.

In the meantime, on the occasion of the European Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Commission is organising a Conference on Accessible Tourism in Europe on 3 and 4 December 2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/convention/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/news/justice/101115_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011422/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Martin (S&D)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Anas Barghouti detained and charged by Israeli Government

Is the High Representative aware of the case of the Palestinian human rights lawyer and activist, Anas Barghouti?

Mr Barghouti supports the human rights of Palestinian prisoners and has regularly called for the peaceful expression of political views. He was first arrested on 15 September 2013 when travelling through a military checkpoint north of Bethlehem. After being held without charge for over one week, Mr Barghouti was then charged with two offences. The first was 'membership in the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine', and the second 'leadership of a committee to organise demonstrations'. Mr Barghouti denies both of these charges and is considered by Amnesty International to be a prisoner of conscience.

Could the High Representative please comment on this situation? Israel has been accused of systematically harassing Palestinian human rights organisations, including arbitrary detentions, restrictions of movement and raiding homes or offices. Could the High Representative also comment on these accusations?

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

The EU is aware and is following closely the case of Mr Anas Barghouti. In the latest developments, on 22 October 2013, the Ofer Military Court decided to release Mr Barghouti on bail. The initial extension of Mr Barghouti's detention without charges was a cause for concern and the EU is closely monitoring further developments in the case, which has not been dropped, on the ground through the Office of the EU Representative in East Jerusalem.

The EU maintains a regular dialogue with Israel on human rights issues particularly in the framework of the EU-Israel political dialogue (latest meeting in December 2012) and the informal working group on human rights (latest meeting in January 2013). Through its annual European Neighbourhood Policy progress report on Israel, the EU also reports on the situation on the ground.

The EU also consistently discusses issues with Israel relating to Palestinian detainees in Israeli jails, calling in particular for the respect of the international human rights obligations towards all Palestinian prisoners. The EU will continue to engage with Israel in order to promote the humanitarian protection of detainees.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-011423/13
a Bizottság számára
Gáll-Pelcz Ildikó (PPE)
(2013. október 4.)

Tárgy: Tagállamok intézményi és eljárási autonómiája a 93/13/EGK irányelv alkalmazásában

Magyarországon a 2008-as válságot megelőzően felvett devizaalapú hitelek – főként a megnövekedett törlesztő részletek miatt – jelentős terheket rónak a lakosságra, és ez a helyzet veszélyezteti az Unió e területen (is) érvényesített, az általános életszínvonal növelésére vonatkozó célkitűzését is.

Tekintettel, hogy az uniós fogyasztóvédelemi rendelkezések oly módon kívánnak harmonizációt bevezetni, hogy az ne szüntesse meg e területen az egyes tagállamok jogi kultúrája között fennálló különbségeket, számos kérdés merülhet fel az uniós jog helyes alkalmazása tekintetében.

Tovább növeli az uniós fogyasztóvédelem komplexitását, hogy az uniós jog által támasztott kritériumokat – mint a fogyasztókkal szemben alkalmazott nyilvánvaló egyenlőtlenség ([1]), vagy a jóhiszeműség – területenként és tagállamonként eltérően kell alkalmazni.

1. Egyetért-e a Bizottság azzal, hogy a nemzeti rendelkezések nem tehetik lehetetlenné vagy túlságosan nehézzé az uniós jog által a fogyasztókra ruházott jogok gyakorlását ([2])?

2. Egyetért-e a Bizottság azzal, hogy amennyiben a nemzeti bíróság tisztességtelennek minősít egy szerződési feltételt, az Európai Unió Bírósága gyakorlata alapján a felek között létrejött szerződés – alapelv szerint – érvényben marad ([3]), de a nemzeti bíróság a tisztességtelennek minősített szerződési feltétel alkalmazásától eltekint, viszont azt az alapelv értelmében nem módosíthatja ([4])?

3. Egyetért-e a Bizottság azzal, hogy a nemzeti bíróságnak annak eldöntéséhez, hogy a szolgáltató és a fogyasztó között a szerződés megkötésekor valóban egyenlőtlenség jött-e létre, fő szabályként azt kell vizsgálni, hogy a szolgáltató a fogyasztóval szembeni tisztességes eljárás esetén ésszerűen elvárhatta-e, hogy a fogyasztó a vizsgált feltételt egyedi tárgyalást követően is elfogadja?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. november 13.)

A tisztelt képviselő asszony számára bizonyára jól ismert tény, hogy a 93/13/EGK irányelv ([5]) nem harmonizálja a nemzeti eljárási szabályokat. Ezek a szabályok – amint azt az EUB is megerősítette – az egyes tagállamok nemzeti jogrendjébe tartoznak, és „a tagállamok eljárási autonómiájaként ([6])" is szokás rájuk utalni. Mindazonáltal az EUB ítélkezési gyakorlata ([7]) szerint ennek az autonómiának határt szab az egyenértékűség és a tényleges érvényesülés elve, amely elvek általánosságban véve az uniós jog által biztosított jogokra vonatkoznak.

1. A fentiek alapján a Bizottság egyetért azzal, hogy az EUB ítélkezési gyakorlatának megfelelően – például a C-415/11. sz. Aziz-ügyben és a C-32/12. sz. Soledad Duarte Hueros-ügyben – a nemzeti eljárási szabályok nem tehetik lehetetlenné vagy túlságosan nehézzé az uniós jog által a fogyasztókra ruházott jogok gyakorlását.

2. A 93/13/EGK irányelv 6. cikkének (1) bekezdése szerint, amint azt a Bíróság – különösen a C-618/10. sz. Banco Español de Crédito-ügyben ([8]) – értelmezte, a nemzeti bíróságoknak ki kell zárniuk a tisztességtelen szerződési feltétel alkalmazását, hogy az ne legyen kötelező erejű a fogyasztóra nézve, ugyanakkor nem jogosultak a szerződés tartalmának felülvizsgálatára. Az ilyen esetekben a szerződésnek elvileg továbbra is érvényben kell maradnia, mindaddig, amíg a nemzeti jog értelmében a folytonosság jogilag lehetséges.

3. A „jóhiszeműség" követelményével kapcsolatban, amelyről a 93/13/EGK irányelv 3. cikkének (1) bekezdése rendelkezik, az EUB a C-415/11. sz. Aziz-ügyben ([9]) megállapította, hogy a nemzeti bíróságoknak meg kell vizsgálniuk, hogy az eladó vagy szolgáltató a fogyasztóval szembeni tisztességes és méltányos eljárása esetén ésszerűen elvárhatta-e, hogy utóbbi az egyedi tárgyalást követően elfogadja az érintett feltételt.

([1]) A felek szerződésből eredő jogai és kötelezettségei tekintetében.
([2]) Európai Unió Bírósága, C-168/05.
([3]) Európai Unió Bírósága, C-240/98.
([4]) Fő szabályként.
([5]) HL L 95., 1993.4.21., 29. o.
([6]) Lásd például a C-618/10. sz. Banco Español de Crédito-ügy 46. bekezdését és a C-415/11. sz. Aziz-ügy 50. bekezdését.
([7]) Lásd például a korábban említett két esetet, valamint a C-32/12. sz. Soledad Duarte Hueros-ügy 31. bekezdését.
([8]) Lásd különösen a 65. bekezdést.
([9]) Lásd különösen a 69. bekezdést.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011423/13
to the Commission
Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Institutional and procedural autonomy of the Member States when applying Directive 93/13/EC

Foreign-currency loans taken out in Hungary before the 2008 crisis are placing a heavy burden on the Hungarian people, primarily as a result of the increases in instalments, and this situation is jeopardising the EU's objective of achieving an overall improvement in living standards.

In view of the fact that the EU's consumer protection provisions aim to introduce harmonisation in such a way that the differences in the legal cultures between the Member States in this area remain, a number of questions arise with regard to the correct application of EC law.

Consumer protection in the EU is increasing in complexity as a result of the need to apply the criteria upheld by EC law — such as the clear inequality applied to consumers ([1]), and the principle of good faith — differently in different areas and Member States.

1. Does the Commission agree that national provisions should not make the exercise of consumer rights as conferred by EC law impossible or excessively difficult ([2])?

2. Does the Commission agree that, if a national court finds a contractual provision to be unfair, the contract should, on the basis of the case-law of the European Court of Justice, remain in force in accordance with the fundamental principle([3]) but that the national court should disregard the provision in question without, however, being able, under the fundamental principle, to make changes to it([4])?

3. Does the Commission agree that, in order for a national court to decide whether a disparity has arisen in the conclusion of a contract between a supplier and a consumer, as a general rule there should be an assessment of whether the supplier, dealing fairly and equitably with the consumer, could reasonably assume that the consumer would have agreed to the term concerned in individual contract negotiations?

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

The Honourable Member will be well aware that directive 93/13EEC ([5]) does not harmonise the national rules of procedure. Such rules, as confirmed by the CJEU, are a matter for the national legal order of each Member State, also referred to as the 'procedural autonomy of the Member States ([6])'. However, according to the case law of the CJEU ([7]), this autonomy is, in turn, limited by the principles of equivalence and effectiveness, which apply to rights conferred by EC law in general.

1. On this basis, the Commission agrees that, in accordance with the case law of the CJEU, for instance in Cases C-415/11 Aziz and C-32/12 Soledad Duarte Hueros, national rules of procedure should not make the exercise of consumer rights conferred by EC law impossible or excessively difficult.

2. According to Article 6 (1) of Directive 93/13/EEC, as interpreted by the CJEU, in particular in Case C-618/10 Banco Español de Crédito ([8]), the national courts are required to exclude the application of an unfair contractual term, so that it does not produce binding effects with regard to the consumer, whilst not being authorised to revise its content. In such cases the contract must continue to exist, in principle, insofar as, in accordance with the rules of domestic law, such continuity is legally possible.

([1]) In terms of the contractual rights and obligations of the parties.
([2]) Case C-168/05 of the Court of Justice of the European Union.
([3]) Case C-240/98 of the Court of Justice of the European Union.
([4]) As a general rule.
([5]) OJ No L 95, 21.4.1993, p.29.
([6]) See, for instance, Case C-618/10 Banco Español de Crédito, paragraph 46 and Case C-415/11 Aziz, paragraph 50.
([7]) See, for instance, the two cases mentioned before and Case C-32/12, Soledad Duarte Hueros, paragraph 31.
([8]) See, in particular, paragraph 65.

3. In relation to the 'good faith' criterion contained in Article 3 (1) of Directive 93/13/EEC, the CJEU established in Case C-415/11 Aziz ([9]) that national courts must assess whether the seller or supplier, dealing fairly and equitably with the consumer, could reasonably assume that the consumer would have agreed to such a term in individual contract negotiations.

([9]) See in particular, paragraph 69.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-011424/13
adresată Comisiei (Vicepreședintelui/Înaltului Reprezentant)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: VP/HR — Semnificația deosebită a semnării Acordului de asociere UE-Ucraina la Vilnius

La apropiatul summit de la Vilnius va fi în joc întregul echilibrul geostrategic între zona euro-atlantică și zona euro-asiatică. În acest context, este crucială asocierea strategică a UE cu Ucraina.

Rusia înțelege acest joc geostrategic și, prin urmare, exercită presiuni asupra Ucrainei pentru a respinge Acordul de Asociere cu UE. Opoziția Rusiei pune summit-ul de la Vilnius într-o nouă perspectivă geo-strategică.

La summit-ul din Vilnius va avea loc prima ciocnire dintre doctrina orientată spre valori a UE și acțiunile geostrategice ale Rusiei. Viitorul credibilității UE ca actor global depinde de victoria sa în Vilnius, dovada victoriei fiind semnarea Acordului de asociere cu Ucraina.

1. Este VP/ÎR de acord că UE nu va fi în măsură să promoveze cu succes valorile sale până când nu va fi câștigat cursa geostrategică?

2. Este VP/ÎR de acord că, în noul context geostrategic, obiectivele de referință ale UE privind Ucraina trebuie revizuite și contextualizate, în conformitate cu principiul *rebus sic stantibus*?

3. Este UE pregătită să ajungă la un compromis între diseminarea valorilor sale și o geostrategie eficientă, acceptând că asocierile strategice între țări cu culturi politice diferite sunt uneori posibile și necesare, considerând totodată Acordul de asociere cu Ucraina mai degrabă un instrument pentru convergența valorilor, decât rezultatul unei astfel de convergențe?

Răspuns dat de Înaltul Reprezentant /doamna *vicepreședinte Ashton în numele Comisiei*
(29 noiembrie 2013)

1. Strategia UE în zona de vecinătate nu este concepută ca o cursă sau ca un joc cu sumă nulă.

2. Obiectivele de referință pentru semnarea Acordului de asociere cu Ucraina nu s-au schimbat.

3. Dezideratul aplicării unor valori comune nu se poate atinge decât în urma unui proces. Obiectivele de referință pentru semnarea acordului nu reprezintă sfârșitul, ci începutul acestui drum.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011424/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adrian Severin (NI)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — The high significance of signing the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in Vilnius

At the forthcoming Vilnius Summit the entire geo-strategic equilibrium between the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asiatic areas will be at stake. In this context the EU's strategic association with Ukraine is crucial.

Russia understands this geo-strategic game and is therefore exerting pressure on Ukraine to reject the Association Agreement with the EU. Russia's opposition puts the Vilnius Summit in a new geo-strategic perspective.

The first-ever clash between the EU's values-oriented doctrine and Russian geo-strategic action will take place at the Vilnius Summit. The future of the EU's credibility as global player depends on its victory in Vilnius, with the proof of that victory being the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine.

1. Does the VP/HR agree that the EU will not be able to successfully promote its values until such a time as it has won the geo-strategic race?

2. Does the VP/HR agree that, in the new geo-strategic context, the EU benchmarks on Ukraine must be revised and contextualised in line with the principle of rebus sic stantibus?

3. Is the EU ready to strike a compromise between the dissemination of its values and an effective geo-strategy by accepting that strategic associations between countries with different political cultures are sometimes possible and necessary, while looking at the Association Agreement with Ukraine as an instrument for achieving the convergence of values rather than the product of such convergence?

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

1. The EU's strategy in the neighbourhood is not conceived as a race or a zero-sum game.

2. The benchmarks for the signature of the Association Agreement with Ukraine have not changed.

3. Achieving implementation of shared values is of course a process. The benchmarks for signature are not the end of this road, they are the beginning.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-011425/13
do Komisji
Andrzej Grzyb (PPE)
(4 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Ograniczenia w umowie licencyjnej użytkownika końcowego (EULA) dla Apple OS X

W umowie licencyjnej użytkownika końcowego (EULA) dotyczącej systemu operacyjnego OS X Apple Inc. zabrania instalowania tego systemu w sprzęcie komputerowym firmy innej niż Apple. W związku z tym nie jest legalnie możliwe zainstalowanie tego systemu w niechronionym patentem sprzęcie komputerowym, który skądinąd fizycznie nadaje się do takiej instalacji. Ponadto dzięki takiemu przepisowi EULA zasadniczo powstrzymuje tworzenie kompatybilnego z OS X sprzętu komputerowego przez innych producentów, ponieważ potencjalni użytkownicy końcowi nie mają możliwości legalnego zainstalowania systemu OS X w takim sprzęcie.

Czy tego rodzaju praktyki są zgodne z dorobkiem UE, zwłaszcza biorąc pod uwagę przepisy rządzące rynkiem wewnętrznym oraz przepisy dotyczące konkurencji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Joaquína Almunię w imieniu Komisji
(11 listopada 2013 r.)

Unijne prawo konkurencji w zasadzie nie zabrania przedsiębiorstwom ograniczania stosowania licencjonowanego oprogramowania do konkretnego sprzętu komputerowego na podstawie umów. Niezależnie od tego, nadużywanie przez przedsiębiorstwa pozycji dominującej na rynku może prowadzić do naruszenia unijnego prawa konkurencji (art. 102 TFUE). Z posiadanych przez Komisję informacji wynika, że spółka Apple nie posiada pozycji dominującej na rynku systemów operacyjnych dla komputerów osobistych. Wydaje się więc mało prawdopodobne, aby działania spółki Apple w odniesieniu do jej OS X naruszały unijne prawo konkurencji.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011425/13
to the Commission
Andrzej Grzyb (PPE)
(4 October 2013)

Subject: Restrictions in the end-user licence agreement (EULA) for Apple OS X

In the end-user licence agreement (EULA) for its OS X operating system, Apple Inc. prohibits the installation of the system on non-Apple hardware. Therefore, it is not legally possible to install the system in non-proprietary hardware which could, nevertheless, physically support the OS X system. Furthermore, by dint of such a provision the EULA essentially prevents the creation of OS X-compatible hardware by third-party hardware producers, given that potential end users have no way of legally installing of the OS X system on such hardware.

Are such practices compatible with the EU acquis, especially taking into consideration internal market rules and rules governing competition?

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

In general EU competition law does not prevent companies from contractually limiting the use of licensed software to specific hardware. EU competition law could however be infringed if companies abuse a dominant position in the market (Article 102 TFEU). On the basis of the information available to the Commission, it appears that Apple does not hold a dominant position on the PC operating system market. It therefore seems unlikely that Apple's behaviour with regard to its OS X infringes EU competition law.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-012007/13
til Kommissionen
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(21. oktober 2013)

Om: Behov for kraftig reaktion til støtte for de fængslede Greenpeace-aktivister i Rusland

Som Kommissionen givetvis ved, er ikke mindre end 30 Greenpeace-aktivister fængslede i Rusland som følge af en ikke-voldelig demonstration ved olieplatformen Prirazlomnaya.

Greenpeace-demonstranternes hensigt var tydeligt og påviseligt ikke-voldelig. De havde intet ønske om at opnå andet end mediedækning af en sag, der skaber stor bekymring for miljøet på et internationalt plan. Situationen opsummeres bedst af en udtalelse, der blev afgivet af en de fængslede aktivister, danskeren Anne Mie Roer Jensen, under et indledende retsmøde i Murmansk:

»Dette var ikke et voldeligt angreb, men en ikke-voldelig demonstration. Vi brugte ikke våben, vi er fredelige. Vi ønsker at redde Arktis, og vi er her for at gøre opmærksom på problemet. I nærheden af platformen sikrede vi os, at vores udstyr var ufarligt. I modsætning til os brugte de vagter, der arresterede os, skydevåben«.

Greenpeace-aktivisternes aktion kan derfor på ingen tænkelig måde udlægges som piratvirksomhed.

Idet jeg anerkender og påskønner de bestræbelser, der gøres af de kompetente myndigheder i de medlemsstater, hvis borgere er blevet fængslet af de russiske myndigheder, vil jeg gerne bede Kommissionen besvare følgende spørgsmål:

1. Hvilke foranstaltninger har Kommissionen truffet for at hjælpe de fængslede aktivister og sikre en hurtig løsladelse?

2. Hvordan agter Kommissionen at involvere sig for at kunne opnå en hurtig løsning på denne beklagelige situation?

3. Har Kommissionen tilbudt at hjælpe myndighederne i de medlemsstater, hvis borgere er blevet fængslet?

Samlet svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af den højtstående repræsentant/næstformand Catherine Ashton
(25. november 2013)

Anklagerne mod Greenpeace-besætningen og journalisterne, som er varetægtsfængslet af de russiske myndigheder efter en protestaktion ved en af Gazproms' olieplatforme, er åbenlyst uforholdsmæssige. Hvad angår de to varetægtsfængslede journalister, giver anklagerne derudover anledning til spørgsmål om pressefrihed.

Medlemsstaterne, hvis borgere er blandt de varetægtsfængslede, behandler indtil videre sagen som et konsulært anliggende. Den højtstående repræsentant/næstformanden respekterer dette, og EU har undladt at afgive offentlig udtalelse foruden udtalelserne ved plenarforsamlingen den 23. oktober. Det er dog naturligvis gjort klart for de russiske myndigheder, at den ulykkelige situation giver anledning til alvorlige bekymringer.

EU-delegationen i Moskva holder hyppigt samordningsmøder med repræsentanter fra de lande, som de varetægtsfængslede kommer fra, uanset om det er EU-medlemsstater eller tredjelande. På møderne aftales en fælles fremgangsmåde over for de russiske myndigheder vedrørende vilkårene for varetægtsfængslingen samt de retlige og proceduremæssige aspekter. EU holder samtidig tæt kontakt med repræsentanter fra Greenpeace.

Nederlandene, som er flagstat for skibet »Arctic Sunrise«, har indbragt sagen for Den Internationale Havretsdomstol for øjeblikkeligt at få frigivet besætningen og skibet. Desværre har Rusland afvist at deltage i voldgiftssagen ved Den Internationale Havretsdomstol og vil ikke møde op til retshøringerne. Domstolen bliver nødt til at træffe sin afgørelse uden Ruslands deltagelse.

Det bør dog bemærkes, at Rusland har fremhævet sin villighed til fortsat at søge efter en gensidigt acceptabel løsning.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011587/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Rapatriement des militants de Greenpeace

Fin septembre, les garde-côtes russes ont arraisonné le navire de Greenpeace *Arctic Sunrise* en mer de Barents, dans l'Arctique russe, une immense zone regorgeant de ressources en hydrocarbures dont le pays a fait une priorité stratégique. Les militants ont été placés en détention pour deux mois à Mourmansk, à environ 2 000 kilomètres au nord de Moscou. La semaine dernière, les 30 membres de l'équipage, dont 26 ne sont pas russes, ont été inculpés de «piraterie en groupe organisé». Ce chef d'accusation leur fait encourir jusqu'à 15 ans de détention.

Surveillance permanente, insalubrité… les 30 militants de Greenpeace arrêtés pour avoir tenté d'aborder une plateforme pétrolière russe seraient détenus dans des conditions «inhumaines», selon un avocat de l'organisation, Sergueï Goloubok.

Plusieurs militants détenus «n'ont pas d'accès à l'eau potable», et tous font l'objet «d'une vidéosurveillance permanente» jusque dans les toilettes, a-t-il souligné.

«Personne ne reçoit de soins médicaux appropriés», a-t-il ajouté. La situation des militants détenus est d'autant plus compliquée que la plupart d'entre eux sont des ressortissants étrangers et ne parlent pas russe, a souligné l'avocat, avant de préciser: «Ils ne peuvent pas parler à leurs proches par téléphone, car ils doivent parler une langue que les employés des centres de détention sont capables de comprendre.»

Ces derniers ne peuvent donc pas remplir un formulaire en russe pour pouvoir retirer de l'argent de leur compte bancaire, ou tout simplement demander la permission aux gardiens d'ouvrir la fenêtre.

1. Comment réagit la Commission?

2. Que compte-t-elle faire pour assurer des conditions de détention humaines?

3. Vu les conditions d'incarcération d'une part, le décalage entre les faits et les peines encourues d'autre part, ne devrait-on pas rapatrier les militants de Greenpeace?

4. Comment la Commission défend-elle ce dossier auprès des autorités russes?

Réponse commune donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

Les charges retenues contre les membres de l'équipage du navire de Greenpeace et les journalistes détenus par les autorités russes à la suite d'une action menée sur une plateforme pétrolière de Gazprom sont manifestement disproportionnées et, dans le cas des deux journalistes arrêtés, soulèvent aussi des questions quant au respect de la liberté de la presse.

Tous les États membres qui comptent des ressortissants parmi les personnes détenues gèrent pour l'instant l'incident comme une affaire consulaire. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante respecte ce choix et l'UE s'est abstenue de toute déclaration publique après celles de la plénière du 23 octobre. Toutefois, les graves préoccupations que suscite cette situation regrettable ont, bien évidemment, été exposées de manière claire aux autorités russes.

La délégation de l'UE à Moscou organise des réunions de coordination fréquentes avec les représentants des pays comptant des ressortissants parmi les détenus, qu'il s'agisse d'États membres ou non. Lors de ces réunions, il est convenu de démarches conjointes auprès des autorités russes sur la question des conditions de détention, ainsi que sur des aspects juridiques et procéduraux. Parallèlement à cela, l'UE reste en contact étroit avec les représentants de Greenpeace.

Les Pays-Bas, État dont l'Arctic Sunrise battait pavillon, ont saisi le Tribunal international du droit de la mer pour obtenir la mainlevée immédiate de l'immobilisation du navire et la libération de ses membres. Malheureusement, la Russie a refusé un arbitrage dans le cadre de la Convention sur le droit de la mer et ne participera pas à la procédure. Le Tribunal devra donc statuer en son absence.

Il convient toutefois de noter que la Russie a insisté sur sa volonté de continuer à rechercher une solution mutuellement acceptable à cette situation.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-011426/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Thijs Berman (S&D)
(7 oktober 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Inbeslagname van het Greenpeace-schip Arctic Sunrise en arrestatie van de bemanning ervan

Op 19 september 2013 zijn de autoriteiten van de Russische Federatie op illegale wijze aan boord van het Greenpeace-schip Arctic Sunrise gegaan en hebben zij dit op illegale wijze in beslag genomen, op het moment dat de bemanning ervan een vreedzame protestactie hield nabij het boorplatform Prirazlomnaya, om zowel de publieke opinie als de Russische autoriteiten te wijzen op de risico's in verband met mijnbouw in de zeeën van het Noordpoolgebied. Het schip is naar Moermansk gebracht, terwijl de bemanningsleden gevangen worden gehouden en zijn beschuldigd van „piraterij", met mogelijk een gevangenisstraf die kan oplopen tot 15 jaar.

In artikel 101 van het internationaal overeengekomen Verdrag van de Verenigde Naties inzake het recht van de zee (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS) wordt piraterij gedefinieerd als „iedere onwettige daad van geweld of aanhouding, alsmede iedere daad van plundering die door de bemanning of de passagiers van een particulier schip of een particulier luchtvaartuig voor persoonlijke doeleinden wordt gepleegd".

De bemanningsleden van het Greenpeace-schip handelden duidelijk niet voor persoonlijke doeleinden, maar ter verdediging van wat zij beschouwen als een publiek en mondiaal belang, en zij deden dit op vreedzame wijze.

Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger het ermee eens dat de reactie van de Russische autoriteiten op het Greenpeace-protest buiten alle verhouding is en onaanvaardbaar in democratische landen?

Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger het ermee eens dat, als de bemanning wordt beschuldigd van „piraterij", moedwillig over het hoofd wordt gezien dat het ging om een vreedzame actie van een ngo, waarbij de deelnemers niet handelden als „piraten", maar als bezorgde burgers?

Kan en zal de hoge vertegenwoordiger snel diplomatieke druk op de Russische autoriteiten uitoefenen om ervoor te zorgen dat het Greenpeace-schip onmiddellijk en onvoorwaardelijk wordt vrijgegeven en de bemanning ervan vrijgelaten?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(25 november 2013)

De beschuldigingen tegen de door de Russische autoriteiten aangehouden Greenpeace-bemanningsleden en de journalisten naar aanleiding van een actie op een olieplatform van Gazprom zijn kennelijk onevenredig en, wat de twee aangehouden journalisten betreft, doen zij ook vragen rijzen inzake de persvrijheid.

Alle lidstaten waarvan onderdanen tot de arrestanten behoren, willen het incident op dit moment afhandelen als een consulaire zaak. De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter eerbiedigt dit en de EU heeft zich onthouden van openbare verklaringen die verder gaan dan die welke zij op de plenaire zitting van 23 oktober heeft afgelegd. Deze ongelukkige situatie geeft aanleiding tot ernstige bezorgdheden die natuurlijk duidelijk aan de Russische autoriteiten zijn kenbaar gemaakt.

De EU-delegatie in Moskou organiseert regelmatig coördinatievergaderingen met de vertegenwoordigers van de EU-staten of derde landen waarvan onderdanen werden gearresteerd. Op deze bijeenkomsten wordt een gemeenschappelijke benadering ten aanzien van de Russische autoriteiten afgesproken wat betreft de gevangenisomstandigheden en de juridische en procedurele aspecten. Tegelijkertijd onderhoudt de EU nauwe contacten met de Greenpeace-vertegenwoordigers.

Nederland, vlaggenstaat van het schip „Arctic Sunrise", heeft een verzoek ingediend bij het Internationaal Hof in het kader van het Zeerechtverdrag met het oog op de onmiddellijke vrijlating van de bemanning en vrijgeving van het schip. Helaas heeft Rusland geweigerd deel te nemen aan de bemiddelingsprocedure overeenkomstig het Zeerechtverdrag en zal het niet deelnemen aan de procedure. Het Hof zal zijn oordeel zonder deelname van Rusland moeten uitspreken.

Het is echter vermeldenswaard dat Rusland heeft beklemtoond bereid te zijn te blijven zoeken naar een wederzijds aanvaardbare oplossing voor deze situatie.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011426/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Thijs Berman (S&D)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Seizure of the Greenpeace vessel Arctic Sunrise and its crew

On 19 September 2013 the Greenpeace vessel Arctic Sunrise was illegally boarded and seized by the Russian Federation authorities, when its crew members were staging a peaceful protest near the Prirazlomnaya oil platform in an attempt to alert both the public and the Russian authorities to the risks involved in mining in the Arctic seas. The vessel has been brought to Murmansk, while crew members are being detained and have been charged with 'piracy', facing a potential sentence of up to 15 years imprisonment.

According to Article 101 of the internationally agreed United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), piracy is defined as 'any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft'.

Obviously, the Greenpeace crew members were not acting for 'private ends' but rather for what they see as a public and global interest, and they acted in a peaceful manner.

Does the High Representative agree that the Russian authorities' reaction to the Greenpeace protest is completely disproportionate and unacceptable in democratic states?

Does the High Representative agree that charging the crew with 'piracy' wilfully overlooks the fact that this was a peaceful action by an NGO in which the members acted not as 'pirates' but as concerned citizens?

Can, and will, the High Representative put urgent diplomatic pressure on the Russian authorities for the immediate and unconditional release of the Greenpeace vessel and its crew?

Question for written answer E-011587/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Repatriation of Greenpeace activists

At the end of September, Russian coast guards boarded the Greenpeace ship *Arctic Sunrise* in the Barents Sea in the Russian Arctic, a huge area rich in hydrocarbon resources which the country has made a strategic priority. The activists are to be detained for two months in Murmansk around 2 000 kilometres north of Moscow. Last week, all 30 members of the crew, 26 of which are not Russian were charged with 'piracy as part of an organised group'. With this charge, they risk up to 15 years of detention.

Constant surveillance, unhealthy conditions … the 30 Greenpeace activists arrested for trying to approach a Russian oil platform are being held in 'inhumane' conditions according to a lawyer of the organisation, Sergei Golubok.

He pointed out that several activists held 'do not have access to drinking water' and all are subject to 'constant video surveillance', even in the toilet

'Nobody is receiving the appropriate medical care', he added. The situation of the detainees is even more complicated as most of them are foreign nationals and do not speak Russian, the lawyer highlighted before stating that: 'They cannot speak to their families on the phone as they have to speak a language which the prison employees can understand'.

The activists are unable to fill in forms in Russian to take money out of their bank accounts or simply ask the guards' permission to open a window.

1. What is the Commission's reaction?

2. What does it intend to do to ensure humane detention conditions?

3. Given the conditions of their imprisonment and the discrepancies between the facts and the penalties incurred, should the Greenpeace activists not be repatriated?

4. How is the Commission defending this case to the Russian authorities?

Question for written answer E-011787/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mary Honeyball (S&D)
(16 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Illegal arrest of Kieron Bryan in Russia

I am writing to impress upon the Commission my deep concern over the situation surrounding the illegal boarding and seizure of the Greenpeace vessel *Arctic Sunrise* at the orders of the Russian Government.

The situation itself is bad enough, but in addition my constituent Kieron Bryan, a journalist and film-maker, was detained and charged along with the rest of the crew.

I believe that charging any member of Greenpeace on board the vessel is completely unjustifiable, but it is particularly troubling that the legal system in Russia cannot distinguish between activists and journalists. Mr Bryan was on board for journalistic reasons, not to protest, and as such there is no reason for him to be detained or charged with any crime. In fact, this goes against press freedom, which is one of the core principles that are so important to modern democracies.

Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that the detention of Kieron Bryan and the criminal charges against him are completely unjustifiable?

Can the Vice-President/High Representative put diplomatic pressure on the Russian authorities for the immediate and unconditional release of Kieron Bryan?

Question for written answer P-012007/13
to the Commission
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(21 October 2013)

Subject: Strong reaction needed in support of the jailed Greenpeace activists in Russia

As the Commission will know, no less than 30 Greenpeace activists are currently imprisoned in Russia following a non-violent demonstration at the Prirazlomnaya oil platform.

The intentions of the Greenpeace protesters were clearly and demonstrably non-violent. They had no desire to achieve anything other than gain media coverage for an issue of grave international environmental concern. The situation is best summed up by the statement made by one of the jailed activists, the Danish national Anne Mie Roer Jensen, during a preliminary hearing in Murmansk:

'This was not a violent attack but a non-violent demonstration. We did not use weapons, we are peaceful. We want to save the Arctic, and we are here to spread the word. Near the platform, we ensured that our equipment was safe. In contrast, the officers who detained us were using firearms'.

The actions of the Greenpeace activists can therefore in no way, shape, or form be construed as an act of piracy.

Recognising and applauding the efforts of the competent authorities in the Member States whose citizens have been jailed by the Russian authorities, I pose the following questions to the Commission:

1. What action has the Commission taken to assist the jailed activists and to secure their speedy release?

2. How does the Commission intend to become involved in order to achieve an expeditious resolution to this deplorable situation?

3. Has the Commission offered to assist the authorities of the Member States whose citizens have been jailed?

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

The charges against detained Greenpeace crew members and journalists detained by Russian authorities following an action at a Gazprom oil platform are manifestly disproportionate and, as far as the two detained journalists are concerned, also raise questions relating to freedom of the press.

All Member States with nationals among the detainees wish are dealing with the incident for the time being as a consular matter. The HR/VP respects this and the EU has abstained from public statements going beyond those made during the 23 October Plenary. However, the serious concerns that this unfortunate situation gives rise to have, of course, been made clearly known to the Russian authorities.

The EU Delegation in Moscow hosts frequent coordination meetings with representatives of the countries having nationals among the detainees, be it EU member and non-member states. In these meetings, joint approaches to the Russian authorities are agreed on the issue of detention conditions as well as on legal and procedural aspects. At the same time, the EU stays in close contact with Greenpeace representatives.

The Netherlands, flag state for the ship 'Arctic Sunrise', have submitted a request to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea Convention for immediate release of crew and ship. Unfortunately Russia has rejected participation in arbitration under the Law of the Sea Convention and will not participate in the proceedings. The Tribunal will have to pronounce its verdict in the absence of such participation.

It is, however, worth noting that Russia has stressed its readiness to continue to seek a mutually acceptable solution to this situation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011427/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(7 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: AST Terni, procedure in corso e ripercussioni occupazionali

Con riferimento alle recenti interrogazioni presentate alla Commissione e concernenti una probabile ulteriore proroga, da parte della Commissione stessa, dell'attività delle Acciaierie di Terni (AST), suscitano ulteriore preoccupazione nel settore della siderurgia europea le notizie riportate dalla stampa della volontà di Outokumpu di effettuare un ulteriore taglio dei posti di lavoro di altre mille unità in Finlandia e in Germania, oltre ai 2500 già previsti.

Per quanto riguarda le AST Terni, durante l'incontro con le parti sociali e le istituzioni umbre avvenuto a Strasburgo lo scorso giugno 2013, il Commissario Almunia aveva escluso la possibilità di concedere ulteriori proroghe precisando che, trascorso il termine assegnato, la Commissione avrebbe nominato un garante al fine di sovraintendere in maniera imparziale alla vendita.

Il Parlamento europeo già nella sua risoluzione del 13 dicembre 2012 «sull'industria siderurgica dell'UE» aveva chiesto alla Commissione di monitorare da vicino gli sviluppi negli stabilimenti di Terni, proprio per tutelare la loro integrità e la loro competitività nel panorama europeo e internazionale.

Premesso che la Commissione ha sempre affermato che il suo operato era volto ad assicurare la sostenibilità economica e la competitività delle AST Terni, può la stessa Commissione far sapere:

— una valutazione delle ultime notizie dei tagli al personale previsti da Outokumpu e le possibili ripercussioni sulla cessione delle AST Terni;

— un quadro dettagliato circa le procedure e le tempistiche utilizzate riguardanti la cessione;

— i principali parametri utilizzati per valutare i possibili acquirenti (europei ed extraeuropei) e i relativi progetti industriali;

— quali azioni ha messo in campo per dare seguito alle richieste contenute nella risoluzione del Parlamento europeo?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(19 novembre 2013)

Nel giugno 2013 è stato presentato un piano d'azione ([1]) per l'industria siderurgica europea, inteso ad aiutare questo settore ad affrontare le sfide odierne e porre le basi per la competitività futura promuovendo l'innovazione e creando crescita e occupazione.

La Commissione è a conoscenza del fatto che Outokumpu sottolinea la necessità di adottare ulteriori misure sul fronte dell'occupazione per conseguire il risanamento finanziario. La Commissione non può intervenire nelle attività economiche di investitori privati. Inoltre, la Commissione non può commentare i dettagli della procedura di cessione o la tempistica specifica. Una panoramica delle procedure e delle principali fasi del processo di cessione sono disponibili negli impegni nella causa M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum ([2]) e nella comunicazione della Commissione sulle misure correttive ([3]).

L'idoneità dei potenziali acquirenti si basa sui seguenti punti ([4]):

— l'acquirente deve essere indipendente e non essere collegato alle parti,

([1]) COM(2013)407.
([2]) Disponibile sul sito web della DG COMP: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/index.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_result&policy_area_id=2&case_number=6471.
([3]) Comunicazione della Commissione concernente le misure correttive considerate accettabili a norma del regolamento (CE) n. 139/2004 e in virtù del regolamento (CE) n. 802/2004, GU C 267 del 22.10.2008, pag. 1-27, disponibile su: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lexuriserv/lexuriserv.do?uri=celex:52008xc1022(01):en:not.
([4]) Cfr. comunicazione della Commissione concernente le misure correttive, punti 48 e 49. Cfr. anche i punti 15 e 16 degli impegni nella causa M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum.

— l'acquirente deve possedere i mezzi finanziari, la comprovata competenza pertinente nonché l'incentivo e la capacità di mantenere e sviluppare l'attività ceduta come forza competitiva redditizia ed attiva, e

— l'acquisizione dell'attività ceduta da parte di un acquirente non deve creare nuovi problemi sul piano della concorrenza.

La Commissione sta monitorando attentamente il processo di cessione, tramite riunioni regolari con le diverse parti interessate, e continuerà a prendere tutte le misure necessarie per tutelare la redditività e la competitività di Acciai Speciali Terni.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011427/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: AST Terni: divestment procedure and implications for jobs

Following on from the questions submitted recently to the Commission concerning a probable further extension of the deadline for selling the Terni steelworks (AST) in Italy, press reports that Outokumpu intends to cut a further 1 000 jobs in Finland and Germany, on top of the 2 500 already announced, have given rise to fresh concerns in the EU steel sector.

At a meeting with the social partners and Umbrian institutions in Strasbourg in June 2013, Commissioner Almunia ruled out the possibility of further extensions. He said that the Commission would appoint an impartial guarantor to oversee the sale, once the deadline has passed.

In its resolution of 13 December 2012 on the EU steel industry, Parliament called on the Commission to monitor closely future developments at the Terni plant in an effort to maintain its integrity and its competitiveness on European and international markets.

The Commission has repeatedly stated its intention to safeguard the economic sustainability and competitiveness of AST Terni. With that in mind:

— What does the Commission have to say about the latest reports of staff cuts at Outokumpu and the implications they might have for the sale of AST Terni?

— Can it give a detailed overview of the procedures and time frame for the sale?

— What are the main criteria for assessing potential buyers (from inside and outside the EU) and their plans for the plant?

— What steps has it taken in response to the aforementioned Parliament resolution?

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

In June 2013 an action plan ([1]) for the European Steel Industry was presented to help this sector confront today's challenges and lay the foundations for future competitiveness by fostering innovation, creating growth and jobs in the sector.

The Commission is aware that Outokumpu reports additional employment measures to be taken to achieve a financial turnaround. The Commission cannot interfere in the business done by private investors. Furthermore, the Commission cannot comment on the details of the divestment procedure or its specific timeline. An overview of the procedures and main steps of the divestiture process can be found in the commitments in case M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum ([2]) and in the Commission notice on remedies ([3]).

Suitability of potential purchasers is based on the following ([4]):

— the purchaser is required to be independent of and unconnected to the merging parties,

— the purchaser must possess the resources, relevant expertise and have the incentive and ability to maintain and develop the divested business as a viable and active competitive force, and

— the acquisition of the business by the purchaser must not prima facie create new competition concerns.

([1]) COM(2013) 407.
([2]) Available on DG COMP's website: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/elojade/isef/index.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_result&policy_area_id=2&case_number=6471
([3]) Commission notice on remedies acceptable under Council Regulation (EC) No 139/2004 and under Commission Regulation (EC) No 802/2004, OJ C 267, 22.10.2008, p. 1-27, available on http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52008XC1022(01):EN:NOT
([4]) See Commission notice on remedies, paragraphs 48 and 49. See also clauses 15 and 16 of the commitments in case M.6471 Outokumpu/Inoxum.

The Commission is closely monitoring the divestment process, through regular meetings with the different stakeholders, and will continue to take all necessary measures to safeguard Acciai Speciali Terni's viability and competitiveness.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011428/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Kursstürze und -manipulation durch Massenorder

Wegen eines Software-Fehlers tätigte die Investmentbank Goldmann Sachs Ende August eine große Zahl von Optionsgeschäften, welche die Aktienkurse massiv drückten. Insgesamt 816 000 Optionsaufträge sollen zu einem fehlerhaften Preis — in den meisten Fällen einen Preis erheblich unter dem Marktpreis — getätigt worden sein. Änderungen an der Software für den Hochfrequenzhandel dürften der Grund gewesen sein. Die Software verwechselte anscheinend bloße Interessenskundgebungen von Kunden mit tatsächlichen Aufträgen und handelte mit einem völlig falschen Preis. Die vom Kursrutsch alarmierten Börsebetreiber griffen umgehend ein.

Dennoch ließ dieser Vorfall das Misstrauen vieler Anleger gegenüber dem Turbo-Trading — bei dem binnen Sekunden Computer völlig selbstständig Wertpapiere kaufen und verkaufen — wachsen. Auch werden dadurch Manipulationsmöglichkeiten eröffnet.

Gibt es auf EU-Ebene Pläne für den Fall von plötzlichen Kursstürzen mit gravierenden Auswirkungen?

Welche Regeln gibt es in der EU bezüglich Turbo-Trading?

Was wird in diesem Zusammenhang auf EU-Ebene unternommen, um Möglichkeiten einer Manipulation einzuschränken?

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

Der von dem Herrn Abgeordneten erwähnte Vorfall wird derzeit auf Ebene der EU-Gesetzgebung behandelt.

Die Kommission hat diesbezüglich ein Paket legislativer Maßnahmen vorgeschlagen. Dieses umfasst die Vorschläge für eine Richtlinie und eine Verordnung über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente (MiFID/R), die an die Stelle der Richtlinie 2004/39/EG und der Vorschläge für eine Verordnung über Marktmissbrauch treten sollen, und eine Richtlinie über strafrechtliche Sanktionen für Marktmissbrauch, die an die Stelle der Richtlinie 2003/6/EG treten soll. Zweck der Vorschläge ist es, die Integration, Effizienz, Transparenz und Integrität der Finanzmärkte weiter zu verbessern.

Die technologische Entwicklung, auf der der Hochfrequenzhandel beruht, erfordert angesichts der Handelsvolumina und der potenziellen Folgen etwaigen Fehlverhaltens für die Integrität und Stabilität des Gesamtmarkts eine angemessene Regulierung. Die Vorschläge der Kommission umfassen folglich eine geeignete Absicherung im algorithmischen Handel und im Hochfrequenzhandel und zielen auf eine bessere Aufdeckung von Manipulation mittels Hochfrequenzhandels und auf gezieltere Sanktionen ab. Neben diesen Vorschlägen ist in der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 236/2012 über Leerverkäufe und bestimmte Aspekte von Credit Default Swaps bereits die Möglichkeit vorgesehen, bei signifikantem Kursverfall den Leerverkauf von Finanzinstrumenten befristet zu beschränken oder zu verbieten.

Die Vorschläge der Kommission werden derzeit vom Europäischen Parlament und vom Rat geprüft.

Bei der Arbeit wird eine politische Einigung über das Gesamtpaket bis Ende 2013 angestrebt. Sollte dieses Paket verabschiedet werden, so würden die Rechtsvorschriften Anfang 2016 in Kraft treten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011428/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Share price collapses and manipulation through the use of mass orders

A software error at the investment bank Goldman Sachs caused a large number of option transactions to be effected at the end of August, pushing share prices sharply downwards. In total, 816 000 options are said to have been exercised at the wrong price, in most cases one considerably lower than the market price. Modifications to the high-frequency trading software may have been the cause. The software confused what were apparently mere expressions of interest from customers with actual option orders and effected transactions at completely wrong prices. Traders alarmed by the collapse in share prices intervened immediately.

Nevertheless, this incident has increased the misgivings many investors have about turbo trading, which involves computers buying and selling securities within seconds completely autonomously, an arrangement which also presents opportunities for manipulation.

Have plans been drawn up at EU level to deal with sudden share price collapses and their serious repercussions?

What are the rules on turbo trading in the EU?

What is being done at EU level to limit opportunities for manipulation?

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

The incident mentioned by the Honourable Member is being addressed by EU legislation.

The Commission has proposed a package of legislative measures in this area: the proposals for a directive and a regulation on markets in financial instruments (MIFID/R), to replace Directive 2004/39/EC and the proposals for a regulation on market abuse (MAR), and a directive on criminal sanctions for market abuse (CSMAD) to replace Directive 2003/6/EC. The aim of the proposals is to further enhance the integration, efficiency, transparency and integrity of financial markets.

With respect to High Frequency Trading (HFT) this technological development requires properly regulation in light of the size of trading and the potential spill-over effect of any misconduct on the integrity and stability of the market as a whole. The Commission proposals therefore provide for proper safeguards around the activity of algorithmic and high-frequency trading and aim at improving the detection and sanctioning of manipulative practices through high frequency trading. In addition to these proposals, Regulation (EU) 236/2012 on short selling and certain aspects of credit default swaps already provides for the possibility to temporarily restrict or prohibit the short selling of financial instruments in the case of a significant price drop.

The Commission proposals are currently being considered by the European Parliament and the Council.

The work is progressing with the objective of reaching a political agreement on the whole package by the end of 2013. If achieved, this would mean that the legislation would enter into force at the beginning of 2016.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011429/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Export von Imitaten in Bulgarien und in der Türkei

Zwei Drittel aller Produktfälschungen, die in der EU entdeckt werden — von Zigaretten bis hin zu Medizin — stammen aus China. Dennoch liegen auch Bulgarien und die Türkei beim Export von Imitaten weit vorne.

1. In wie weit wird dieser Umstand bei den Beitrittsgesprächen mit der Türkei mitberücksichtigt?

2. Welche Maßnahmen werden hinsichtlich der über Bulgarien verlaufenden Schmuggelrouten ergriffen?

3. Gibt es Schätzungen über die Schadenshöhe aufgrund der über Bulgarien und Türkei laufenden Fälschungen?

Antwort von Herrn Šemeta im Namen der Kommission
(17. Dezember 2013)

1. Die Rechte des geistigen Eigentums in der Türkei sind sowohl im Rahmen der Beitrittsverhandlungen (siehe Kapitel 7: Vorschriften über geistiges Eigentum und Kapitel 29: Zollunion) als auch im Rahmen des Zollunionabkommens EU-Türkei regelmäßig Gegenstand der Gespräche mit der Türkei. Über den Stand dieser Gespräche und die aktuelle Situation in der Türkei in Bezug auf die Rechte des geistigen Eigentums gibt der am 16. Oktober von der Kommission veröffentlichte Fortschrittsbericht ([1]) Aufschluss. Darüber hinaus hat die Kommission mit der Türkei eine Arbeitsgruppe zu den Rechten des geistigen Eigentums eingerichtet, die einmal jährlich zusammentritt.

2. Im Bereich der illegalen Herstellung und des Schmuggels von Zigaretten ist die Zusammenarbeit mit den bulgarischen Strafverfolgungsbehörden ausgezeichnet. Das Europäische Amt für Betrugsbekämpfung (OLAF) und der bulgarische Dienst zur Koordinierung der Betrugsbekämpfung (AFCOS) tauschen fast täglich einschlägige Informationen aus.

Derzeit untersucht das OLAF in Bulgarien fünf Fälle von Zigarettenschmuggel. Auch mit den türkischen Zollbehörden arbeitet das OLAF im Bereich des Handels mit gefälschten Zigaretten, Parfums und alkoholischen Getränken aktiv zusammen.

3. Zu dieser Frage des Herrn Abgeordneten liegen der Kommission keine Informationen vor.

([1]) KOM(2013)700 vom 16.10.2013 und SWD(2013)417 vom 16.10.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011429/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Export of imitation goods from Bulgaria and Turkey

Two-thirds of all counterfeit products discovered in the EU — from cigarettes to medicines — come from China. However, Bulgaria and Turkey are very much at the forefront when it comes to the export of imitation goods

1. To what extent is this situation being taken into account in the accession negotiations with Turkey?

2. What steps are being taken with regard to the smuggling routes running through Bulgaria?

3. Are there any estimates of the scale of the loss due to the counterfeit products passing through Bulgaria and Turkey?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2013)

1. The issues related to intellectual property rights (IPR) in Turkey are discussed on a permanent basis with Turkey both in the framework of accession negotiations (ex. Chapter 7 Intellectual Property Law and Chapter 29 Customs Union), as well as under the EU — Turkey Customs Union agreement. A reflection of these discussions, as well as of the situation prevailing in Turkey in the area of IPR can be found in the latest Progress Report published on 16 October by the European Commission ([1]). In addition, the Commission has established with Turkey an IPR working group which meets once a year.

2. In the field of the illegal production and smuggling of cigarettes, the cooperation with the Bulgarian law enforcement agencies is excellent. The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and Bulgarian Anti-Fraud Cooperation Service (AFCOS) exchange relevant information almost on daily basis.

OLAF has five ongoing cases involving Bulgaria in the field of cigarette smuggling. There is also active cooperation between OLAF and Turkish Customs on the traffic of counterfeit cigarettes and counterfeit perfumes and alcohol.

3. The Commission does not possess the information the Honourable Member requests.

([1]) COM(2013) 700 of 16/10/2013 and SWD(2013) 417 of 16/10/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011430/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Bekämpfung von Umgebungslärm

Aufgrund der Richtlinie 2002/49/EG werden Aktionspläne zur Bekämpfung von Umgebungslärm aufgestellt. Damit soll schädlichen Auswirkungen von Umgebungslärm auf die menschliche Gesundheit sowie unzumutbaren Belästigungen durch Umgebungslärm entgegengewirkt werden.

1. Welche Fortschritte wurden bei der Bekämpfung von Umgebungslärm erzielt?

2. In welchem Ausmaß werden Maßnahmen zur Bekämpfung von Umgebungslärm in sensiblen Regionen bzw. Lebensräumen wie etwa dem Brenner seitens der EU gefördert?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(4. Dezember 2013)

Die Kommission überprüft derzeit die von den Mitgliedstaaten übermittelten Lärmkarten und Aktionspläne, um den Durchführungsstand der Richtlinie über Umgebungslärm ([1]) bewerten zu können.

Aus den vorliegenden Daten wird ersichtlich, dass sich die Exposition gegenüber übermäßigem Umgebungslärm in den vergangenen fünf Jahren kaum verändert hat (die Lärmexposition hat in fast allen Fällen um weniger als 1 % zu- oder abgenommen).

In der Richtlinie sind „ruhige Gebiete" definiert, und die Mitgliedstaaten müssen im Rahmen ihrer Aktionspläne besondere Maßnahmen zum Schutz dieser Gebiete festlegen.

Im Falle des Brennerpasses stellt die Kommission fest, dass weder Österreich noch Italien in ihren Aktionsplänen besondere Maßnahmen für ruhige Gebiete getroffen haben.

([1]) Richtlinie 2002/49/EG, ABl. L 189 vom 18.7.2002.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011430/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Management of environmental noise

On the basis of Directive 2002/49/EC, action plans for the management of environmental noise are drawn up. These action plans are intended to counter the harmful effects of environmental noise on human health and the unreasonable annoyance it causes.

1. What progress has been made in the management of environmental noise?

2. To what extent are measures for the management of environmental noise in sensitive regions or habitats, such as the Brenner Pass, supported by the EU?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission is reviewing the noise maps and action plans recently submitted by the Member States, so as to be able to assess the state of implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive ([1]).

It appears from the data available that exposure to excessive environmental noise has hardly changed over the last 5 years (noise exposure has increased or decreased in almost all cases by less than 1%).

The directive defines quiet areas and provides for Member States to adopt specific measures to preserve them as part of their action plans.

In the specific case of the Brenner Pass, the Commission notes no specific measures have been taken by either Austria or Italy in their respective action plans for quiet areas.

([1]) Directive 2002/49/EC, OJ L 189, 18.7.2002.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011431/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Handel mit Gesundheitsdaten

Der US-Pharma-Marktforscher IMS-Health hat allein in Österreich mit gut 350 Ärzten und fast 300 Apotheken Verträge über die Lieferung von (angeblich) anonymisierten Patienten,- Rezept- und Arztdaten abgeschlossen. Medienberichten zufolge ist die Zahl noch höher, und auch Krankenhäuser sollen in großem Stil Informationen an IMS-Health — und damit in weiterer Folge an die pharmazeutische Industrie — verkauft haben. Einige Krankenhäuser bestätigen die Zusammenarbeit mit IMS-Health, erklären jedoch, dass lediglich der Verbrauch aller Medikamente bekannt gegeben werde, was wertvolle Informationen zur Optimierung des Medikamenteneinsatzes liefern soll. Vor allem bei teuren und selten eingesetzten Medikamenten sind derartige Informationen wertvoll, weil sie Rückschlüsse auf zugrunde liegende Erkrankungen zulassen.

1. Gibt es mit den USA Abkommen, in denen es um medizinische Daten geht?

2. Werden auf EU-Ebene Daten zum Medikamenteneinsatz gesammelt bzw. erfolgt hier in irgendeiner Form eine Koordinierung?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2013)

1. Zwischen der EU und den USA besteht kein Abkommen über die Übermittlung medizinischer Daten. Die Vorschriften, die derzeit für eine solche Datenübermittlung gelten, sind in Artikel 25 der Richtlinie 95/46/EG festgelegt.

2. Gemäß dem EU-Vertrag fällt die Verschreibung von Arzneimitteln und ihre Aufnahme in die einzelstaatlichen Gesundheitssysteme bzw. in die Systeme der sozialen Sicherheit in den Zuständigkeitsbereich der EU-Mitgliedstaaten. Diese Art der Datenerhebung wird von der EU in keiner Weise koordiniert. Das Marktforschungsunternehmen IMS Health erhebt in Europa wie auch in den USA Daten zum Medikamentenverbrauch, darunter auch Rezeptdaten. Gemäß dem jeweiligen nationalen Rechtsrahmen und dem entsprechenden Geschäftsgebaren des Unternehmens erfolgt die Datenerhebung durch IMS Health in den einzelnen Ländern auf unterschiedliche Art und Weise.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011431/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Trade in health data

The US pharmaceuticals market research company IMS Health has concluded contracts with more than 350 doctors and almost 300 dispensing chemists in Austria alone for the supply of (supposedly) anonymous data on patients, prescriptions and doctors. According to media reports, the number is even higher, and hospitals are also reported to have sold large amounts of information to IMS Health — and consequently to the pharmaceuticals industry. Some hospitals confirm their cooperation with IMS Health, but state that only the consumption of all medicines is disclosed, which apparently provides valuable information for optimising the use of medicines. This kind of information is particularly valuable in the case of expensive and seldom used medicines, because it allows conclusions to be drawn concerning underlying diseases.

1. Are there any agreements with the US concerning medical data?

2. Are data relating to the use of medicines collected at EU level, or is any form of coordination carried out at this level?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

1. There is no general agreement between EU and US on transfer of medical data. The rules that currently apply are provided by Article 25 of the directive 95/46/EC.

2. Prescription of medicines and their inclusion into the national health system or social security schemes is, according to the EU Treaty, the competence of the EU Member States. The EU does not undertake any coordination activities in this type of data collection. In Europe, as in the US, the market research company IMS Health collects data on consumption of medicines, including prescription data. Data collection by IMS Health is done in different ways in different countries, according to the national legal frameworks and the corresponding business practices of the company.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011432/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διάθεση προϊόντων με συστατικό την ουσία GBL

Η χημική ουσία GBL (gamma-butyrolactone) είναι άχρωμο και άοσμο υγρό, το οποίο δεν γίνεται αντιληπτό ούτε σε ένα ποτήρι με καθαρό νερό. Η κατανάλωσή του προκαλεί ζάλη, αναστολή των αντιστάσεων και προσωρινή απώλεια μνήμης, καθιστώντας το εξαιρετικά επικίνδυνο για τη δημόσια υγεία. Πρόσφατα, σύμφωνα με τις ελληνικές αρχές, έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί ως αναισθητικό σε επίθεση βιασμού. Η ουσία αυτή αποτελεί βασικό συστατικό προϊόντων καθαρισμού εξαρτημάτων αυτοκινήτου και, ως εκ τούτου, διατίθεται στο εμπόριο χωρίς περιορισμό και χωρίς καμία ενημέρωση για τους κινδύνους που επιφυλάσσει για τη δημόσια υγεία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή τους κινδύνους που εγκυμονεί η χρήση της συγκεκριμένης χημικής ουσίας για τη δημόσια υγεία; Έχει αναλάβει πρωτοβουλίες για το πλαίσιο και τους περιορισμούς που θα διέπουν τη διακίνηση της;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τους κινδύνους για τη δημόσια υγεία που σχετίζονται με την κακή χρήση GBL (γ-βουτυρολακτόνη), μίας χημικής ουσίας η οποία χρησιμοποιείται ευρέως ως διαλύτης, ζυμωτής αρωμάτων, προϊόν αφαίρεσης λεκέδων, για την παραγωγή των προμηθειών των νοσοκομείων, ως μέσο επεξεργασίας στην παραγωγή βιταμινών και φαρμάκων, καθώς και για άλλους βιομηχανικούς σκοπούς.

Η GBL αποτελεί πρόδρομο ουσία του GHB (γ-υδροξυβουτυρικό οξύ), φαρμάκου χρησιμοποιούμενου βάσει της Σύμβασης για τις ψυχοτρόπους ουσίες· όταν η GBL καταναλίσκεται από τον άνθρωπο, μετατρέπεται σε GHB. Η GBL δεν υπάγεται σε έλεγχο βάσει της Σύμβασης των ΗΕ του 1971, πλην όμως πολλά κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ έχουν θεσπίσει εθνικά μέτρα ελέγχου. Η GBL δεν υπάγεται στα ενωσιακά μέτρα τα εφαρμοστέα στις προδρόμους των ναρκωτικών ουσίες ([1])· ωστόσο, προκειμένου να αντιμετωπιστεί η μη ενδεδειγμένη χρήση της, η ευρωπαϊκή χημική βιομηχανία υιοθέτησε το 1999 εθελοντικά μέτρα ελέγχου. Όπως για όλα τα χημικά προϊόντα που διατίθενται στην αγορά στην ΕΕ και τα οποία υπερβαίνουν ορισμένο βάρος, η GBL υπάγεται επίσης στις διατάξεις του κανονισμού REACH ([2]).

Πρόσφατα η Επιτροπή υιοθέτησε δέσμη νομοθετικών μέτρων για τις νέες ψυχοτρόπους ουσίες ([3]), η οποία προτείνει μια πιο γρήγορη και πιο αναλογική προσέγγιση για την υγεία, την ασφάλεια και τους κοινωνικές κινδύνους που ενέχουν οι εν λόγω ουσίες, και η οποία λαμβάνει επίσης υπόψη τις θεμιτές χρήσεις. Μόλις θεσπιστεί από τους συννομοθέτες, το μέσο αυτό θα συνιστά ένα πρόσθετο χρήσιμο εργαλείο για να αντιμετωπισθούν οι προκλήσεις που θέτει η ταχεία εμφάνιση νέων ψυχοτρόπων ουσιών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της GBL.

([1]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 273/2004 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου της 11ης Φεβρουαρίου 2004 περί των προδρόμων ουσιών των ναρκωτικών (όπως τροποποιήθηκε προσφάτως — πλην όμως δεν έχει ακόμη δημοσιευθεί στην ΕΕ) και κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 111/2005 του Συμβουλίου, της 22ας Δεκεμβρίου 2004, σχετικά με τη θέσπιση κανόνων για την παρακολούθηση του εμπορίου πρόδρομων ουσιών ναρκωτικών μεταξύ της Κοινότητας και τρίτων χωρών (όπως τροποποιήθηκε προσφάτως — πλην όμως δεν έχει ακόμη δημοσιευθεί στην ΕΕ).

([2]) Κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1907/2006 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 18ης Δεκεμβρίου 2006, για την καταχώριση, την αξιολόγηση, την αδειοδότηση και τους περιορισμούς των χημικών προϊόντων (REACH) και για την ίδρυση του Ευρωπαϊκού Οργανισμού Χημικών Προϊόντων καθώς και για την τροποποίηση της οδηγίας 1999/45/ΕΚ και για την κατάργηση του κανονισμού (ΕΟΚ) αριθ. 793/93 του Συμβουλίου και κανονισμός (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1488/94 της Επιτροπής καθώς και οδηγία 76/769/ΕΟΚ του Συμβουλίου και οδηγίες της Επιτροπής 91/155/ΕΟΚ, 93/67/ΕΟΚ, 93/105/ΕΚ και 2000/21/ΕΚ, όπως τροποποιήθηκαν επανειλημμένως.

([3]) COM(2013)618 τελικό και COM(2013)619 τελικό.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011432/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: The marketing of products containing GBL

The chemical substance GBL (gamma-butyrolactone) is a colourless and odourless liquid which cannot be detected, even in a glass of clear water. Consumption causes dizziness, immune system suppression and temporary memory loss, rendering it extremely dangerous to public health. According to the Greek authorities, it has been used as a sedative in rape attacks. This substance is one of the basic ingredients of cleaning products for car parts, and, as a result, it is available on the market without restriction and without any public health warnings.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Is the Commission aware of the public health risks building up through the use of this chemical substance? Has it taken any steps towards a framework of restrictions to regulate its circulation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the public health risks related with the misuse of GBL (gamma-butyrolactone), a chemical widely used as a solvent, aroma compounder, stain remover, in the manufacture of hospital supplies, as a processing aid in the production of vitamins and pharmaceuticals, and for other industrial purposes.

GBL is a precursor to GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyric acid), a drug controlled under the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances; when GBL is consumed by humans, it converts into GHB. GBL is not controlled under the 1971 UN Convention, but several EU Member States have introduced national control measures. GBL is not subjected to the EU measures applicable to drug precursors ([1]); nonetheless, in response to concerns about its misuse, the European chemical industry adopted voluntary control measures in 1999. As for all chemicals placed on the market on the EU above a certain tonnage, GBL is also subjected to the provisions of the REACH Regulation ([2]).

The Commission has recently adopted a legislative package on new psychoactive substances ([3]), which put forward a quicker and more proportional approach to the health, social and safety risks posed by these substances, and which also takes into account their legitimate uses. Once adopted by the co-legislator, this instrument will provide an additional useful tool to respond to the challenges posed by the rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances, including GBL.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 273/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 on drug precursors (recently amended — not yet published in the OJ) and Council Regulation (EC) No 111/2005 of 22 December 2004 laying down rules for the monitoring of trade between the Community and third countries in drug precursors (recently amended — not yet published in the OJ).

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC, amended several times.

([3]) COM(2013) 618 final and COM(2013) 619 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011433/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Συμψηφισμός αγροτικών επιδοτήσεων της ΕΕ με χρέη προς ασφαλιστικά ταμεία

Πρόσφατες πληροφορίες του Τύπου στην Ελλάδα αναφέρουν ότι: «Από τον συμψηφισμό κοινοτικών αγροτικών επιδοτήσεων και ληξιπρόθεσμων ασφαλιστικών οφειλών των αγροτών θα αναζητήσει η κυβέρνηση μέρος των κεφαλαίων για να καλύψει τα ελλείμματα των ασφαλιστικών ταμείων το 2014. Η σχετική πρόταση έχει διατυπωθεί από το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο προκειμένου να γίνει αποπληρωμή έστω κι ενός μέρους από τα 510 εκατομμύρια ευρώ τα οποία οφείλουν οι αγρότες στον Οργανισμό Γεωργικών Ασφαλίσεων».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Ως μέλος της τρόικα, είναι ενήμερη για την πρόταση αυτή του ΔΝΤ; Είναι σύμφωνη με την κοινοτική νομοθεσία η παρακράτηση κοινοτικών επιδοτήσεων από τα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία, δίχως τη συγκατάθεση του δικαιούχου;

— Τη στιγμή που η συντριπτική πλειονότητα των ελλήνων αγροτών, ως αποτέλεσμα των εφαρμοζόμενων μνημονιακών πολιτικών, είναι υπερχρεωμένη, δεν αποτελεί τουλάχιστον δικαίωμά τους να επιλέξουν πώς θα καταναλώσουν τα χρήματα που προέρχονται από τις κοινοτικές επιδοτήσεις, π.χ. να τα διαθέσουν για να εξασφαλίσουν ηλεκτρικό ρεύμα, θέρμανση, τροφή για την οικογένειά τους ή για την εξόφληση χρεών προς τα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία;

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

Τα δημοσιεύματα του τύπου που αναφέρει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου είναι ανακριβή. Το μόνο μέτρο που εν προκειμένω αφορά την κοινή γεωργική πολιτική έχει προταθεί από τις ελληνικές αρχές, αφού διαπίστωσε ότι ορισμένοι υποκείμενοι στο φόρο που εισέπραξαν πόρους από κονδύλια της ΕΕ δεν καταβάλλουν το σύνολο των οφειλόμενων κοινωνικών εισφορών.

Αυτό συνεπάγεται ότι, στην περίπτωση δικαιούχων με εκκρεμείς οφειλές κοινωνικών εισφορών, η οφειλή στον Οργανισμό Γεωργικής Ασφάλισης θα ρυθμιστεί μέσω συμψηφισμού ισοδύναμου ποσού της ΚΓΠ με εκκρεμείς πληρωμές για τον ίδιο δικαιούχο. Όσον αφορά τις άμεσες ενισχύσεις, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 11 του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1290/2005 ([1]) του Συμβουλίου, για τη χρηματοδότηση της κοινής γεωργικής πολιτικής και το άρθρο 29 του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 73/2009 ([2]) του Συμβουλίου για τη θέσπιση κοινών κανόνων για τα καθεστώτα άμεσης στήριξης για τους γεωργούς, οι πληρωμές που σχετίζονται με τα ενωσιακά καθεστώτα άμεσης στήριξης πρέπει να καταβάλλονται στο ακέραιο στους δικαιούχους. Βάσει των ειδικών όρων που καθόρισε το Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο στην υπόθεση C-132/95 Jensen ([3]) τα κράτη μέλη έχουν τη δυνατότητα συμψηφισμού γεωργικών πληρωμών με εκκρεμείς οφειλές προς το κράτος μέλος.

Η Επιτροπή αδυνατεί να δει τη σχέση μεταξύ της πρότασης, η οποία εξετάζεται εις βάθος, με την διασφάλιση του εφοδιασμού σε ηλεκτρική ενέργεια, θέρμανσης και τροφίμων για τους γεωργούς.

([1]) ΕΕ L 209 της 11.8.2005, σ. 1-25.
([2]) ΕΕ L 30 της 31.1.2009, σ. 16-99.
([3]) Υπόθεση C-132/95 Bent Jensen and Korn- og Foderstofkompagniet A/S.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011433/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Using EU farm subsidies to offset debts to insurance funds

The Greek press has revealed that: 'The Government will seek some of the capital to cover insurance fund debts in 2014 by using Community farming subsidies to offset farmers' insurance debts. The proposal was made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with a view to paying off at least part of the EUR 510 million which farmers owe to the Agricultural Insurance Organisation'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Has it, as a member of the Troika, been informed of the IMF's proposal? Is the withholding of Community subsidies by insurance funds, without the consent of the beneficiary, in accordance with Community law?

— At a moment when the overwhelming majority of Greek farmers are sinking into debt through the implementation of Memorandum policies, is it not their right at least to choose how to use the money originating from Community subsidies, whether on securing supplies of electricity, heating and food for their families, for example, as well as paying off debts to insurance funds?

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

The press reports mentioned by the Honourable Member are inaccurate. The only measure related to Common Agricultural Policy funds in this respect has been proposed by the Greek authorities after having detected that some taxpayers who received Funds from the EU are not paying all the social security contributions due.

It would involve that, in the case of beneficiaries with outstanding social contribution arrears, the debt to the Agricultural Insurance Organisation would be settled through offsetting an equivalent amount of CAP pending payments for the same beneficiary. Concerning direct payments, according to Article 11 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 ([1]) on the financing of the common agricultural policy and Article 29 of Council Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 ([2]) establishing common rules for direct support schemes for farmers, payments relating to the financing of EU direct support schemes have to be disbursed in full to the beneficiaries. Member States have the possibility under the specific conditions set out in the European Court of Justice Case C-132/95 Jensen ([3]) to set-off agricultural payments against outstanding debts to the Member State.

The Commission does not see the link between the proposal, which is being analysed, and securing supplies of electricity, heating and food for farmers.

([1]) OJ L 209, 11.8.2005, p. 1-25.
([2]) OJ L 30, 31.1.2009, p. 16-99.
([3]) Case C-132/95 Bent Jensen and Korn- og Foderstofkompagniet A/S.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011434/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Masacre en la comunidad de San José de Nacahuil: 11 personas asesinadas y 17 gravemente heridas

El pasado 7 de septiembre, varios hombres armados se introdujeron en la comunidad maya kakchikel de San José Nacahuil (Guatemala), asesinaron a 11 personas e hirieron gravemente a otras 17 tras, tal y como ha denunciado la comunidad, una campaña de amedrentamiento en la que participó activamente la Policía Nacional Civil (PNC) dirigida contra los ciudadanos que han participado activamente en las movilizaciones contra las explotaciones mineras en el territorio, concretamente, en el campamento de resistencia pacífica de «La Puya» contra la mina «El Tambor».

El proyecto minero Progreso Siete Derivada, gestionado por la empresa norteamericana Kappes Kassiday & Asocciates KCA y la guatemalteca Exploraciones Mineras de Guatemala S.A. (Exmingua), se vio paralizado en marzo de 2012 por un «plantón» pacífico por parte de ciudadanos de San José del Golfo y San Pedro Ayampuc que, contrarios al proyecto y en defensa de derechos reconocidos en Guatemala, están instalados pacíficamente en el territorio. A la resistencia de los habitantes de estas dos comunidades se sumó desde el principio la participación de la comunidad de San José de Nacahuil.

Los casos de violaciones de los derechos humanos, persecución, amenazas e incluso asesinatos de defensores de los derechos humanos, líderes sociales y activistas de comunidades que rechazan y protestan pacífica y activamente contra la explotación insostenible de los recursos guatemaltecos por parte de transnacionales son, desgraciadamente, cada vez más frecuentes.

Asimismo, recientemente se han publicado estudios que señalan la relación directa entre la existencia de multinacionales dedicadas a la explotación de recursos minerales con el incremento de las violaciones de los derechos humanos en estas regiones de países empobrecidos.

Teniendo en cuenta la cláusula segunda del Acuerdo de Asociación de la UE con los países centroamericanos que exige el respeto de los derechos humanos, ¿piensa la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante expresar al Gobierno guatemalteco su condena por la masacre en la comunidad de San José y exigir que los responsables materiales e intelectuales sean llevados ante la justicia? ¿No considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante necesario que la UE establezca mecanismos efectivos de seguimiento y supervisión del cumplimiento de los derechos humanos con un control estricto de las actuaciones de las empresas europeas en terceros países?

Respuesta de la Alta representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

Inmediatamente después de que se produjeran los trágicos acontecimientos, la Delegación de la UE se puso en contacto con las autoridades competentes para preguntarles por el asunto y subrayar la necesidad de poner a los responsable ante la justicia. Una vez concluidas las investigaciones necesarias, la Fiscal General declaró que el ataque se había perpetrado como represalia por miembros de una banda que extorsionaban a comerciantes locales de San José de Nacahuil. Los principales sospechosos han sido detenidos. No hay indicios de que exista una vinculación con las actividades mineras de la zona. La UE seguirá prestando su apoyo al sistema judicial guatemalteco en sus esfuerzos para mejorar las capacidades forenses, reduciendo así considerablemente la impunidad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011434/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Massacre in the village of San José de Nacahuil: 11 people killed and 17 seriously wounded

On 7 September 2013, a number of armed men entered the Mayan Kaqchikel village of San José Nacahuil (Guatemala). There they killed 11 people and seriously wounded 17 others. As members of the community reported, this came after a campaign of intimidation, actively participated in by the National Civil Police (PNC), against citizens who have been active in protests against mining in the area, specifically in 'La Puya', a peaceful camp of resistance against the 'El Tambor' mine.

The Progreso Siete Derivada mining project, managed by the US company Kappes Cassiday & Associates (KCA) and the Guatemalan company Exploraciones Mineras de Guatemala S.A. (EXMINGUA), was halted in March 2012 by a peaceful 'sit-in' by inhabitants of the villages of San José del Golfo and San Pedro Ayampuc who, in opposition to the project and in defence of recognised rights in Guatemala, are camped peacefully on the land. From the outset, the villagers of San José de Nacahuil had participated in the resistance mounted by the people from these two villages.

Cases of human rights violations, persecution, threats and even the murder of human rights defenders, social leaders and community activists who reject and protest peacefully against the unsustainable exploitation of Guatemalan resources by international companies are, unfortunately, increasingly frequent.

Studies have also been published recently that suggest a direct relationship between the presence of multinational companies engaged in mining mineral resources and the increase in human rights violations in these regions of poor countries.

Considering that the second clause of the EU's Association Agreement with Central American countries requires respect for human rights, will the Vice-President/High Representative express to the Guatemalan Government her condemnation of the massacre in the village of San José and call for those responsible for perpetrating and instigating the massacre to be brought to justice? Does the Vice-President/High Representative not believe that the EU should establish effective mechanisms to monitor and supervise compliance with human rights, with strict control of the activities of European companies in third countries?

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

Right after the tragic events took place, the EU Delegation has contacted the competent authorities to enquire about the case and highlight the need to bring those responsible before justice. After having concluded the required investigations, the Attorney General's office declared that the attack was perpetrated as retaliation by gang members who were extorting local businesses in the village of San José de Nacahuil. The main suspects have been arrested. There are no indications of a link with mining acitivities in the area. The EU will cotinue to support the Guatemalan justice system in its efforts to improve forensic skills, thus lowering significantly impunity.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011435/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Movimientos sísmicos debido al almacenamiento subterráneo de gas en España

Los pasados días 1 y 2 de octubre se produjo una serie de terremotos cerca del límite entre la Comunidad valenciana y Cataluña. Estos terremotos, que fueron precedidos de otros tres durante los días anteriores, alcanzaron la magnitud de 4,2 grados en la escala de Richter.

Dichos terremotos están asociados al proyecto Castor desarrollado por la empresa Escal UGS. Se trata de un proyecto de almacenamiento de gas en un depósito subterráneo. Este tipo de proyectos de almacenamiento ha sido denunciado por numerosas asociaciones ecologistas y grupos políticos por suponer un riesgo potencial de dimensiones desconocidas para los ecosistemas y poblaciones situados en las cercanías de los depósitos de gas.

Los movimientos sísmicos ocurridos en España confirman los riesgos a los que se está sometiendo a la población europea. Pese a la abundante evidencia científica que existe sobre el riesgo sísmico de este tipo de prácticas de almacenaje, así como otras técnicas como la fractura hidráulica, las instituciones europeas han aprobado la introducción de las mismas. Esta actitud inconsciente está poniendo en peligro miles de vidas, puesto que se trata de riesgos complejos que son difícilmente predecibles y que los sistemas de seguridad y control que se aplican en la actualidad escasamente pueden contener.

¿Conoce la Comisión los citados terremotos y su relación con el proyecto Castor? ¿Tiene información la Comisión sobre los estudios de impacto ambiental del mismo?

¿Considera la Comisión que ante los impredecibles riesgos sísmicos se deben detener este y todos los proyectos que en la actualidad estén desarrollando prácticas similares?

¿Piensa la Comisión instar a España a que detenga el desarrollo de todos los proyectos similares debido al claro riesgo que supone?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de diciembre de 2013)

Con relación a los estudios de impacto ambiental realizados para el proyecto Castor, la Comisión remite a Su Señoría a las respuestas que diera a las preguntas escritas E-3789/2010 y E11478/11, en las que recordaba que, tras haberse realizado una investigación, no había podido encontrarse ninguna infracción de la normativa medioambiental aplicable en la EU.

La Comisión tiene conocimiento de que las autoridades competentes españolas están llevando a cabo nuevas pruebas para confirmar la relación entre el citado proyecto y los terremotos a los que se refieren esas preguntas escritas y poder decidir así el seguimiento que haya de darse a este problema. Entretanto, las autoridades han decidido detener la ejecución del proyecto.

Los Estados miembros son los responsables principales de la exacta y puntual transposición de las directivas, así como de la correcta aplicación y ejecución de la totalidad del acervo. Es, por lo tanto, responsabilidad suya decidir la continuación o la suspensión de la actividad de los proyectos que utilicen técnicas similares.

En cuanto a los presuntos riesgos de este tipo de proyectos, la Comisión se remite a su respuesta conjunta a las preguntas escritas E-011199/2013, E-011239/2013, E-011240/2013 y E-011243/2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011632/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(11 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Impatto ambientale delle piattaforme di stoccaggio gas

Il Progetto Castor, cofinanziato anche dalla Banca europea per gli investimenti, è un deposito artificiale atto a fungere da riserva strategica di gas naturale per il mercato spagnolo, e consiste in una piattaforma marittima al largo del Golfo di Valencia collegata ad un antico giacimento esaurito negli anni '70, quello di Amposta, per iniettarvi il gas naturale dalla rete ad una profondità di 1750 m al di sotto del mare.

Il funzionamento del deposito del progetto Castor avviene tramite iniezioni di gas naturale nel serbatoio che va a rimpiazzare l'acqua grazie agli strati di calcare di natura porosa. Il gas è intrappolato nel serbatoio a causa dell'esistenza di roccia impermeabile che sigilla gli strati superiori. Per recuperare il gas immagazzinato viene iniettata nel serbatoio dell'acqua e il gas da trattare viene estratto e restituito alla rete.

Il progetto Castor ha iniziato ad operare nel maggio 2012, nell'aprile 2012 si è effettuata la prima iniezione di gas nel serbatoio.

Fin dal mese di aprile del 2012, con un terremoto di 3,1 gradi della scala Richter in prossimità della piattaforma di iniezione, è stata osservata un'attività sismica insolita per la zona.

Considerato che:

— da metà settembre del 2013 ci sono state diverse centinaia di terremoti nella zona, e solo nell'ultimo mese di attività si sono registrati circa 300 sismi, per terminare col terremoto dello scorso 1° ottobre di 4,2 gradi;

— questo sciame sismico ha convinto il ministro dell'Industria iberico, José Manuel Soria, a chiudere l'impianto lo scorso 26 settembre, in attesa di conoscere i risultati di studi geologici che dovranno accertare se Castor ne sia la causa;

si domanda alla Commissione:

1. di quali informazioni dispone riguardo agli eventuali rischi derivanti da questo tipo di attività di stoccaggio di gas;

2. se intende approfondire la questione e fornire al Parlamento informazioni in merito.

Risposta congiunta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(2 dicembre 2013)

In relazione agli studi sull'impatto ambientale effettuati per il progetto Castor, la Commissione rimanda l'onorevole parlamentare alle risposte alle interrogazioni scritte E-3789/2010 e E11478/11 nelle quali si evidenzia che l'inchiesta realizzata non ha riscontrato alcuna potenziale violazione della pertinente normativa UE in materia ambientale.

La Commissione al corrente del fatto che le autorità spagnole competenti stanno attualmente realizzando ulteriori prove per verificare il rapporto tra il progetto suddetto e gli eventi sismici cui fanno riferimento le interrogazioni scritte di cui sopra al fine di mettere in atto un follow-up adeguato. Le autorità hanno nel frattempo deciso di interrompere la gestione del progetto.

Gli Stati membri hanno la responsabilità primaria del recepimento tempestivo ed accurato delle direttive, nonché della corretta applicazione e attuazione dell'intero *acquis*. Pertanto è loro responsabilità decidere se continuare o sospendere l'attività dei progetti che prevedono l'impiego di pratiche analoghe.

Per quanto riguarda i presunti rischi legati a questo tipo di progetti la Commissione rimanda alla risposta congiunta alle interrogazioni scritte E-011199/2013, E-011239/2013, E-011240/2013 e E-011243/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011435/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Earthquakes due to underground gas storage in Spain

On 1 and 2 October 2013, a series of earthquakes occurred close to the border between the regions of Valencia and Catalonia. These earthquakes, which were preceded by others in the days before, reached a magnitude of 4.2 on the Richter scale.

The earthquakes are linked to the Castor project being undertaken by the company, Escal UGS. This is a project to store gas in an underground storage facility. Storage projects of this kind have drawn criticism from many environmental associations and political groups for posing a potential risk of unknown dimensions to ecosystems and towns located near to the gas storage facilities.

