IV

(Obavijesti)

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EUROPSKI PARLAMENT

PISANA PITANJA S ODGOVOROM

Pisana pitanja zastupnika Europskog parlamenta i odgovori institucije Europske unije na njih

(2013/C 329 E/01)

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(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009365/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Παράτυπη εντολή καταστροφής δάσους από το ελληνικό Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος για να διευκολυνθεί η έναρξη επιφανειακής εξόρυξης χρυσού στη Χαλκιδική

Το Δασαρχείο Αρναίας προσφάτως υπέγραψε με την εταιρεία «Ελληνικός Χρυσός» «Πρωτόκολλο Εγκατάστασης και Υλοτόμησης» για την υλοτόμηση όλων των εκτάσεων που περιλαμβάνονται στην 7633/2012 απόφαση παραχώρησης δάσους του Γενικού Γραμματέα Αποκεντρωμένης Διοίκησης Μακεδονίας-Θράκης. Η απόφαση αυτή αφορά 3 273 στρέμματα αρχέγονου δάσους στις Σκουριές και 857 στρέμματα στον Κοκκινόλακκα για την κατασκευή χώρου απόθεσης επικινδύνων αποβλήτων. Η υλοποίηση της εν λόγω απόφασης έχει ήδη ξεκινήσει και προχωρά με ταχείς ρυθμούς ([1]). Ο όρος 14 της 7633/2012 όμως προϋποθέτει την ύπαρξη Ειδικής Έγκρισης Επέμβασης του δασικού νόμου 998/79 και Έγκρισης Τεχνικής Μελέτης για όλα τα σχεδιαζόμενα υποέργα, από τα οποία όμως υπάρχει μόνο Έγκριση Τεχνικής Μελέτης για το «υποέργο Σκουριές» ([2]). Αυτή επιτρέπει αποκλειστικά και μόνο τη διαμόρφωση της κύριας οδού πρόσβασης του μεταλλείου Σκουριών και την κατασκευή ράμπας και φρέατος του υπόγειου μεταλλείου Σκουριών. Αλλά ακόμα και για να εγκριθούν αυτές οι Τεχνικές Μελέτες προϋποτίθεται η ύπαρξη εγκεκριμένου Επενδυτικού Σχεδίου που επίσης δεν υπάρχει. Μάλιστα, τα παραπάνω επιβεβαιώνει και ο Γενικός Διευθυντής Δασών και Αγροτικών Υποθέσεων της Αποκεντρωμένης Διοίκησης Μακεδονίας-Θράκης που διευκρινίζει προς το Δασαρχείο Αρναίας ότι «*η υπηρεσία σας θα επιτρέψει τις επεμβάσεις που αφορούν, τόσο τους χώρους που καταλαμβάνουν αυτά καθαυτά τα έργα, όσον και τους χώρους επεμβάσεων που εξαρτώνται άμεσα από αυτά (π.χ. δρόμοι προσπέλασης σε αυτά κ.λπ.) και θα εκδώσει τα ανάλογα πρωτόκολλα εγκατάστασης υλοτομικών εργασιών μόνο μετά την προσκόμιση των εγκεκριμένων μελετών των προσαρτημάτων 3, 4 και 5 του υποέργου "Μεταλλευτικές Εγκαταστάσεις Σκουριών"*» ([3]), που όμως δεν υπάρχουν ([4]).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Εκτιμά ότι παρακάμπτονται οι Εγκρίσεις Τεχνικών Μελετών και η Έγκριση Επενδυτικού Σχεδίου που απαιτούνται για να δοθεί η άδεια υλοτόμησης;

2. Συμφωνεί ότι αυτό αντίκειται στην ελληνική και ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία; Αν ναι, τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-4129/2012 του κ. Τσουκαλά ([5]).

Όσον αφορά την εφαρμογή, και ιδίως τις ειδικές διατάξεις που αναφέρονται στον δασικό νόμο 998/79, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει δικαιοδοσία να επιληφθεί του θέματος που θίγει η ερώτηση, το οποίο αφορά αποκλειστικά τις αρμόδιες ελληνικές αρχές.

([1]) http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dwyauo-DYaM
([2]) Απόφαση Δ8-Α/Φ.7,49,13/2809/349/10. Φεβρ.2012.
([3]) «Διευκρινήσεις επί των υλοτομικών εργασιών εντός της παραχωρηθείσης έκτασης», Αποκεντρωμένη Διοίκηση Μακεδονίας-Θράκης, Διεύθυνση Δασών & Αγροτικών Υποθέσεων, ΑΠ 21944, 28/9/2012.
([4]) «Ωμή παρέμβαση του Υπ. Περιβάλλοντος υπέρ της "Ελληνικός Χρυσός"», Εξάντας, 15/10/2011.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/el/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009365/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Clearance of forest land inappropriately ordered by the Greek Environment Ministry for the purposes of open-pit gold mining in the Khalkidhiki