The earthquakes that have occurred in Spain confirm the risks to which the European population is being exposed. Despite abundant scientific evidence of the seismic risk in this type of storage practice, and in other techniques like hydraulic fracturing, the European institutions have approved their introduction. This irresponsible attitude is endangering thousands of lives, as complex risks are involved that are difficult to predict, and which the applicable safety and control systems can scarcely contain.

Is the Commission aware of the earthquakes mentioned and their relationship with the Castor project? Does the Commission have any information on any environmental impact studies carried out on this project?

Does the Commission believe that, given the unpredictable seismic risk, this, and all other projects currently using similar practices, should be stopped?

Will the Commission urge Spain to halt development on all similar projects due to the clear risk involved?

Question for written answer E-011632/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(11 October 2013)

Subject: Environmental impact of gas storage platforms

The Castor Project, co-financed by the European Investment Bank, is an artificial storage facility intended to serve as a strategic natural gas reserve for the Spanish market. It consists of an offshore platform in the Gulf of Valencia, connected to the former Amposta oilfield, which was exhausted in the 1970s, where natural gas is injected from the grid at a depth of 1 750 m.

The Castor Project's storage facility functions by injecting natural gas into a reservoir, which replaces water through layers of naturally porous limestone. The gas is trapped in the reservoir by impermeable rock that seals the upper strata. Water is injected into the reservoir to recover the stored gas, which is extracted for treatment and returned to the grid.

The Castor Project began operations in May 2012, and the first gas injection into the reservoir was made in April 2012.

Unusual seismic activity for the area has been observed since April 2012, after an earthquake near the injection platform that measured 3.1 on the Richter scale.

There have been many hundreds of earthquakes in the area since mid-September 2013 — around 300 earthquakes were recorded last month — culminating in the earthquake of 1 October, which measured 4.2 on the Richter scale. This series of tremors led the Spanish Minister for Industry, José Manuel Soria, to close the plant on 26 September while awaiting the results of geological studies to ascertain whether Castor was the cause.

What information does the Commission have on the possible risks of this type of gas storage activity?

Does it intend to study the question and provide Parliament with information on this subject?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

In relation to the environmental impact studies carried out for the Castor project, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answers to Written Questions E-3789/2010 and E11478/11, where it recalled that, after having carried out an investigation, it could not find a potential breach of the applicable EU environmental law.

The Commission is aware that the Spanish competent authorities are now carrying out further tests to ascertain the relationship between this project and the earthquakes referred to in these Written Questions in order to decide accordingly the appropriate follow-up. In the meantime, the authorities have decided to halt the project's operation.

Member States are primary responsible for the timely and accurate transposition of directives as well as the correct application and implementation of the entire *acquis*. It is therefore their responsibility to decide on the continuation or suspension of the activity of projects using similar practices.

With regard to the alleged risks of this type of project, Commission refers to the joint answer given to Written Questions E-011199/2013; E-011239/2013; E-011240/2013 and E-011243/2013.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011437/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Caracol manzana

El caracol manzana se encuentra en el catálogo de especies invasoras del Ministerio de Agricultura del Reino de España. El Estado español tienen la obligación, sobretodo desde una perspectiva medioambiental, de establecer y ejecutar técnica y económicamente con las administraciones respectivas un plan de lucha contra dicha especie invasora.

A la luz de lo anterior y teniendo en cuenta el Reglamento n° 473/2013:

¿tiene la Comisión conocimiento de que el Gobierno del Reino de España esté poniendo los recursos necesarios, esto es, económicos y técnicos, para hacer el plan de choque necesario para la erradicación del caracol manzana?

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

La Comisión Europea ha reconocido el impacto negativo del caracol manzana (*Pomacea insularum*), especie esta que está sujeta a medidas de emergencia para impedir su introducción y propagación en la Unión, tal y como dispone la Decisión 2012/697/UE ([1]), relativa a las medidas aplicables contra los caracoles del género *Pomacea*. En virtud de la Directiva 2000/29/CE ([2]), las autoridades españolas se han beneficiado desde 2010 de la cofinanciación fitosanitaria de la UE para ayudarlas a realizar inspecciones ad hoc y a aplicar medidas de erradicación contra ese caracol.

La dotación presupuestaria disponible para apoyar las medidas de erradicación en España es una cuestión de competencia nacional.

([1]) DO L 311 de 10.11.2012.
([2]) DO L 169 de 10.7.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011437/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: The apple snail

The apple snail is in the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture's catalogue of invasive species. The Spanish State is obliged, above all from an environmental point of view, to establish and implement — technically and economically — a plan to combat this invasive species, in conjunction with the respective authorities.

In view of the above and having regard to Regulation No 473/2013:

Does the Commission know whether the Government of the Kingdom of Spain is providing the necessary economic and technical resources to draw up an emergency plan needed to eradicate the apple snail?

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

The negative impact of the apple snail (*Pomacea insularum)* has been recognised by the European Commission and this species is subject to emergency measures to prevent its introduction into and the spread within the Union in accordance with Decision 2012/697/EU ([1]) on measures against snails of the genus *Pomacea*. EU plant health co-financing has been granted to Spain since 2010 under Directive 2000/29/EC ([2]) to help the authorities in implementing ad hoc inspection and eradication measures against the apple snail.

The budget allocation made available to support eradication measures in Spain is a matter that falls under national competence.

([1]) OJ L 311, 10.11.2012.
([2]) OJ L 169, 10.7.2000.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011438/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Programa Life+ en el Estado español

El Programa Life+ tiene como principal objetivo, entre otros, controlar y facilitar el buen funcionamiento de los sistemas naturales en la EU con el objetivo de favorecer la biodiversidad.

El caracol manzana es considerada una de las 100 especies invasoras más perjudiciales del mundo. Es una especie voraz muy resistente al tratamiento con productos sanitarios, ya que dispone de unos opérculos que cierran la coquilla. Tiene además una extrema capacidad de resistencia a las condiciones ambientales extremas.

A la luz de lo anterior, ¿no cree la Comisión que resulta prioritario aprobar el Proyecto Life+ «Threatened Wetlands biodiversity & Agriculture in Europe: Battling the invasive Apple Snail in the Ebro delta (Spain)», defendido por el Departament d'Agricultura, Ramaderia, Pesca, Alimentació i Medi Natural (DAAM) (Consejería de Agricultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya)?

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

El proyecto LIFE+ propuesto a que se refiere Su Señoría se centraba, principalmente, en el cultivo de arroz, no en los sistemas naturales. Por ello, la propuesta de financiarlo a través del programa Naturaleza y Biodiversidad de LIFE+ no cumple los criterios de este, que son «proteger, conservar, restaurar, supervisar y desarrollar el funcionamiento de los sistemas naturales, los hábitats naturales, y la flora y la fauna silvestres, con el fin de detener la pérdida de biodiversidad».

Con todo, desde 201, la UE concede cofinanciación fitosanitaria a España al amparo de la Directiva 2000/29/CE ([1]) para ayudar a las autoridades españolas a efectuar inspecciones y aplicar medidas *ad hoc* de erradicación del caracol manzana, contribuyendo así al mantenimiento del cultivo de arroz en el delta del Ebro.

([1]) DO L 169 de 10.7.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011438/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: The Life+ Programme in Spain

The Life+ Programme's main objectives include monitoring and facilitating the functioning of natural systems in the EU to promote biodiversity.

The apple snail is considered one of the world's 100 most damaging invasive species. It is a voracious species that is very resistant to treatment with plant health products, as it has opercula that seal its shell. It also has a tremendous capacity to withstand extreme environmental conditions.

In view of the above, does the Commission not think it a priority to approve the Life+ Project, 'Threatened Wetlands Biodiversity & Agriculture in Europe: Battling the invasive Apple Snail in the Ebro delta (Spain)', supported by the Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Food and the Environment of the Regional Government of Catalonia?

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

The main focus of the proposed LIFE+ project in question was on rice cultivation, and not on natural systems. Therefore this proposal for funding under LIFE+ Nature and Biodiversity does not satisfy the criteria which are 'to protect, conserve, restore, monitor and facilitate the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, and wild flora and fauna, with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity'.

However, EU plant health co-financing has been granted to Spain since 2010 under Directive 2000/29/EC ([1]) to help the authorities in implementing *ad hoc* inspection and eradication measures against the apple snail, thus contributing to maintain rice cultivation in the Ebro Delta.

([1]) OJ L 169, 10.7.2000.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011439/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Nuevo drama evitable en el Mediterráneo: centenares de personas muertas en las costas de Lampedusa al intentar llegar a Europa

Ayer volvieron a hacerse patentes las consecuencias dramáticas y vergonzosas de la política migratoria europea —conocida como «Europa fortaleza»— y la ineficacia de Frontex para evitar dramas humanos, al llegar a la costa de la isla italiana de Lampedusa más de cien cuerpos sin vida y al tener conocimiento de que más de doscientos cincuenta seres humanos que viajaban junto a estos están aún desaparecidos.

Más allá de la evidente necesidad de que la UE lleve a cabo un cambio radical en sus fallidas políticas migratorias, de asilo y de control de fronteras —centrándose en los derechos humanos y en la necesidad de responder a las emergencias humanitarias en países empobrecidos—, para evitar dramas humanos como el que se destapó ayer es igualmente necesaria la implementación inmediata de medidas efectivas de auxilio en el mar Mediterráneo, donde se estima que, desde 1990, han perdido la vida más de veinte mil personas, en su intento por llegar hacia Europa.

Además de las declaraciones inocuas de diferentes miembros de Gobiernos de Estados miembros —que lamentan dramas y hechos como el de ayer mientras, a la vez, recortan políticas mitigadoras basadas en la cooperación al desarrollo—, es inaceptable que la UE siga defendiendo políticas que, inevitablemente, condenan a la migración obligada a miles de personas de los países empobrecidos que huyen así de tragedias como el hambre, la guerra o la pobreza provocadas directa o indirectamente por acciones u omisiones de Gobiernos de Estados miembros y/o empresas transnacionales de capital europeo. Así, en muchos de los casos, estas personas se ven obligadas a emigrar para sobrevivir. Como ejemplo —que recogía ya en mi pregunta escrita E-006760/2011—, miles de ciudadanos se han visto obligados a emigrar en los últimos años de Somalia, al haber disminuido brutalmente los recursos pesqueros con los que sobrevivían miles de familias por la presencia y captura de estos recursos por parte de flotas pesqueras europeas.

¿Piensa implementar la Comisión nuevas medidas actualmente a su alcance para poner fin a la muerte evitable de miles de personas cada año cerca de sus fronteras?

Al no disponer la Comisión —según afirma en su respuesta E-006760/2011— de datos ni estudios específicos sobre el fenómeno que podemos denominar «migración forzada», es decir, migración provocada directa o indirectamente por las actividades en países empobrecidos de empresas europeas, respaldadas por Gobiernos y la propia UE, ¿considera necesario la Comisión Europea realizar estos estudios, así como abordar el fenómeno y replantear sus acuerdos y políticas hacia los países empobrecidos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión Europea manifiesta su profunda preocupación por los acontecimientos que tuvieron lugar en alta mar frente a la costa de Lampedusa, tal y como lo demuestra la visita a la isla del Presidente Barroso y de la Comisaria Malmström el 9 de octubre tras las trágicas muertes de más de 300 personas. En esa ocasión, la Comisión reiteró su pleno apoyo a los Estados miembros que hubieron de llevar a cabo complejas operaciones de búsqueda y rescate, y que recibieron un gran número de inmigrantes; así, se asumió el compromiso de aportar un total de 30 millones de euros para el refuerzo de las tareas de patrulla y del sistema de asilo en Italia. Una parte de estos fondos se empleará para mejorar la presencia de Frontex en la zona. De este modo, esta iniciativa se añade a las actividades de apoyo ya existentes dirigidas a Italia, tales como el plan de apoyo que actualmente lleva a cabo la Oficina Europea de Apoyo al Asilo. La próxima activación de EUROSUR supondrá una importante contribución a esta iniciativa. Además, la Comisión está dispuesta a apoyar a los países que actualmente son objeto de presiones debido a la afluencia de solicitantes de asilo que reciben, en particular debido a la crisis en Siria.

En línea con los debates mantenidos en el último Consejo de Justicia y Asuntos de Interior, la Comisión ha creado y preside un Grupo Especial para el Mediterráneo. Así pues, este grupo reúne a todos los Estados miembros y a las agencias competentes, y en diciembre presentó los resultados de su labor al Consejo JAI, incluidas varias propuestas para desarrollar acciones destinadas a reducir el riesgo de que se produzcan tragedias similares en el futuro.

En relación con su propuesta de realizar un estudio al respecto, la Comisión conoce la existencia de una serie de estudios sobre la emigración forzada y, por tanto, no considera que resulte pertinente llevar a cabo tal acción de entre las posibles iniciativas que se puedan emprender en respuesta a la tragedia de Lampedusa, puesto que estas están destinadas a alcanzar un impacto operativo inmediato.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011439/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: New avoidable tragedy in the Mediterranean: hundreds of people killed off the coast of Lampedusa while trying to reach Europe

Yesterday, the tragic and shameful consequences of European migration policy — known as 'fortress Europe' — and Frontex's inability to prevent human tragedies, once again become apparent, when over 100 dead bodies washed up on the shores of the Italian island of Lampedusa, and it emerged that more than 250 human beings that had travelled with them were still missing.

Beyond the obvious need for the EU to make radical changes to its failed policies on immigration, asylum and border control — focusing on human rights and the need to respond to humanitarian emergencies in poor countries –, if human tragedies such as the one that came to light yesterday are to be prevented, it is also necessary to implement immediate and effective rescue measures in the Mediterranean Sea, where it is estimated that more than 20 000 people have perished attempting to reach Europe since 1990.

As well as the anodyne statements made by various members of Member State governments — lamenting tragedies and events like yesterday's while, at the same time, cutting back on mitigation policies based on development cooperation –, it is equally unacceptable for the EU to continue advocating policies that inevitably doom thousands of people who flee from impoverished countries and the tragedies of famine, war and poverty, caused, directly or indirectly, by the actions and inaction of Member State governments and/or European-owned international corporations, to a situation of forced migration. In many cases, these people are thus forced to migrate to survive. As an example — already given in my written Question E-006760/2011 –, thousands of Somalis have been forced to emigrate from their country in recent years as the fishery resources on which thousands of families survived have been brutally depleted by the presence of European fishing fleets and their catches.

Does the Commission intend to implement new measures, currently within its power, to put an end to the preventable deaths, near its borders, of thousands of people each year?

As the Commission, according to its reply E-006760/2011, does not have specific data or studies on the phenomenon of 'forced migration', i.e. migration caused directly or indirectly by the activities of European companies in poor countries, backed by governments and the EU itself, does the Commission think that such studies should be carried out, and that the phenomenon should be addressed and its agreements and policies towards poor countries reconsidered?

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

The European Commission is deeply concerned by the events off the coast of Lampedusa, as demonstrated by the visit President Barroso and Commissioner Malmström paid to the island on the 9 October in the aftermath of the tragic death of over 300 migrants. On that occasion the Commission reiterated its full support to Member States having to undertake complex Search and Rescue operations and receiving a large number of migrants, including by pledging a total of EUR 30 million for the reinforcement of patrolling and the strengthening of the asylum system in Italy. A part of these funds will be used in order to upgrade the Frontex presence in the area. This will come on top of already existing support activities targeted at Italy such as the Support Plan being implemented by the EASO. The upcoming activation of Eurosur will make an important contribution to this effort. In addition, the Commission is seeking to support countries which are currently under pressure due to the inflow of asylum-seekers they are receiving, in particular due to the Syrian crisis.

In line with the discussions in the last Justice and Home Affairs Council the Commission has set up a dedicated Task Force for the Mediterranean under its presidency. This Task Force brings together all Member States and relevant agencies. It presented the results of its work in December to the JHA Council, including proposals for actions aimed at reducing the risk of similar tragedies occurring in the future.

Concerning your proposal for a study the Commission is aware that a number of studies on forced migration are available and would not consider it among the actions to be taken in response to the Lampedusa tragedy, as these are aimed at achieving an immediate operational impact.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011440/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Comercio y trazabilidad de los productos importados de Guatemala

El último estudio de la Fundación Codeca titulado «Situación Laboral de Trabajadores/as Agrícolas en Guatemala», publicado el pasado mes de abril, presenta información sobre la gravísima situación que están soportando los trabajadores de dicho sector en el país centroamericano.

Los trabajadores agrícolas suelen ofrecer sus servicios en grandes fincas dedicadas a cultivos de exportación, muy relacionados con la demanda internacional de la que la Unión Europea es en buena parte responsable. Cultivos como la caña de azúcar, el café, la palma africana, etc. están casi íntegramente destinados a la exportación y son los que registran peores condiciones. En concreto, la caña de azúcar, debido a su difícil mecanización, absorbe el 26 % de la mano de obra agrícola del país, siendo estos los trabajadores que deben soportar las peores condiciones higiénico-sanitarias.

Tanto los trabajadores de la caña como el resto de jornaleros del sector agrario son víctimas de unas condiciones laborales absolutamente injustas e indignas, y se hallan ante una completa indefensión dentro de las fincas agrícolas donde trabajan. En dichas fincas no existe el Estado ni se realizan controles para garantizar que se cumple la legislación laboral, solo existen cuerpos de seguridad privados que defienden los intereses de los propietarios.

Según el citado estudio y denuncias de ONG y diferentes actores sociales y políticos del país, las violaciones de los convenios internacionales sobre el trabajo son numerosísimas: el trabajo infantil, la prohibición de la sindicación, el trabajo de menores, la ausencia de permiso alguno por maternidad, la concatenación de contratos temporales a trabajadores permanentes, etc.

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante los escandalosos datos sobre las terribles condiciones que los trabajadores agrarios afrontan diariamente en Guatemala?

Teniendo en cuenta el marco de aplicación del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Centroamérica, ¿piensa instar a Guatemala a que realice un control efectivo de las condiciones laborales de los trabajadores agrarios y aplique de manera efectiva los convenios de la OIT que ha ratificado, así como sus propias leyes en el ámbito laboral?

Respuesta de la alta representante y vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2013)

Los derechos laborales siguen siendo una de las prioridades en el diálogo en curso con Guatemala. La UE hace hincapié en la necesidad de respetar la legislación laboral vigente y de consolidar las instituciones responsables. Están en curso varias medias legislativas destinadas a mejorar los sistemas de inspección del trabajo. El seguimiento de las condiciones laborales se realiza en gran medida en el marco de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (OIT). Dos misiones tripartitas de alto nivel visitaron Guatemala en 2013 y se ha creado un Programa de Trabajo Decente para los próximos años que se ejecutará con la cooperación técnica de la OIT. Además, la firma de un Memorándum de Entendimiento entre el Gobierno de Guatemala y la Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI) en marzo de 2013 muestra el compromiso de las autoridades con el refuerzo de la aplicación de los convenios fundamentales de la OIT. En octubre de 2013, el Consejo de Administración de la OIT tomó nota de estas conclusiones, así como de un plan de trabajo en el que se esbozan las medidas que deben adoptarse para abordar las recomendaciones de los órganos de control de la OIT. Está previsto un nuevo debate del Consejo de Administración de la OIT en marzo de 2014.

La UE colabora estrechamente con la OIT para promover la ratificación y la aplicación efectiva de las normas laborales internacionales. El Acuerdo de Asociación entre la UE y América Central consta de un capítulo sobre comercio y desarrollo sostenible que hace claramente obligatorio para los países signatarios aplicar de forma efectiva los convenios fundamentales de la OIT. El Acuerdo de Asociación proporcionará un nuevo marco para el diálogo con Guatemala en materia de normas laborales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011440/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Trade in, and traceability of, products imported from Guatemala

The latest study by the CODECA Foundation, entitled 'Employment Status of Agricultural Workers in Guatemala', published in April 2013, provides details of the desperate situation of workers in this sector in the Central American country.

Agricultural workers usually offer their services on large farms dedicated to export crops, which are very closely tied to international demand, for which the European Union is largely responsible. Crops such as sugar cane, coffee and African oil palm, grown almost entirely for export, are associated with the worst conditions. Specifically, sugar cane, due to the difficulty in mechanising its cultivation, accounts for 26% of the country's agricultural labour force, and these are the workers who must endure the worst health and hygiene conditions.

Both sugar cane workers and other day labourers in the agricultural sector are the victims of absolutely unjust and undignified working conditions, finding themselves in a position of complete helplessness on the farms where they work. On these farms, the State does not exist nor does it carry out any checks to ensure compliance with labour legislation. There are only private security forces to defend the owners' interests.

According to the study mentioned above, and to reports by non-governmental organisations and various social and political actors in the country, there are countless violations of international labour conventions: child labour, prohibition of trade union membership, under-age workers, no maternity leave, concatenation of temporary contracts for permanent workers, etc.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the scandalous details of the terrible conditions faced daily by agricultural workers in Guatemala?

In view of the framework for applying the EU-Central America Association Agreement, will she urge Guatemala to conduct effective monitoring of the working conditions of agricultural workers and to implement effectively the International Labour Organisation conventions that it has ratified, as well as its own labour laws?

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

Labour rights continue to be one of the priorities in the ongoing dialogue with Guatemala. The EU emphasises the need to respect current labour laws and strengthen the institutions in charge. Several legislative actions aimed at improving labour inspection systems are underway. Monitoring of the labour conditions takes place largely within the framework of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Two ILO high-level tripartite missions visited Guatemala during 2013 and a Decent Work Programme has been set up for the coming years to be implemented with ILO technical cooperation. Furthermore, the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Government of Guatemala and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in March 2013 shows the commitment of the authorities to further strengthen the implementation of the fundamental ILO conventions. In October 2013, the ILO Governing Body took note of these findings and also of a roadmap outlining steps to be taken to address recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies. A new discussion of the ILO Governing body is forseen for March 2014.

The EU works closely with the ILO in promoting the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards. The Association Agreement between the EU and Central America has a chapter on trade and sustainable development which clearly makes it an obligation for the signatory countries to effectively implement the ILO's Fundamental Conventions. The Association Agreement will provide an additional framework for the dialogue with Guatemala on labour standards.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011441/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Comercio y trazabilidad de productos importados de Guatemala

En el último estudio de la Fundación Codeca, titulado «*Situación laboral de trabajadores/as agrícolas en Guatemala*» y publicado el pasado mes de abril, se da a conocer información sobre las durísimas condiciones a las que están sometidos los trabajadores de dicho sector en este país centroamericano.

Los trabajadores del sector agrario suelen vender su fuerza de trabajo en grandes fincas dedicadas a cultivos de exportación, muy ligados a la demanda internacional, en gran medida procedente de la Unión Europea. Ciertos cultivos, como la caña de azúcar, el café y la palma africana, se destinan casi íntegramente a la exportación y son los que registran las peores condiciones. En concreto, la caña de azúcar, debido a su difícil mecanización, absorbe el 26 % de la mano de obra agrícola del país y los trabajadores que la cultivan deben soportar las peores condiciones higiénico-sanitarias.

Tanto los trabajadores de la caña como el resto de jornaleros del sector agrario son víctimas de unas condiciones laborales absolutamente injustas e indignas y se encuentran en la más completa indefensión en las fincas agrícolas donde trabajan. En dichas fincas no interviene el Estado ni se efectúan controles para garantizar que se cumple la legislación laboral; solo existen cuerpos de seguridad privados que garantizan los intereses de los propietarios.

Según el citado estudio y diversas denuncias de ONG y diferentes actores sociales y políticos del país, las violaciones de los convenios internacionales sobre el trabajo son numerosísimas: trabajo infantil, prohibición de la sindicación, trabajo de menores, ausencia de permiso alguno por maternidad, concatenación de contratos temporales a trabajadores permanentes, etc.

¿Conoce la Comisión los escandalosos datos sobre las terribles condiciones que los trabajadores agrarios afrontan diariamente en Guatemala?

¿Qué instrumentos se prevén en el Acuerdo de Asociación UE-América Central para comprobar que el cultivo de este tipo de productos importados por la Unión Europea respeta los convenios de la OIT así como la propia legislación guatemalteca? ¿Se planteará la introducción de sistemas de trazabilidad para los productos agrícolas importados desde Guatemala que garanticen la visibilidad de las condiciones laborales en origen? ¿Se planteará exigir a Guatemala un sistema de inspecciones viable que garantice que se cumplen los derechos laborales y los convenios de la OIT?

Respuesta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión
(29 de noviembre de 2013)

Los derechos laborales siguen siendo una prioridad en el diálogo con Guatemala. La UE hace hincapié en la necesidad de respectar la legislación laboral actual, mejorar el marco legislativo y reforzar las instituciones responsables. Están en curso varias medias legislativas destinadas a mejorar los sistemas de inspección del trabajo. La Organización Internacional del Trabajo llevó a cabo dos misiones tripartitas de alto nivel en Guatemala durante 2013, y se estableció un Programa de Trabajo Decente que se aplicará con la cooperación técnica de la OIT. En marzo de 2013, el Gobierno de Guatemala firmó también un Memorándum de Entendimiento con la Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI) a fin de reforzar en mayor medida la aplicación de los convenios fundamentales de la OIT.

Además, el pilar comercial del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-América Central contiene un capítulo sobre «comercio y desarrollo sostenible» que garantiza un equilibrio adecuado entre los logros económicos, sociales y medioambientales. Este capítulo prevé disciplinas fuertes en cuestiones laborales y medioambientales específicas del comercio, en particular en la aplicación eficaz, tanto en la legislación como en la práctica, de los Convenios fundamentales de la OIT que cubren todas las normas laborales básicas. Este diálogo cada vez más intenso con América Central dará a la UE la oportunidad de aumentar el seguimiento de las condiciones laborales en la región, incluida Guatemala.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011441/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Trade in, and traceability of, products imported from Guatemala

The latest study by the CODECA Foundation, entitled 'Employment Status of Agricultural Workers in Guatemala', published in April 2013, provides details of the extremely harsh conditions workers are subjected to in this sector in this Central American country.

Workers in the agricultural sector usually sell their labour services on large farms dedicated to export crops, which are very closely tied to international demand, for which the European Union is largely responsible. Some crops, such as sugar cane, coffee and African oil palm, are grown almost entirely for export and are associated with the worst conditions. Specifically, sugar cane, due to the difficulty in mechanising its cultivation, accounts for 26% of the country's agricultural labour force, and the workers who cultivate it must endure the worst health and hygiene conditions.

Both sugar cane workers and other day labourers in the agricultural sector are the victims of absolutely unjust and undignified working conditions, finding themselves in a position of complete helplessness on the farms where they work. The State does not intervene on these farms, nor does it carry out any checks to ensure compliance with labour legislation; there are only private security forces to defend the owners' interests.

According to the study mentioned above and various reports by non-governmental organisations and various social and political actors in the country, there are countless violations of international labour conventions: child labour, prohibition of trade union membership, under-age workers, no maternity leave, concatenation of temporary contracts for permanent workers, etc.

Is the Commission aware of the scandalous details of the terrible conditions faced daily by agricultural workers in Guatemala?

What instruments does the EU-Central America Association Agreement provide for to verify that cultivation of such crops imported by the European Union respects International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions and Guatemala's own legislation? Will the Commission consider introducing traceability systems for agricultural products imported from Guatemala to ensure the visibility of working conditions at source? Will it consider calling on Guatemala to introduce a workable system of inspections to ensure compliance with labour rights and ILO conventions?

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

Labour rights continue to be a priority in the dialogue with Guatemala. The EU emphasises the need to respect current labour laws, improve the framework and strengthen the institutions in charge. Several legislative actions aimed at improving labour inspection systems are underway. The International Labour Organisation carried out two high-level tripartite missions to Guatemala during 2013 and a Decent Work Programme has been set up for the coming years to be implemented with ILO technical cooperation. The Government of Guatemala has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in March 2013 in a bid to further strengthen the implementation of the fundamental ILO conventions.

In addition, the Trade pillar of the EU-Central America Association Agreement contains a 'trade and sustainable development' chapter, ensuring that an appropriate balance is struck between economic, social and environmental achievements. This chapter provides for robust disciplines on trade-specific labour and environmental issues, in particular on effective implementation both in law and in practice of the ILO Fundamental Conventions, covering all the core labour standards. This ever-stronger dialogue with Central America will give the EU the opportunity to enhance the monitoring of labour conditions in the region, including in Guatemala.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011442/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(7 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Riconoscimento del permesso provvisorio di guida

La normativa europea in materia di patenti stabilisce il reciproco riconoscimento delle stesse tra gli Stati membri (art. 2 direttiva 2006/126/CE), ma lo stesso non accade per quanto riguarda il permesso provvisorio di guida rilasciato nell'ipotesi di smarrimento o di furto della patente. In Italia, nel caso in cui si verifichi tale eventualità, viene rilasciato dalle autorità competenti un permesso provvisorio di guida valido soltanto nel territorio nazionale. La patente duplicata viene spedita dal ministero alla residenza dell'utente: se il duplicato non perviene entro 90 giorni, la validità del permesso provvisorio si intende prorogata fino al momento della consegna del duplicato. Nel caso in cui, invece, lo smarrimento o il furto avvengano durante un viaggio in uno Stato membro diverso da quello che ha rilasciato la patente, è necessario rivolgersi alla polizia del luogo e al consolato o all'ambasciata del proprio paese per informarsi su cosa fare.

Questi potrebbero rilasciare un documento provvisorio col quale poter guidare nel paese ospitante per un periodo limitato. Resta il fatto che tali certificati provvisori non sono riconosciuti automaticamente negli altri paesi dell'UE. Ne consegue che, malgrado i progressi compiuti in materia di armonizzazione delle norme relative alle patenti di guida, sussistono divergenze significative tra gli Stati membri, i quali hanno piena discrezionalità nel riconoscere o meno un titolo provvisorio. Ciò comporta significativi disagi al cittadino che si trovi o che abbia necessità di recarsi in un Stato membro con la propria autovettura, anche in considerazione delle tempistiche necessarie per ottenere il duplicato.

Alla luce di quanto sopra e tenuto conto che la direttiva 2006/126/CE ha evidenziato che le norme relative alle patenti di guida sono elementi indispensabili della politica comune dei trasporti e che il possesso di una patente debitamente riconosciuta dallo Stato membro ospitante è in grado di favorire la libera circolazione e la libertà di stabilimento delle persone, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— il vuoto normativo in materia e l'impedimento alla guida con il solo certificato provvisorio in uno Stato membro diverso da quello che ha rilasciato il titolo costituiscono un impedimento alla libera circolazione nel territorio dell'Unione europea?

— è opportuno un intervento del legislatore europeo in materia?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(25 novembre 2013)

In caso di smarrimento o furto della patente di guida, è lo Stato membro di abituale residenza di un soggetto a dovergli fornire i documenti sostitutivi, compresi gli eventuali permessi provvisori di guida ([1]). Se il furto e lo smarrimento si verificano all'estero, l'interessato deve richiedere l'assistenza delle autorità consolari.

La persona che ha subito il furto o lo smarrimento della patente non perde il diritto di guidare. Pertanto, gli Stati membri che devono far fronte a una situazione di questo tipo devono agire secondo modalità appropriate al loro obbligo di riconoscere tale diritto.

([1]) Articolo 11, paragrafo 5, della direttiva 2006/126/CE, concernente la patente di guida, GU L 403 del 30.12.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011442/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Recognition of temporary driving licences

Under European legislation, driving licences must be mutually recognised by Member States (Article 2 of Directive 2006/126/EC); however this does not happen when it comes to temporary licences issued when a driving licence has been lost or stolen. If a licence is lost or stolen in Italy, the authorities issue a temporary licence valid only in Italy. The ministry sends a replacement licence to the driver's home address and if it has not arrived within 90 days, the validity of the temporary licence is automatically extended until the replacement is delivered. However, if the loss or theft takes place during a visit to a Member State other than the one which issued the licence, the driver must contact the local police and their own country's local consulate or embassy to find out what to do.

The latter might issue a temporary document allowing the person to drive in the host country for a limited time. The fact remains that these temporary licences are not automatically recognised in other EU Member States. This means that, in spite of the progress that has been made on harmonising legislation on driving licences, there are still significant discrepancies between Member States, which may or may not recognise a temporary licence, entirely at their own discretion. This causes considerable inconvenience for anyone who is in or needs to travel to a Member State in their own vehicle, not least because of the time it takes to obtain a replacement licence.

In the light of the above and given that Directive 2006/126/EC emphasises that driving licence legislation is an essential element of the common transport policy and that holding a driving licence duly recognised by the host Member State facilitates the free movement of persons and freedom of establishment:

— Are the legislative vacuum on this subject and the fact that people are prevented from driving with only a temporary licence in a Member State other than that which issued their driving licence an impediment to freedom of movement within the European Union?

— Should the European legislator take action on this subject?

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

When a person's driving licence is lost or stolen, it is the Member State of normal residence which has to provide the person with the necessary replacement, including as the case may be a temporary driving licence ([1]). If this happened while travelling abroad, the person concerned should seek the assistance of the consular authorities.

The person who has lost or whose driving licence has been stolen does not lose his entitlement to drive. Therefore, Member States who are faced with such a situation have to act in a manner which is commensurate with their obligation to recognise that entitlement.

([1]) Article 11(5) of Directive 2006/126/EC on driving licences,OJ L 403, 30.12.2006.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011443/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(7 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Nuova economia sociale di mercato

Il commissario per gli Affari economici e monetari, parlando il 1° ottobre scorso all'European Press Club americano di Parigi, ha dichiarato che è prematuro affermare che la crisi è finita, riconoscendo che in alcuni paesi «la disoccupazione rimane a livelli drammatici». Non ha affermato però che una delle cause dell'aumento spropositato della disoccupazione è stata l'applicazione delle misure d'austerità imposte dall'UE. È opinione comune che questa rigida politica di bilancio abbia contribuito alla disoccupazione e non alla crescita. Il caso del mio paese è paradigmatico. Nell'autunno del 2011 il livello di disoccupazione raggiungeva l'8,5 %. Con il cambio di governo e l'introduzione delle misure imposte da Bruxelles tale livello ha raggiunto ora più del 12 %, con indici mai raggiunti prima per la disoccupazione giovanile. Il commissario ha dichiarato inoltre che le due più grandi economie della zona euro, Germania e Francia, insieme, sono in grado di contribuire alla fine della crisi e che occorre una nuova economia sociale di mercato che implichi la cultura della stabilità, lo spirito imprenditoriale e la giustizia sociale.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, la Commissione

1. ritiene che la situazione attuale sia il frutto di un'economia sociale di mercato insufficiente e inadeguata rispetto alla realtà che stiamo vivendo?

2. Considera quindi che sia necessaria una nuova economia che punti alla crescita e allo sviluppo, o che sia sufficiente puntare sulle proposte suggerite alla Francia e alla Germania che, insieme, come afferma il commissario, sarebbero in grado di contribuire alla fine della crisi?

3. Quali iniziative intende proporre per rinnovare l'economia sociale in vigore e combattere di conseguenza la disoccupazione?

4. Può far sapere quali elementi occorre introdurre nella nuova auspicata economia per raggiungere la giustizia sociale?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(10 dicembre 2013)

L'attuale situazione economica e sociale è una conseguenza dell'impatto della crisi economica e finanziaria, aggravato dalla necessità di correggere gli squilibri macroeconomici accumulati nel corso degli anni. Questa situazione mette a dura prova il modello economico e sociale europeo, che può tuttavia emergere dalla crisi rinvigorito.

Le politiche per il rafforzamento del modello economico e sociale europeo, raccomandate dalla Commissione nelle diverse analisi annuali della crescita ([1]), comprendono una strategia di risanamento di bilancio differenziata e orientata alla crescita, la promozione della crescita e della competitività, il miglioramento dell'efficienza e dell'efficacia della protezione sociale nonché misure per far fronte alla disoccupazione e alle conseguenze sociali della crisi. Poiché questo approccio è stato approvato dal Consiglio dell'UE, non è corretto presentarlo come «misure imposte da Bruxelles».

La Commissione ha proposto una serie di iniziative per migliorare la situazione sociale e affrontare in modo efficace il problema della disoccupazione. Tra queste: il pacchetto sull'occupazione ([2]), il pacchetto sull'occupazione giovanile ([3]), il pacchetto sugli investimenti sociali ([4]), la comunicazione sulla dimensione sociale dell'Unione economica e monetaria ([5]) nonché l'invito a destinare al Fondo sociale europeo una quota minima del 25 % del bilancio assegnato alla politica di coesione.

([1]) Analisi annuali della crescita.
([2]) Comunicazione della Commissione COM(2012)173 def. del 18 aprile 2012.
([3]) Comunicazione della Commissione COM(2012)727 def. del 5 dicembre 2012.
([4]) Comunicazione della Commissione COM(2013)083 def. del 20 febbraio 2013.
([5]) COM(2013)690 def.

Il programma di lavoro della Commissione per il 2014 ([6]) continuerà ad incentrarsi sulla promozione della crescita sostenibile e sul miglioramento dell'occupazione. La Commissione intende portare avanti questo sforzo nell'ambito del semestre europeo, in particolare tramite le raccomandazioni specifiche per paese ([7]). Ad esempio, l'Italia è stata esortata a spostare il carico fiscale dal lavoro alla tassazione sull'ambiente ([8]). La Commissione proporrà nuove iniziative volte a promuovere la mobilità del lavoro e la creazione di posti di lavoro nell'economia verde, insieme a sforzi più ampi per rafforzare l'unione economica e monetaria.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_it.htm

([7]) Raccomandazioni specifiche per paese.

([8]) Raccomandazioni specifiche per paese del 2013. Inoltre, nella relazione 2013 sulle riforme fiscali negli Stati membri dell'UE, l'Italia viene citata, a pagina 47, tra gli Stati membri in cui questo spostamento del carico fiscale offre grandi possibilità. L'Italia presenta infatti una tassazione del lavoro relativamente elevata e dispone di un certo margine per aumentare altre imposte, tra cui quelle ambientali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011443/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: New social market economy

Speaking on 1 October 2013 at the European American Press Club in Paris, the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs stated that it would be premature to claim that the economic crisis is over, acknowledging that in some countries, 'unemployment remains at dramatic levels'. He did not however say that one of the reasons for this huge rise in unemployment has been the implementation of austerity measures imposed by the EU. It is a widely held opinion that this rigid budget policy has contributed to unemployment, but not to growth. My country is a case in point. In autumn 2011, the unemployment level was 8.5%. With the change of government and the measures imposed by Brussels, the level is now higher than 12% and the youth unemployment rate has reached levels never seen before. The Commissioner also declared that between them Germany and France, the two largest economies of the euro area, are in a position to help end the crisis and that a new social market economy is needed, involving a culture of stability, entrepreneurial drive and social justice.

1. Does the Commission believe that the current situation is a product of a social market economy that is inadequate and inappropriate for the present circumstances?

2. Does it therefore believe that a new kind of economy based on growth and development is needed, or should we rely on the proposals put forward by France and Germany, which the Commissioner claims can together help end the economic crisis?

3. What initiatives does the Commission intend to put forward to renew the current social economy and therefore combat unemployment?

4. Can the Commission state what components should be included in this hoped-for new economy to achieve social justice?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2013)

The current economic and social situation reflects the impact of the economic and financial crisis, exacerbated by the need to connect and readjust the macroeconomic imbalances built up along many years. This puts strain on the European economic and social model, which can nevertheless emerge from the crisis stronger and reinvigorated.

Policies that contribute to the reinforcement of the European economic and social model include a differentiated, growth-friendly fiscal consolidation; promoting growth and competitiveness; improving the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection and tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis — as have been recommended by the Commission in successive AGS ([1]). This approach has been endorsed by the EU Council. It is therefore not accurate to present it as 'measures imposed by Brussels'.

The Commission has proposed a number of initiatives to improve the social situation and effectively tackle unemployment. These include the Employment Package ([2]), the Youth Employment Package ([3]), the Social Investment Package ([4]), the communication on the Social Dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union ([5]), and a call that a minimum share of 25% of the budget should be allocated to the Cohesion policy was dedicated to the ESF.

([1]) Annual Growth Surveys.
([2]) Chapeau Communication — COM(2012) 173 of 18 April 2012.
([3]) Chapeau Communication — COM(2012) 727 final of 5 December.
([4]) Chapeau Communication — COM(2013) 083 final of 20 February 2013.
([5]) COM(2013) 690 final.

Promoting sustainable growth and better jobs remains at the centre of the Commission's 2014 Work Programme ([6]), and the Commission will pursue this in the EU Semester, and in particular through the CSRs. ([7]) For example, Italy was advised to shift tax burden from labour to the environment. ([8]) The Commission will come forward with new initiatives on promoting labour mobility and job creation in the green economy, along with wider efforts reinforcing the economic and monetary union.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm
([7]) Country Specific Recommendations.
([8]) 2013 CSRs. Moreover, the report Tax Reforms in the EU Member States 2013 (p.47) mentions Italy as one of the MSs where such tax shift would have potential, because Italy has a relatively high tax on labour and room to increase e.g. environmental taxes.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011445/13
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(7 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Autoritatea Bancară Europeană

În baza Regulamentului nr.1093/2010, orice demers de aducere la îndeplinire a obiectivelor sau prerogativelor Autorității Bancare Europene (ABE) oferă spațiu de obiecții și limitări din partea Consiliului, Comisiei sau a Parlamentului European. Mai mult, în contextul modificărilor introduse de propunerea de regulament de modificare a Regulamentului 1093/2010, Autorității Bancare Europene îi vor fi impuse noi limitări în raport cu Banca Centrală Europeană.

În forma actuală a Regulamentului, procedura de adoptare a standardelor tehnice necesită aprobare din partea Comisiei și, acolo unde este cazul, modificări compatibile cu recomandările primite de la Comisie. Chiar și în acest caz, Comisia poate aduce propriile amendamente și le poate adopta. Așadar, deși împuternicită să elaboreze standarde tehnice, acestea au un efect obligatoriu doar după aprobarea Comisiei.

Luând în considerare necesitatea eficientizării, consecvenței de reglementare și supraveghere prudențială în întreaga Uniune, dar mai ales în contextul realizării unei veritabile Uniuni Bancare, are în vedere Comisia anumite demersuri juridice de întărire a autonomiei în practică a ABE?

Astfel de demersuri ar presupune necesitatea unei modificări a Tratatului de la Lisabona?

Răspuns dat de dl Barnier în numele Comisiei
(2 decembrie 2013)

Astfel cum se prevede în Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1093/2010 de instituire a Autorității Bancare Europene (ABE), acest organism poate elabora, în domeniile specificate în legislația sectorială relevantă, proiecte de standarde tehnice care fac parte dintr-o reglementare unică. Pentru ca proiectele de standarde tehnice să intre în vigoare, Comisia trebuie să le aprobe ulterior prin intermediul unor acte delegate în temeiul articolului 290 din TFUE (standarde tehnice de reglementare) sau prin intermediul unor acte de punere în aplicare în temeiul articolului 291 din TFUE (standarde tehnice de punere în aplicare). În conformitate cu tratatele, o agenție nu poate adopta aceste acte și Comisia este cea care răspunde din punct de vedere politic pentru acestea. Există, de asemenea, norme clare privind implicarea corespunzătoare a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului, precum și a statelor membre.

Regulamentul modificat privind ABE, adoptat împreună cu Regulamentul privind mecanismul unic de supraveghere (MUS) ([1]), are ca obiectiv să mențină rolul ABE și să garanteze faptul că BCE și ABE vor coopera în cadrul Sistemului european de supraveghere financiară. Acest regulament include modificarea modalităților de vot pentru a se asigura că interesele tuturor statelor membre, indiferent dacă sunt participante la mecanismul unic de supraveghere sau nu, sunt luate în considerare în mod adecvat și pentru a permite buna funcționare a ABE în vederea menținerii și aprofundării pieței interne a serviciilor financiare. Funcționarea și performanța ABE, inclusiv problema independenței acesteia, vor fi evaluate în cadrul reexaminării în derulare a Sistemului european de supraveghere financiară, care va duce la elaborarea unui raport care urmează să fie publicat de Comisie în lunile următoare.

([1]) Regulamentul (UE) nr. 1024/2013 al Consiliului din 15 octombrie 2013 de conferire a unor atribuții specifice Băncii Centrale Europene în ceea ce privește politicile legate de supravegherea prudențială a instituțiilor de credit; JO L 287, 29.10.2013, p. 63-89.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011445/13
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: European Banking Authority

Based on Regulation no 1093/2010, any step aimed at implementing the objectives or powers of the European Banking Authority (EBA) provides scope for objections and restrictions from the Council, Commission or Parliament. Moreover, in light of the amendments introduced by the proposal for a regulation amending Regulation no 1093/2010, new restrictions will be imposed on the EBA in relation to the European Central Bank.

In the regulation's current form, the procedure for adopting technical standards requires the Commission's approval and, if appropriate, amendments compliant with the recommendations received from the Commission. Even in this case, the Commission may submit its own amendments and adopt them. Therefore, although the EBA is empowered to draft technical standards, they are only binding after being approved by the Commission.

In view of the need for a more effective and consistent level of regulation and prudential supervision throughout the EU, but especially with establishing a proper Banking Union in mind, does the Commission envisage particular legal measures for increasing the EBA's autonomy in practice?

Would such measures include the need to amend the Lisbon Treaty?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

As set out in the regulation (EU) No 1093/2010 establishing the EBA the latter may in areas specified in the relevant sectoral legislation, develop draft technical standards which form part of the single rulebook. In order to give the draft technical standards legal effect the Commission needs to subsequently endorse them by means of delegated acts pursuant to Article 290 TFEU (Regulatory Technical Standards) or by means of implementing acts pursuant to Article 291 TFEU (Implementing Technical Standards). In accordance with the Treaties, an agency cannot adopt these acts and it is the Commission that is politically accountable for them. There are also clear rules on the respective involvement of the European Parliament and the Council and of Member States.

The amended EBA Regulation, adopted in conjunction with the SSM Regulation ([1]), aims at preserving the role of the EBA and at ensuring that the ECB and the EBA will cooperate within the framework of the European System of Financial Supervision. It includes amendments to the voting arrangements in order to ensure that the interests of all Member States, irrespective of whether they are participating in the Single Supervisory Mechanism or not, are adequately taken into account and to allow for the proper functioning of EBA with a view to maintaining and deepening the internal market for financial services. The functioning and performance of the EBA, including the issue of independence, will be assessed in the framework of the ongoing review of the European System of Financial Supervision, which will result in a report to be published by the Commission in the coming months.

([1]) Council Regulation (EU) No 1024/2013 of 15 October 2013 conferring specific tasks on the European Central Bank concerning policies relating to the prudential supervision of credit institutions; OJ L 287, 29.10.2013, p. 63-89

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011446/13
do Komisji
Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR)
(7 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Rozwój przemysłu turystycznego w Polsce

Według polskiego Ministerstwa Sportu i Turystyki wielkość przemysłu turystycznego w Polsce wzrosła o 11 % w 2012 r., z 14.8 milionów do 15 milionów odwiedzin. Ponieważ turystyka stanowi około 6 % polskiej gospodarki, stały wzrost przemysłu turystycznego może wygenerować nowe miejsca pracy, tak bardzo potrzebne Polsce. W związku z tym:

— Jakie środki podejmuje UE w celu rozwoju turystyki, szczególnie w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej?

— Jaką pomoc UE może zapewnić Polsce w zakresie marketingu turystycznego?

— Sprawne i skuteczne zarządzanie minimalizuje biurokrację wpływającą na turystykę. Jakie „dobre praktyki" może UE zalecić polskiemu rządowi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Antonia Tajaniego w imieniu Komisji
(6 grudnia 2013 r.)

Przeprowadzanie inwestycji na rzecz konkurencyjnego i trwałego wzrostu turystyki może w znacznej mierze przyczynić się do utrzymania istniejących i tworzenia nowych miejsc pracy w sektorze turystyki. Stanowi to główny cel działań Komisji w tym sektorze.

Turystyka należy do priorytetowych obszarów strategii UE dla regionu Morza Bałtyckiego ([1]), w której wraz z innymi państwami uczestniczy również Polska, a także strategii UE na rzecz regionu Dunaju ([2]). Ponadto Europejski Bank Inwestycyjny wspiera współpracę transgraniczną w regionie Morza Bałtyckiego, finansując długoterminowe projekty dotyczące takich dziedzin jak: transport, energia, środowisko, badania, rozwój i innowacje, działania w dziedzinie klimatu oraz MŚP, w tym w sektorze turystyki ([3]).

Komisja wspiera rozwój turystyki, podejmując szereg działań, takich jak prowadzenie międzynarodowej kampanii promocyjnej „Europe, whenever you're ready" ([4]), a także współpracując z Europejską Komisją Turystyki ([5]) (której Polska jest aktywnym członkiem) i udzielając jej wsparcia.

Ograniczenie biurokracji stanowi priorytet dla Komisji, która – poprzez ambitne działania zainicjowane w 2011 r. – podjęła już odpowiednie kroki służące zminimalizowaniu obciążenia regulacyjnego wynikającego z przepisów UE dla MŚP ([6]). W odniesieniu do sektora turystyki w najbliższych miesiącach Komisja zamierza rozpocząć konsultacje społeczne w celu zidentyfikowania wszystkich unijnych, krajowych, regionalnych i lokalnych inicjatyw (legislacyjnych lub nie) oraz praktyk administracyjnych, w przypadku których nadal można zmniejszyć obciążenia, którymi obarczane są MŚP, a zwłaszcza mikroprzedsiębiorstwa, a także obciążenia nakładane na miejsca będące celem podróży turystycznych w UE, administrację publiczną i turystów z Europy i spoza Europy zwiedzających państwa członkowskie UE.

([1]) Strategia dla regionu Morza Bałtyckiego dotyczy najważniejszych wyzwań w zakresie zrównoważonego środowiska, dobrobytu, dostępności, bezpieczeństwa i ochrony, a także wykorzystania możliwości doprowadzenia to tego, by region ten stał się zintegrowanym, skupionym na przyszłości regionem światowej klasy, o wiodącej roli w Europie. Strategia ma na celu koordynację działań zmierzających do bardziej efektywnego rozwoju regionu, prowadzonych przez państwa członkowskie, regiony i gminy, Unię Europejską, organizacje działające w skali całego regionu, instytucje finansowe i organizacje pozarządowe. Stanowi również element regionalnej realizacji zintegrowanej polityki morskiej. Więcej informacji dostępnych jest na następujących stronach internetowych: http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/

([2]) http://www.danube-region.eu/

([3]) http://www.eib.org/attachments/country/the_eib_in_the_baltic_sea_region_en.pdf

([4]) Międzynarodowa kampania promocyjna ma służyć zwiększeniu postrzegania Europy jako atrakcyjnego celu podróży turystycznych poprzez zaprezentowanie jej różnorodności i bogactwa, a także ma zachęcić turystów do zwiedzania Europy. Więcej informacji dostępnych jest na następującej stronie internetowej: http://europa.eu/readyforeurope/

([5]) Europejska Komisja Turystyki jest europejską siecią reprezentującą krajowe organizacje turystyki z 33 państw. Głównym celem Komisji jest wspieranie strategii „Kierunek: Europa!", która ma promować Europę jako kierunku podróży turystycznych w perspektywie średnio- i długookresowej. Więcej informacji dostępnych jest na następującej stronie internetowej: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/international/index_en.htm

([6]) COM(2011) 0803 wersja ostateczna z 23.11.2011 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011446/13
to the Commission
Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Development of the tourist industry in Poland

According to the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Poland's tourist industry grew by 11% in 2012, with the number of visits rising from 14.8 million to 15 million. Given that tourism accounts for around 6% of the Polish economy, steady growth in the tourist industry could create new jobs, which Poland badly needs. With this in mind:

— What steps is the EU taking with the aim of developing tourism, especially in central and eastern Europe?

— What help can the EU give Poland in the area of tourism marketing?

— Efficient, effective management keeps red tape in tourism to a minimum. What 'good practices' can the EU recommend to the Polish Government?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

Investing in the competitive and sustainable growth of tourism can highly contribute to job maintenance and creation in the sector. This is the Commission's main objective for the tourism sector.

Tourism is one of the priority areas of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBR) ([1]) which regroups Poland, amongst other countries, as well as of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region ([2]). Moreover, the European Investment Bank supports the Baltic Sea Region cross-border cooperation by financing long-term projects involving transport, energy, the environment, research, development and innovation (RDI), climate action and SMEs, including in the tourism sector ([3]).

The Commission is supporting tourism promotion via several actions, such as the international communication campaign, 'Europe, whenever you're ready' ([4]), as well as through its cooperation with and support to the European Travel Commission ([5]) (ETC) of which Poland is an active member.

Cutting red-tape is a priority for the Commission and it has already taken steps to minimise the regulatory burden of EU legislation for SMEs through ambitious policy actions launched in 2011 ([6]). With regard to the tourism sector, the Commission intends to launch, in the coming months, a public consultation to identify all the EU, national, regional and local policy initiatives (legislative or not) and administrative practices, where there may still be scope for further reducing the burden for SMEs, and in particular for micro businesses, as well as for EU tourism destinations, public administrations and tourists visiting EU Member States from within or outside Europe.

([1]) The strategy addresses the key challenges of sustainable environment, prosperity, accessibility, and safety and security, but also the opportunities to make this an integrated, forward-looking world-class region, the 'top of Europe'. It aims at coordinating action by Member States, regions and municipalities, the EU, pan-Baltic organisations, financing institutions and non-governmental bodies for a more effective development of the Region. The strategy also provides the regional implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy. For more information: http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/

([2]) http://www.danube-region.eu/

([3]) http://www.eib.org/attachments/country/the_eib_in_the_baltic_sea_region_en.pdf

([4]) The international communication campaign aims to raise the visibility of Europe as a top tourism destination by showcasing its diversity and richness and encourage tourists to travel to Europe. For further information: http://europa.eu/readyforeurope/

([5]) ETC is the European network representing the National Tourism Organisations from 33 countries. The main aim of the Commission is to foster a real 'Destination Europe 2020' strategy for the promotion of Europe as a destination in the medium and long-term. For further information: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/international/index_en.htm

([6]) COM(2011) 803 final of 23.11.2011.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-011447/13
a Bizottság számára
Bánki Erik (PPE)
(2013. október 7.)

Tárgy: A nagybányai (Baia Mare) cianidos technológiát alkalmazó aranybánya újranyitása

Napjainkban számos aranybányászati célú projekt vár engedélyezésre a Kárpát-medencében, jellemzően külföldi – ausztrál, kanadai, ciprusi, orosz és brit – vállalatok számára.

A heves tiltakozásokat kiváltó romániai verespataki bánya mellett nem lehet figyelmen kívül hagyni a már 2000-ben hatalmas ciánkatasztrófát okozó nagybányai (Baia Mare) – cianidos technológiát alkalmazó – aranybánya újranyitásáról szóló tervezeteket. Magyar szempontból további aggodalomra ad okot, hogy egy esetleges újabb nagybányai katasztrófa hosszabb szakaszon érintené a Tisza folyót, mint egy Verespatakról kiinduló.

Nem szabad továbbá elfelejteni, hogy az Európai Parlament 2010-ben a cianidos bányászat betiltásáról határozott, mely politikai akaratnak az Európai Bizottság azóta sem szerzett érvényt.

1. Ismerve az érintett lakosság véleményét és aggodalmát, tudomással van-e, illetve figyelemmel kíséri-e az Európai Bizottság a nagybányai projekt alakulását, különös tekintettel a vonatkozó uniós környezetvédelmi normák maradéktalan betartására?

2. A fent említett határozat fényében és tudva azt, hogy környezetbarátabb aranybányászati technológiák kerülhetnek alkalmazásra, mikorra készíti el végre a cianidos bányászat betiltását célzó jogszabálytervezetet a Bizottság?

Janez Potočnik válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. november 27.)

A Bizottság tisztában van azzal, hogy folytatódnak a nagybányai (Baia Mare) aranybánya újranyitásával kapcsolatos megbeszélések.

A nagybányai katasztrófa óta az Európai Unióban a nyersanyagok biztonságos kitermelését átfogó szabályrendszer biztosítja, amely magában foglalja a környezeti hatásvizsgálatról szóló irányelvet ([1]), a stratégiai környezeti vizsgálatról szóló irányelvet ([2]) és az ásványinyersanyag-kitermelő iparban keletkező hulladék kezeléséről szóló 2006/21/EK irányelvet ([3]).

Az átfogó szabályrendszert azzal a céllal hozták létre, hogy megfelelő végrehajtásával megelőzhető legyen a balesetek bekövetkezése, továbbá azok környezeti hatásai minimálisra csökkenjenek.

A tagállamok illetékes hatóságainak gondoskodniuk kell a helyes végrehajtásról, a jogérvényesítésről és az uniós szabályozásnak való megfelelésről.

A Bizottságnak ebben a szakaszban nincs tudomása az uniós jogszabályok esetleges megsértéséről.

A cianidot alkalmazó bányászati technológiák EU-ban történő alkalmazásának esetleges betiltásával kapcsolatban a Bizottság a tisztelt képviselő figyelmébe ajánlja a Tabadji képviselő úr által beterjesztett P-3589/2010. számú írásbeli kérdésre ([4]) adott válaszát.

([1]) Az egyes köz- és magánprojektek környezetre gyakorolt hatásainak vizsgálatáról szóló 2011/92/EU irányelv, HL L 26., 2012.1.28.
([2]) Az Európai Parlament és a Tanács 2001. június 27-i 2001/42/EK irányelve bizonyos tervek és programok környezetre gyakorolt hatásainak vizsgálatáról, HL L 197., 2001.7.21.
([3]) HL L 102., 2006.04.11.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/hu/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011447/13
to the Commission
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Reopening of the Nagybánya (Baia Mare) gold mine, which uses cyanide technology

There are currently numerous gold-mining projects in the Carpathian Basin awaiting authorisation, most of which are in the hands of foreign (Australian, Canadian, Cypriot, Russian and British) concerns.

In addition to the mine in Verespatak in Romania, which is the subject of large-scale protests, attention must also be paid to the planned reopening of the gold mine at Nagybánya (Baia Mare), which uses cyanide technology and which caused a major cyanide disaster in 2000. From the Hungarian point of view, the fact that a fresh disaster at Nagybánya would affect a longer section of the River Tisza than one at Verespatak is further cause for concern.

It should also not be forgotten that in 2010 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on a ban on the use of cyanide mining technologies, reflecting a political will which the Commission has since then failed to implement.

1. Knowing the views and concerns of the residents affected, is the Commission aware of — and is it monitoring — the progress of the Nagybánya project, with particular regard to ensuring complete compliance with the EU's environmental standards?

2. In the light of the abovementioned resolution, and given that gold mining techniques which are more environmentally-friendly might be introduced, when will the Commission finally draw up draft legislation banning cyanide mining technologies?

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

The Commission is aware that discussions are ongoing as to the reopening of the Nagybánya (Baia Mare) gold mine.

Since the Baia Mare accident, a comprehensive set of rules has been put in place in the European Union to ensure safe mining, including the directive on Environmental Impact Assessment ([1]), the directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment ([2]) and Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries ([3]).

Properly implemented, this set of rules is designed to prevent the occurrence of accidents and minimise their environmental impacts.

The competent authorities of the Member States have to ensure correct implementation, enforcement and compliance with EU legislation.

The Commission has, at this stage, no information relating to potential breaches of EU legislation.

As regards the potential introduction of a ban of the use of cyanide mining technologies in the EU, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question P-3589/2010 by Mr Tabadji ([4]).

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([2]) Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.
([3]) OJ L 102 of 11/4/2006.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-011448/13
a Bizottság számára
Bagó Zoltán (PPE) és Gáll-Pelcz Ildikó (PPE)
(2013. október 7.)

Tárgy: A 93/13/EGK irányelv alkalmazásában figyelembe veendő tények

A Bíróság gyakorlata – a 93/13/EGK irányelv alkalmazási körében – értelmében ([1]) „célszerűnek tűnik a fogyasztó jogi helyzetének vizsgálata abból a szempontból, hogy milyen eszközök állnak a rendelkezésére a nemzeti szabályozás alapján ahhoz, hogy megszüntesse a tisztességtelen feltételek alkalmazását".

Magyarországon a hosszú távú devizaalapú, jelzáloggal biztosított hitelek esetében a forint leértékelődött és a hitelek költségei növekedtek, ezzel együtt a biztosítékul szolgáló ingatlanok értéke jelentősen csökkent ([2]). A Bizottság szerint lehet-e ezt a helyzetet olyan körülményként értelmezni, hogy így jelentősen megnehezül a fogyasztók számára a tisztességtelen szerződési feltételek – mint a fogyasztók irányában egyoldalúan foganatosított hátrányos kikötések – alkalmazása megszüntetésének lehetősége ([3])?

A hosszú távú devizaalapú jelzáloghitelek esetében is figyelemmel kell-e lenni a Bizottság szerint az Európai Unió Bírósága által (is) elismert célkitűzésre, miszerint a fogyasztóvédelmi irányelv ([4]) a maga egészében hozzájárul az Unióra bízott feladatok megoldásához, különösen az Unió egész területén az életminőség és az életszínvonal javításához is?

A Bíróság gyakorlata alapján egy szerződési kikötés tisztességtelen jellegének megállapításakor az összes lényeges körülményre figyelemmel kell lenni ([5]). A Magyar Nemzeti Bank kutatása rámutat ([6]), hogy a hosszú távú devizaalapú jelzáloghitelek felvételekor a lakosság döntő többsége még az alapvető pénzügyi fogalmakkal sem volt tisztában. Figyelembe vehető-e ez a helyzet a Bizottság szerint a fogyasztók (hitelfelvevők) javára?

Szintén az MNB tanulmánya mutat rá, hogy ([7]) azok a bankok, amelyek a megfelelő prudenciával helyezték ki a hosszú távú devizaalapú hiteleket, a bankokat terhelő fiskális terhek, valamint a devizaalapú hitelekkel kapcsolatos fizetési problémák ellenére is stabilan nyereségek tudtak maradni. Kérdezzük a Bizottságot, figyelembe vehető-e ez a tény a hitelfelvevők javára?

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés P-011737/13
a Bizottság számára
Bagó Zoltán (PPE)
(2013. október 15.)

Tárgy: A 93/13/EGK irányelv alkalmazása során figyelembe vehető kritériumok

Kérdezzük a Bizottságot, hogy az ítélkezési gyakorlatra tekintettel ([8]) – alapelv szerint – tisztességtelennek kell-e minősíteniük a nemzeti bíróságoknak egy olyan szerződési kikötést, amelynek értelmében egy hosszú távú tartalékvaluta ([9]) vagy euró alapú hitel esetén az árfolyamkockázatot teljes mértékben a hitelfelvevőknek (fogyasztóknak) kell viselniük, míg a tartalékvalutában természetesen bekövetkező – esetleges – alapkamat-csökkentésnek ([10]) vagy az Európai Központi Bank kamatcsökkentéseinek érvényesítésére a szerződés a szolgáltatót (bankot) egyáltalán nem kötelezi, különösen, hogy az utóbbi években jelentősen csökkent Magyarország CDS felára?

([1]) Európai Unió Bírósága, C-415/11.
([2]) Sok esetben az ingatlanok jelenlegi piaci értéke kisebb, mint a hitelfelvevők tartozása.
([3]) Azt is számításba kell venni, hogy a hitelfelvevők számára – főként anyagi nehézségek miatt – megnehezül a megfelelő felkészültségű védőügyvédhez való hozzájutás is.
([4]) Európai Unió Bírósága, C-92/11.
([5]) Európai Unió Bírósága, C-415/11.
([6]) Forrás: MNB, Pénziránytű, GFK, 2011.
([7]) Forrás: MNB, Pénziránytű, GFK, 2011.
([8]) Európai Unió Bírósága, C-415/11, főleg a tekintetben, hogy egy szerződés tisztességtelen kikötésének fő vizsgálati szempontja a Bíróság gyakorlata alapján az, hogy a fogyasztó egyedi tárgyalás során is elfogadta volna az adott kikötést.
([9]) CHF.
([10]) Álláspontunk szerint természetes folyamat, hogy – amennyiben válság esetén – egy tartalékvaluta befektetők menekülése során megerősödik, akkor az adott központi bank az erősödés csökkentése érdekében általában csökkenti az alapkamatot.

Kérdezzük továbbá a Bizottságot, hogy amennyiben a nemzeti bíróság azt a kritériumot vizsgálja, hogy a fogyasztó az adott hatályos jogban szabályozottnál rosszabb helyzetbe kerül-e, akkor számításba kell-e venni azt, hogy ha a magyarországi forintalapú hitelek kamatait vagy az MNB kamataihoz, vagy a magyarországi forinthitelek piaci kamatszintjéhez kötik, akkor a devizaalapú hitelek esetében is vagy az adott deviza központi bankjának alapkamatához vagy az adott valutaövezet irányadó piaci kamatszintjéhez képest kellene meghatározni a kamatokat, azaz érvényesíteni kell-e az utóbbi években bekövetkezett csökkenést? Megkövetelik-e az uniós rendelkezések a transzparenciát a kamatok és forrásköltségek tekintetében?

Összeegyeztethetőnek tekinti-e a Bizottság az uniós rendelkezésekkel, vagy ezek meghatároznak-e korlátokat a szolgáltatók (bankok) irányában a tekintetben, hogy ez utóbbiak olyan szerződések esetén, amelyek értelmében az árfolyamkockázatot kizárólag a fogyasztók viselik, egyoldalúan kamatot emelnek ([11]), vagy a deviza eladási és vételi árfolyama közötti különbséget egyoldalúan növelik ([12])? Összeegyeztethetőnek tűnik-e a fogyasztók és szolgáltatók közötti valódi egyensúly megteremtésének uniós célkitűzéseivel, hogy az árfolyamkockázatot a bankok nemcsak a tőketartozás esetében, hanem a kezelési költségekre is alkalmazzák (a fogyasztók kárára)?

Michel Barnier egyesített válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. november 25.)

A nemzeti bíróságok számára egy szerződés tisztességtelen jellegének a fogyasztókkal kötött szerződésekben alkalmazott tisztességtelen feltételekről szóló 93/13/EGK irányelv alapján történő megállapításakor a melléklet nyújt segítséget, amely nem kimerítő jelleggel sorolja fel a potenciálisan tisztességtelen feltételeket. Azonban mindaddig nem tekinthető tisztességtelennek, ha a pénzügyi eszközök terén az eladó vagy szolgáltató egyoldalúan megváltoztatja a szerződési kikötéseket, amíg a pénzpiaci árfolyam-ingadozások alakulására az eladó vagy szolgáltató nem képes befolyást gyakorolni. Az irányelv betartatása tekintetében a Bizottság a nemzeti fogyasztóvédelmi hatóságokra hagyatkozik. A magyar polgárok az alábbiakhoz fordulhatnak:

Magyar Nemzeti Bank Pénzügyi Fogyasztóvédelmi Központ
Cím: 1013 Budapest, Krisztina krt. 39.
Postai cím: 1535 Budapest, 114 Pf. 777
Tel.: +36-40-203-776
E-mail: ugyfelszolgalat@mnb.hu
Honlap: http://felugyelet.mnb.hu/fogyasztoknak

A hitelezők és fogyasztók közötti szerződéseket a magánjog alapján kötik meg. A bankokra vonatkozó uniós jogszabályok nem bocsátkoznak ilyen részletekbe.

A fogyasztók jövőbeni védelme érdekében a Bizottság javaslatot terjesztett elő a lakóingatlanokhoz kapcsolódó hitelmegállapodásokról szóló irányelvre (COM(2011) 142), amelyet a társjogalkotók várhatóan 2013 végéig fogadnak el. A tagállamoknak 24 hónap áll rendelkezésére az irányelv átültetéséhez, amely nem rendelkezik visszamenőleges hatállyal. Az irányelv felhívja a fogyasztók figyelmét a devizaalapú, jelzáloggal biztosított hitelekkel járó kockázatokra. Az egységes európai adatlap tartalmazza az összes hitellel kapcsolatos releváns információt még a szerződés aláírása előtt, ideértve a beszedendő kamatot, annak értékét százalékban, vagy adott esetben a referencia-kamatlábat és a hitelezői felár százalékos értékét. Ennek segítségével a fogyasztók meg tudják állapítani az alkalmazandó alapkamatlábat.

([11]) Arra hivatkozással, hogy sok fogyasztó (hitelfelvevő) fizetési nehézségekkel küszködik.

([12]) Az MNB tanulmányából egyértelműen kitűnik, hogy a fogyasztók (hitelfelvevők) terheinek növekedéséhez az árfolyamok számukra kedvezőtlen változásán túl a szolgáltatók (bankok) olyan gyakorlata is hozzájárult, hogy a deviza vételi és eladási árfolyamát a fogyasztók kárára módosították (Balog Ádám, Nagy Márton, MNB).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011448/13
to the Commission
Zoltán Bagó (PPE) and Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Factors to be considered in implementing Directive 93/13/EEC

Pursuant to the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union — regarding implementation of Directive 93/13/EEC ([1]) — 'an assessment of the legal situation of the consumer having regard to the means at his disposal, under national law, to prevent [continued] use of unfair terms, should [also] be carried out'.

In Hungary, in the case of long-term foreign currency loans secured by mortgages, the forint has depreciated and the cost of credit has risen, and this has led to a significant decrease in the value of property used as security ([2]). In the Commission's opinion, could this situation be construed as a factor making it significantly more difficult for consumers to be able to prevent the use of unfair contract terms such as unfavourable conditions imposed unilaterally on consumers ([3])?

In the case of long-term foreign-currency mortgage loans, does the Commission consider it necessary to bear in mind the objective (also) recognised by the Court of Justice of the European Union, according to which the Consumer Rights Directive ([4]) as a whole should contribute to carrying out the tasks conferred on the EU, in particular that of improving the quality of life and standard of living throughout the EU?

On the basis of the case-law of the Court, it is necessary when establishing the unfair nature of a contract term to take all relevant circumstances into account ([5]). Research conducted by the Hungarian National Bank (MNB) ([6]) indicates that the vast majority of people were not aware of basic financial terminology when taking out long-term foreign-currency mortgage loans. In the Commission's view, should this be taken into account for the benefit of consumers (borrowers)?

The MNB study also indicates ([7]) that banks which exercised caution when issuing long-term foreign-currency loans managed to maintain steady profitability in spite of the fiscal burdens on banks and the payment difficulties associated with foreign-currency-based loans. In the Commission's view, should this fact be taken into account for the benefit of borrowers?

Question for written answer P-011737/13
to the Commission
Zoltán Bagó (PPE)
(15 October 2013)

Subject: Criteria to be taken into account in applying Directive 93/13/EEC

In the light of case-law ([8]), should national courts in principle define a contract obligation as unfair which, in the case of a long-term loan taken out in a reserve currency ([9]) or euros, stipulates that the exchange rate risk should be borne entirely by the borrower (consumer) while the contract does not in the slightest require the service-provider (bank) to pass on any naturally occurring base rate reduction ([10]) in the reserve currency or reduction in the European Central Bank's interest rate, particularly bearing in mind that in recent years Hungary's CDS premium has declined significantly?

([1]) Court of Justice of the European Union, C-415/11.
([2]) In many cases the current market price of property is lower than the borrowers' debts.
([3]) It must also be borne in mind that access for borrowers to properly-trained defence lawyers is hampered primarily by financial difficulties.
([4]) Court of Justice of the European Union, C-92/11.
([5]) Court of Justice of the European Union, C-415/11.
([6]) Source: Hungarian National Bank, GFK, 2011.
([7]) Source: Hungarian National Bank, Pénziránytű ('money compass'), GFK, 2011.
([8]) Court of Justice of the European Union, C-415/11, particularly with reference to the fact that, for the purpose of ascertaining whether a contract obligation is unfair, the main criterion to be applied, according to European case-law, is whether the consumer has accepted the obligation during an individual negotiation.
([9]) The Swiss franc.
([10]) I take it to be a natural process if, in the event of a crisis, a reserve currency appreciates because of the flight of investors and the central bank concerned seeks — as it generally will — to dampen the appreciation of the currency by reducing the base rate.

If the national court reviews the criterion of whether the consumer finds himself in a worse position than provided for by the relevant law in force, should it take account of the fact that, if interest rates on loans in Hungarian forint are linked either to the interest rates of the Hungarian Central Bank or to the market interest rate for loans in Hungarian forint, then, in the case of foreign-currency loans, interest rates ought to be determined by comparison either with the base rate of the central bank responsible for the foreign currency concerned or with the market interest rate for the currency zone concerned, i.e. ought the reduction which has occurred in recent years to be passed on? Does European law require transparency with regard to interest rates and the cost of funds?

Does the Commission consider it to be compatible with European law for service-providers (banks) to unilaterally raise interest rates ([11]) or unilaterally increase the disparity between the foreign currency buying and selling rates ([12]) where contracts exist under which the exchange rate risk is borne solely by the consumer, or does European law limit the power of service-providers (banks) to do this? Does it seem compatible with EU objectives regarding the striking of a genuine balance between consumers and service-providers for banks to apply the exchange rate risk not only in the case of a capital debt but also to charges for managing that debt (to the detriment of consumers)?

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

National courts that assess on the basis of the Unfair Commercial Terms Directive (93/13/EEC) whether a contract has to be considered unfair are helped by an annex which outlines non-exhaustive examples of terms which might potentially be unfair. Yet, the unilateral alteration of contract terms by the seller or supplier in the area of financial instruments might not be considered unfair, as long as the price fluctuation of the market rate is beyond the trader's control. For the directive's enforcement, the Commission relies on the national consumer protection authorities. Hungarians can turn to:

National Bank of Hungary: Financial Consumer Protection Centre
Address: 1013 Budapest, Krisztina krt. 39
Postal Address: 1535 Budapest, 114 Pf. 777
Phone: +36-40-203-776
E-mail: ugyfelszolgalat@mnb.hu
Website: http://felugyelet.mnb.hu/fogyasztoknak

Contracts between creditors and consumers are concluded on the basis of the private law. The EU banking legislation does not enter into such details.

To better protect consumers in future, the Commission proposed a Mortgage Credit Directive (COM 2011/142), which should be adopted by co-legislators by the end of 2013. Member States have 24 months to transpose the directive, which will not apply retroactively. The directive alerts consumers to risks associated to foreign currency denominated mortgage loans. The European Standardised Information Sheet provides all relevant credit-related information prior to the contract's signature, including the interest rates to be charged, plus its value in percentage, or, where applicable, an indication of a reference rate and percentage value of the creditor's spread. This should put the consumer in a position to determine which base rate applies.

([11]) Bearing in mind that many consumers (borrowers) are experiencing payment difficulties.

([12]) The Hungarian National Bank's study clearly indicates that the increase in the burdens on consumers (borrowers) has been caused not only by the — for them — disadvantageous change in exchange rates but also by the practice adopted by service-providers (banks) of changing foreign currency buying and selling rates to the detriment of consumers (Ádám Balog, Márton Nagy, MNB).

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011449/13
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(7 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Ftehim dwar il-Kummerċ Ħieles bejn l-UE u Singapor

Fl-20 ta' Settembru 2013, il-Kummissjoni ppubblikat memorandum dwar il-Ftehim dwar il-Kummerċ Ħieles bejn l-UE u Singapor (MEMO13/805), wara iktar minn sentejn ta' negozjati ma' Singapor. Skont dan il-memorandum, il-ftehim dwar il-kummerċ ħieles ser iwassal għal bosta benefiċċji ekonomiċi fl-għaxar snin li ġejjin. Skont analiżi ekonomika ppreparata mill-Unità tal-Kap Ekonomist tad-DĠ tal-Kummerċ, il-Kummissjoni qed tbassar żieda ta' madwar EUR 1.4 biljun f'esportazzjonijiet mill-UE lejn Singapor għall-perjodu msemmi, filwaqt li l-esportazzjonijiet minn Singapor lejn l-UE mistennija jiżdiedu b'EUR 3.5 biljun.

Fir-rigward ta' din iż-żieda fil-kummerċ, il-Kummissjoni hija konxja dwar liema huma dawk il-prodotti li ser jikkostitwixxu ż-żieda mbassra fil-kummerċ? X'inhi l-evalwazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-impatti potenzjali li dawn iż-żidiet jista' jkollhom fuq industriji bbażati fl-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur De Gucht f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(3 ta' Diċembru 2013)

Singapor huwa l-ikbar imsieħeb fil-kummerċ u l-investiment tal-UE fl-Assoċjazzjoni tan-Nazzjonijiet tax-Xlokk tal-Asja (ASEAN).

L-UE u Singapor inizjalaw il-Ftehim għall-Kummerċ Ħieles (FTA) fl-20 ta' Settembru 2013. Valutazzjoni ekonomika mħejjija mill-Kummissjoni tbassar li l-FTA se jwassal għal żieda ta' madwar EUR 1,4 biljun ta' esportazzjonijiet tal-UE fuq perjodu ta' għaxar snin, filwaqt li l-esportazzjoni ta' Singapor tiżdied b'EUR 3,5 biljuni ([1]). Dawn huma stimi konservattivi peress li ma kienx possibbli li jiġu kkwantifikati b'mod preċiż l-effetti ta' ċerti partijiet regolatorji tal-FTA.

Il-benefiċċji mill-FTA mhumiex limitati għall-eliminazzjoni tat-tariffi, iżda jirriżultaw ukoll minn fost l-oħrajn (i) it-tneħħija ta' ostakoli mhux tariffarji bħal standards tekniċi bla bżonn, (ii) il-liberalizzazzjoni tas-servizzi u s-swieq ta' akkwist appoġġjati minn dixxiplini avvanzati sabiex jiġu żgurati t-trasparenza u n-nondiskriminazzjoni, kif ukoll (iii) il-protezzjoni effettiva tad-drittijiet tal-proprjetà intellettwali inklużi indikazzjonijiet ġeografiċi.

L-istudju jbassar li ħafna setturi tal-ekonomija tal-UE se jibbenefikaw mill-FTA. Il-fornituri tas-servizzi tal-UE huma mistennija li jmorru l-aktar minn fuq, inkluż għas-servizzi finanzjarji fejn l-UE kisbet aċċess tajjeb għas-suq dinamiku ta' Singapor, filwaqt li l-esportaturi tas-sustanzi kimiċi minn Singapor għandhom jaraw l-akbar żieda fil-kummerċ tagħhom, segwiti minn esportaturi ta' makkinarju u l-fornituri tas-servizzi (xi whud minnhom, sussidjarji tal-kumpaniji tal-UE).

Dan l-FTA hu pass strateġiku lejn Ftehim mal-ASEAN fil-qafas reġjonali, li jibqa' l-għan aħħari għall-UE. L-UE bħalissa qed tinnegozja FTAs mal-membri tal-ASEAN il-Malażja, it-Tajlandja u l-Vjetnam.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/september/tradoc_151724.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011449/13
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement

On 20 September 2013, the Commission published a memo on the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (MEMO/13/805), after more than two years of negotiations with Singapore. According to this memo, the free trade agreement will produce considerable economic benefits in the coming decade. Citing economic analysis prepared by the Chief Economist Unit of DG Trade, the Commission predicts an increase of some EUR 1.4 billion in EU exports to Singapore for the same period, with Singapore's exports to the EU set to increase by EUR 3.5 billion.

In relation to this increase in trade, is the Commission aware of the types of goods which would constitute the predicted increase in trade? What is the Commission's evaluation of the potential impacts of these increases on EU-based industries?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

Singapore is the EU's largest trade and investment partner in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The EU and Singapore initialled the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on 20 September 2013. An economic assessment prepared by the Commission predicts that the FTA would lead to an increase of some EUR 1.4 billion of EU exports to Singapore over a ten-year period, whilst Singapore's exports would rise by EUR 3.5 billion ([1]). These are conservative estimates since it has not been possible to precisely quantify the effects of certain regulatory parts of the FTA.

The benefits from the FTA are not limited to the elimination of tariffs, but also result from *inter alia* (i) the removal of non-tariff barriers such as unnecessary technical standards, (ii) the liberalisation of services and procurement markets supported by advanced disciplines to ensure transparency and non-discrimination, as well as (iii) the effective protection of intellectual property rights including for geographical indications.

The study predicts that many sectors of the EU economy will benefit from the FTA. EU services providers are set to gain the most, including for financial services where the EU has achieved a good access to the dynamic Singaporean market, whereas Singaporean exporters of chemicals should see the largest increase in their trade, followed by exporters of machinery and services providers (some of them, subsidiaries of EU companies).

This FTA is a strategic step towards an agreement with ASEAN in the regional framework, which remains the EU's ultimate objective. The EU is currently negotiating FTAs with ASEAN members Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/september/tradoc_151724.pdf

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-011450/13
adresată Comisiei
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(7 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Sensibilizarea populației în legătură cu cancerul din zona capului și a gâtului

Cancerul în zona capului și a gâtului este cel de-al șaselea cel mai comun tip de cancer în Europa, cu peste 150 000 de cazuri noi înregistrate în 2012 și cu o incidență în creștere. În momentul de față, în Europa nu există o bună informare asupra acestui tip de cancer sau asupra factorilor care favorizează apariția acestuia, multe cazuri fiind identificate în stadii târzii, ceea ce reduce drastic șansele de supraviețuire ale pacienților.

În acest context:

1. Poate finanța Comisia campanii publice de sensibilizare referitoare la acest tip de cancer?

2. Ce fel de acțiuni prevede Comisia pentru un parteneriat mai bun cu actorii guvernamentali și non-guvernamentali privind informarea populației cu privire la factorii de risc care pot duce la apariția cancerului la cap și gât?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(4 noiembrie 2013)

Acțiunea UE în domeniul cancerului are scopul de a contribui la reducerea implicațiilor cancerului prin abordări de prevenire și control bazate pe date concrete.

85 % din ansamblul cazurilor de cancer în zona capului și a gâtului sunt asociate consumului de tutun. Ca atare, toate acțiunile UE în domeniul controlului tutunului, inclusiv legislația UE de reglementare a produselor din tutun și a publicității acestora, campaniile de sensibilizare la nivelul întregii UE și Recomandarea Consiliului privind mediile fără fum de tutun pot contribui indirect la prevenirea cancerului în zona capului și a gâtului, prin abordarea unuia dintre principalele sale elemente determinante.

Un instrument-cheie pentru prevenirea cancerului este Codul european împotriva cancerului, o listă de recomandări într-un format ușor accesibil cetățenilor, bazată pe date științifice verificate, adoptată pentru prima dată în 2003 și urmând a fi prezentată într-o nouă ediție în 2014.

Multe dintre recomandările cuprinse în Codul european împotriva cancerului abordează factorii de risc asociați cancerului în zona capului și a gâtului: consumul de tutun, consumul frecvent și ridicat de alcool (alcoolul crește riscul dezvoltării cancerului în gură, în faringe, în laringe și în esofag) și expunerea prelungită la soare (asociată cancerului în zona buzelor). Cercetările arată, de asemenea, că o igienă orală deficitară și infecția cu papilomavirusul uman constituie factori de risc asociați cancerului în zona capului și a gâtului.

Pentru a îmbunătăți prevenirea și controlul cancerului, Comisia pune accent pe sprijinirea statelor membre în adoptarea planurilor naționale de combatere a cancerului, prin intermediul unei serii de acțiuni comune finanțate în cadrul programului UE în domeniul sănătății. Măsurile de prevenire puse în aplicare de autoritățile naționale, cu participarea organizațiilor de pacienți și a experților științifici, oferă cele mai rentabile strategii pe termen lung pentru reducerea implicațiilor acestei boli.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011450/13
to the Commission
Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Raising public awareness of head and neck cancer

Head and neck cancer is the sixth most common type of cancer in Europe and its prevalence is increasing, with more than 150 000 new cases registered in 2012. At present, however, people in Europe are not well-informed about this type of cancer or its risk factors, and many cases are not diagnosed until they have reached an advanced stage, which drastically reduces the patient's chances of survival.

1. Can the Commission finance campaigns to raise public awareness of this type of cancer?

2. What type of measures will the Commission take with a view to a better partnership withgovernmental and non-governmental actors as regards informing the public on the riskfactors that can lead to the development of head and neck cancer?

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

EU action in the field of cancer aims to help reduce the burden of cancer through evidence-based approaches for prevention and control.

85% of all cases of head and neck cancer are linked to tobacco use. As such, all EU action in the field of tobacco control, including EU legislation regulating tobacco products and their advertising, EU-wide campaigns and the Council Recommendation on Smoke free environments can indirectly help to prevent head and neck cancer by addressing one of its key determinant.

A key tool to help prevent cancer is the European Code Against Cancer, a list of recommendations in a citizen-friendly format, based on scientifically proven evidence, adopted for the first time in 2003 and for which a new edition will be presented in 2014.

Many of the recommendations in the European Code Against Cancer address risk factors linked to head and neck cancer: tobacco use, frequent and heavy consumption of alcohol (alcohol raises the risk of developing cancer in the mouth, pharynx, larynx, and esophagus), and prolonged sun exposure (linked to cancer in the lip area). Research also indicates that poor oral hygiene and an infection with human papillomavirus is a risk factor for head and neck cancer.

To improve the prevention and control of cancers, the Commission puts emphasis on supporting Member States in the adoption of National Cancer Plans, through a series of Joint Actions funded under the EU Health programme. Prevention measures implemented by national authorities, with input of patients' organisations and scientific experts, offer the most cost-effective, long-term strategy for reducing the burden of disease.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011451/13
to the Commission
Sir Robert Atkins (ECR)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity (Article 5(3)) has been part of the Treaties since 7 February 1992. On how many occasions since that date has a Member State taken legal action against the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union concerning a directive on the grounds that it breached the principle of subsidiarity?

On how many occasions has the Court of Justice of the European Union found in favour of the Member State?

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

A Member State has lodged an action for annulment against a directive adopted by the European Parliament and the Council invoking a breach of the principle of subsidiarity on three occasions (Cases C-376/98, Germany v Parliament and Council; C-377/98, The Netherlands v Parliament and Council; and C-176/09, Luxembourg v Parliament and Council). In another case (C-233/94, Germany v Parliament and Council), a Member State challenged a directive adopted by the Parliament and the Council on the ground that the legislature had breached its obligation to state the reasons justifying respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

One of these cases led to the annulment of the directive under review (C-376/98), but on the ground that the legal basis used was inappropriate. In that case the Court did not address the principle of subsidiarity, as the act challenged was annulled for that other reason. The other cases were dismissed by the Court.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011452/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Übermüdete Piloten — Gefahr für die Passagiere

Laut einer aktuellen Umfrage des Marktforschungsunternehmens GfK Austria im Auftrag der Austrian Cockpit Association (ACA), zeigten sich 88 % der Befragten darüber besorgt, dass ihr Pilot/ihre Pilotin schon seit 22 Stunden wach sein könnte, wenn das Flugzeug landet. 66 % äußerten sich „sehr besorgt", 22 % sind zumindest „etwas besorgt". Eine EU-Rechtsvorschrift wird dies aber demnächst trotzdem möglich machen. Piloten wehren sich dagegen, denn extrem lange Einsätze führen zu langen Wachzeiten, die ein sicheres Landen gefährden. Seit Monaten kämpfen Europas Piloten für eine Regelung, die Flugdienst- und Ruhezeiten vorsieht, welche den wissenschaftlichen Kriterien entsprechen. Leider versuchen die Fluglinien, das Maximum für sich herauszuholen — aber die Sicherheit wird dabei außer Acht gelassen.

1. Wie will die Kommission vorgehen, um Passagieren und Crews in Zukunft einen sicheren Flug und eine sichere Landung, zu gewährleisten?

2. Kritische Stimmen werden laut, dass eine ohne demokratische Kontrolle handelnde Behörde (EASA) de facto neue Rechtsvorschriften erlässt. Wie steht die Kommission zu dieser Kritik: stimmt das?

3. In Zusammenhang mit einem Rechtsakt, der einer EU-Behörde quasi per „Blankoscheck" erlaubt, die Regeln in Zukunft ohne Kontrolle durch das Europäische Parlament und den Ministerrat weiter zu lockern, gibt es den Vorwurf, dass die EU in diesem Fall zu wenig demokratisch agiert. Wie sieht die Kommission das?

4. Kritisiert wird auch die damit verbundene „Vereinheitlichung"; denn so würden Länder mit strengeren Arbeits- und Flugzeitregelungen gezwungen werden, ihren Standard auf europäisches Einheitsniveau abzusenken. Was sagt die Kommission zu dieser Kritik?

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

1. Das alleinige Ziel der neuen Bestimmungen zur Ermüdung von Piloten besteht darin, den jetzt schon hohen Grad an Flugsicherheit noch weiter zu verbessern. Der Entwurf der Kommissionsverordnung enthält mehr als 30 Bestimmungen, mit denen der Schutz der Flugbesatzungen vor Ermüdung künftig verbessert werden soll. Die Europäische Agentur für Flugsicherheit (EASA) wird verpflichtet, ab Beginn der Umsetzung der neuen Bestimmungen während drei Jahren ein Aufsichts- und Forschungsprogramm zur Müdigkeit und Leistungsfähigkeit von Flugbesatzungen durchzuführen und der Kommission darüber zu berichten.

2./3. Die Kommission kann sich den vom Herrn Abgeordneten angeführten kritischen Stimmen nicht anschließen. Die EASA hat der Kommission entsprechend dem ihr vom Mitgesetzgeber in der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 216/2008 erteilten Auftrag eine Stellungnahme zur Begrenzung der Flugzeiten (FTL) übermittelt, die sich auf eine eingehende Analyse einschließlich wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse stützt und die in umfassender Konsultation mit Sachverständigen und Interessenträgern erarbeitet wurde. Auf dieser Grundlage, wenn auch mit einigen Änderungen zur Berücksichtigung der Standpunkte unterschiedlicher Interessenträger, hat die Kommission ihren Vorschlag für den neuen Verordnungsentwurf erstellt.

Außerdem wurde die EASA damit beauftragt, Zertifizierungsspezifikationen im Bereich der Flugdienstzeitbegrenzung herauszugeben, wie sie bereits in allen anderen Bereichen der Flugsicherheit vorliegen. Diese Zertifizierungsspezifikationen werden zurzeit mit Sachverständigen aus den Mitgliedstaaten und Interessenträgern erarbeitet.

4. Hierzu verweist die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-010759/2013 ([1]).

Andere zweckdienliche Informationen hat die Kommission in ihren Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen P-007959/2013 und 008439/2013 ([1]) erteilt.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011452/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Fatigued pilots — danger to passengers

According to a current survey by the market research company GfK Austria on behalf of the Austrian Cockpit Association (ACA), 88% of respondents indicated concern that their pilot could have been awake for 22 hours by the time the aircraft lands. Sixty-six per cent indicated they were 'very concerned' and 22% were at least 'fairly concerned'. An EU legislative instrument is nevertheless set to make this possible in the near future. Pilots are opposed to this, as extremely long duty times will lead to long periods awake, which will put a safe landing at risk. For months, Europe's pilots have been fighting for an arrangement that provides for flight times and rest times that meet the scientific criteria. Unfortunately, the airlines are attempting to get as much out of this for themselves as they can, but in doing so safety is being disregarded.

1. What will the Commission do to ensure a safe flight and a safe landing for passengers and crew in the future?

2. Criticism has been voiced about the fact that an authority (EASA) acting with no democratic scrutiny is de facto enacting new legislation. Where does the Commission stand with regard to this criticism? Is it correct?

3. A legislative act that allows an EU authority, almost with a 'blank cheque', to relax the rules further without the scrutiny of Parliament or the Council, prompts the accusation that, in this case, the EU is not acting in a sufficiently democratic manner. What is the Commission's view of that?

4. The 'harmonisation' associated with this has also been criticised, as this would mean that countries with more stringent working and flight time rules would be forced to lower their standards to the uniform European level. What does the Commission say to this criticism?

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

1. Improving even further the already high level of aviation safety is the only objective of the new rules on pilot fatigue. The draft Commission Regulation includes more than 30 provisions aimed at increasing crew protection against fatigue in the future. It obliges EASA to launch a monitoring and research programme on aircrew fatigue and performance and to report to the Commission, to take place for the first time three years after the start of implementation of the new rules.

2 and 3. The Commission does not share the criticism referred to by the Honourable Member. In line with the mandate given by the co-legislator in Regulation (EC) No 216/2008, EASA has provided the Commission with its Opinion on flight time limitations (FTL), based on an in-depth analysis, including scientific evidence, and in full consultation with experts and stakeholders. On this basis, but having made a number of changes to take account of the views of different stakeholders, the Commission made its proposal for the new draft Regulation.

EASA has also been mandated to issue Certification Specifications in the field of FTL as is the case in all other areas of aviation safety. Certification Specifications are being prepared together with experts from Member States and stakeholders.

4. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-010759/2013 ([1]).

Other relevant information has been provided by the Commission in its answers to written questions P-007959/2013 and 008439/2013 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011454/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Autopistas del agua

En declaraciones a Europa Press, el ministro de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente del Gobierno del Reino de España, Miguel Arias Cañete, opina que «en España debería haber una red de autopistas del agua que conecten las cuencas y permitan, en momentos puntuales, trasladar los excesos que se dan en unas cuencas a embalses» a fin de «almacenar agua y dar mayor garantía de disponibilidad, de modo que nadie en España tuviera necesidad de ir mendigando o exigiendo agua». En su respuesta a la pregunta E-005461/2013, la Comisión indica que «tras el recurso presentado por la Comisión, el Tribunal condenó a España por no haber aprobado ni notificado los planes hidrológicos de cuenca a que obliga la Directiva marco del agua (DMA, 2000/60/CE)».

A la luz de lo anterior y teniendo en cuenta la Directiva marco del agua (DMA, 2000/60/CE):

1. ¿Tiene la Comisión conocimiento de dicho plan?

2. ¿Cuenta la Comisión con previsiones de que en el futuro vaya a haber excesos de agua y sabe si, efectivamente, actualmente se pierde agua?

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

La Comisión no tiene conocimiento de ningún plan que conecte las cuencas fluviales españolas a través de una red de «autopistas del agua». En caso de existir, dicho plan debería quedar reflejado en los planes hidrológicos de cuenca elaborados de conformidad con la Directiva marco del agua ([1]). Tal como se indica en la pregunta escrita, el hecho de que España no haya adoptado los planes hidrológicos de cuenca en el caso de la mayor parte de las cuencas fluviales está siendo tratado en el contexto de la aplicación de la sentencia del Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea de 4 de octubre de 2012 (asunto C-403/11, Comisión contra España). Los planes que han sido adoptados y notificados hasta ahora no indican ninguna interconexión entre cuencas fluviales.

Según las previsiones de los científicos, el cambio climático contribuirá a reducir notablemente la disponibilidad de agua en la cuenca mediterránea. En este contexto, una gestión adecuada de los recursos hídricos es fundamental para garantizar que dichos recursos se utilicen con la máxima eficacia. Según la Comisión, el medio más adecuado para conseguir una gestión sostenible de los recursos hídricos es aplicar de manera adecuada las obligaciones y los principios recogidos en la Directiva marco del agua.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011454/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Water motorways

In statements to *Europa Press*, Miguel Arias Cañete, Spain's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment, states that 'in Spain there ought to be a network of water motorways connecting water catchment areas, to make it possible, when necessary, to move the excess water in certain catchment areas to reservoirs' with a view to 'storing water and providing greater security of supply, so that nobody in Spain would have the need to go begging for or needing water'. In its answer to Question E-005461/2013, the Commission stated that 'Following the referral by the Commission, the Court condemned Spain for the lack of adoption and reporting of River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) under the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC)'.

In view of the above and with regard to the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC):

1. Is the Commission aware of the said plan?

2. Does the Commission have forecasts of excess amounts of water in the future, and does it know if in fact water is currently being lost?

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

The Commission is not aware of any plan to connect the Spanish river basins through 'water motorways'. Any such plan would need to be reflected in the River Basin Management Plans prepared according to the Water Framework Directive ([1]). As referred to in the written question, the failure by Spain to adopt the River Basin Management Plans for most of the Spanish river basin districts is being addressed in the framework of the implementation of the European Union Court of Justice judgment of 4 October 2012 (Case C-403/11 Commission v. Spain). The plans that have been adopted and reported so far do not reflect interconnection between river basins.

Scientists foresee that climate change will significantly decrease water availability in the Mediterranean basin. In this context sound water management is essential to ensure that water is used in the most efficient way. The Commission believes that proper implementation of the principles and obligations of the Water Framework Directive is the way to achieve such sustainable water management.

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011455/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Cuenca del río Ebro

La Directiva Marco del Agua (DMA, 2000/60/CE) establece un marco general para proteger las aguas superficiales y las aguas subterráneas, con el objetivo de garantizar el buen estado de todas las aguas, en principio, antes de 2015. El principal instrumento para alcanzar este objetivo son los planes hidrológicos de cuenca y los programas de medidas. De conformidad con los artículos 13 y 14 de la DMA, los ejemplares del proyecto de plan hidrológico de cuenca debían ser publicados para consulta pública antes de diciembre de 2008 y los planes debían ser aprobados definitivamente por los Estados miembros antes de diciembre de 2009. Los planes deberán ser enviados a la Comisión antes de marzo de 2010.

Según contestó la Comisión en febrero de 2009 (E-005592/2009), la fijación de un caudal ecológico mínimo en las cuencas de los ríos regulados por presas y sometidos a un uso intensivo de sus aguas se considera sumamente importante para la aplicación de la DMA. No es posible alcanzar el objetivo de la DMA —un buen estado ecológico de las aguas superficiales— si no se garantiza un caudal ecológico mínimo. El caudal mínimo ha de estar vinculado al objetivo de buen estado ecológico y, por consiguiente, deberá abordarse caso por caso, teniendo en cuenta las características físicas, hidrológicas y ecológicas de las masas de agua de que se trate.

Teniendo en cuenta la DMA y la respuesta E-005461/2013, ¿cree la Comisión que, por lo que respecta a la cuenca del río Ebro, se garantizará el buen estado de todas sus aguas antes del 2015?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

La falta de aprobación y notificación a la Comisión del plan hidrológico de cuenca de, *inter alia*, la demarcación hidrográfica del Ebro es una de las cuestiones tratadas en el marco de la ejecución de la sentencia del Tribunal de Justicia de la Unión Europea, de 4 de octubre de 2012 (asunto C-403/11 Comisión contra España).

Solo después de aprobado y notificado a la Comisión el plan hidrológico para la mencionada cuenca podrá la Comisión examinar el cumplimiento de las disposiciones de la Directiva marco sobre el agua ([1]) y, concretamente, la obligación de garantizar el buen estado de sus aguas.

([1]) Directiva 2000/60/CE (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011455/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: The River Ebro basin

The Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC) lays down a general framework for protecting surface water and groundwater, with the aim of achieving good status of all waters, in principle, by 2015. The main tools for achieving this aim are the river basin management plans and the programmes of measures. Under Articles 13 and 14 of the WFD, draft copies of the river basin management plan should have been published for public consultation before December 2008 and the plans should have been finally adopted by the Member States before December 2009. The plans should have been sent to the Commission before March 2010.

According to the Commission's answer in February 2009 (E-005592/2009), the establishment of minimum ecological flows in river basins which are regulated by dams and/or are subject to an intense water use is considered very important for the implementation of the WFD. It is not possible to achieve the WFD objective of good ecological status for surface waters if a minimum ecological flow is not guaranteed. The minimum flow has to be linked with the objective of good ecological status and, therefore, has to be developed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the physical, hydrological and ecological characteristics of the affected water bodies.

In view of the WFD and answer E-005461/2013, does the Commission believe that good status of all waters in the River Ebro basin will be achieved before 2015?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The failure by Spain to adopt and report to the Commission the River Basin Management Plan for, *inter alia*, the Ebro river basin district is being addressed in the framework of the implementation of the European Union Court of Justice judgment of 4 October 2012 (Case C-403/11 Commission v. Spain).

Only after the adoption and reporting of the River Basin Management Plan for that basin, will the Commission be able to analyse its compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive ([1]), including the obligation to achieve good status of its waters.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011456/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σοβαρά προβλήματα λειτουργίας του ΧΥΤΑ Μαυροράχης — μεταφορά στραγγισμάτων από τον ΧΥΤΑ

Στις 7.8.2013 η Εκτελεστική Επιτροπή του Συνδέσμου ΟΤΑ Νομού Θεσσαλονίκης, με απόφασή της (Αρ. Πρ. 3513) «προκειμένου να είναι δυνατή η απρόσκοπτη λειτουργία της Μονάδας Επεξεργασίας Λυμάτων του ΧΥΤΑ Μαυροράχης και για να υπάρχει δυνατότητα διαχείρισης της περίσσιας παραγωγής στραγγισμάτων χωρίς να υπάρχει κίνδυνος επιβάρυνσης του περιβάλλοντος, κρίνεται απαραίτητη η άμεση μεταφορά των στραγγισμάτων από τις δεξαμενές αποθήκευσης πλεοναζουσών παροχών της Μονάδας Επεξεργασίας Στραγγισμάτων του ΧΥΤΑ Μαυροράχης στην Εγκατάσταση Επεξεργασίας Λυμάτων Θεσσαλονίκης», ενέκρινε δαπάνη ύψους 206 640 ευρώ για τη μίσθωση τεσσάρων βυτιοφόρων τα οποία για τρεις μήνες θα εκτελούν 12 τουλάχιστον δρομολόγια ημερησίως για να μεταφέρουν τα στραγγίσματα.

Ο ΧΥΤΑ Μαυροράχης εγκαινιάστηκε στις 26.11.2008. Ήδη από το 2009 έχουν γίνει καταγγελίες από τους κατοίκους, τις οποίες από το 2011 έχω μεταφέρει στην Επιτροπή με ερωτήσεις μου (E-011586/2011, E-011587/2011, E-003633/2012), που αφορούν κυρίως διαρροή στραγγισμάτων σε ύδατα που φτάνουν στην λίμνη Κορώνεια. Η Επιτροπή στις απαντήσεις της κατά πάγιο τρόπο «νίπτει τας χείρας της» επικαλούμενη αναρμοδιότητα, παρά το γεγονός ότι έχει επισημανθεί η απαράδεκτη κατάσταση.

Δεδομένου ότι, μετά την ανωτέρω απόφαση (Αρ. Πρ. 3513) οι κάτοικοι της περιοχής έχουν πλέον τη βεβαιότητα ότι η μέχρι σήμερα «περίσσια παραγωγή στραγγισμάτων» κατέληγε στο περιβάλλον και δεδομένων των τεράστιων αποδεδειγμένων προβλημάτων που παρουσιάζουν πολλά έργα ΧΥΤΑ στην Ελλάδα (π.χ. Δυτική Σάμος, Καρβουνάρι, Ζάκυνθος) είτε λόγω «αστοχίας» των μελετών είτε λόγω «κατασκευαστικών λαθών», ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Ποια μέσα διαθέτει για να διερευνήσει αν ο «αρμόδιες αρχές» κράτους μέλους καλύπτουν απαράδεκτες καταστάσεις και κραυγαλέες παραβιάσεις της κοινοτικής νομοθεσίας; Προτίθεται να διερευνήσει από πότε δεν λειτουργούν τα συστήματα βιολογικού καθαρισμού στον ΧΥΤΑ Μαυροράχης και αν τα τοξικά υπολείμματα που ανεξέλεγκτα διαρρέουν στο περιβάλλον ενδεχομένως ρυπαίνουν και τη λίμνη Κορώνεια;

— Ποια άμεσα μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει σε συνεργασία με την ελληνική κυβέρνηση για να πάψει ο οικολογικός εφιάλτης που προκαλεί ο τρόπος μελέτης, κατασκευής και λειτουργίας ΧΥΤΑ/Υ στην Ελλάδα;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Με βάση τις πληροφορίες που προσκομίζει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, η Επιτροπή θα επικοινωνήσει με τις ελληνικές αρχές προκειμένου να εξακριβωθεί κατά πόσον οι εν λόγω χώροι υγειονομικής ταφής είναι σύμμορφοι με τις απαιτήσεις της οδηγίας περί υγειονομικής ταφής των αποβλήτων ([1]).

Η Επιτροπή αντιμετωπίζει παραβάσεις και ποικίλων μορφών ανεπαρκή εφαρμογή της περί αποβλήτων νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ. Μεταξύ αυτών περιλαμβάνονται η έναρξη ερευνών και διαδικασιών επί παραβάσει κατά κρατών μελών για σοβαρές παραβάσεις, καθώς και δραστηριότητες συνδρομής για τη συμμόρφωση ([2]). Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή παραπέμπει την Ελλάδα στο Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο επί παραλείψει της εφαρμογής προγενέστερης δικαστικής απόφασης για τους παράνομους χώρους ταφής αποβλήτων ([3]).

([1]) Οδηγία 2000/35/ΕΚ, ΕΕ L 200 της 8.8.2000.
([2]) Βλ.: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm
([3]) Βλ.: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-143_el.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011456/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Serious problems in the operation of the Mavrorachi landfill site — transportation of leachate from the landfill site

On 7 August 2013, the Executive Committee of the Association of Municipalities of Thessaloniki Prefecture, under decision No 3513, stated that: 'with a view to allowing the smooth operation of the Mavrorachi landfill's effluent treatment plant and with a view to allowing management of excess leachate production without endangering the environment, it is necessary to transport the leachate directly from the overflow storage tanks at the Mavrorachi landfill's effluent treatment plant to the Thessaloniki effluent treatment facility' and approved expenditure totalling EUR 206 640 for the leasing of four tanker lorries, which will carry out at least 12 trips daily over a three-month period to transport the leachate.

The Mavrorachi landfill site was opened on 26 November 2008. Local inhabitants have been voicing complaints since 2009, and since 2011 I have been passing these on to the Commission through my questions (E-011586/2011, E-011587/2011, E-003633/2012), which mainly concern leachate leaks into waters draining into Lake Koronia. In its answers, the Commission consistently 'washes its hands of the matter' by invoking its lack of competence, despite the fact that this unacceptable situation has been brought to its attention.

Given the above decision No 3513, the inhabitants of the region are now certain that the hitherto 'excess leachate production' was ending up in the environment and, given the huge proven problems created by many landfill projects (e.g. Western Samos, Karvounari and Zakynthos) either due to a 'failure' of the studies or due to 'construction errors', will the Commission say:

— What means does it have to investigate whether the 'competent authorities' of Member States are dealing with unacceptable conditions and blatant violations of Community legislation? Does it intend to make enquiries as to when the operation of the biological cleaning systems at the Mavrorachi landfill site ceased operation and whether the toxic waste which leaks into the environment uncontrollably may be polluting Lake Koronia as well?

— What direct measures does it intend to take in cooperation with the Greek Government in order to stop the environmental nightmare that has resulted from the methods of studying, constructing and operating landfills and treatment plants in Greece?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 December 2013)

In the light of the information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission will contact the Greek authorities to verify whether the landfill in question is compliant with the requirements in the Landfill Directive ([1]).

The Commission addresses breaches and insufficient implementation of EU waste law in various ways. These include the initiation of investigations and infringement proceedings against Member States for serious offenses as well as compliance assistance activities ([2]). Earlier this year the Commission took Greece back to the European Court of Justice for failing to implement an earlier ruling on illegal landfills ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2000/35/EC, OJ L 200, 8.8.2000.
([2]) See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm
([3]) See: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-143_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011457/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE) und Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Rote Ausschreibungen und Durchgaben von Interpol in Bezug auf von der EU anerkannte Flüchtlinge

Pjotr Silajew ist ein Flüchtling aus Moskau. Er entkam einer polizeilichen Fahndung im Anschluss an seine Teilnahme an einer Demonstration gegen Korruption und Unregelmäßigkeiten in Zusammenhang mit einem kontroversen Autobahnbau in der Nähe von Moskau. Die finnischen Behörden haben ihm gemäß der Flüchtlingskonvention von 1951 politisches Asyl gewährt. Aufgrund einer von Interpol erfolgten Durchgabe, die auf Betreiben der Moskauer Staatsanwaltschaft erfolgte, wurde Herr Silajew in Spanien festgenommen; daraufhin legte er gegen den russischen Auslieferungsantrag Rechtsmittel ein. Der Auslieferungsantrag wurde mit der Begründung, dass das gegen ihn gerichtete Strafverfahren politisch motiviert sei, abgelehnt. Trotz dieser für ihn positiven Entscheidung verbrachte Herr Silajew acht Tage in Haft und konnte Spanien sechs Monate lang nicht verlassen, da er sich täglich beim örtlichen Gericht melden musste ([1]).

Die Systeme von Interpol können dazu missbraucht werden, um die Festnahme und Inhaftierung von Personen in einem EU-Mitgliedstaat zu erwirken, die in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat im Einklang mit EU-Normen als Flüchtlinge anerkannt worden sind. Die Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa (OSZE) hat ihre Besorgnis „über den Missbrauch des Interpol-Systems der roten Ausschreibungen durch Teilnehmerstaaten, deren Rechtssysteme nicht den internationalen Normen entsprechen" zum Ausdruck gebracht ([2]) und Interpol aufgefordert, seine Kontrollmechanismen zu verbessern, um einen Missbrauch des Systems zu vermeiden ([3]).

Die Kommission wird daher um die Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen gebeten:

1. Wird die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin Interpol um Antwort bitten, was seine bestehenden Mechanismen zur Ermittlung von Versuchen betrifft, seine Systeme zu missbrauchen, um die Inhaftierung, Festnahme und Auslieferung von aus politischen Gründen verfolgten Personen zu erwirken? Wird die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin Interpol um Antwort bitten, auf welche Art und Weise festgelegt wird, ob eine Verfolgung politisch motiviert ist?

2. Wird die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin Interpol um Antwort bitten, was die Bedeutung betrifft, die Interpol folgenden Punkten beimisst: (a) die Gewährung von Asyl in einem Mitgliedstaat erfolgt anhand bestimmter Strafverfahren, die die Grundlage einer roten Ausschreibung bilden; (b) die Weigerung eines EU-Mitgliedstaats, eine Person auszuliefern, die sich auf der Grundlage einer roten Ausschreibung Strafverfahren stellen muss, mit der Begründung, dass diese Strafverfahren politisch motiviert sind?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(17. Dezember 2013)

Der Kommission sind konkrete Fälle, darunter auch einige kürzlich in einem Bericht von Fair Trials International ([4]) hervorgehobene Fälle, bekannt, bei denen eine Reihe von Interpol-Mitgliedern angeblich politisch motivierte Ersuchen um Festnahme gesuchter Personen gestellt haben.

Die Kommission, die nicht Mitglied von Interpol ist, vertritt die Auffassung, dass Interpol-Instrumente in angemessener Weise dazu genutzt werden sollten, zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung von Kriminalität und zum Schutz der Grundrechte beizutragen.

Interpol verfügt über ein System, mit dem potenziellem Missbrauch ihrer Instrumente auf der Grundlage der Interpol-Statuten, der Interpol-Vorschriften über die Kontrolle von Informationen und den Zugang zu Interpol-Akten, der Interpol-Vorschriften über die Verarbeitung der Daten sowie der Betriebsvorschriften der Interpol-Kommission zur Kontrolle von Interpol-Dateien begegnet werden kann.

([1]) Umfassende Informationen zu diesem Fall sind abrufbar unter: http://www.fairtrials.net/cases/petr-silaev/
([2]) Erklärung von Monaco und Entschließungen, die von der Parlamentarischen Versammlung der OSZE auf ihrer 21. Jahrestagung vom 5. bis 9. Juli 2012 verabschiedet wurden, Ziffer 93.
([3]) Erklärung von Istanbul und Entschließungen, die von der Parlamentarischen Versammlung der OSZE auf ihrer 22. Jahrestagung vom 29. Juni bis 3. Juli 2013 verabschiedet wurden, Ziffer 147.
([4]) Fair Trials International, „Strengthening respect for human right, strengthening INTERPOL", November 2013.

In Zusammenarbeit mit den EU-Mitgliedstaaten als Mitgliedern von Interpol wird die Kommission mit Interpol die bestehenden Verfahren für die Interpol-Ausschreibungen ansprechen, einschließlich etwaiger notwendiger Maßnahmen zur weiteren Stärkung der Mechanismen zur Vermeidung politisch begründeter Ersuchen.

Die Kommission wird das Europäische Parlament über den Stand dieser Diskussionen auf dem Laufenden halten.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011457/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE) en Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7 oktober 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — „Red Notice" van Interpol en verspreiding van een aanhoudingsbevel m.b.t. door de EU erkende vluchtelingen

Petr Silaev is een vluchteling, afkomstig uit Moskou. Na zijn deelname aan een demonstratie tegen corruptie en onregelmatigheden in verband met een controversieel plan voor de aanleg van een snelweg in de buurt van Moskou die uitmondde in politiegeweld, slaagde hij erin het land te verlaten. De Finse overheid besloot, overeenkomstig het Vluchtelingenverdrag van 1951, de heer Silaev politiek asiel te verlenen. Na een Interpol-signalering op instigatie van het openbaar ministerie te Moskou, werd de heer Silaev gearresteerd in Spanje. Rusland diende een uitleveringsverzoek in, dat door de heer Silaev werd aangevochten en dat niet werd ingewilligd omdat Spanje van oordeel was dat de gerechtelijke vervolging door politieke motieven was ingegeven. Ondanks deze voor hem gunstige beslissing zat de heer Silaev acht dagen vast en kon hij zes maanden lang Spanje niet verlaten, omdat hij zich bij de plaatselijke rechtbank moest melden ([1]).

Het signaleringssysteem van Interpol kan misbruikt worden om in een lidstaat de arrestatie of detentie te bewerkstelligen van een persoon die in een andere lidstaat overeenkomstig gemeenschappelijke EU-normen als vluchteling is erkend. De Organisatie voor Veiligheid en Samenwerking in Europa (OVSE) heeft zich bezorgd getoond over het misbruik van het „Red Notice"-systeem van Interpol door bij Interpol aangesloten landen die een justitieel apparaat hebben dat niet aan de internationale normen beantwoordt ([2]), en heeft er bij Interpol op aangedrongen haar toezichtsmechanismen te verbeteren om misbruik van dit systeem te voorkomen ([3]).

Met het oog op bovenstaande:

1. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger van plan om inlichtingen in te winnen bij Interpol over de mechanismen die zijn ingevoerd om pogingen tot misbruik van het Europol-systeem te kunnen opsporen die bedoeld zijn om de arrestatie, detentie of uitlevering te bewerkstelligen van personen om deze om politieke redenen te kunnen vervolgen, alsmede over de maatstaven die zij hanteert om te bepalen of er sprake is van een door politieke motieven ingegeven vervolging?

2. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger van plan om bij Interpol te informeren welke waarde zij toekent aan: (a) asiel dat door een lidstaat verleend is op basis van de strafprocedure die ten grondslag ligt aan het laten uitgaan van een Red Notice; (b) weigering van een EU-lidstaat om een persoon uit te zetten met het oog op een strafprocedure die ten grondslag ligt aan een Red Notice, omdat die strafprocedure ingegeven is door politieke motieven?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(17 december 2013)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van specifieke gevallen, zoals enkele die onlangs in een verslag van Fair Trials International ([4]) werden besproken, waarbij een aantal leden van Interpol vermeende politiek gemotiveerde verzoeken indiende voor de arrestatie van gezochte personen.

Hoewel zij geen lid van Interpol is, is de Commissie van mening dat de instrumenten van Interpol juist moeten worden gebruikt, teneinde criminaliteit te voorkomen en te bestrijden, alsmede de grondrechten te beschermen.

Interpol beschikt over een systeem om mogelijk misbruik van haar instrumenten aan te pakken; dit systeem steunt op de statuten van Interpol, de voorschriften van Interpol inzake de controle van informatie en de toegang tot de Interpol-dossiers, de voorschriften van Interpol inzake de verwerking van gegevens en de bedrijfsregels van de Interpol Commission for the Control of Interpol Files.

([1]) Uitgebreide informatie over deze zaak is te raadplegen op: http://www.fairtrials.net/cases/petr-silaev/.
([2]) Verklaring van Monaco en resoluties aangenomen door de Parlementaire Assemblee van de OVSE tijdens haar 21ste jaarvergadering in Monaco, van 5 t/m 7 juli 2012, punt 93.
([3]) Verklaring van Istanboel en resoluties aangenomen door de Parlementaire Assemblee van de OVSE tijdens haar 22ste jaarvergadering in Istanboel, van 29 juni t/m 3 juli 2013, punt 147.
([4]) Fair Trials International, „Strengthening respect for human right, strengthening INTERPOL", november 2013.

In samenwerking met de EU-lidstaten, die lid zijn van Interpol, zal de Commissie de bestaande procedures voor de afgifte van „notices" met Interpol bespreken, waaronder de eventuele noodzaak om de mechanismen verder te versterken en politiek gemotiveerde verzoeken te voorkomen.

De Commissie houdt het Europees Parlement op de hoogte van die besprekingen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011457/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE) and Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Interpol Red Notices and diffusions concerning EU-recognised refugees

Petr Silaev is a refugee from Moscow. He escaped a police crackdown following his participation in a demonstration against corruption and irregularities surrounding a controversial motorway development outside Moscow. The Finnish authorities decided to grant Mr Silaev political asylum in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention. However, because of an Interpol diffusion issued by Moscow prosecutors, Mr Silaev was arrested in Spain, where he subsequently fought an extradition request from Russia. This was rejected on the grounds that the prosecution brought against him was politically motivated. Despite this favourable decision, Mr Silaev spent eight days in detention and was unable to leave Spain for six months as he was required to report to the local court ([1]).

Interpol's systems can be misused to obtain the arrest and detention in one Member State of those who have already been recognised as refugees in another Member State in accordance with common EU standards. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has expressed concern about the 'abuse of the Interpol Red Notice system by participating States whose judicial systems do not meet international standards' ([2]), and has called on Interpol to improve its oversight mechanisms so as to prevent misuse of the system ([3]).

In the light of this:

1. will the Vice-President/High Representative seek information from Interpol regarding the mechanisms it has in place for detecting attempts to abuse its systems in order to seek the arrest, detention and extradition of those facing politically motivated prosecutions, and about how it determines whether a prosecution is politically motivated?

2. will the Vice-President/High Representative seek information from Interpol as to the significance which Interpol attributes to: (a) the granting of asylum by an EU Member State based on the specific criminal proceedings which form the basis of a Red Notice; (b) refusal by an EU Member State to extradite a person to face the criminal proceedings which form the basis of a Red Notice, on the grounds that those proceedings are politically motivated?

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

The Commission is aware of specific cases, including some highlighted recently in a report by Fair Trials International ([4]), in which allegedly politically motivated requests were made by a number of Interpol's Members for the arrest of wanted persons.

While not being a member of Interpol, the Commission takes the view that Interpol's instruments should be used appropriately with a view to contributing to the prevention of and fight against criminality and the protection of fundamental rights.

Interpol has a system to address potential abuse of its instruments, based on the Interpol constitution, the Interpol rules on the control of information and access to Interpol files, the Interpol rules on the processing of data, as well as the operating rules of the Interpol Commission for the Control of Interpol Files.

In liaison with EU Member States, as Members of Interpol, the Commission will raise with Interpol the existing procedures for the issuance of Interpol notices, including the possible need for actions to further strengthen mechanisms to avoid politically motivated requests.

The Commission will keep the European Parliament informed of those discussions.

([1]) Full information regarding the case is available at: http://www.fairtrials.net/cases/petr-silaev/
([2]) Monaco Declaration and Resolutions adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its 21st Annual Session in Monaco, 5-9 July 2012, point 93.
([3]) Istanbul Declaration and Resolutions adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at its 22nd Annual Session in Istanbul, 29 June — 3 July 2013, point 147.
([4]) Fair Trials International, 'Strengthening respect for human right, strengthening INTERPOL', November 2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011458/13
an die Kommission
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE) und Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Rote Notizen und Durchgaben von Interpol in Bezug auf von der EU anerkannte Flüchtlinge

Pjotr Silajew ist ein Flüchtling aus Moskau. Er entkam einer polizeilichen Fahndung im Anschluss an seine Teilnahme an einer Demonstration gegen Korruption und Unregelmäßigkeiten in Zusammenhang mit einem kontroversen Autobahnbau in der Nähe von Moskau. Die finnischen Behörden haben ihm gemäß der Genfer Flüchtlingskonvention von 1951 politisches Asyl gewährt. Wegen einer von Interpol verbreiteten Durchgabe der Moskauer Staatsanwaltschaft wurde Herr Silajew jedoch in Spanien festgenommen. Er legte gegen den russischen Auslieferungsantrag Rechtsmittel ein, der daraufhin mit der Begründung abgelehnt wurde, dass das Strafverfahren gegen ihn politisch motiviert sei. In seiner Entscheidung stützte sich das spanische Gericht unter anderem auf die vorherige Entscheidung Finnlands. Trotz dieser für ihn positiven verbrachte Pjotr Silajew acht Tage in Haft und konnte Spanien sechs Monate lang nicht verlassen, da er sich täglich beim örtlichen Gericht melden musste.

Die Systeme von Interpol können dazu missbraucht werden, die Festnahme und Inhaftierung von Personen in einem EU-Mitgliedstaat zu erwirken, die in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat bereits im Einklang mit gemeinsamen EU-Normen als Flüchtlinge anerkannt worden sind.

Die Kommission wird daher um die Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen gebeten:

1. Gibt es geltende EU-Rechtsvorschriften, mit denen die Bewegungsfreiheit innerhalb der Europäischen Union von in der EU anerkannten Flüchtlingen geschützt werden kann, für die es im System von Interpol eine politisch motivierte Rote Notiz (Ersuchen um Festnahme oder vorläufige Festnahme mit dem Ziel der Auslieferung) gibt, und können diese Rechtsvorschriften verhindern, dass andere Mitgliedstaaten die betreffenden Personen ausliefern oder inhaftieren?

2. Gedenkt die Kommission, Maßnahmen in dieser Hinsicht zu ergreifen, falls sie zu dem Schluss kommt, dass es keine EU-Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz der Bewegungsfreiheit von in der EU anerkannten Flüchtlingen mit einer politisch motivierten Roten Notiz von Interpol gibt?

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

Bei der Prüfung einer Roten Notiz von Interpol haben die Mitgliedstaaten laut EU-Recht den Grundsatz der Nichtzurückweisung zu beachten, wonach niemand in einen Staat abgeschoben oder ausgewiesen werden darf, in dem sein Leben oder seine Freiheit aus Gründen der Rasse oder Religion, Staatsangehörigkeit, Zugehörigkeit zu einer bestimmten sozialen Gruppe oder aufgrund seiner politischen Ansichten gefährdet wäre oder die ernsthafte Gefahr der Vollstreckung der Todesstrafe, der Folter oder einer anderen unmenschlichen oder erniedrigenden Strafe oder Behandlung besteht. Die Auslieferung eines Flüchtlings ist zwar möglich. Gleichwohl sollten die Mitgliedstaaten unter Berücksichtigung sämtlicher Umstände im Einzelfall sehr genau prüfen, ob einem Antrag auf Auslieferung in das Herkunftsland stattzugeben ist, wenn der betreffenden Person in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat Flüchtlingsstatus gewährt wurde. In dieser Hinsicht sind die Gründe für die Anerkennung der betreffenden Person als Flüchtling in der EU zu berücksichtigen.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011458/13
aan de Commissie
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE) en Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7 oktober 2013)

Betreft: „Red Notice" van Interpol en verspreiding van een aanhoudingsbevel m.b.t. door de EU erkende vluchtelingen

Petr Silaev is een vluchteling, afkomstig uit Moskou. Na zijn deelname aan een demonstratie tegen corruptie en onregelmatigheden in verband met een controversieel plan voor de aanleg van een snelweg in de buurt van Moskou die uitmondde in politiegeweld, slaagde hij erin het land te verlaten. De Finse overheid besloot, overeenkomstig het Vluchtelingenverdrag van 1951, de heer Silaev politiek asiel te verlenen. Na een Interpol-signalering op instigatie van het openbaar ministerie te Moskou, werd de heer Silaev gearresteerd in Spanje. Rusland diende een uitleveringsverzoek in, dat door de heer Silaev werd aangevochten en dat niet werd ingewilligd omdat Spanje van oordeel was dat de gerechtelijke vervolging door politieke motieven was ingegeven. De Spaanse rechtbank nam deze beslissing onder meer op basis van het Finse asielbesluit. Ondanks deze voor hem gunstige beslissing zat de heer Silaev acht dagen vast en kon hij zes maanden lang Spanje niet verlaten, omdat hij zich bij de plaatselijke rechtbank moest melden.

Het signaleringssysteem van Interpol kan misbruikt worden om in een lidstaat de arrestatie of detentie te bewerkstelligen van een persoon die in een andere lidstaat overeenkomstig gemeenschappelijke EU-normen als vluchteling is erkend.

Met het oog op bovenstaande:

1. Bestaat er EU-wetgeving ter bescherming van het vrij verkeer binnen de EU van door de EU erkende vluchtelingen tegen wie een door politieke motieven ingegeven Red Notice van Interpol is uitgegaan, en kan deze wetgeving voorkomen dat andere lidstaten de betrokken persoon uitzetten of gevangennemen?

2. Is de Commissie van plan om op dit gebied maatregelen te treffen, als zij tot de conclusie komt dat er geen wetgeving bestaat ter bescherming van het vrij verkeer van door de EU erkende vluchtelingen tegen wie een door politieke motieven ingegeven Red Notice van Interpol is uitgegaan?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(5 december 2013)

Wanneer lidstaten het antwoord op een Red Notice van Interpol onderzoeken, verplicht het EU-recht hen het principe van non-refoulement te eerbiedigen, volgens welk niemand mag worden verwijderd of uitgezet uit een land wanneer zijn leven of vrijheid wordt bedreigd om redenen van ras, religie, nationaliteit, lidmaatschap van een bepaalde sociale groep of politieke overtuiging, of wanneer er een risico bestaat onderworpen te worden aan de doodstraf, foltering of een andere onmenselijke en vernederende behandeling. Hoewel de uitzetting van een vluchteling mogelijk is, moeten de lidstaten in het licht van alle elementen van zijn dossier zeer zorgvuldig nadenken over de aanvraag om iemand die in een andere lidstaat de vluchtelingenstatus heeft verkregen, uit te leveren aan zijn land van oorsprong. In dit verband moeten de redenen waarom iemand de vluchtelingenstatus in de EU heeft verkregen, worden overwogen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011458/13
to the Commission
Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE) and Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Interpol Red Notices and diffusions concerning EU-recognised refugees

Petr Silaev is a refugee from Moscow. He escaped a police crackdown following his participation in a demonstration against corruption and irregularities surrounding a controversial motorway development outside Moscow. The authorities of Finland decided to grant Mr Silaev political asylum in accordance with the 1951 Convention. However, because of an Interpol diffusion issued by Moscow prosecutors, Mr Silaev was arrested in Spain where he subsequently fought an extradition request from Russia, which was rejected on the basis that the prosecution against him was politically-motivated. In the decision, the Spanish court relied, *inter alia*, on the previous decision of Finland. Despite the favourable decision, Mr Silaev spent eight days in detention and six months unable to leave Spain as he was required to report to the local court.

Interpol's systems can be misused to obtain the arrest and detention, in one Member State, of those who have already been recognised as refugees in another Member State in accordance with common EU standards.

In the light of this:

1. Is there current EU legislation in place that can protect the free movement across the EU of EU-recognised refugees which have a politically motivated Red Notice in the Interpol system, and can this legislation prevent other Member States from extraditing or detaining the persons in question?

2. If the Commission concludes that no rules exist to protect the free movement EU-recognised refugees with a politically-motivated Interpol Red Notice, does it intend to take any initiatives in this area?

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

When Member States consider the response to a Red Notice in the Interpol system, EC law obliges them to respect the principle of non-refoulement, according to which no one may be removed or expelled to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or where there is a serious risk that he or she would be subjected to the death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment. Whereas extradition of a refugee is possible, Member States should therefore consider very carefully a request for the extradition to his/her country of origin of a person who has been granted refugee status in another Member State, in light of all the relevant facts of the individual case. In this respect, the reasons for which a person was granted refugee status in the EU must be taken into consideration.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011460/13
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(7 octobre 2013)

Objet: Rapport de la Cour des comptes sur la situation du secteur forestier dans l'Union

Dans un rapport publié le 19 septembre 2013, la Cour des comptes européenne constate que la situation du secteur forestier dans l'Union n'a pas fait l'objet d'analyses spécifiques justifiant de proposer une aide financière particulière pour améliorer la valeur économique des forêts. La Cour considère que les États membres sélectionnés pour son audit — à savoir l'Espagne (Galice), l'Italie (Toscane), la Hongrie, l'Autriche et la Slovénie — ont utilisé cette aide pour soutenir des opérations qui ne correspondent pas aux objectifs du programme et qu'il serait plus approprié de financer dans le cadre d'autres dispositifs, avec des conditions d'éligibilité ainsi que des taux de financement différents, ces derniers étant généralement plus bas.

La Cour recommande à la Commission de définir et d'évaluer les besoins de l'Union concernant l'amélioration de la valeur économique des forêts, de définir clairement les éléments clés de nature à garantir que l'aide de l'Union soit ciblée de façon à pourvoir à ces besoins et à créer une valeur ajoutée européenne et d'améliorer son suivi de la mesure 122 «Amélioration de la valeur économique des forêts» afin de s'assurer que les États membres appliquent cette dernière conformément aux objectifs spécifiques établis.

1. La Commission partage-t-elle l'analyse de l'auditeur externe sur les déficiences affectant le programme de manière générale, tant au niveau de la conception que de la mise en œuvre et du suivi de la mesure 122? Les conclusions de l'audit sont-elles généralisables à l'ensemble de l'Union? Une analyse similaire sera-t-elle effectuée pour les autres États membres qui ne sont pas concernés par l'audit de la Cour des comptes?

2. Quelle suite la Commission compte-t-elle donner aux recommandations de la Cour?

3. La nouvelle stratégie forestière européenne, proposée par la Commission le lendemain de la publication de l'audit, a-t-elle anticipé les problèmes soulevés par la Cour?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(3 décembre 2013)

Concernant le rapport spécial n° 8 (2013) ([1]) rédigé par la Cour des comptes européenne (CCE), la Commission est d'avis que la conception et la mise en œuvre de la mesure «Amélioration de la valeur économique des forêts» sont allées au-delà des suggestions de la Cour.

La Commission fait observer que l'audit en question ne concernait que 5 ([2]) des 49 Programmes de développement rural (PDR) qui avaient intégré cette mesure. Il convient de noter qu'une évaluation ex post de chaque PDR sera effectuée d'ici 2016. Dans cette optique, la stratégie forestière sera évaluée dans tous les États membres ou régions qui ont inclus cette mesure dans leur programme.

La Commission s'emploie maintenant à améliorer cette mesure forestière pour la prochaine période de programmation 2014-2020. Par conséquent, les nouvelles dispositions juridiques sont plus explicites et contiennent des définitions plus précises.

La Commission fournit également aux États membres des documents d'orientation détaillés sur les mesures forestières. En outre, les résultats des opérations de suivi et d'évaluation devraient s'améliorer étant donné que les pratiques actuelles dans ce domaine ont été revues.

Dans sa section «Promouvoir nos communautés rurales et urbaines», la nouvelle stratégie forestière de l'Union européenne recommande l'orientation stratégique suivante: «La Commission et les États membres devraient évaluer les effets des mesures forestières mises en œuvre au titre de la politique de développement rural».

([1]) «Le soutien du Fonds européen agricole pour le développement rural à l'amélioration de la valeur économique des forêts».
([2]) Espagne (Galice), Italie (Toscane), Hongrie, Autriche et Slovénie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011460/13
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: The Court of Auditors' report on the situation of the forestry sector in the EU

In a report published on 19 September 2013, the European Court of Auditors states that the forestry sector situation in the EU was not specifically analysed so as to justify specific financial aid aimed at improving the economic value of forests. The Court found that the Member States selected for its audit — namely Spain (Galicia), Italy (Tuscany), Hungary, Austria and Slovenia — had used the measure to support operations which did not correspond to the programme's goals and which would be more appropriately financed by other measures with different eligibility requirements and aid financing rates, usually lower.

The Court recommends that the Commission define and assess the EU's needs for improving the economic value of forests, clearly define the key features that would ensure that the EU support is targeted to address those needs, and thus create EU added value, and improve its monitoring of measure 122, 'improvement of the economic value of forests', in order to ensure that the Member States implement it in line with the specific objectives set.

1. Does the Commission agree with the external auditor's analysis of the deficiencies affecting the programme in general, with regard to the design, implementation and monitoring of measure 122? Are the conclusions of the audit applicable generally to the whole of the EU? Will a similar analysis be carried out by the other Member States which were not covered by the Court of Auditors' audit?

2. How will the Commission follow up on the Court's recommendations?

3. Has the new EU forest strategy, which was proposed by the Commission the day after the publication of the audit, anticipated the problems identified by the Court?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

As regards the special Report No 8 (2013) ([1]) prepared by the European Court of Auditors (ECA), the Commission is of the opinion that the implementation and design of the measure 'Improvement of the economic value of forests' were stronger than suggested by the Court.

The Commission points out that the audit in question covered only 5 ([2]) Rural Development Programmes (RDP) out of 49 which have included this measure in the Programme. It must be noted that an *ex-post* evaluation of every RDP will be carried out by 2016. In this context the forestry measures will be evaluated in all those Member States or regions that have included it in their Programmes.

The Commission is currently working towards improving this forestry measure regarding the next Programming period 2014-2020. Consequently, more clarity and clearer definitions have been provided in the new legal provisions.

The Commission is also providing the Member States with comprehensive guidance documents on the forestry measures. Furthermore, the current schemes of monitoring and evaluation have been reviewed and should therefore provide better monitoring and evaluation results.

In the section 'Supporting our rural and urban communities', the new EU Forest Strategy contains the strategic orientation; 'The Commission and the Member States should assess and improve the effect of forestry measures under rural development policy'.

([1]) 'Support for the Improvement of the Economic Value of Forests from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development'.
([2]) Spain (Galicia), Italy (Tuscany), Hungary, Austria and Slovenia.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011461/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(7 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Progetto MOSE: indagine penale sull'impiego dei fondi e dubbi sul futuro funzionamento dell'opera

Come già accennato in chiusura dell'interrogazione n. E-009581/2013, nel corso dell'estate 2013 il Consorzio Venezia Nuova, concessionario unico dello Stato italiano incaricato dal 1983 della realizzazione del progetto MOSE, è stato coinvolto direttamente nel contesto di una clamorosa indagine per capi d'imputazione quali corruzione, concussione, turbativa d'asta e vari reati fiscali. L'indagine, che ha condotto all'applicazione della misura cautelare degli arresti domiciliari per ragioni d'età all'ottuagenario dimissionario presidente dell'ente e che coinvolge ben 32 indagati, sembrerebbe portare allo scoperto l'esistenza di una vera e propria associazione a delinquere, assurta a sistema, dedita alla distrazione di risorse destinate alla realizzazione dell'opera mediante costituzione di «fondi neri» grazie a false fatturazioni e manipolazioni dei prezzi. Tale denaro sarebbe poi stato in parte utilizzato per finalità corruttive attraverso la dazione di tangenti a esponenti bipartisan del mondo politico-istituzionale per la creazione di consenso attorno all'opera ([1]). Nel febbraio 2013, inoltre, una precedente indagine aveva condotto all'arresto per addebiti analoghi del presidente del consiglio di amministrazione di Mantovani S.p.A., la maggiore tra le imprese consorziate ([2]).

Lo scandalo prodotto dai risultati delle due indagini e dal coinvolgimento di illustri soggetti getta una luce del tutto diversa sulla reale gestione di appalti, consulenze, controlli e collaudi, nonché sulle scelte progettuali e tecnologiche che hanno condotto al rigetto delle proposte alternative in merito alla realizzazione di un'opera, della quale già da tempo viene autorevolmente messa in discussione la futura funzionalità: le costruende paratoie volte a contenere le maree potrebbero infatti risultare dinamicamente instabili e consentire all'acqua di penetrare perché soggette a fenomeni di risonanza in condizioni di mare agitato ([3]).

Tutto ciò premesso, la Commissione:

1. Non ritiene opportuno che la BEI (Banca Europea degli Investimenti) apra un'indagine sulla concreta possibilità che tra le risorse che sembrerebbero essere state distratte e destinate ad attività illecite siano compresi anche i fondi pari a quasi un miliardo di euro dalla stessa già erogati per la realizzazione dell'opera?

2. Non intende approfondire la questione del possibile futuro mancato funzionamento del MOSE, ricordando che sono ancora possibili modifiche in corso d'opera?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(17 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione non interviene in procedimenti giudiziari o indagini nazionali in corso. Spetta ai tribunali nazionali valutare le denunce di corruzione, concussione, turbativa d'asta e vari reati fiscali.

L'interrogazione dell'onorevole parlamentare si riferisce alle attività di erogazione di prestiti della BEI. Quest'ultima ha fatto sapere che, sulla base delle informazioni finora disponibili al pubblico, le indagini e le misure cautelari adottate non sembrano riguardare fatti relativi al progetto MOSE, da essa finanziato, ma piuttosto attività svolte da singoli all'interno del CVN, presumibilmente non in relazione all'opera MOSE. Nel complesso, esse non sembrano riguardare opere finanziate dalla BEI. I servizi interni della BEI preposti alle indagini hanno contattato le autorità giudiziarie e di polizia italiane per ottenere maggiori informazioni sul procedimento in corso e, in particolare, per stabilire se esso incida anche sui lavori effettuati nell'ambito del progetto finanziato dalla BEI (le paratoie contro le inondazioni, note come progetto MOSE). Su richiesta della BEI in seguito alla divulgazione della notizia, il ministero delle Infrastrutture ha confermato che l'indagine in corso non dovrebbe pregiudicare il finanziamento della BEI a favore del progetto. Quest'ultimo beneficia di contributi statali e rappresenta uno dei più importanti investimenti infrastrutturali attualmente realizzati in Italia.

Spetta alle autorità nazionali decidere in merito a eventuali modifiche del progetto.

([1]) Cfr. articolo del quotidiano locale «Il Gazzettino» del 23.7.2013: http://goo.gl/sZw3Ml.
([2]) Cfr. articolo del quotidiano locale «La Nuova» di Venezia e Mestre del 28.2.2013: http://goo.gl/53mXv4.
([3]) Secondo gli oppositori al progetto, in particolare, fu scartata senza confronto nel merito una soluzione alternativa che evitava la risonanza anche con notevole riduzione dei costi di realizzazione e di gestione e dell'impatto ambientale. Cfr. studio commissionato nel 2008 dall'allora Amministrazione del Comune di Venezia alla società francese Principia R.D.: http://goo.gl/uhhSMb.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011461/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: MOSE project — criminal investigation into the use of funds and doubts about the future performance of the work

As stated at the end of Written Question E-009581/2013, in the summer of 2013 the Consorzio Venezia Nuova (New Venice Consortium), the sole concessionaire of the Italian State with responsibility since 1983 for implementing the MOSE project, has been directly implicated in a sensational investigation into allegations of corruption, extortion, bid rigging and miscellaneous tax offences. The investigation, which resulted in a pre-trial supervision measure — house arrest on grounds of age — being applied to the octogenarian retired head of the consortium and which involves as many as 32 suspects, has seemingly uncovered a genuine large-scale criminal conspiracy to divert funds earmarked for the work through slush funds set up using fake invoices and price manipulation. It is alleged that some of the money was then used to bribe bipartisan politicians and officials to agree on matters concerning the work ([1]). Moreover, an earlier investigation carried out in February 2013 resulted in the arrest on similar charges of the managing director of Mantovani S.p.A, the largest company in the consortium ([2]).

The scandal caused by the outcomes of the two investigations and the involvement of prominent individuals sheds a completely different light on the bid management, consultancy, checks and inspections that actually took place, as well as on the design and technological decisions that led to the rejection of alternative proposals for implementing the project, the future performance of which has already long been questioned by experts: the barriers being built to hold back the tides could be dynamically unstable and could allow water to penetrate because of the resonance that occurs when the sea is rough ([3]).

1. Does the Commission not believe that the European Investment Bank (EIB) should investigate the real possibility that the funds apparently misappropriated for illegal activities include almost EUR 1 billion of funds already granted by the EIB for completion of the work?

2. Does it not intend to look more closely at the possibility that MOSE may fail in the future, while emphasising the fact that changes are still possible while the work is under way?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2013)

The Commission does not intervene in pending national investigations or judicial proceedings; it is for the national Courts to assess allegations of corruption, extortion, bid rigging and miscellaneous tax offences.

The Honourable Member's question relates to the EIB's lending operations. We understand from EIB that, based on information so far available to the public, the investigations and precautionary measures taken do not seem to concern facts relating to the MOSE project, financed by the EIB, but rather concern activities carried out by individuals within the CVN, allegedly not in relation to the MOSE works. In general, they do not seem to concern works that are financed by the EIB. The EIB internal investigation services have contacted the Italian judicial and police authorities to get more information on the pending proceeding, and in particular whether it affects also works carried out on the EIB finance project (the anti-flood barriers known as MOSE). Upon request from the EIB at the time of the outbreak of the news, the Ministry of Infrastructure confirmed that the ongoing investigation should not affect EIB funding to the project. The project benefits from State contributions, and is one of the most important infrastructural investments currently under implementation in Italy.

It is for the national authorities to decide on possible changes to this project.

([1]) See article in the 23 July 2013 issue of *Il Gazzettino* (local newspaper): http://goo.gl/sZw3Ml
([2]) See article in the 28 February 2013 issue of *La Nuova* (local newspaper for Venice and Mestre): http://goo.gl/53mXv4
([3]) Opponents of the project claim, in particular, that an alternative solution that prevented resonance and significantly reduced the project's implementation and management costs and environmental impact was rejected without any comparisons being made. See study by the French company Principia R.D. commissioned in 2008 by the administration of the municipality of Venice at that time: http://goo.gl/uhhSMb

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011462/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Strage a Lampedusa

Una tragedia dell'immigrazione senza precedenti, avvenuta il 3 ottobre scorso al largo dell'isola di Lampedusa, ha provocato centinaia di morti e di dispersi. Il naufragio è stato causato da un incendio innescato a bordo del barcone dagli stessi passeggeri che cercavano di farsi avvistare e soccorrere quando erano a poche miglia dalla costa dell'Isola dei Conigli.

Fino ad ora sono stati contati 111 morti tra cui 4 bambini e 2 donne in stato di gravidanza. Salvi in 151, ma le speranze sono davvero poche per gli oltre 200 dispersi. Secondo le testimonianze, sul barcone viaggiavano circa 500 persone.

E dall'isola è giunto l'ennesimo grido d'allarme: «Siamo in piena emergenza», afferma il responsabile del Poliambulatorio: «nella camera mortuaria non c'è più spazio per i cadaveri».

Le immagini della tragedia hanno fatto il giro del mondo e hanno provocato l'indignazione dell'opinione pubblica di tutta Europa.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. dopo questa ennesima strage, intende rivedere complessivamente le politiche europee che regolano i flussi migratori?

2. Alla luce di quanto accaduto, intende abrogare urgentemente il regolamento Dublino III (UE) n. 604/2013, che attribuisce la competenza per l'esame di una domanda di asilo o il riconoscimento dello status di rifugiato esclusivamente allo Stato membro di primo approdo?

3. Intende affermare il principio della solidarietà e della corresponsabilità tra tutti gli Stati membri, con la definizione di una strategia europea sulla migrazione che tuteli i rifugiati, in un nuovo regolamento sulla materia?

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

La Commissione è profondamente preoccupata dai recenti avvenimenti a largo di Lampedusa, come hanno testimoniato il Presidente Barroso e la Commissaria Malmström recandosi sull'isola il 9 ottobre 2013. In tale occasione la Commissione ha ribadito il suo pieno sostegno agli Stati membri che devono intraprendere difficili operazioni di ricerca e salvataggio e accogliere numerosi migranti, offrendo fra l'altro un importo totale di 30 milioni di EUR per rafforzare il pattugliamento e il sistema di asilo in Italia. Parte di questi fondi sarà impiegata per potenziare la presenza di Frontex nella zona. Questo aiuto si aggiungerà alle attività di sostegno dell'Unione europea già in corso specificamente destinate all'Italia, come il piano di sostegno speciale attuato dall'Ufficio europeo di sostegno per l'asilo.

In seguito alle discussioni svoltesi nell'ultimo Consiglio «Giustizia e affari interni», la Commissione ha istituito e presiede una Task Force specifica per il Mediterraneo, che riunisce tutti gli Stati membri e le agenzie competenti. A dicembre essa presenterà al Consiglio i risultati dei suoi lavori, comprese nuove azioni volte a ridurre il rischio che possano riprodursi tragedie di questo tipo.

Lungi dal costituire una causa di tali tragedie, il regolamento Dublino III, adottato dai colegislatori nel giugno di quest'anno, mira a rendere più efficiente il sistema Dublino e ad aumentare il livello di protezione per i richiedenti. Le statistiche mostrano che il 70 % di tutti i richiedenti asilo è accolto da soltanto cinque paesi: la Germania, il Belgio, la Francia, il Regno Unito e la Svezia. È chiaro, peraltro, che gli Stati membri che si trovano lungo la frontiera meridionale dell'Unione sono esposti a una maggiore pressione migratoria: è pertanto necessario sostenerli ininterrottamente, in quanto i loro sistemi di asilo e di accoglienza sono spesso sottoposti a tensioni improvvise.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011462/13
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(7 October 2013)

Subject: Tragedy off Lampedusa

On 3 October, an unprecedented immigration tragedy occurred off the island of Lampedusa, leaving hundreds of people dead or missing. The shipwreck happened after passengers started a fire on their boat a few miles off the Isola dei Conigli, in an attempt to attract attention and be rescued.

So far, 111 have been confirmed dead, including 4 children and 2 pregnant women. There are 151 survivors, but very little hope remains for over 200 missing people. According to witness accounts, there were 500 passengers on board.

Yet another alarm has been sounded on the island: the medical centre director said that this is a full-blown emergency, and that there is no more room for bodies in the mortuary.

Pictures of the tragedy have been seen all over the world, and sparked public outrage across Europe.

1. Following this latest tragedy, does the Commission intend to carry out a comprehensive review of EU migration policies?

2. In light of this incident, does it plan to urgently repeal Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III) which attributes responsibility for examining an asylum request or granting refugee status exclusively to the Member State through which the immigrant first entered the EU?

3. Will it confirm the principle of solidarity and shared responsibility of the Member States and set out a European strategy on migration which protects refugees in a new regulation on this issue?

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

The Commission is deeply concerned by the events off the coast of Lampedusa, as demonstrated by the visit President Barroso and Commissioner Malmström paid to the island on 9 October 2013. On that occasion the Commission reiterated its support to Member States having to undertake complex Search and Rescue operations and receiving a large number of migrants, including by pledging a total of EUR 30 million for the reinforcement of patrolling and the strengthening of the asylum system in Italy. A part of these funds will be used in order to upgrade the Frontex presence in the area. This will come on top of existing support activities targeted at Italy such as the Support Plan of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

In line with the discussions in the last Justice and Home Affairs Council, the Commission has set up a dedicated Task Force for the Mediterranean under its presidency. This Task Force brings together all Member States and relevant agencies. It will present the results of its work in December to the Council, including new actions aimed at reducing the risk of such tragedies occurring in the future.

Far from being a cause of such tragedies, the Dublin III Regulation, which was adopted by the co-legislators in June this year, seeks to increase the efficiency of the Dublin system and enhance the level of protection for applicants. Statistics show that 70% of all asylum applicants are received by just five countries, namely Germany, Belgium, France, United Kingdom and Sweden. It is also clear that Member States on the southern border are exposed to particular migratory pressure, and that is why continued support should be provided to these countries, which often face sudden pressures on their asylum and reception systems.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-011463/13
aan de Commissie
Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE)
(8 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Het strafbaar stellen van daklоosheid in Hongarije

De Hongaarse regering maakt zich wederom schuldig aan een schending van de grondrechten door een amendement op de wet op misdrijven aan te nemen waarmee gemeentes „daklozenvrije zones" kunnen instellen: gebieden waar op straat leven als vergrijp wordt beschouwd. Het bouwen van tijdelijke onderkomens — wat voor velen de laatste overlevingskans is nu de winter in aantocht is, aangezien er niet genoeg officiële opvangplekken voor daklozen zijn — is nu illegaal geworden in de hele openbare ruimte.

Het Hongaarse constitutionele hof verwierp een eerdere poging om daklоosheid strafbaar te stellen als ongrondwettig. De Commissie heeft haar bezorgdheid geuit en het Parlement heeft oplossingen voorgesteld, zowel met betrekking tot daklоosheid als sociale woningbouw. Ondanks de waarschuwingen en na een wijziging van de grondwet, heeft de Hongaarse regering het amendement op de wet op misdrijven opnieuw ingediend, weliswaar in licht gewijzigde vorm, maar met bijna dezelfde inhoud: daklоosheid wordt alsnog strafbaar gesteld.

Juist in tijden van crisis, wanneer kwetsbare personen het meest om hulp verlegen zitten, schendt de Hongaarse regering de grondrechten en stigmatiseert zij daklozen die bovendien fysiek worden uitgesloten van de samenleving.

1. Welke acute maatregelen is de Commissie gezien de hierboven geschetste situatie van plan te nemen om ervoor te zorgen dat de grondrechten, met inbegrip van het recht op menselijke waardigheid, worden gehandhaafd en beschermd door de EU, in overeenstemming met de artikelen 1, 3, 4 en 21 van het Handvest van de grondrechten?

2. Wat is de Commissie van zins te ondernemen om erop toe te zien dat de Hongaarse autoriteiten navolging geven aan de landgebonden aanbevelingen over sociale uitsluiting in het kader van het Europees semester?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(13 november 2013)

De Commissie zet zich binnen de grenzen van haar bevoegdheden in voor de volledige eerbiediging van de rechten en vrijheden die in het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie beschreven zijn. Overeenkomstig artikel 51, lid 1 van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie zijn de bepalingen ervan echter uitsluitend tot de lidstaten gericht wanneer zij het recht van de Unie ten uitvoer brengen. In dit verband schijnen de bepalingen van de door het geachte Parlementslid genoemde wet geen betrekking te hebben op de uitvoering van het EU-recht.

De Commissie ziet op regelmatige basis toe op de uitvoering van de landspecifieke aanbevelingen (CSR) en verwacht dat de lidstaat de maatregelen schetst die zijn genomen of zijn gepland in antwoord op die aanbevelingen van 2013 in het nationale hervormingsprogramma en dat vóór eind april 2014. Daarnaast zullen de EU-fondsen van programmeringsperiode 2013-2020, waarover al met de lidstaten wordt onderhandeld, de doelstellingen van Europa 2020 en de landspecifieke aanbevelingen prioritair zijn.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011463/13
to the Commission
Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Criminalisation of homelessness in Hungary

The Hungarian Government is, once again, violating fundamental rights by adopting the amendment of the Act on Misdemeanours allowing local municipalities to create 'homeless-free zones': areas where living on the street is considered to be an offence. Building of shacks — which might be the last chance for many to survive in the approaching winter given that there are not enough places for homeless people in the shelter system — is now illegal in all public areas.

The Hungarian Constitutional Court ruled a previous attempt to criminalise homelessness unconstitutional. The Commission expressed its concerns and the Parliament proposed solutions both with regard to homelessness and social housing. Despite the warnings and having amended the constitution, the Hungarian Government reintroduced the amendment of the Act on Misdemeanours in a slightly modified form, but with almost identical content — ultimately reintroducing the criminalisation of street homelessness.

At times of crisis, when the vulnerable need most help, the Hungarian Government violates fundamental rights, stigmatises homeless people and physically excludes them from society.

1. In view of the above, what immediate action is the Commission planning to take to make sure that fundamental rights, including the right to human dignity, are upheld and protected by the EU, in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Articles 1, 3, 4 and 21 thereof?

2. What action does the Commission intend to take to ensure that the Hungarian authorities follow up on the country-specific recommendation related to social exclusion within the framework of the European Semester?

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

The Commission is committed, within the limits of its powers, to ensure full respect of the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. However, according to Article 51 (1) of the Charter, its provisions are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law. In this regard, the provisions of the law referred to by the Honourable Member do not appear to be related to the implementation of European Union law.

The Commission monitors the implementation of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) on regular basis and is expecting the Member State to outline the measures taken and planned in response to the 2013 CSRs in the National Reform Programme which is due in April 2014. In addition, the EU funds from the 2013-2020 programming period, which is under negotiation with the Member States, will take the Europe 2020 targets and CSRs as a financing priority.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011464/13
alla Commissione
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(8 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Tragedia al largo di Lampedusa

La tragedia accaduta nelle acque al largo di Lampedusa nelle prime ore del mattino di giovedì 3 ottobre non è che l'ultima di una lunga serie di incidenti che sono costati la vita a centinaia di migranti. Da quando è scoppiata la rivoluzione in Libia, i traffici di clandestini sono aumentati in maniera considerevole e le organizzazioni criminali, la maggior parte delle quali formate da ex miliziani dell'ex dittatore Gheddafi, regnano incontrastate. Basti pensare che nelle sole due ultime settimane sono sbarcati via mare sulle coste italiane ben 5 583 migranti (3 807 uomini, 703 donne e 1 073 minori) suddivisi in 45 sbarchi, un numero considerevole di persone, tra le quali la nazionalità prevalente è quella siriana (2 075 persone), seguita dall'eritrea (1 280) e palestinese (428). La massa dei migranti, a giudizio degli investigatori, proviene dai campi profughi costituiti in Kenya, in Tripolitania o nel Sudan: ed è nei campi nomadi che i criminali reclutano passeggeri, a prezzi elevatissimi che raggiungono i 2 000 dollari, per i loro viaggi in condizioni disumane su natanti che a malapena riescono a solcare le acque.

Preso atto che la situazione è diventata ormai insostenibile e che l'Italia, con le sue sole forze, non riesce e non può gestire un flusso così imponente di clandestini; preso atto che l'Europa ha varato nel 2004 la costituzione dell'agenzia Frontex per la gestione della cooperazione internazionale alle frontiere esterne degli Stati membri dell'UE e che allo stato attuale l'agenzia può contare su 26 elicotteri, 22 aerei e 113 navi per pattugliare le coste di tutta Europa, può la Commissione riferire se:

— ritiene che non sia necessario aumentare in maniera considerevole il numero di mezzi e uomini dell'agenzia Frontex da impiegare specificatamente sulle rotte tra la Libia e le coste italiane per intercettare quanti più natanti clandestini possibile e impedire il ripetersi di nuove tragedie in quel tratto di mare;

— non crede di dover avviare trattative per la revisione degli accordi bilaterali con gli Stati non-UE che si affacciano sul Mediterraneo, in particolare quelli africani, per avviare un'attività di contrasto delle organizzazioni criminali alla fonte, a cominciare dai porti, impedendo così alle navi di migranti di prendere il largo?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(12 novembre 2013)

A breve termine Frontex, insieme agli Stati membri, potenzierà le operazioni congiunte nel Mediterraneo, aumentando le capacità di contribuire alla protezione dei migranti e di salvarne le vite. A questo scopo sarà fornito a Frontex un finanziamento aggiuntivo di 7,9 milioni di euro.

Inoltre, Eurosur diventerà operativo a partire dal 2 dicembre 2013 e la sua attuazione e il suo pieno utilizzo da parte degli Stati membri saranno attentamente sorvegliati allo scopo di realizzare una strategia globale e coordinata di sorveglianza delle frontiere. Nell'ambito di Eurosur si cercherà di migliorare l'individuazione delle piccole imbarcazioni con l'aiuto del futuro sistema Copernicus e di altri progetti di ricerca attualmente in corso come Closeye, Perseus, I2C e Seabilla.

Per quanto riguarda la cooperazione con i paesi terzi, la Commissione ritiene che l'attuazione dell'approccio globale in materia di migrazione e mobilità fornisca un quadro adeguato per lo sviluppo di iniziative in tali paesi, e intende studiare le iniziative necessarie per aumentare ulteriormente l'efficacia e l'incidenza dell'approccio globale. In futuro, le azioni continueranno a concentrarsi sui paesi di origine e/o di transito della migrazione irregolare e su quelli vicini a zone di conflitto.

Infine, la Commissione intende proporre nuove iniziative per combattere le reti di trafficanti in cooperazione con gli Stati membri, Europol e Interpol. Intanto Frontex ed Europol dovrebbero concludere un accordo operativo che consenta lo scambio di dati personali, come previsto nel regolamento Frontex riveduto, al fine di sostenere la lotta contro il favoreggiamento dell'immigrazione illegale.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011464/13
to the Commission
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Tragedy off the coast of Lampedusa

The tragedy which occurred off the coast of Lampedusa in the early hours of Thursday 3 October is only the latest in a long series of such incidents which have claimed the lives of hundreds of migrants. Since the outbreak of the revolution in Libya, human trafficking has substantially increased and criminal gangs, mostly made up of ex-soldiers who served under the Kaddafi dictatorship, are operating unhindered. In the last two weeks alone, 45 boatloads of migrants, totalling 5 583 individuals (3 807 men, 703 women and 1 073 children) have landed on Italian shores. The migrants are chiefly of Syrian (2 075), Eritrean (1 280) and Palestinian (428) origin. According to investigators, most of them come from refugee camps in Kenya, Tripolitania or Sudan, having been preyed upon by criminal gangs extorting as much as USD 2000 per voyage, only to find themselves enduring inhuman conditions of transport on highly unseaworthy craft.

The situation has now become unsustainable, with Italy unable to deal with such a massive influx of illegal migrants alone. In 2004, the Frontex agency was set up for the international monitoring of EU external borders. It currently has 26 helicopters, 22 aircraft and 113 vessels to patrol all European coasts.

In view of this:

— Does the Commission not consider a substantial increase in Frontex resources and manpower to be necessary for the monitoring of traffic between the Libyan and Italian coasts, enabling it to intercept as many clandestine vessels as possible and prevent any further tragedies occurring in these waters?

— Does it not consider that it should initiate moves to renegotiate its bilateral agreements with third countries along the Mediterranean, especially in Africa, with a view to striking at the heart of criminal organisations, commencing with the ports of departure, so as to prevent vessels carrying migrants from taking to the open sea?

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

In the short term Frontex, together with Member States, will reinforce joint operations in the Mediterranean, enhancing capacities contributing to the protection and saving the lives of migrants. Additional funding of EUR 7.9 million will be provided to Frontex for that purpose.

In addition, Eurosur will become operational as of 2 December 2013 and its implementation and full use by the Member States will be closely monitored in order to achieve a comprehensive and coordinated approach to border surveillance. In the context of Eurosur, efforts to improve the detection of small boats will be pursued with the support of the future Copernicus system as well as ongoing research projects such as Closeye, Perseus, I2C and Seabilla.

Regarding cooperation with third countries, the Commission believes that the implementation of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility provides an adequate framework for the development of action in third countries. The Commission will analyse what is needed to further enhance the GAMM's effectiveness and impact. Future action will continue to focus on countries of origin and/or of transit of irregular migration and those neighbouring conflict zones.

Finally the Commission will propose new steps to fight trafficking networks in cooperation with Member States, Europol and Interpol. At the same time, Frontex and Europol should conclude an operational agreement allowing for the exchange of personal data, as provided for in the revised Frontex Regulation, for the purpose of supporting the fight against facilitators.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011466/13
alla Commissione
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(8 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Tragedia al largo di Lampedusa

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Preso atto che la situazione è diventata ormai insostenibile e che l'Italia, con le sue sole forze, non riesce e non può gestire un flusso così imponente di clandestini; preso atto che l'Europa ha varato nel 2004 la costituzione dell'agenzia Frontex per la gestione della cooperazione internazionale alle frontiere esterne degli Stati membri dell'UE e che allo stato attuale l'agenzia può contare su 26 elicotteri, 22 aerei e 113 navi per pattugliare le coste di tutta Europa, può la Commissione riferire se:

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— non crede di dover avviare trattative per la revisione degli accordi bilaterali con gli Stati non-UE che si affacciano sul Mediterraneo, in particolare quelli africani, per avviare un'attività di contrasto delle organizzazioni criminali alla fonte, a cominciare dai porti, impedendo così alle navi di migranti di prendere il largo?

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

La Commissione rimanda alla risposta fornita alla precedente interrogazione scritta P-011464/2013 dell'onorevole parlamentare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011466/13
to the Commission
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Tragedy off the coast of Lampedusa

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In view of this:

— Does the Commission not consider a substantial increase in Frontex resources and manpower to be necessary for the monitoring of traffic between the Libyan and Italian coasts in particular, enabling it to intercept as many clandestine vessels as possible and prevent any further tragedies occurring in these waters?

— Does the Commission not consider it necessary to initiate moves to renegotiate bilateral agreements with third countries along the Mediterranean, especially in Africa, with a view to striking at the heart of criminal organisations, commencing with the ports of departure, so as to prevent vessels carrying migrants from taking to the open sea?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answer given to his Written Question P- 011464/2013.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011467/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Ejecución presupuestaria en el Estado español

Tan importante como el diseño del presupuesto es su ejecución práctica. Desviaciones significativas (tanto positivas como negativas) pueden tener como causa discrecionalidades políticas fuera del control democrático y perjudicar los objetivos tanto de déficit como de crecimiento a medio plazo.

Por ejemplo, el Gobierno español incumple sistemáticamente los presupuestos relacionados con la construcción de infraestructuras en Cataluña, perjudicando la consecución de políticas europeas como, por ejemplo, el corredor mediterráneo, incluido en la Red TEN-T ([1]).

Con la aprobación del Reglamento (UE) n° 473/2013, la Comisión puede emitir recomendaciones sobre el contenido de los presupuestos estatales y los Estados están obligados a crear consejos fiscales independientes de responsabilidad fiscal.

A la luz de lo anterior, ¿podría responder la Comisión a las siguientes preguntas?

¿Tiene datos la Comisión sobre el grado de ejecución territorial de los presupuestos de 2013 en el Estado español?

¿Tendrá en cuenta la Comisión estos datos en sus recomendaciones para los presupuestos de 2014?

¿Cree la Comisión que el consejo fiscal independiente debe dar datos sectoriales y territorializados de la ejecución de los presupuestos?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

1. La Comisión supervisa la ejecución presupuestaria de las administraciones públicas a lo largo de todo el año, incluida la evolución de las administraciones que la componen (es decir, administración central, regional, local y de la Seguridad Social). La Comisión utiliza como factores los datos de las notificaciones semestrales del procedimiento de déficit excesivo (PDE), los proyectos de planes presupuestarios de las administraciones públicas, así como otros datos de ejecución presupuestaria publicados periódicamente en el sitio web del Gobierno de España. Dicho esto, la Comisión no dispone de información sobre el grado de ejecución territorial de los presupuestos de 2013 en España.

2. La Comisión se esfuerza por tener en cuenta toda la información relevante a la hora de formular sus opiniones y recomendaciones.

3. La legislación de la UE obliga a los Estados miembros de la zona del euro a contar con instituciones fiscales independientes (IFI) que elaboran o avalan las previsiones macroeconómicas independientes que sustentan los planes presupuestarios nacionales a medio plazo y los proyectos de presupuestos. Estas IFI también tienen que vigilar el cumplimiento de las reglas presupuestarias numéricas y facilitar, en su caso, las evaluaciones públicas relativas a las normas presupuestarias nacionales, entre otras cosas en relación con la activación de los mecanismos de corrección y activación de las cláusulas de salvaguardia.

Los Estados miembros de la zona del euro pueden decidir añadir más tareas a las IFI en los ámbitos relacionados con la política presupuestaria, siempre que sean conmensuradas con sus recursos humanos y financieros y conformes a su mandato.

([1]) http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/05/23/catalunya/1337805831_844151.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011467/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Budgetary implementation in Spain

The implementation of the budget, in practice, is as important as its design. Significant departures (both positive and negative) may result from political margins of discretion that fall outside democratic scrutiny, and these may jeopardise both deficit and growth objectives in the medium term.

For example, the Spanish Government systematically fails to implement the budgets relating to infrastructure construction in Catalonia, adversely affecting completion of European policies such as the Mediterranean corridor, part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). ([1])

Following the adoption of Regulation (EU) No 473/2013, the Commission may issue recommendations on the content of national budgets, and Member States have a duty to set up independent fiscal bodies with fiscal responsibility.

In view of the above, could the Commission respond to the following questions?

Does the Commission have information on the extent of territorial implementation of the 2013 budgets in Spain?

Will the Commission take this information into account in its recommendations for the 2014 budgets?

Does the Commission believe that the independent fiscal council ought to provide sector-specific and territory-specific information on the implementation of the budgets?

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

1. The Commission monitors the budgetary execution of the general government throughout the year, including the evolution of its subcomponents (i.e., central, regional, local and social security administration). The Commission factors in data from the semi-annual Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP) notifications, from the general government's draft budgetary plans as well as from other budgetary execution data published periodically on the Spanish government's website. That said, the Commission does not have information on the extent of territorial implementation of the 2013 budgets in Spain.

2. The Commission strives to take into account all relevant information in formulating its opinions and recommendations.

3. The EU legislation requires euro area Member States to have Independent Fiscal Institutions (IFI) producing or endorsing independent macroeconomic forecasts underpinning national medium-term fiscal plans and draft budgets. Such IFI also have to monitor compliance with numerical fiscal rules and provide, where appropriate, public assessments with respect to national fiscal rules, *inter alia*, relating to the activation of the correction mechanisms and activation of escape clauses.

Euro area Member states may decide to add more tasks to IFIs in fiscal policy-related areas, provided that these are commensurate with their human and financial resources and consistent with their mandate.

([1]) http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2012/05/23/catalunya/1337805831_844151.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011468/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Gasto en defensa en el presupuesto 2014 del Estado español

El presupuesto presentado por el Gobierno español está supuestamente destinado a reducir el déficit del Estado para el año 2013 y poner las bases para la recuperación.

A pesar de ello, la investigación militar y el servicio militar de construcciones han sido incrementados en un 39,5 % y 34,5 %, respectivamente. Y aunque el presupuesto del Ministerio de Defensa se ha reducido formalmente en un 4,8 %, el año pasado se le otorgaron 1 459 millones en créditos que no habían sido tenidos en cuenta inicialmente ([1]). Del mismo modo, desde el año 2008 las dotaciones extraordinarias han sumado 9 125 millones de euros ([2]), por lo que es probable que la misma fórmula se utilice durante el año 2014.

El 21 de mayo entró en vigor el Reglamento (UE) n° 473/2013 que, entre otras cosas, obliga a los Estados a crear Consejos Fiscales Independientes y permite a la Comisión emitir recomendaciones sobre el contenido de los presupuestos estatales.

A la luz de todo lo anterior:

¿Ha recibido la Comisión cálculos del impacto fiscal de este gasto en defensa, según se requiere en el artículo 6 del citado Reglamento?

¿Cree la Comisión que el Consejo Fiscal Independiente de España debe velar por el cumplimiento de los objetivos presupuestarios marcados y por que los aumentos previstos en el gasto sean incluidos desde el inicio en los presupuestos?

¿Piensa la Comisión incluir en su informe alguna recomendación para reducir el gasto en defensa con el objetivo de disminuir los gastos no productivos y cumplir con los objetivos de déficit sin perjudicar el crecimiento?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de diciembre de 2013)

1. No.

2. La responsabilidad de garantizar que se cumplan los objetivos presupuestarios incumbe exclusivamente al Gobierno. El Consejo Fiscal Independiente (CFI) puede presentar análisis, recomendaciones o dictámenes e influir en el debate sobre la política fiscal, pero no puede garantizar por sí solo el cumplimiento de los objetivos en materia de presupuesto. El proyecto de ley prevé que las administraciones públicas puedan apartarse de las recomendaciones emitidas por el CFI en sus informes. En tales casos, el Gobierno debe motivar su decisión.

3. España ha de cumplir sus compromisos en virtud del Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, es decir, poner fin a la situación de déficit excesivo de conformidad con la Recomendación del Consejo a España de junio de 2013. La recomendación define el camino para reducir el déficit de las administraciones públicas a una cifra inferior al 3 % para 2016 e incluye objetivos anuales intermedios y los ajustes estructurales necesarios. Corresponde a las autoridades españolas decidir las medidas que se deberán adoptar para cumplir los objetivos, teniendo en cuenta al mismo tiempo las recomendaciones específicas que se formulen a España, especialmente en lo que se refiere a la calidad de las finanzas públicas.

([1]) http://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Llegan-presupuestos_13_181061893.html
([2]) http://www.eldiario.es/economia/Ministerio_de_Defensa-presupuesto-armamento_helicoptero_Tigre-Joan_Baldovi-Equo_0_166933465.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011468/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Defence expenditure in Spain's budget for 2014

The budget put forward by the Spanish Government is supposedly designed to reduce the State deficit for 2013 and to lay the foundations for recovery.

Despite this, military research and the military construction service have been increased by 39.5% and 34.5% respectively. Even though the Ministry of Defence's budget has been officially reduced by 4.8%, last year it was allocated EUR 1 459 million in loans that were not taken into account at the outset. ([1]) In the same way, since 2008 extraordinary provisions have totalled EUR 9 125 million ([2]), and it is therefore likely that the same formula will be used in 2014.

Regulation (EU) No 473/2013 entered into force on 21 May. Among other things, it obliges Member States to set up independent fiscal bodies and allows the Commission to issue recommendations on the content of national budgets.

In light of the above:

Has the Commission received calculations of the fiscal impact of this defence expenditure, in line with the requirements of Article 6 of the regulation?

Does the Commission believe that Spain's independent fiscal council ought to ensure that the budget objectives set are met and that planned increases in expenditure are included when the budgets are first drawn up?

Is the Commission planning to include in its report any recommendation to reduce spending on defence, with the aim of decreasing non-productive expenditure and meeting the deficit objectives without jeopardising growth?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

1. No.

2. The responsibility for ensuring that budgetary targets are met rests solely with the government. *The Independent* Fiscal Institution (IFI) can provide analysis, policy recommendations or opinions and influence the fiscal policy debate, but cannot by itself ensure the fulfilment of budgetary targets. The draft law foresees that government may deviates from the recommendations issued by the IFI in its reports. In such cases, the government has to motivate its decision.

3. Spain has to fulfil its commitments under the Growth and Stability Pact, i.e. to put an end to the situation of an excessive deficit in accordance with the Council recommendation to Spain of June 2013. The recommendation sets out a path for bringing the general government deficit below 3% by 2016 with annual intermediate targets and required structural efforts. It is up to the Spanish authorities to decide what measures to take to fulfil the targets, while taking into account any country-specific recommendations addressed to Spain, notably regarding the quality of public finances.

([1]) http://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Llegan-presupuestos_13_181061893.html
([2]) http://www.eldiario.es/economia/Ministerio_de_Defensa-presupuesto-armamento_helicoptero_Tigre-Joan_Baldovi-Equo_0_166933465.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011469/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Reducción de las transferencias

El sistema de ingresos de los Gobiernos regionales está basado en un 90 % en las transferencias que manda el Gobierno central a las autonomías, sin que los Gobiernos regionales tengan capacidad para recaudar ingresos autónomamente.

En el presupuesto de 2014 del Gobierno español está previsto reducir en un 13,6 % ([1]) las transferencias a las comunidades autónomas a pesar de que su objetivo de déficit para 2014 es del 1 %, mucho menor que el 4,8 % previsto para el Gobierno central pese a gestionar un presupuesto de tamaño equivalente ([2]). Así pues, será inevitable un nuevo aumento de los recortes en los presupuestos autonómicos, que son precisamente los que destinan el 80 % del gasto relacionado con el Estado del bienestar. Además, esta política aumenta los costes de financiación del Estado y perjudica su sostenibilidad fiscal, pues la falta de transferencias producirá un aumento del endeudamiento de las autonomías con actores privados que piden un interés sensiblemente más elevado a las regiones que al Gobierno del Estado.

Con la aprobación del Reglamento (UE) n° 473/2013, la Comisión puede emitir recomendaciones sobre el contenido de los presupuestos estatales.

A la luz de todo lo anterior,

¿Incluirá la Comisión en sus recomendaciones sobre el presupuesto de 2014 del Gobierno español una disminución en el recorte de las transferencias a las autonomías?

¿Considera la Comisión que la centrifugación del déficit practicada aumenta el nivel de deuda del Estado y no ayuda a la consecución de los objetivos marcados en el Pacto de Estabilidad y Crecimiento, así como en el *six-pack* y el *two-pack* de gobernanza económica del euro?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de noviembre de 2013)

El 15 de noviembre de 2013, la Comisión aprobará y hará público su dictamen sobre los proyectos de planes presupuestarios de los Estados miembros de la zona del euro que no están sujetos a un programa de ajuste macroeconómico, incluida España.

([1]) http://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Llegan-presupuestos_13_181061893.html
([2]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/economia/20130731/54379039781/objetivo-deficit-catalunya-1-58.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011469/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Reduced transfers

Ninety per cent of the revenue system for the regional governments is based on transfers sent by central government to the autonomous communities; the regional governments do not have any ability to collect revenue independently.

The Spanish Government's budget for 2014 sets out a 13.6% ([1]) reduction in transfers to the autonomous communities, despite the fact that its deficit objective for 2014 is 1%, much less than the 4.8% planned for central government, although the budget managed is of an equivalent size ([2]). There will therefore inevitably be a further increase in cuts to the autonomous communities' budgets, and it is these budgets that provide 80% of welfare state expenditure. In addition, this policy is increasing the State's financing costs and having an adverse effect on its fiscal sustainability: the decrease in transfers will result in an increase in the autonomous communities' debts to private entities, which charge the regions significantly higher interest than they do the Spanish Government.

Now that regulation (EU) No 473/2013 has been adopted, the Commission may issue recommendations on the content of national budgets.

In light of the above:

Will the Commission include reduced cuts to transfers to the autonomous communities in its recommendations on the Spanish Government's budget for 2014?

Does the Commission believe that decentralisation of the deficit is increasing the country's debt level and not helping to achieve the objectives set in the Stability and Growth Pact, or in the six-pack or two-pack for economic governance of the euro?

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

The Commission will adopt and make public its opinion on draft budgetary plans of euro area Member States that are not subject to a macroeconomic adjustment programme on 15 November 2013, including for Spain.

([1]) http://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/Llegan-presupuestos_13_181061893.html
([2]) http://www.lavanguardia.com/economia/20130731/54379039781/objetivo-deficit-catalunya-1-58.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011470/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Conexión ferroviaria de alta velocidad entre Barcelona y París

El pasado 29 de julio, el Sr. Kallas respondió a la pregunta E-007703/2013: «La Comisión reconoce que, en esta línea, debe crearse un corredor efectivo de ferrocarril y carretera tanto para viajeros como para mercancías antes de 2030, según la planificación de la UE, ya que contribuirá a la competitividad de la región y de la Unión en su conjunto. El Gobierno francés todavía no se ha pronunciado de manera oficial sobre la nueva línea Montpellier-Perpiñán ni sobre las intervenciones que deberán programarse en la línea existente».

La Cámara de Comercio de Barcelona lamenta que el tren de alta velocidad entre Barcelona y París siga sin fecha oficial ([1]). Considera que los nuevos servicios ferroviarios de altas prestaciones para viajeros ofrecerían un gran potencial para abrir nuevas oportunidades de negocio entre el sur de Francia y Cataluña, e incluso para ampliar el área de influencia del aeropuerto de Barcelona.

Habida cuenta de la gran inversión realizada en la línea de alta velocidad desde Barcelona hasta los Pirineos y de la importancia de comunicar con ferrocarril el norte y el sur de Europa, ¿ha dado la Comisión algún plazo de tiempo para que Francia se pronuncie oficialmente?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

La red principal de la RTE-T, a la que pertenece la línea Montpellier-Perpiñán, debe estar concluida antes de 2030 y cumplir las normas establecidas en el Reglamento sobre la RTE-T.

La Comisión prepara en estos momentos el nombramiento de los coordinadores de cada uno de los corredores de la red principal, que, entre otras cosas, presidirán su correspondiente «foro del corredor». El foro, que está compuesto por todas las partes interesadas, prepara un plan de trabajo para la ejecución del corredor.

([1]) http://www.europapress.es/turismo/transportes/tren/noticia-camara-barcelona-lamenta-ave-paris-siga-fecha-oficial-20130815125044.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011470/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: High-speed rail connection between Barcelona and Paris

On 29 July 2013, Mr Kallas answered Question E-007703/2013 as follows: 'The Commission acknowledges that an effective rail-road corridor for both passengers and freight has to be developed before 2030 along this line, according to the EU planning, since it contributes to the competitiveness of the Region and of the Union as a whole. A formal position by the French Government is still awaited on the new line Montpellier-Perpignan and on the interventions to be scheduled on the existing line'.

The Barcelona Chamber of Commerce deplores the fact that there is still no official date for the launch of a high-speed train service between Barcelona and Paris ([1]). It believes that the new high-performance rail services for passengers would offer considerable potential for new business opportunities between southern France and Catalonia, and for an extension of Barcelona airport's area of influence.

In view of the significant investment made in the high-speed line from Barcelona to the Pyrenees and the importance of rail connections between the north and south of Europe, has the Commission given France any deadline for stating its formal position?

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

The TEN-T Core Network, to which the Montpellier-Perpignan line belongs, has to be completed by 2030, and comply with the standards stated in the TEN-T Regulation.

The Commission is currently preparing the appointment of the Coordinators for each of the Core Network Corridors, who will *inter alia* chair their respective Corridor Forum. The forum, which is composed of all stakeholders concerned, develops a work plan for the implementation of the Corridor.

([1]) http://www.europapress.es/turismo/transportes/tren/noticia-camara-barcelona-lamenta-ave-paris-siga-fecha-oficial-20130815125044.html

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011471/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εφαρμογή της ευρωπαϊκής νομοθεσίας κατά των διακρίσεων στην εργασία και την απασχόληση, το ζήτημα των οροθετικών

Η ΕΕ βασίζεται στις αρχές της ελευθερίας, της δημοκρατίας, του σεβασμού των δικαιωμάτων του ανθρώπου, των θεμελιωδών ευκαιριών καθώς και στο κράτος δικαίου. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο η έμπρακτη καταπολέμηση των διακρίσεων συνιστά μια από τις μεγαλύτερες προκλήσεις που έχει να αντιμετωπίσει η Ένωση. Δεδομένου ότι η εργασία αποτελεί, μεταξύ άλλων, κύριο συστατικό για την ουσιαστική ενσωμάτωση στην οικονομική, κοινωνική και πολιτιστική ζωή, είναι αναγκαία η θέσπιση πλήρους νομοθεσίας που να προφυλάσσει τους ευρωπαίους εργαζομένους από οποιαδήποτε διάκριση στην απασχόληση και στην εργασία, όπως επιχειρείται με την οδηγία 2000/78/ΕΚ.

Εντούτοις, κάποιες ασάφειες αναφορικά με τους ορισμούς που περιλαμβάνονται στην οδηγία, όπως π.χ. το κατά πόσο είναι ξεκάθαρο ότι η ασθένεια του AIDS συμπεριλαμβάνεται στις αναπηρίες, αλλά και οι διαφορετικές προσεγγίσεις που υιοθετήθηκαν από τα κράτη μέλη κατά τη μεταφορά της εν λόγω οδηγίας, έχουν ως συνέπεια αυξημένο όγκο προσφυγών στο Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο των Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων για σχετικές υποθέσεις.

Προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει στοιχεία αναφορικά με κρούσματα διακριτικής μεταχείρισης οροθετικών στα κράτη μέλη; Τα περιστατικά οφείλονται σε πλημμελή εφαρμογή της νομοθεσίας, έλλειψη ενημέρωσης ή/και ασάφεια στο υπάρχον νομοθετικό πλαίσιο;

2. Ποιες πρωτοβουλίες πρόκειται να αναλάβει προκειμένου να διασαφηνιστούν τα ζητήματα που έχουν ανακύψει, σύμφωνα με την αξιολόγηση εφαρμογής της οδηγίας στα κράτη μέλη;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία σχετικά με διακρίσεις ασθενών που πάσχουν από HIV στα κράτη μέλη.

Σε καμία απόφαση του Δικαστηρίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης δεν έχει ακόμη αντιμετωπιστεί κρούσμα διακρίσεων κατά ασθενών που πάσχουν από HIV, στο πλαίσιο της οδηγίας 2000/78/ΕΚ ([1]).

Για την έκθεση σχετικά με την εφαρμογή των οδηγιών 2000/43/ΕΚ ([2]) και 2000/78/ΕΚ, η οποία θα δημοσιευθεί σύντομα, έχει προγραμματιστεί να περιλαμβάνεται παράρτημα σχετικά με τη νομολογία του Δικαστηρίου των Ευρωπαϊκών Κοινοτήτων σχετικά με τις δύο οδηγίες.

([1]) Οδηγία 2000/78/ΕΚ του Συμβουλίου, της 27ης Νοεμβρίου 2000, για τη διαμόρφωση γενικού πλαισίου για την ίση μεταχείριση στην απασχόληση και την εργασία (ΕΕ L 303 της 2.12.2000, σ. 16).

([2]) Οδηγία 2000/43/ΕΚ του Συμβουλίου, της 29ης Ιουνίου, περί εφαρμογής της αρχής της ίσης μεταχείρισης προσώπων ασχέτως φυλετικής ή εθνοτικής τους καταγωγής, ΕΕ L 180 της 19.7.2000. σσ. 22.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011471/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: HIV infection and the implementation of European legislation against discrimination in employment and occupation

The EU is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental opportunities and the rule of law. Within this framework, combating discrimination in practical terms is one of the biggest challenges that the Union has to tackle. Given that work is one of the main components of effective integration into economic, social and cultural life, there is a need to establish comprehensive legislation protecting European employees from any discrimination in employment and occupation, as is the case under Directive 2000/78/EC.

However, specific uncertainties over the definitions included in the directive, for example as to how clear it is that AIDS is included in the list of disabilities, but also the different approaches adopted by Member States in the transposition of the directive, have resulted in an increased number of appeals to the European Court of Human Rights in related cases.

To this end, will the Commission answer the following:

1. Does it have data on the occurrence of discrimination against HIV patients in Member States? Are these incidents due to improper implementation of the legislation, lack of awareness and/or lack of clarity in the existing legislative framework?

2. What steps does it plan to take in order to clarify the resulting issues in accordance with the evaluation of the implementation of the directive in the Member States?

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

The Commission does not have specific data on the occurrence of discrimination against HIV patients in the Member States.

No judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union has yet dealt with a situation concerning discrimination of a HIV patient in the context of Directive 2000/78/EC ([1]).

For the report on the application of Directives 2000/43/EC ([2]) and 2000/78/EC, which will be published soon, it is planned to include an annex on the case law of the Court of Justice on both directives.

([1]) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

([2]) Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011473/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(8 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Ajutoare pentru fermierii care nu vor mai putea vinde laptele neconform

România a avut până în prezent trei derogări pentru procesarea laptelui crud neconform, iar ultima dintre ele va expira la 1 ianuarie 2014. În consecință, cei care nu respectă normele europene de igienă nu vor mai putea vinde laptele pe piață, ceea ce va avea un impact devastator asupra veniturilor micilor agricultori, care dețin numai câteva vaci de lapte în gospodăriile lor.

Numărul de capete de vaci de lapte a scăzut deja în România de la peste 1,3 milioane, în 2010, la mai puțin de 900 000 de capete în 2013, potrivit datelor Asociației Crescătorilor de Bovine.

În acest context, Comisia este rugată să precizeze în ce condiții ar putea România să le acorde micilor proprietari de animale anumite compensații financiare pentru pierderile suferite, fără ca acești bani să fie considerați a fi ajutoare de stat.

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloş în numele Comisiei
(28 noiembrie 2013)

Programul național de dezvoltare rurală al României (PDR) 2007-2013 le oferă sprijin fermierilor care fac investiții în vederea respectării standardelor europene. Acesta include posibilitatea de a sprijini investițiile care ar permite respectarea standardelor pentru laptele crud care beneficiază de actuala perioadă de grație. Autoritățile române au deschis, în 2012, două astfel de apeluri care vizau atingerea standardelor Uniunii. Comisia înțelege că interesul a fost scăzut. Acest tip de sprijin poate fi acordat în continuare, cu condiția ca măsura PDR în cauză să mai dispună de fonduri și ca autoritățile române să decidă să mai lanseze o cerere de propuneri.

Posibilitatea ca România să acorde sprijin pentru respectarea normelor obligatorii va continua să existe în cadrul noului regulament privind dezvoltarea rurală pentru perioada 2014-2020 — din nou, în anumite condiții și perioade de timp. Sprijinul acordat în cadrul politicii de dezvoltare rurală nu este supus controalelor privind acordarea ajutoarelor de stat.

În plus, în cadrul inițiativei „O formare mai bună pentru o hrană mai sigură", Comisia va organiza, înainte de sfârșitul acestui an, o misiune de formare intensivă în România, care se va concentra în mod special pe standardele de sănătate privind laptele crud.

România poate avea în vedere utilizarea Regulamentului (CE) nr. 1535/2007 ([1]) privind ajutoarele de minimis în sectorul producției de produse agricole. Regulamentul respectiv le oferă statelor membre posibilitatea de a acorda ajutoare de minimis în valoare de 7 500 EUR pe întreprindere, pe durata a trei exerciții financiare și în limitele unei sume maxime pentru fiecare stat membru, fără ca acestea să fie considerate ajutoare de stat. Regulamentul respectiv expiră la 31 decembrie 2013 și un nou regulament este în prezent în curs de pregătire. Se examinează posibilitatea de a ridica plafonul pentru ajutoarele de minimis.

([1]) JO L 337, 21.12.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011473/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Aid for farmers who will no longer be able to sell non-compliant milk

So far, Romania has had three derogations for the processing of non-compliant raw milk. The last of these will expire on 1 January 2014. As a consequence, those who do not comply with European hygiene standards will no longer be able to market their milk. This will have a devastating impact on the income of small farmers who have only a few dairy cows in their smallholding.

The number of dairy cows in Romania has already fallen from over 1.3 million in 2010 to less than 900 000 head in 2013, according to the data of the Cattle Breeders' Association.

In this context, can the Commission state the conditions under which Romania could grant financial compensation to small animal farmers for their losses, without this money being considered as state aid?

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

The Romanian Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 offers support to farmers for investments for meeting Union standards. This includes the possibility of support for meeting standards for raw milk benefiting from the current grace period. The Romanian authorities opened two such targeted calls for meeting Union standards in 2012, but the Commission understand its uptake was low. Such support may be still be granted, provided there are available funds left in the relevant RDP measure and that the Romanian authorities decide to open a new call for proposals.

The possibility for Romania to grant support for meeting mandatory standards will continue under the new Rural Development Regulation for the period 2014-2020, again under certain conditions and time periods. Such support granted within the framework of rural development policy would not be submitted to state aid control.

Moreover, under the Better Training for Safer Food initiative, the Commission is organising, before the end of this year, a sustained training mission to Romania, especially focused on the health standards for raw milk.

Romania may consider making use of Regulation (EC) No 1535/2007 ([1]) on *de minimis* aid in the sector of agricultural production. That regulation offers Member States the possibility to grant EUR 7 500 of *de minimis* aid per undertaking over a period of three fiscal years and within the limits of a maximum amount per Member State without it being considered state aid. That regulation expires on 31 December 2013 and a new regulation is currently being prepared and an increase of the threshold is under consideration.

([1]) OJ L 337, 21.12.2007.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011474/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(8 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Încheierea acordurilor de parteneriat între statele membre și Comisia Europeană

În contextul stabilirii priorităților de investiții ale tuturor statelor membre din perspectiva cadrului financiar 2014-2020, printr-o relație contractuală bine definită, Comisia Europeană este rugată să precizeze:

Câte dintre statele membre au trimis proiecte în vederea încheierii acordurilor de parteneriat cu Comisia Europeană?

Care este stadiul negocierilor referitoare la aceste acorduri și câte dintre ele au fost deja semnate până în prezent?

Răspuns dat de dl Hahn în numele Comisiei
(13 decembrie 2013)

Acordurile de parteneriat nu pot fi înaintate în mod oficial de statele membre decât după intrarea în vigoare a Regulamentului privind dispozițiile comune, care este așteptată la sfârșitul lunii decembrie 2013.

În conformitate cu regulamentul respectiv, Comisia va dispune de cel mult trei luni pentru a formula observații cu privire la acordul de parteneriat; de îndată ce statul membru în cauză va lua în considerare în mod corespunzător aceste observații, acordul de parteneriat va fi adoptat de către Comisie.

Totuși, pentru a accelera procesul de adoptare a acordurilor de parteneriat, în iunie 2012 Comisia le-a propus tuturor statelor membre să se angajeze într-un dialog informal. În septembrie și octombrie 2012, Comisia a trimis documente de poziție care au subliniat punctele sale de vedere cu privire la necesitățile de dezvoltare și la prioritățile de finanțare pentru toate statele membre, în vederea programării celor cinci fonduri structurale și de investiții europene.

La data de 11 noiembrie 2013, Comisia primise în total 21 de proiecte de acorduri de parteneriat în cazul cărora a fost posibilă pregătirea unor observații informale. 13 seturi de observații informale referitoare la aceste proiecte de acorduri de parteneriat au fost deja trimise statelor membre în perioada iulie-octombrie.

Angajarea activă în dialogul informal le-a permis multor statele membre să realizeze progreseze semnificative, astfel încât adoptarea acordurilor de parteneriat poate fi așteptată în primăvara anului 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011474/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Conclusion of partnership agreements between the Member States and the Commission

In the context of establishing the investment priorities of all Member States in the light of the 2014-2020 financial framework, through a well-defined contractual relationship, can the Commission answer the following questions?

How many of the Member States have submitted projects for the conclusion of partnership agreements with the Commission?

What is the status of the negotiations on these agreements and how many of them have already been signed so far?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

Partnership Agreements can only be officially submitted by Member States once the Common Provisions Regulation enters into force. This is currently expected by the end of December 2013.

According to the regulation, the Commission will have up to three months to make observations on the Partnership Agreement; once the Member State has adequately taken these observations into account, the Partnership Agreement will be adopted by the Commission.

Nevertheless, in order to speed up the process of adoption of the Partnership Agreements, the Commission proposed to all Member States in June 2012 to engage in an informal dialogue. In September and October 2012, the Commission sent position papers which outlined the Commission's views of the development needs and funding priorities in all Member States for the programing of the five European Structural and Investment Funds.

As of 11 November 2013, the Commission had received a total of 21 draft Partnership Agreements for which it was possible to prepare informal observations. 13 sets of informal observations on these draft Partnerhsip Agreements had already been sent to Member State during July-October.

Engaging actively in the informal dialogue has allowed many Member States to progress well, so that the adoption of the Partnership Agreements can be expected in spring 2014.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011475/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(8 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Nieuwe Turkse wetgeving: potentiële demonstranten de cel in

In Turkije is nieuwe wetgeving aangenomen die het de politie toestaat om personen die „mogelijk een demonstratie kunnen (laten) organiseren", maximaal 24 uur op te sluiten zonder tussenkomst van de rechter.

Na rechterlijk besluit kan de detentie met 24 uur worden verlengd.

1. Is de Commissie met de betreffende nieuwe Turkse wetgeving bekend ([1])? Hoe beoordeelt zij deze?

2. Hoe verhoudt de nieuwe wetgeving zich, naar oordeel van de Commissie, tot de door de Turkse regering in het „Democratization and Human Rights Package" aangekondigde maatregelen, waaronder de verruiming van het recht op demonstratie ([2])? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de nieuwe wetgeving volstrekt in strijd is met het „Democratization and Human Rights Package"? Deelt de Commissie dan ook de mening dat de door de Turkse regering in het „Democratization and Human Rights Package" aangekondigde maatregelen een wassen neus zijn? Zo neen, hoe beoordeelt de Commissie deze dubieuze ontwikkeling in Turkije dan wel?

3. Heeft de nieuwe wetgeving gevolgen voor de toetredingsonderhandelingen tussen de EU en Turkije? Zo ja, welke? Zo neen, impliceert de Commissie daarmee dat zij het voor lief neemt dat Turkije de EU met zijn valse beloften resp. vermeende hervormingen een rad voor ogen draait?

4. Wanneer stopt de Commissie met pappen en nathouden en worden de toetredingsonderhandelingen tussen de EU en Turkije — eindelijk — beëindigd?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(22 november 2013)

Volgens de informatie van de Turkse autoriteiten is er momenteel geen wetgeving die de politie toestaat om personen die mogelijk een demonstratie kunnen (laten) organiseren, maximaal 24 uur op te sluiten zonder tussenkomst van de rechter; evenmin is er een dergelijke wetgeving op komst.

([1]) http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/new-law-to-permit-turkish-police-to-detain-possible-protesters.aspx?PageID=238&NID=55790&NewsCatID=341.
([2]) http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/haberler/democratization-and-human-rights-package/52628.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011475/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: New Turkish legislation: potential demonstrators to be imprisoned

In Turkey, new legislation has been adopted which allows the police to imprison people for up to 24 hours without seeking a court order if they 'might organise, or arrange for the organisation of, a demonstration'.

Once a court order has been obtained, the detention can be extended by 24 hours.

1. Is the Commission aware of this new legislation in Turkey ([1])? What view does the Commission take of it?

2. How can the new legislation be reconciled with the measures announced by the Turkish Government in the Democratisation and Human Rights Package, including the right to demonstrate ([2])? Does the Commission agree that the new legislation is in flagrant contradiction with the Democratisation and Human Rights Package? Does the Commission therefore agree that the measures announced by the Turkish Government in the Democratisation and Human Rights Package are a sham? If not, what is the Commission's assessment of this dubious development in Turkey?

3. Will the new legislation have any impact on the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey? If so, what? If not, does the Commission mean to imply that it is happy for Turkey to pull the wool over the eyes of the EU with its false promises and supposed reforms?

4. When will the Commission stop papering over the cracks and at long last halt the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey?

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

According to information provided by Turkish authorities, there are currently no provisions allowing 'the police to imprison people for up to 24 hours without seeking a court order if they "might organise or arrange for the organisation of, a demonstration"'; nor are any such provisions planned.

([1]) http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/new-law-to-permit-turkish-police-to-detain-possible-protesters.aspx?PageID=238&NID=55790&NewsCatID=341
([2]) http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/haberler/democratization-and-human-rights-package/52628

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011476/13
to the Council
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Inclusion of individual on restrictive measures list

I have been contacted by a constituent of mine on behalf of Dr Tarif Akhas, who has been included on a list of individuals and entities subject to restrictive measures in connection with his designation under Annex I to Council Decision 2012/739/CFSP on Syria.

Can the Council please explain the basis on which Dr Akhas has been included on this list?

Reply
(25 November 2013)

Mr Tarif Akhras has been designated under the EU's restrictive measures against Syria since 2 September 2011. The reasons for his designation, as stated in the most recent relevant legal act, Council Decision 2013/255/CFSP of 31 May 2013 ([1]), read: 'Prominent businessman benefiting from and supporting the regime. Founder of the Akhras Group (commodities, trading, processing and logistics) and former Chairman of the Homs Chamber of Commerce. Close business relations with President Al-Assad's family. Member of the Board of the Federation of Syrian Chambers of Commerce. Provided industrial and residential premises for improvised detention camps, as well as logistical support for the regime (buses and tank loaders).'

In accordance with standard practice, Mr Akhras has been duly notified by the Council of the reasons justifying the listing. He has also been made aware of the possibility of submitting a request to the Council, together with supporting documentation, that the decision to include him on the abovementioned list should be reconsidered. In addition, Mr Akhras can challenge his designation before the European Courts, a right Mr Akhras is in fact making use of.

([1]) OJ L 147 of 1.6.2013, p. 14.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011477/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(8. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: SEPA (Einheitlicher europäischer Euro-Zahlungsraum) weist zahlreiche Fehlbuchungen auf

Die einheitliche europäische Zahlungsmethode (SEPA) hat in den vergangenen Wochen zu zahlreichen Problemen geführt. Die Umstellung auf den SEPA-Lastschriftenverkehr sollte den Zahlungsverkehr innerhalb von Europa erleichtern. Ab dem 1. Februar 2014 wird die Umstellung für alle Pflicht. Jedoch werden laut Presseartikel Verbraucher vor zahlreichen Fehlbuchungen gewarnt. Bei der Software-Umstellung ist es zu vielfachen Doppelbuchungen von Daueraufträgen gekommen. Nun raten Verbraucherschützer, zum 1. Februar 2014 Kontobewegungen besonders aufmerksam zu beobachten.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu diesen Problemen, und wie werden in Zukunft Probleme des SEPA-Lastschriftverkehrs gelöst?

2. Die EU-Kommission unterstützt gemeinsam mit der Europäischen Zentralbank den einheitlichen Zahlungsverkehr in Europa. Jedoch hat die Umstellung in den letzten Wochen zu mehreren Doppelbuchungen geführt. Die Verbraucher stehen den Änderungen daher sehr misstrauisch gegenüber. Wie kann man nach den anfänglichen Problemen das Vertrauen der Verbraucher zurückgewinnen? Welche Vorschläge kommen hierzu von der Kommission?

3. Mit der SEPA-Einführung verlieren alle aktuellen Überweisungen und Einzugsermächtigungen ihre Gültigkeit. Die Umstellung verlangt einen hohen Verwaltungsaufwand und verursacht zusätzliche Kosten. Kann dieser Verwaltungsaufwand vermieden werden? Gibt es dazu andere Vorschläge von der Kommission, wie dem entgegengewirkt werden kann?

4. Besonders für Klein- und Mittelbetriebe ist die Umstellung eine organisatorische Hürde. Gerade kleine Betriebe sollten dabei unterstützt werden. Eine vorhandene Software, welche die Umstellung erleichtert, wäre von Vorteil. Auch Beratungen oder Workshops sollten eingeführt werden, um auch kleinere Betriebe aufzuklären und zu unterstützen. Gibt es in diesem Fall Vorschläge von der Kommission?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(9. Dezember 2013)

1. Die SEPA-Verordnung trat am 31. März 2012 in Kraft und ließ den Marktteilnehmern für die Vorbereitung auf die Umstellung zwei Jahre Zeit. Die Kommission ist sich bewusst, dass die SEPA-Migration insbesondere betreffend Lastschriften nur langsam vorankommt und dass die Umstellung vorhandener Systeme auf SEPA technische Anpassungen erfordert. Um mögliche Probleme auf ein Minimum zu beschränken und um zu vermeiden, dass die Migration in letzter Minute stattfindet, forderte die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten und ihre Banken auf, verstärkt Informationskampagnen durchzuführen. Auch der Rat „Wirtschaft und Finanzen" hat in seinen Schlussfolgerungen ([1]) nachdrücklich auf die Notwendigkeit hingewiesen, die Migration zu beschleunigen. Das Beispiel der Rechnungssteller, die die Umstellung bereits vollzogen haben, zeigt, dass eine Migration ohne technische Probleme möglich ist, wenn sie ernsthaft betrieben wird.

2. Die Kommission ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass in einigen wenigen Fällen Probleme entstehen können, wenn die Migrationsprojekte der Unternehmen Mängel aufweisen, die gegebenenfalls Doppelzählungen oder IT-Fehler verursachen. Auf ausdrückliches Ersuchen der Kommission und der EZB organisieren Banken und Mitgliedstaaten entsprechende Kommunikationskampagnen.

3. Im Zusammenhang mit den Lastschriften entsteht für einige Mitgliedstaaten ein nicht zu vermeidender Verwaltungsaufwand, weil die dort bislang üblichen Abbuchungsaufträge auf Initiative des Zahlungspflichtigen (Daueraufträge) von Abbuchungsaufträgen auf Initiative des Zahlungsempfängers (Lastschriften) geändert werden müssen, also eine Verlagerung von den Banken auf die Gläubiger vollzogen werden muss. Proaktive und klare Kommunikation ist von zentraler Bedeutung, und nach den der Kommission vorliegenden Informationen haben die Mitgliedstaaten und deren nationale Zentralbanken ihre Bemühungen und Unterstützung in dieser Hinsicht beträchtlich erhöht.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/137122.pdf

4. Auf der Website des Europäischen Zahlungsverkehrsausschusses steht ein „Migration Toolkit“ zur Verfügung. Außerdem werden alle Organisationen, die ihre Verfahren bis 1. Februar 2014 an die SEPA-Verordnung anpassen wollen, aufgefordert, die zahlreichen Ressourcen in Anspruch zu nehmen, die vom Bankensektor und anderen Dienstleistern zur Unterstützung der Marktteilnehmer bei der Umstellung angeboten werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011477/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: SEPA (Single Euro Payments Area) exhibits numerous accounting errors

The single European payment method (SEPA) has led to numerous problems in recent weeks. The switch to the SEPA direct debiting transactions should facilitate payment transactions within Europe. From 1 February 2014, the switch will be compulsory for everyone. According to articles in the press, however, consumers are being warned of numerous accounting errors. The software switch has led to double counting of many standing orders. Consumer protection organisations are now advising consumers to monitor their account movements particularly carefully up to 1 February 2014.

1. What is the Commission's position with regard to these problems, and how will problems relating to the SEPA direct debiting transactions be resolved in future?

2. Together with the European Central Bank, the Commission supports the single payments system in Europe. However, the switch has resulted in several cases of double counting in recent weeks. Consumers are therefore very sceptical about the changes. After the initial problems, how can the confidence of consumers be regained? What does the Commission propose in this regard?

3. With the introduction of SEPA, all current credit transfers and direct debit authorisations will become invalid. The switch requires a great deal of administrative work and will result in additional costs. Can this administrative work be avoided? Does the Commission have any other suggestions for ways to address this?

4. This switch presents an organisational obstacle for small and medium-sized enterprises in particular. Small businesses in particular ought to receive support during this process. Available software that facilitates the switch would be beneficial. Advisory services or workshops should also be established in order to educate and support smaller businesses. Does the Commission have any suggestions in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

1. The SEPA Regulation entered into force on 31 March 2012, giving market participants 2 years to prepare. The Commission is aware that the take-up of SEPA migration, especially for direct debit (DD), has been slow and that migrating legacy systems to SEPA requires technical changes. To ensure that possible problems are brought down to a minimum, the Commission has urged Member States (MS) and their banks to increase communication campaigns to avoid last minute migration. Ecofin Council conclusions emphasising the need to speed up migration, were also adopted ([1]). Billers that have already migrated have proven that if taken seriously, migration is possible without causing technical problems.

2. The Commission is aware that problems may arise in a few cases where businesses encounter shortcomings in their migration project, leading to possible double counting or IT glitches. Communication campaigns are organised by banks and governments on the explicit request of the Commission and the ECB.

3. For DD administrative work for some MS where the current debtor mandate flow must be changed to a creditor mandate flow cannot be avoided because it means a move of current mandates from banks to creditors. Active and clear communication is key and according to the Commission's information, MS and their National Central Banks have significantly increased their efforts and assistance in this regard.

4. On the website of the European Payments Council, a 'Migration Tool Kit' has been made available. Organisations working towards achieving compliance with the SEPA Regulation by 1 February 2014 are also invited to take advantage of the numerous resources offered by the banking industry and other service providers to support market participants during the transition.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/137122.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011478/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Solicitudes de cofinanciación rechazadas

Diversas informaciones aseguran que, en 2013, la Comisión ha rechazado las últimas solicitudes de cofinanciación presentadas por los Gobiernos aragonés y/o español destinadas a estudios y actuaciones para la reapertura del ferrocarril internacional Canfranc-Pau.

Habida cuenta de ello, ¿podría responder la Comisión a las siguientes preguntas?

— ¿Qué proyectos se han presentado?

— ¿Cuáles han sido aprobados para su cofinanciación, cuáles han sido rechazados y por qué motivo?

— ¿Cuál era la cuantía de la ayuda solicitada en los proyectos aprobados y en los rechazados?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

En las convocatorias de la RTE-T 2012 (Red Transeuropea de Transporte), el número de solicitudes recibidas fue excepcionalmente elevado, lo que obligó a la Comisión a concentrar los recursos en proyectos que ya han alcanzado un grado de madurez elevado y que tienen un gran valor añadido europeo. El proyecto mencionado por Su Señoría no figura entre los seleccionados para cofinanciación.

Los detales sobre la selección del proyecto se encuentran en el documento explicativo del resultado de la convocatoria, que puede descargarse en la dirección siguiente:
http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/download/calls2012/map_wp/map_fac_brochure_final_web_2013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011478/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Rejected co-financing requests

Various information sources maintain that the Commission has rejected the latest co-financing requests submitted by the Aragonese and/or Spanish Governments in 2013 for studies and activities relating to the reopening of the Canfranc-Pau international railway line.

In light of this, could the Commission respond to the following questions?

— Which projects have been submitted?

— Which have been approved for co-financing and which have been rejected, and why?

— What was the value of the assistance requested for the projects which were approved and for those which were rejected?

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

The 2012 TEN-T (Transeuropean Transport Network) calls have been exceptionally oversubscribed, which has obliged the Commission to concentrate resources on projects that have already reached a high degree of maturity and of significant European added value. The project mentioned by the Honourable Member was not among those selected for co-financing.

The details about project selection can be found in the explanatory paper of the Call outcome which can be downloaded at: http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/download/calls2012/map_wp/map_fac_brochure_final_web_2013.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011479/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Ayuda humanitaria en Siria

La organización Médicos Sin Fronteras ha publicado una carta abierta sobre la situación de Siria ([1]).

En dicha carta, la ONG declara textualmente que «es imperativo que los gobiernos ruso y estadounidense trabajen con sus respectivos aliados políticos en el desarrollo de una estrategia que facilite la llegada masiva de ayuda humanitaria allí donde sea necesaria en Siria».

¿Es conocedora la Comisión de dicha carta y de la propuesta?

¿Considera la Comisión que la Unión Europea tendría que trabajar juntamente con Rusia y los Estados Unidos de América en la dirección expresada por Médicos Sin Fronteras?

¿Piensa la Comisión dar pasos para asegurar que la ayuda humanitaria llegue de forma masiva allá donde sea necesaria en Siria? ¿Qué pasos en concreto?

Respuesta de la Sra. Georgieva en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión está al corriente de la carta de Médicos sin Fronteras sobre la situación en Siria.

Además, aboga a través de de todos los canales posibles por un acceso y presencia mayores de los trabajadores humanitarios sobre el terreno, en colaboración con las principales partes interesadas. El 25 de septiembre de 2013, durante la semana de la Asamblea General de la ONU, la Comisión y el Gobierno de Jordania presidieron conjuntamente una reunión centrada específicamente en la mejora del acceso a las ayudas en Siria, en la que participaron los Estados Unidos de América y Rusia, así como otras partes interesadas clave.

El Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas emitió en octubre de 2013 una DP ([2]) sobre la situación humanitaria en Siria. El Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de la UE declaró en sus conclusiones que la DP debía aplicarse en su totalidad. El Consejo de la UE de octubre también declaró que todas las partes debían tomar todas las medidas adecuadas para facilitar el acceso seguro y sin obstáculos a la ayuda humanitaria por parte de las poblaciones necesitadas de ayuda en la totalidad del territorio de Siria, incluso a través de los frentes bélicos y las fronteras con los países vecinos. Llevar a la práctica la DP es crucial y exige la participación activa de las partes interesadas, incluidos los Estados Unidos de América y Rusia.

La UE y los Estados miembros han destinado hasta el momento dos millones de euros de ayuda humanitaria y de recuperación para las personas necesitadas de Siria y de la región (Líbano, Jordania, Turquía e Irak). La ayuda humanitaria, canalizada a través de los socios humanitarios internacionales, apoya en primer lugar las intervenciones de urgencias médicas que salvan vidas, el suministro de medicamentos esenciales, alimentos y artículos nutricionales, agua potable, saneamiento e higiene, abrigo, distribución de artículos no alimentarios de primera necesidad y protección.

([1]) https://www.msf.es/noticia/2013/siria-carta-abierta-estados-actores-implicados-en-conflicto
([2]) Declaración de la Presidencia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011479/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Humanitarian aid in Syria

The organisation Doctors Without Borders has published an open letter regarding the situation in Syria ([1]).

In this letter, the NGO states that 'it is imperative that the Russian and U.S. governments work with their respective political allies to develop a strategy for facilitating a massive infusion of humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed in Syria'.

Is the Commission aware of the abovementioned letter and proposal?

Does the Commission consider that the European Union should work in conjunction with Russia and the United States of America in the manner set out by Doctors Without Borders?

Is the Commission considering taking steps to ensure that humanitarian aid on a huge scale arrives where it is needed in Syria? What steps in particular?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the letter by Doctors Without Borders regarding the situation in Syria.

The Commission is advocating through all possible channels for increased access and a strengthended presence of humanitarian workers on the ground in coordination with key stakeholders. On the 25 September 2013, during the UN General Assembly week, the Commission, together with the Government of Jordan, co-chaired a meeting with a specific focus on the improvement of aid access in Syria, to which the United States of America and Russia as well as other key stakeholders participated in.

The United Nations Security Council issued in October 2013 a PRST ([2]) regarding the humanitarian situation in Syria. The EU Foreign Affairs Council stated in its conclusions that the PRST must be fully implemented. The EU Council in October also stated that all parties must take all appropriate measures to facilitate safe and unhindered humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance in the entirety of the Syrian territory, including across conflict lines and across borders from neighbouring countries. The operationalization of the PRST is crucial and requires active engagement from stakeholders including Russia and the United States of America.

The EU and the Member States have so far mobilised EUR 2 billion in relief and recovery aid to support people in need inside Syria as well as in the region (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq). The humanitarian assistance, channelled through international humanitarian partners, primarily supports life-saving medical emergency responses, the provision of essential drugs, food and nutritional items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, distribution of basic non-food items and protection.

([1]) http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/letters/2013/Syria_Open_Letter_ENG.pdf
([2]) Presidential Statement.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011480/13
al Consejo
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE) y Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Carta de las Lenguas e ingreso en la EU

El Parlamento Europeo ha aprobado recientemente con una amplísima mayoría el informe «Lenguas europeas amenazadas de desaparición y diversidad lingüística».

En dicho informe se señala en el punto 5 lo siguiente: «Pide a las autoridades de la Unión que incorporen el respeto efectivo a la diversidad lingüística y especialmente la protección de las lenguas no hegemónicas europeas a la serie de condiciones que deben cumplir todos los Estados que quieran ingresar en la EU como Estados miembros.»

¿Tiene el Consejo previsto tomar en consideración la recomendación del Parlamento Europeo arriba mencionada?

¿Se ha dado a sí mismo el Consejo algún plazo para tomar en consideración la recomendación mencionada?

Respuesta
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

El Consejo tomó nota del informe al que hace referencia la pregunta de Sus Señorías. El Consejo querría recordar a este respecto que el respeto de la diversidad se consagra en el artículo 3, apartado 3, del Tratado de la Unión Europea. Por consiguiente, esta exigencia incumbiría a cualquier Estado que desee ser admitido como Estado miembro de la UE.

Por otra parte, como sus Señorías sin duda saben, con arreglo a los artículos 165 y 166 del TFUE, las cuestiones relativas a la política lingüística son básicamente competencia de los Estados miembros.

El Consejo ha demostrado de manera constante su compromiso con el fomento de la diversidad lingüística y ha adoptado varias iniciativas importantes en este ámbito. A este respecto, podrían mencionarse dos iniciativas especificas:

La Resolución del Consejo de 2008 relativa a una estrategia europea en favor del multilingüismo ([1]) estimaba que la diversidad lingüística era tanto una baza como un desafío para Europa, y destacaba la importancia de fomentar el aprendizaje de las lenguas —incluidas las lenguas europeas menos difundidas— como medio de reforzar la cohesión social y el diálogo intercultural, así como para aumentar la competitividad y las posibilidades de empleo.

Asimismo, las conclusiones del Consejo de noviembre de 2011 sobre las competencias lingüísticas como motor de la movilidad ([2]) invitaban a los Estados miembros a ofrecer un mayor número de opciones en materia de idiomas en todos los niveles de la enseñanza.

([1]) DO C 320 de 16.12.2008, p. 1.
([2]) DO C 372 de 20.12.2011, p. 27.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011480/13
to the Council
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE) and Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Charter for Languages and admission to the EU

Parliament has recently approved the report 'Endangered European languages and linguistic diversity' with a huge majority.

Item 5 of this report 'Calls on the Union authorities to include effective respect for linguistic diversity, and protection for the most vulnerable European languages in particular, as a condition that must be met by all states wishing to be admitted as an EU Member State'.

Does the Council intend to take into consideration Parliament's abovementioned recommendation?

If so, has the Council set itself a deadline for doing so?

Reply
(16 December 2013)

The Council took note of the report referred to in the Honourable Members' question. The Council would recall in this context that respect for linguistic diversity is enshrined in Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union. This requirement would accordingly be incumbent upon any State wishing to be admitted as an EU Member State.

Furthermore, as the Honourable Members are certainly aware, pursuant to Articles 165 and 166 TFEU matters relating to language policy essentially come under Member States' competence.

The Council has consistently demonstrated its commitment to fostering linguistic diversity and has adopted several important initiatives in this area. Two specific initiatives could be mentioned in this respect:

The 2008 Council Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism ([1]) identified linguistic diversity as both an asset and a challenge for Europe, and highlighted the importance of promoting language learning — including that of less widely used European languages — as a means of strengthening social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, as well as boosting competitiveness and employability.

Also, the Council conclusions of November 2011 on language competences to enhance mobility ([2]) encouraged the Member States to offer a broader choice of languages at all levels of education.

([1]) OJ C 320, 16.12.2008, p. 1.
([2]) OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 27.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011482/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Υπολογισμός του ελλείμματος γενικής κυβέρνησης και η απαίτηση της Τρόικας για νέα δύσκολα μέτρα

Στο πλαίσιο του υπό κατάθεση προσχεδίου κρατικού προϋπολογισμού της Ελλάδας για το 2014 και, σύμφωνα με σχετικές δηλώσεις του Αναπληρωτή Υπουργού Οικονομικών που εδράζονται στα αντίστοιχα δημοσιονομικά στοιχεία της χώρας, το έλλειμμα γενικής κυβέρνησης αναμένεται να διαμορφωθεί κάτω από το 3%. Με βάση τη μεθοδολογία που ακολουθεί η Eurostat για τον υπολογισμό του ύψους του ελλείμματος, αναμένεται να συμπεριληφθούν τόσο οι επιστροφές κερδών από τις ευρωπαϊκές τράπεζες (SMP's), όσο και το μέρισμα που πρόκειται να αποδοθεί στην Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος.

Κατά αυτόν τον τρόπο το πλεόνασμα ενισχύεται με συνέπεια να μειώνονται τα απαιτούμενα ποσά για την εξυπηρέτηση του χρέους. Έπειτα από μια σειρά κοινωνικά επίπονες αποφάσεις που μεταφράστηκαν σε δυσβάσταχτες θυσίες από πλευράς του ελληνικού λαού, με ρυθμούς ύφεσης που ξεπερνούν χρόνο με το χρόνο τις μνημονιακές προβλέψεις και τους κοινωνικούς δείκτες να βρίσκονται σε δραματική κατάσταση, η Ελλάδα διαφαίνεται να επιτυγχάνει το στόχο του πρωτογενούς πλεονάσματος, καθώς και αυτόν του ελλείμματος γενικής κυβέρνησης, κάτι που στην ουσία σημαίνει ότι το εισόδημα των ελληνικών νοικοκυριών δε θα πρέπει να υποστεί εκ νέου μειώσεις.

Παρά ταύτα, η Τρόικα φαίνεται να απορρίπτει τους υπολογισμούς της Ελληνικής πλευράς, μολονότι βασίζονται στη μεθοδολογία της Eurostat, εκθέτοντας τις ελληνικές προσπάθειες και απαιτώντας νέα μέτρα περικοπών. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, και ως μέλος της Τρόικας, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με ποιό σκεπτικό αμφισβητούνται τα εν λόγω οικονομικά στοιχεία που παρέχει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση όταν μάλιστα βασίζονται σε επίσημες και ευρωπαϊκά αποδεκτές μεθόδους υπολογισμού;

2. Πώς κρίνει το γεγονός ότι απαιτούνται από την ελληνική πλευρά νέα μέτρα όταν με βάση τα δημοσιονομικά αποτελέσματα επιτυγχάνονται οι στόχοι του Προγράμματος;

3. Είναι δυνατόν σε μια ιδιαίτερα δύσκολη, κοινωνικά και πολιτικά, συγκυρία για την Ένωση με τα ποσοστά ευρωσκεπτικισμού να αυξάνονται ραγδαία, να δίδεται η εντύπωση ότι οι ευρωπαίοι εταίροι δεν εκτιμούν δεόντως τις θυσίες του ελληνικού λαού και τις δύσκολες πολιτικές αποφάσεις της ελληνικής κυβέρνηση, απαιτώντας νέες περικοπές, χωρίς κάτι τέτοιο να είναι απαραίτητο;

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

1. Το σχέδιο προϋπολογισμού για το 2014 που υποβλήθηκε από τις αρχές βασίζεται σε υπερβολικά αισιόδοξες παραδοχές σχετικά με τις αποδόσεις των εσόδων της φορολογικής διοίκησης και την ανάκτηση της φορολογικής συμμόρφωσης και των εισφορών κοινωνικής ασφάλισης μετά από την οικονομική ανάκαμψη.

2. Ενώ η Ελλάδα έχει επιτύχει τολμηρή και φιλόδοξη δημοσιονομική εξυγίανση κατά τα πρόσφατα έτη, η προσαρμογή δεν έχει ακόμη ολοκληρωθεί. Η υλοποίηση των δημοσιονομικών στόχων το 2013 και τα επόμενα έτη, είναι ύψιστης σημασίας για τη στήριξη της αποκατάστασης της εμπιστοσύνης και για λόγους ανάπτυξης και δημιουργίας θέσεων εργασίας. Το πρωτογενές πλεόνασμα του 2013 είναι εφικτό, αλλά δεδομένης της ύπαρξης δημοσιονομικού κενού, έχει ουσιαστική σημασία να ληφθούν μέτρα για την επίτευξη του στόχου πρωτογενούς πλεονάσματος 1,5% του ΑΕΠ για το 2014, καθώς και να διασφαλιστούν περαιτέρω δημοσιονομικές βελτιώσεις το 2015 και το 2016 ώστε να επιτευχθεί μέχρι το 2016 πρωτογενές πλεόνασμα ύψους 4,5% του ΑΕΠ. Ενώ υπάρχει συμφωνία για την ανάγκη κάλυψης του δημοσιονομικού κενού το 2014, κυρίως χάρη σε στοχοθετημένες περικοπές δαπανών και μέτρα για τη βελτίωση της είσπραξης των εσόδων, τα ειδικά μέτρα για την επίτευξή τους δεν έχουν ακόμη προσδιοριστεί.

3. Η Επιτροπή έχει πλήρη επίγνωση των προσπαθειών που κατέβαλαν οι ελληνικές αρχές και οι πολίτες για να επανέλθουν τα δημόσια οικονομικά της Ελλάδας σε διατηρήσιμη τροχιά. Η Επιτροπή πιστεύει ότι η σημαντική οικονομική βοήθεια που έλαβε η Ελλάδα από την έναρξη του προγράμματος, τα μέτρα που συμφωνήθηκαν στα τέλη του 2012 και η δέσμευση να παρασχεθεί χρηματοδοτική στήριξη μέχρι η Ελλάδα να ανακτήσει πρόσβαση στις αγορές, καθώς και η λήψη ενδεχόμενων μέτρων, εφόσον χρειαστεί, για να εξασφαλιστεί ότι ο δείκτης του χρέους προς το ΑΕΠ θα φτάσει στο 124% του ΑΕΠ κατά το 2020 αντικατοπτρίζουν σαφώς την αναγνώριση από τους ευρωπαίους εταίρους των εν λόγω προσπαθειών που κατέβαλε η Ελλάδα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011482/13
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Calculating the coalition government's deficit and the Troika's request for difficult new measures

In the provisional draft of the Greek national budget to be submitted for 2014, the coalition Government's deficit is expected to be kept below 3%, according to statements by the Deputy Finance Minister based on the country's relevant budgetary data. On the basis of the methodology followed by Eurostat for calculating the deficit level, the budget is expected to include not only the profit return from the European banks (under the Securities Markets Programme), but also the share that is to be given to the Bank of Greece.

Thus the surplus will increase and the sums required for servicing the debt will consequently be reduced. Following a series of socially painful decisions requiring enormous sacrifices by the Greek people, with patterns of recession exceeding the Memoranda predictions year after year and social statistics revealing a dramatic situation, Greece appears to be achieving its primary surplus target and also the coalition Government's surplus target, something which essentially means that Greek household income should not suffer further reductions.

In spite of all that and even though they are based on the Eurostat methodology, the Troika appears to be rejecting the Greek calculations, — compromising Greece's efforts and requiring new cuts. In this context, and as a member of the Troika, will the Commission say:

1. What are the grounds for doubting the above economic data provided by the Greek Government, when they are based on official calculation methods accepted at European level?

2. Why does it conclude that new measures are required on the Greek side when, based on the fiscal results, the Programme's targets are being achieved?

3. How can the European partners, in particularly difficult social and economic circumstances for the EU, and with eurosceptism sharply on the rise, give the impression, by demanding unnecessary new cuts, that they do not properly appreciate the sacrifices of the Greek people and the difficult decisions of the Greek Government?

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

1. The draft 2014 budget presented by the authorities is based on too optimistic assumptions concerning the yields of the tax administration gains and the recovery of tax compliance and Social Security Contributions following the economic recovery.

2. While Greece has achieved a bold and ambitious fiscal consolidation in recent years, the adjustment is not completed yet. Ensuring the delivery of the fiscal targets in 2013 and subsequent years is paramount to support the return of confidence and for the sake of growth and job creation. A primary surplus in 2013 is within reach, but in presence of a fiscal gap it is essential to take measures to meet the target of a primary surplus of 1.5% of GDP for 2014 and ensure further budgetary improvements in 2015 and 2016 to achieve by 2016 a primary surplus of 4.5% of GDP. While there is agreement on the need to close the fiscal gap in 2014 mostly by targeted expenditure cuts and measures to improve revenue collection, the specific measures to deliver them still remain to be identified.

3. The Commission is fully aware of the efforts made by the Greek authorities and citizens to bring Greece's public finances back to a sustainable footing. The Commission believes that the substantial financial assistance received by Greece since the start of the programme, the measures agreed in late 2012 and the commitment to provide financial assistance until Greece regains market access and to consider contingent measures, if necessary to ensure that the debt to GDP ratio reaches 124% of GDP in 2020 reflect very clearly the recognition by European partners of these efforts undertaken by Greece.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-011484/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(8 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Suġġett: Servizzi tal-kura tat-tfal.

B'segwitu tat-tweġiba tal-Kummissjoni għall-mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-008947/13, nixtieq nistaqsi:

Għaliex kien hemm dan id-dewmien kollu biex ittieħdet azzjoni f'qasam ta' prijorità tal-UE, ladarba l-kwistjoni hija "fil-qalba tal-istrateġiji ta' tkabbir ekonomiku tal-Ewropa", li għalihom l-għanijiet ġew iffissati 11-il sena ilu?

Tista' l-Kummissjoni ssemmi l-11-il Stat Membru li ġew rakkomandati biex itejbu d-disponibilità tas-servizzi tal-kura tat-tfal, u tista' tindika r-rakkomandazzjonijiet speċifiċi għall-pajjiż?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(6 ta' Diċembru 2013)

L-iżvilupp ta' faċilitajiet għall-indukrar tat-tfal jaqa' taħt ir-responsabbiltà tal-Istati Membri; madankollu l-Kummissjoni qed timplimenta bosta azzjonijiet f'dan il-qasam fil-qafas tal-istrateġija tagħha dwar l-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel ([1]), il-Kummissjoni partikolarment:

— timmonitorja regolarment il-progress lejn l-objettivi ta' Barċellona permezz tar-rapport annwali tagħha dwar l-ugwaljanza bejn l-irġiel u n-nisa u permezz ta' żewġ rapporti speċifiċi ([2]);

— organizzat bosta skambji tal-aħjar prattiki bejn l-Istati Membri dwar il-kwistjoni tal— indukrar tat-tfal u tal-bilanċ bejn ix-xogħol u l-ħajja privata ([3]);

— tippromwovi riċerka f'dan il-qasam pereżempju dwar servizzi ta' indukrar għal tfal tal-iskola ([4]).

Il-ftuħ tal-aċċess għas-suq tax-xogħol u għal impjiegi għat-tieni ħaddiem b'paga fil-familja, bis-saħħa ta' inċentivi fiskali adatti u l-introduzzjoni ta' servizzi ta' indukrar tat-tfal ta' kwalità u bi prezz raġonevoli, ġie identifikat bħala prijorità fl-Istħarriġ Annwali dwar it-Tkabbir ([5]) għall-aħħar semestru, fil-qafas tal-istrateġija Ewropa 2020, u ġie enfasizzat ukoll fis-SAT 2014 li ġie adottat riċentement ([6]). Il-11-il pajjiż li rċievew rakkomandazzjoni fl-2013 dwar servizzi tal-indukrar tat-tfal biex iżidu d-disponibbiltà/d-dispożizzjoni, il-kwalità u/jew l-affordabbiltà tagħhom kienu: AT, CZ, DE, EE, ES, HU, IT, MT, PL, UK u SK. L-Onorevoli Membru jista' jsib ir-rakkomandazzjonijiet dettaljati għal kull pajjiż f'dan il-link: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/index_mt.htm.

([1]) COM(2010) 491.
([2]) COM(2008)638 u COM(2013)322.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130910_egge_out_of_school_en.pdf
([5]) COM(2012) 750.
([6]) COM(2013) 800 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011484/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Childcare services

Following the Commission's answer to Written Question E-008947/13, I would like to ask:

Why has it taken so long to take action in a field of priority for the EU, given that it is 'at the heart of Europe's economic growth strategies' for which the targets had been set 11 years ago?

Can the Commission list the 11 Member States that were recommended to improve the availability of childcare services, and can it indicate the country-specific recommendations?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

The development of childcare facilities is a responsibility of Member States; however the Commission has been implementing several actions in this field in the framework of its strategy on equality between women and men ([1]), notably it:

— regularly monitors the progress towards the Barcelona objectives through its annual report on equality between men and women and through two specific reports ([2]);

— organised several exchanges of best practices between Member States on the issue of childcare and of reconciling work and private life ([3]);

— promotes research in this area for instance on childcare services for school age children ([4]).

Opening up access to the labour market and to employment for a second wage-earner from the household thanks to suitable tax incentives and the introduction of affordable, quality childcare services was identified as a priority in the Annual Growth Survey ([5]) for the last semester, in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, and was highlighted in the recently adopted 2014 AGS as well ([6]). The 11 countries that received a recommendation in 2013 on childcare services to increase their availability/provision, their quality and or affordability were: AT, CZ, DE, EE, ES, HU, IT, MT, PL, UK and SK. The Honourable Member can find the detailed recommendations for each country at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-your-country/index_en.htm.

([1]) COM(2010) 491.
([2]) COM(2008) 638 and COM(2013) 322.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130910_egge_out_of_school_en.pdf
([5]) COM(2012) 750.
([6]) COM(2013) 800 final.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-011485/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(8 oktober 2013)

Angående: Medlemsstaternas it-försvar och den digitala inre marknaden

Vissa medlemsstater har nyligen inlett omfattande it-försvarskampanjer som sägs syfta till att antingen skydda nationella handelshemligheter mot utländska intressen eller förvärva kapacitet att med hjälp av informationsinfrastrukturen angripa centrala tjänster i andra länder. Har kommissionen undersökt hur detta kommer att påverka den digitala inre marknaden? Vad gör kommissionen för att se till att medlemsstaternas åtgärder inte hindrar utvecklandet av den digitala inre marknaden?

Svar från Neelie Kroes på kommissionens vägnar
(26 november 2013)

Kommissionen känner inte till någon sådan kampanj eller kapacitet som parlamentsledamoten nämner. I avsaknad av närmare uppgifter är kommissionen inte i stånd att kommentera eller att bedöma inverkan på den digitala inre marknaden. Den nationella säkerheten är fortfarande varje medlemsstats eget ansvar, i enlighet med artikel 4 i fördraget om Europeiska unionen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011485/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Member State cyber defence and the digital single market

Some Member States have recently launched major cyber defence campaigns, whose goals are stated to be either to protect domestic trade secrets from foreign interests or to acquire capacity to attack through the information infrastructure core services of other countries. Has the Commission investigated the impact of this on the digital single market? What is the Commission doing to ensure that such activities by Member States do not disturb the development of the digital single market?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2013)

The Commission is not aware of any such campaigns or capabilities mentioned by the Honourable Member. In the absence of evidence the Commission is not in a position to comment or to assess the impact on the digital single market. National security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State, in line with Article 4 of the Treaty on the European Union.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-011486/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(8 oktober 2013)

Angående: Rådets begäran om ett konsoliderat förslag om den digitala inre marknaden

Jag har fått information om att kommissionens förslag till förordning om den digitala inre marknaden var resultatet av en uppmaning från rådet till kommissionen om att utarbeta ett uttömmande förslag för att säkra en snabbare behandling av ärendet.

Kan kommissionen ange i vilket rådsdokument denna begäran framfördes?

Svar från Neelie Kroes på kommissionens vägnar
(13 november 2013)

I slutsatserna från Europeiska rådets möte den 14–15 mars 2013 (EUCO 23/13) beslutade rådet att hålla en rad tematiska diskussioner om sektoriella och strukturella aspekter som är av avgörande betydelse för den ekonomiska tillväxten och Europas konkurrenskraft. För detta ansåg rådet att ett förberedande arbete borde göras, med prioritering av vissa specifika frågor.

När det gäller den digitala agendan noterade Europeiska rådet kommissionens avsikt att i god tid före oktober lämna en lägesrapport med en rapport om de kvarstående hinder som måste undanröjas för att se till att den digitala inre marknaden ska kunna fullbordas senast 2015, tillsammans med konkreta åtgärder för att snarast möjligt fullborda den integrerade inre marknaden för informationssamhället.

Slutligen betonade Europeiska rådet i sina slutsatser från sitt möte den 24–25 oktober 2013 (EUCO 169/13) igen den avgörande roll som den digitala ekonomin spelar för den europeiska konkurrenskraften och underströk det akuta behovet av en enhetlig och integrerad inre marknad för det digitala området och telekommunikation. Rådet välkomnade i detta sammanhang kommissionens redogörelse för paketet ”en uppkopplad kontinent” och uppmanade lagstiftaren att genomföra en koncentrerad behandling så att paketet kan antas inom fastställd tid.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011486/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Council request for consolidated digital single market proposal

I have received information to the effect that the Commission's proposal for a Digital Single Market Regulation was the result of the Council urging the Commission to make a comprehensive proposal in order to ensure faster processing of the dossier.

Can the Commission indicate in which Council document this request is enshrined?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2013)

In the Conclusions of its meeting held on 14/15 March 2013 (EUCO 23/13), the European Council decided to hold a series of thematic discussions on sectoral and structural aspects that are key to economic growth and European competitiveness and called for preparatory work to be conducted giving priority to specific areas of intervention.

In particular, with regard to the Digital Agenda, the European Council noted the Commission's intention to report well before October on the state of play and the remaining obstacles to be tackled so as to ensure the completion of a fully functioning Digital Single Market by 2015, as well as concrete measures to establish the single market in Information and Communications Technology as early as possible.

Finally, in the Conclusions of the meeting held on 24/25 October 2013 (EUCO 169/13), the European Council highlighted again the vital role of a strong digital economy for European competitiveness and stressed the urgent need for an integrated single digital and telecoms market, thus welcoming the presentation by the Commission of the 'Connected Continent' package and encouraging the legislator to carry out an intensive examination with a view to its timely adoption.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011487/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(8 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Definizione della stearina di palma in relazione alle direttive 2009/28/CE e 2008/98/CE

L'articolo 2, lettera h), della direttiva 2009/28/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio definisce «bioliquidi» i combustibili liquidi per scopi energetici diversi dal trasporto, compresi l'elettricità, il riscaldamento ed il raffreddamento, prodotti a partire dalla biomassa. Tale definizione si fonda sulla natura liquida del combustibile, che deve essere ricavato da un processo di trasformazione della biomassa. L'articolo 2, lettera e), della stessa direttiva definisce «biomassa» la frazione biodegradabile dei prodotti, rifiuti e residui di origine biologica provenienti dall'agricoltura, dalla silvicoltura e dalle industrie connesse. L'articolo 5 della direttiva 2008/98/CE identifica come sottoprodotti le sostanze o gli oggetti derivanti da un processo di produzione il cui scopo primario non è la produzione di tale articolo e se: i) è certo che la sostanza o l'oggetto saranno ulteriormente utilizzati, ii) la sostanza o l'oggetto possono essere utilizzati direttamente senza alcun ulteriore trattamento diverso dalla normale pratica industriale, iii) la sostanza o l'oggetto sono prodotti come parte integrante di un processo di produzione e, infine, iv) l'ulteriore utilizzo è legale.

La stearina di palma è ricavata da un processo di frazionamento dell'olio di palma che porta alla produzione di due sostanze: l'oleina, che è liquida, e la stearina, che è solida. La natura solida della stearina è riconosciuta, fra l'altro, a livello unionale nelle «Note esplicative della nomenclatura combinata» delle Comunità europee e, successivamente, dell'Unione europea, pubblicate dalla Commissione nella Gazzetta Ufficiale dell'Unione europea rispettivamente in data 30 maggio 2008 e 6 maggio 2011. In tali note si chiarisce che la stearina è compresa nelle «Frazioni solide» dell'olio di palma, con codice doganale 1511 90 19. La stearina soddisfa tutti i requisiti di cui all'articolo 5 della direttiva 2008/98/CE: essa, infatti, i) è riutilizzata, fra l'altro, ai fini della produzione di energia elettrica, ii) può essere riutilizzata direttamente senza alcun ulteriore trattamento diverso dalla normale pratica industriale, iii) è il residuo di un normale processo industriale volto innanzitutto alla produzione di oleina a fini agroalimentari e iv) il suo utilizzo è perfettamente legale e soddisfa tutti i requisiti riguardanti i prodotti e la tutela della salute umana e dell'ambiente e non arreca alcun danno ai medesimi;

Ciò premesso, si chiede alla Commissione di confermare che, secondo la normativa unionale, la stearina di palma:

— deve essere considerata, ai fini dell'applicazione della direttiva 2009/28/CE e delle discipline nazionali di attuazione, come biomassa e non come bioliquido;

— deve essere considerata, ai sensi della direttiva 2008/98/CE, un sottoprodotto.

Risposta di Günther Oettinger a nome della Commissione
(3 dicembre 2013)

1. Secondo la Commissione la stearina di palma soddisfa la definizione di biomassa di cui alla direttiva sulle energie rinnovabili (direttiva 2009/28/CE) in quanto è un prodotto agricolo biodegradabile e di origine biologica. La stearina di palma è un solido ed è riscaldata per agevolarne il trasporto e l'ulteriore trasformazione nei prodotti derivati.

2. Nella misura in cui non è l'oggetto principale del processo che la produce e soddisfa le condizioni indicate all'articolo 5, paragrafo 1, lettere da a) a d) della direttiva 2009/28/CE, la stearina di palma è un sottoprodotto. Questo sembra effettivamente essere il caso. .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011487/13
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Definition of palm stearin with regard to Directives 2009/28/EC and 2008/98/EC

Article 2(h) of Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council defines 'bioliquids' as liquid fuel for energy purposes other than for transport, including electricity and heating and cooling, produced from biomass. This definition covers the liquid form of fuel, which has to be obtained via a biomass conversion process. Article 2(e) of the same Directive defines 'biomass' as the biodegradable fraction of products, waste and residues from biological origin from agriculture, forestry and related industries. Article 5 of Directive 2008/98/EC classifies substances or objects resulting from a production process as by-products if the primary aim of the process is not the production of those items and if: i) further use of the substance or object is certain; ii) the substance or object can be used directly without any further processing other than normal industrial practice; iii) the substance or object is produced as an integral part of a production process; and lastly iv) further use is lawful.

Palm stearin is obtained by fractionation of palm oil, which produces two substances: olein, a liquid, and stearin, a solid. The solid state of stearin is recognised, *inter alia*, at EU level in the 'Explanatory Notes to the Combined Nomenclature' of the European Communities and subsequently of the European Union, published by the Commission in the Official Journal of the European Union of 30 May 2008 and 6 May 2011 respectively. These notes clarify that stearin is included in the 'solid fractions' of palm oil, under customs code 1511 90 19. Stearin meets all the requirements laid down in Article 5 of Directive 2008/98/EC: i) it is reused, among other things, for generating electricity; ii) it can be reused directly without any further processing other than normal industrial practice; iii) it is the residue of a normal industrial process aimed primarily at producing olein for food use; and iv) its use is perfectly lawful and meets all the requirements relating to products and the protection of human health and the environment, and does not harm the latter in any way.

In view of the above, can the Commission confirm that, in accordance with EU legislation, palm stearin:

— should be regarded as a type of biomass and not as a bioliquid pursuant to Directive 2009/28/EC and national implementing legislation;

— should be regarded as a by-product pursuant to Directive 2008/98/EC?

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

1. In the view of the Commission palm stearin fulfils the definition of biomass used in the Renewable Energy Directive (Directive 2009/28/EC) as it is an agricultural product which is both biodegradable and from biological origin. Palm stearin is a solid and is warmed up to allow for easier transport and further processing into downstream products.

2. In so far as palm stearin is not the primary aim of its production process and it fulfils the conditions set out in Article 5 (1) (a) to (d) of Directive 2008/98/EC, it is a by-product. This normally seems to be the case.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011489/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(8 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Possibile inquadramento giuridico dell'operatore presso i centri di trasmissione dati

In Italia, da circa quindici anni sono presenti e operano in forma indipendente i cosiddetti «centri di trasmissione dati» (CTD). Tali centri mettono a disposizione dei potenziali clienti un percorso telematico per l'inoltro di dati relativi a proposte di scommesse. La figura dell'operatore presso i centri di trasmissione dati non va confusa con quella dei bookmaker o dei concessionari di scommesse, dal momento che non incide in nessun modo sull'organizzazione o l'accettazione della scommessa, non sostiene nessun rischio economico e non fa banca in proprio, ma si limita a percepire una percentuale sulla quantità dei dati trasmessi.

In pratica, i CTD consentono al consumatore di aderire a offerte più vantaggiose in termini di quantità e di qualità di prodotti e hanno inoltre una funzione di garanzia. Tuttavia, a oggi la figura dell'operatore di CTD non è adeguatamente tutelata, in quanto non esiste una regolamentazione unitaria che disciplini tale attività e ne riconosca la professionalità. Tale categoria è stata in passato oggetto di molteplici sentenze della Corte di giustizia dell'UE, che hanno cercato di disciplinarla senza però riuscire a incidere sulla normativa interna. In particolare, le conclusioni dell'avvocato generale nella sentenza Costa e Cifone e il dispositivo della sentenza Biasci hanno riconosciuto la figura dell'operatore di CTD, sottolineando la funzione di sicurezza e garanzia che svolge nei confronti dei consumatori.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

— qual è l'iter per il riconoscimento giuridico della categoria dei centri di trasmissione dati?

— Se è possibile, per i consumatori italiani o di altri Stati dell'Unione europea nei quali il gioco è regolamentato, accedere al percorso telematico messo a disposizione da questi intermediari per beneficiare di condizioni migliori?

— Come sono disciplinati i centri di trasmissione dati negli altri Stati membri dell'Unione europea?

— Può la Commissione fornire altresì un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(9 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione rammenta che spetta agli Stati membri stabilire, nei limiti tracciati dalla Corte di giustizia dell'UE, l'organizzazione e il controllo dell'offerta di gioco d'azzardo e gli obiettivi politici perseguiti. Laddove la prestazione di servizi di gioco d'azzardo sia subordinata all'ottenimento di una licenza, le autorità degli Stati membri sono tenute, quale che sia il canale di trasmissione utilizzato per tale prestazione, a rispettare le norme fondamentali dei trattati, i principi di parità di trattamento e di non discriminazione a motivo della nazionalità e il conseguente obbligo di trasparenza.

In mancanza di disposizioni di armonizzazione a livello unionale e purché le misure nazionali non siano discriminatorie né contravvengano altrimenti ai trattati, gli Stati membri sono sostanzialmente liberi di fissare il livello di tutela che ritengono adeguato nel pubblico interesse, anche relativamente ai servizi di trasmissione dati mediante intermediari e le licenze o autorizzazioni che tali intermediari devono ottenere.

In risposta al terzo e al quarto quesito si rileva che la regolamentazione dei servizi di gioco d'azzardo negli Stati membri è caratterizzata da un'eterogeneità di norme. È intenzione della Commissione effettuare uno studio dedicato, in particolare, al ruolo delle autorità di regolamentazione nel gioco d'azzardo in linea, per comporre una panoramica delle discipline normative vigenti negli Stati membri, tra l'altro in materia di centri di trasmissione dati ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/internal_market/calls

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011489/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Possible legal framework for data transmission centre operators

'Data transmission centres' (DTCs) have been operating independently in Italy for approximately 15 years. These centres make available to potential customers a data transmission service to forward data relating to offers of bets. DTC operators are not to be confused with bookmakers or licensees for the collection of bets, since the former do not have any say regarding the organisation and acceptance of bets, nor do they bear any economic risk or operate as a bank, but only receive a percentage based on the quantity of data transmitted.

In practice, DTCs allow customers to accept more advantageous offers in terms of the quantity and quality of products, and they also have a guarantee function. To date, however, DTC operators are not adequately protected since there are no uniform rules governing their activity and recognising their professional status. In the past, this profession has been subject to numerous judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union seeking to regulate it without, however, managing to influence domestic legislation. In particular, the Advocate General's conclusions in the Costa and Cifone judgment and the operative part of the Biasci judgment recognised the profession of DTC operator, highlighting the security and guarantee functions it provides for customers.

— What is the procedure for obtaining legal recognition for data transmission centres as a whole?

— Is it possible for customers in Italy or in other EU Member States where gaming is regulated to access the data transmission service provided by these intermediaries in order to obtain better conditions?

— How are data transmission centres regulated in the other EU Member States?

— Can the Commission also provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The Commission would like to recall that it is for the Member States, within the limits established by the Court of Justice of the EU, to determine the organisation and control of the gambling offer and to set the objectives of their policy. In the situation where licences for gambling services are required, regardless of the transmission channel, Member States' authorities have a duty to comply with the fundamental rules of the Treaties, the principles of equal treatment and of non-discrimination on grounds of nationality and the consequent obligation of transparency.

In essence, in the absence of harmonising measures at EU level and as long as the national measures are not discriminatory or otherwise contrary to the Treaties, Member States may define the level of protection sought in the public interest, including as regards data transmission services by means of intermediaries, and licences or permits for such intermediaries.

As for the third and fourth question, the regulation of gambling services in the Member States is characterised by a diversity of regulatory frameworks. The Commission intends to carry out a study, notably on the role of regulators for online gambling, which should provide an overview of the regulatory frameworks in the Member States, including that for data transmission centres ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/internal_market/calls/

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011490/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: W związku z nałożeniem kar za przekroczenie kwot mlecznych

Polska znalazła się w gronie pięciu krajów, na które nałożone zostały kary związane z przekroczeniem kwot produkcji mleka obowiązujących w okresie rozliczeniowym 2012/2013. Wysokość nadwyżki określono przy tym na 0,2 proc., co oznacza, że każdy rolnik, który przekroczył limit, zobowiązany jest do uiszczenia opłaty dodatkowej.

Tymczasem wielu producentów świadomie decyduje się na przekraczanie kwot, co związane jest z planowanym na kwiecień 2015 r. całkowitym zniesieniem systemu limitów. Celem utrzymania silnej pozycji i możliwości konkurowania na europejskim rynku w nadchodzących latach zmuszeni są oni bowiem już obecnie znacząco podnieść stopnień produkcji. Warto zaznaczyć, że Polska dotychczas broniła limitów na forum europejskim.

W oparciu o powyższą argumentację zwracam się z zapytaniem, czy uwzględniając niewielki odsetek nadwyżki mleka wypracowany przez polskich rolników, istnieje możliwość umorzenia zastosowanej kary?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Daciana Cioloşa w imieniu Komisji
(14 listopada 2013 r.)

Wszechstronna dyskusja na temat kwot mlecznych miała miejsce w ramach oceny funkcjonowania reformy WPR w 2008 r. W jej wyniku rozpoczęto m.in. stopniowe zwiększanie krajowych kwot mlecznych (o 1 % rocznie) oraz zmieniono współczynnik korekcyjny tłuszczu. Decyzja ta była wynikiem kompromisu między państwami członkowskimi różniącymi się pod względem potencjału podaży i warunków.

Celem decyzji podjętej w ramach oceny funkcjonowania reformy WPR było zagwarantowanie „miękkiego lądowania" w całej UE. W okresie przejściowym może ona utrudnić dużym lub bardziej efektywnym producentom rozwijanie produkcji tak szybko, jakby sobie tego życzyli, ale daje innym producentom możliwość stopniowego przystosowania się do nowej sytuacji. Dla państw członkowskich o wyższym potencjale produkcyjnym ważnym atutem jest już samo zniesienie kwot.

Jak potwierdzono w porozumieniu politycznym w sprawie reformy wspólnej polityki rolnej z czerwca 2013 r., system kwot mlecznych pozostaje w mocy do dnia 31 marca 2015 r. Jeżeli dane państwo członkowskie przekroczy krajową kwotę mleczną, producenci muszą uiścić dodatkową opłatę z tytułu nadwyżek, proporcjonalną do ich wkładu w nadwyżkę. Obowiązujące rozporządzenie nie przewiduje możliwości odstępstwa od tej zasady.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011490/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Penalties imposed for exceeding milk quotas

Poland is one of five countries which have been fined for exceeding binding milk production quotas in the 2012/2013 reference period. The amount by which it exceeded the quotas was determined to be 0.2%. As a consequence, every farmer whose milk production was over the limit is obliged to make an additional payment.

However, many producers deliberately decide to exceed the quotas given the plan to do away with the quota system altogether in April 2015. In order to maintain a strong position and to compete on the European market in the coming years, they need to significantly increase production levels now. It should be pointed out that so far Poland has defended the limits at EU level.

Based on the reasons set out above, and given the small percentage of surplus milk produced by Polish farmers, is there a possibility of the penalties being cancelled?

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

A comprehensive discussion on milk quotas took place in the framework of the CAP Health Check in 2008. This discussion brought — among other elements — a gradual increase in the national quotas by 1% a year and a change in the fat correction factor. This decision was the outcome of a compromise amongst Member States with different supply potential and conditions.

The Health Check decision was aimed to ensure a 'soft landing' in the EU as a whole. It might not allow big or more efficient producers to expand as fast as they would like during this transitional period, but it gives other producers the opportunity to gradually adapt to the new situation. For the Member States with a higher production potential, the abolition of the quota as such constitutes already an important advantage.

As reconfirmed in the June 2013 political agreement on the reform of the common agricultural policy, the milk quota regime remains in force until 31 March 2015. If a Member State exceeds the national milk quota, producers have to pay the surplus levy in proportion to their contribution to the overrun. The applicable regulation doesn't foresee possibilities to deviate.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011491/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: W sprawie ograniczeń funkcjonowania dyrektywy o leczeniu transgranicznym w Polsce

Mająca niebawem zacząć obowiązywać, dyrektywa dotycząca transgranicznej opieki zdrowotnej stanowi istotny instrument ułatwiający pacjentowi podejmowanie leczenia w placówkach na terenie całej Wspólnoty, a także krajowych ośrodkach niepublicznych. Jest, w mojej opinii, ważną zdobyczą europejskich obywateli, wyrażającą interes każdego z nich.

Tymczasem polskie władze, w obawie o stan finansów państwa, dążą do ograniczenia uprawnień z niej wynikających. Skonkretyzowana ma być lista świadczeń medycznych oraz każdorazowo wymagana zgoda krajowego ubezpieczyciela, od której uzależniona będzie możliwość uzyskania zwrotu kosztów leczenia. Są to założenia kwestionujące zasadniczy wymiar tejże dyrektywy.

Działając w interesie polskich pacjentów zwracam się z prośbą o informacje:

1. Czy instytucje europejskie współpracują z polskim rządem, bądź nadzorują prace, w zakresie wprowadzenia planowanych ograniczeń dyrektywy? W szczególności, czy Komisja wyraża zgodę na implementację jedynie części przepisów?

2. Czy zastosowanie wspomnianych ograniczeń nie pozostaje w sprzeczności z prawem wspólnotowym oraz jakie kary grożą państwu członkowskiemu w przypadku niedostosowania krajowych przepisów w sprawach regulowanych dyrektywą?

3. Środowiska lekarskie w Polsce wyrażają również niepokój w odniesieniu do niespójnych przepisów dotyczących leczenia obcokrajowców (choćby w zakresie tłumaczenia i przechowywania dokumentacji medycznej). Czy i w jaki sposób Komisja przewiduje rozwiązanie tej kwestii?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(25 listopada 2013 r.)

Termin transpozycji dyrektywy 2011/24/UE ([1]) upłynął 25 października 2013 r. Do tego dnia państwa członkowskie miały obowiązek wdrożyć wszystkie przepisy dyrektywy. Komisja będzie kontrolować i nadzorować transpozycję tej dyrektywy i podejmie odpowiednie działania wobec państw członkowskich, które nie wypełnią wszystkich obowiązków z niej wynikających.

W odniesieniu do stosowania uprzedniej zgody art. 8 ust. 2 dyrektywy uprawnia państwa członkowskie do wymagania od pacjentów, aby uzyskali zgodę na leczenie, zwłaszcza takie, które obejmuje pobyt w szpitalu przez noc lub użycie wysoce specjalistycznej i kosztownej infrastruktury medycznej. Państwo członkowskie może też wymagać od pacjentów uzyskania zgody na leczenie szczególnie ryzykowne dla pacjenta lub ogółu społeczeństwa lub gdy istnieją poważne i konkretne wątpliwości co do jakości i bezpieczeństwa opieki zdrowotnej oferowanej przez podmiot świadczący opiekę zdrowotną. Opieka zdrowotna nienależąca do tych kategorii nie może podlegać obowiązkowi uzyskania uprzedniej zgody.

Komisji nie powiadomiono o obawach polskich lekarzy, o których wspomina szanowny Pan Poseł. W związku z tym Komisja nie może zająć stanowiska w tej kwestii.

([1]) Dz.U. L 88 z 4.4.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011491/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Restrictions on implementation of the directive on cross-border healthcare in Poland

The directive on cross-border healthcare, which is soon to enter into force, is an important piece of legislation facilitating access for patients to healthcare in establishments throughout the European Union, including national private healthcare facilities. It is an important step forward for all Europeans.

Regrettably, the Polish authorities are seeking to restrict the entitlements to which it gives rise, owing to concerns about the state of the country's finances. A list of healthcare services is to be drawn up, and any patient wishing to access one of those services will need to gain the prior approval of the national health insurance authorities in order to be eligible for reimbursement of the cost. This is contrary to the basic purpose of the directive.

With a view to protecting the interests of Polish patients, can the Commission say whether:

1. The EU institutions are cooperating with the Polish Government in connection with the introduction of these restrictions on the operation of the directive, or are monitoring developments in this matter? In particular, is the Commission happy with a Member State implementing only part of the directive's provisions?

2. The introduction of such restrictions is incompatible with EC law, and what penalties may be imposed on any Member State that fails to bring its national law into line in the areas covered by the directive?

3. It intends to address the concerns voiced by Polish doctors about inconsistencies in the provisions governing the treatment of non-nationals (e.g. as regards translation and keeping of medical records), and if so, how?

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

The transposition deadline for Directive 2011/24/EU ([1]) was 25 October 2013. By this date Member States were required to implement all the provisions of the directive. The Commission will be checking and monitoring the transposition of this directive, and will take appropriate action vis-à-vis those Member States who do not meet their obligations under the directive.

With regard to the use of prior authorisation, Article 8(2) of the directive allows Member States to require patients to seek authorisation in particular for treatments which either involve overnight hospital accommodation or the use of highly-specialised and cost-intensive medical infrastructure. A Member State may also require patients to seek authorisation for treatments posing a particular risk for the patient or the population in general, or where the healthcare is to be provided by a healthcare provider who gives rises to serious and specific concerns regarding the quality and safety of healthcare. Healthcare not falling into these categories may not be made subject to prior authorisation.

The concerns of Polish doctors to which the Honourable Member refers have not been brought to the attention of the Commission. The Commission is therefore unable to comment on them.

([1]) OJ L 88, 4.4.2011.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011492/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Rosyjskie próby torpedowania integracji krajów Partnerstwa Wschodniego z UE

Polityka inspirowania przez Moskwę „wojen handlowych" z sąsiednimi państwami (również członkowskimi UE) ewidentnie nabiera rozpędu, nierzadko przy bierności unijnych instytucji.

W chwili obecnej wiele europejskich firm podejmuje starania o zawarcie bądź przedłużenie kontraktów związanych z handlem z Rosją w roku 2014. Seria ostatnich negatywnych decyzji oraz rozporządzeń rosyjskich służb celnych i sanitarnych odnoszących się do europejskich produktów spożywczych eksportowanych do tego kraju wzbudza uzasadniony niepokój. Zwiększeniu ulec mają także opłaty transportowe, co oprotestowała już m.in. Komisja Europejska.

Nawiązując do powyższego zwracam się do pani Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel z prośbą o wyjaśnienie:

1. Jakie działania względem Rosji zostały podjęte przez ESDZ w obliczu ewidentnego naruszenia przez ten kraj procedur Światowej Organizacji Handlu?

2. Czy rozważane jest dyplomatyczne wsparcie europejskich przedsiębiorców, celem ułatwienia im prowadzenia bieżących negocjacji warunków wymiany handlowej?

3. Czy i w jaki sposób europejska dyplomacja udziela wsparcia wschodnim sąsiadom, aspirującym do stowarzyszenia z Unią, w ich relacjach z Rosją?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Karela De Guchta w imieniu Komisji
(16 grudnia 2013 r.)

Komisja utrzymuje zdecydowane stanowisko i wykorzystuje wszelkie możliwości rozwiązania problemów związanych z przestrzeganiem przez Rosję jej zobowiązań wobec Światowej Organizacji Handlu (WTO).

Dnia 9 lipca 2013 r. UE wszczęła postępowanie w ramach procedury rozstrzygania sporów WTO dotyczące rosyjskiej opłaty recyklingowej za samochody. Ponadto po szybkiej reakcji i zdecydowanej krytyce Komisji wobec rosyjskich środków kontroli celnej zastosowanych do wywozu z Litwy, w tym po wzmiance o tym środku w konkluzjach Rady WTO ds. Handlu Towarami, rosyjskie ograniczenie zostało usunięte.

Jeśli chodzi o stosowane przez Rosję środki handlowe wpływające na wywóz żywności z UE jako całości lub z niektórych państw członkowskich, Komisja nadal działa na rzecz rozwiązania tych kwestii w rozmowach dwustronnych z Rosją zarówno na wysokim szczeblu, jak i na posiedzeniach ekspertów. Komisja wyraziła też poważne obawy co do środków sanitarnych oraz fitosanitarnych Rosji na wielostronnych forach w ramach WTO: w Radzie ds. Handlu Towarami oraz przy okazji posiedzenia Komitetu Środków Sanitarnych i Fitosanitarnych.

Komisja wierzy, że te dwustronne i wielostronne wysiłki przyniosą dalsze rezultaty, które pomogą przedsiębiorstwom UE w wymianie handlowej z rosyjskimi partnerami.

UE nadal wspiera kraje Partnerstwa Wschodniego za pomocą środków dyplomatycznych i wyjaśnień technicznych. Ponadto oświadczenia na najwyższym szczeblu miały na celu wyjaśnienie kwestii obejmujących obawy Rosji o potencjalnych skutkach umów o wolnym handlu, które mają zostać zawarte między UE a jej wschodnimi partnerami.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011492/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Russian attempts to scupper the EU integration of Eastern Partnership countries

Moscow's policy of waging 'trade wars' against neighbouring countries (and EU Member States) is clearly gathering momentum, often in the face of passivity on the part of the EU institutions.

Many European companies are currently trying to conclude or extend contracts involving trade with Russia in 2014. The recent spate of negative decisions and regulations from the Russian customs and health authorities affecting European food exports to Russia is understandably causing concern. Transport fees are also to be raised, something to which the Commission and others have already objected.

With this in mind:

1. What action has the EEAS taken against Russia with regard to the fact that it is in clear breach of WTO procedures?

2. Is any form of diplomatic assistance to European businesses being considered with a view to helping them in the current negotiations on trade terms?

3. Are EU diplomats providing assistance to the neighbouring countries in the east that aspire to EU membership as regards their relations with Russia? If so, in what way is this being done?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

The Commission maintains a firm stance and uses every opportunity to address the problems as regards Russia`s compliance with its World Trade Organisation (WTO) commitments.

The EU launched a WTO dispute settlement procedure on 9 July 2013 concerning Russia`s car recycling fee. Furthermore, following the Commission`s quick reaction and strong criticism of Russia`s customs control measures affecting Lithuanian exports, including the mention of this measure in the Council for Trade in Goods in the WTO, the Russian restriction was removed.

As regards Russian trade measures affecting food exports from the EU as a whole or some of its Member States, the Commission continues to address these matters bilaterally with Russia both at high-level and expert meetings. The Commission also voiced its serious concerns about Russia`s sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures in multilateral platforms within the WTO: at the Council for Trade in Goods as well as in the margin of the SPS Committee.

The Commission trusts that these bilateral and multilateral efforts will bring further results which will assist EU businesses in trading with their Russian counterparts.

The EU continues to support the Eastern Partnership countries through diplomatic means and by way of technical clarifications. Moreover, statements at the highest level were aimed at addressing these matters, including Russia`s concerns about the potential impacts of the free trade agreements to be signed between the EU and its Eastern partners.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011493/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – W związku z wydaleniem amerykańskich dyplomatów z Wenezueli

Prezydent Wenezueli Nicolas Maduro zwrócił się w ubiegłym tygodniu do trójki wysokich przedstawicieli Stanów Zjednoczonych w Caracas o opuszczenie (w ciągu 48 godzin) terytorium kraju. Jednocześnie publicznie oskarżył (w telewizyjnym wystąpieniu) dyplomatów o przygotowywanie sabotażu wymierzonego w system energii elektrycznej. Jest to w ostatnich miesiącach kolejna akcja skierowana przeciwko administracji w Waszyngtonie. USA ponadto nie mają swojego ambasadora w Wenezueli już od roku 2008, kiedy to został on wydalony z inicjatywy ówczesnego prezydenta Hugo Chaveza.

W odniesieniu do powyższej sytuacji zwracam się do Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel z prośbą o przybliżenie informacji dotyczących charakteru w jakim reprezentowana jest w Wenezueli Unia Europejska, w szczególności czy wzajemne relacje dyplomatyczne realizowane są w zgodzie z międzynarodowymi standardami w tym zakresie i w sposób nie budzący zastrzeżeń?

Proszę również o ocenę, czy i w jakim zakresie problemy amerykańskiego przedstawicielstwa dyplomatycznego w Caracas mogą rzutować na stosunek wenezuelskich władz względem Wspólnoty, bądź poszczególnych krajów członkowskich (przede wszystkim stowarzyszonych w Pakcie Północnoatlantyckim)?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton
w imieniu Komisji
(5 grudnia 2013 r.)

UE reprezentowana jest w Wenezueli przez delegaturę, która gwarantuje realizację zadań UE przyznanych jej na mocy traktatu lizbońskiego. Niedawno mianowana nowa szefowa delegatury przeprowadziła wymianę poglądów z parlamentarną Komisją Spraw Zagranicznych w lipcu 2013 r. Szefowa delegatury złożyła listy uwierzytelniające oraz została przyjęta przez prezydenta Maduro w dniu 2 października 2013 r.

Delegatura UE w Caracas regularnie koordynuje stanowiska jedenastu ambasad państw członkowskich UE w Wenezueli.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011493/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Expulsion of American diplomats from Venezuela

Last week, President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela called on three senior representatives of the United States in Caracas to remove themselves from the country within 48 hours. At the same time, he publicly accused the diplomats during a televised interview of preparing to sabotage the country's electrical power system. This is the latest act in recent months targeted against the administration in Washington. Moreover, the USA has had no ambassador to Venezuela since 2008, when the last ambassador was expelled at the request of former President Hugo Chavez.

In this connection, could the Vice-President/High Representative say what the character of the European Union's representation in Venezuela is, and particularly whether mutual diplomatic relations are being pursued in line with international standards and in a way that does not raise objections?

Could the VP/HR also say to what extent the problems facing the US diplomatic representation in Caracas could have an impact on the Venezuelan Government's attitude towards the EU or its individual Member States, particularly those which are also NATO members?

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

The EU is represented in Venezuela by a Delegation which assures the function assigned to the EU under the Lisbon Treaty. The recent appointed new Head of Delegation had an exchange of views with the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs in July 2013. She has presented her letters of credentials and was formally received by President Maduro on 2 October 2013.

The EU Delegation in Caracas regularly coordinates positions with the eleven EU Member State embassies in Venezuela.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-011981/13
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(21 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Discriminerende btw-behandeling van digitale en gedrukte boeken

Aansluitend bij indieners eerdere schriftelijke vraag over verschillende btw-tarieven voor papieren boeken, e-boeken en audioboeken (E-0673/10) is het belangrijk te benadrukken dat fysieke en digitale boeken in de EU momenteel nog steeds onderworpen zijn aan een verschillende btw-behandeling, in die zin dat verlaagde btw-tarieven niet kunnen worden toegepast op digitale boeken.

In tijden van economische crisis zijn deze discriminerende btw-regels voor e-boeken en fysieke boeken niet in overeenstemming met de EU-doelstellingen op het gebied van cultureel beleid, noch met haar inspanningen ter ondersteuning van de digitale economie en ter bevordering van de groei door het benutten van het potentieel van de gemeenschappelijke markt.

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat een verschillende btw-behandeling, wat de toepasselijke tarieven voor gedrukte en digitale boeken betreft, een belemmering vormt op de interne markt en nadelig is voor de EU-consumenten?

2. Is de Commissie van plan de bedoelde verschillen en het gebrek aan convergentie tussen de online- en de fysieke omgeving aan te pakken door de btw-regels voor gedrukte en digitale boeken in het kader van een toekomstig wetgevingsvoorstel gelijk te trekken, zoals zij heeft aangegeven in haar mededeling over de toekomst van de btw (COM(2011)0851)?

3. Is zij voornemens dit voorstel in te dienen vóór het eind van het jaar, als eerder meegedeeld?

Antwoord van de heer Šemeta namens de Commissie
(25 november 2013)

De verschillende btw-behandeling van gedrukte en elektronische boeken is het resultaat van de huidige btw-wetgeving die unaniem door de lidstaten is goedgekeurd en die voorziet in verschillende regels — btw-tarieven buiten beschouwing gelaten — voor de levering van goederen en diensten. De verkoop van boeken op fysieke dragers (inclusief luisterboeken) vormt een levering van goederen die volgens de btw-richtlijn ([1]) in aanmerking kunnen komen voor een verlaagd btw-tarief. Het downloaden van e-boeken wordt echter beschouwd als een dienst, en meer in het bijzonder als een langs elektronische weg verrichte dienst. Als zodanig wordt deze handeling uitdrukkelijk uitgesloten van een verlaagd btw-tarief overeenkomstig artikel 98, lid 2, van die richtlijn zoals elke andere langs elektronische weg verrichte dienst.

De Commissie, die erop moet toezien dat het EU-recht juist wordt toegepast, heeft inbreukprocedures ingeleid tegen de lidstaten die de btw-richtlijn niet correct toepassen ([2]).

Zoals aangekondigd in haar mededeling over de toekomst van de btw ([3]), onderzoekt de Commissie momenteel deze kwestie in de bredere context van een effectbeoordeling inzake de herziening van de huidige btw-tariefstructuur. In een gerichte openbare raadpleging ([4]) is de convergentie tussen de online- en de fysieke omgeving aan de orde gesteld en er is ook opdracht gegeven voor een specifieke studie. Deze elementen zullen worden meegenomen bij het vervolledigen van de effectbeoordeling om beleidsconclusies te trekken over mogelijke hervormingen van de btw-tariefstructuur in de nabije toekomst.

([1]) Combinatie van bepalingen van artikel 98 en categorie 6 van bijlage III bij Richtlijn 2006/112/EG van de Raad van 28 november 2006 — PB L 347 van 11.12.2006.
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-137_nl.htm
([3]) COM(2011) 851 definitief.
([4]) Zie volgende link: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011494/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: W kwestii obniżenia stawki podatku VAT na e-booki

Polski rząd postuluje obniżenie podatku VAT na e-booki i dobra kulturowe, które mają stawkę wyższą w świecie cyfrowym niż w świecie analogowym. Jest to działania w interesie europejskich konsumentów. Za nieuzasadnione uważam bowiem utrzymywanie odmiennych stawek obejmujących – w praktyce – te same artykuły. Treść książki drukowanej od jej wersji elektronicznej, z założenia, nie różni się niczym. Podobna sytuacja dotyczy gazet i czasopism, a także utworów muzycznych (wydawanych na CD i udostępnianych w sieci). Wszystko to są dzieła intelektualne, dlatego uznawanie ich elektronicznych wersji jako usług, wzbudza zrozumiałe wątpliwości zarówno twórców, producentów, jak i przede wszystkim nabywców.

Proszę o informacje dotyczące postępu prac związanych z ujednoliceniem stawek podatku VAT dotyczących wspomnianych artykułów. Jakie jest bieżące stanowisko Komisji w tejże sprawie oraz w jakim okresie czasu możliwe będzie wypracowanie satysfakcjonujących rozwiązań?

Wspólna odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Algirdasa Šemetę w imieniu Komisji
(25 listopada 2013 r.)

Odmienne podejście do książek drukowanych i elektronicznych wynika z obowiązujących przepisów dotyczących podatku VAT przyjętych jednomyślnie przez państwa członkowskie i przewidujących odmienne zasady – z wyjątkiem stawki podatku VAT – obowiązujące w przypadku dostawy towarów i świadczenia usług. Sprzedaż książek na jakimkolwiek nośniku fizycznym (w tym książek audio) stanowi dostawę towarów, która zgodnie z dyrektywą VAT ([1]) może korzystać z obniżonej stawki VAT. Wczytywanie treści książek elektronicznych traktowane jest jednak jako świadczenie usług, a precyzyjniej mówiąc jako usługa świadczona drogą elektroniczną. W związku z powyższym usługa ta jest wyraźnie wyłączona z zakresu obniżonej stawki VAT na mocy art. 98 ust. 2 dyrektywy VAT, podobnie jak wszystkie inne usługi świadczone drogą elektroniczną.

Mając obowiązek zapewnienia właściwego stosowania prawa UE, Komisja wszczęła postępowanie w sprawie naruszenia przepisów przeciwko państwom członkowskim, które nie stosują prawidłowo dyrektywy VAT ([2]).

Zgodnie z zapowiedzią zawartą w komunikacie w sprawie przyszłości podatku VAT ([3]), Komisja obecnie bada tę kwestię w szerszym kontekście oceny skutków w sprawie przeglądu istniejącej struktury stawek podatku VAT. W ramach ukierunkowanych konsultacji społecznych ([4]) poruszono kwestię konwergencji między środowiskiem internetowym i fizycznym, a także zlecono szczegółowe badanie w tym zakresie. Elementy te zostaną uwzględnione przy uzupełnianiu oceny skutków w celu wyciągnięcia wniosków strategicznych na temat ewentualnych przyszłych zmian w systemie stawek VAT w najbliższej przyszłości.

([1]) Połączenie przepisów art. 98 oraz kategorii 6 określonej w załączniku III dyrektywy Rady 2006/112/WE z dnia 28 listopada 2006 r. (Dz.U. L 347 z 11.12.2006).
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-137_en.htm
([3]) COM(2011) 851 wersja ostateczna.
([4]) Więcej informacji: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011494/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Reducing VAT rates on e-books

The Polish Government is proposing to reduce VAT rates on e-books and cultural goods, which are more highly taxed in digital format than they are in analogue. Such a move would be a boon to European consumers. I consider it unjustifiable to maintain different rates for what are essentially the same articles. There is no difference between the content of a printed book and that of its electronic version. A similar situation can be observed with newspapers, journals and musical works issued on CD and online. These are all intellectual works, so categorising their electronic versions as services understandably raises doubts among artists, producers and — above all — customers.

What is the state of play as regards work on harmonising VAT rates on the aforementioned articles? What is the Commission's current view on this matter, and within what time frame will it be possible to develop satisfactory solutions?

Question for written answer P-011981/13
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(21 October 2013)

Subject: Discriminatory VAT treatment of digital and printed books

Following my previous written question on differing VAT rates for paper books, e-books and audio books (E-0673/10), it is important to stress that at present physical and digital books are still subject to differing VAT treatment in the EU, insofar as reduced VAT rates cannot be applied to digital books.

In times of economic crisis, such discriminatory VAT rules for e-books and physical books are not in line with the EU's cultural policy objectives or its efforts to support the digital economy and boost growth by unlocking the potential of the single market.

1. Does the Commission consider that differing VAT treatment in terms of the rates applicable to printed and digital books constitutes a barrier in the internal market and is to the detriment of EU consumers?

2. Does the Commission intend to address these discrepancies and the challenge of convergence between the online and physical environments by aligning VAT rates for printed and digital books in a future legislative proposal, as indicated in its communication on the future of VAT (COM(2011)0851)?

3. Does the Commission plan to present such a proposal by the end of the year, as previously indicated?

Joint answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(25 November 2013)

The different VAT treatment of printed and electronic books derives from the current VAT legislation agreed by the unanimity of Member States and which provides for different rules — VAT rates apart — for the supply of goods and services. The sale of books on any physical support (including audio-books) constitutes a supply of goods which according to the VAT Directive ([1]) can benefit from a reduced VAT rate. The downloading of e-books is however considered as a supply of services, and more particularly, as an electronically supplied service. As such it is explicitly excluded from a reduced VAT rate by Article 98(2) of that directive like any other electronically supplied service.

The Commission, which has to ensure that EC law is properly applied, has launched infringement proceedings against the Member States which do not apply correctly the VAT Directive ([2]).

([1]) Combination of provisions of Article 98 and Category c of Annex III of Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 — OJ L 347, 11.12.2006.
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-137_en.htm

As announced in its communication on the future of VAT ([3]), the Commission is currently examining this issue in the broader context of an impact assessment on the review of the current VAT rates structure. A targeted public consultation ([4]) looked at the issue of convergence between online and physical environments and a specific study has been commissioned as well. These elements will be taken on board in completing the impact assessment to draw policy conclusions on possible future reforms to the VAT rates framework in the near future.

([3]) COM(2011) 851 final.
([4]) See following link : http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011495/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: W związku z pozwaniem Polski za stosowanie obniżonego VAT na produkty medyczne

Komisja wystosowała wobec Polski pozew do Trybunału Sprawiedliwości w związku ze stosowaniem obniżonych stawek podatku VAT na sprzęt medyczny i nielecznicze produkty farmaceutyczne. Zarzucono naruszenie przedmiotowej dyrektywy w odniesieniu do kilku przypadków powiązanych z lecznictwem.

Moje wątpliwości wzbudza zawarta w komunikacje Komisji argumentacja, wyrażająca zastrzeżenie wobec stosowania niższego VAT-u dla sprzętu medycznego powszechnego użytku, co związane jest bezpośrednio z wyposażeniem szpitali, przychodni i tym podobnych placówek opieki zdrowotnej. W sytuacji dramatycznego niedofinansowania służby zdrowia w Polsce i grożącej wielu ośrodkom niewypłacalności, ewentualna konieczność zwiększenia kosztów nabywania sprzętu może okazać się dla nich zabójcza. Nie trzeba tłumaczyć, że skutki takiej polityki odczują bezpośrednio pacjenci.

W trosce o bezpieczeństwo zdrowotne polskich obywateli, zwracam się z prośbą o rozważenie wycofania ww. pozwu i wypracowanie, wespół z polskimi władzami, zadowalających rozwiązań w tej niezwykle istotnej sprawie. Proszę o informacje, czy i w obliczu jakiej argumentacji Komisja dopuszcza podjęcie sugerowanych przeze mnie działań? Proszę również o określenie, czy i z uwzględnieniem jakich warunków instytucje europejskie mogłyby umożliwić utrzymanie w Polsce obecnie stosowanych stawek VAT obejmujących szpitalny sprzęt medyczny?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Algirdasa Šemetę w imieniu Komisji
(20 listopada 2013 r.)

W odniesieniu do pierwszej kwestii Komisja odsyła szanownego Pana Posła do swojej odpowiedzi na pytanie parlamentarne E-010743/2013, w której znajdzie stosowne wyjaśnienia.

Natomiast jeśli chodzi o ostatnie pytanie szanownego Pana Posła, Komisja pragnie podkreślić, że jedynym możliwym rozwiązaniem umożliwiającym zastosowanie obniżonej stawki podatku w odniesieniu do wskazanych produktów jest zmiana dyrektywy w sprawie VAT ([1]). W takim przypadku ostateczna decyzja należy do Rady stanowiącej jednomyślnie.

([1]) Dyrektywa Rady 2006/112/WE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011495/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Action against Poland for applying a reduced VAT rate on medical products

The Commission has referred Poland to the Court of Justice in connection with the application of reduced VAT rates on medical equipment and non-medicinal pharmaceutical products. It alleges a breach of the relevant directive in respect of a number of cases relating to healthcare.

My doubts concern the arguments in the Commission communication objecting to the application of reduced VAT on medical equipment for general use, which is linked directly to the equipment in hospitals, clinics and similar healthcare facilities. Given the dramatic underfunding in Poland's healthcare system, many facilities are facing insolvency, and any increase in the cost of obtaining equipment could be fatal for them. It goes without saying that the effects of such a policy will be felt directly by patients.

In the interests of the health of Polish citizens, I would ask you to consider withdrawing the above action and to develop, together with the Polish authorities, satisfactory solutions in this extremely important matter. Would the Commission consider taking the course of action I have suggested, and if so, under what circumstances? Please also state whether, and under what conditions, the European institutions would be able to allow Poland to maintain the VAT rates currently applied to medical equipment for hospitals.

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

Concerning the first question, the Commission would invite the Honourable Member to see its reply to parliamentary Question E-010743/2013 where he can find the answer to his queries.

As regards the last question of the Honourable Member, the Commission would like to stress that the only possible solution to apply a reduced rate to the products in question is by an amendment of the VAT Directive ([1]). In this case the final decision belongs to the Council acting unanimously.

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011498/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Irão: Críticas do comandante da Guarda Revolucionária a Hassan Rohani

Foram recentemente tornadas públicas as críticas do comandante da Guarda Revolucionária, a força de elite do regime iraniano, à histórica conversa telefónica entre o presidente iraniano, Hassan Rohani, e seu homólogo americano. O contacto telefónico entre presidentes foi o primeiro deste tipo entre os dois países desde a rutura de relações diplomáticas em 1980.

Assim, pergunto à Alta Representante:

— Que importância atribui ao contacto havido entre os presidentes iraniano e norte-americano?

— Como analisa a aparente dissensão nas altas esferas do poder iraniano e em que medida julga que esta poderá condicionar a capacidade de compromisso com a paz e o desanuviamento regional dos seus principais dirigentes?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(19 de dezembro de 2013)

Tal como o Senhor Deputado referiu, a conversa telefónica entre o recém-eleito presidente iraniano, Hassan Rouhani e o presidente americano Barak Obama, foi o primeiro contacto entre um presidente americano e um presidente iraniano desde há muitos anos.

Em geral, esses contactos entre dois dirigentes políticos só podem ser acolhidos com agrado, uma vez que podem contribuir para encontrar soluções diplomáticas e atenuar eventuais tensões.

No que diz respeito ao debate interno no Irão quanto a esta questão, não cabe à AR/VP proferir qualquer comentário. Um debate político livre é saudável, constuindo um vetor essencial da democracia e, enquanto tal, sempre bem-vindo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011498/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Iran: Criticism of Hassan Rouhani by the Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC)

Criticism from the Commander of the IRGC, the Iranian regime's elite force, of the historic telephone conversation between the Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, and his US counterpart has recently been made public. The telephone call between the presidents was the first of its kind between the two countries since diplomatic relations were severed in 1980.

— How important does the High Representative think the contact between the Iranian and US Presidents is?

— What is her opinion of the apparent dissent among the upper echelons of the Iranian administration and to what extent does she think that this could compromise the ability of its key leaders to commit to peace and to easing tensions in the region?

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

As mentioned by the Honourable Member, the telephone conversation between the newly elected President of Iran, Mr Hassan Rouhani and US president Barak Obama was the first contact between an American and an Iranian President for many years.

In general, such contacts between two political leaders can only but be welcomed because they can contribute to finding diplomatic solutions and ease possible tensions.

As for the internal debate in Iran regarding the matter, this is not for the HR/VP to comment on. A free political debate is healthy and one of the keys to democracy, and as such, always welcome.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011500/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Acordo EUA-Afeganistão pós-2014

O Secretário-Adjunto do Departamento da Defesa dos Estados Unidos da América, Ash Carter, declarou recentemente que Washington e Cabul devem chegar «rapidamente» a um acordo sobre a permanência de tropas americanas no Afeganistão depois de 2014.

Carter afirmou que será uma «tragédia» se as negociações fracassarem, acrescentando que «precisamos (deste acordo) rapidamente», para «dar certezas» ao comando militar.

Barack Obama comprometeu-se a pôr termo à presença militar americana no Afeganistão até ao fim de 2014, mas propôs a manutenção de um contingente reduzido no país.

Assim, pergunta-se à Alta Representante:

— Como avalia as declarações de Ash Carter?

— Considera viável e desejável a conclusão deste acordo?

— Quais poderiam ser as consequências para as populações afegãs e para a estabilidade da região de uma retirada total das forças norte-americanas e suas aliadas?

— Contactou os governos norte-americano e afegão a este propósito? Que respostas obteve?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(29 de novembro de 2013)

De acordo com os compromissos assumidos pela comunidade internacional nas conferências de Bona (2011), Chicago e Tóquio (2012), a União Europeia apoia o atual processo de transição no Afeganistão, incluindo a redução da Força Internacional de Assistência à Segurança da NATO e o destacamento de uma missão de acompanhamento da transferência integral da responsabilidade pela segurança nesse país para as forças de segurança afegãs.

A conclusão do acordo bilateral de segurança EUA-Afeganistão continua a ser um pré-requisito para uma transição bem sucedida. A UE tem conhecimento das declarações do Secretário-Adjunto do Departamento de Defesa dos EUA, Ashton Carter, e da declaração do Secretário de Estado dos EUA, John Kerry, de 12 de outubro que exprimem uma «elevada confiança» de que o «povo afegão», através dos seus representantes no Loya Jirga, «reconheçam as vantagens do acordo» e o aprovem.

Há uma ligação clara entre o desenvolvimento e a segurança e entre a resolução de conflitos e a capacidade da UE para fomentar a mudança económica e social. Por conseguinte, a obtenção de melhorias adicionais em matéria de segurança, em paralelo com o aprofundamento da cooperação regional e a prossecução de um processo de paz inclusivo e conduzido pelos afegãos, serão fatores essenciais para o êxito do apoio a longo prazo da UE ao reforço das capacidades e ao desenvolvimento.

A UE aborda regularmente questões políticas e de segurança no quadro do seu diálogo com o Governo afegão e os Governos dos países parceiros que apoiam o Afeganistão, incluindo os Estados Unidos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011500/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — post-2014 US-Afghan Agreement

The US Deputy Defence Secretary, Ash Carter, recently stated that Washington and Kabul needed to reach an agreement 'soon' on the presence of US troops in Afghanistan after 2014.

Mr Carter stated that it would be a 'tragedy' were negotiations to fail, adding that 'we need (this agreement) soon', in order to 'provide certainty' to military commanders.

Barack Obama has undertaken to wind up the United States' military presence in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, but has proposed keeping a smaller contingent in the country.

— What is the High Representative's view of Ash Carter's statements?

— Does she think it is feasible and desirable to conclude this agreement?

— What consequences could a total withdrawal of US forces and its allies have for the Afghan people and for stability in the region?

— Has she contacted the US and Afghan Governments in this regard? What answers has she received?

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

In line with the commitments made by the international community at the conferences in Bonn (2011), Chicago and Tokyo (2012) the European Union supports the current transition process in Afghanistan, including the draw-down of NATO's International Security Assistance Force and the deployment of a follow-on mission accompanying the full transfer of responsibility for security in that country to Afghan security forces.

The finalisation of the bilateral US-Afghan bilateral security agreement remains a prerequisite for a successful transition. The EU is aware of US Deputy Defense Secretary's Ashton Carter's statements and of US Secretary of State John Kerry's statement of 12 October expressing 'high confidence', that the 'people of Afghanistan', through their representatives in the Loya Jirga, 'will see the benefits that exist in the agreement' and approve it.

There is an obvious link between development and security, and between conflict resolution and EU's ability to stimulate economic and social change. Thus, further improvements of the security situation, in tandem with deepened regional cooperation and an inclusive, Afghan-led, peace process will be essential factors for the success of the EU's long-term support to capacity-building and development.

The EU raises political and security issues regularly in dialogue with the Afghan government and the governments of partner countries engaged in Afghanistan, including the United States.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011501/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Banco Mundial: paralisia orçamental dos EUA ameaça países pobres

O presidente do Banco Mundial declarou recentemente a sua extrema preocupação devido à incerteza orçamental nos Estados Unidos da América e à consequente paralisação do seu governo.

Para Jim Yong Kim, «esta incerteza, associada a outras fontes de volatilidade na economia mundial, poderá causar graves prejuízos aos mercados emergentes e em desenvolvimento na África, Ásia e América Latina».

O Fundo Monetário Internacional também afirmou ser importante uma solução rápida para o bloqueio nos Estados Unidos, para que este não afete a recuperação do país e a economia mundial.

Assim, pergunta-se à Alta Representante:

— Como avalia as consequências externas para a ajuda e a cooperação internacionais que esta paralisação acarretará?

— Considera que a mesma é de molde a colocar efetivamente em risco a ajuda a países e populações carenciadas?

— Poderá a União Europeia ajudar a suprir alguma dessas situações se tal se vier a revelar necessário?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(29 de novembro de 2013)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento de qualquer impacto imediato decorrente da «paralisação» do Governo dos EUA e dos debates orçamentais sobre a ajuda ao desenvolvimento ou outra forma de assistência atualmente concedida por esse país, dado que a atual ajuda dos Estados Unidos já foi aprovada, geralmente numa base plurianual. Contudo, o «congelamento orçamental» reduziu o financiamento global para o Departamento de Estado e a Agência para o Desenvolvimento Internacional dos EUA em cerca de 2,0 mil milhões de USD no exercício orçamental de 2013, 399 milhões de USD para operações de Estado e 1,55 mil milhões de USD para a assistência externa. A UE continuará a seguir com a maior atenção os debates orçamentais dos EUA, incluindo no que se refere às possíveis repercussões sobre a assistência internacional concedida pelos EUA.

O financiamento disponível a favor da cooperação para o desenvolvimento da UE é determinado pelo quadro financeiro plurianual e pelo orçamento anual da UE, bem como pelo orçamento do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, e não depende, em princípio, dos fundos afetados ao desenvolvimento por outros países terceiros, incluindo os EUA. A possibilidade de a UE fazer face a situações específicas decorrentes dos impactos da situação orçamental dos EUA sobre a sua assistência a países terceiros terá de ser examinada numa base casuística.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011501/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — World Bank: US budgetary stalemate threatens poor countries

The President of the World Bank recently expressed his serious concern over the budgetary uncertainty in the US and its government coming to a standstill as a result.

According to Jim Yong Kim, 'this uncertainty, combined with other sources of volatility in the global economy, could do great damage to emerging markets and developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America'.

The International Monetary Fund has also stated that it is vital to find a solution to the deadlock in the United States soon, so that it does not affect the country's recovery and the global economy.

— What external consequences for international aid and cooperation does the High Representative think that this stalemate will have?

— Does she think that it is likely to jeopardise aid for countries and people in need?

— If it were necessary, could the European Union help to address some of these situations, were it necessary?

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

The Commission is not aware of any immediate impact of the US Government 'shutdown' and budgetary discussions on development or other assistance currently provided by that country, since current US assistance has already been approved, usually on a multiannual basis. However, the 'sequester' has reduced overall funding for the Department of State and the US Agency for International Development by close to USD 2.0 billion in the fiscal year 2013, USD 399 million for State Operations and USD 1.55 billion for Foreign Assistance. The EU will continue following US budgetary discussions with utmost attention, including as regards possible repercussions on international assistance provided by the US.

The funding available for EU development cooperation is determined by the multiannual financial framework and the annual EU budget as well as the budget for the European Development Fund, and does not depend, in principle, on the funds allocated to development by other third countries, including the US. The possibility for the EU to address specific situations resulting from impacts of the US budgetary situation on its assistance to third countries would need to be examined on a case by case basis.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011502/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Exportação de químicos para a Síria por parte de Estados ocidentais

O Governo alemão admitiu recentemente ter autorizado a exportação para a Síria de 360 toneladas de produtos que podem ser usados no fabrico de armas químicas, entre 1998 e 2011.

Por seu turno, o regime de Bashar al-Assad acusa os países ocidentais de fornecerem produtos tóxicos a grupos de oposição.

Assim, pergunto à Alta Representante:

— Tem conhecimento de que mais países europeus forneceram produtos químicos suscetíveis de serem utilizados na fabricação de armas químicas?

— Dispõe de informações quanto ao eventual fornecimento de produtos químicos à oposição síria por países ocidentais e, em particular, por Estados-Membros da UE?

Resposta dada por Karel De Gucht em nome da Comissão
(22 de novembro de 2013)

A Comissão observa que o Regulamento (CE) n.° 428/2009 prevê um regime de controlo das exportações de produtos químicos de dupla utilização que podem ser utilizados para a produção de armas químicas.

A Comissão está ciente de que alguns Estados-Membros autorizaram, no passado, a exportação de produtos químicos de dupla utilização para empresas sírias de vários setores civis, incluindo os setores dos metais, do vidro e da joalharia. A Comissão sublinha que foram emitidas autorizações de exportação pelas autoridades nacionais competentes após um exame aprofundado de todos os riscos envolvidos, incluindo o risco de proliferação, e, consequentemente, com base nas informações de que os produtos seriam utilizados para fins civis.

A Comissão não tem conhecimento de que os produtos exportados tenham, entretanto, sido utilizados para qualquer outro efeito que não sejam os fins civis indicados no pedido, e não dispõe de quaisquer informações relativas ao alegado fornecimento de substâncias químicas à oposição síria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011502/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Export of chemicals to Syria by Western states

The German Government recently admitted that, between 1998 and 2011, it had authorised the export to Syria of 360 tonnes of products that can be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons.

For its part, Bashar al-Assad's regime accuses Western countries of supplying toxic products to opposition groups.

— Is the High Representative aware of any other European countries having supplied chemicals that could be used to manufacture chemical weapons?

— Does she have any information on whether Western countries and, in particular, EU Member States have supplied chemicals to the Syrian opposition?

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

The Commission notes that regulation (EC) No 428/2009 provides for controls on the export of dual-use chemicals that can be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons.

The Commission is aware that some Member States have in the past authorised the export of dual-use chemicals to Syrian enterprises from various civilian sectors, including the metal, glass and jewellery sector. The Commission notes that the export licences were issued by national competent authorities after a thorough review of all the risks involved, including the risk of proliferation, and thus based on the information that the goods were to be used for civilian purposes.

The Commission is not aware that the exported goods have in the meantime been used for anything other than the civilian purposes indicated in the application, and has no information regarding alleged supply of chemicals to the Syrian opposition.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011503/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: proposta timorense de adiamento de eleições

O primeiro-ministro de Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão, recomendou que as eleições na Guiné-Bissau sejam feitas no próximo ano de modo a que possa ter lugar um recenseamento eleitoral credível. Para Xanana Gusmão, «materialmente é impossível fazer-se eleições antes do fim do ano».

Assim, pergunto à Alta Representante:

— Considera possível e desejável a realização de eleições na Guiné-Bissau em novembro do presente ano tal como previamente determinado ou acredita que o processo de transição e estabilização do país poderia beneficiar do adiamento proposto?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente apoia firmemente a prossecução dos esforços da Cedeao ([1]), das Nações Unidas, da União Africana, da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa e de todos aqueles que lutam por uma transição pacífica a concluir o mais rapidamente possível, através de eleições inclusivas e credíveis, a fim de criar os alicerces para uma democracia estável e pacífica na Guiné-Bissau. A este respeito, a AR/VP aguarda com expectativa o anúncio do calendário eleitoral, como prometido pelas autoridades de transição.

([1]) Comunidade Económica dos Estados da África Ocidental.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011503/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: East Timorese proposal to postpone elections

The Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão, has recommended that the elections in Guinea-Bissau be held next year so that a credible census can be conducted. According to Xanana Gusmão, it is materially impossible to hold the elections before the end of the year.

Does the High Representative think it is possible and desirable to hold elections in Guinea Bissau in November 2013, as previously decided, or does she believe that the country's transition and stabilisation process could benefit from the proposed delay?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President firmly supports the continued efforts of Ecowas ([1]), the United Nations, the African Union and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, and all those who strive for a peaceful transition to be concluded as soon as possible through inclusive and credible elections, in order to create the foundations of a stable and peaceful democracy in Guinea Bissau. In that respect, the HR/VP looks forward to the announcement of the electoral calendar as promised by the transition authorities.

([1]) Economic Community of West African States.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011504/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Pedido de ajuda de Cabo Verde: — sensibilização das comunidades para a vacina contra a rubéola e o sarampo

Cabo Verde pediu recentemente aos parceiros do país que ajudem as autoridades sanitárias locais na sensibilização das respetivas comunidades a vacinarem-se na campanha contra a rubéola e o sarampo. A campanha visará uma cobertura da vacina de 95 por cento da população entre os nove meses e os 25 anos.

Assim, pergunta-se à Alta Representante:

— Está a União Europeia disposta a responder positivamente ao pedido cabo-verdiano?

— Através de que meios humanos e materiais?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(27 de novembro de 2013)

Em 2 de outubro de 2013, o Ministro da Saúde de Cabo Verde encontrou-se com representantes da comunidade diplomática, na cidade da Praia, Cabo Verde, incluindo a delegação da UE, e informou-os de que entre 14 e 23 de outubro de 2013 seria realizada uma campanha de vacinação contra o sarampo e a rubéola apoiada pela Unicef, a OMS e o Gabinete das Nações Unidas.

Como o ministro da saúde não solicitou a assistência da UE na vacinação contra o sarampo e a rubéola, a UE não poderá aceder ao pedido de Cabo Verde. Esse pedido foi dirigida à Unicef, à OMS e ao Gabinete das Nações Unidas em Cabo Verde.

O Ministro da Saúde afirmou claramente que não era necessário apoio complementar e que Cabo Verde, com o apoio das referidas organizações internacionais, dispunha dos meios técnicos e humanos necessários para levar a afeito esta campanha. O Ministro não fez qualquer novo pedido à UE. O único pedido que o Ministro apresentou aos representantes das embaixadas presentes nesta reunião era o aumento da sensibilização dos seus residentes para a importância de serem vacinados.

Nesse momento, a campanha de vacinação está terminada e o Ministério da Saúde informou que 95,07 % da população-alvo tinha sido vacinada. Por conseguinte, o objetivo da campanha de vacinação, ou seja, vacinar 95 % da população com idades compreendidas entre os 9 meses e os 25 anos, foi alcançado com êxito. Assim, a UE não poderá conceder qualquer apoio a esta campanha .

O principal canal da UE para a vacinação, incluindo a vacinação contra o sarampo e a rubéola, é a sua contribuição para a Aliança Mundial para as Vacinas e a Imunização (Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunization — GAVI). Contudo, Cabo Verde não é elegível para a GAVI, uma vez que o seu RNB per capita é superior a 1 500 dólares americanos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011504/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Cape Verde's request for assistance: raising awareness among communities of vaccination against rubella and measles

Cape Verde recently asked its partners to help its local health authorities raise awareness among their respective communities of vaccination in the campaign against rubella and measles. The campaign will aim to vaccinate 95% of the population aged between 9 months and 25 years.

— Is the European Union prepared to grant Cape Verde's request?

— With what human and material resources?

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

On 2 October 2013, the Minister of Health of Cape Verde met representatives of the diplomatic community in Praia, Cape Verde, including the EU Delegation, and informed them that a vaccination campaign against rubella and measles supported by the Unicef, WHO and the UN's office was going to be conducted between 14 and 23 October 2013.

As the Minister of Health did not request the EU to provide assistance in the field of vaccination against rubella and measles, the EU could not grant Cape Verde's request. This request was addressed to Unicef, WHO and the UN's office in Cape Verde.

The Minister of Health clearly stated that complementary support was not required and that Cape Verde, with the support of the abovementioned International Organisations, had the necessary human and technical means to carry out this campaign. The Minister did not make any further request to the EU. The only request that the Minister addressed to the representatives of the Embassies present at this meeting was to raise awareness among their residents about the importance of being vaccinated.

At this moment, the vaccination campaign has been completed and the Ministry of Health has stated that 95.07% of the target population was vaccinated. Therefore, the aim of the campaign, namely to vaccinate 95% of the population aged between 9 months and 25 years, was successfully achieved. Thus, the EU will not be able to grant this campaign any assistance.

The EU's main channel for vaccination, including measles and rubella, is the contribution to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI). However, Cape Verde is not eligible to GAVI because its GNI per capita is above USD 1 500.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011506/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: Comissão de Verdade e Reconciliação

O primeiro-ministro de Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão, propôs recentemente a criação de uma Comissão de Verdade e Reconciliação na Guiné-Bissau à semelhança da estabelecida no seu próprio país após a independência.

Assim, pergunto à Alta Representante:

— Que avaliação faz da proposta de Xanana Gusmão?

— Crê que a Guiné-Bissau beneficiaria do estabelecimento de um organismo desse teor e que o mesmo poderia ter condições efetivas de atuação?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(9 de dezembro de 2013)

A AR/VP considera que o retorno da Guiné-Bissau à ordem constitucional, mediante a rápida realização de eleições credíveis e a execução das reformas necessárias, nomeadamente nos setores da segurança, da justiça e da administração, continua a ser uma prioridade para o país.

A AR/VP está persuadida de que é igualmente importante lutar contra a impunidade e promover a reconciliação nacional na tentativa de estabelecer uma democracia estável e pacífica. Logo que se realizem as eleições e um novo Governo legítimo tenha tomado posse, a UE irá estudar a melhor forma de apoiar os esforços de reconstrução e reconciliação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011506/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão, recently proposed setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Guinea-Bissau, like the one set up in his own country after it gained independence.

— What is the High Representative's assessment of Xanana Gusmão's proposal?

— Does she think that Guinea-Bissau would benefit from setting up a body of this kind and that it could have the actual conditions for taking action?

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

The HR/VP considers that the return of Guinea Bissau to the constitutional order through early credible elections and the implementation of required reforms, notably in the security, justice and administration sectors, remains a priority for the country.

The HR/VP believes it is also important to fight impunity and to promote national reconciliation in the quest for a stable and peaceful democracy. Once the elections have taken place and a new legitimate government is in place, the EU will consider how best to provide support to the reconstruction and reconciliation efforts.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011507/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: proposta de Serifo Nhamadjo

O presidente de transição da Guiné-Bissau anunciou que irá solicitar à Comunidade Económica dos Estados da África Ocidental (Cedeao) que impeça a participação dos membros do governo transitório nas eleições gerais. No entender de Nhamadjo, alguns dos atrasos que se verificam no processo de transição devem-se ao facto de alguns membros do executivo transitório já se terem perfilado para concorrer às eleições legislativas.

Serifo Nhamadjo já admitiu que as eleições gerais poderão ser adiadas devido aos atrasos nos preparativos para as mesmas.

Assim, pergunto à Alta Representante:

— Como avalia a proposta de Serifo Nhamadjo e a sua avaliação da situação política guineense?

— Confirma a existência de atrasos no processo de transição?

— Crê que estes serão de molde a impedir a realização das eleições para o dia aprazado?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(6 de dezembro de 2013)

A AR/VP continua preocupada com a situação política e de segurança na Guiné-Bissau, designadamente com as tensões sociais e os atos de intimidação por parte dos militares, a deterioração da situação económica a financeira e o adiamento das eleições.

A AR/VP e a União Europeia apoiam firmemente a prossecução dos esforços envidados pela Cedeao, a ONU, a União Africana e a Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa, bem como por todos aqueles que operam em favor de uma transição pacífica com vista à realização, o mais rapidamente possível, de eleições inclusivas e credíveis que permitam criar as bases de uma democracia estável e pacífica na Guiné-Bissau.

Neste contexto, a AR/VP anota o anúncio feito pelo Governo de transição de uma nova data para as eleições — 16 de março de 2014 — e apela à cooperação estreita entre as autoridades de transição, os partidos políticos e os organismos envolvidos na realização das eleições para que não se verifiquem mais atrasos. A UE já deu uma contribuição de 2 milhões de euros para apoiar o processo eleitoral.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011507/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: proposal by Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo

The interim President of Guinea-Bissau has announced that he will ask the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) to prevent members of the transitional government from participating in the general elections. According to Mr Nhamadjo, some of the delays that have occurred in the transition process are due to the fact that some members of the transitional government have already positioned themselves to stand in the parliamentary elections.

Mr Nhamadjo has admitted that the general elections could be postponed because of delays in preparing for them.

— What is the High Representative's view of Mr Nhamadjo's proposal and of the political situation in Guinea-Bissau?

— Can she confirm that there are delays in the transition process?

— Does she believe they will prevent the elections being held on the appointed day?

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

The HR/VP remains concerned with the political and security situation in Guinea Bissau, including the social tension and intimidation by the military, the deterioration of the economic and financial situation and the postponement of elections.

The HR/VP and the European Union firmly supports the continuing efforts by Ecowas, UN, African Union and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, and all those who are working for a peaceful transition to conclude as soon as possible inclusive and credible elections, in order to create the foundations of a stable and peaceful democracy in Guinea Bissau.

In that respect, the HR/VP notes the announcement, by the transitional government, of a new election date — 16 March 2014 — and calls on the transitional authorities, the political parties and the election bodies to work together to ensure that there are no further delays. The EU has already made a contribution of EUR 2 million in support of the electoral process.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011508/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Ativação de reator nuclear norte-coreano

O Instituto EUA-Coreia da Johns Hopkins University indicou recentemente que terão surgido provas de que o reator norte-coreano de Yongbyon havia retomado as operações. Esta reativação coloca evidentes riscos para a paz na região e não pode deixar de preocupar a União Europeia.

Assim, pergunta-se à Alta Representante:

— Está em condições de confirmar esta notícia?

— Como a avalia?

— Contactou as autoridades norte e sul-coreanas a propósito desta questão? Que respostas obteve?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(4 de dezembro de 2013)

A AR/VP está ao corrente das informações recentemente transmitidas que sugerem o reatamento das atividades nas instalações nucleares de Yongbyon. Não é possível confirmar a alegada reativação do reator 5 MW, uma vez que não se pode proceder a uma avaliação completa sem inspetores no terreno.

A UE continua a estar muito empenhada na plena aplicação de todas as resoluções pertinentes do Conselho de Segurança da ONU, que, entre outras condições, exigem que a República Popular Democrática da Coreia (RPDC) abandone completamente todas as armas nucleares e os programas nucleares existentes de forma verificável e irreversível. Defender o regime internacional de não proliferação é de grande importância para a UE.

Nos seus contactos com a RPDC e outros países, a UE tem levantado repetidamente e de modo consistente esta questão, bem como salientado a necessidade de a RPDC participar em conversações credíveis sobre a desnuclearização, em que estejam presentes seis partes. A UE acompanha de perto a situação e tem realizado consultas com a República da Coreia e ainda com outros parceiros estratégicos nesta e noutras regiões.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011508/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Activation of the North Korean nuclear reactor

The US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University recently stated that evidence has emerged showing that the North Korean Yongbyon reactor had been put back into operation. This reactivation clearly jeopardises peace in the region and must be a cause for concern for the European Union.

— Can the High Representative confirm this news?

— What is her assessment of it?

— Has she contacted the North and South Korean authorities about this matter? What answers has she received?

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

The VP/HR is aware of the recenlty issued reports suggesting renewed activities at the Yongbyon nuclear facilities. Confirmation of the alleged reactivation of the 5MW reactor is not possible since a full assessment can not be made without inspectors on the ground.

The EU remains strongly committed to the full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions which *inter alia* require that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. Upholding the international non-proliferation regime is of great importance to the EU.

In its contacts with the DPRK and other countries, the EU consistently and repeatedly raises this issue and underlines the need for the DPRK to engage in credible talks on denuclearisation within the 6-party format. The EU closely monitors the situation and consults with the Republic of Korea, as well as other strategic partners in the region and beyond.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011510/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Bactérias multirresistentes: problema de saúde pública

Por toda a Europa é conhecida a existência de bactérias multirresistentes que, em particular nas unidas de saúde, colocam em risco a vida e a saúde dos cidadãos. É apontada como uma das possíveis causas para a resistência e sobrevivência destes micro-organismos a sua exposição excessiva a antibióticos em virtude da prescrição nem sempre justificada dos mesmos por parte dos clínicos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Está atenta aos riscos inerentes à crescente resistência de alguns organismos que, em particular nas unidades de saúde, colocam sérios riscos à saúde dos cidadãos?

— Acompanha a sua evolução? De que modo?

— Quais considera serem os principais riscos a temer e quais as melhores soluções para os precaver a nível europeu?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(21 de novembro de 2013)

A Comissão congratula-se de participar na luta contra a resistência antimicrobiana e tem plena consciência dos riscos inerentes para a saúde pública.

Neste contexto, a Comissão prossegue com o seu pormenorizado plano de ação de 2011 sobre a resistência antimicrobiana ([1]) com iniciativas concretas para favorecer o uso adequado dos antibióticos, prevenir as infeções microbianas e a sua propagação, desenvolver novos agentes antimicrobianos eficazes e cooperar com parceiros internacionais.

Além disso, o plano de ação prevê ações horizontais na área da monitorização e da vigilância, da investigação e da inovação, da comunicação, da educação e da formação. A vigilância da resistência antimicrobiana na Europa está sob a responsabilidade do Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças (CEPCD) ao abrigo da legislação da UE sobre doenças transmissíveis. O Sistema Europeu de Vigilância da Resistência aos Antimicrobianos proporciona dados sobre a resistência em oito bactérias patogénicas com importância para a saúde pública na totalidade dos 28 Estados-Membros da UE. Os dados estão acessíveis através de uma base de dados interativa gerida pelo CEPCD através da ligação indicada infra ([2]).

Estão ainda a ser publicados inquéritos *ad hoc* a fim de monitorizar a situação, por exemplo o inquérito europeu sobre as enterobactérias produtoras de carbapenemase. No início deste ano, o CEPCD também publicou o seu primeiro estudo de prevalência pontual relativo a infeções relacionadas com os cuidados de saúde e à utilização de agentes antimicrobianos nos hospitais de cuidados agudos em 2011-2012.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/docs/communication_amr_2011_748_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/antimicrobial_resistance/database/Pages/database.aspx

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011510/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Multi-resistant bacteria: a public health issue

The existence of multi-resistant bacteria, which put people's lives and health at risk, particularly in hospitals and health-centres, is known throughout Europe. One of the possible causes for the resistance and survival of these microorganisms is over-exposure to antibiotics prescribed by doctors — not always justifiably.

— Is the Commission aware of the inherent risks of the increasing resistance of certain organisms which, particularly in health centres, pose serious risks to public health?

— Is it monitoring developments? If so, how?

— What does it think are the main risks and what are the best solutions to guard against them in Europe?

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

The Commission is keen to help fight against antimicrobial resistance and is fully aware of the inherent risks that it poses to public health.

In this context, the Commission is pursuing its 2011 comprehensive Action Plan to address antimicrobial resistance ([1]) with concrete initiatives to favour the appropriate use of antibiotics, prevent microbial infections and their spread, develop new effective antimicrobials, and to cooperate with international partners.

Furthermore, the action plan foresees horizontal actions in the area of monitoring and surveillance, research and innovation, communication, education and training. Surveillance of antimicrobial resistance in Europe is under the responsibility of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), on the basis of EU legislation on communicable diseases. The European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network provides data on resistance in eight bacterial pathogens of public health importance in all 28 EU Member States. Data are available from an interactive database hosted by ECDC under the below link ([2]).

In addition, ad-hoc surveys to monitor the situation are being published, for example the European Survey on Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae. Earlier this year, the ECDC also published its first point prevalence survey of healthcare-associated infections and anti-microbial use in acute care hospitals in 2011-2012.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/docs/communication_amr_2011_748_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/antimicrobial_resistance/database/Pages/database.aspx

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011511/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Retirada dos isqueiros dos automóveis

A Hyundai Motors anunciou que vai retirar dos veículos para o mercado sul-coreano a tomada de isqueiro e que a irá substituir por um ponto de energia USB.

Esta medida conduzirá a que diversos equipamentos mais antigos, entre os quais telemóveis e GPS, que ainda não tenham entrada USB, deixem de poder ser carregados dentro dos veículos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Como avalia esta decisão da Hyundai?

— Advoga que a mesma seja adotada pelos demais construtores automóveis e aplicável àUnião Europeia? Com que fundamento?

Resposta dada por Antonio Tajani em nome da Comissão
(19 de novembro de 2013)

Dentro dos limites da legislação em vigor, cabe aos fabricantes de veículos equipar ou não os seus produtos com determinados acessórios.

A Comissão gostaria de sublinhar que a legislação europeia relativa à homologação de veículos a motor, que estabelece requisitos que os veículos a motor têm de cumprir para ser colocados no mercado europeu, não exige que os veículos a motor sejam equipados com uma tomada de isqueiro para cigarros. Por conseguinte, a Comissão não pode exprimir um parecer sobre a decisão da Hyundai ou a questão de saber se outros fabricantes automóveis devem seguir a mesma orientação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011511/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Removal of cigarette lighters from cars

Hyundai Motors has announced that it is to remove the cigarette lighter socket from vehicles for the South Korean market and replace it with a USB power socket.

This measure will mean that older equipment, including mobile phones and GPS devices, which still do not have a USB port, will no longer be able to be charged in cars.

— What does the Commission's think of Hyundai's decision?

— Does it think that it should be adopted by other car manufacturers and apply in the European Union? On what grounds?

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

Within the limits of existing legislation, it is up to the vehicle manufacturers to equip their products with certain features or not.

The Commission would like to underline that European type approval legislation for motor vehicles, laying down the requirements such vehicles have to meet in order to be put on the European market, does not require motor vehicles to be equipped with a cigarette lighter socket. Consequently, the Commission cannot express any views on the decision of Hyundai or the question whether other car manufacturers should follow that same line.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011512/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Envelhecimento ativo e sustentado

Segundo dados recentemente divulgados pelas Nações Unidas, a Suécia é o país que melhor gere o envelhecimento da sua população. Na lista dos 10 países que melhor respondem a semelhante desafio estão também os Países Baixos, o Canadá, a Suíça, a Nova Zelândia, os Estados Unidos, a Islândia e o Japão.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Atendendo a que são europeus 2 dos 11 países que melhor são capazes de lidar com o fenómeno do envelhecimento populacional, a União Europeia tem de alguma forma procurado retirar ensinamentos das suas experiências e identificar as melhores práticas neles aplicadas?

— De que formas?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(27 de novembro de 2013)

A Comissão apoia os esforços no sentido de melhorar as condições de vida das pessoas idosas em domínios como as pensões, a saúde e os cuidados de longo prazo, o emprego, as tecnologias da informação e da comunicação, a luta contra a discriminação, a educação de adultos e os transportes ([1]), nomeadamente através do apoio ao desenvolvimento de soluções inovadoras ([2]). O denominado Pacote de Investimento Social, recentemente apresentado, proporciona orientações sobre a adaptação aos desafios colocados por uma população em envelhecimento em tempos de limitações orçamentais, a fim de manter serviços sociais e de cuidados de saúde que sejam adequados e sustentáveis ([3]).

A Parceria Europeia para a Inovação no domínio do Envelhecimento Ativo e Saudável ([4]) pretende responder ao desafio do envelhecimento demográfico com melhor saúde e qualidade de vida para os mais velhos, e também com oportunidades para sistemas e empresas de saúde e cuidados. O trabalho da parceria evidencia boas práticas inovadoras e inclui um sistema de apadrinhamento de regiões e organizações que pretendam implementar soluções fiáveis.

A atenção dedicada às condições de envelhecimento atingiu o seu auge em 2012, Ano Europeu do Envelhecimento Ativo e da Solidariedade entre as Gerações. Este Ano Europeu mobilizou as partes interessadas no sentido de criar melhores oportunidades para o envelhecimento ativo ([5]) e, ao mesmo tempo, resultou também no desenvolvimento e numa melhor monitorização das práticas a favor de um envelhecimento ativo.

Os Princípios Orientadores para o Envelhecimento Ativo e a Solidariedade entre as Gerações contêm uma lista de controlo para as autoridades nacionais e as partes interessadas sobre o que deve ser feito. O Índice de Envelhecimento Ativo reflete o potencial desaproveitado de uma participação ativa na sociedade por parte das pessoas mais velhas ([6]). Os países podem usar este índice para definir objetivos e acompanhar os progressos. A Comissão produziu igualmente, em cooperação com a OCDE, publicações que comparam os países da UE, como *Pensions at a Glance* (as pensões em síntese) e *Health at a Glance* (panorama da saúde) ([7]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6920&type=2&furtherPubs=yes
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=home
([5]) http://europa.eu/ey2012/
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1837&furtherNews=yes
([7]) http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/HealthAtAGlanceEurope2012.pdf e http://www.oecd.org/els/public-pensions/pensionsataglance.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011512/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Active and supported ageing

According to recent data from the United Nations, Sweden is the country that best looks after its ageing population. The Netherlands, Canada, Switzerland, New Zealand, the United States, Iceland and Japan appear among the top 10 countries that best meet the same challenge.

— Since only 2 of the 11 countries that are best equipped to deal with an ageing population are EU Member States, has the European Union sought in some way to draw lessons from its experiences and to identify the best practices applied in them?

— How?

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

The Commission is supporting efforts to improve conditions for older people in areas such as pensions, health and long-term care, employment, ICT, antidiscrimination, adult education and transport ([1]) including via support for the deployment of innovative solutions ([2]). The recent Social Investment Package provides guidance on how to adapt to the challenges of an ageing society in times of limited public budgets, to maintain adequate and sustainable social and healthcare services ([3]).

The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing ([4]) aims to turn the challenge of demographic ageing into better health and quality of life for older people, as well as opportunity for health and care systems and businesses. The work of the Partnership showcases innovative good practices and features a coaching scheme for regions and organisations looking for implementation of proven solutions.

Attention to ageing conditions reached a high point during the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012. While mobilising stakeholders to create better opportunities for active ageing ([5]), this European Year also resulted in the development and better monitoring of ageing practices.

The Guiding principles for active ageing and solidarity between generations provide a checklist for national authorities and stakeholders on what needs doing. The Active Ageing Index captures the untapped potential of older people for active participation in society ([6]). Countries can use it to set targets and monitor progress. The Commission has also produced in cooperation with the OECD publications comparing EU countries such as 'Pensions at a Glance' and 'Health at a Glance' ([7]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=6920&type=2&furtherPubs=yes
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=active-healthy-ageing&pg=home
([5]) http://europa.eu/ey2012/
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1837&furtherNews=yes
([7]) http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/HealthAtAGlanceEurope2012.pdf and http://www.oecd.org/els/public-pensions/pensionsataglance.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011513/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Urso pardo: risco de extinção

O urso pardo é uma das espécies europeias mais ameaçadas de extinção.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia de alguma forma programas ou projetos destinados à sua preservação?

2. De que forma?

3. E com que resultados?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011515/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Lobo ibérico: risco de extinção

O lobo ibérico é uma das espécies europeias mais ameaçadas de extinção.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia de alguma forma programas ou projetos destinados à sua preservação?

2. De que forma?

3. E com que resultados?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011516/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Lince ibérico: risco de extinção

O lince ibérico é uma das espécies europeias mais ameaçadas de extinção.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia de alguma forma programas ou projetos destinados à sua preservação?

2. De que forma?

3. E com que resultados?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011517/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Morcego de Bechstein: risco de extinção

Foi recentemente identificada na Tapada de Mafra, em Portugal, uma colónia de morcegos de Bechstein, espécie em perigo de extinção e que não era avistada há mais de dez anos neste país.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia de alguma forma programas ou projetos destinados à sua preservação?

2. De que forma?

3. E com que resultados?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011518/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Lontra: risco de extinção

A lontra é uma das espécies europeias mais ameaçadas de extinção.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia de alguma forma programas ou projetos destinados à sua preservação?

2. De que forma?

3. E com que resultados?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011526/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Águia real: risco de extinção

A águia real é uma das espécies europeias mais ameaçadas de extinção.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Apoia de alguma forma programas ou projetos destinados à sua preservação?

2. De que forma?

3. E com que resultados?

Resposta conjunta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(28 de novembro de 2013)

A espécie referida pelo Senhor Deputado é estritamente protegida, em conformidade com as disposições da Diretiva Habitats ([1]), enquanto a águia real, como todas as aves selvagens, beneficia do regime geral de proteção estabelecido ao abrigo da Diretiva Aves ([2]).

Nessa base, a Comissão apoiou financeiramente, nomeadamente através dos programas LIFE e LIFE+, um grande número de projetos para a realização de ações concretas destinadas a melhorar o estado de conservação destas espécies. Podem ser obtidas informações pormenorizadas sobre estes projetos e os seus resultados na base de dados LIFE que pode ser consultada no endereço ([3]). Além disso, recentes publicações específicas do programa LIFE apresentam os resultados agregados respeitantes a grandes carnívoros ([4]), mamíferos ([5]), incluindo o lince ibérico, o urso pardo, o lobo, a lontra, morcegos, e aves ([6]). Algumas das espécies antes mencionadas também beneficiaram de atividades cofinanciadas através de outros fundos comunitários, como o Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional e o Fundo Europeu Agrícola de Desenvolvimento Rural.

Além disso, a Comissão, juntamente com os Estados-Membros e em cooperação com o Acordo sobre a conservação das populações de morcegos europeus UNEP/Eurobats está atualmente a desenvolver um plano de ação para as 44 espécies de quirópteros abrangidas pelo anexo IV da Diretiva Habitats. Esse documento, que ficará concluído em 2014, vai ajudar os Estados-Membros no intercâmbio de informações e de boas práticas sobre a melhor forma de aplicar medidas destinadas a preservar a fauna europeia de quirópteros.

([1]) JO L 206 de 22.7.1992, Diretiva 92/43/CEE, de 21 de maio de 1992, relativa à preservação dos habitats naturais e da fauna e da flora selvagens.
([2]) JO L 20 de 26.1.2010, Diretiva 2009/147/CE, de 30 de novembro de 2009, relativa à conservação das aves selvagens.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/flippingbook/carnivores/index.html
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/mammals.pdf
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/flippingbook/habitats-for-birds/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011513/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Brown bear facing extinction

The brown bear is one of the most endangered species in Europe.

1. Does the Commission provide any support for brown bear conservation programmes or projects?

2. How?

3. What have been the results?

Question for written answer E-011515/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Iberian wolf facing extinction

The Iberian wolf is one of the most endangered species in Europe.

1. Does the Commission provide any support for Iberian wolf conservation programmes or projects?

2. How?

3. What have been the results?

Question for written answer E-011516/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Iberian lynx facing extinction

The Iberian lynx is one of the most endangered species in Europe.

1. Does the Commission provide any support for Iberian lynx conservation programmes or projects?

2. How?

3. What have been the results?

Question for written answer E-011517/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Bechstein's bat facing extinction

A colony of Bechstein's bats, an endangered species that has not been sighted in the country for over 10 years, was recently identified in Tapada de Mafra, Portugal.

1. Does the Commission provide any support for Bechstein's bat conservation programmes or projects?

2. How?

3. What have been the results?

Question for written answer E-011518/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Otters facing extinction

The otter is one of the most endangered species in Europe.

1. Does the Commission provide any support for otter conservation programmes or projects?

2. How?

3. What have been the results?

Question for written answer E-011526/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Golden eagle facing extinction

The golden eagle is one of the most endangered species in Europe.

1. Does the Commission provide any support for golden eagle conservation programmes or projects?

2. How?

3. What have been the results?

Joint answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

The non-bird species referred to by the Honourable Member are strictly protected in accordance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive ([1]), while the golden eagle, as all wild birds, benefits from the general system of protection established under the Birds Directive ([2]).

On that basis the Commission has supported financially, namely through the LIFE and LIFE+ programmes, a large number of projects implementing concrete actions to improve the conservation status of all these species. Detailed information about these projects and their results is available in the LIFE database that can be consulted at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm. In addition, recent dedicated LIFE publications present aggregated results covering large carnivores ([3]), mammals ([4]) including the Iberianl lynx, brown bear, wolf, otter, bats, and birds ([5]) . Some of the aforementioned species have also benefitted from activities co-financed through other available EU funds such as the European Regional Development Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Furthermore, the Commission, together with Member States and in cooperation with the Agreement on the Conservation of the Populations of European Bats UNEP/EUROBATS is currently developing an Action Plan for all 44 bat species covered by Annex IV of the Habitats Directive. This document, which will be finalised in the course of 2014, will help the Member States with exchange of information and best practices on how best to implement measures in order to preserve the European bat fauna.

([1]) OJ L 206 of 22.7.1992, Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.
([2]) OJ L20, 26.1.2010, Directive 2009/47/EC of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/flippingbook/carnivores/index.html
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/mammals.pdf
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/flippingbook/habitats-for-birds/index.html

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-011514/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 de outubro de 2013)

Assunto: Sobrevivência de espécies e florestas europeias

Diversas espécies animais europeias dependentes das florestas nativas europeias têm conhecido um decréscimo dos seus efetivos em consequência da significativa redução das áreas ocupadas por floresta.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— De que modo contribui para o repovoamento nas florestas existentes, bem como para a reflorestação da União Europeia?

— Que principais resultados assinala?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(26 de novembro de 2013)

Desde 1992, a Política Agrícola Comum tem dado oportunidades para cofinanciar a florestação e o repovoamento das florestas existentes, através dos seguintes instrumentos:

1. Regulamento (CEE) n.° 2080/92 ([1]) relativo às medidas florestais na agricultura;

2. Regulamentos relativos ao desenvolvimento rural n.° 1257/1999 ([2]) e n.° 1698/2005 ([3]), que proporcionaram uma grande variedade de medidas no domínio florestal, incluindo a florestação e restauração das florestas existentes.

Consequentemente, a área florestal da UE tem vindo a aumentar nas últimas décadas ([4]), embora o estado dos ecossistemas florestais, tal como foram comunicados pelos Estados-Membros nos termos do artigo 17.° da Diretiva Habitats, continue a ser fonte de preocupações.

Além disso, cerca de metade dos sítios designados na Diretiva «Aves» (2009/147/CE ([5])) ou na Diretiva «Habitats» (92/43/CEE ([6])) dizem respeito a habitats florestais ou contêm elementos florestais. Os Estados-Membros devem estabelecer as medidas de conservação necessárias para as espécies e habitats para os quais os sítios foram designados. Essas medidas foram cofinanciadas ao abrigo dos programas LIFE e LIFE + desde a adoção da Diretiva «Habitats».

A Comissão publicou uma panorâmica «*LIFE and European forests*», que ilustra os resultados obtidos ao abrigo do programa LIFE III ([7]).

Em relação à biodiversidade florestal e à proteção da natureza, na Estratégia de Biodiversidade da UE para 2020 (COM(2011)244) foi estabelecida uma meta no domínio das floresta que prevê, até 2020, garantir que estejam operacionais Planos de Gestão Florestal ou instrumentos equivalentes para todas as florestas de propriedade pública e para as explorações florestais superiores a uma determinada área que beneficiam de financiamento ao abrigo da política de desenvolvimento rural da UE.

([1]) JO L 215 de 30.7.1992, p. 1.
([2]) JO L 160 de 26.6.1999, p. 1.
([3]) JO L 277 de 21.10.2005, p. 1.
([4]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-78-09-993
http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/10-messages-for-2010-2014-3
([5]) JO L 20 de 26.1.2010, p. 1.
([6]) JO L 206 de 22.7.1992, p. 1.
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/forest_lr.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011514/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Survival of European species and forests

Several European animal species that depend on native European forests have seen their numbers fall as a result of major deforestation.

— How has the Commission contributed to the repopulation of existing forests, as well as reforestation in the European Union?

— What are the main results it can highlight?

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

Since 1992 the Common Agriculture Policy has provided opportunities to co-finance afforestation as well as repopulation of existing forests by means of the following instruments:

1. Regulation (EEC) No 2080/92 ([1]) on afforestation of agricultural land ;

2. Rural Development Regulations No 1257/1999 ([2]) and No 1698/2005 ([3]), which offered a large variety of forest measures, including afforestation as well as restoration of existing forests.

As a result, EU forest area has actually increased over the past decades ([4]), although the state of forest ecosystems as reported by Member States pursuant to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive remains a source of concern.

Furthermore about half of the sites designated under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC ([5])) or the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC ([6])) concern forest habitats or contain forest elements. Member States are required to establish the necessary conservation measures for the species and habitats for which the sites have been designated. Such measures have been co-financed under the LIFE and LIFE+ programmes since the adoption of the Habitats Directive.

The Commission has published an overview 'LIFE and European forests', illustrating the achievements under the LIFE III programme ([7]).

Regarding forest biodiversity and the protection of nature, a forest target was set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (COM(2011)244) whereby Forest Management Plans or equivalent instruments should be in place by 2020 for all forests that are publicly owned and for forest holdings above a certain size that receive funding under the EU Rural Development Policy.

([1]) OJ L 215, 30.7.1992.
([2]) OJ L 160, 26.6.1999.
([3]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005.
([4]) Please see: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-78-09-993 http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/10-messages-for-2010-2014-3
([5]) OJ L 20, 26.1.2010.
([6]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([7]) Please see : http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/forest_lr.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-011519/13
à la Commission
Frank Engel (PPE)
(8 octobre 2013)

Objet: Pérennité du système de publication obligatoire en ligne des décisions des autorités publiques en Grèce moyennant le système «clarté» («diavgeia» en grec)

La Grèce a mis en place un système de publication en ligne de décisions officielles des autorités publiques, sous le nom de «clarté» («diavgeia» en grec). Le ministère de la réforme administrative de la République hellénique envisage actuellement de modifier le recours à ce système, de manière à le rendre quasiment facultatif — y compris, par exemple, en matière d'avis de recrutement ou de marchés publics. Une procédure de consultation à cet effet est actuellement en cours et expire le 8 octobre 2013. L'abolition de l'obligation de publication décrite à brève échéance justifie dès lors le caractère prioritaire de la présente question.

La Grèce étant bénéficiaire d'aides européennes qui sont liées, entre autres, à la conditionnalité de l'accroissement de la transparence administrative, la Commission doit se soucier de la possible mise en veilleuse d'un système transparent de publication en ligne de décisions des autorités publiques. Dans la mesure où des fonds substantiels nouveaux devraient être mis à disposition de la Grèce, notamment en vue d'investissements publics, il est difficilement concevable que la gestion et l'attribution de tels fonds européens échappent à la transparence de la décision administrative, et que des avis de marchés publics, notamment, ne soient pas publiés en temps utile et de manière visible pour tous.

La Commission partage-t-elle le point de vue selon lequel le caractère obligatoire de la publication en ligne de décisions des autorités publiques en Grèce doit être maintenu en place, en vue d'une gestion transparente de fonds, notamment mais non uniquement européens, mais également afin de renforcer la confiance des administrés grecs en leur structure administrative et de remplir le postulat d'un accroissement de la transparence administrative en Grèce, élément conditionnant les aides à la Grèce?

Dans l'affirmative, pourrait-elle préciser si elle entend intervenir auprès des autorités grecques afin de s'assurer de la pérennité du caractère obligatoire de la publication en ligne des décisions des autorités publiques moyennant le système «clarté» (diavgeia)?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(4 novembre 2013)

La Commission partage l'avis de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur l'importance d'une transparence complète des initiatives des pouvoirs publics, en Grèce comme dans tous les autres États membres. La Commission est consciente du problème soulevé par l'Honorable Parlementaire et est favorable à la publication obligatoire des décisions du gouvernement grec sur le site web officiel Diavgeia.

Les révisions des dispositions juridiques proposées par le ministère grec de la réforme administrative et de l'administration en ligne visent à clarifier les dispositions existantes et ne semblent pas avoir d'incidence sur les exigences de base de l'initiative telles que définies dans la loi 3861/2010. Le ministère a nié toute intention de modification dans la direction indiquée par l'Honorable Parlementaire ([1]), et s'est publiquement engagé à procéder à une nouvelle rédaction des dispositions, si nécessaire, afin d'éviter toute erreur d'interprétation. La Commission continuera de suivre l'évolution de la situation dans ce domaine.

([1]) http://www.ydmed.gov.gr/?p=6220

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011519/13
to the Commission
Frank Engel (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Retaining the system of mandatory online publication of Greek Government decisions under the 'Cl@rity' initiative ('diavgeia' in Greek)

'Cl@rity' is a system in operation in Greece which makes it mandatory for all official government decisions to be published online. However, Greece's Ministry of Public Administrative Reform is now planning to change the way the system is used, in a way that would essentially render the publication process optional, for example for recruitment and public contract notices. A consultation procedure on this issue was completed on 8 October 2013. This question is therefore a particularly urgent one, as the publication requirement may soon be scrapped.

Since one of the conditions attaching to the EU bailout for Greece was increased administrative transparency, the Commission should be concerned that a transparent system for publishing government decisions online may now be done away with. At a time when Greece may require another hefty bailout, primarily to fund public investment, it is unthinkable that the management and allocation of this funding should not be transparent and that public contract notices in particular should not be published in good time and be universally accessible.

Does the Commission agree that the online publication of Greek Government decisions should continue to be mandatory, with a view to the transparent management of the funding it receives from the EU and other sources? Greek people would then have more confidence in their government and Greece would meet its obligation to increase administrative transparency as a precondition for receiving aid.

If so, does the Commission intend to contact the Greek authorities in order to satisfy itself that the publication of government decisions online will remain mandatory under the 'Cl@rity' system?

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

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member on the importance of full transparency of government initiatives, in Greece as in all other Member States. The Commission is aware of the issue raised by the Honourable Member and supports compulsory publication of Greek Government decisions on the official website Diavgeia.

The revisions of legal provisions proposed by the Greek Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Governance aim at clarifying existing provisions and do not seem to affect the core requirements of the initiative as stipulated in law 3861/2010. The Ministry has denied any changes in the direction indicated by the Honourable Member ([1]), and has publicly committed to redrafting the provisions if necessary, in order to avoid any misinterpretation. The Commission will continue to monitor developments in this area.

([1]) http://www.ydmed.gov.gr/?p=6220

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-011520/13
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(8. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Diskriminierung von Nicht-Ansässigen bei der Pkw-Maut

Wie die Kommission bereits 2011 in ihrem Weißbuch „Fahrplan zu einem einheitlichen europäischen Verkehrsraum" (KOM(2011)144) feststellte, sind „die öffentlichen Mittel für die Infrastrukturfinanzierung […] erhöhtem Druck ausgesetzt, und es ist ein neuer Ansatz für die Finanzierung und Bepreisung der Infrastruktur erforderlich". Zudem unterstrich die Kommission in ihrer Mitteilung über die Erhebung nationaler Straßenbenutzungsgebühren auf leichte Privatfahrzeuge (KOM(2012)199): „Jegliche Diskriminierung von EU-Bürgern aus Gründen der Staatsangehörigkeit ist gemäß Artikel 18 AEUV untersagt".

Ist es vor diesem Hintergrund in den Augen der Kommission zulässig, wenn ein Mitgliedstaat, der eine Pkw-Maut einführt, ausweitet oder erhöht, zugleich eine Kompensation (Steuer- bzw. Abgabensenkung o. ä.) bietet, von der nur die in diesem Mitgliedstaat ansässigen Unionsbürger profitieren?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(28. Oktober 2013)

Mautsysteme müssen mit der Richtlinie 1999/62/EG ([1]) („Eurovignetten-Richtlinie") für schwere Lastkraftwagen und — sofern sie für Personenkraftwagen gelten — mit den allgemeinen Grundsätzen des EU-Vertrags im Einklang stehen. Nach beiden Rechtsakten ist eine Diskriminierung aus Gründen der Staatsangehörigkeit verboten.

Die Erhebung von Abgaben fällt in die Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten. Gemäß Artikel 5 der Richtlinie 1999/62/EG werden Kraftfahrzeugsteuern nur von dem Mitgliedstaat erhoben, in dem das Fahrzeug zugelassen ist. In Anhang I der Richtlinie 1999/62/EG sind die für schwere Lastkraftwagen anzuwendenden Kraftfahrzeugsteuer-Mindestsätze festgelegt. Die Höhe der Steuern für Personenkraftwagen gebietsansässiger Fahrer können die Mitgliedstaaten jedoch nach eigenem Ermessen festlegen.

Aus diesem Grund sollten Straßenmautsysteme, die sowohl für gebietsansässige als auch für gebietsfremde Fahrer gelten, eher in Form von Nutzungsgebühren als von Abgaben umgesetzt werden, so dass die erhobenen Gebühren in einem angemessenen Verhältnis zur Nutzung der Infrastruktur stehen. Je stärker auf die Verhältnismäßigkeit der Mautsysteme geachtet wird, desto eher entsprechen sie dem Nutzerprinzip („Nutzer zahlt") und desto weniger diskriminierend sind sie.

Grundsätzlich stellt eine Senkung der Kraftfahrzeugsteuern für gebietsansässige Nutzer, unter Beachtung der in der Richtlinie 1999/62/EG festgelegten Mindestsätze für Lastkraftwagen, bei gleichzeitiger Erhebung angemessener Nutzungsgebühren für alle Nutzer also keine Diskriminierung aus Gründen der Staatsangehörigkeit dar.

([1]) Richtlinie 1999/62/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 17. Juni 1999 über die Erhebung von Gebühren für die Benutzung bestimmter Verkehrswege durch schwere Nutzfahrzeuge, ABl. L 187 vom 20.7.1999.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011520/13
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Discrimination against non-residents in the context of road-use tolls

As long ago as in 2011, in its White Paper entitled 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area' (COM(2011) 144), the Commission noted that 'there is increased pressure on public resources for infrastructure funding and a new approach to funding and pricing is needed'. Moreover, in its communication 'on the application of national road infrastructure charges levied on light private vehicles' (COM(2012) 199) the Commission emphasised that 'any discrimination of EU citizens on grounds of nationality is prohibited by Article 18 of the Treaty'.

Against this background, if a Member State introduces, broadens the scope of or increases a road-use toll does the Commission consider it acceptable that it should also offer compensation (a tax reduction or similar measure) which benefits only EU citizens residing in that Member State?

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

Road tolling schemes have to comply with Directive 1999/62/EC (the so-called 'Eurovignette' Directive) ([1]) for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) and with general Treaty principles as concerns the passenger cars. In both cases, discrimination on grounds of nationality is prohibited.

Taxation falls within the competence of the Member States. According to Article 5 of Directive 1999/62/EC circulation taxes should be charged solely by the Member State of registration. In the case of HGV, minimum circulation taxes are laid down in Annex I to Directive 1999/62/EC. As far as passenger cars are concerned, however, Member States are free to set the level of circulation taxes for resident drivers.

In view of the above, road tolling schemes — applying to both residents and non-residents — should be implemented as user charges rather than taxes, which essentially implies that fees levied should be proportional to the use of the infrastructure. The more proportional road tolling schemes are, the better they reflect the 'user pays' principle and the less discriminatory they are.

As such, reducing circulation taxes for resident users, while respecting the minima provided for in Directive 1996/62/EC for HGV, and implementing proportional user charges for all users would, in principle, not constitute discrimination on grounds of nationality.

([1]) Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 1999 on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, OJ L 187, 20.7.1999.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011521/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διαγωνισμός Youth European Parliament

Το Λύκειο Ακροπόλεως (Λευκωσία — Κύπρος), έλαβε πρόσφατα μέρος στο διαγωνισμό για το Youth European Parliament, μαζί με άλλα 15 σχολεία της δημόσιας και ιδιωτικής Μέσης εκπαίδευσης της Κύπρου. Το Λύκειο Ακροπόλεως προκρίθηκε στον τελικό γύρο και 3 μαθητές του κέρδισαν το δικαίωμα συμμετοχής στις εργασίες σχετικού φόρουμ στη Χάγη. Είναι παράδοξο, ωστόσο, πώς τα παιδιά και ο καθηγητής που θα τα συνοδεύσει θα πρέπει να πληρώσουν το αντίτιμο των συνεπαγομένων εξόδων διαμονής και μεταφοράς που ανέρχονται περίπου σε 600 ευρώ ανά άτομο.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Τι είδους διαγωνισμός είναι αυτός που ζητάει από τους επιτυχόντες να πληρώσουν;

2. Σε εποχές μιας σοβούσης οικονομικής κρίσης, με ιδιαίτερα σοβαρό αντίκτυπο στην Κύπρο, δεν θα έπρεπε η ίδια η Επιτροπή να εξεύρει τους πόρους και να χρηματοδοτήσει τη συμμετοχή των νικητών του διαγωνισμού, αντί να ζητά από τους ίδιους να πληρώσουν;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Το «Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο Νεολαίας, Κάτω Χώρες» είναι μέρος του πανευρωπαϊκού δικτύου «Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο Νεολαίας» (ΕΥΡ). Η διεθνής κεντρική οργάνωση του δικτύου αυτού — το ίδρυμα Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation — λαμβάνει ενίσχυση από το πρόγραμμα «Νεολαία σε δράση» στο πλαίσιο της επιμέρους δράσης 4.1: υποστήριξη για φορείς που δραστηριοποιούνται σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο στον τομέα της νεολαίας. Η επιδότηση προορίζεται για να υποστηρίξει το σύνολο των δαπανών λειτουργίας αυτής της ευρωπαϊκής ΜΚΟ.

Η εκδήλωση «The Hague 2013: 2nd International Forum of European Youth Parliament, Netherlands» (Χάγη 2013: 2ο Διεθνές Φόρουμ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου Νεολαίας, Κάτω Χώρες) πραγματοποιείται από το εθνικό παράρτημα του ΕΥΡ στις Κάτω Χώρες και δεν λαμβάνει χρηματοδότηση από την Επιτροπή.

Συνεπώς, η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να παρέμβει όσον αφορά τον τρόπο με τον οποίο οι διοργανωτές χρηματοδοτούν τον διαγωνισμό τους.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011521/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Youth European Parliament competition

The Acropolis Lyceum (Nicosia — Cyprus) recently took part in a competition for the Youth European Parliament, along with 15 other schools from the public and private secondary education sector in Cyprus. The Lyceum Acropolis qualified for the final round, and three students won the right to participate in the work of the relevant forum in The Hague. It is paradoxical, however, that the children and the teacher accompanying them will have to pay accommodation and transport costs totalling EUR 600 per person.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say what kind of competition calls on the winners to pay?

2. In times of continuing economic crisis, which has affected Cyprus particularly severely, is it not up to the Commission itself to fund participation by the competition winners, instead of asking them to pay?

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

The 'European Youth Parliament, Netherlands' is part of the European-wide network 'European Youth Parliament' (EYP). The international umbrella organisation of this network — the Heinz Schwarzkopf Foundation — receives support from the Youth in Action Programme under sub-Action 4.1: Support for bodies active at European level in the field of youth. The grant is meant to support the operating costs of this European NGO.

'The Hague 2013: 2nd International Forum of European Youth Parliament, Netherlands' is an event carried out by the national branch of the EYP in the Netherlands and does not receive any funding from the Commission.

The Commission can therefore not intervene in the manner in which the organisers fund their competition.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011522/13
to the Commission
Jim Higgins (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Property law enforcement in the European Union

Is the Commission aware of recent failures of Member States to properly enforce the rulings of their courts in cases of overseas investment?

Does the Commission agree that such failures are contrary to the spirit of the European Union, which emphasises free trade and respect for the rule of law?

What does the Commission intend to do to ensure the timely enforcement of judgments in all EU Member States?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

As regards overseas investments in the Union, it should be noted that the Union is now in the process of negotiating investment protection agreements with a number of trading partners on the basis of Article 207 TFEU. The aim of these agreements will be to ensure the free flow of investment between the Union and third countries and a high level of protection for investors. These agreements will include a commitment to allow the free flow of capital movements in relation to investment, including capital movements with respect to property in relation to an investment. Such agreements will be binding on Member States.

In addition, the free movement of capital as enshrined in the Treaty, liberalises capital movements between the Union and third countries within the parameters set out in Articles 63-66 TFEU. The Commission is vigilant in ensuring that the fundamental freedoms of the Treaty are enforced appropriately by Member States.

The Commission recalls that Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights provides to everyone whose rights and freedoms guaranteed by EC law are violated for the right to an effective remedy before a tribunal. However, according to its Article 51, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law and based on the information provided by the Honourable Member it cannot be established whether such situations are concerned.

More generally, the Commission recalls that improving the quality, independence and efficiency of national justice systems, including by ensuring that claims are settled within a reasonable period of time are amongst the key priorities of the European Semester — the EU annual cycle of economic policy coordination, as expressed in the communication from the Commission on the Annual Growth Survey 2014 ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/2014/ags2014_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011523/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(8 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Informe social nacional sobre los efectos del Programa Nacional de Reformas en España

En la respuesta que el Comisario de Empleo, Asuntos Sociales e Inclusión ha dado a mi anterior pregunta numerada E-005017/2013, se afirma que la Comisión se encuentra a la espera de un informe social nacional que analice los aspectos de inclusión y protección social centrado en los efectos de los programas nacionales de reforma emprendidos en España.

Los Estados miembros acordaron en el Comité de Protección Social la obligación de entregar el citado informe social nacional que evalúe de manera consistente los efectos que el Programa Nacional de Reformas tiene sobre las políticas sociales. Los indicadores estadísticos normalmente empleados reflejan el mantenimiento o un escaso descenso de los niveles de pobreza cuando el país está sufriendo un gravísimo proceso de pauperización según documentan numerosos informes independientes de diversas ONG. Como afirma el Comisario en su respuesta sobre el descenso de la pobreza según la tasa AROPE, se puede deber a un descenso simultáneo de la media y la mediana de los ingresos españoles, lo que justifica la emergencia de un estudio que muestre la realidad del incremento de la pobreza en el país a raíz del programa de reformas emprendido por el Gobierno del Partido Popular.

¿Han entregado las autoridades españolas el citado informe social nacional al Comité de Protección Social de la Comisión? ¿Cuáles son sus resultados?

¿Cuáles son las medidas que propone o piensa proponer el Comité para garantizar que se cumplan los criterios básicos de protección social en España ante la agresión que supone el Programa Nacional de Reformas?

¿Cómo piensa promover la cooperación en el ámbito de la protección social entre los Estados miembros con países que están forzados a cumplir un estricto Programa Nacional de Reformas que atacan los mecanismos más básicos de la protección social como las pensiones o los servicios públicos?

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

Las autoridades españolas presentaron un Informe Social Nacional en 2012 ([1]), pero no se había pedido a los Estados miembros que presentaran Informes Sociales Nacionales para 2013 en el seno del Comité de Protección Social (CPS).

En el marco del método abierto de coordinación social, el Comité de Protección Social ha movilizado diversos instrumentos para luchar contra la pobreza y la exclusión social en la EU. Promueve la cooperación entre los Estados miembros a través de un marco establecido para vigilancia temática y multilateral de las reformas en materia de protección social de los países de la UE. Los Estados miembros informarán al Comité de Protección Social y los evaluarán un país de la UE y la Comisión.

En su informe de 2012 sobre la situación social en la EU ([2]), el Comité de Protección Social identificó los siguientes retos en materia de política social para España ([3]):

i) un deterioro muy intenso de los ingresos y las condiciones de vida de la población (especialmente en el caso de los menores) y aumento de la desigualdad;

ii) empleabilidad de los grupos vulnerables, y

iii) garantizar servicios de apoyo eficaces a los niños y la familia.

De conformidad con las disposiciones vigentes del Tratado (artículo 160 del TFUE), el Comité de Protección Social carece de poder normativo y no formula recomendaciones políticas individuales.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?pager.offset=40&langId=es&mode=advancedSubmit&policyArea=0&subCategory=0&year=0&country=0&type=0&advSearchKey=socialreporting
([2]) Social Europe : current challenges and the way forward— Annual report of the SPC (2012).
([3]) Véase la página 231.

La Comisión, en consonancia con las conclusiones del Consejo sobre el paquete sobre inversión social, propuso al Consejo una recomendación sobre políticas activas del mercado de trabajo con el fin de mejorar la empleabilidad de las personas más alejadas del mercado laboral. La Comisión también considera que España debería mejorar la fijación de objetivos y la eficiencia y la efectividad de las medidas de apoyo, con el fin de reducir el número de personas en riesgo de pobreza y/o exclusión social. El Consejo adoptó esta recomendación el 9 de julio de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011523/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: National social report on the effects of the National Reform Programme in Spain

In the response that the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion provided to my previous question numbered E-005017/2013, it is stated that the Commission is awaiting a national social report that analyses the subjects of inclusion and social protection, focusing on the effects of the national reform programmes that have been embarked upon in Spain.

Through the Social Protection Committee, Member States agreed with the obligation that the abovementioned national social report be submitted, which provides a solid assessment of the effects of the National Reform Programme on social policies. The regularly employed statistical indicators highlight that poverty levels have remained stable or decreased slightly, when the country is in fact undergoing an extremely severe process of impoverishment as documented in numerous independent reports by various NGOs. As the Commissioner states in his response regarding the reduction in poverty according to the AROPE rate, this can be explained by a concurrent decrease in mean and median Spanish disposable incomes. This accounts for the emergence of a study that demonstrates the reality, the increasing poverty in the country, as a result of the reform programme undertaken by the People's Party (Partido Popular) Government.

Have the Spanish authorities submitted the abovementioned national social report to the Commission's Social Protection Committee? What are its findings?

What measures is the Committee proposing or intending to propose to guarantee that basic social protection criteria are complied with in Spain in the face of the assault posed by the National Reform Programme?

How does it intend to promote cooperation in terms of social protection amongst Member States with countries being forced to comply with a strict National Reform Programme that attacks the most basic social protection mechanisms such as pensions or public services?

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

The Spanish authorities have submitted a National Social Report in 2012 ([1]), but Member States were not asked to submit National Social Reports for 2013 within the Social Protection Committee (SPC).

Under the social open method of coordination, the SPC has mobilised various instruments to tackle poverty and social exclusion in the EU. It promotes cooperation among Member States through an established framework for thematic and multilateral surveillance of EU countries' social protection reforms. Member States report to the SPC and they are assessed by a reviewing EU country and the Commission.

In its 2012 report of the social situation in the EU ([2]), the SPC identified the following social policy challenges for Spain ([3]):

i) very strong deterioration in the income and living conditions of the population (especially for children) and increase in inequality;

ii) employability of vulnerable groups and

iii) ensuring effective child and family support services.

According to the Treaty provisions in place (Article 160 of the TFEU), the SPC has no normative power and does not address individual policy recommendations.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?pager.offset=40&langId=en&mode=advancedSubmit&policyArea=0&subCategory=0&year=0&country= 0&type=0&advSearchKey=socialreporting
([2]) Social Europe: current challenges and the way forward — Annual report of the SPC (2012).
([3]) See page 231.

The Commission, in line with Council conclusions on the Social Investment Package, proposed to Council a recommendation on active labour market policies with the aim to improve the employability of those away from the labour market. The Commission also considers that Spain should improve the targeting and efficiency/effectiveness of support measures, in order to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. This recommendation was adopted by Council on 9 July 2013.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-011525/13
до Комисията
Slavi Binev (EFD)
(8 октомври 2013 г.)

Относно: Кризата със сирийските бежанци

Правителството на България мълчи и не заема позиция по проблемите в Сирия. Страната ни и Европейският съюз трябва категорично да се обявят против военната намеса в Сирия, като настояваме за решаване на сирийския проблем само и единствено в рамките на Съвета за сигурност на Организацията на обединените нации.

Над 2 милиона сирийски бежанци, повечето от половината от които са деца, вече са напуснали родината си. По данни на „Евростат“ през 2012 г. 23 510 сирийски бежанци са потърсили убежище в ЕС и 18 700 са го получили. Това ги прави най-голямата група лица, получили закрила в ЕС. Повечето от бежанците се намират в съседните на Сирия държави — Ливан, Йордания и Турция, като броят им нараства ежедневно на фона на продължаващите военни действия. С безконтролното допускане на бежанци в страната ни през Турция, като южна граница, България е на прага на критичната бройка бежанци и има голям риск от последваща криза в страната. Критичната бройка са 5 000 бежанци. Към момента те са над 12 000 и се очаква до края на годината броят им да достигне около 15 000. Имайки предвид, че България не разполага със средства и възможности, за да се справи с мащабите на бежанския поток, както и че не познава логистика, тъй като това е прецедент в новата история на България:

1. Одобрява ли ЕС подобно отношение на държавите членки — да очакват решение, без да изразяват собствената си позиция?

2. Възнамерява ли Комисията да вземе мерки и да предостави финансиране, както и логистична подкрепа за равномерното разпределение на вълната от сирийски бежанци на територията на целия ЕС?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Малмстрьом от името на Комисията
(13 декември 2013 г.)

Комисията следи отблизо ситуацията в държавите членки, чиито системи за предоставяне на убежище са или биха могли в бъдеще да бъдат подложени на натиск поради увеличен приток на сирийски граждани или други групи от мигранти и/или лица, търсещи убежище. България е една от тези държави членки.

От известно време вече Комисията е в тесен контакт с българските органи с цел да се обсъдят възможните мерки за подкрепа. Помощта от ЕС може да варира от финансова подкрепа до помощ в натура посредством Европейската служба за подкрепа в областта на убежището (EASO), например чрез разгръщане на екипи за подкрепа в областта на убежището, които да помагат на органите с изграждане на капацитет. Такава помощ може да бъде оказана единствено по искане на органите на съответната държава членка.

България е подала официална заявка за спешна помощ от Европейския бежански фонд в размер на 5,6 милиона евро. В момента искането се обработва, за да се предложи бързо решение. На 17 октомври 2013 г. EASO и България подписаха оперативен план, в който се обръща особено внимание на разширяването и подобряването на капацитета на България за прием на бежанци и за обработване на заявките за закрила от страна на българската Държавна агенция за бежанците.

Тази помощ не включва прехвърляне на сирийски граждани от България в други държави членки. Решението дали да се предложи или не прехвърляне на бежанци или лица, ползващи се от субсидиарна закрила, от една държава членка в друга в крайна сметка се взема от органите на съответните държави членки.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011525/13
to the Commission
Slavi Binev (EFD)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Syrian refugee crisis

The Bulgarian Government has remained silent and taken no stance on the problems in Syria. Bulgaria and the EU should take a decisive stand against armed intervention in Syria and urge that a solution to the Syrian problem be sought solely through the United Nations Security Council.

Over two million Syrian refugees, most of whom are children, have already abandoned their homeland. According to Eurostat figures, 23 150 Syrian refugees applied for asylum in the EU in 2012, and 18 700 were granted asylum. This makes them the largest group of people to have been given refuge in the EU. Most of the refugees are living in the countries neighbouring Syria — Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey — and their numbers are swelling daily as the conflict continues. Since refugees are being freely allowed to enter Bulgaria through its southern border with Turkey, the number of refugees in Bulgaria is nearing the critical level and there is a major risk this will spark a crisis. The critical figure is 5 000 refugees. At present there are over 12 000 refugees and it is expected that this number will increase to around 15 000 by the end of the year.

Bulgaria does not have the means or resources to cope with a flood of refugees on this scale and it is logistically ill-prepared for this situation, which is unprecedented in the country's recent history.

Can the Commission therefore state:

1. Whether the EU approves of the Member States' attitude of waiting for a solution without adopting their own positions?

2. Whether the Commission intends to take steps to provide funding and logistical support so that this wave of Syrian refugees can be distributed evenly across the whole of the EU?

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

The Commission is closely monitoring the situation in the Member States whose asylum systems are, or in future could be, under pressure due to an increased inflow of Syrian nationals or other groups of migrants and/or asylum-seekers. Bulgaria is one of these Member States.

The Commission has already for some time been in close contact with the Bulgarian authorities to discuss possible support measures. EU assistance can range from financial support to assistance in kind through the European Asylum Support office (EASO), for instance through deployment of asylum support teams to assist the authorities with capacity building. Such assistance can be rendered only upon request of the authorities of the Member State concerned.

Bulgaria has submitted an official application for emergency assistance under the European Refugee Fund for an amount of EUR 5.6 million. This request is currently being processed with a view to a swift decision. On 17 October 2013, an EASO-Bulgaria Operating Plan was signed, with particular attention to enlarging and improving Bulgaria's reception capacity and its capacity to process claims for protection by the Bulgarian State Agency for Refugees.

This support is not accompanied by relocation of Syrian nationals from Bulgaria to other Member States. The decision whether or not to offer to relocate refugees or beneficiaries of subsidiary protection from one Member State to another ultimately rests with the authorities of the Member States concerned.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011529/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Νομικό καθεστώς του Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινούπολης

Σύμφωνα με καταγγελίες της Παγκόσμιας Ομοσπονδίας Κωνσταντινουπολιτών, το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο Κωνσταντινούπολης, που αποτελεί τον θρησκευτικό φάρο και πνευματικό καθοδηγητή των περίπου 300 εκ. πιστών της Ανατολικής Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας, δεν αναγνωρίζεται από τις τουρκικές αρχές και δεν έχει οποιοδήποτε νομικό καθεστώς αναγνώρισης στη χώρα που εδρεύει.

Ερωτάται η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος της Ένωσης για θέματα Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής και Πολιτικής Ασφαλείας, κ. Άστον:

1. Είναι ενήμερη των δυσκολιών που αντιμετωπίζει το Πατριαρχείο στην άσκηση του πνευματικού του ρόλου εξαιτίας της άρνησης της τουρκικής κυβέρνησης να του αποδώσει το κατάλληλο νομικό καθεστώς;

2. Η συμπεριφορά αυτή της τουρκικής κυβέρνησης συνάδει με τις ευρωπαϊκές αρχές περί ανεξιθρησκείας, καθώς και με τις υποχρεώσεις της Τουρκίας ως υπό ένταξη χώρας;

3. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή ώστε να εξομαλυνθεί η κατάσταση και να μπορεί το Πατριαρχείο ανεμπόδιστα να επιτελεί το έργο του;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για τα θέματα που αντιμετωπίζει το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο και τα έχει ήδη θίξει με συνέπεια και στις δύο επαφές της με τις τουρκικές αρχές και στις σχετικές με την Τουρκία εκθέσεις προόδου.

Ειδικότερα, στην έκθεση προόδου του 2013 ([1]) για την Τουρκία, αναφέρεται ότι «οι μη μουσουλμανικές κοινότητες — ως οργανωμένες θρησκευτικές ομάδες — συνέχισαν να αντιμετωπίζουν προβλήματα ως εκ της αδυναμίας τους να αποκτήσουν νομική υπόσταση, με δυσμενή αποτελέσματα όσον αφορά τα δικαιώματα κυριότητας, την πρόσβαση στη δικαιοσύνη, την συγκέντρωση χρηματικών πόρων και την ικανότητα του ξένου κλήρου να αποκτήσει άδεια διαμονής και άδεια εργασίας. Οι σχετικές με το θέμα συστάσεις της Επιτροπής της Βενετίας του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης δεν έχουν ακόμη εφαρμοσθεί. Το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο δεν είχε ενδείξεις από τις αρχές ότι μπορεί να χρησιμοποιήσει ελεύθερα τον τίτλο "Οικουμενικό". Το συμπέρασμα της Επιτροπής της Βενετίας, σύμφωνα με το οποίο κάθε παρέμβαση στο δικαίωμα αυτό θα συνιστούσε παραβίαση της αυτονομίας της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας βάσει του άρθρου 9 του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαστηρίου Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων, δεν έχει ακόμη εφαρμοσθεί.» (σελίδες 54-55).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011529/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Legal status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Concerns are being voiced by the World Federation of Constantinopolitans to the effect that the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which provides religious and spiritual leadership for around 300 million members of the Eastern Orthodox Church, it is not recognised by the Turkish authorities and has no established legal status in the country in which it is situated.

In view of this:

1. Is the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy aware of the difficulties being encountered by the Patriarchate in providing spiritual leadership because of the refusal of the Turkish Government to accord it an appropriate legal status?

2. Is the stance adopted by the Turkish Government in accordance with European principles of religious tolerance and its obligations as a candidate for EU membership?

3. What actions will the High Representative take to remedy matters and enable the Patriarchate to fulfil its role unhindered?

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

The Commission is aware of the issues the Ecumenical patriarchate is faced with and has been raising them consistently in both its contacts with the Turkish authorities and in Turkey's Progress Reports.

In particular, in the Turkey 2013 Progress Report ([1]) it is mentioned that 'Non-Muslim communities — as organised structures of religious groups — continued to face problems as a result of being unable to acquire legal personality, with adverse effects on property rights, access to justice, fundraising and the ability of foreign clergy to obtain residence and work permits. The relevant 2010 Council of Europe Venice Commission recommendations have yet to be implemented. The Ecumenical Patriarchate received no indication from the authorities that it may use the "ecumenical" title freely. The Venice Commission's 2010 conclusion that any interference with this right would constitute a violation of the autonomy of the Orthodox Church under Article 9 of the ECHR has yet to be implemented.' (pages 54-55).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011530/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Το περί Ανακεφαλαιοποίησης της Συνεργατικής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας της Κύπρου Διάταγμα της Κυπριακής Κυβέρνησης

Στα πλαίσια της εφαρμογής του Μνημονίου Συναντίληψης, η κυβέρνηση της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας έχει εκδώσει ειδικό διάταγμα το οποίο ρυθμίζει τον τρόπο ανακεφαλαιοποίησης της Συνεργατικής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας της Κύπρου.

Από πλευράς των μελών του συνεργατικού κινήματος υπάρχουν σοβαρές αντιδράσεις για κάποιες πρόνοιες του διατάγματος, ιδιαίτερα όσον αφορά τη μέθοδο επαναγοράς των μετοχών της Τράπεζας, αλλά και την υποχρέωση της τελευταίας να καταβάλλει 10% ετησίως επί του κατατεθέντος κεφαλαίου ως αμοιβή της κυβέρνησης για τη συμμετοχή της. Η πρόβλεψη του 10% κρίνεται ως ιδιαίτερα επαχθής για το συνεργατικό κίνημα και από πολλούς θεωρείται ως ένα είδος εκμετάλλευσης αφού η κυβέρνηση δανείζεται από τους διεθνείς πιστωτές με 2,5% αλλά διαθέτει τα κεφάλαια προς την Τράπεζα με 10%. Εγείρονται επίσης θέματα ισότιμης μεταχείρισης μεταξύ πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων αφού στο παρελθόν η κυβέρνηση συμμετείχε σε διάσωση ιδιωτικών τραπεζών με πολύ πιο ευνοϊκούς όρους.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι ενήμερη των εξελίξεων αναφορικά με τη Συνεργατική Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου;

2. Γνωρίζει τις πρόνοιες του προαναφερόμενου Διατάγματος και συμφωνεί με το περιεχόμενό του;

3. Έχει άποψη κατά πόσο το Διάταγμα παραβιάζει τους περί ελεύθερου ανταγωνισμού και ισότιμης μεταχείρισης των πολιτών κανονισμούς της ΕΕ;

4. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να διασφαλιστούν τα συμφέροντα των μελών του συνεργατικού κινήματος, το οποίο σε δύσκολους καιρούς έχει διαδραματίσει θετικότατο ρόλο στην οικονομία και χαίρει μεγάλης εκτίμησης και εμπιστοσύνης στην κυπριακή κοινωνία;

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

Σύμφωνα με επανεξέταση που διεξήχθη από ανεξάρτητους εμπειρογνώμονες, η δανειοδοτική πρακτική των συνεταιριστικών πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων, ιδίως το γεγονός ότι αγνοούσαν την ικανότητα εξόφλησης των δανείων από τους δανειολήπτες, οδήγησε σε μαζικές πιστωτικές ζημίες. Χωρίς κρατική ανακεφαλαιοποίηση ύψους 1,5 δισ. ευρώ, οι απώλειες αυτές όχι μόνο εξαντλούν πλήρως το συνεταιριστικό κεφάλαιο, αλλά και το μετατρέπουν σε αρνητικό κεφάλαιο.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις εξελίξεις στον συνεταιριστικό τομέα της Κύπρου με σκοπό να διασφαλιστεί η εφαρμογή του προγράμματος στήριξης και η συμμόρφωση με τους κανόνες περί κρατικών ενισχύσεων. Βάσει των κανόνων αυτών, η Επιτροπή πρέπει να διασφαλίζει ότι ο όμιλος θα αποκαταστήσει τη βιωσιμότητά του μέσω ενδελεχούς αναδιάρθρωσης. Δεδομένου του ασθενούς σημείου εκκίνησης, είναι αναγκαία η ριζική αναδιάρθρωση, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της θέσπισης νέων δομών διακυβέρνησης ώστε να αποφευχθεί μελλοντικός ηθικός κίνδυνος.

Οι κανόνες περί κρατικών ενισχύσεων απαιτούν επίσης επιμερισμό των βαρών μεταξύ των μετόχων και επαρκή απόδοση για το κράτος, πράγμα που σημαίνει ότι η αποζημίωση θα αντιστοιχεί στον κίνδυνο που ανέλαβε το κράτος. Στην προκειμένη περίπτωση, όπου οι μελλοντικές ζημίες θα εξαντλήσουν το εισφερόμενο κεφάλαιο και το κράτος κατά πάσα πιθανότητα δεν θα είναι ποτέ σε θέση να ανακτήσει τα χρήματά του, οι κανόνες προβλέπουν ότι το κράτος θα αποκτήσει πλήρη κυριότητα σε αντάλλαγμα για τη μεγάλη αύξηση του κεφαλαίου.

Σε ένα υποθετικό σενάριο επαναγοράς ([1]), η απαιτούμενη απόδοση θα είναι τουλάχιστον 10% ετησίως για μια τόσο μεγάλη, επισφαλή επένδυση σε ίδια κεφάλαια. Αυτό δεν μπορεί να συγκριθεί με το επιδοτούμενο επιτόκιο με το οποίο η Κύπρος δανείζεται από διεθνείς δανειστές.

Εάν το κράτος, λόγω αναδιάρθρωσης, επιθυμεί να πωλήσει τις μετοχές του στην αγορά, για παράδειγμα μέσω ανοικτής και χωρίς διακρίσεις διαδικασίας υποβολής προσφορών, οι πρώην κάτοχοι θα μπορούσαν να συμμετέχουν στη συγκεκριμένη διαδικασία και ενδεχομένως να κάνουν την καλύτερη προσφορά και να εξαγοράσουν το σύνολο ή μέρος των μετοχών.

([1]) Κατά κανόνα το ίδιο το πιστωτικό ίδρυμα δεν έχει το δικαίωμα να επαναγοράσει το κρατικό μέσο. Ωστόσο, έπειτα από αίτημα των αρχών και του ομίλου, η Επιτροπή αναλύει τη δυνατότητα να εγκρίνει το δικαίωμα επαναγοράς εάν το κράτος λάβει επαρκή αποζημίωση για τον κίνδυνο που ανέλαβε.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011530/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Decree issued by the Government of Cyprus concerning the recapitalisation of the Cooperative Central Bank of Cyprus

Under the memorandum of understanding, the Cypriot Government has issued a special decree concerning arrangements for the recapitalisation of the Cooperative Central Bank of Cyprus.

Representatives of the cooperative sector have raised objections to a number of its provisions, particularly with regard to the repurchase of shares in the bank and compulsory 10% annual repayments on Government capital injections, which many of them consider excessive, not to say extortionate, particularly in view of the fact that the Cypriot Government is able to obtain credit at a rate of 2.5% on the international markets. This also raises questions regarding the equal treatment of credit institutions, given that private banks have in the past received government bailouts on much more favourable terms.

In view of this:

1. Is the Commission aware of these developments regarding the Cooperative Central Bank of Cyprus?

2. Is it aware of the provisions of the above decree and does it approve of them?

3. To what extent does it consider that the decree infringes EU regulations regarding free competition and equal treatment?

4. What measures will it take to protect the interests of the cooperative sector, which has been of major economic benefit in these difficult times and enjoys great public esteem and confidence in Cyprus?

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

According to a review made by independent experts, the lending practice of the cooperative credit institutions, in particular their disregard of the borrowers' ability to repay loans, resulted in massive credit losses. Without a EUR 1.5 billion State recapitalisation these losses would not only fully deplete the cooperatives' capital but turn it into negative capital.

The Commission is following developments in the Cypriot cooperative sector closely to ensure implementation of the support programme and compliance with state aid rules. Under these rules, the Commission must ensure that the group restores its viability through a thorough restructuring. Given the weak starting point, deep restructuring is necessary, including the introduction of new governance structures to avoid future moral hazard.

State aid rules also require burden sharing by existing shareholders and a sufficient return for the State, which means that the remuneration corresponds to the risk taken. In the present case, where future losses will drain the injected capital and the State will probably never be able to recuperate its money, the rules require that the State get full ownership in exchange for the large capital increase.

In a hypothetical repurchase scenario ([1]), the required return would be at least 10% annually for such a large, risky equity investment. This cannot be compared to the subsidised rate at which Cyprus is borrowing from international creditors.

If the State, following restructuring, wants to sell its shares on the market, for instance, by means of an open and non-discriminatory bidding procedure, former owners could participate in this bidding process, possibly match the winning bid and buy some or all of the shares.

([1]) Normally there is no right for the credit institution itself to buy back the State instrument. However, having been requested by the authorities and the group, the Commission is analysing the possibility to authorise a buy back right if the State receives sufficient remuneration for the risk taken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011531/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Public procurement

Does the EU *acquis communautaire* governing public procurement directly bind promoters applying to Local Action Groups for Leader funds?

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

Project promoters who apply for funding from Axis 4 (Leader) of a rural development programme are normally supported by the administrative structure of the local action group in their project application (LAG office). In the delivery system of the Leader approach the LAG offices have a major role in advising potential project promoters in financial and administrative issues, which includes the compliance with rules on public procurement. ([1]) It remains nevertheless the responsibility of each individual beneficiary to comply with the relevant rules for public procurement.

([1]) See Art. 62 (2), 63 (c) Regulation (EC) 1698/2005, OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1-40.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011532/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Public procurement

Can a Member State rely on the 'Guidelines for determining financial corrections to be made to expenditure co-financed by the Structural Funds or the Cohesion Fund for non-compliance with the rules on public procurement' (COCOF 07/0037/03-EN) to impose financial penalties under point 21 of that document (namely 'non-compliance with the requirement of an adequate degree of advertising and transparency') on a private limited company administering the Leader programme in a Member State, such as Ireland, where the value of the contract falls below EU thresholds?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

The mentioned guidelines are drawn up for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund. As Leader in the 2007-2013 programming period falls under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), it is not covered by these guidelines. A Member State could choose, however, under its own responsibility, to use these guidelines as an inspiration in dealing with matters outside the funds covered by these guidelines, as long as the guidelines are not in contradiction to sector specific regulations.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011533/13
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Public procurement

What obligations does EC law place on private limited companies contracted to administer the Leader programme to advertise tenders valued at under EUR 250 000 on a national public procurement website?

What obligations does EC law place on private limited companies contracted to administer the Leader programme to advertise construction works tenders valued at EUR 262 158 on a national public procurement website?

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

The Leader Axis of Member States' rural development programmes is implemented through local development strategies which are elaborated and managed by local action groups (LAGs) [1]. The selection of the projects through the LAGs has to be carried out in accordance with the existing legal requirements. These may involve aspects of public procurement. The Rural Development Regulation does not rule cases where contracted private limited companies issue calls for tender on the level of the local action group. EC law only sets rules for advertising tenders for public contracts and, in the utilities' sectors only, contracts awarded by contracting entities which can include certain private companies. It might rule the award of private contracts which are subsidised by contracting authorities by more than 50% if the value reaches the threshold of EUR 5 million for works tenders.

[1] Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, Articles 61-65, OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1-40.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011534/13
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(8 octobre 2013)

Objet: Quatrième paquet ferroviaire

Le quatrième «paquet ferroviaire» présenté par la Commission européenne entend achever l'ouverture à la concurrence du transport ferroviaire dans l'Union européenne avec la constitution d'un marché ferroviaire unique européen. Il vise notamment l'ouverture totale du secteur à la concurrence en 2019, y compris les lignes intérieures et régionales, malgré l'opposition de la Fédération syndicale européenne des transports, qui appelle les salariés du secteur à la mobilisation le 9 octobre.

Les trois précédents paquets ferroviaires se sont soldés par une augmentation générale des tarifs, un abandon des lignes les moins rentables, un recul de l'entretien des voies. Comment la Commission peut-elle prétendre «que l'ouverture de ces marchés a amené des améliorations en qualité et en disponibilité des services» quand tous les usagers constatent l'inverse?

On a aussi pu constater une réduction du nombre de salariés, une augmentation de la sous-traitance et des emplois précaires. Comment la Commission peut-elle soutenir que la libéralisation devrait se traduire «par la création de nouveaux emplois, de meilleure qualité»?

Enfin, on remarque, suite à ces directives, une diminution générale de la part du rail par rapport au mode routier dans le transport européen. Comment la Commission peut-elle affirmer que cette libéralisation à marche forcée permettra de «participer à la dé-carbonisation du transport» européen alors qu'elle entraîne au contraire le recul du rail?

Quand la Commission présentera-t-elle un bilan détaillé sur les effets des trois premiers paquets en matière d'évolution des tarifs, d'accessibilité au service public ferroviaire, de progrès écologique, du nombre et de la qualité des emplois dans le secteur?

La Commission veut-elle envisager d'abandonner le projet de libéralisation du secteur ferroviaire et revenir sur les précédents paquets ferroviaires? Ou bien agit-elle sous l'effet d'une certitude scientifique ou écologique?

Si la Commission persévère dans la voie de la libéralisation, quand le Parlement européen sera-t-il saisi du quatrième paquet ferroviaire?

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

Les propositions contenues dans le quatrième «paquet ferroviaire» ont été adoptées par la Commission le 30 janvier 2013. Le Parlement européen a procédé à un examen approfondi de l'ensemble de ces propositions. Des projets de rapports ont déjà été présentés par les différents rapporteurs et ils devraient être adoptés par la commission des transports et du tourisme du Parlement avant la fin de cette année.

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se pencher sur les analyses d'impact du quatrième paquet, qui ont couvert les aspects économiques, environnementaux et sociaux, ont tenu compte des résultats des trois paquets précédents et se sont appuyées sur une vaste consultation des parties concernées (notamment les partenaires sociaux) et des citoyens (environ 25 000). Ces analyses peuvent être consultées à l'adresse suivante:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm

Les propositions du quatrième paquet visent à inverser la tendance au déclin du rail dans plusieurs États membres, en s'appuyant notamment sur l'expérience acquise dans les États membres qui ont ouvert leurs services commerciaux à la concurrence par le libre accès et/ou ont lancé des procédures d'appel d'offres pour attribuer des marchés de service public. Ces mesures ont contribué à la création de nouveaux emplois et ont permis, dans certains cas, de compenser les pertes d'emplois à long terme dans le secteur ferroviaire résultant de l'évolution technologique.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011534/13
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Fourth railway package

The fourth railway package presented by the Commission aims to complete the process of opening up rail transport to competition in the EU by establishing a single European railway market. In particular, the package aims to fully open up the sector to competition in 2019, including domestic and regional routes, despite the opposition of the European Transport Workers' Federation, which called on railway sector employees to take action on 9 October 2013.

The three previous railways packages resulted in a general increase in fares, the abandonment of less profitable lines and less track maintenance. How can the Commission claim that opening up these markets 'has shown improvements in quality and availability of services' when all railway service users state the opposite?

There have been reductions in the number of staff, increased outsourcing and more precarious work. How can the Commission argue that this liberalisation should lead to 'new and better jobs'?

As a result of these directives, there has been a general reduction in rail transport, compared to road transport, in Europe. How can the Commission claim that this fast-track liberalisation will enable railway transport to be 'decarbonised' when it is actually leading to a decline in rail use?

When will the Commission give a detailed report on the impact of the first three packages on changes in fares, accessibility to the public rail service, ecological progress and the number and quality of jobs in the sector?

Would the Commission consider abandoning the liberalisation of the railway sector and revise to the previous railways packages? Or is it taking action with scientific or ecological certainty?

If the Commission continues on the path of liberalisation, when will the fourth railway package be referred to Parliament?

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

The fourth railway package proposals have been adopted by the Commission on 30 January 2013. The European Parliament has been actively examining all these proposals and draft reports have already been submitted by the various rapporteurs. The draft reports are expected to be voted before the end of the year in its Committee for Transport and Tourism.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the impact assessments of the fourth package, which have covered economic, environmental and social aspects, have taken into account the outcomes of the 3 previous packages in their analysis and are based on a broad consultation of stakeholders (including social partners) and citizens (some 25.000) at the following address:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/packages/2013_en.htm

The fourth package proposals aim at reversing the decline of rail in several Member States, building notably upon the experiences in those Member States that have opened their commercial services to competition through open access and/or that have put their public service contracts for tender.New jobs have been created further to those measures offsetting in some cases the long-term decline of rail employment which results from technological change.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-011535/13
a Bizottság számára
Gáll-Pelcz Ildikó (PPE) és Bagó Zoltán (PPE)
(2013. október 8.)

Tárgy: Nemzeti bíróságok kötelezettsége *in limine litis*, vagy az eljárás bármelyik szakaszában

Magyarországon a 2008-as válságot megelőzően felvett devizaalapú hitelek – főként a megnövekedett törlesztőrészletek miatt – jelentős terheket rónak a lakosságra, és ez a helyzet veszélyezteti az Unió e területen is érvényesített, az általános életszínvonal növelésére vonatkozó célkitűzését is.

Tekintettel, hogy az uniós fogyasztóvédelemi rendelkezések oly módon kívánnak harmonizációt bevezetni, hogy az ne szüntesse meg e területen az egyes tagállamok jogi kultúrája között fennálló különbségeket, számos kérdés merül fel az uniós jog helyes alkalmazását illetően.

Tovább növeli az uniós fogyasztóvédelem komplexitását, hogy az uniós jog által támasztott kritériumokat – mint a fogyasztókkal szemben alkalmazott nyilvánvaló egyenlőtlenség ([1]) vagy a jóhiszeműség – területenként és tagállamonként eltérően kell alkalmazni.

A Bizottság szerint a 93/13/EGK irányelvet úgy kell-e értelmezni, hogy a fogyasztóval kötött szerződések kikötéseit a tisztességtelen szerződési feltételek szempontjából a nemzeti bíróság az eljárás során bármikor vizsgálhatja, valamint e bíróságnak hatáskörrel kell rendelkeznie – amennyiben ez szükséges az eljárás hatékonyságának és az uniós jog által a fogyasztókra ruházott jogok biztosításához – ideiglenes intézkedések meghozásához, ideértve adott esetben a végrehajtási eljárás felfüggesztését is?

Viviane Reding válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2013. december 3.)

Amint azt a Bizottság a P-011423/2013 kérdésre adott válaszában már kifejtette, és amint azt a tisztelt képviselő is bizonyára tudja, a 93/13/EGK irányelv ([2]) nem harmonizálja a nemzeti eljárási szabályokat. Ezek a szabályok – amint azt az EUB is megerősítette – az egyes tagállamok nemzeti jogrendjébe tartoznak, és „a tagállamok eljárási autonómiájaként" is szokás rájuk utalni ([3]). Az EUB ítélkezési gyakorlata ([4]) szerint azonban ezt az autonómiát az egyenértékűség és a tényleges érvényesülés elve korlátozza.

A tényleges érvényesülés elve értelmében eseti alapon kell értékelni, hogy a nemzeti eljárási szabályok lehetetlenné vagy túlzottan nehézkessé teszik-e az uniós jog által biztosított fogyasztói jogok gyakorlását. A 93/13/EGK irányelvet illetően ez az értékelés különösen arra vonatkozik, hogy a tisztességtelen szerződési feltételek nem lehetnek kötelezőek a fogyasztókra nézve. Bizonyos helyzetekben a tisztességtelen szerződési feltételek elleni védelem tényleges érvényesülése azt is megkövetelheti, hogy a szerződési feltételek tisztességtelen jellegének megítélése érdekében a tagállami bíróságok képesek legyenek felfüggeszteni a végrehajtási eljárást, amint azt az EUB a C-415/11. sz., Aziz-ügyben hozott ítéletében kimondta.

([1]) A felek szerződésből eredő jogai és kötelezettségei tekintetében.
([2]) HL L 95., 1993.4.21., 29. o.
([3]) Lásd például a C-618/10. sz., Banco Español de Crédito ügyben hozott ítélet 46. pontját és a C-415/11. sz., Aziz-ügyben hozott ítélet 50. pontját.
([4]) Lásd például a korábban említett két ügyet, valamint a C-32/12. sz., Soledad Duarte Hueros ügyben hozott ítélet 31. pontját.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011535/13
to the Commission
Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE) and Zoltán Bagó (PPE)
(8 October 2013)

Subject: Obligation of national courts at the inception of legal proceedings, or at any stage of the proceedings

In Hungary, loans taken out in foreign currencies before the crisis of 2008 are a substantial burden on people — mainly because of the increased repayment instalments — and this situation jeopardises the target adopted by the European Union in this field with regard to raising the general standard of living.

As the European Union's consumer protection provisions are intended to bring about harmonisation in such a way as to avoid eliminating the disparities which exist between the legal cultures of the individual Member States in this field, numerous questions arise concerning the correct application of European law.

Moreover, the complexity of EU consumer protection is increased by the fact that the criteria enshrined in European law — such as the manifest inequality ([1]) in the position of consumers, or good faith — have to be applied differently between territories and Member States.

Does the Commission consider that directive 93/13/EEC should be interpreted as meaning that the provisions of contracts with consumers may be reviewed by national courts at any stage during the proceedings from the point of view of unfairness of contract terms, and that — if this should prove necessary in the interests of effectiveness of the procedure and in order to enforce the rights vested in consumers by European law — such courts must have jurisdiction to adopt provisional measures, including, where appropriate, suspending the enforcement procedure?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

As already stated in the Commission's reply to Question P-011423/2013, the Honourable Member will be well aware that directive 93/13EEC ([2]) does not harmonise the national rules of procedure. Such rules, as confirmed by the CJEU, are a matter for the national legal order of each Member State, also referred to as the 'procedural autonomy of the Member States' ([3]). However, according to the case law of the CJEU ([4]), this autonomy is limited by the principles of equivalence and effectiveness.

On the basis of the principle of effectiveness, it has to be assessed on a case-by-case basis whether national rules of procedure make the exercise of consumer rights conferred by EC law impossible or excessively difficult. With regard to Directive 93/13/EEC this assessment relates especially to the requirement that unfair contract terms are not binding on consumers. In particular situations the effectiveness of the protection against unfair contract terms may indeed require that national courts must be able to suspend enforcement proceedings in order to assess the unfairness of contract terms, as stated by the CJEU in Case C-415/11 Aziz.

([1]) With regard to the rights and obligations of the parties derived from a contract between them.
([2]) OJ No L 95, 21.4.1993, p.29.
([3]) See, for instance, Case C-618/10 Banco Español de Crédito, paragraph 46 and Case C-415/11 Aziz, paragraph 50.
([4]) See, for instance, the two cases mentioned before and Case C-32/12, Soledad Duarte Hueros, paragraph 31.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-011537/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(9 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Προβλέψεις της Επιτροπής για την ανεργία στην Ελλάδα

Οι οικονομικές προβλέψεις της Γενικής Διεύθυνσης Οικονομικών και Χρηματοδοτικών Υποθέσεων (ΓΔ ECFIN) που γίνονται εξ ονόματος της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής διαψεύδονται τα τελευταία χρόνια από τους πραγματικούς δείκτες της Ελληνικής οικονομίας και αποκλίνουν από την υπάρχουσα οικονομική κατάσταση με αποτέλεσμα να χρειάζονται μονίμως αναθεώρηση. Ιδιαίτερα η εκρηκτική άνοδος της ανεργίας στην Ελλάδα διέψευσε όλες τις προβλέψεις που έκανε η Επιτροπή.

Συγκεκριμένα, για τα τελευταία 3 χρόνια:

Για το 2010 η Επιτροπή προέβλεψε 10,2% ανεργία, αναγκάστηκε να αναθεωρήσει στο 11,8%, ενώ η πραγματική ανεργία μετρήθηκε τελικά από την Eurostat 12,6%. Για το 2011 η Επιτροπή προέβλεψε 13,2%, αναγκάστηκε να αναθεωρήσει στο 15,0%, ενώ η πραγματική ανεργία μετρήθηκε εκ των υστέρων στο 17,7%. Ομοίως για το 2012, η Επιτροπή προέβλεψε 15,2%, αναγκάστηκε να αναθεωρήσει σε 18,4%, ενώ η πραγματική ανεργία έφτασε σύμφωνα με την Eurostat στο 24,3%. Διακρίνουμε ότι υπάρχει μια απαράδεκτη απόκλιση ανάμεσα στις προβλέψεις και στην πραγματική ανεργία που φτάνει τις 9 ποσοστιαίες μονάδες (απόκλιση 60%) το 2012.

Δεδομένου ότι η ανεργία αποτελεί δείκτη βαρύνουσας σημασίας για την οικονομική ανάπτυξη και την κοινωνική συνοχή στη χώρα, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιοι είναι οι λόγοι για τους οποίους η Επιτροπή έπεσε έξω στις προβλέψεις της για την Ελλάδα και ειδικότερα για την ανεργία στη χώρα τα προηγούμενα τρία έτη;

2. Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την αρχική πρόβλεψη της Επιτροπής για 18,4% το 2013 και την πολλαπλή αναθεώρησή της στο 27%, ποια είναι η εκτίμηση της Επιτροπής για το ύψος της ανεργίας το 2013;

3. Σε ποιο ύψος ανεργίας έχει στηριχθεί το μακροοικονομικό σενάριο της Επιτροπής για τα έτη 2014, 2015 και 2016, μακροοικονομικό σενάριο το οποίο αποτελεί τη βάση για το μεσοπρόθεσμο πρόγραμμα δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής που εφαρμόζεται στην Ελλάδα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(31 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Το γεγονός ότι οι προβλέψεις, περιλαμβανομένων, μεταξύ άλλων, των προβολών της Επιτροπής, έχουν υποτιμήσει στο παρελθόν το βάθος της ύφεσης στην Ελλάδα, έχει αποτελέσει ήδη αντικείμενο έντονων συζητήσεων και αναλύσεων. Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στη θέση I.5 των Ευρωπαϊκών Οικονομικών Προβλέψεων του Φθινοπώρου 2012, καθώς και στη θέση 1 της ανά χώρα έκθεσης του ΔΝΤ του Ιουνίου 2013 αριθ. 13/154.

Οι τελευταίες αδημοσίευτες προβολές της Επιτροπής για την Ελλάδα περιέχονται στην Έκθεση Συμμόρφωσης της 3ης επανεξέτασης του Ιουλίου 2013. Υπολογίζεται ως εκ τούτου ότι το ετήσιο ποσοστό ανεργίας (σύμφωνα με την διεθνώς συγκρίσιμη έννοια της ΔΟΕ) θα φθάσει το 27,0% το 2013.

Η Έκθεση συμμόρφωσης της 3ης επανεξέτασης του Ιουλίου 2013 προβλέπει επίπεδα ανεργίας (σύμφωνα με την διεθνώς συγκρίσιμη έννοια της ΔΟΕ) από 26,0% το 2014, σε 24,0% το 2015 και 21,0% το 2016.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011537/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Commission forecasts in respect of Greek unemployment levels

Economic forecasts carried out in recent years by the Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) on behalf of the Commission have been proven wrong by actual economic indicators for Greece and the current economic situation. It has accordingly been necessary to adjust them continuously, particularly with regard to spiralling unemployment figures in Greece defying all Commission predictions.

Over the last three years:

The Commission was forced to revise from 10.2% to 11.8% its unemployment forecast for 2010, compared with the actual Eurostat figure of 12.6%. It was also forced to revise its 2011 forecast from 13.2% to 15%, compared with the actual figure of 17.7%. Similarly, it had to revise its 2012 forecast from 15.2% to 18.4%, compared with the Eurostat figure of 24.3%. In other words, we can observe an inadmissible disparity between forecast and actual unemployment figures, culminating in a 9-point (60%) divergence for 2012.

Given the fundamental significance of unemployment figures as a yardstick for economic growth and social cohesion in a country:

1. Can the Commission give the reasons for the inaccuracy of its forecasts with regard to Greece, particularly in respect of unemployment over the last three years?

2. Given that the Commission's initial forecast for 2013 has been repeatedly revised upwards from 18.4% to 27%, what is its current unemployment forecast for this year?

3. What unemployment levels has the Commission taken as the basis for its macroeconomic estimates for 2014, 2015 and 2016 for the purpose of drawing up the medium-term economic adjustment programme being implemented in Greece?

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

The fact that forecasts, including the projections of the Commission among others, have in the past underestimated the depth of the recession in Greece has already been the subject of intensive discussion and analysis. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to Box I.5 in the European Economic Forecast Autumn 2012 as well as Box 1 in the June 2013 IMF Country Report No 13/154.

The latest published unemployment projections of the Commission for Greece can be found in the 3rd Review Compliance Report from July 2013. This estimates that the annual unemployment rate (according to the internationally comparable ILO concept) will reach 27.0% in 2013.

The 3rd Review Compliance Report from July 2013 projects an unemployment rate (according to the internationally comparable ILO concept) of 26.0% in 2014, falling to 24.0% in 2015 and 21.0% in 2016.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-011538/13
alla Commissione
Guido Milana (S&D)
(9 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Impianti di acquacoltura nelle isole greche

Da alcune settimane è in corso una protesta di pescatori, abitanti, stranieri residenti e turisti delle isole greche di Lefkada, Meganisi, Kalamos e Kastos (area Ionio) contro il progetto di costruzione di allevamenti intensivi di acquacoltura attorno a queste coste. La realizzazione di questi impianti si ritiene distruggerebbe non solo uno splendido e incontaminato ecosistema, ma anche un turismo straniero e interno in forte ripresa.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

— se è a conoscenza di questi progetti;

— se sono stati utilizzati finanziamenti e, in caso affermativo, quali tipi di finanziamento;

— se gli impianti progettati rispettano le norme dell'Unione in materia ambientale, in particolare la direttiva Habitat, Natura 2000 e la direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(12 novembre 2013)

La Commissione non è a conoscenza dei progetti cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato. Lo strumento di cui dispone l'UE per il finanziamento degli investimenti produttivi nel settore dell'acquacoltura è il Fondo europeo per la pesca (FEP). Dall'inizio del periodo di programmazione in corso, vale a dire dal 2007, non sono stati stanziati fondi del FEP per la realizzazione di progetti di acquacoltura in Grecia. Poiché il programma operativo del FEP è attuato in regime di gestione concorrente, la Grecia non necessita dell'autorizzazione preliminare della Commissione per avviare tali progetti. Tuttavia, la preventiva trasmissione di una valutazione d'impatto ambientale per ciascun progetto di acquacoltura è un requisito fondamentale per ottenere i finanziamenti.

L'area marina compresa tra le isole menzionate dall'onorevole deputato è stata designata dalla direttiva Habitat 92/43/CEE ([1]) come zona speciale di conservazione da tutelate nell'ambito della rete Natura 2000 ([2]). Di conseguenza, qualsiasi impianto di acquacoltura in tale area deve essere valutato in conformità alle disposizioni di cui all'articolo 6 della direttiva e può essere autorizzato solo dopo avere accertato che non pregiudicherà l'integrità del sito in causa. È responsabilità delle competenti autorità greche garantire il rispetto di questi requisiti. La Commissione ha pubblicato orientamenti specifici sull'attuazione di tali disposizioni in relazione alle attività di acquacoltura ([3]).

La direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino (2008/56/CE ([4])) non stabilisce requisiti specifici per i singoli progetti di acquacoltura, bensì prevede il conseguimento entro il 2020 di un buono stato ecologico delle acque marine, che deve essere garantito dagli Stati membri.

([1]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE del Consiglio, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992 .
([2]) ESOTERIKO ARCHIPELAGOS IONIOU (MEGANISI, ARKOUDI, ATOKOS, VROMONAS) GR2220003.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Aqua-N2000 %20guide.pdf
([4]) GU L 164 del 25.6.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-011538/13
to the Commission
Guido Milana (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Aquaculture facilities in the Greek islands

Over recent weeks, local people, foreign nationals, tourists and fishermen on the Greek islands of Lefkada, Meganisi, Kalamos and Kastos (in the Ionian Sea) have been protesting against plans to build intensive aquaculture facilities along their coasts. They believe that the construction of these facilities would result in the destruction of not only a remarkable, still unspoilt ecosystem, but also a fast-recovering domestic and international tourism industry.

— Is the Commission aware of these plans?

— Is any funding being provided? If so, what type of funding?

— Do the proposed facilities comply with EU environmental standards, in particular the Habitats Directive (Natura 2000) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?

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

The Commission is not aware of the plans referenced by the Honourable Member. The relevant EU-level instrument for financing productive investments in aquaculture is the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). No EFF funding has been allocated to aquaculture projects in Greece since the beginning of the current programming period in 2007. As the EFF operational programme is implemented under shared management, Greece does not require prior authorisation from the Commission to initiate aquaculture projects. However, prior submission of an environmental impact assessment study for each aquaculture project is a key requirement for funding.

The marine area between the islands referred to by the Honourable Member has been designated under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([1]) as a Special Area of Conservation for protection under the Natura 2000 network ([2]). Accordingly, any aquaculture facilities in that area would have to be assessed in accordance with the provisions of Article 6 of the directive and can be authorised if it is ascertained that they will not affect the integrity of the area. It is the responsibility of the Greek competent authorities to ensure compliance with these requirements. The Commission has issued specific guidance on the implementation of these provisions in relation to aquaculture activities ([3]).

The provisions of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC ([4])) do not lay down specific requirements for any individual aquaculture project. Rather, the directive provides for the overall achievement of Good Environmental Status for marine waters by 2020, which has to be ensured by Member States.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, Official Journal L 206, 22/07/1992.
([2]) ESOTERIKO ARCHIPELAGOS IONIOU (MEGANISI, ARKOUDI, ATOKOS, VROMONAS) GR2220003.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Aqua-N2000%20guide.pdf
([4]) OJ L 164, 25.6.2008.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011539/13
al Consejo
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(9 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Negación del permiso a una misión de observación de la OSCE en España

El pasado 27 de septiembre el Delegado del Gobierno de España para las relaciones con la OSCE impidió que la Oficina para las Instituciones Democráticas y los Derechos Humanos de esta organización observara la manifestación convocada bajo el lema «Jaque al Rey» para el pasado 25 de octubre.

El director de la citada oficina de la OSCE, Janez Lenarčič, ha realizado unas contundentes declaraciones expresando su profunda preocupación por la citada decisión del Gobierno de impedir la observación de dicha manifestación: «La repentina oposición de las autoridades españolas provoca cierta preocupación por las intenciones que puedan tener mañana», afirmó.

El propósito de la misión era evaluar la actuación policial frente a dicha manifestación ante los últimos episodios policiales contra los manifestantes. Ante la prohibición de la observación, la OSCE llamó a las autoridades «a asegurar el respeto a la libertad de reunión, en la línea de los compromisos de la OSCE y otros estándares internacionales de los derechos humanos».

¿Conoce el Consejo la decisión de las autoridades españolas de no permitir la observación de la OSCE en la pasada manifestación «Jaque al Rey»?

¿Considera el Consejo que el Gobierno de España debe mantener la colaboración con instituciones como la OSCE en materias relativas a la supervisión del cumplimiento de los derechos humanos?

¿Tiene conocimiento el Consejo de qué Estados miembros de la Unión Europea han denegado el permiso a misiones de observación similares de la OSCE?

Respuesta
(16 de diciembre de 2013)

El Consejo no ha deliberado sobre este asunto dado que no entra en su ámbito de competencias.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011539/13
to the Council
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Authorisation denied for an OSCE observation mission in Spain

On 27 September 2013, the Spanish Government's representative for relations with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) denied the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) authorisation to send observers to the 'Jaque al Rey' (anti-monarchy) demonstration on 25 October.

The Director of the ODIHR, Janez Lenarčič, issued some strongly-worded statements expressing his deep concern at the aforementioned decision by the Spanish Government: 'the Spanish authorities' sudden opposition raises concerns over their intentions tomorrow'.

The purpose of the mission was to assess police activity at the demonstration following recent problems between police and demonstrators. In response to the decision refusing authorisation for the mission, the OSCE called on the authorities 'to safeguard freedom of assembly, in line with OSCE commitments and other international human rights standards'.

Is the Council aware of the Spanish authorities' decision not to allow the OSCE to send observers to the recent 'Jaque al Rey' demonstration?

Does the Council take the view that the Spanish Government should continue to cooperate with institutions such as the OSCE on matters relating to the monitoring of human rights compliance?

Which other EU Member States have denied the OSCE authorisation to carry out similar observation missions?

Reply
(16 December 2013)

The Council has not discussed this question, as it does not fall within its sphere of competence.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011540/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(9 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Construcción de la autovía entre Solares y Torrelavega

El pasado mes de noviembre de 2012 el Gobierno de España estableció una previsión presupuestaria para acabar el tramo de autovía situado entre Solares y Torrelavega en el norte del país. Se trata de un tramo de autopista que carece de interés social o económico y se está realizando con un estudio de impacto ambiental de hace veinte años.

Esta autovía está proyectada desde 1993 cuando, gobernando España el PSOE, se aprobó la evaluación de impacto ambiental que se realizó bajo un marco jurídico totalmente diferente al actual. La Directiva 2011/92/UE relativa a la evaluación de impacto ambiental implementada en el cuerpo del Derecho español a través de la Ley de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental de proyectos (Real Decreto Legislativo 1/2008 de 11 de enero), estipula que tras el paso de cinco años cualquier estudio de impacto queda sin validez y debe ser realizado de nuevo. Esto implica que, en el caso de los tramos pendientes de la autovía entre Solares y Torrelavega, el Gobierno de España puede estar incumpliendo el Derecho de la UE.

Desde el punto de vista de la pertinencia social y económica del proyecto, queda claro que no existe un gran interés social y económico que permita justificar que se ignore el impacto ambiental de dicha obra. El tráfico en las carreteras nacionales que existen ahora dista mucho de encontrarse masificado y las perspectivas en su progresión distan mucho de plantear el incremento del tráfico en la región.

¿Conoce la Comisión la situación del citado proyecto de autovía entre Solares y Torrelavega?

¿Considera la Comisión que dicha infraestructura cumple lo establecido en la Directiva 2011/92/UE relativa a la evaluación de impacto ambiental?

¿Se están financiando con fondos europeos algunos de los tramos de la citada autovía?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión no tiene conocimiento de la situación a que se refiere Su Señoría. Según la Directiva 2011/92/UE ([1]), los proyectos que puedan tener efectos significativos en el medio ambiente deben someterse al requisito de autorización de su desarrollo y a una evaluación con respecto a sus efectos. Estos proyectos se definen en el artículo 4 de la Directiva e incluyen la construcción de autopistas y vías rápidas. Sin embargo, la Directiva no fija ningún plazo de validez de las evaluaciones de impacto ambiental que se lleven a cabo de conformidad con dichas disposiciones, por lo que esta cuestión entra plenamente en el ámbito de aplicación de la legislación española.

Por consiguiente, la información disponible no permite apuntar a una posible aplicación incorrecta de la Directiva 2011/92/UE por parte de las autoridades españolas, en este caso.

La autopista entre Solares y Torrelavega no se ha beneficiado de ninguna financiación de la UE.

([1]) Directiva de 13 de diciembre de 2011, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011540/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Construction of the motorway between Solares and Torrelavega

In November 2012, the Spanish Government established a budget estimate for completion of the stretch of motorway between Solares and Torrelavega in northern Spain. This stretch of motorway does not offer any significant public or economic benefit, and construction is being carried out with an environmental impact assessment that is twenty years old.

The motorway has been planned since 1993, when Spain was governed by the Spanish socialist party (PSOE). The environmental impact assessment of the motorway, which was performed under a legal framework totally different to the one now in place, was approved that year. Directive 2011/92/EU on environmental impact assessment, transposed into Spanish law by the Law on the Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects [*Ley de Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental de proyectos*] (Royal Legislative Decree 1/2008 of 11 January), provides that after five years, any impact assessment is invalid and must be performed again. Thus, in the case of the planned stretches of motorway between Solares and Torrelavega, the Spanish Government may be violating EC law.

In terms of the social and economic significance of the project, it is clear that there is no great social or economic benefit that would justify disregarding the project's environmental impact. Traffic on existing national roads is far from congested, and forecasts do not suggest that traffic in the region is likely to increase.

Is the Commission aware of the situation involving the aforementioned motorway project between Solares and Torrelavega?

Does the Commission believe that this infrastructure meets the requirements of Directive 2011/92/EU on environmental impact assessment?

Are any stretches of the aforementioned motorway being paid for with EU funds?

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

The Commission is not aware of the situation raised by the Honourable Member. Directive 2011/92/EU ([1]) requires that projects likely to have significant effects on the environment be made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. Those projects are defined in Article 4 of the directive and include the construction of motorways and express roads. However, the directive does not establish any time limit for the validity of environmental impact assessments carried out pursuant to this provision. This is therefore a matter which is governed entirely by Spanish legislation.

In consequence, the available information does not allow for the identification of a possible bad application of Directive 2011/92/EU by the Spanish authorities in this instance.

The motorway between Solares and Torrelavega has not received EU funding.

([1]) EIA Directive 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.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-011541/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(9 de octubre de 2013)

Asunto: Liberación de moscas transgénicas en Tarragona (Cataluña)

Considerando que en la zona del sur de Tarragona (Catalunya) hay una plaga de mosca del olivo, perjudicial para el fruto y el aceite, y que la empresa Oxitec ha solicitado autorización a la Generalitat de Catalunya (que debe ser revisada por la Comisión Nacional del Ministerio de Agricultura de España) para realizar un experimento con moscas transgénicas. El objetivo es utilizar moscas modificadas genéticamente contra la plaga de mosca del olivo. Este será el primer caso de liberación de animales transgénicos en toda Europa.

Considerando que el experimento, de una duración de tres meses, se quiere realizar en 48 olivos (tapados con redes) en un área de 1 500 m^2 en la que se liberarán las moscas transgénicas, y que la empresa no ha presentado ningún plan para evaluar la bioseguridad del experimento, que suscita serias dudas sobre sus consecuencias para la salud y el medio ambiente.

Considerando la novedad del experimento, que sería la primera experiencia de liberación de animales transgénicos, que presenta muchas incógnitas en cuanto a sus consecuencias para el medio ambiente, la salud y la seguridad alimentaria, y que tampoco está clara su eficacia para tratar la plaga, ya que los daños se producen en la fase larvaria de la mosca.

Invocando el principio de cautela y la Directiva 2001/18/CE sobre la liberación intencional en el medio ambiente de organismos modificados genéticamente, se podría solicitar la denegación de la autorización de la empresa Oxitec.

¿Ha sido informada la Comisión de la solicitud presentada por la empresa Oxitec?

¿Pedirá la Comisión a las autoridades competentes que denieguen la autorización a la empresa Oxitec?

¿No cree la Comisión que, de conformidad con el Protocolo de Cartagena sobre Bioseguridad, se debería haber incluido en la solicitud de autorización un plan para evaluar la bioseguridad del experimento?

¿Qué mecanismos tiene la Comisión para garantizar que los órganos competentes y responsables exijan el cumplimiento de la normativa de la Unión para conceder la autorización de dicho proyecto? ¿Qué medidas piensa aplicar en caso de incumplimiento de las directivas comunitarias?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de diciembre de 2013)

La Comisión es consciente de la solicitud realizada por Oxitec. La autoridad competente de España ha presentado un resumen de la notificación recibida con arreglo al artículo 6 de la Directiva 2001/18/CE ([1]). Se puede consultar en el sitio web http://gmoinfo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/gmo_report.aspx?CurNot=B/ES/13/07

No corresponde a la Comisión determinar si debe concederse autorización para un ensayo de la parte B . La Directiva 2001/18/CE exige que la autoridad competente del Estado miembro en cuyo territorio vaya a realizarse la liberación evalúe la solicitud y determine si procede o no conceder la autorización. Los Estados miembros deben tener en cuenta en el principio de precaución durante este proceso.

El procedimiento de autorización y la información que debe figurar en la notificación se establecen en el artículo 6 de la Directiva 2001/18/CE. Las autoridades competentes podrá, si así lo desean, solicitar información ulterior para ayudarles a completar su evaluación de la solicitud.

([1]) DO L 106 de 17.4.2001, p. 1.

Se exige a dichas autoridades que sigan los procedimientos establecidos en el artículo 11 de la Directiva 2001/18/CE, que incluyen un adecuado y oportuno intercambio de información entre las autoridades competentes y la Comisión. La Comisión remitirá dicha información a los demás Estados miembros que, en un plazo de treinta días, podrán presentar observaciones. De conformidad con el artículo 9 de la Directiva, el procedimiento también implica la consulta al público. La autoridad competente tendrá en cuenta las opiniones expresadas por el público y las observaciones presentadas por los Estados miembros a la hora de adoptar una decisión.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011541/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Release of transgenic flies in Tarragona (Catalonia)

Whereas in the south of Tarragona (Catalonia), there is a an olive fly plague that is harmful to olives and olive oil, and the Oxitec company has requested authorisation from the Autonomous Government of Catalonia (subject to review by the National Commission of the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture) to conduct an experiment with transgenic flies. The aim is to use genetically modified flies to combat the olive fly plague. This will be the first time that transgenic animals are released anywhere in Europe.

Whereas the experiment, lasting three months, is designed to be performed on 48 olive trees (covered with netting) in an area of 1 500 m^2 where the transgenic flies will be released, and the company has not presented any plan to assess the biosafety of the experiment, raising serious doubts about its effects on health and the environment.

Whereas the novelty of the experiment, which would be the first time transgenic animals are released, means that there are many unknowns in terms of its effects on the environment, health and food safety, and the experiment's effectiveness in combating the plague is also unclear, since the damage occurs in the fly's larval stage.

In accordance with the precautionary principle and Directive 2001/18/EC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms, a request could be made to deny authorisation to the Oxitec company.

Has the Commission been informed of the request made by Oxitec?

Will the Commission ask the appropriate authorities to deny authorisation to Oxitec?

Does the Commission not believe that, in accordance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the request for authorisation should have included a plan to assess the biosafety of the experiment?

What mechanisms does the Commission have to ensure that the appropriate authorities with responsibility in this area require compliance with EU legislation in order to grant authorisation for this project? What measures does it plan to take in the event of non-compliance with Community directives?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the request made by Oxitec. The competent authority for Spain has submitted a summary of the notification received under Article 6 of Directive 2001/18/EC ([1]). This can be found on the following website: http://gmoinfo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/gmo_report.aspx?CurNot=B/ES/13/07

It is not for the Commission to determine whether or not the authorisation for a Part B trial should be granted. Directive 2001/18/EC requires that the competent authority of the Member State within whose territory the release is to take place assesses the application and determines whether or not authorisation should be granted. Member States should take into account in the precautionary principle during this process.

The authorisation procedure including the information required in the notification is set out in Article 6 of Directive 2001/18/EC. The competent authority may, if they wish, request further additional information to assist them in completing their assessment of the application.

Competent Authorities are required to follow the procedures as set out in Article 11 of Directive 2001/18/EC which includes the appropriate and timely exchange of information between the competent authorities and the Commission. The Commission forwards this information to the other Member States, which may, within 30 days, present their observations. In accordance with Article 9 of the directive, the procedure also involves consulting the public. Opinions expressed by the public and the observations submitted by the Member States will be considered by the Competent Authority in taking a decision.

([1]) OJ L 106, 17.4.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011542/13
to the Commission
Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: TripAdvisor's refusal to remove businesses from its database

TripAdvisor is an online travel website which allows anyone to leave a review or opinion about a restaurant, hotel or other attraction. Reviewers do not have to sign up to the website, nor do they have to prove that they have, indeed, visited the restaurant or hotel they are reviewing. Businesses can appear on the website without giving prior consent. TripAdvisor — based in the United States — has a policy of only removing a business from its website if it has closed down, even if the business has requested that its information be removed. Could the Commission explain:

1. whether TripAdvisor's refusal to accept such requests from businesses based in the European Union contravenes any EC laws on the right to privacy?

2. what course of action is available to businesses that wish to be removed from the TripAdvisor website?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

In accordance with Article 2(a) of Directive 95/46/EC ([1]) personal data are any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). The rights laid down in that directive can therefore in principle only be invoked by natural persons. The case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU shows that legal persons can claim the protection of Articles 7 and 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights (the right to privacy and the right to protection of personal data) only in so far as the official title of the legal person identifies one or more natural persons ([2]). The majority of reviews published on Trip Advisor relate to legal persons and only rarely make it possible to identify natural persons. An express mention of a chef of a restaurant or of an owner of a family hotel could however serve as examples of reviews which involve identified or identifiable natural persons.

Furthermore, Directive 2006/114/EC provides a minimum level protection against misleading advertising in business-to-business relations. It prohibits any advertising which in any way, including its presentation, deceives or is likely to deceive the persons to whom it is addressed or whom it reaches and which, by reason of its deceptive nature, is likely to affect their economic behaviour or which for those reasons, injures or is likely to injure a competitor.

Without prejudice to the competence of the Commission as guardian of the Treaties, the supervision and enforcement of data protection and marketing legislation falls within the competence of national authorities, in particular the data protection supervisory authorities, and courts.

([1]) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31-50 .

([2]) Judgment of 9 November 2010 in joined cases C-92/09 and C-93/09 Volker und Markus Schecke GbR and Hartmut Eifert v Land Hessen, paragraph 53.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011543/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(9 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Miljoenen voor moordenaars, verkrachters, pedofielen en terroristen

Naar *The Times* bericht ([1]), heeft het Verenigd Koninkrijk sinds 1998 202 Europese mensenrechtenzaken verloren waarbij criminelen betrokken waren, en als gevolg daarvan miljoenen ponden aan schadevergoeding moeten betalen. De rechters in Straatsburg hebben GBP 4,4 miljoen toegewezen aan klagers waaronder moordenaars, verkrachters, pedofielen en terroristen. Over deze uitspraken is in het VK een geweldige beroering ontstaan.

1. Hoe denkt de Commissie over de beslissingen van de rechters van het EHRM in Straatsburg op grond waarvan miljoenen euro's moesten worden uitbetaald aan moordenaars, verkrachters, pedofielen en terroristen wegens inbreuken op hun fundamentele rechten die in geen verhouding staan tot de misdaden die zij hebben gepleegd?

2. Ziet de Commissie de uitbetaling van dergelijke bedragen aan schurken als middel om het vertrouwen van de EU-burger in de Europese rechtspraak op te vijzelen?

3. Hoe denkt de Commissie over de manier waarop de Europese mensenrechtenzaken op dit moment in strafzaken zijn geïntegreerd?

4. Denkt zij dat deze tendens in de beslissingen van het EHRM bijdraagt aan de gemeenschappelijke bestrijding in Europa van bijzonder zware criminaliteit zoals terrorisme, mensensmokkel en seksuele uitbuiting van vrouwen en kinderen?

5. Hoe denkt de Commissie ervoor te zorgen dat het publiek zijn vertrouwen in de rechtspraak c.q. in de bescherming van de mensenrechten bewaart (herwint)?

6. Heeft de Commissie een lijst van landen waartegen de rechters van het EHRM dit soort oordelen hebben uitgesproken?

7. Staat Nederland op die lijst? Zo ja, voor welk bedrag en bij hoeveel zaken is Nederland betrokken?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(5 december 2013)

De Commissie beschikt niet over gegevens met betrekking tot de gevallen in de vraag van het geachte Parlementslid die zouden wijzen op de uitvoering van het EU-recht. Overeenkomstig artikel 51, lid 1, van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie zijn de bepalingen in dit handvest uitsluitend tot de lidstaten gericht wanneer zij het recht van de Unie ten uitvoer brengen.

([1]) http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article3889514.ece.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011543/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Millions paid out to murderers, rapists, paedophiles and terrorists

The Times reports ([1]) that Britain has lost 202 European human rights cases involving criminals since 1998, resulting in millions of pounds being paid out in compensation. Judges in Strasbourg have paid out GBP 4.4 million to recipients including murderers, rapists, paedophiles and terrorists. These rulings have caused a tremendous outcry in the UK.

1. What is the Commission's opinion concerning the rulings of the ECHR judges resulting in millions of euros being paid out to murderers, rapists, paedophiles and terrorists because of infringements of their human rights that are in no way comparable to the crimes that were committed?

2. Does it regard the paying of these sums to villains as a way of improving EU citizens' trust in the European judicial system?

3. What is the Commission's opinion regarding the way that European human rights are currently included in penal cases?

4. Does it think that this trend in ECHR decision-making contributes to the common European fight against particularly serious crime, such as terrorism, trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of women and children?

5. How does the Commission propose to keep (gain) the public's trust in the judicial system and in safeguarding human rights?

6. Does it have a list of the countries affected by this kind of ruling by the ECHR judges?

7. Is the Netherlands on this list? If so, how many cases in the Netherlands have there been and what amount was paid out?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

The Commission has no information relating to the cases referred to in the Honourable Member's question that would indicate they concerned the implementation of European Union law. According to Article 51(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, its provisions are addressed to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law.

([1]) http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article3889514.ece

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011544/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (ALDE)
(9 oktober 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Brief van Sam Rainsy, leider van de Nationale Reddingspartij van Cambodja

Heeft de VV/HV de brief van 7 oktober 2013 van Sam Rainsy, leider van de Nationale Reddingspartij van Cambodja ontvangen?

Is de VV/HV bereid antwoord te geven op de vragen die Sam Rainsy in zijn brief van 7 oktober 2013 stelde, en zo ja, is ze dan tevens bereid haar antwoorden met het Parlement te delen?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(4 december 2013)

De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter heeft de brief over de politieke situatie in Cambodja, waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst, van Sam Rainsy, de voorzitter van de Cambodia National Rescue Party, ontvangen. Zij droeg de directeur voor Zuid- en Zuidoost-Azië in de Europese dienst voor extern optreden (EDEO), de heer Ugo Astuto, op om te antwoorden. Op 30 oktober deed hij dit.

Gezien het vertrouwelijke karakter van de briefwisseling deelt de EDEO dergelijke brieven normaliter niet met derden. Bij eerdere gelegenheden heeft de heer Rainsy echter al brieven die aan hem werden gericht, op zijn website gepubliceerd. Onlangs heeft hij een brief van de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter openbaar gemaakt waarin de EU alle partijen aanmoedigt om de dialoog te hervatten en om belangrijke hervormingen, zoals die over de verkiezingen, te bespreken. Volgens de EU zou het voor het verloop van toekomstige verkiezingen belangrijk zijn om de tekorten van de vorige verkiezingen te identificeren en aan te pakken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011544/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Johannes Cornelis van Baalen (ALDE)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Letter from Sam Rainsy, President of the Cambodia National Rescue Party

Did the VP/HR receive a letter from Sam Rainsy, President of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, dated 7 October 2013?

Is the VP/HR prepared to answer the questions put by Sam Rainsy in his letter of 7 October 2013, and is she willing to share her answers with Parliament?

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

The HR/VP received the letter referred to by the Honorable Member from Sam Rainsy, the President of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, on the political situation in Cambodia. She instructed the Director for South and Southeast Asia in the European External Action Service (EEAS), Mr Ugo Astuto, to reply. He has done so on 30 October.

As confidentiality of correspondence prevails, the EEAS would normally not share such letters with third parties. On previous occasions, however Mr Rainsy has made letters addressed to him public on his website. He has recently made public a letter from HR/VP in which the EU encourages all parties to resume dialogue and to discuss key reforms, in particular electoral ones. The EU is of the opinion that identifying and addressing shortcomings during the last elections would be important for the conduct of future elections.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011574/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Législation pour que les entreprises de l'Union veillent à ce que leurs achats ne profitent pas aux auteurs d'actes de corruption et de violations graves des Droits de l'homme

Le Parlement propose que la Commission élabore une législation exigeant que les entreprises de l'Union veillent à ce que leurs achats ne profitent pas aux auteurs d'actes de corruption et de violations graves des Droits de l'homme ainsi qu'aux acteurs de conflits, notamment en procédant à des contrôles et des audits de leur chaîne d'approvisionnement et en en publiant les conclusions.

Il estime que l'obligation de vérification approfondie pour les entreprises de l'Union, en conformité avec les principes directeurs de l'OCDE, permettrait de faire progresser les entreprises européennes et de rendre plus cohérentes les politiques européennes de développement et de défense des Droits de l'homme, en particulier dans les régions touchées par un conflit.

Comment la Commission se positionne-t-elle face à cette demande?

Réponse commune donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(11 décembre 2013)

Les entreprises de l'UE, comme leurs homologues américaines et asiatiques, sont exposées au risque de financer des groupes armés étant donné que leurs chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales en ressources minérales peuvent souvent avoir comme point d'origine des zones de conflit. Il convient de traiter de manière globale cette question et les problèmes qui y sont associés.

La Commission, quant à elle, réfléchit actuellement à la meilleure manière de traiter le problème de l'approvisionnement responsable en ressources minérales originaires de zones de conflit et de zones à haut risque, conformément au guide de l'OCDE sur le devoir de diligence mentionné par les Honorables Parlementaires. Comme les travaux préparatoires ne sont pas achevés, la nature précise de l'initiative reste encore à déterminer.

En ce qui concerne les coûts que le devoir de diligence et la traçabilité imposent aux entreprises concernées, la Commission est consciente, sur la base d'informations préliminaires, du fait que les niveaux des coûts ne sont pas constants et peuvent varier selon les chaînes d'approvisionnement en ressources minérales (et en fonction de celles-ci). La Commission évalue donc actuellement la nature et l'ampleur de ces coûts dans le cadre de l'analyse d'impact qu'elle réalise; elle examinera aussi les conséquences que pourraient avoir des initiatives dans ce domaine sur la compétitivité des entreprises européennes responsables.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011545/13
aan de Commissie
Michael Cashman (S&D) en Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(9 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Vervolg op EU-initiatief inzake verantwoorde winning van mineralen

De globalisering in de moderne toeleveringsketens kan met zich brengen dat natuurlijke rijkdommen waarvoor bloedige conflicten zijn uitgevochten, internationaal worden verhandeld, ook door ondernemingen in de EU.

Met de invoering van een EU-verordening waarbij Europese bedrijven die natuurlijke rijkdommen gebruiken of verhandelen een zorgvuldigheidsplicht wordt opgelegd, overeenkomstig OESO- en VN-normen, zou invulling worden gegeven aan toezeggingen die de Europese Raad reeds heeft gedaan in de overkoepelende post-2015 agenda (zie de punten 16(f) en (h) van de conclusies van de Raad). Een in de EU-wetgeving vastgelegde zorgvuldigheidsplicht zou de inspanningen ondersteunen voor een in de post-2015 agenda op te nemen wereldwijd grondstoffeninitiatief.

De Commissie organiseerde onlangs een openbare raadpleging over een mogelijk „EU-initiatief inzake verantwoorde winning van mineralen", teneinde de houding van de EU in deze kwestie te bepalen. Tijdens een recente bijeenkomst met de commissie DEVE heeft zij toegezegd tegen eind 2013 met een voorstel te zullen komen.

Zal de Commissie ervoor zorgen dat in haar voorstel een dwingende verplichting wordt opgenomen voor in de EU actieve ondernemingen, die de nader te reguleren natuurlijke rijkdommen voor het eerst op de EU-markt brengen, controles uit te voeren op hun toeleveringsketen, een zogeheten zorgvuldigheidsplicht dus, die beantwoordt aan de internationale norm zoals omschreven in de OESO-richtlijnen betreffende zorgvuldigheidseisen?

In de DEVE-hoorzitting van 17 september werd de indruk gewekt dat de Commissie alleen de toeleveringssector in haar voorstel denkt te zullen bestrijken. Als dat juist is, hoe denkt de Commissie dan te zullen nagaan welke maatregelen (zo al überhaupt) de in de EU gevestigde ondernemingen op het punt van verantwoorde oorsprong nemen, en ervoor te zorgen dat die ondernemingen geen mensenrechtenschendingen financieren?

Antwoord van de heer De Gucht namens de Commissie
(11 december 2013)

Ondernemingen in de EU lopen, net als Amerikaanse en Aziatische ondernemingen, het gevaar dat zij gewapende groeperingen financieren, aangezien de oorsprong van hun mondiale toeleveringsketens voor mineralen in veel gevallen in een door conflicten getroffen gebied kan liggen. Voor deze en aanverwante kwesties is een alomvattende aanpak nodig.

De Commissie buigt zich momenteel over de vraag hoe op verantwoorde wijze mineralen uit door conflicten getroffen en risicovolle gebieden kunnen worden betrokken, in overeenstemming met de richtsnoeren betreffende zorgvuldigheidseisen van de Organisatie voor Economische Samenwerking en Ontwikkeling (OESO) waarnaar de geachte Parlementsleden verwijzen. Aangezien de voorbereidende werkzaamheden nog aan de gang zijn, moet de precieze aard van het initiatief nog worden vastgesteld.

Wat de kosten van de zorgvuldigheidseisen en de traceerbaarheid voor de betrokken ondernemingen betreft, is de Commissie zich er op grond van voorlopige informatie van bewust dat de kosten niet constant zijn en dat deze kunnen verschillen naar gelang van de mineralentoeleveringsketen. Daarom evalueert de Commissie momenteel de aard en de hoogte van deze kosten in het kader van haar effectbeoordelingen en onderzoekt zij ook de gevolgen van dergelijke initiatieven voor het concurrentievermogen van de verantwoordelijke ondernemingen in de EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011545/13
to the Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D) and Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Follow-up to EU initiative on responsible sourcing of minerals

The global nature of modern supply chains means that natural resources which have fuelled some of the world's most brutal conflicts are bought and traded internationally, including by companies operating in the EU.

The introduction of an EU regulation that requires European business entities using and trading natural resources to carry out due diligence, in line with OECD and UN standards, would align with commitments already made by the European Council in relation to the overarching post-2015 Millennium Development Goals agenda, (see points 16(f) and (h) of the Council's conclusions). EU due diligence legislation would reinforce critical efforts to include a global initiative on raw materials in the post-2015 agenda.

The Commission recently held a public consultation on a 'possible EU initiative on responsible sourcing of minerals' to determine the EU's response to this issue and, during a recent DeveCo hearing, committed to publishing a proposal by the end of 2013.

With this in mind, will the Commission ensure that its proposal contains a mandatory obligation for companies operating in the EU which initially place natural resources covered by the regulation on the EU market to undertake supply chain checks, known as due diligence, that meet the international standards laid down in the OECD Due Diligence Guidance?

At the DeveCo hearing of 17 September 2013, it was suggested that the Commission is considering targeting only the upstream sector in its proposal. If this is correct, how does the Commission intend to verify what steps, if any, EU-based companies are taking to source responsibly and to ensure that they are not financing human rights abuses?

Question for written answer E-011574/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Legislation requiring EU companies to ensure that their purchases do not support perpetrators of corruption, conflicts and grave human rights violations

Parliament has proposed that the Commission draw up legislation requiring EU companies to ensure that their purchases do not support perpetrators of corruption, conflicts and grave human rights violations, namely by carrying out checks and audits on their raw materials supply chains and publishing the findings.

It takes the view that mandatory due diligence by EU companies, in line with the guidelines published by the OECD, would boost European businesses and make EU human rights and development policies more coherent, especially in areas plagued by conflict.

What is the Commission's position in light of this request?

Question for written answer E-011577/13
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Legislation relating to raw materials from conflict zones

Despite fuelling some of the world's most brutal and entrenched conflicts, natural resources continue to be bought and traded on international markets, including by companies operating in the European Union (EU).

Would the Commission agree that the endorsement of the OECD's 'Due Diligence Guidance' by EU Member States has failed to compel many companies operating within the EU that use and trade minerals from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to look more closely at their supply chains in the region?

Some companies and industry bodies have asserted that supply chain due diligence obligations are too expensive or burdensome for companies to undertake. However, is the Commission aware of the examples of companies covered by US legislation, which were not previously sourcing minerals from eastern DRC, but which have now begun to do so despite conditions of mandatory reporting and due diligence? Would the Commission agree that legislation containing a mandatory supply chain due diligence requirement in this area is not prohibitive to business?

Does the Commission plan to introduce a mandatory due diligence obligation — requiring companies to meet the standard set by the OECD Due Diligence Guidance — to ensure that businesses using and trading natural resources in the European Union can assure consumers, investors and shareholders that they meet the same responsible sourcing standard as US-listed companies?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2013)

EU companies, like their US and Asian counterparts, are potentially exposed to the financing of armed groups as their global mineral supply chains may often originate in areas affected by conflict. This and related issues need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

For its part, the Commission is currently considering how to address the issue of responsible sourcing of minerals originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas in line with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) due diligence guidance that the Honourable Members refers to. In view of the fact that preparatory work is still ongoing, the precise nature of the initiative still has to be determined.

With regard to the costs of due diligence and traceability for the companies concerned, based on preliminary information, the Commission is aware of the fact that cost levels are not constant and may vary along (and according to) mineral supply chains. The Commission is therefore currently assessing the nature and the magnitude of these costs in the framework of its impact assessment work and will also examine the consequences of such initiatives on the competitiveness of responsible EU businesses.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-011547/13
Komisi
Evžen Tošenovský (ECR) a Konrad Szymański (ECR)
(9. října 2013)

Předmět: Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy v období 2014–2020 v České republice a v Polsku – posilování přenosových soustav vysokého a velmi vysokého napětí

Česká republika a Polsko už roky čelí vážným negativním důsledkům opakovaného přetěžování svých elektrických přenosových sítí, které způsobují především neplánované „kruhové toky" (loop flows) vedené přes polské a české území ze severního do jižního Německa.

V reakci na tento problém se jako jedno z nejlepších řešeních osvědčilo posilování a modernizace přenosových soustav vysokého a velmi vysokého napětí.

V květnu 2013 se energetickými otázkami zabývala Rada a v jejích závěrech se zdůrazňuje potřeba značných investic do energetické infrastruktury. Jako jedno z prioritních opatření pro vytvoření podmínek pro požadované investice do energetického sektoru umožnily hlavy států a předsedové vlád využívat k tomuto účelu všech dostupných fondů EU.

Kvůli omezeným prostředkům, které jsou k dispozici v nástroji pro propojení Evropy, plánují Česká republika a Polsko financovat energetické projekty především z prostředků strukturálních fondů a Fondu soudržnosti, jež jim byly přiděleny na roky 2014–2020.

Zváží Komise specifické potřeby České republiky a Polska v oblasti energetiky? Přidělí jim během vyjednávání o využití těchto fondů (zejména co se týče operačních programů) odpovídající prostředky k posílení soustav vysokého a velmi vysokého napětí?

Odpověď komisaře Hahna jménem Komise
(13. prosince 2013)

Projekty, jejichž cílem je vyvíjení a zavádění inteligentních rozvodných systémů nízkého a středního napětí, může podporovat Evropský fond pro regionální rozvoj (EFRR) i Fond soudržnosti. Kromě toho může EFRR podporovat i zvyšování energetické účinnosti a zabezpečení dodávek prostřednictvím rozvoje inteligentních systémů pro rozvod, skladování a přepravu energie a prostřednictvím integrace distribuované výroby z obnovitelných zdrojů.

Avšak na základě požadavků na tematické zaměření fondu EFRR se investice zaměří nejvíce na rozvodnou infrastrukturu nízkého a středního napětí, zatímco nástroj pro propojení Evropy bude investovat do přenosové infrastruktury vysokého napětí s přeshraničním dopadem. Projekty zaměřené na zamezení „kruhovým tokům" (loop flows) v Polsku a České republice jsou zahrnuty v prvním seznamu projektů společného zájmu, který Komise přijala v říjnu 2013.

S přihlédnutím k výše uvedeným skutečnostem bude Komise během jednání o partnerských dohodách a programech samozřejmě zohledňovat specifické potřeby České republiky a Polska v oblasti energetiky.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011547/13
do Komisji
Evžen Tošenovský (ECR) oraz Konrad Szymański (ECR)
(9 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Europejskie fundusze strukturalne i inwestycyjne na lata 2014-2020 w Republice Czeskiej i w Polsce – rozwój elektroenergetycznych sieci przesyłowych wysokiego i bardzo wysokiego napięcia

Już od lat Czechy i Polska borykają się z poważnymi negatywnymi skutkami powtarzających się przypadków przeciążenia swoich elektroenergetycznych sieci przesyłowych, których główną przyczyną są tzw. przepływy kołowe przez obszar Polski i Czech z północnych do południowych Niemiec.

Jednym z najskuteczniejszych sprawdzonych rozwiązań tego problemu jest rozwój i modernizacja sieci elektroenergetycznych wysokiego i bardzo wysokiego napięcia.

W maju 2013 r. Rada zajęła się kwestiami energetycznymi i w swoich konkluzjach podkreśliła potrzebę poczynienia znacznych inwestycji w infrastrukturę elektroenergetyczną. Szefowie państw i rządów umożliwili dostęp do wszystkich funduszy UE jako jedno z wielu działań priorytetowych, które należy podjąć w celu ułatwienia inwestycji w sektorze energetycznym.

Z uwagi na ograniczone środki dostępne w ramach instrumentu „Łącząc Europę" Czechy i Polska planują finansować projekty energetyczne głównie za pomocą funduszy strukturalnych i spójnościowych przyznanych obydwu państwom członkowskim na lata 2014-2020.

Czy Komisja weźmie pod uwagę specyficzne potrzeby Polski i Republiki Czeskiej w dziedzinie energii? Czy w ramach negocjacji w sprawie wykorzystania funduszy, zwłaszcza w odniesieniu do programów operacyjnych, Komisja przeznaczy odpowiednie zasoby na rozwój sieci elektroenergetycznych wysokiego i bardzo wysokiego napięcia?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(13 grudnia 2013 r.)

Zarówno Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Regionalnego (EFRR), jak i Fundusz Spójności mogą wspierać projekty mające na celu opracowanie i wdrożenie inteligentnych systemów dystrybucji niskiego i średniego napięcia. Ponadto EFRR może również wspierać poprawę efektywności energetycznej i bezpieczeństwa dostaw poprzez rozwój inteligentnych systemów dystrybucji, przechowywania i przesyłu energii oraz poprzez integrację wytwarzania rozproszonego ze źródeł odnawialnych.

Jednak na podstawie wymogów EFRR dotyczących koncentracji tematycznej, inwestycje będą koncentrować się głównie na infrastrukturze dystrybucyjnej niskiego i średniego napięcia, podczas gdy w ramach instrumentu „Łącząc Europę" prowadzone będą inwestycje w infrastrukturę przesyłową wysokiego napięcia mającą skutki transgraniczne. Projekty mające na celu uniknięcie przepływów kołowych przez obszar Polski i Republiki Czeskiej są włączone do pierwszego wykazu projektów będących przedmiotem wspólnego zainteresowania, który został przyjęty przez Komisję w październiku 2013 r.

W związku z powyższym, w negocjacjach dotyczących umów o partnerstwie i programów, Komisja z pewnością rozważy szczególne potrzeby Republiki Czeskiej i Polski w dziedzinie energii.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011547/13
to the Commission
Evžen Tošenovský (ECR) and Konrad Szymański (ECR)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: European structural and investment funds 2014-2020 in the Czech Republic and Poland — strengthening of high-voltage and very-high-voltage power transmission grids

For years the Czech Republic and Poland have been facing the serious negative consequences of repetitive overloading of their power transmission grids, mainly caused by unplanned 'loop flows' from northern to southern Germany via Polish and Czech territory.

In response to this issue, strengthening and modernisation of the high-voltage and very-high-voltage power grids have proved to be one of the most efficient solutions.

In May 2013, the Council dedicated itself to energy issues and in its conclusions it stressed the need for significant investment in energy infrastructure. Among other priority actions to be taken to facilitate the required investment in energy, the heads of state and government enabled all available EU funds to be accessed.

In the light of the limited sources available from the Connecting Europe Facility, the Czech Republic and Poland are planning to finance energy projects mainly from the structural and cohesion funds allocated to the two Member States for 2014-2020.

Will the Commission consider the specific needs of the Czech Republic and Poland in the field of energy? Will it grant adequate resources to strengthen the high-voltage and very-high-voltage power grids in the negotiations on the use of the funds, in particular as regards the operational programmes?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

Both the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund can support projects aiming to develop and implement smart distribution systems at low and medium voltage levels. In addition, the ERDF can also support the improvement of energy efficiency and security of supply through the development of smart energy distribution, storage and transmission systems and through the integration of distributed generation from renewable sources.

However, on the basis of the thematic concentration requirements of the ERDF, investments will mostly focus on low and medium voltage distribution infrastructure, while the Connecting Europe Facility will invest in high-voltage transmission infrastructure with cross-border impacts. Projects addressing the avoidance of loop flows in Poland and the Czech Republic are included in the first list of projects of common interest, which was adopted by the Commission in October 2013.

Taking the above into account, in the negotiations of the partnership agreements and the programmes the Commission will certainly consider the specific needs of the Czech Republic and Poland in the field of energy.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011548/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Piotr Borys (PPE) oraz Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(9 października 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Wykorzystywanie przez państwa autorytarne tajnych służb oraz nakazów aresztowania wydawanych przez Interpol w celu prześladowania opozycjonistów i dysydentów politycznych przebywających w Europie

Niedawne wydarzenia związane z szeregiem przypadków przetrzymywania kazachskich, rosyjskich i ukraińskich dysydentów w różnych państwach członkowskich przy wykorzystaniu tajnych służb oraz nakazów aresztowania wydawanych przez Interpol wzbudzają poważne obawy dotyczące wykorzystywania przez państwa autorytarne porozumień o współpracy międzynarodowej i innych międzynarodowych instrumentów w celu prześladowania dysydentów przebywających za granicą.

Jesteśmy obecnie świadkami coraz większej liczby aresztowań wśród przedstawicieli opozycji w Kazachstanie. I tak na przykład Tatjana Paraskiewicz została zatrzymana w Republice Czeskiej i oczekuje na decyzję w sprawie ewentualnej ekstradycji na Ukrainę lub do Rosji. Kolejnym przykładem jest sprawa Muratbeka Ketebajewa, którego zatrzymano w Polsce na podstawie nakazu aresztowania wydanego przez Interpol, a następnie zwolniono, kiedy się okazało, że skierowane przeciwko niemu zarzuty najprawdopodobniej mają charakter polityczny.

Sprawą najpilniejszą jest w tej chwili sprawa Aleksandra Pawłowa. W dniu 27 września 2013 r. Sąd Najwyższy Hiszpanii miał wydać orzeczenie w sprawie jego ekstradycji do Kazachstanu, ale odroczył swoją decyzję do dnia 25 października 2013 r., aby zbadać informacje dotyczące podobnej sprawy, jaką jest sprawa Muratbeka Ketebajewa w Polsce. Gdyby doszło do ekstradycji Aleksandra Pawłowa, groziłoby mu złe traktowanie, tortury lub nawet śmierć. Wymienione sprawy oraz zdecydowane kroki podejmowane przeciwko opozycji i społeczeństwu obywatelskiemu w Kazachstanie w ciągu ostatnich dwóch lat jednoznacznie świadczą o tym, czego Pawłow może się spodziewać, jeżeli będzie musiał wrócić do swojego kraju.

Czy Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel jest poinformowana o wyżej wspomnianych sprawach i jeżeli tak – czy śledzi związane z nimi wydarzenia?

Czy ESDZ może się wypowiedzieć na temat ewentualnych ustaleń poczynionych w celu zapobieżenia nadużywaniu międzynarodowych mechanizmów współpracy przez kraje, które nie przywiązują większej wagi do kwestii praw człowieka?

Czy ESDZ zamierza powołać grupę ekspertów oraz wykorzystać analizy przeprowadzone przez niezależnych specjalistów i organizacje w celu opracowania zaleceń dla państw członkowskich, aby dwustronnych i międzynarodowych porozumień nie nadużywano jako narzędzia prześladowania dysydentów?

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

UE zapoznała się z kwestiami poruszonymi w pytaniu i uważnie śledzi rozwój wydarzeń w sprawie Aleksandra Pawłowa (byłego szefa bezpieczeństwa Muchtara Abliazowa) oraz innych dysydentów.

UE oraz delegatura w Astanie nadal ściśle monitorują tą sprawę oraz inne podobne przypadki. UE w dalszym ciągu wykorzystuje formalne i nieformalne możliwości zachęcania Kazachstanu do poszanowania jego międzynarodowych zobowiązań, w szczególności Konwencji w sprawie zakazu stosowania tortur oraz innego okrutnego, nieludzkiego lub poniżającego traktowania albo karania (wraz z jej protokołem fakultatywnym), której Kazachstan jest stroną.

Unia Europejska porusza i będzie nadal poruszać – konsekwentnie i na wszystkich szczeblach – kwestie praw człowieka w ramach dialogu politycznego prowadzonego z Kazachstanem, a w szczególności w ramach corocznego dialogu na temat praw człowieka.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011548/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Piotr Borys (PPE) and Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Use of secret services and Interpol arrest warrants by authoritarian states to persecute opposition and political dissidents living in Europe

Recent developments in a number of cases involving the detention of Kazakh, Russian and Ukrainian dissidents in different Member States through the use of secret services and Interpol arrest warrants raise a serious issue as to how international cooperation agreements and other international tools are being used by authoritarian states to persecute dissidents living abroad.

We are currently witnessing an increasing number of arrests among representatives of the opposition in Kazakhstan. For example, Tatiana Paraskevich was detained in the Czech Republic and is awaiting a decision on her potential extradition to Ukraine or Russia. Another example is the case of Muratbek Ketebayev, who was detained in Poland under an Interpol arrest warrant but subsequently released, as the charges against him were deemed to be most likely political.

The most urgent case at present is that of Alexandr Pavlov. The National High Court of Spain was to make a decision on 27 September 2013 concerning his extradition to Kazakhstan, but suspended that decision until 25 October 2013 in order to analyse information on a similar case, that of Muratbek Ketebayev in Poland. Should Alexandr Pavlov be extradited, he would be under imminent threat of ill-treatment, torture or even death. The abovementioned cases and the clamp-down on the opposition and civil society in Kazakhstan over the last two years are clear indicators of what Pavlov can expect if he is sent back to his country.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the abovementioned cases and, if so, is she monitoring developments?

Can the EEAS say whether there are any arrangements in place to prevent the misuse of these international collaboration mechanisms by countries with poor human rights records?

Does the EEAS intend to create a group of experts and to use the analyses carried out by independent specialists and organisations in order to prepare recommendations to the Member States so that bilateral and international agreements are not used as a tool to persecute dissidents?

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

The EU has taken good note of the issues raised in the question, and is following closely the developments of the case of Mr Aleksandr Pavlov, former security chief of Mukhtar Ablyazov and other dissidents.

The EU and the Delegation in Astana continues to monitor very closely this and other similar cases. The EU continues to use both formal and informal opportunities to encourage Kazakhstan to respect its international obligations, notably the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol that Kazakhstan is a state party to.

The EU raises and will continue to raise human rights issues in its political dialogue with Kazakhstan consistently and at all levels and in particular, in the framework of the annual Human Rights Dialogue.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011549/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(9 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Abbandono di neonati

L'abbandono di neonati rappresenta il libro nero della maternità. In Italia, fonti giornalistiche parlano di 3 mila all'anno, figli partoriti e lasciati nella toilette di un bar o, peggio, in un cassonetto delle immondizie. Pochi sono lasciati nelle 40 «culle della vita» dislocate in tutta Italia tra ospedali, parrocchie e centri d'assistenza. Ogni caso d'abbandono nasconde una storia simile, quasi sempre triste: disagio, disperazione, solitudine, con conseguenze a volte irreparabili, perché dall'angoscia di non poter accudire il figlio indesiderato all'infanticidio (197 i casi registrati nel 2011) il passo è breve. Causa principale dell'infanticidio — afferma un docente di psicopatologia forense alla facoltà di medicina della Sapienza di Roma — è la psicosi post partum, mentre all'origine degli abbandoni, spesso, c'è l'immaturità di chi ancora non si sente pronta ad affrontare la maternità. È il caso di diverse giovani immigrate, quasi sempre clandestine. Appare fondamentale informare le donne su tutte le possibilità alternative: reti di sostegno, opportunità offerte dalla legge e le già menzionate «culle della vita». In questa azione devono impegnarsi tutte le organizzazioni, pubbliche e private, che sono a contatto con il mondo femminile, a cominciare dai centri d'accoglienza per gli immigrati fino alle famiglie, agli ospedali e agli enti d'assistenza. Insieme all'aborto, che per fortuna sembra in diminuzione, l'abbandono è una piaga sociale che va combattuta con tutti i mezzi.

Si chiede alla Commissione:

1. Può dirci qual è la situazione degli abbandoni negli altri grandi Stati dell'Unione?

2. Conosce metodi, politiche e programmi di prevenzione che possano ridurli?

3. Non ritiene che un'educazione e una cultura mirate alla vita possano contribuire a dare valore alla natalità e alla maternità?

4. È in grado di fornire un contributo alle politiche antiabbandono?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(9 dicembre 2013)

La Commissione richiama l'attenzione dell'onorevole parlamentare sui risultati di uno studio dal titolo «Child abandonment and its prevention in Europe» (L'abbandono dei bambini e la sua prevenzione in Europa), finanziato dalla Commissione stessa nell'ambito del programma Daphne e pubblicato nel gennaio 2012 ([1]). Lo studio, che non riguardava tutti gli Stati membri ma rispettava un certo equilibrio geografico, esaminava la normativa e le politiche vigenti, i dati disponibili e le migliori prassi, in particolare riguardo ai metodi di prevenzione.

In virtù dell'articolo 24 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, i minori hanno diritto alla protezione e alle cure necessarie per il loro benessere. La Carta, come recita il suo articolo 51, paragrafo 1, si applica agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione. Poiché l'Unione europea non dispone di competenze generali in relazione ai diritti dei minori, la cura di questi ultimi ricade sotto la responsabilità degli Stati membri.

([1]) http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/BCN/details.asp?id=30091&themeID=1001&topicID=1006

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011549/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Abandonment of newborns

The abandonment of newborns is the dark side of motherhood. According to press sources, there are 3 000 such cases per year in Italy: babies born and left in the toilet of a bar or, even worse, in a rubbish bin. Few are left at the 40 'life cradles' located around Italy, in hospitals, churches and help centres. There is a similar, almost always sad, story behind every abandoned baby: hardship, despair, isolation, with sometimes irreversible consequences, as it does not take much to go from worrying about not being able to look after an unwanted baby to infanticide (197 recorded cases in 2011). According to a lecturer in forensic psychiatry at the faculty of medicine of the Sapienza University of Rome, postnatal depression is the main cause of infanticide, while the immaturity of those who do not yet feel ready for motherhood is often to blame for child abandonment. This is the case for many young, almost always illegal, immigrants. It is vital to inform women about all the alternatives: support networks, options provided by law and the aforementioned 'life cradles'. All public and private organisations that work with women, from immigrant reception centres to families, hospitals and support organisations, need to be involved in this activity. Together with abortion, which fortunately seems to be in decline, child abandonment is a social scourge that we should make every effort to fight.

1. Can the Commission say what the situation is in other large EU Member States as regards child abandonment?

2. Is it aware of prevention methods, policies and programmes to reduce child abandonment?

3. Does it not think that pro-life education and culture can help give value to giving birth and motherhood?

4. Can the Commission contribute to anti-abandonment policies?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(9 December 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the results of a study called 'Child abandonment and its prevention in Europe' which has been financed by the Commission under the Daphne programme and published in January 2012 ([1]). The study did not cover all EU Member States but does respect a certain geographical balance. It has examined existing legislation and policies as well as existing data and best practices, in particular relating to prevention methods.

In accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, children shall have the right to protection and care as is necessary for their well-being. According to Article 51 (1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to Member States only when they are implementing Union law. As the European Union does not have general powers in respect of the rights of the child matters related to childcare fall under the powers of the Member States.

([1]) http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/BCN/details.asp?id=30091&themeID=1001&topicID=1006

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011550/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(9 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Nuova diffusione dell'HIV

L'allarme è lanciato dal direttore dell'Unità operativa «malattie infettive» di un ospedale dell'Italia settentrionale: «I giovani eterosessuali sono oggi tra le persone maggiormente a rischio, a causa di una sessualità sempre più precoce e promiscua». È una sessualità molto disinibita e troppo poco protetta, che si trasforma in terreno fertile per il virus HIV, come già avvenuto nelle comunità gay degli anni ottanta, dove l'Aids fece strage. Oggi, per fortuna, con i nuovi farmaci si controlla l'infezione e il rischio di morte è quasi scomparso, ma non si guarisce e il contagio condanna a una terapia a vita, non priva di seri effetti collaterali sulla salute.

Il fenomeno di questa nuova diffusione è ugualmente inquietante e le famiglie e la scuola dovrebbero farsi carico di un'informazione molto più corretta sui nuovi rischi e sulle misure da intraprendere per evitarli.

La Commissione:

1. È al corrente di questo nuovo fenomeno?

2. Può appurare se la diffusione denunciata dall'ospedale italiano è avvenuta anche in altri paesi dell'UE?

3. In caso affermativo, non crede opportuno lanciare un grido d'allarme ai governi degli Stati membri perché il fenomeno venga combattuto con tutte le energie necessarie, coinvolgendo i genitori e la scuola nell'opera d'informazione e nell'azione di educazione alla sessualità?

4. I programmi di ricerca sanitaria prevedono anche studi su questo specifico settore?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(21 novembre 2013)

1. La trasmissione per via sessuale è responsabile del 74,2 % delle nuove infezioni da HIV nell'Unione europea. Questa tendenza è riscontrabile nella maggior parte degli Stati membri e il 10,6 % di tutti i casi di HIV diagnosticati nel 2012 riguarda giovani tra i 15 e i 24 anni.

2. Nel 2012 la proporzione di nuovi casi di HIV tra i giovani tra i 15 e i 24 anni andava da meno del 5 % di casi in Slovacchia a più del 30 % in Romania. Per quanto concerne le altre malattie trasmesse sessualmente, nel 2001 il 73 % di tutti i casi di infezioni da clamidia e il 42 % dei casi di gonorrea riguardavano giovani dai 15 ai 24 anni.

3. La comunicazione della Commissione «La lotta contro l'HIV/AIDS nell'Unione europea e nei paesi vicini 2009-2013» ([1]) e l'allegato piano d'azione dell'UE in tema di HIV/AIDS illustrano gli obiettivi politici e le azioni volti ad affrontare l'HIV/AIDS nell'UE. Inoltre il Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie opera di concerto con gli Stati membri per monitorare la situazione e fornire orientamenti sulle misure e azioni di prevenzione indirizzate tra l'altro ai giovani.

4. Diversi progetti in tema di HIV/AIDS e giovani hanno ricevuto finanziamenti nell'ambito del programma Salute. Tra questi si segnalano il progetto SUNFLOWER, che promuove la prevenzione dell'HIV tra i giovani, e il progetto SAFESEX.

([1]) (COM(2009)569 definitivo)

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011550/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: New spread of HIV

According to warnings by the head of the infectious diseases department of a hospital in northern Italy, heterosexual young people are now among those most at risk as a result of increasing promiscuity and being sexually active at a younger age. They are very disinhibited sexually and all too often practise unsafe sex, which creates a breeding ground for HIV, as happened in gay communities in the 1980s, when AIDS wreaked havoc. Fortunately, new drugs can today control the infection and the risk of death is negligible, but there is no cure and being HIV-positive means a lifetime of treatment, with serious side effects for health.

This new spread is equally concerning and families and schools should take responsibility for providing much more accurate information about the new risks and what to do to avoid them.

1. Is the Commission aware of this new phenomenon?

2. Can it establish whether the spread reported by the Italian hospital has happened in other EU countries?

3. If so, does it think it should warn the Member States' governments to make every effort to tackle the phenomenon, involving parents and schools in informing and educating young people about sexuality?

4. Do health research programmes also provide for studies in this specific area?

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

1. Sexual transmission accounts for 74.2 % of new HIV infections in the European Union. This trend is observed in the majority of Member States and young people aged 15 to 24 years accounted for 10.6 % of all HIV diagnoses in 2012.

2. In 2012 the proportion of new HIV cases among people aged 15 to 24 years ranged from less than 5 % of cases in Slovakia to more than 30 % in Romania. As regards other sexually transmitted diseases, in 2001, 73 % of all cases of chlamydia infections and 42 % of gonorrhoea cases were diagnosed on people aged 15 to 24 years.

3. The Commission Communication on Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries 2009-2013 ([1]) and the annexed EU Action Plan on HIV/AIDS outlines the policy objectives and actions to address HIV/AIDS in the EU. In addition the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control works jointly with Member States in monitoring the situation and providing guidance on preventive measures and actions, including for the target group of young people.

4. A number of projects focusing on HIV/AIDS and young people have received funding under the Health Programme. These include the SUNFLOWER project, that promotes prevention of HIV in young people, and the SAFESEX project.

([1]) (COM(2009) 569 final)

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011551/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(9 ottobre 2013)

Oggetto: Ritorna la tubercolosi

Il rapporto 2013 dell'OMS sulla TBC conferma che in Europa nel 2000 si contavano circa 400 000 casi di TBC, che nel 2011 sono scesi a 380 mila (72 334 nell'UE, 19 mila dei quali in Romania) con ancora 44 mila decessi l'anno. Risulterebbe impossibile arrivare ai 200 mila dell'obiettivo fissato dall'ONU entro il 2015. Si teme, tra l'altro, che la tendenza al ribasso in Europa, già di per sé lenta, stia rallentando troppo, tanto da far temere un'inversione. Una delle cause è rappresentata da una presenza sempre più massiccia degli immigrati che, vivendo spesso in condizioni disagiate, sono più soggetti ad ammalarsi. In Belgio si è addirittura riaperto un sanatorio, a dieci anni dalla chiusura dell'ultimo, per i casi di TBC resistenti ai farmaci. Queste forme resistenti (circa 6 mila casi in Europa nel 2011) fanno crescere il costo economico della malattia, che nell'UE tocca i sei miliardi.

La Commissione:

1. Può confermare questi dati?

2. Ritiene che il programma di ricerca nel settore della sanità possa contribuire ad approfondire le indagini per la scoperta di nuovi antidoti alla TBC?

3. Ha iniziative da proporre agli Stati membri per cercare di invertire la tendenza e raggiungere l'obiettivo previsto per il 2015?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(3 dicembre 2013)

1. Nel 2011 sono stati notificati 380 000 casi di tubercolosi (TBC) nella regione europea dell'OMS. Il numero di casi notificati è diminuito di circa il 5 % tra il 2000 e il 2011. La regione europea ha conseguito il risultato di arrestare e invertire l'incidenza entro il 2015.

Con il progredire dei paesi e il ridursi del numero totale di casi aumenta la proporzione di casi rilevati fra persone di origine straniera, provenienti da paesi in cui la tubercolosi è ancora diffusa. Nel 2011 nell'UE sono stati notificati 1 522 casi di ceppi resistenti agli antibiotici e circa 30 000 nella regione europea dell'OMS nel suo insieme. Nel 2012 i costi totali per tutte le forme di tubercolosi sono stati stimati a 536 milioni di EUR e i costi di vita corretti per invalidità a oltre 5 miliardi di EUR.

2. La ricerca sulla tubercolosi è sempre stata uno dei settori prioritari nell'ambito del 7° PQ, che ha sostenuto la ricerca collaborativa per sviluppare migliori strumenti diagnostici, vaccini e farmaci contro la tubercolosi. Nell'ambito del 7° PQ sono stati sostenuti 20 progetti, con un contributo dell'UE pari a oltre 72 milioni di EUR. Due progetti in particolare hanno contribuito alla scoperta di nuove terapie per la tubercolosi: il progetto ORCHID (*Open collaborative model for tuberculosis lead optimisation)* per la scelta di un composto guida destinato a un ulteriore sviluppo preclinico e clinico, e il progetto MM4TB, *More medicines for tuberculosis*, che puntava a validare almeno cinque nuovi bersagli farmacologici e a scoprire almeno una famiglia di farmaci candidati.

3. I progressi verso l'eliminazione della tubercolosi vengono attentamente monitorati dal Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie. Dal 2008 è in vigore un piano d'azione per la lotta contro la tubercolosi nell'Unione europea, il cui obiettivo è incrementare la sensibilizzazione a livello pubblico e politico, rafforzare le attività svolte in questo ambito dagli Stati membri e contribuire al controllo della tubercolosi nell'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011551/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Return of tuberculosis

According to the World Health Organisation's 2013 report on TB, in 2000 there were around 400 000 cases of TB in Europe, falling to 380 000 in 2011 (72 334 in the EU, 19 000 of which were in Romania), with 44 000 deaths per year. Reaching the target set by the United Nations of 200 000 cases by 2015 seems impossible. There are also fears that the already slow downward trend in Europe is slowing down too much, so much so as to suggest a reversal of that trend. One of the causes is the increasingly widespread presence of immigrants who, by often living in hardship, are more prone to becoming ill. In Belgium, a sanatorium has even reopened, 10 years after the last one closed, for cases of drug-resistant TB. These resistant forms (around 6 000 cases in Europe in 2011) are causing the financial cost of the disease to soar, reaching EUR 6 billion in the EU.

1. Can the Commission confirm these figures?

2. Does it think that the health research programme can contribute to in-depth research to discover new cures for TB?

3. Does it have any initiatives to propose to the Member States in an attempt to reverse the trend and reach the target set for 2015?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

1. 380 000 Tuberculosis (TB) cases were notified in the WHO European Region in 2011. The number of cases notified fell by about 5% between 2000 and 2011. The European Region has met the target to halt and reverse the incidence for 2015.

As countries progress and the overall number of cases drops, a larger proportion of cases are detected among foreign-born persons from countries where Tuberculosis is still high. In 2011, 1 522 antibiotic resistant strains cases were notified in the EU, and about 30 000 such cases in the WHO European Region as a whole. The total costs for all forms of Tuberculosis have been estimated at EUR 536 million in 2012 with disability adjusted life costs estimated at over EUR 5 billion.

2. Tuberculosis research has been one of the priority areas in FP7 which has supported collaborative research to develop better diagnostics, vaccines and drugs against TB. In FP7, 20 projects were supported with EU contribution of over EUR 72 million. In particular, two projects contributed to discovering new cures for TB: the project ORCHID, 'Open collaborative model for tuberculosis lead optimisation' on the choice of a lead compound for further preclinical and clinical development; and the project MM4TB, 'More medicines for tuberculosis', aimed at validating at least five new drug targets pharmacologically and to discover at least one family of candidate drugs.

3. Progress towards TB elimination is closely monitored by the European Centre for Disease Prevention. A Framework Action Plan to fight TB in the EU is in place since 2008. It aims to increase political and public awareness, support and strengthen EU Member States' efforts, and to contribute to control TB in the EU.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-011552/13
komissiolle
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(9. lokakuuta 2013)

Aihe: EU:n ja OECD:n yhteistyö koulutusta koskevassa tutkimuksessa

Sekä EU:n että OECD:n piirissä tehdään laadukasta koulutusta koskevaa tutkimusta. Vuosien varrella näissä tutkimushankkeissa on kuitenkin havaittu tiettyä päällekkäisyyttä, joka tuntuu tarpeettomalta ja joka tarkemmalla koordinaatiolla olisi siten myös vältettävissä.

Tämän johdosta haluan kysyä komissiolta seuraavaa:

1. Millä tasolla yhteistyö EU:n ja OECD:n välillä on tällä hetkellä koulutusta koskevan tutkimuksen osalta?

2. Millaista yhteistyötä ja tutkimushankkeiden yhteistä suunnittelua EU ja OECD aikovat tulevaisuudessa toteuttaa?

Androulla Vassilioun komission puolesta antama vastaus
(15. marraskuuta 2013)

OECD:lla ja komissiolla on omat erityiset vahvuutensa koulutustutkimuksessa ja perinteitä yhteistyöstä keskenään.

Tästä syystä komissio ja OECD sopivat lokakuussa 2013 koulutusta ja osaamista koskevasta yhteistyöjärjestelystä (Education and Skills Cooperation Arrangement), joka muodostaa konkreettiset puitteet komission koulutuksen ja kulttuurin pääosaston ja OECD:n koulutuksen ja osaamisen pääosaston yhteistyölle. Yhteistyötä tehostetaan lähinnä seuraavilla kolmella alueella: maakohtaiset analyysit, osaamisstrategiat ja kansainväliset kyselytutkimukset (tulosten syväanalyysi mukaan luettuna). Lisäksi järjestelyyn sisältyy yhteistyö ajankohtaisten aiheiden parissa, kuten ”innovatiivinen oppimisympäristö ja avoimet oppimisresurssit”.

Komissio on edustettuna kaikissa tärkeissä OECD:n elimissä yleissivistävän ja ammatillisen koulutuksen alalla, myös OECD:n koulutuspoliittisessa komiteassa sekä koulutustutkimuksen ja innovoinnin kehittämiskeskuksen hallintoneuvostossa. Yhteistyön käytännön toteutusta ja suunnittelua koordinoidaan molempien pääosastojen ylemmän johdon säännöllisissä tapaamisissa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011552/13
to the Commission
Hannu Takkula (ALDE)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Cooperation between the EU and the OECD in research related to education

Both the EU and the OECD are involved in conducting high-quality research related to education. Over the years there has, however, been a degree of overlap between these research projects, which seems unnecessary and which could be avoided if there were more in-depth coordination.

As a result, I would like to ask the Commission the following:

1. What is the current level of cooperation between the EU and the OECD in research related to education?

2. What manner of cooperation and joint planning of research projects is intended for the EU and the OECD in the future?

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

The OECD and Commission have distinct strengths with regard to education research and a strong record of cooperation.

For this reason the Commission and OECD signed in October 2013 an 'Education and Skills Cooperation Arrangement', which provides a concrete framework for cooperation between DG Education and Culture of the Commission and the Education and Skills Directorate of the OECD. Enhanced cooperation is mainly foreseen in three areas: country analyses, skills strategies and international surveys (including the in-depth analysis of results). Furthermore, the arrangement foresees cooperation on topical issues, such as 'Innovative Learning Environment and Open Educational Resources'.

The Commission is represented in all important OECD bodies in the field of education and training, including the OECD's 'Education Policy Committee' and the governing board of the 'Centre for Educational Research and Innovation'. The practical implementation and planning of the cooperation is coordinated through regular meetings between the senior management of both directorates.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011554/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Ratification de la convention des Nations unies sur le droit de la mer (CNUDM)

Sur les 21 États de la Méditerranée, trois n'ont ni signé ni ratifié la CNUDM.

1. Comment la Commission explique-t-elle la position des trois non signataires?

2. Que compte-t-elle faire afin que ces pays, en particulier les pays candidats à l'Union, deviennent parties à la convention et mettent en œuvre la CNUDM en tant que partie intégrante du cadre réglementaire de l'Union pour les affaires maritimes?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(3 janvier 2014)

La signature et la ratification d'un traité international, y compris la convention des Nations unies sur le droit de la mer (CNUDM) de 1982, reste une décision souveraine de chaque État.

Conformément aux communications de la Commission de 2009 «Développer la dimension internationale de la politique maritime intégrée de l'Union européenne» ([1]) et «Pour une meilleure gouvernance dans la Méditerranée grâce à une politique maritime intégrée» ([2]), assurer une participation universelle à la CNUDM reste une priorité. Par conséquent, la Commission s'engage à promouvoir la ratification et la signature de ladite convention dans le cadre de son dialogue avec ces États, y compris dans le contexte des négociations et des accords bilatéraux pertinents. Par exemple, la Commission a encouragé la Turquie à ratifier la CNUDM ([3]).

([1]) COM(2009) 536 final.
([2]) COM(2009) 466 final.
([3]) Rapport du 16 octobre 2013 sur les progrès accomplis par la Turquie [SWD (2013) 417 final] par rapport à la stratégie d'élargissement et aux principaux défis 2013-2014 [COM 2013 (700)].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011554/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos)

Of the 21 Mediterranean states, three have neither signed nor ratified the Unclos.

1. How does the Commission explain the position of the three non-subscribing States?

2. What does it intend to do so that these countries, in particular candidate countries for EU accession, become parties to the convention and implement Unclos as an integral part of the EU regulatory framework for maritime affairs?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(3 January 2014)

The signature and ratification of any international treaty, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), remains a sovereign decision of each State.

In line with the Commission's 2009 Communications 'Developing the international dimension of the Integrated Maritime Policy of the European Union ()' and 'Towards an Integrated Maritime Policy for better governance in the Mediterranean ()', securing universal participation in Unclos remains a priority. Consequently, the Commission is committed to promoting the ratification and signature of the said Convention in its dialogue with such States, including in the context of relevant bilateral negotiations and agreements. For instance, the Commission has encouraged Turkey to ratify Unclos ([1]).

([1]) Turkey 2013 Progress Report of 16 October 2013 (SWD (2013) 417 final) to the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2013-14 (COM(2013) 700 final).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011555/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Approche régionale de conservation et d'exploitation de la pêche dans les eaux de la Méditerranée et de la mer Noire

Comment la Commission envisage-t-elle une approche régionale de conservation et d'exploitation de la pêche dans les eaux de la Méditerranée et de la mer Noire en tenant compte de la dimension transfrontalière de l'activité de pêche et du caractère migratoire de certaines espèces?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(21 novembre 2013)

Il existe plusieurs stocks chevauchants dans la Méditerranée et la mer Noire, partagés entre plusieurs pays. Ainsi, la promotion, le soutien et le renforcement de la coopération et de la coordination internationales dans ces régions sont essentiels pour une exploitation équilibrée et durable des ressources halieutiques. La Commission générale des pêches pour la Méditerranée (CGPM) constitue une enceinte unique pour la conservation des ressources dans ces régions. L'Union, représentée par la Commission, et l'ensemble de ses États membres de Méditerrannée et de la mer Noire sont parties contractantes à la CGPM.

La Commission soutient l'action de la CGPM sur trois axes principaux:

— l'amélioration des avis scientifiques et de la collecte de données pour soutenir les mesures de gestion de la pêche dans la région. À cet égard, une évaluation de l'actuel cadre de collecte des données de la CGPM est en cours afin de remédier aux lacunes du système actuel d'ici à la fin 2014;

— l'élaboration de plans de gestion pluriannuels, sur la base des récentes lignes directrices de la CGPM. Lors de la session annuelle de mai 2013, un plan de gestion pour les pêcheries de petits pélagiques dans la mer Adriatique initié par l'Union a été adopté par la CGPM;

— la mise en place de conditions de concurrence équitables dans la Méditerranée et la mer Noire, afin de garantir aux décisions de la CGPM un niveau de conformité approprié ainsi que l'efficacité des mesures de gestion.

La Commission soutient aussi ce que l'on appelle les projets régionaux MED de la FAO visant à améliorer la mise à disposition des travaux et des données scientifiques et leur partage entre les pays partenaires de l'Union et hors de l'Union, et à promouvoir une participation coordonnée dans les cadres régionaux concernés, pour une gestion durable de la pêche.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011555/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Regional approach to fish conservation and fishing in Mediterranean and Black Sea waters

How does the Commission plan to develop a regional approach to fish conservation and fishing in Mediterranean and Black Sea waters, taking into account the cross-border dimension of fishing and the migratory nature of some species?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(21 November 2013)

There are several straddling fish stocks in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea shared by several countries. Thus, promoting, supporting and strengthening international cooperation and coordination in these regions is crucial for the balanced and sustainable exploitation of fishery resources. The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) is a unique forum for the conservation of resources in these regions. The EU, represented by the Commission, and all the EU Mediterranean and Black Sea Member states are GFCM contracting parties.

The Commission is supporting the action of GFCM along three main strands:

— improving scientific advice and data collection in support of fisheries management measures in the region. For this, an assessment of the current GFCM data collection framework is being carried out in order to address deficiencies in the current system by the end of 2014.

— developing multiannual management plans, on the basis of the recently adopted GFCM Guidelines. In the Annual Session held in May 2013 a management plan for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea was adopted by GFCM on the initiative of the EU.

— establishing a level playing field in the Mediterranean and Black Sea in order to ensure appropriate level of compliance of GFCM decisions for the effectiveness of the management measures.

The Commission is also supporting the so-called FAO Mediterranean Regional Projects established to improve the provision and sharing of scientific work and data among EU and non-EU partner countries and to promote coordinated participation in the relevant regional frameworks for sustainable fisheries management.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011556/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Dépenses publiques en dehors des dépenses structurelles

La Commission va-t-elle accéder à la demande du Parlement qui voudrait que les dépenses publiques supportées par les États membres au titre du cofinancement des programmes soutenus par les Fonds structurels ne figurent pas parmi les dépenses structurelles, publiques ou assimilées, prises en considération dans le cadre de l'accord de partenariat pour le contrôle du respect du pacte de croissance et de stabilité, dans la mesure où il s'agit d'une obligation dérivant directement du respect du principe d'additionnalité?

La Commission est elle également d'avis que les dépenses publiques liées à la mise en œuvre de programmes cofinancés par les Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens doivent être totalement exclues de la définition des déficits structurels du pacte de croissance et de stabilité dans la mesure où il s'agit de dépenses consacrées à la réalisation des objectifs d'Europe 2020 et au soutien de la compétitivité, de la croissance et de la création d'emploi, tout particulièrement de la création d'emplois pour les jeunes?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(13 décembre 2013)

La Commission a précisé la manière dont le cofinancement national de projets financés par l'Union (au titre des Fonds structurels et de cohésion de l'UE, réseaux transeuropéens et mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe) sera intégré dans le volet préventif du pacte de stabilité et de croissance («clause d'investissement»). Sur cette base, les États membres peuvent être autorisés à s'écarter temporairement de leur objectif budgétaire à moyen terme ou de la trajectoire d'ajustement qui y mène afin d'intégrer les dépenses liées à un cofinancement de ce type. Cependant, la clause est subordonnée aux strictes conditions d'admissibilité suivantes: i) ne pas être soumis à une procédure pour déficit excessif et respecter le seuil de référence de déficit de 3 % ainsi que la règle en matière de dette, pendant toute la période d'application de la clause; ii) enregistrer une croissance négative ou un important écart de production négatif; iii) les projets financés par l'Union doivent produire des effets budgétaires positifs à long terme (y compris par une croissance potentielle).

On est loin d'une «règle d'or» qui exclut les dépenses d'investissement publiques sur une base permanente (ou du moins une partie) des chiffres du déficit pertinents pour l'application du cadre de surveillance budgétaire de l'Union. Une telle disposition n'est pas prévue pour un certain nombre de raisons ([1]).

En définissant les niveaux de référence aux fins de l'additionnalité ([2]) en coopération avec les États membres, la Commission vise à fixer ces objectifs à un niveau qui soit compatible avec les obligations des États membres dans le cadre du pacte de stabilité et de croissance. Lors de l'examen à mi-parcours de l'additionnalité effectué en 2012, la Commission a admis que les efforts d'assainissement budgétaire ont, dans certains cas, affecté la capacité des ÉM à maintenir le niveau des dépenses publiques convenu ex ante et par conséquent, elle a accepté de réduire considérablement le niveau de référence aux fins de l'additionnalité dans dix ÉM. Cette réduction a été particulièrement forte en Italie, au Portugal et en Grèce.

([1]) Voir le rapport des services de la Commission sur la qualité des dépenses publiques dans l'UE de décembre 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp125_en.pdf

([2]) Les niveaux de référence aux fins de l'additionnalité sont des niveaux fixes de formation brute de capital fixe (FBCF) publique que les États membres s'engagent à respecter (sur une moyenne annuelle et sur 7 ans) en vue d'éviter que les fonds de l'Union supplantent les investissements nationaux.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011556/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Public expenditure outside structural expenditure

Will the Commission grant Parliament's request that public expenditure incurred by Member States to co-finance of programmes supported by the Structural Funds is not included in the public or equivalent structural expenditure taken into account under partnership agreements for the purpose of ascertaining that the Stability and Growth Pact is being complied with, given that the latter expenditure constitutes an obligation deriving directly from the observance of additionality?

Is the Commission also of the opinion that public expenditure related to the implementation of programmes co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds should be completely excluded from the definition of Stability and Growth Pact structural deficits because this is expenditure devoted to achieving the goals of Europe 2020 and supporting competitiveness, growth and job creation for young people?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

The Commission has clarified how national co-financing of EU-funded projects (under the EU structural and cohesion funds, Trans-European-Networks and Connecting Europe Facility) will be accommodated within the preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact (so-called investment clause). On this basis, Member States (MS) may be allowed to temporarily deviate from their Medium-Term-Objective or the required adjustment path towards it to accommodate spending linked to such co-financing. However, the clause is subject to strict eligibility conditions: (i) being out of the excessive deficit procedure and comply with the 3% deficit reference threshold and the debt rule throughout the application of the clause; (ii) have negative growth or largely negative output gap; (iii) EU funded projects should have positive long-term budgetary effects (including via potential growth).

This is very different from a 'golden rule' excluding on a permanent basis public investment expenditure (or part of it) from deficit figures relevant for the application of the EU budgetary surveillance framework. Such an arrangement is not envisaged for a number of reasons ([1]).

When defining additionality baselines ([2]) in cooperation with the MS, the Commission aims to set such targets at a level which is compatible with the MS' obligations under the Stability and Growth Pact. During the mid-term review of additionality held in 2012, the Commission recognised that fiscal consolidation efforts had in some cases affected the MS' capacity to maintain the level of public spending agreed *ex-ante*, and as a consequence, agreed to considerably lower the additionality baseline in 10 MS. This decrease was particularly important in Italy, Portugal and Greece.

([1]) See Commission Services' Report 'The quality of public expenditure in the EU', December 2012 (http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp125_en.pdf).

([2]) Additionality baselines are fixed levels of public Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) which Member States commit to respect (on a yearly average, over 7 years) in order to avoid that EU funds crowd out domestic investment.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011557/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Régir l'accès de la flotte de l'Union aux ressources des ZEE

La Commission prévoit-elle l'établissement d'une stratégie à plus long terme visant à régir l'accès de la flotte de l'Union aux ressources des ZEE des pays de cette zone, sur la base d'un accord-cadre régional entre l'Union européenne et les pays du Pacifique occidental et central, négocié avec la FFA, en se basant sur les points suivants:

1. l'accord devrait fixer les modalités d'accès de la flotte de l'Union, lesquelles seraient ensuite précisées dans le cadre d'accords bilatéraux de coopération dans le secteur de la pêche avec les pays concernés;

2. l'accord devrait établir un régime de gouvernance transparent qui garantirait en particulier la lutte contre la pêche INN, tout en spécifiant les instruments qui devraient être appliqués, y compris l'accord relatif aux mesures du ressort de l'État du port;

3. l'accord devrait reposer sur le VDS, si tant est que des mesures soient adoptées pour garantir sa transparence, améliorer son efficacité et son respect par toutes les parties concernées, et assurer sa cohérence avec les meilleures recommandations scientifiques disponibles;

4. lors de la négociation de l'accord, les différentes voies possibles pour canaliser les aides au développement prévues dans le FED pour la zone par l'intermédiaire de la FFA devraient être explorées, étant donné que les pays ACP du Pacifique ne disposent pas des ressources humaines et techniques suffisantes pour pouvoir utiliser ces fonds d'une manière appropriée.

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(3 janvier 2014)

L'élaboration de stratégies régionales de pêche durable à l'échelle de l'océan ou de la mer, par exemple dans l'océan Pacifique, figure au nombre des actions jugées prioritaires dans la communication relative à la dimension extérieure de la politique commune de la pêche (PCP). Conformément à la communication intitulée «Vers un partenariat renouvelé pour le développement UE-Pacifique», une approche à plus long terme visant à garantir l'accès des navires UE aux ZEE des pays de la région concernée s'inscrirait dans le cadre d'une telle stratégie ([1]).

La communication relative à la dimension extérieure a souligné la nécessité de renforcer les synergies entre la politique en matière de pêche et les autres politiques de l'UE, et notamment la politique de développement mise en œuvre au moyen du Fonds européen de développement. La Commission encourage les États du Pacifique à renforcer la transparence, la coopération internationale, la gouvernance des pêches, l'efficacité et le respect des mesures de conservation, ainsi que la coopération en matière de lutte contre la pêche illicite, non déclarée et non réglementée (INN). Pour que ces conditions préalables, essentielles à tout accord sur l'accès aux pêcheries, soient remplies, il faut que les États du Pacifique fassent preuve d'un engagement constructif, et cela également au sein de la Commission des pêches pour le Pacifique occidental et central. Jusqu'ici, le système de détection des navires (VDS) mis en place par les parties à l'accord de Nauru n'atteint pas les objectifs convenus au niveau international et ne crée pas des conditions de concurrence équitables, de sorte qu'il ne peut pas encore servir de base opérationnelle à un accord sur l'accès aux pêcheries.

Le recensement préalable, par l'UE, de certains États du Pacifique ne contribuant pas, selon elle, à la lutte contre la pêche INN, de même que l'expérience acquise dans le cadre de l'accord de partenariat économique entre l'UE et les États du Pacifique, laquelle témoigne de la difficulté de négocier avec un groupe de pays à la fois nombreux et divers, sont des considérations importantes dans la perspective d'un éventuel accord régional. La coopération en matière de lutte contre l'INN s'est améliorée à certains égards, et l'UE va maintenir son engagement vis-à-vis de la région concernée.

L'Union européenne a conclu un accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche (APP) avec Kiribati. D'autres accords de ce type avec les Îles Salomon et la Micronésie sont actuellement inactifs. Un nouvel APP est en cours de négociation avec les Îles Cook.

([1]) JOIN(2012)6 «Vers un partenariat renouvelé pour le développement UE-Pacifique».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011557/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Access for the EU fleet to EEZ resources

Does the Commission plan to provide for the establishing of a longer-term strategy for access for the EU fleet to the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of the countries of the region, based on a regional framework agreement between the EU and the countries of the Western and Central Pacific, negotiated with the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and centring on the following aspects:

1. the agreement should outline the arrangements for access for the EU fleet, which would then be given concrete form in bilateral fisheries cooperation agreements with the countries concerned;

2. the agreement should establish a system of transparent governance which would in particular ensure the combating of IUU fishing and specify the tools that should be used, including the Port State Measures Agreement;

3. the agreement should be based on the VDS, provided that measures are adopted to ensure its transparency, improve its effectiveness and its implementation by all relevant parties, and ensure its compliance with the best available scientific advice;

4. the negotiation of the agreement should explore ways of channelling EDF development assistance for the region through the FFA, since the Pacific ACP countries do not have the human and technical resources to adequately utilise that funding.

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(3 January 2014)

The communication on the External Dimension of the CFP identified the development of oceans-based regional strategies for sustainable fisheries e.g. for the Pacific as a priority action. A longer-term approach to ensure access for the EU to the EEZs in the region would be framed by such a strategy under the Joint Communication 'Towards a renewed EU-Pacific development partnership' ([1]).

The External Dimension Communication highlighted the need for stronger synergies of fisheries and other EU policies, including development policy through the European Development Fund. The Commission encourages Pacific States to strengthen transparency, international cooperation, fisheries governance, effectiveness and respect of conservation measures and cooperation in fighting IUU. These preconditions, essential for any access agreement, depend on the constructive engagement of Pacific states, also in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. So far the VDS developed by the Parties to the Nauru Agreement does not achieve the internationally agreed objectives or allow for a level playing field and hence cannot yet be an operational basis for a access agreement.

The fact that the EU has pre-identified some Pacific states as non-cooperating in fighting IUU and experiences with the EU-Pacific Economic Partnership Agreement that have testified to the complexity of negotiating with a large and diverse group are important considerations for a possible regional agreement. Cooperation in the fight against IUU has improved in some respects and we will continue our engagement with the region.

The EU currently operates an FPA with Kiribati, while FPAs with Solomon Islands and Micronesia are dormant. A new FPA is under negotiation with Cook Islands.

([1]) JOIN(2012) 6 'Towards a renewed EU-Pacific development partnership'.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011558/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Chapitre sur l'état des finances publiques et des réformes des collectivités locales

Le Parlement a accueilli favorablement le rapport sur les finances publiques de l'UEM publié par la Commission et en particulier le chapitre relatif à la décentralisation fiscale dans l'Union, qui souligne la solidité d'un modèle fiscal fédéraliste déléguant la responsabilité de la levée de recettes et des dépenses aux collectivités locales.

Ne serait-il pas opportun que la Commission inclue un tel chapitre sur l'état des finances publiques et des réformes des collectivités locales dans le rapport sur les finances publiques de l'UEM de l'an prochain?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(28 novembre 2013)

Le rapport annuel sur les finances publiques dans l'Union économique et monétaire (UEM) rassemble dans une seule publication un aperçu des principales initiatives politiques prises dans le domaine des finances publiques et une série de conclusions analytiques tirées en la matière. Plus précisément, tout en considérant les finances publiques au sens large, le rapport fournit une description et une analyse détaillées des évolutions récentes dans le domaine budgétaire, ainsi qu'une appréciation des perspectives pour les années à venir, et traite de l'évolution du cadre de surveillance budgétaire de l'UE. Le rapport propose ensuite deux parties analytiques portant sur des thèmes en rapport avec la politique de la Commission. Ces parties visent à ouvrir un débat sur de nouveaux outils ou thématiques susceptibles de faire partie de la surveillance régulière exercée par la Commission. Il est donc normal que les sujets de la partie analytique finissent par changer, alors que le choix des sujets des deux parties sur la surveillance est dicté par les évolutions survenues dans l'année. Le contenu du rapport sur les finances publiques dans l'UEM est ainsi arrêté chaque année au cas par cas.

La Commission souhaite attirer l'attention de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur le récent document intitulé «Fiscal relations across government levels in times of crisis — making compatible fiscal decentralisation and budgetary discipline» («Relations budgétaires entre les niveaux de pouvoir en temps de crise — concilier décentralisation et discipline en matière budgétaire»), élaboré par la direction générale des affaires économiques et financières (DG ECFIN) à la suite d'un atelier sur l'établissement décentralisé des budgets. Ce document est disponible, en anglais uniquement, à l'adresse suivante:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/economic_paper/2013/ecp501_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011558/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Chapter on the state of sub-state public finances and reforms

Parliament has welcomed the Commission's Report on Public Finances in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and especially the chapter on Fiscal Decentralisation in the EU, which highlights the soundness of a fiscal federalist model that devolves revenue-raising as well as expenditure responsibilities to sub-state authorities.

Would it not be appropriate for the Commission to include such a chapter on the state of sub-state public finances and reforms in next year's report on Public Finances in the EMU?

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

The annual report on the public finances in EMU brings together in a single publication a review of key policy developments and new analytical findings in the area of the public finances. More precisely, while considering the public finances in a wide sense, the report provides a detailed description and analysis of recent budgetary developments and an assessment of the outlook over the coming years, discusses the evolution of the EU's fiscal surveillance framework. The report then proposes two analytical parts on themes relevant to the Commission policy. These parts aim at opening a discussion on new tools or topics which can become part of the regular surveillance work of the Commission. It is therefore normal that the topics of the analytical parts change in time, while the choice of topics of the two parts on surveillance is dictated by the developments of the year. So the contents of the Public Finance in the EMU report are decided every year on ad hoc basis.

The Commission would draw the Honourable Member's attention to the recent paper 'Fiscal relations across government levels in times of crisis — making compatible fiscal decentralisation and budgetary discipline' produced by Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) following a workshop on decentralised budgeting. It is available at
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/economic_paper/2013/ecp501_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011559/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Application des instruments financiers

L'application des instruments financiers est élargie, en vertu de la politique de cohésion, à tous les objectifs thématiques et à tous les Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens.

1. La Commission pourrait-elle proposer une analyse détaillée et une évaluation du potentiel de nouveaux moyens et de nouvelles sources de financement pour soutenir les investissements destinés à la croissance tels que le marché obligataire, l'instrument de partage des risques et l'utilisation d'instruments financiers innovants?

2. La Commission (avec le concours de la Banque européenne d'investissement (BEI)) pourrait-elle proposer de nouveaux modes de financement des investissements à long terme des collectivités locales et régionales, y compris en attirant des capitaux privés?

3. Soulignons le rôle essentiel joué par les dispositifs de prêts de la BEI dans le financement de projets d'intérêt européen. Dès lors, une coordination et une synergie renforcées entre ces dispositifs et les Fonds structurels ne serait-elle pas souhaitable?

Réponse donnée par M. Hahn au nom de la Commission
(18 décembre 2013)

1. La Commission a déjà réalisé des évaluations ex ante approfondies des instruments financiers ([1]) à mettre en œuvre dès le début du cadre financier pluriannuel 2014-2020 et procède actuellement à de nouvelles évaluations ([2]). La Commission s'attend à ce que la plus grande souplesse nouvellement proposée aux autorités de gestion stimule l'utilisation des instruments financiers lors de la mise en œuvre des Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens («Fonds ESI») pour 2014-2020, ce qui permettra de renforcer l'effet de levier et d'améliorer la viabilité à long terme des investissements.

2. Les autorités de gestion peuvent apporter un soutien sous la forme d'instruments financiers mis en place au niveau de l'Union ou à des instruments financiers établis à l'échelle nationale, régionale, transnationale ou transfrontière. En tout état de cause, les contributions des Fonds ESI aux instruments financiers doivent être utilisées conformément aux objectifs du/des programme(s).

Les autorités de gestion des États membres et des régions ont la possibilité, au titre de ce cadre général, de mettre au point, conjointement avec la BEI et d'autres établissements financiers internationaux ou nationaux, des mécanismes innovants pour financer les investissements au cours de la période 2014-2020. Elles peuvent confier la mise en œuvre des instruments financiers directement à la BEI. La Commission apportera une aide aux autorités de gestion au moyen de mesures d'assistance technique horizontales.

3. Si les autorités de gestion ont recours à des instruments financiers établis au niveau de l'Union, mis en œuvre par la BEI ou d'autres établissements financiers, une coordination et des synergies optimales entre les instruments financiers existant au niveau de l'Union et les Fonds ESI seront assurées conjointement par la Commission, la BEI et éventuellement d'autres établissements financiers, et par l'autorité de gestion compétente.

([1]) En particulier, ceux relevant de COSME et Horizon 2020.
([2]) Par exemple, en ce qui concerne le mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe, des instruments au titre du programme pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale et de l'initiative en faveur des PME qui mobilise des ressources des Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens, de COSME et Horizon 2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011559/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Application of financial instruments

The application of financial instruments under the Cohesion Policy has been extended to all thematic objectives and all European Structural and Investment Funds.

1. Could the Commission come up with a thorough analysis and assessment of the potential of the new means and sources of financing to support investments for growth, such as the bond market, the risk-sharing instrument and the use of innovative financial instruments?

2. Could the Commission (with the support of the European Investment Bank (EIB)) come up with innovative ways to finance the long-term investments of local and regional authorities including through attracting private capital?

3. We would emphasise the key role played by EIB loan schemes in financing projects of European interest. Therefore, would it not be desirable to establish greater coordination and synergy between such schemes and the Structural Funds?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2013)

1. The Commission has already made thorough *ex-ante* assessments of the financial instruments ([1]) to be implemented from the beginning of the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework, and is currently carrying out further assessments ([2]). The Commission expects that new and increased flexibility offered to managing authorities will boost the use of financial instruments when implementing the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). This will enhance leverage and the long-term sustainability of investment.

2. Managing authorities can provide support in the form of financial instruments set up at EU level, or for financial instruments set up at national, regional, transnational or cross-border level. In all cases, contributions from the ESIF to financial instruments must be used in accordance with the objectives of the programme(s).

Managing authorities in Member States and regions have the possibility under this general framework to develop jointly with the EIB and other international or national financial institutions innovative ways to finance investment in 2014-20. Managing authorities may entrust the implementation of financial instruments directly to the EIB. The Commission will assist managing authorities through horizontal technical assistance actions.

3. If managing authorities use financial instruments set up at EU level, implemented by the EIB or other financial institutions, an optimal coordination and synergies between financial instruments at EU level and the ESIF will be ensured jointly by the Commission, the EIB and possibly other financial institutions, and the competent managing authority.

([1]) in particular those under COSME and Horizon 2020.
([2]) e.g. for the Connecting Europe Facility, instruments under the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) and the SME Initiative which brings together European Structural and Investment Funds and COSME and Horizon 2020 resources.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011560/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Bonne gouvernance contre corruption

La Commission compte-t-elle proposer, dans le cadre de la prochaine révision de l'accord de Cotonou, le respect de la bonne gouvernance en tant qu'élément essentiel de l'accord et compte-t-elle suggérer d'étendre la portée de la définition de la corruption, afin de pouvoir sanctionner les violations de la clause relative à la bonne gouvernance dans tous les cas graves, et pas uniquement lorsque ces violations sont liées à des politiques ou à des programmes économiques et sectoriels pour lesquels l'Union est un partenaire important sur le plan de l'appui financier?

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011569/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Promotion des mécanismes d'alerte de l'OLAF

Que pense la Commission de la proposition du Parlement consistant à faire connaître les mécanismes d'alerte de l'OLAF sur l'abus de fonds de l'Union par des participants aux appels d'offres publics et des bénéficiaires de l'aide de l'Union, et d'émettre des lignes directrices sur le traitement des informations fournies par les dénonciateurs d'abus dans les pays tiers, en permettant de manière appropriée le suivi, la réaction et la protection contre les représailles, en accordant une attention particulière à la situation des populations les plus vulnérables, et notamment des femmes, dans de nombreux pays en développement, car celles-ci sont particulièrement susceptibles d'être la cible d'actes de corruption et de coopérer pour les dénoncer, mais aussi d'être plus vulnérables et stigmatisées en cas de coopération?

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011571/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Conditionnalité aux normes internationales en matière de corruption

Le Parlement a demandé à la Commission d'appliquer le principe de conditionnalité aux normes internationales en matière de corruption dans leurs programmes d'aide au développement et d'introduire une clause anti-corruption dans les contrats de passation de marchés comme le recommande l'OCDE. Il demande que la Commission continue de favoriser une transparence élevée de l'aide dans des formats lisibles par machine et d'utiliser une norme commune afin d'assurer la comparabilité avec les autres donateurs, et aussi, plus particulièrement, selon les besoins des pays bénéficiaires. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission? Compte-t-telle satisfaire le Parlement?

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

Les demandes de l'Honorable Parlementaire sont identiques à celles formulées par le Parlement dans sa résolution sur la corruption dans les secteurs public et privé: incidences sur les Droits de l'homme dans les pays tiers, adoptée le 8 octobre 2013. La Commission communiquera sa réponse au Parlement, conformément aux règles en vigueur concernant les suites données par la Commission aux résolutions non législatives adoptées par le Parlement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011560/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Good governance against corruption

As part of the next revision of the Cotonou Agreement, does the Commission intend to propose the respect of good governance as an essential element of the Agreement and does it intend to suggest widening the scope of the definition of corruption, allowing the sanctioning of breaches of the good governance clause in all serious cases, and not only when related to economic and sectoral policies and programmes on which the European Union is a significant partner in terms of financial support?

Question for written answer E-011569/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Promoting OLAF alert mechanisms

What does the Commission think of Parliament's proposal to publicise the reporting mechanisms within OLAF regarding misuse of EU funds among participants in public tenders and beneficiaries of EU aid, and produce policy guidelines on the treatment of information provided by whistle-blowers regarding those abuses in third countries, allowing for a proper follow-up, feedback and protection against retaliation, paying particular attention to the situation of the most vulnerable population groups, especially women, in many developing countries as they are particularly prone to be the targets of corruption and to cooperate in exposing it, but also to be more vulnerable and stigmatised for cooperating?

Question for written answer E-011571/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Application of the principle of conditionality to international anti-corruption norms

Parliament has asked the Commission to apply the principle that their development aid programmes should be conditional on observance of international anti-corruption norms, and to introduce an anti-corruption clause into public procurement contracts as recommended by the OECD; requests that the Commission continue to foster high levels of aid transparency in digital, machine-readable formats and to use a common standard to ensure comparability both with other donors, and also, more particularly, in line with the needs of recipient governments. What is the Commission's reaction? Will it satisfy Parliament's request?

Joint answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2013)

The Honourable Member's enquiries are identical to the requests formulated by Parliament in its Resolution on Corruption in the public and private sectors: the impact on human rights in third countries adopted on 8 October 2013. The Commission will inform the Parliament of its reply in accordance with the rules in force concerning the follow-up by the Commission regarding non-legislative resolutions adopted by the Parliament.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011562/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Sélection selon le sexe

La Commission va-t-elle promouvoir une recherche et un examen scientifiques approfondis concernant les causes principales des pratiques de sélection selon le sexe, afin d'encourager la recherche dans le domaine des coutumes et traditions nationales susceptibles de conduire à une sélection selon le sexe, ainsi que dans le domaine des conséquences sociétales à long terme de la sélection selon le sexe?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Geoghegan-Quinn au nom de la Commission
(4 décembre 2013)

La question de la sélection selon le sexe concerne certains pays non membres de l'Union européenne, notamment la Chine, l'Inde et le Pakistan. Cette pratique est une conséquence inacceptable des inégalités et discriminations fondées sur le sexe.

La Commission est déterminée à combattre les pratiques de sélection selon le sexe qui ont cours dans certaines parties du monde. Un appel à propositions (actuellement en cours d'examen par la DG DEVCO) a notamment été lancé pour lutter contre l'infanticide des filles. Les projets retenus devront prendre en compte des facteurs culturels et de localisation, ainsi que les conséquences de la surreprésentation des hommes par rapport aux femmes, qui peut conduire à une hausse sensible de la criminalité, à des violations des Droits de l'homme (prostitution forcée, traite des êtres humains à des fins de mariage ou exploitation sexuelle) et à une augmentation du taux de suicide des femmes.

Les priorités de l'UE en vue de la mise en place d'un espace de justice, de liberté et de sécurité pour la période 2010-2014 sont énoncées dans le programme de Stockholm. Comme l'indiquent le plan d'action mettant en œuvre ce programme, la Charte des femmes et la stratégie pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes (2010-2015), la Commission s'emploie activement à promouvoir l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et les droits des femmes, ainsi que la lutte contre toutes les formes de violence à l'égard des femmes, y compris les pratiques traditionnelles préjudiciables.

En outre, dans le cadre d'Horizon 2020, l'UE a l'intention de financer de vastes projets de recherche sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et les violences faites aux femmes, afin de permettre à l'Europe de contribuer à la gouvernance et à la justice mondiales dans des domaines tels que l'égalité hommes-femmes et les Droits de l'homme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011562/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Sex selection

Will the Commission promote a thorough scientific investigation and examination of the root causes of sex-selective practices with a view to promote research into those country-specific customs and traditions that may lead to sex selection and the long-term societal consequences of sex selection?

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

The issue of sex selection affects some specific non-EU countries, in particular China, India and Pakistan. It is an unacceptable consequence of gender inequalities and a sex-discrimination

The Commission is committed to the fight against sex-selective practices occurring in some parts of the world. A call for proposals (currently under selection by DG DEVCO) has been launched to tackle girl infanticide. The selected projects will take into consideration location-specific and cultural factors as well as the consequences of the over-representation of men over women, which can lead to significant increase in crime and human rights violations (forced prostitution, trafficking for marriage or sexual exploitation) and increase female suicide rates.

The EU priorities for developing an area of justice, freedom and security during the period 2010-2014 are set out in the Stockholm Programme. As shown in the action plan implementing it, in the Women's Charter and in the strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015, the Commission has been actively committed to the promotion of gender equality and women's rights, and in particular to combating all forms of violence against women, including harmful traditional practices.

In addition, under Horizon 2020, the EU plans to fund broad research projects on gender equality and violence against women enabling Europe to contribute to global governance and justice in domains such as gender equality and human rights.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011563/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Avortement sélectif

La Commission va-t-elle, comme le demande le Parlement dans son rapport sur le génériciide, dresser une liste des cliniques qui pratiquent l'avortement sélectif en Europe, fournir des statistiques en la matière et élaborer un recueil des meilleures pratiques pour empêcher ces avortements?

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

Conformément au traité, l'organisation et la fourniture des services de santé et des soins médicaux relèvent de la compétence des États membres. L'UE n'a pas de compétences en ce qui concerne la politique de l'avortement au niveau national et ne dispose pas de statistiques en ce domaine.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011563/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Sex-selective abortion

Will the Commission, as requested by Parliament in its report on gendercide, identify clinics in Europe that conduct sex-selective abortions, provide statistics on this practice and elaborate a list of best practices for preventing them?

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

According to the Treaty, the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care are the competence of the individual Member States. The EU has no competences on abortion policy at national level and no statistics in this area.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011564/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Promotion éducative de l'égalité des genres

La Commission compte-t-elle apporter un soutien technique et financier en faveur d'activités novatrices et de programmes éducatifs visant à alimenter le débat et à favoriser la compréhension du fait que les filles ont la même valeur que les garçons, en utilisant à cette fin tous les médias et les réseaux sociaux disponibles, en ciblant les jeunes gens, les dirigeants spirituels et religieux, les enseignants, les chefs de communauté et les autres personnalités influentes, dans le but de modifier les perceptions culturelles en matière d'égalité des genres d'une société donnée et de souligner la nécessité de comportements non discriminatoires?

Dans l'affirmative, comment va-t-elle s'y prendre?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(5 décembre 2013)

Promouvoir un comportement non discriminatoire et de bonnes pratiques concernant le rôle des femmes et des hommes dans le domaine de l'éducation, de la culture et du sport est une des actions clés de la communication de la Commission «Stratégie pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes» ([1]).

En 2009 et 2012, la Commission a organisé des échanges de bonnes pratiques, axés sur des choix éducatifs non stéréotypés pour les garçons et les filles, et a encouragé le débat sur une restriction possible des choix individuels et de la réalisation du potentiel aussi bien des femmes que des hommes, due à une répartition rigide des rôles entre hommes et femmes ([2]).

Un autre exemple de l'action de la Commission est l'organisation de la première conférence de l'UE sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes et le sport, qui se tiendra les 3 et 4 décembre 2013 à Vilnius et sera consacrée, entre autres, à la lutte contre les stéréotypes sexistes dans le sport.

L'UE soutient également des projets Comenius qui visent à supprimer les stéréotypes sexistes et à renforcer la coopération entre écoles de différents États membres. Le Fonds social européen peut aussi soutenir des activités innovantes visant à promouvoir l'égalité des sexes et un comportement non discriminatoire.

Le cadre législatif relatif aux Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens (FSIE) Member States shall also take steps to ensure the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of EU gender equality law and policy in the field of ESIF. In particular, for the European Social Fund, the programming of specific actions for gender equality and non-discrimination is mandatory and all data has to be broken down by sex.

([1]) COM(2010) 491 final.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011564/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Educational promotion of gender equality

Does the Commission intend to provide technical and financial support for innovative activities and educational programmes that aim to stimulate debate and understanding of the equal value of girls and boys, using all available media and social networks, targeting and involving young people, religious and spiritual leaders, teachers, community leaders and other influential personalities, in an effort to modify the cultural perceptions of gender equality of a given society and to underscore the need for non-discriminatory behaviour?

If so, how will it provide this support?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2013)

Promoting non-discriminatory behaviour and good practices on gender roles in youth education, culture and sport is one of the key actions of the Commission's 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015' ([1]).

In 2009 and 2012, the Commission organised exchanges of good practices focusing on non-stereotypical educational choices for girls and boys, and stimulating a debate on rigid gender roles that can hamper individual choices and restrict the potential of both women and men ([2]).

Another example of the Commission's action is the organisation of the first EU Conference on Gender Equality in Sport on 3 and 4 December 2013 in Vilnius, notably dedicated to the fight against gender stereotypes in sport.

The EU also supports Comenius projects focusing on eliminating gender stereotypes and enhancing cooperation between schools from different Member States. The European Social Fund can also support innovative activities promoting gender equality and non-discriminatory behaviour.

The legislative framework for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2014-2020 requires Member States to ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective are promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes. Member States shall also take steps to ensure the existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of EU gender equality law and policy in the field of ESIF. In particular, for the European Social Fund, the programming of specific actions for gender equality and non-discrimination is mandatory and all data has to be broken down by sex.

([1]) COM(2010) 491.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011565/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Génériciде et aide humanitaire

La Commission va-t-elle, lors des négociations concernant l'aide humanitaire, accéder à la demande du Parlement et faire du génériciде l'un des problèmes que les pays tiers concernés doivent résoudre en priorité? La Commission compte-t-elle leur demander de s'engager à éradiquer cette pratique sans plus attendre, de renforcer les mesures de sensibilisation et d'encourager les actions de prévention en la matière?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Georgieva au nom de la Commission
(28 novembre 2013)

Toutes les interventions humanitaires relatives à la protection et financées par l'Union européenne visent à prévenir la violence et à agir sur ses conséquences, y compris les différentes formes de violence fondées sur le sexe, les meurtres ou les mutilations.

Le consensus européen sur l'aide humanitaire insiste sur le fait que «des stratégies de protection contre la violence sexuelle et sexiste doivent être intégrées dans tous les aspects de l'aide humanitaire». C'est pourquoi la Commission est déterminée tant à empêcher la violence sexuelle et sexiste qu'à y réagir dans les situations de crise humanitaire. Pour ce faire, elle accorde une place centrale à ces problèmes, élabore des actions ciblées et renforce les capacités nécessaires. À cet égard, de nombreuses actions sont financées chaque année dans différents pays pour combattre et/ou prévenir la violence sexuelle et sexiste.

La Commission a récemment adopté un document de travail interne sur l'intégration de la dimension hommes-femmes dans l'aide humanitaire («Gender in humanitarian aid: different needs, adapted assistance»). Il présente l'approche de la Commission, qui prend en compte les spécificités des deux sexes et la violence sexuelle et sexiste dans l'aide humanitaire, et contient des recommandations sur la manière de résoudre la violence à caractère sexiste et de lutter contre la discrimination. En outre, la Commission élabore actuellement de nouveaux outils pour mieux tenir compte des risques spécifiques liés au sexe rencontrés par les femmes et les hommes dans les situations de crise.

Des engagements à long terme sont nécessaires pour trouver une solution durable à des problèmes complexes comme le génériciде. Il est donc particulièrement important, à cet égard, d'établir un véritable lien entre l'aide humanitaire et les efforts de développement. Parallèlement aux interventions humanitaires, la Commission aborde la question de l'infanticide des filles dans le cadre de ses programmes de coopération au développement. Ainsi, l'appel d'offres lancé en 2013 pour lutter contre les discriminations dans le cadre du programme de développement social et humain comporte un volet doté de 5 millions d'euros, qui vise à lutter contre les pires formes de discrimination à l'égard des nourrissons de sexe féminin, notamment contre l'infanticide des filles.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011565/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Gendercide and humanitarian aid

When discussing humanitarian aid packages, will the Commission grant Parliament's request and prioritise gendercide as an issue to be addressed by the third countries concerned? Will the Commission enjoin them to commit themselves to make the eradication of gendercide a priority, to increase awareness about this issue and to press for its prevention?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2013)

All humanitarian interventions funded by the European Union in the protection sector aim at preventing and addressing the consequences of violence, including different forms of gender-based violence or killing and maiming.

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid underlines that 'protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence must be incorporated in all aspects of humanitarian assistance'. Therefore, the Commission is committed to both prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in humanitarian settings. This is done through mainstreaming, targeted actions and capacity building. In this connection, numerous actions are funded each year in different countries to address and/or prevent SGBV.

The Commission recently adopted a Staff Working Document on 'Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance', which outlines the Commission's approach to gender and SGBV in humanitarian aid, including recommendations to address GBV and fight discrimination. Furthermore, the Commission is currently developing new tools to better address the specific gender-related risks faced by women and men in crises.

In order to sustainably address complex issues such as gendercide, long-term commitments are required. Hence, effective links between humanitarian and development efforts are particularly relevant in this respect. Alongside humanitarian interventions, the Commission addresses female infanticide through its development cooperation programmes. For instance, the 2013 Investing in People Call on 'Combating Discrimination' includes a 5 million EUR component, which aims at addressing the worst forms of discrimination against girl infants, including female infanticide.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011566/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Retrait des billets de 1 000 euros

1. La Commission est-elle en faveur du maintien des billets de 1 000 euros? En effet, ceux-ci seraient, d'après de récentes études, principalement utilisés par les milieux mafieux ou pour l'évasion fiscale.

2. Combien coûte annuellement la production de ce type de billet?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

L'Honorable Parlementaire observera que cette dénomination n'existe pas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011566/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Withdrawal of the EUR 1 000 banknote

1. Is the Commission in favour of keeping EUR 1 000 banknotes? According to recent studies, these notes are mainly used by mafia groups or for tax evasion.

2. What is the annual cost of producing this denomination of banknote?

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

The Honourable Member should notice that such a denomination does not exist.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011567/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Les cigarettiers rachètent l'e-cigarette

Tous les grands industriels du tabac, Philip Morris aux États-Unis, Japan Tobacco et British American Tobacco, ont déjà acheté une ou plusieurs marques de cigarettes électroniques. Leurs objectifs sont clairs: si le marché reste aussi rentable, ils feront totalement main basse dessus et proposeront le mal et le remède. C'est un problème grave. Avec ce genre de pratique, l'éthique risque de partir en fumée.

1. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission?

2. N'y a-t-il pas conflit d'intérêts ou un problème d'éthique? Que compte faire la Commission?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(25 novembre 2013)

La Commission est consciente que le marché des produits contenant de la nicotine, notamment les cigarettes électroniques, est en pleine expansion. Cette préoccupation s'est reflétée dans l'analyse d'impact dont était assortie la proposition de révision de la directive sur les produits du tabac.

En conséquence, la Commission, dans sa proposition du 19 décembre 2012 de révision de la directive sur les produits du tabac ([1]) prévoit que les produits contenant de la nicotine qui présentent un taux de nicotine supérieur à un certain seuil sont soumis aux mêmes règles que les médicaments. La principale préoccupation de la Commission est de veiller à ce que les produits contenant de la nicotine soient sûrs et n'ouvrent pas la porte à la dépendance à la nicotine pour les jeunes, en particulier les non-fumeurs.

([1]) Proposition de directive relative au rapprochement des dispositions législatives, réglementaires et administratives des États membres en matière de fabrication, de présentation et de vente du tabac et de ses produits, COM(2012) 788.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011567/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Cigarette companies acquire the e-cigarette

All the main cigarette companies, Philip Morris in the United States, Japan Tobacco and British American Tobacco, have already purchased one or several electronic cigarette brands. Their objectives are clear: if the market remains as profitable, they will be completely in control and, thus, offer both the evil and the remedy. This is a serious problem. With such practices, ethics risk going up in smoke.

1. What is the Commission's reaction?

2. Is there not a conflict of interest, or an ethical problem? What does the Commission plan to do?

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

The Commission is aware that the nicotine-containing product market, which includes electronic cigarettes, is expanding. This concern was reflected in the impact assessment accompanying the proposed revision of the Tobacco Products Directive.

As a result, the Commission, in its proposal ([1]) of 19 December 2012 to revise the Tobacco Products Directive, foresees that nicotine-containing products beyond a certain level of nicotine are regulated as pharmaceutical products. The Commission's main concern is to ensure that nicotine-containing products are safe and do not develop into an entry gate for young people — in particular non-smokers — into nicotine addiction.

([1]) Proposal for a directive on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products, COM(2012) 788.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011568/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Fonctionnaires violant les Droits de l'homme

La Commission pourrait-elle, comme le lui suggère le Parlement, élaborer un plan d'action en vue de créer un mécanisme recensant, d'une part, les fonctionnaires de pays tiers (notamment des policiers, procureurs et juges) impliqués dans des violations graves des Droits de l'homme et dans des «manipulations» judiciaires contre les dénonciateurs d'abus, les journalistes dénonçant la corruption et les militants des Droits de l'homme dans les pays tiers et imposant, d'autre part, des sanctions ciblées similaires à leur encontre?

Les critères d'inscription sur la liste ainsi créée devraient reposer sur des sources bien documentées, convergentes et indépendantes, et sur des preuves convaincantes, ainsi que prévoir des mécanismes de recours pour les personnes visées.

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante, au nom de la Commission
(3 décembre 2013)

Comme précisé à l'article 21 du traité sur l'Union européenne, l'action extérieure de l'Union a notamment pour but de consolider et de soutenir la démocratie, l'État de droit, les Droits de l'homme et les principes du droit international.

Le Conseil de l'Union européenne est chargé d'adopter les décisions relatives à toute question spécifique dans le domaine de la politique étrangère et de sécurité commune. Les mesures restrictives sont l'un des instruments dont il dispose à cet égard. Il convient d'examiner cet outil dans le contexte plus large de la politique de l'Union européenne à l'égard d'une situation ou d'un pays en particulier.

D'ailleurs, le Conseil, sur la base des politiques précitées, a déjà imposé un certain nombre de régimes de sanctions en raison de graves violations des Droits de l'homme. C'est par exemple le cas pour la Biélorussie, l'Iran, la Birmanie et le Zimbabwe, des critères spécifiques d'inscription sur la liste étant utilisés de façon systématique.

Il est à noter que toute inscription sur la liste doit être effectuée sur la base de raisons particulières et spécifiques. Ceux qui font l'objet d'une inscription sur la liste doivent être informés de la décision du Conseil et de leurs droits à demander un réexamen de ladite décision par le Conseil ou à la contester devant la Cour.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011568/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Public officials violating human rights

Can the Commission not, as suggested by Parliament, draw up an action plan, with a view to creating a mechanism for listing and imposing similar targeted sanctions against officials of third countries (including police officers, prosecutors and judges) involved in grave human rights violations and judicial 'manipulations' against whistle-blowers, journalists reporting on corruption and human rights activists in third countries?

Criteria of inclusion on the list should be built up on the basis of well-documented, converging and independent sources and convincing evidence, allowing for mechanisms of redress for those targeted.

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

The consolidation and support of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law, are objectives of the Union's external action, as stated in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union.

The Council of the European Union is responsible for adopting decisions concerning any specific matter in the field of the common foreign and security policy. Restrictive measures are one of the instruments at the disposal of the Council in this regard. This tool should be looked at in the broader context of the policy of the European Union towards a specific situation or country.

As a matter of fact, on the basis of the abovementioned policies, the Council has already imposed a number of sanctions regimes in response to serious human rights violations. For example, this is the case for Belarus, Iran, Burma, Zimbabwe where specific listing criteria are used in each case.

It is noted that any listing must be done on the basis of individual and specific reasons. Those subject to listing must be notified of the Council's decision and of their rights for it to be reviewed by the Council or challenged before the Court.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011570/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Sanctions pour l'avortement forcé

La Commission va-t-elle mettre en place les mesures législatives qui s'imposent pour veiller à ce que les avortements forcés et les actes chirurgicaux sélectifs visant à interrompre une grossesse sans avoir préalablement obtenu le consentement éclairé des femmes concernées ni s'être assuré qu'elles avaient compris la procédure soient passibles de sanctions pénales?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(2 décembre 2013)

L'Union européenne n'a pas compétence pour harmoniser la définition de l'avortement forcé et des actes chirurgicaux sélectifs, ni le niveau des sanctions pénales correspondantes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011570/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Sanctions for forced abortion

Will the Commission take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that practising forced abortions and sex-selective surgery to terminate pregnancy without prior and informed consent or understanding of the procedure by the women involved is criminalised?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The European Union does not have the competence to harmonise the definition of forced abortion and sex-selective surgery and their level of criminal sanctions.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011572/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 octobre 2013)

Objet: Définition des défenseurs des Droits de l'homme

Que pense la Commission de l'idée d'élargir la définition des défenseurs des Droits de l'homme dans les orientations de l'Union les concernant, afin d'y inclure les militants anticorruption, les journalistes d'investigation et, particulièrement, les dénonciateurs d'abus?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(5 décembre 2013)

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante approuve la définition de défenseur des Droits de l'homme telle qu'elle figure dans la Déclaration des Nations unies de 1998 sur le droit et la responsabilité des individus, groupes et organes de la société de promouvoir et protéger les Droits de l'homme et les libertés fondamentales universellement reconnus (communément appelée «déclaration des Nations unies sur les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme»), qui constitue le principal instrument international dans ce domaine.

Selon la déclaration des Nations unies, un défenseur des Droits de l'homme est toute personne qui, individuellement ou en association avec d'autres, œuvre pacifiquement à la défense et à la protection des Droits de l'homme. Cette définition couvre tant les individus que les groupes qui œuvrent à cet objectif. Le plus important est l'accent mis sur les Droits de l'homme et le caractère non violent des actions entreprises.

Par conséquent, la définition de défenseur des Droits de l'homme ne peut énumérer toutes les catégories de défenseurs des Droits de l'homme. À ce titre, les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme se distinguent avant tout par la nature de leur travail plutôt que par leur identité ou leur profession. Les militants anticorruption, les journalistes d'investigation et les dénonciateurs d'abus peuvent dès lors être considérés comme des défenseurs des Droits de l'homme pour autant qu'ils œuvrent à la défense et à la protection des Droits de l'homme sans recourir à la violence.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011572/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(9 October 2013)

Subject: Definition of Human Rights Defenders

What does the Commission think of the idea of extending the definition of human rights defenders in the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders to include anti-corruption activists, investigative journalists and, notably, whistle-blowers?

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

The HR/VP subscribes to the definition of a human rights defender, as spelled out in the 1998 UN Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (commonly known as the UN Declaration on HRDs), which is the main international instrument in this field.

On the basis of the UN Declaration, a human rights defender is anyone who, either alone or in association with others, works peacefully for the promotion and protection of human rights.This definition covers both individuals and groups who work to promote and protect human rights. What is most important is the human rights character of the work undertaken and its non-violent character.

Therefore, the definition of a human rights defenders does not contain an enumerative catalogue of categories of human rights defenders. As such, human rights defenders are identified first and foremost by the nature of their work rather than by their identity or profession. In consequence, anti-corruption activists, investigative journalists and whistle blowers may be considered human rights defenders as long as they work for the promotion and protection of human rights without resorting to violence.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-011576/13
za Komisijo
Tanja Fajon (S&D)
(10. oktober 2013)

Zadeva: Opozorila o nezakonitostih pri izvajanju Uredbe 320/2006 in sum zlorabe finančnih sredstev EU ob prestrukturiranju Tovarne sladkorja v Ormožu

Opozorjena sem bila na malverzacije pri upravljanju evropskih sredstev, ki so se dogajale pri prestrukturiranju sladkorne tovarne v Ormožu in o katerih sta bila s pismom slovenske državljanke z dne 30. avgusta 2011 obveščena tako Evropska komisija kot OLAF.

1. Kaj je naredila Komisija ob opozorilih o nezakonitostih pri izvajanju Uredbe 320/2006 in oškodovanju kmetovalcev, delavcev in sredstev proračuna EU pri prestrukturiranju Tovarne sladkorja v Ormožu (TSO)?

2. Ali je Komisija prijavo goljufije s sredstvi EU in oškodovanja države članice Slovenije, ki ji je bila poslana, posredovala ustreznim organom? Kaj je storila glede goljufije oziroma namernega oškodovanja evropskih sredstev, države in tovarne s strani uprave TSO in likvidacijskega upravitelja? Iz prijave je namreč razvidno, da so dela, ki so bila plačana iz sredstev proračuna EU, izvajali in nadzirali isti ljudje. Likvidacijski upravitelj TSO je bil lastnik predalčnega podjetja Nukleus Limited v Londonu, ki je bilo lastnik Poslovnih integracij, d. o. o., v Mariboru, to podjetje pa je izvajalo večino del pri razgradnji TSO.

3. Zakaj Komisija navedenih dejstev iz prijave o nepravilnostih z dne 30. avgusta 2011 ni upoštevala pri vložitvi tožbe proti državi članici Sloveniji, saj je tudi sama – z opustitvijo dolžnega ravnanja pri potrjevanju sprememb prestrukturiranja TSO – povzročila, da se je (na željo lastnikov iz Nizozemske) v državi članici Sloveniji spremenil že odobreni program prestrukturiranja TSO. Zaradi tega Sloveniji grozi plačilo 8,9 milijonov EUR odškodnine.

Odgovor komisarja Cioloş v imenu Komisije
(16. december 2013)

1. Komisija potrjuje, da je slovenske organe opozorila na to pritožbo na dvostranskem srečanju, organiziranem v okviru postopka potrditve obračunov o slovenski shemi prestrukturiranja sektorja sladkorja decembra 2011. Na podlagi analize pritožbe, prejetih odgovorov in informacij je bilo sklenjeno, da nadaljnji ukrepi Komisije niso potrebni. V zvezi s tem je pritožnik o tej zadevi tudi obvestil OLAF in slovenskega tožilca. OLAF je informacije ocenil in sprejeta je bila odločitev, da ne bo začel preiskave, saj so zadevo že obravnavali slovenski organi.

2. Glede ukrepov, ki jih je sprejela Komisija, upoštevajte odgovor na vprašanje 1. Na podlagi člena 5 Uredbe Sveta 320/2006 ([1]), s katero je bila shema vzpostavljena, so za odločitve o upravičenosti načrta prestrukturiranja in nadzor načrta po njegovi odobritvi pristojni slovenski organi. Trditve glede goljufij in namerne škode morajo preiskati ustrezni slovenski organi.

3. Komisija ni odobrila posameznih načrtov prestrukturiranja in sprememb načrtov prestrukturiranja. Predlagani finančni popravek, na katerega se sklicuje spoštovana poslanka, se ne nanaša na pritožbo z dne 30. avgusta 2011. V okviru postopka potrditve obračunov je Komisija naknadno preverila, ali je slovenska shema skladna z zadevnimi pravili, in ugotovila, da so bili silosi za sladkor ohranjeni v nekdanji tovarni sladkorja, zato je Komisija za Slovenijo predlagala finančni popravek v višini 8,7 milijona EUR. Komisija bo zadevo preučila glede na nedavno sodbo Sodišča z dne 14. novembra 2013 v zvezi s silosi za sladkor (zadeva C-187/12 do 189/12).

([1]) UL L 58, 28.2.2006 in UL L 58, 28.2.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011576/13
to the Commission
Tanja Fajon (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Warnings of a breach of Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 and suspected misuse of EU funds in the restructuring of the Ormož sugar factory

I have been informed about the mismanagement of EU funds that occurred during the restructuring of the Ormož sugar factory (Tovarna sladkorja Ormož — TSO), a case which was notified to the Commission and OLAF by a Slovenian national in a letter dated 30 August 2011.

1. How did the Commission respond to the warnings about the breach of Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 and about the damage caused to farmers, workers, and the EU budget in the restructuring of TSO?

2. Having been notified of the fraud involving EU funds and the damage caused to Slovenia, did the Commission pass on the information to the relevant authorities? What measures did it take regarding the fraud and intentional damage caused to EU funds, Slovenia, and the factory by TSO's management and its liquidator? It is clear from the notification that the same people implemented and oversaw the work paid for from the EU budget. Jurij Dogša, the liquidator of TSO, was the owner of a London-based shell company called Nukleus Limited, which owned Poslovne integracije, d. o. o., the Maribor-based company that carried out most of the work connected with the decommissioning of TSO.

3. In bringing an action against Slovenia, why has the Commission not taken into account the facts reported in the notification of 30 August 2011 concerning the irregularities, given that — by failing in its duty as regards the approval of changes to the TSO restructuring — it brought about a situation in which (at the request of the Dutch owners) the TSO restructuring plan already approved was changed in Slovenia? As a result, Slovenia may have to pay EUR 8.9 million in compensation.

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(16 December 2013)

1. The Commission confirms it raised this complaint with the Slovenian authorities during the bilateral meeting organised under the clearance of accounts procedure on the Slovenian sugar restructuring scheme in December 2011. On the basis of analysis of the complaint and the replies and information received, it was concluded that no further action should be taken by the Commission. In this respect, the complainant also notified this matter to OLAF and also to a Slovenian prosecutor. OLAF has assessed the information and it was decided not to open an investigation as the case was already dealt with by the Slovenian authorities

2. Please see the reply to question 1 above regarding action taken by the Commission. Under Article 5 of Council Regulation 320/2006 ([1]) which set up the scheme, decisions on the eligibility of a restructuring plan and the supervision of the plan once approved are a matter for the Slovenian authorities. The claims of fraud and intentional damage are a matter for the appropriate Slovenian authorities to investigate.

3. The Commission did not approve individual sugar restructuring plans or modifications to restructuring plans. The proposed financial correction to which the Honourable Member refers does not relate to the complaint dated 30 August 2011. Under the clearance of accounts procedure, the Commission checked *ex post* if the Slovenian scheme was compliant with the relevant rules and found that sugar silos had been retained in the former sugar factory and consequently the Commission has proposed a financial correction of EUR 8.7 million on Slovenia. The Commission will examine the situation in the light of the recent Court of Justice judgment of 14 November 2013 in relation to sugar silos (Case C-187/12 to C-189/12).

([1]) OJ L 58, 28.2.2006.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011578/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(10 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Juridisch advies van de Raad over het gemeenschappelijk afwikkelingsmechanisme

Op 7 oktober 2013 heeft de Juridische Dienst van de Raad van de Europese Unie zijn advies gegeven over het voorstel voor een gemeenschappelijk afwikkelingsmechanisme (GAM) ([1]).

De Juridische Dienst van de Raad heeft er uitdrukkelijk op gewezen dat het huidige voorstel voor een GAM niet strookt met de Verdragen en ook niet met de jurisprudentie van het Europese Hof van Justitie.

Gezien het bovenstaande:

1. Kent de Commissie het advies van de Juridische Dienst van de Raad?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie dit advies?

3. Is de Commissie ook van mening dat haar voorstel openlijk inbreuk maakt op het EU-recht?

4. Welke maatregelen is de Commissie van plan te nemen? Trekt ze haar voorstel terug of wijzigt ze het alleen overeenkomstig het juridisch advies van de Raad?

5. Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat haar blauwdruk voor een Europese bankenunie onlangs opnieuw een zware slag is toegebracht, zoals *The Financial Times* ([2]) stelt?

6. Is de Commissie ook van mening dat het doek moet vallen voor al haar huidige en toekomstige EMU-governancevoorstellen? Al deze voorstellen zijn namelijk alleen legaal na verdragswijzigingen en de lidstaten hebben daar niet mee ingestemd.

7. Staat de Commissie nog altijd achter het antwoord dat zij gaf op mijn schriftelijke vraag E-006122/2013 ([3]) van 31 juli 2013?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(2 december 2013)

1. en 2. Overeenkomstig de desbetreffende institutionele regels neemt de Commissie deel aan de besprekingen van de Raad over het voorstel voor een gemeenschappelijk afwikkelingsmechanisme en is derhalve op de hoogte van de besprekingen in de Raad. De Commissie zal een standpunt innemen over de algemene aanpak waarover de Raad naar verwachting aan het einde van het jaar overeenstemming zal bereiken, maar zal geen opmerkingen maken over afzonderlijke interne documenten van de Raad die zijn opgesteld tijdens de besprekingen om tot die algemene aanpak te komen.

3. en 4. De Commissie heeft een voorstel ingediend voor een gemeenschappelijk afwikkelingsmechanisme op basis van artikel 114 van het VWEU, dat zij volledig in overeenstemming acht met het Verdrag. De Commissie is bereid steun te verlenen voor de verbetering van het wetgevingsproces in de Raad en het Europees Parlement.

5. Op basis van de conclusies van de Europese Raad op 24 en 25 oktober 2013 acht de Commissie de kans groot dat de Raad aan het eind van het jaar overeenstemming bereikt over een algemene aanpak. Zij merkt ook op dat de planning van de werkzaamheden van het Europees Parlement even ambitieus is. De Commissie heeft derhalve geen reden om aan te nemen dat er sprake zou zijn van een „zware slag" voor een Europese bankenunie.

6. De Commissie heeft in haar voorstel uiteengezet welke EMU-governancevoorstellen haalbaar zouden zijn in het kader van het huidige Verdrag en welke van die voorstellen een wijziging van het Verdrag vereisen. Zij is het er niet mee eens dat de EMU-governancevoorstellen een wijziging van het Verdrag vereisen.

7. Het antwoord dat de Commissie gaf op schriftelijke vraag E-006122/2013 moet niet worden herzien of gewijzigd.

([1]) http://interactive.ftdata.co.uk/docCloud/templates/onePageAttr.html?p=802602-cls-banking-union.
([2]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/306c4e48-2ffe-11e3-9eec-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz2hDYiYJW7.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-006122&language=EN.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011578/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Legal opinion of the Council on the Single Resolution Mechanism

On 7 October 2013 the Legal Service of the Council of the European Union issued its legal opinion on the proposal for a Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) ([1]).

The Legal Service of the Council has clearly pointed out that the current proposal for an SRM is not in line with the Treaties or the case law of the European Court of Justice.

In the light of this:

1. Is the Commission aware of the legal opinion submitted by the Legal Service of the Council of the EU?

2. How does the Commission judge this legal opinion?

3. Does the Commission agree that it submitted a proposal which openly breaches EC law?

4. What actions does the Commission plan to undertake? Will it withdraw its proposal or simply modify it in accordance with the Council's legal advice?

5. Does the Commission agree that its blueprint for European Banking Union has just suffered another serious setback, as stated in *The Financial Times* ([2])?

6. Does the Commission agree that it is time to bring the curtain down on all its present and future EMU governance proposals, since they would all require Treaty changes which have not been agreed upon by the Member States, as is necessary for them to be legal?

7. Does the Commission still agree with the answer it gave on 31 July 2013 to my Written Question E-006122/2013 ([3])?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

1 and 2. Following applicable institutional rules, the Commission attends Council deliberations on its proposal for a Single Resolution Mechanism and is therefore aware of Council discussions. The Commission will take a position on any general approach which the Council is expected to reach by the end of the year, but will not comment on individual internal Council documents prepared in discussions leading to that general approach.

3 and 4. The Commission has made a proposal for a Single Resolution Mechanism based on Article 114 TFEU which it is convinced is fully in line with the Treaty. The Commission is open to support improvements in the legislative process in Council and European Parliament.

5. Following the European Council conclusions of 24/25 October 2013, the Commission has the impression that there are good chances of reaching a general approach within the Council on its proposals by the end of the year, and notes that the European Parliament's timetable is equally ambitious. The Commission has therefore no reason to believe that there would be a 'serious setback' for the Banking Union.

6. The Commission has set out in its Blueprint which EMU governance proposals would be feasible under the current Treaty and which of them would require a Treaty change. It does not agree that any EMU governance proposals require a Treaty change.

7. The answer the Commission gave to Written Question E-006122/2013 does not need to be reviewed or amended.

([1]) http://interactive.ftdata.co.uk/docCloud/templates/onePageAttr.html?p=802602-cls-banking-union.
([2]) http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/306c4e48-2ffe-11e3-9eec-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz2hDYiYJW7
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-006122&language=EN

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011579/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(10 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Influențele politice asupra justiției, în România

Recent, vicepremierul Guvernului României a fost trimis în judecată pentru „infracțiunea de folosire a influenței sau autorității de către o persoană care deține o funcție de conducere într-un partid, în scopul obținerii pentru sine sau pentru altul de foloase necuvenite", respectiv încercarea de a frauda un referendum organizat în anul 2012.

Dosarul privind această faptă a fost instrumentat de un procuror care ulterior a fost retras din funcția pe care o ocupa, iar primul-ministru a afirmat explicit că această măsură a fost legată de orientarea sa politică.

În momentul transmiterii dosarului vicepremierului către instanță în vederea judecării, primul-ministru a calificat acest dosar ca fiind politic, declarație de natură să influențeze instanța. La rândul său, președintele Senatului a afirmat că vicepremierul ar fi nevinovat. Comisia este rugată să exprime un punct de vedere.

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(13 decembrie 2013)

Comisia consideră că independența sistemului judiciar trebuie menținută și verifică dacă aceasta este respectată în rapoartele referitoare la România, publicate în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și de verificare. Având în vedere numirile magistraților, trebuie remarcat faptul că un proces de numire transparent, fără ingerințe politice, este crucial pentru a asigura expertiza și încrederea necesară în serviciile parchetului. Comisia va monitoriza îndeaproape evoluția situației, inclusiv în ceea ce privește respectarea independenței sistemului judiciar și va adopta, la începutul anului 2014, un nou raport privind progresele realizate de România în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și de verificare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011579/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Political influence on the judiciary in Romania

The Romanian Government's Deputy Prime Minister was recently prosecuted for 'the crime of using the influence or authority of someone holding a party leadership position with the aim of gaining an unfair advantage for himself or someone else', that is, the attempt to defraud a referendum organised in 2012.

The case on this offence was investigated by a prosecutor who was later removed from the position he had held, and the Prime Minister explicitly stated that this measure was linked to his political affiliation.

When the Deputy Prime Minister's case was sent to the court for judgment, the Prime Minister stated that this was a political case, a statement that was likely to influence the court. The Senate President also stated that the Deputy Prime Minister was innocent. Can the Commission state its position on this?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2013)

The Commission considers that the independence of the judiciary must be upheld and is verifying whether it is respected in the reports on Romania published under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism. Considering the appointments of magistrates, it should be noted that a transparent appointment process, which is free of political interference, is crucial for ensuring the required expertise and trust in the prosecution services. The Commission will monitor the progress closely, including with regard to the respect for judicial independence, and adopt a further report on progress in Romania under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism at the beginning of 2014.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011580/13
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(10 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Importuri vinuri Republica Moldova

Comisia Europeană propune deschiderea completă a pieței Uniunii Europene pentru importurile de vinuri din Republica Moldova, înainte de intrarea în vigoare a Acordului de Asociere între Uniunea Europeană și Republica Moldova și a Acordului privind Zona de liber schimb aprofundat și cuprinzător (DCFTA), ca o măsură pentru a compensa dificultățile cu care Republica Moldova se confruntă în exportul vinurilor pe unele dintre pieţele sale tradiționale.

Republica Moldova are o industrie a vinului bine dezvoltată, ajutată de faptul că se află într-o zonă geografică favorabilă fabricării vinurilor de calitate. Republica Moldova produce o gamă de vinuri alese, rafinate, care sunt apreciate și căutate în întreaga lume pentru calitățile lor deosebite.

În acest context, vinurile moldovenești vor avea acces pe piața europeană fără limită de cantitate și fără taxe vamale, ci doar cu respectarea normelor sanitare și de calitate din Uniune, aceleași care se aplică și vinurilor europene.

Salutând sprijinul Uniunii Europene de a susține Republica Moldova pe drumul ei european, care este strategia Comisiei pentru investitorii în vinurile moldovenești din perspectiva accesului, dar și a concurenței din partea statelor membre mari producătoare de vinuri, precum Franța, Italia, Spania pe piața europeană?

Răspuns dat de dl Cioloș în numele Comisiei
(5 decembrie 2013)

În 2012, Republica Moldova a exportat către Uniune 156 741 hectolitri de vin — o creștere cu 8 % față de anii precedenți. Pentru UE, aceste importuri reprezintă doar 1,1 % din totalul importurilor de vin din țări terțe și numai 0,1 % din consumul total de vin.

Plecând de la aceste date, Comisia Europeană a propus să acorde vinurilor care provin din Republica Moldova acces liber pe piața UE. Acordul bilateral UE/Republica Moldova prevede, de asemenea, consolidarea protecției indicațiilor geografice ale vinurilor din Republica Moldova în UE și ale celor din UE în Republica Moldova. UE a oferit asistență tehnică Republicii Moldova, în vederea punerii în aplicare a dispozițiilor legale de protecție a indicațiilor geografice. Această combinație de măsuri va contribui, fără îndoială, la sporirea atractivității Republicii Moldova pentru investitori.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011580/13
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Imports of wine from the Republic of Moldova

The Commission is proposing to fully open the European Union's market to wine imports from the Republic of Moldova, in advance of the entry into force of the EU — Republic of Moldova Association Agreement and the related Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), as a measure aimed at easing some of the difficulties the Republic of Moldova is experiencing with its wine exports to some of its traditional markets.

The Republic of Moldova has a well-developed wine industry and its geographical location favours the production of high-quality wines. The Republic of Moldova produces a range of excellent, refined wines that are appreciated and sought after across the world owing to their distinct characteristics.

Moldovan wines are now to have access to the European market without any restrictions on quantity and without customs duty. They will be subject only to the same EU health and quality standards that also apply to European wines.

The European Union's support for the Republic of Moldova's European future is to be welcomed. What is the Commission's strategy in relation to investors in Moldovan wines as regards both access to the European market and competition from the main wine-producing Member States, such as France, Italy and Spain?

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

In 2012, the Republic of Moldova exported 156 741 hectolitres to the Union, an increase of 8% compared to previous years. Those imports represent only 1.1% of all imports of wine from third countries and only 0.1% of all wine consumption in the EU.

On this basis, the European Commission has proposed to grant to wines originating in Moldova free access to the EU market. The EU/Moldova bilateral agreement also provides for the strengthening of the protection of geographical indications of Moldovan wines in the EU and vice versa those of the EU in Moldova. The EU has provided technical support to Moldova for the implementation of the legal provisions of protection of GIs. This combination of measures will no doubt contribute to increasing the attractivity of the Republic of Moldova for investment.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011581/13
an die Kommission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(10. Oktober 2013)

Betrifft: Wettbewerbsverzerrung im Schlacht- und Zerlegebereich durch Lohn- und Sozialdumping

Deutschlands Lohnpolitik, in der keine gesetzlich geregelten Mindestlöhne und Kollektivverträge vorgesehen sind, hat unmittelbare Auswirkungen auf die Schlacht- und Zerlegewirtschaft in den Nachbarstaaten. Unter dem Deckmantel der „EU-Entsenderichtlinie" werden Teile der Produktion durch billigste Werkverträge an Leiharbeiter ausgelagert. Unmittelbare Auswirkungen dieser Politik sind, dass Schlachttiere aus anderen Mitgliedstaaten zur Schlachtung und weiteren Bearbeitung nach Deutschland gebracht werden oder dass international agierende Marktteilnehmer deutsche Betriebe kaufen, um dort kostengünstiger schlachten bzw. zerlegen zu können.

Wie wird diese Lohnpolitik von der EU-Kommission beurteilt? Was gedenkt die EU-Kommission gegen die erheblichen Wettbewerbsverzerrungen, von denen fast alle namhaften EU-Produzenten betroffen sind, zu unternehmen?

Gerade für Österreich stellt die beträchtliche Lohndifferenz einen erheblichen Nachteil dar, der die gesamte Produktion gefährdet. Was gedenkt die EU-Kommission zu tun, um die drastisch beeinträchtigte Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der österreichischen Fleischbranche aufrechtzuerhalten und zu stärken?

Wie gedenkt die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten bei dem Bestreben, einen hohen Grad an Selbstversorgung aufrechtzuerhalten, zu unterstützen?

Antwort von László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2013)

Für die Beurteilung der Frage, ob das angebliche Sozialdumping im deutschen Agrar- und Lebensmittelsektor eine Verletzung des EU-Rechts darstellt, bestand weiterer Klärungs- und Beweisbedarf hinsichtlich der tatsächlichen Gegebenheiten. Die Kommission hat den deutschen Behörden neue Anfragen übermittelt und den Mitgliedern der Verwaltungskommission für die Koordinierung der Systeme der sozialen Sicherheit Fragen gestellt. Die Kommission hat die Informationen von den deutschen Behörden erhalten und wertet diese derzeit aus.

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auch auf die Antworten zu den Anfragen E-6740/13 und 11385/13 Die Kommission hat außerdem Kenntnis davon genommen, dass die größten Unternehmen in der fleischverarbeitenden Industrie Deutschlands jetzt bereit sind, über einen branchenspezifischen Mindestlohn zu verhandeln. Die Tarifverhandlungen haben am 22. Oktober 2013 begonnen. Die Kommission wird diese Entwicklungen weiterverfolgen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011581/13
to the Commission
Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Distortion of competition in the abattoir industry as a result of wage and social dumping

Germany's wage policy, which sets no statutory minimum wage and does not provide for collective agreements, is directly affecting the abattoir industry in neighbouring countries. Under the guise of 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, some areas of production are being outsourced to contract workers through very cheap service contracts. The direct effects of this policy include livestock from other Member States being taken to Germany for slaughter and processing, and international players in the market buying up Germany businesses in order to be able to perform abattoir operations there more cheaply.

What is the Commission's view of this wage policy? What does the European Commission intend to do about this substantial distortion of competition, which is affecting practically all major EU producers?

For Austria in particular, the substantial wage differential represents a considerable disadvantage that is jeopardising the whole of its production. What does the European Commission intend to do to maintain and strengthen the competitiveness of the Austrian meat industry, which has been dramatically impaired?

How does the Commission intend to support the Member States in their efforts to maintain a high level of self-sufficiency?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

In order to be able to assess whether or not allegations of social dumping in the agro-food sector in Germany constitute a breach of Union law, further clarification and substantiation of the factual circumstances were necessary. New requests have been sent by the Commission to the German authorities as well as questions to the members of the Administrative Commission on social security. The Commission has received the information from the German authorities and is currently analysing them.

The Commission would also like to refer the Honourable Member to the reply to questions E-6740/13 and E-11385/13. The Commission has also taken note of the information that some of the largest undertakings in the meat-processing industry in Germany are now ready to negotiate on a sectorial minimum wage. The collective bargaining started on 22 October 2013. The Commission will continue to follow these developments.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-011583/13
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(10 octombrie 2013)

Subiect: Ordonanța de urgență privind procedurile de prevenire a insolvenței

Guvernul României a adoptat recent Ordonanța de urgență 91/2013 privind procedurile de prevenire a insolvenței, act care prevede, printre altele, că posturilor TV și radio le este retrasă licența de emisie în cazul în care se află într-o astfel de procedură. De asemenea, noul act permite aplicarea retroactivă a acestor proceduri de insolvență. O parte semnificativă din publicul român a interpretat acest act normativ ca fiind un atac al guvernului la adresa libertății presei. Comisia este rugată să exprime un punct de vedere.

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(4 decembrie 2013)

Comisia caută să asigure respectarea libertății mass-mediei și a pluralismului în cadrul competențelor sale, deoarece aceste elemente reprezintă pilonii fundamentali ai societăților democratice consacrați la articolul 11 din Carta drepturilor fundamentale a Uniunii Europene. În conformitate cu articolul 51 alineatul (1) din cartă, ea se aplică statelor membre numai atunci când acestea pun în aplicare dreptul Uniunii Europene. Mai mult, articolul 6 alineatul (1) din Tratatul privind Uniunea Europeană prevede că: „Dispozițiile cuprinse în Cartă nu extind în niciun fel competențele Uniunii astfel cum sunt definite în tratate".

În ceea ce privește serviciile mass-media audiovizuale, Directiva serviciilor mass-media audiovizuale prevede un cadru juridic la nivel european, dar nu abordează situația menționată în întrebarea distinsului membru.

În prezent, nu există norme ale UE privind procedurile de prevenire a insolvenței. Comunicarea Comisiei din decembrie 2012 a lansat un proces de reflecție privind un nouă abordare europeană referitoare la eșecul în afaceri și insolvență. În perioada iulie-octombrie 2013, a fost organizată o consultare publică. În urma acestei consultări, Comisia intenționează să propună norme procedurale comune, al căror obiectiv ar fi crearea unei culturi de „salvare" pentru întreprinderile aflate în dificultate financiară, permițând, de exemplu, o restructurare anticipată a întreprinderilor neperformante și continuarea activității.

Cu toate acestea, Comisia subliniază faptul că, în cazul în care nu pune în aplicare dreptul Uniunii, un stat membru are obligația de a se asigura că obligațiile care îi revin cu privire la drepturile fundamentale, astfel cum rezultă din dreptul constituțional național și din acordurile internaționale, cum ar fi Convenția europeană a drepturilor omului, sunt respectate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011583/13
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Emergency ordinance on insolvency prevention procedures

The Romanian Government has recently adopted Emergency Ordinance 91/2013 on insolvency prevention procedures. This act stipulates, among other things, that TV and radio stations will have their broadcasting licence revoked should they be involved in such a procedure. In addition, the new act allows the retrospective application of such insolvency procedures. A significant part of the Romanian public interpreted this normative act as a Government attack on the freedom of the press. Can the Commission state its position on this?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2013)

The Commission seeks to ensure the respect of media freedom and pluralism within its competences, as they are fundamental pillars of democratic societies enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. According to its Article 51(1), the Charter applies to Member States only when they are implementing European Union law. Moreover, Article 6(1) of the Treaty of the European Union states that, 'the provisions of the Charter shall not extend in any way the competences of the Union as defined in the Treaties.'

As regards audiovisual media services, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive provides for a legal framework at European level, but does not address the situation outlined in the question of the Honourable Member.

Today there are no EU rules on insolvency prevention procedures. The Commission Communication of December 2012 has launched a reflection process on a new European approach to business failure and insolvency. A public consultation was organised from July to October 2013. As a follow-up the Commission intends to propose common procedural rules which aim is to create a rescue culture for businesses in financial difficulty, for example by allowing an early restructuring of distressed companies and the continuation of business.

The Commission notes however that in situations where it is not implementing Union law a Member State is bound to ensure that its obligations regarding fundamental rights as resulting from national constitutional law and international agreements like the European Convention of Human Rights are respected.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011584/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(10 oktober 2013)

Betreft: Versoepeling visumprocedure Marokko

De Europese Commissie heeft voorgesteld om met Marokko te onderhandelen over flexibelere visumprocedures. De commissaris voor Binnenlandse Zaken ziet het als een belangrijke stap in de samenwerking tussen de EU en Marokko. De versoepeling van de visumplicht draagt volgens haar bij aan een versterking van het wederzijds begrip en de sociale economische ontwikkeling van de betrokken landen en volkeren.

In 2011 woonden er al veel Marokkanen in de EU. Er zijn bijvoorbeeld meer dan 1 miljoen Marokkanen in Frankrijk, 750 000 in Spanje, 400 000 in Italië, 356 000 in Nederland, 26 500 in België en 102 000 in Duitsland.

1. Welke sociale economische ontwikkelingen worden volgens de commissaris nu geremd door de huidige visumplicht?

2. Verwacht de Commissie dat een versoepeling van de visumplicht zal leiden tot een toename van het aantal Marokkanen dat zich zal vestigen in die EU-lidstaten die al een substantiële Marokkaanse gemeenschap binnen de landsgrenzen hebben?

3. Is de Commissie bekend met het feit dat in de Nederlandse detentiecentra criminelen met een Marokkaanse achtergrond onevenredig zwaar zijn vertegenwoordigd?

4. Op welke wijze zal volgens de Commissie het naar Europa laten reizen van nog meer Marokkanen bijdragen aan een versterking van het wederzijds begrip en de sociale economische ontwikkeling van de betrokken landen en volkeren?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(6 december 2013)

Op 4 oktober 2013 heeft de Commissie haar aanbeveling voor onderhandelingsrichtsnoeren aan de Raad gepresenteerd om een visumversoepelingsovereenkomst met Marokko te onderhandelen. Deze overeenkomst is één van de maatregelen in het mobiliteitspartnerschap dat in juni 2013 is afgesproken door Marokko, de EU en negen van haar lidstaten, waaronder Nederland.

De Commissie stelt niet voor om de visumplicht af te schaffen voor Marokkaanse staatsburgers die een korte periode in de Schengenruimte verblijven. De visumversoepelingsovereenkomst is er eerder op gericht om sommige vereisten te vereenvoudigen, zodat visumprocedures sneller en minder omslachtig worden voor visumaanvragers. Immigranten van Marokkaanse origine zullen gemakkelijker contact kunnen hebben met hun naaste familieleden. Bovendien is de EU een belangrijke partner van Marokko voor bijvoorbeeld handel, onderzoek en onderwijs. Daarom moet op EU-niveau worden gestreefd naar een soepelere mobiliteit van zakenlui, onderzoekers en studenten om bij te dragen aan de ontwikkeling van Marokko zal bijdragen en de Marokkanen minder aan te moedigen naar de Europese Unie te emigreren.

De versoepeling van visa is niet bedoeld om migratie op de lange termijn te bevorderen, omdat de maximale verblijfsduur met een Schengen-visum 90 dagen bedraagt; de Commissie verwacht niet dat de overeenkomst een impact zal hebben op het aantal Marokkaanse migranten naar de EU. De gebruikelijke controles op het misbruik van visa blijven bestaan om irreguliere migratie tegen te gaan. In dit kader moet worden benadrukt dat de Commissie voorstelde dat de visumversoepelingsovereenkomst op dezelfde dag in werking treedt als de overnameovereenkomst waarover de EU en Marokko momenteel onderhandelen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011584/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Relaxation of the visa procedures for Morocco

The European Commission has proposed the negotiation of more flexible visa procedures with Morocco. The Commissioner for Home Affairs sees it as an important step in the cooperation between the EU and Morocco. She believes that the relaxation of visa requirements contributes to a strengthening of mutual understanding and the socioeconomic development of the countries and populations concerned.

In 2011 there were already many Moroccans living in the EU. For example, there are more than 1 million Moroccans in France, 750 000 in Spain, 400 000 in Italy, 356 000 in the Netherlands, 26 500 in Belgium and 102 000 in Germany.

1. Which socioeconomic developments does the Commissioner believe are at present being inhibited by current visa requirements?

2. Does the Commission anticipate that a relaxation of visa requirements will result in an increase in the number of Moroccans settling in those EU Member States that already have a substantial Moroccan community within their national borders?

3. Is the Commission aware that there are a disproportionate number of criminals of Moroccan origin in Dutch detention centres?

4. In what way does the Commission believe that allowing even more Moroccans to travel to Europe will contribute to a strengthening of mutual understanding and the socioeconomic development of the countries and populations concerned?

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

On 4 October 2013 the Commission presented its recommendation to the Council for negotiating directives to negotiate a visa facilitation agreement with Morocco. This agreement is one of the measures included in the Mobility Partnership agreed in June 2013 by Morocco, the EU and 9 of its Member States, including the Netherlands.

The Commission is not proposing to eliminate the visa obligation for Moroccan citizens visiting the Schengen area for short stays. The objective of a visa facilitation agreement is rather to simplify certain requirements to make visa procedures faster and less cumbersome for the applicants. It will facilitate contacts between immigrants of Moroccan origin with their close relatives in Morocco. Moreover the EU is an important partner of Morocco in, for instance, the areas of trade, research and education. Therefore facilitating the mobility of, respectively, business people, researchers and students is an aim to be pursued at EU level that will contribute to Morocco's development and, thus, will contribute to decreasing push factors for Moroccans to emigrate to the EU.

Visa facilitation is not about promoting long-term migration, as the maximum period of stay of a Schengen visa is 90 days; the Commission does not expect the agreement to have an impact on the levels of migration of Moroccan citizens to the EU. The usual checks to prevent visa abuse for the purpose of irregular migration will remain in place. In this context, it should also be stressed that the Commission proposed that the visa facilitation agreement will enter into force on the same day as the readmission agreement which is under negotiation between the EU and Morocco.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011585/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(10 oktober 2013)

Betreft: 207 Nieuwe gevangenissen in Turkije

De Turkse minister van Justitie heeft, voor de komende vijf jaar, de bouw van 207 nieuwe gevangenissen aangekondigd.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met de door de Turkse minister van Justitie aangekondigde bouw van 207 nieuwe gevangenissen ([1])? Hoe interpreteert de Commissie deze ontwikkeling?

2. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de bouw van 207 nieuwe gevangenissen een triest gevolg is van het toenemend repressieve karakter van de Turkse regering respectievelijk van het feit dat steeds meer burgers worden opgesloten (in 1992: 54 per 100 000 burgers; in 2013: 173 per 100 000 burgers)? Hoe reageert de Commissie op deze treurige cijfers?

3. Hoe verhoudt het toenemend repressieve karakter van de Turkse regering zich tot de nota bene door haarzelf in het „Democratization and Human Rights Package" ([2]) aangekondigde hervormingen? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de realiteit niet strookt met deze zogenaamde hervormingen? Zo neen, welke concrete positieve ontwikkelingen in Turkije ziet de Commissie dan wel?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(22 november 2013)

Volgens de informatie van de Turkse autoriteiten zijn er sinds 2002 slechts 79 nieuwe penitentiaire inrichtingen geopend, terwijl 234 van dergelijke inrichtingen zijn gesloten.

Volgens de huidige plannen worden tegen 2017 164 penitentiaire inrichtingen gesloten en 202 geopend.

De Turkse autoriteiten trachten ontoereikende penitentiaire inrichtingen te vervangen door nieuwe installaties die voldoen aan de minimumnormen van de VN en van de Raad voor dergelijke inrichtingen.

([1]) „Turkse premier Erdogan zowel dictator als hervormer — Een man met twee gezichten", Algemeen Dagblad, 9 oktober 2012, blz. 19.
([2]) http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/haberler/democratization-and-human-rights-package/52628.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011585/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: 207 New prisons in Turkey

The Turkish Minister of Justice has announced that 207 new prisons are to be built in the next five years.

1. Is the Commission aware of the Turkish Minister of Justice's announcement of the building of 207 new prisons ([1])? What is the Commission's interpretation of this development?

2. Does the Commission share the view that the construction of 207 new prisons is a sorry consequence of the increasingly repressive nature of the Turkish Government or of the fact that more and more citizens are being locked up (in 1992: 54 per 100 000 citizens; in 2013: 173 per 100 000 citizens)? What is the Commission's reaction to these dismal figures?

3. How does the increasingly repressive nature of the Turkish Government accord with the reforms it has itself announced in the 'Democratization and Human Rights Package' ([2])? Does the Commission share the view that the reality fails to match these supposed reforms? If not, which specific positive developments does the Commission actually see in Turkey?

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

According to information provided by the Turkish authorities, only 79 new penitentiary establishments have opened since 2002, while 234 such establishments have been closed.

Under current plans, 164 penitentiary establishments are scheduled for closure and 202 are to be opened up by 2017.

Turkish authorities endeavour to replace inadequate penitentiary establishments with new installations that meet UN and Council of Europe minimum standards for such establishments.

([1]) 'Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, dictator and reformer — A man with two faces', Algemeen Dagblad, 9 October 2012, p. 19.
([2]) http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/haberler/democratization-and-human-rights-package/52628

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-011624/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(11 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Θέμα: Απόλυση της Τουρκάλας τηλεπαρουσιάστριας Γκοζντέ Κανσού

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιογραφικές πληροφορίες ([1]), η Γκοζντέ Κανσού, γνωστή Τουρκάλα τηλεπαρουσιάστρια, απολύθηκε από την εργασία της όταν ο Χουσεΐν Τσελίκ, εκπρόσωπος Τύπου του κυβερνώντος κόμματος της Δικαιοσύνης και Ανάπτυξης (ΑΚΡ), διαμαρτυρήθηκε για το τολμηρό της ντεκολτέ! «Αυτή η εμφάνιση παραήταν ακραία, και είναι απαράδεκτη», ανάφερε ο κ. Τσελίκ, προσπαθώντας να δικαιολογήσει την απόλυση της κ. Κανσού.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι σε γνώση της το περιστατικό αυτό και αληθεύουν οι προαναφερόμενες δημοσιογραφικές πληροφορίες;

2. Είναι τέτοιες συμπεριφορές προς τη γυναίκα συμβατές με τις ευρωπαϊκές αρχές και τους κανονισμούς για ισότιμη αντιμετώπιση των πολιτών, ανεξαρτήτως φύλου, και μάλιστα σε μια υπό ένταξη χώρα;

3. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει για αποκατάσταση των δικαιωμάτων της κ. Κανσού;

4. Πιστεύει η Επιτροπή ότι η Τουρκία, ως υπό ένταξη χώρα, εφαρμόζει ορθά τις ευρωπαϊκές πολιτικές για την ισότητα των φύλων; Αν όχι, σε ποιους τομείς υστερεί και τι χρειάζεται να γίνει για την πλήρη συμμόρφωσή της;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Δεκεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για την κατάσταση στην οποία αναφέρονται τα αξιότιμα μέλη του Κοινοβουλίου.

Η Επιτροπή θέτει στις τουρκικές αρχές, με κάθε ευκαιρία, το ζήτημα των δικαιωμάτων των γυναικών και της ισότητας των φύλων. Στις 7 Νοεμβρίου 2013, στο συνέδριο «Πρόοδος στον τομέα των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων των γυναικών», το οποίο διοργάνωσε το τουρκικό υπουργείο Οικογένεια και Κοινωνικές Πολιτικές, ο Επίτροπος της ΕΕ για τη διεύρυνση και πολιτική γειτονίας υπογράμμισε ότι: «Αντιλαμβανόμαστε όλοι ότι η πρόοδος στο ζήτημα των δικαιωμάτων των γυναικών εξαρτάται επίσης από την αλλαγή νοοτροπίας και των αντιλήψεων περί φύλου. […] θα πρέπει να καταβληθούν περισσότερες προσπάθειες για να αρθούν τα στερεότυπα και να αλλάξουν οι αντιλήψεις του ρόλου των φύλων σε όλους τους τομείς».

Οι εξελίξεις στον τομέα αυτό παρακολουθούνται επίσης στο πλαίσιο των διαπραγματεύσεων για την προσχώρηση της Τουρκίας. Η Επιτροπή υποβάλλει ανά τακτά χρονικά διαστήματα εκθέσεις σχετικά με την πρόοδο των εργασιών αυτών, μεταξύ άλλων στις ετήσιες εκθέσεις προόδου της.

([1]) http://www.france24.com/en/20131009-turkish-tv-presenter-fired-revealing-cleavage-veliaht-gozde-kansu-celik

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011586/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(10 oktober 2013)

Betreft: „Te sexy" Turkse tv-presentatrice ontslagen

De bekende Turkse tv-presentatrice Gözde Kansu van het programma „Veliaht" is op staande voet ontslagen — onder druk van de AK-partij van zittend premier Erdoğan. Haar outfit zou „te sexy" zijn.

Hüseyin Çelik, woordvoerder van de AK-partij, licht toe: „We zijn tegen niemand, maar dit gaat echt te ver. Dit zou in de hele wereld niet geaccepteerd worden".

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het ontslag van tv-presentatrice Gözde Kansu ([1])?

2. Hoe reageert de Commissie op de uitspraak van Hüseyin Çelik dat „dit (de outfit van Gözde Kansu) in de hele wereld (dus ook in de EU) niet geaccepteerd zou worden"? Met andere woorden: strookt deze zedenpolitiële actie van de AK-partij wel of niet met de „waarden waarop de EU berust", zoals neergelegd in artikel 2 VEU, en waarom?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(2 december 2013)

De Commissie is zich bewust van de uitspraken waarnaar de geachte Parlementsleden verwijzen.

Bij alle geschikte gelegenheden bespreekt de Commissie met de Turkse autoriteiten de rechten van vrouwen en de gendergelijkheid. Op 7 november 2013 benadrukte de commissaris voor uitbreiding en nabuurschapsbeleid op de door het Turkse Ministerie van Gezin en Sociaal beleid georganiseerde conferentie „Progress in Women's Human Rights" het volgende: „Wij beseffen allemaal dat voor vooruitgang op het gebied van de rechten voor vrouwen een mentaliteitsverandering en een verandering van de zienswijzen over gender nodig zijn. […] Er moet meer worden gedaan om stereotypen te doorbreken en de perceptie van rolpatronen op alle gebieden te veranderen".

De ontwikkelingen op dit gebied worden ook gevolgd in het kader van de Turkse toetredingsonderhandelingen. De Commissie brengt regelmatig verslag uit over deze werkzaamheden, zo ook in haar jaarlijkse voortgangsverslagen.

([1]) http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/21958273/__Presentatrice_weg_om_decollete__.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011586/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Turkish TV presenter fired for being 'too sexy'

The well-known Turkish TV presenter Gözde Kansu from the programme 'Veliaht' has been summarily dismissed — under pressure from the AK Party of incumbent Prime Minister Erdoğan. Her outfit was alleged to be 'too sexy'.

Hüseyin Çelik, spokesman for the AK Party, explains, 'We have nothing against anyone but this really is going too far. This would not be accepted anywhere in the world.'

1. Is the Commission aware of the dismissal of TV presenter Gözde Kansu ([1])?

2. What is the Commission's reaction to the assertion by Hüseyin Çelik that 'this (the outfit worn by Gözde Kansu) would not be accepted anywhere in the world (i.e. including in the EU)'? In other words, does this morality-police action by the AK Party accord with the 'values on which the Union is founded', as set out in Article 2 TEU, and why (not)?

Question for written answer E-011624/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(11 October 2013)

Subject: Dismissal of Turkish television presenter Gözde Kansu

According to media reports, ([2]) the famous Turkish television presenter Gözde Kansu was sacked from her job when Hüseyin Çelik, the press spokesman for the ruling Justice and Development party, complained about her low-cut dress. 'Her appearance was too extreme. This is unacceptable', said Mr Çelik, in a bid to justify Ms Kansu's dismissal.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of this incident and are the above media reports true?

2. Is this conduct towards this woman compatible with European principles and rules of equal treatment of citizens, regardless of sex, especially in a candidate country?

3. What does it intend to do to restore Ms Kansu's rights?

4. Does the Commission believe that, as a candidate country, Turkey is applying European policies on equality between men and women correctly? If not, in which sectors is it lagging behind and what needs to be done in order to obtain its full compliance?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(2 December 2013)

The Commission is aware of the statement to which the Honourable Members refer.

The Commission raises women's rights and gender equality issues with Turkish authorities on all appropriate occasions. On 7 November 2013, during the conference 'Progress in Women's Human Rights' organised by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy stressed that: 'We are all aware that progress on women's rights also depends on a change in mentality and perceptions on gender. […] More work is needed to break down stereotypes and change perceptions of gender roles in all spheres'.

Developments in this field are also monitored in the framework of Turkey's accession negotiations. The Commission regularly reports on this work, including in its annual Progress Reports.

([1]) http://www.telegraaf.nl/buitenland/21958273/__Presentatrice_weg_om_decollete__.html
([2]) http://www.france24.com/en/20131009-turkish-tv-presenter-fired-revealing-cleavage-veliaht-gozde-kansu-celik

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011588/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Cargolux et HCNA: attention aux emplois

Le futur partenaire de Cargolux devrait être HCNA, d'après les autorités, qui ajoutent que «la compagnie HCNA est recommandée car elle propose un prix intéressant, son business plan correspond à la volonté d'expansion de Cargolux, elle accepte de participer à la hausse de capital prévue, tout comme l'absence de perte d'emploi au Luxembourg, et s'engage à ne pas faire de délocalisation».

1. Que pense la Commission de cette potentielle acquisition?

2. La Commission ne doit-elle pas veiller à ce que l'État ne refasse pas la même erreur qu'avec Qatar Airways? «En clair, ne pas céder plus de 33 % des parts de Cargolux pour garder entièrement la main sur la stratégie du groupe. Un manque que les syndicats ne vont certainement pas manquer de rappeler au gouvernement, cette question jouant directement sur l'avenir des quelque 1 300 salariés de la compagnie aérienne luxembourgeoise».

3. Enfin, que pense la Commission du fait que les négociations se déroulent au sein d'un comité restreint qui exclut la direction et le management de Cargolux, ce qui paraît tout simplement hallucinant?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(6 décembre 2013)

1. En l'espèce, il n'appartient pas à la Commission de se prononcer sur le bien-fondé d'une vente d'une société commerciale à un fonds d'investissement.

2. La Commission rappelle que les États membres, dans le cas présent le Luxembourg, sont responsables en premier lieu du contrôle du respect, par une compagnie aérienne (en l'occurrence Cargolux), des conditions pour l'obtention d'une licence d'exploitation et, plus exactement, des dispositions relatives à la mise en œuvre et au respect des règles en matière de détention et de contrôle énoncées par le règlement (CE) n° 1008/2008 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 24 septembre 2008 établissant des règles communes pour l'exploitation de services aériens dans la Communauté ([1]). En vertu de l'article 4, point f), du règlement (CE) n° 1008/2008, l'une des conditions régissant l'octroi d'une licence d'exploitation par l'autorité compétente d'un État membre à une compagnie aérienne est que l'entreprise soit détenue à plus de 50 % et effectivement contrôlée par des États membres et/ou des ressortissants d'États membres, soit directement, soit indirectement par le biais d'une ou de plusieurs entreprises intermédiaires.

Le Luxembourg est donc responsable du respect des règles mentionnées ci-dessus dans le cadre de la vente de parts de Cargolux à des investisseurs de pays tiers. En l'espèce, la Commission n'a pas reçu d'informations indiquant que le droit de l'UE a été ou sera enfreint dans ce contexte.

3. En ce qui concerne le rôle joué par la direction de Cargolux dans les négociations, de nouveau il appartient en principe à l'État membre de veiller à ce que la législation applicable soit respectée. À ce jour, la Commission n'a reçu aucune information qui pourrait laisser penser que la législation de l'Union européenne a été ou sera enfreinte dans le cadre de cette vente.

([1]) JO L 293 du 31.10.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011588/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Cargolux and HCNA: warning over jobs

According to the authorities, the future partner of Cargolux is expected to be HCNA. Apparently, HCNA is recommended as it offers an attractive price, its business plan is in line with Cargolux's growth aspirations, it agrees to contribute to the planned capital increase, as well as to no job losses in Luxembourg, and it undertakes not to relocate.

1. What are the Commission's thoughts on this potential acquisition?

2. Should the Commission not ensure that the State does not make the same mistake it made with Qatar Airways? Put simply, that means not giving up a 33% share of Cargolux to retain complete control over the group's strategy. This is an oversight that the unions will be sure to point out to the government, as the future of some 1 300 workers at the Luxembourgish airline is at stake.

3. Lastly, what does the Commission think of the fact that negotiations are being held in a select committee that does not include Cargolux's management, which is, quite frankly, staggering?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2013)

1. In a situation such as the one at issue, it is not for the Commission to comment on the merits of a sale of a commercial company to an investment fund.

2. The Commission recalls that Member States, in this case Luxembourg, have the prime responsibility to monitor the compliance by the airline, in this case Cargolux, with the requirements for granting an operating license, and more precisely for the implementation and observance of ownership and control rules under Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community ([1]). A condition for the competent licensing authority of a Member State to grant an operating license to an airline is that a Member State and/or nationals of the Member States own more than 50% of the airline and effectively control it, whether directly or indirectly through one or more intermediate companies (Article 4(f) of Regulation 1008/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community).

Luxembourg is therefore responsible to ensure compliance with the abovementioned rules in the framework of the sale of shares of Cargolux to third countries investors. In the present case, the Commission has not received information indicating that EC law has been or will be violated in this context.

3. Regarding the involvement of Cargolux's management in the negotiations, it is once again in principle for the Member State to ensure that the applicable law is observed. So far, no information has been provided to the Commission that would suggest that in the process EC law has been or will be violated.

([1]) EU OJ L 293, 31.10.2008.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011589/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: La fiscalité numérique

Les géants non européens de l'internet — tels Google, Facebook, Amazon, ou encore Apple — sont de plus en plus montrés du doigt en raison du décalage entre les impôts qu'ils paient et les profits qu'ils tirent de leurs activités dans les pays européens.

Le Commissaire européen en charge de la fiscalité, Algirdas Semeta, a annoncé mercredi à Paris son intention de lancer un «groupe de réflexion» chargé spécifiquement de la fiscalité du numérique.

Les systèmes de taxation sur lesquels nous nous appuyons aujourd'hui ont été élaborés à une époque où les ordinateurs étaient encore une idée futuriste.

Quand la Commission compte-t-elle passer à l'acte?

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

L'essor de l'économie numérique crée de nombreuses perspectives au niveau tant de l'innovation que de la croissance. Cependant, cet essor ne va pas sans poser également quelques problèmes en ce qui concerne l'application des règles fiscales internationales existantes, qu'il s'agisse de fiscalité directe ou de fiscalité indirecte. L'OCDE examinera ces questions dans le cadre de son projet, soutenu par le G20, sur l'érosion de la base d'imposition et le transfert de bénéfices. Le 22 octobre 2013, la Commission a créé un groupe d'experts à haut niveau dans le domaine de la taxation de l'économie numérique afin de recenser et de traiter les problèmes du point de vue de l'Union. Ce groupe aura pour mission d'étudier les meilleurs moyens de taxer l'économie numérique dans l'Union, en mettant en balance les avantages et les risques de différentes approches. Il s'agira avant tout de recenser les principaux problèmes liés à la taxation de l'économie numérique du point de vue de l'Union, et de présenter un éventail de solutions possibles. Le groupe doit transmettre à la Commission un rapport concernant ses travaux avant le 1er juillet 2014. La Commission se chargera ensuite, dans le cadre de ses compétences définies par le traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, d'élaborer les initiatives de l'Union permettant d'améliorer le cadre fiscal du secteur numérique en Europe.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011589/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Taxation of the digital economy

The non-European Internet giants — such as Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple — are increasingly being singled out because of the disconnect between the taxes they pay and the profits they make from their business in European countries.

On Wednesday, in Paris, the Commissioner responsible for taxation, Algirdas Šemeta, announced his intention to set up a focus group, specifically tasked with taxation of the digital economy.

The taxation systems on which we rely today were constructed in an age when computers were still a futuristic idea.

When will the Commission take action?

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

The rise of the digital economy creates numerous possibilities for innovation and growth. At the same time, it also poses difficulties for the application of existing international tax rules in both direct and indirect taxation. The OECD will look into these issues as part of its G20-supported project on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting. On 22 October 2013 the Commission created a High Level Expert Group on Taxation of the Digital Economy to identify and address the issues from an EU perspective. The group will examine the best ways of taxing the digital economy in the EU, weighing up both the benefits and risks of various approaches. Its focus will be on identifying the key problems with digital taxation from an EU perspective, and presenting a range of possible solutions. The group is to provide the Commission with a report on its work before 1 July 2014. The Commission will then, within its competences under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, develop any necessary EU initiatives to improve the tax framework for the digital sector in Europe.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011591/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Eurotunnel

«La France et la Grande-Bretagne ont remis deux mémoires à la Commission européenne pour défendre la politique tarifaire du concessionnaire du tunnel sous la Manche, Groupe Eurotunnel (GET.FR)», a déclaré mercredi un porte-parole du ministère des transports.

Alors que la Commission a engagé une procédure pour obtenir une baisse des péages de la part de l'opérateur, ces mémoires «contestent un point en particulier [de l'analyse de la Commission], celui de l'évaluation des coûts à long terme liés à la construction et à l'exploitation du tunnel», a indiqué le porte-parole à Dow Jones Newswires.

Eurotunnel avait déjà déclaré s'attendre à recevoir le soutien de ses deux États de tutelle, affirmant qu'une baisse imposée des péages l'autoriserait à exiger des indemnités pour couvrir ses coûts d'exploitation, conformément à ce que prévoient le contrat de concession et la convention d'utilisation du tunnel.

Groupe privé coté en bourse, Eurotunnel est soumis à la régulation d'une commission intergouvernementale franco-britannique. Premier client d'Eurotunnel, la compagnie Eurostar, détenue en majorité par la SNCF, avait saisi la Commission cette année pour réclamer une plus grande transparence sur la politique de prix du gestionnaire du tunnel.

1. Comment réagit la Commission après lecture des deux mémoires?

2. Qu'en est-il de la procédure pour obtenir une baisse des péages de la part de l'opérateur?

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

La Commission a reçu les réponses de la France et du Royaume-Uni à ses avis motivés. La Commission va analyser ces réponses et décider du suivi à apporter. À cet égard, la Commission souligne qu'elle n'est pas en position de fournir des informations aux tiers sur les procédures d'infraction en cours à l'encontre des États membres.

Comme l'ont indiqué les Honorables Parlementaires, la procédure ouverte par Eurostar pour une plus grande transparence sur la politique de prix du gestionnaire du tunnel relève de la compétence de la commission intergouvernementale. La Commission européenne n'est pas partie à cette procédure; c'est pourquoi elle n'est pas en mesure de la commenter.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011591/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Eurotunnel

A spokesman from the Ministry of Transport stated on Wednesday that 'France and the United Kingdom have submitted two reports to the European Commission to defend the tariff policy of the Channel Tunnel operator, Groupe Eurotunnel (GET.FR)'.

While the Commission has initiated a procedure to reduce the operator's tolls, these reports, according to the spokesman in a statement to Dow Jones Newswires, 'question one issue in particular [of the Commission's analysis] which is the evaluation of long-term costs concerning the construction and operation of the tunnel'.

Eurotunnel has already stated that it expects to receive support from both States it is linked to, confirming that a reduction in tolls would entitle it to claim compensation to cover its operating costs, in accordance with the concession agreement and the agreement on using the tunnel.

As a group quoted on the stock exchange, Eurotunnel is subject to regulation by a French-British Intergovernmental Commission. This year, the main client of Eurotunnel, the company Eurostar (majority owned by SNCF) submitted a request to the Commission for greater transparency on the tunnel operator's pricing policy.

1. What is the Commission's reaction after reading these two reports?

2. What is the situation with regard to the procedure for reducing the operator's tolls?

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

The Commission has received the replies to the reasoned opinions sent by France and the United Kingdom. The Commission will analyse these replies and decide on further follow-up. In this respect the Commission highlights that it is not in the position to provide information to third parties on the ongoing infringement proceedings against the Member States.

As pointed out by the Honourable Members, the procedure initiated by Eurostar for greater transparency on the tunnel operator's pricing policy is under the remit of the Intergovernmental Commission. The European Commission is not a party to this procedure and for this reason is not in a position to comment on it.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011592/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Taxes antidumping biodiesel

1. Qu'en est-il de la plainte déposée par le Bureau européen du biodiesel (EEB), qui accuse l'Argentine et l'Indonésie de concurrence déloyale en vendant leur biodiesel à prix cassé sur le marché européen?

2. Ne serait-il pas temps que la Commission européenne impose des taxes définitives particulièrement élevées sur les importations de biodiesel argentin et indonésien?

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

L'enquête antidumping sur les importations de biodiesel originaire d'Argentine et d'Indonésie a été lancée le 29 août 2012 à la suite d'une plainte de l'industrie de l'UE (Bureau européen du biodiesel). Le 28 mai 2013, la Commission a institué des droits antidumping provisoires compris entre 65,24 et 104,92 euros par tonne sur le biodiesel en provenance d'Argentine et entre 0 et 83,84 euros par tonne sur le biodiesel en provenance d'Indonésie.

La Commission vient d'adopter une proposition de règlement instituant des droits antidumping définitifs sur le biodiesel en provenance d'Argentine et d'Indonésie et l'a transmise au Conseil pour adoption ([1]). Les droits antidumping définitifs proposés maintenant par la Commission sont plus élevés que les droits provisoires et sont fixés à un niveau qui permettra d'assurer des conditions de concurrence équitables pour les producteurs de biodiesel européens. Les mesures antidumping proposées sont en pleine conformité avec la législation de l'UE et de l'OMC.

Le délai pour que le Conseil adopte des mesures antidumping définitives, le cas échéant, est le 28 novembre 2013.

La Commission a aussi examiné, parallèlement, une plainte antisubventions contre les importations de biodiesel en provenance d'Argentine et d'Indonésie déposée par le Bureau européen du biodiesel (EBB). Cependant, cette plainte a été retirée ensuite par l'EBB.

([1]) COM(2013) 748.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011592/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Anti-dumping duties for biodiesel

1. What is the situation regarding the complaint submitted by the European Biodiesel Board (EBB) accusing Argentina and Indonesia of unfair competition by selling their biodiesel at cut prices on the European market?

2. Is it not time that the European Commission imposed particularly high definitive taxes on the imports of Argentinean and Indonesian biodiesel?

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

The anti-dumping investigation into imports of biodiesel originating in Argentina and Indonesia was initiated on 29 August 2012 following a complaint by EU industry (the European Biodiesel Board). On 28 May 2013 the Commission imposed provisional anti-dumping duties ranging from EUR 65.24 to EUR 104.92 per tonne for biodiesel from Argentina and from EUR 0 to EUR 83.84 per tonne for biodiesel from Indonesia.

The Commission has now adopted a proposal for a regulation imposing definitive anti-dumping duties on biodiesel from Argentina and Indonesia and forwarded it to the Council for adoption ([1]). The definitive anti-dumping duties now proposed by the Commission are higher than those provisionally imposed and are set at a level that will serve to ensure a level playing field for European biodiesel producers. The proposed anti-dumping measures are in full compliance with EU and WTO law.

The deadline for the Council to adopt definitive anti-dumping measures, if any, is 28 November 2013.

The Commission also investigated, in parallel, an anti-subsidy complaint against imports of biodiesel from Argentina and Indonesia brought forward by the European Biodiesel Board (EBB). However, this complaint has subsequently been withdrawn by the EBB.

([1]) COM(2013) 748.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011593/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Sables bitumineux

1. Les sables bitumineux sont-ils polluants? 21 Prix Nobel en sont convaincus. Quelle est la position de la Commission sur le sujet?

2. Elle doit servir à réduire de 6 % d'ici 2020 les émissions de gaz à effet de serre qui proviennent des carburants utilisés dans les transports. Il y a deux ans, la Commission avait proposé des modalités précises de mise en œuvre parmi lesquelles le calcul d'un taux d'émissions de gaz à effet de serre pour chaque type de carburant. Mais le lobbying du Canada et un vote européen sans résultat ont poussé la Commission européenne à commander une étude en 2012. Où en est-on?

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

1. Dans le cadre de l'article 7 *bis* de la directive 98/70/CE, la Commission a examiné l'incidence sur les émissions de gaz à effet de serre de divers carburants utilisés dans le transport routier provenant de différentes matières premières, y compris les sables bitumeux. Il est notamment ressorti de ces considérations une étude de la Commission, dont la conclusion est que les carburants provenant de sables bitumeux dégagent, en moyenne, des volumes plus élevés de gaz à effet de serre que les carburants issus de pétrole conventionnel. Les autres incidences environnementales n'ont pas été évaluées de manière approfondie, mais il est évident que l'extraction des sables bitumeux a des répercussions sur la qualité de l'eau, la pollution atmosphérique et la biodiversité. Ces répercussions peuvent être plus importantes que celles résultant de l'extraction de pétrole conventionnel.

2. En 2012, la Commission a commandé une étude afin d'obtenir des informations en vue de réaliser une analyse d'impact sur les incidences climatiques et socio-économiques des diverses méthodes de calcul des émissions de gaz à effet de serre provenant des carburants utilisés dans le transport routier. L'analyse d'impact accompagnera la mesure d'exécution une fois que la proposition sera parachevée.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011593/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Bituminous sands

1. Are bituminous sands pollutants? Twenty-one Nobel Prize-winners are convinced that they are. What is the Commission's position on the subject?

2. It must act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fuel used in transport by 6% by 2020. Two years ago the Commission proposed specific methods of implementation including the calculation of a greenhouse gas emission tax for each type of fuel. However, Canadian lobbying and a European vote without a result prompted the European Commission to order a study in 2012. What is the status of this study?

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

1. In the context of Article 7a of Directive 98/70/EC the Commission has considered the greenhouse gas impact of various road transport fuels derived from various feedstocks, including oil sands. One result of these considerations is a Commission study which concluded that fuels derived from oil sands are, on average, more greenhouse gas intensive than fuels derived from conventional crude oil. While other environmental impacts have not been evaluated in detail, it is apparent that the extraction of oil sands have an impact on water quality, air pollution and biodiversity. Such impacts may be greater than those experienced for the extraction of conventional oil.

2. In 2012 the Commission procured a study aiming to provide information for an impact assessment on the climatic and socioeconomic impacts of various methodologies for calculating greenhouse gas emissions from road transport fuels. The impact assessment will accompany the implementing measure once the proposal is finalised.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011594/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Solvabilité 2

1. La Commission a demandé la publication d'une directive pour reporter au 1er janvier 2016 la date d'application de Solvabilité 2. Pour quelle raison?

2. Quels sont les différentes étapes du projet et leur agenda?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(3 décembre 2013)

1. Le 2 octobre 2013, la Commission a adopté une proposition (COM (2013)680) afin de reporter la date d'application de la directive Solvabilité II du 1er janvier 2014 au 1er janvier 2016. Les négociations concernant Omnibus II n'étant pas terminées à la date de transposition, fixée au 30 juin 2013, il a été proposé d'étendre ce délai. Laisser ces dates inchangées impliquerait de mettre Solvabilité II en œuvre sans les règles transitoires et d'autres adaptations importantes prévues par Omnibus II. Afin d'éviter une insécurité juridique et de garantir la continuité juridique des dispositions actuelles de la directive Solvabilité I jusqu'à la mise en place du paquet Solvabilité II, il a été proposé de repousser jusqu'au 31 janvier 2015 la date de transposition correspondante de la directive 2009/138/CE.

Il est important de donner aux autorités de surveillance et aux entreprises d'assurance et de réassurance un délai suffisant pour préparer l'application de Solvabilité II. Il a donc été proposé d'étendre la date de la première application de Solvabilité II au 1er janvier 2016.

2. Un accord politique sur Omnibus II a été conclu le 13 novembre 2013. Il a également été décidé, dans le cadre de cet accord, de reporter la date de transposition au 31 mars 2015, tout en confirmant le 1er janvier 2016 comme nouvelle date d'application de Solvency II. Le Parlement européen a voté en faveur de la proposition lors de la séance plénière du 20 novembre 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011594/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Solvency II

1. Has the Commission called for the publication of a directive to postpone the application date of the Solvency II Directive until 1 January 2016. Why?

2. What are the different stages of the project and the timetable for them?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2013)

1. On 2 October 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal (COM(2013) 680) to postpone the application date of the Solvency II directive from 1 January 2014 to 1 January 2016. In view of the fact that the negotiations on Omnibus II had not yet been finalised at the date of transposition of 30 June 2013, it was proposed to extend this deadline. Leaving the dates unchanged would imply that Solvency II would need to be implemented without the transitional rules and other important adaptations foreseen in Omnibus II. In order to avoid continued legal uncertainty and ensure the legal continuity of the current Solvency provisions (Solvency I) until the complete Solvency II package is in place, it was proposed that the relevant transposition date in Directive 2009/138/EC was extended to 31 January 2015.

It is important to allow supervisors and insurance and reinsurance undertakings some time to prepare for the application of Solvency II. It was therefore proposed to extend the date for first application of Solvency II to 1 January 2016.

2. A political agreement on Omnibus II was reached on 13 November 2013. As part of this agreement, it was also decided to change the new transposition date to 31 March 2015, while upholding 1 January 2016 as the new application date for Solvency II. The European Parliament voted in favour of the proposal during the plenary session of 20 November 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-011595/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) et Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 octobre 2013)

Objet: Perturbateurs endocriniens

C'est en décembre que devaient avoir lieu les discussions au niveau européen sur les perturbateurs endocriniens. Finalement, au vu de la complexité du dossier, ce sera en 2014 que la Commission rendra son rapport sur les critères les définissant.

Dans l'immédiat, Anne Glover, la conseillère scientifique du Président de la Commission européenne, José Manuel Barroso, va organiser le 24 octobre 2013 une réunion scientifique sur la question.

1. Pourquoi la Commission a-t-elle besoin d'un délai supplémentaire?

2. Quelle est la position de la Commission sur les triazoles, les dithiocarbamates ou les pyréthrinoïdes?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(10 décembre 2013)

1) La Commission avait prévu de proposer des critères scientifiques horizontaux pour définir les perturbateurs endocriniens, puis de les inclure dans les divers actes législatifs de l'UE. Conformément à cette approche, la Commission avait l'intention, dans un deuxième temps, d'adapter l'application de ces critères aux besoins de chaque législation spécifique (par exemple REACH, produits phytopharmaceutiques, biocides, cosmétiques).

En raison des préoccupations exprimées par les parties prenantes de l'industrie au sujet de l'impact socio-économique des critères et des divergences d'opinions parmi les scientifiques à propos de certaines questions scientifiques liées à la perturbation endocrinienne, la Commission a décidé de réaliser une analyse d'impact complète.

Cette approche permettra de prendre des décisions en toute connaissance de cause lors de la fixation de critères horizontaux pour la définition des perturbateurs endocriniens et de leur inclusion dans les actes législatifs concernés, conformément au 7e programme d'action pour l'environnement qui vient d'être approuvé.

L'analyse d'impact comportera une consultation publique de trois mois, permettant à toutes les voix de se faire entendre. Ce sera l'occasion de consulter sur tous les aspects un public plus large, incluant les consommateurs, les PME, les scientifiques et les médecins.

La décision de réaliser une analyse d'impact implique que la Commission a besoin de plus de temps avant de proposer des critères.

2) Les substances actives des groupes chimiques des triazoles, dithiocarbamates et pyréthrinoïdes sont traitées comme toutes les autres substances actives relevant du règlement (CE) n° 1107/2009 ([1]), qui prend déjà en considération l'évaluation d'une éventuelle perturbation endocrinienne et fixe des critères provisoires applicables pour définir les perturbateurs endocriniens.

([1]) JO L 309, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011595/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D) and Jean Louis Cottigny (S&D)
(10 October 2013)

Subject: Endocrine disrupters

In December 2013, EU-level discussions are expected to be held on endocrine disrupters. In view of the complexity of the issue, the Commission will eventually publish its report on the criteria to define them in 2014.

For the time being, Anne Glover, scientific adviser to the Commission President, José Manuel Barroso, will hold a scientific meeting on the issue on 24 October 2013.

1. Why does the Commission need more time?

2. What position does the Commission take on triazoles, dithiocarbamates and pyrethroids?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2013)

1) The Commission had planned to propose horizontal scientific criteria to identify endocrine disruptors and then implement them in the various EU pieces of legislation. Following this approach, the Commission intended to tailor in a second step the implementation of the criteria to the needs of each specific legislation (e.g. REACH, plant protection products, biocides, cosmetics).

Because of the concern among industry stakeholders about the socioeconomic impact of the criteria and the diverging views among scientists about some scientific issues related to endocrine disruption, the Commission has decided to carry out a comprehensive impact assessment.

This approach will allow taking a more informed decision when setting horizontal criteria for the identification of endocrine disruptors and implementing them in the relevant pieces of legislation, in line with the approved 7th EAP.

The impact assessment will include a 3 months public consultation, making sure that everyone's voice is heard. It will be an opportunity to consult a wider community, including consumers, SMEs, scientists and medical doctors on all aspects.

The decision to carry out an impact assessment implies that the Commission needs more time before proposing the criteria.

2) The active substances of the chemical groups of triazoles, dithiocarbamates and pyrethroids are treated as any other active substance falling under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ([1]), where the assessment of potential endocrine disruption is already considered and interim criteria to identify endocrine disruptors are defined and applicable.

([1]) OJ L 309/1.

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