The Arnaia Forestry Department has recently signed a surface clearance protocol with Hellas Gold SA in respect of all forest land referred to in Decision 7633/2012 issued by the Secretary-General of the Macedonia-Thrace Decentralised Administration relating to 327.3 hectares of primeval forest land in Skouries and 85.7 hectares in Kokkinolakkas for the construction of a hazardous waste disposal facility. This decision is already being rapidly put into effect ([1]). However, under paragraph 14 of Decision 7633/2012, special authorisation referred to in Forestry Law 998/79 and approval of a technical survey for all sub-projects are required. To date only the technical survey for the Skouries sub-project has been approved ([2]), relating solely and exclusively to work on the principal mine access road as well as the ramp and shaft. Approval of the technical surveys is subject to an authorised investment plan, which is also non-existent. The above requirements have been confirmed by the Director-General for Forestry and Rural Affairs of the Macedonia-Thrace Decentralised Administration, which has notified the Arnaia Forestry Department that 'your department may authorise operations at the sites of each of the projects and directly related operations (for example, access roads, etc.) and issue the relevant surface clearance protocols only after submission of approved surveys for appendices 3, 4 and 5 of the "Skouries mining installations" sub-project' ([3]). These surveys, however, are non-existent ([4]).

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission consider that the technical survey and investment plan approval procedures for surface clearance authorisation have been circumvented?

2. Does it agree that this is an infringement of Greek and European law? If so, what measures will it take?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 November 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-4129/2012 by Mr Tsoukalas ([5]).

As regards the implementation, and in particular the special provisions referred to in the Forestry Law 998/79, the Commission has no jurisdiction to deal with the question asked, which is a matter solely for the Greek authorities concerned.

([1]) http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dwyauo-DYaM
([2]) Decision D8-A/F.7,49,13/2809/349/10. February 2012.
([3]) 'Details regarding forest clearance within the concession area', Macedonia-Thrace Decentralised Administration, Forestry and Rural Affairs Directorate, Decision 21944, 28 September 2012.
([4]) Statement of 15 October 2011 by the Environment Minister concerning Hellas Gold SA.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009367/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(16 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Quiebras transaccionales de entidades de previsión social voluntaria

En los últimos meses, centenares de trabajadores de varias empresas radicadas en el País Vasco han sufrido los efectos de la quiebra de una empresa radicada en otro país de la Unión, que era responsable del abono de parte de los derechos pasivos a que tenían derecho. En concreto, estos trabajadores tenían contratada, a través de una empresa de seguros radicada en Amberes, una póliza que completaba las prestaciones ordinarias que ofrece la seguridad social en España. Tras un proceso de deslocalización de varias empresas, los trabajadores quedaron en situación de desempleo o se acogieron a jubilaciones anticipadas y comenzaron a cobrar, junto a las prestaciones de la Seguridad Social, los complementos de renta correspondientes a las indemnizaciones contratadas con la citada empresa belga.

Tras comenzar a cobrar estas prestaciones complementarias, la firma belga de seguros fue intervenida por las autoridades federales del señalado Estado. La primera consecuencia de esta intervención, ocurrida a finales de 2011, fue que los trabajadores de las empresas vascas dejaron de cobrar los complementos de renta que tenían contratados. Los tribunales españoles, tras analizar lo sucedido, reconocieron estas deudas a los trabajadores afectados. Sin embargo, éstos no han podido hasta la fecha ni hacer efectivo el cobro de las cantidades que ya se les adeudan, ni garantizar que, en el futuro, vuelvan a cobrar las prestaciones complementarias por las que cotizaron. A la vista de lo sucedido:

1. ¿Dispone la Comisión de datos, reclamaciones o denuncias que se refieran a problemas como el que se describe en esta pregunta? De ser así, ¿a cuántos trabajadores afectan y de qué Estados miembros?

2. ¿Hay algún procedimiento previsto para agilizar las reclamaciones ante casos de quiebras y/o intervenciones que afecten a entidades de previsión social voluntaria radicadas en un determinado país de la Unión y tengan efectos en los derechos pasivos de trabajadores que cotizaron por ellos y residen en otros Estados diferentes?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión conoce el asunto a que se refiere Su Señoría. La Comisión ha pedido a la autoridad de supervisión competente belga que mantenga informada a la autoridad de supervisión competente española sobre el progreso del proceso de liquidación, de conformidad con lo dispuesto en el artículo 18 de la Directiva 2001/17/CE, relativa al saneamiento y a la liquidación de las compañías de seguros ([1]).

Varios Estados miembros de la UE tienen sistemas de garantía de seguros para proteger a los tomadores de seguros en caso de insolvencia de una empresa de seguros. En junio de 2010, la Comisión propuso un conjunto de medidas destinadas a reforzar la confianza de los consumidores en los servicios financieros. Tal conjunto incluía dos propuestas de Directivas sobre los sistemas de garantía de depósitos y los sistemas de indemnización de los inversores, así como un Libro Blanco sobre los sistemas de garantía de seguros. En esta fase, y especialmente antes de que avancen las negociaciones sobre las dos propuestas legislativas, la Comisión cree prematuro considerar un seguimiento del Libro Blanco.

([1]) DO L 110 de 20.4.2001, pp. 28-39.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009367/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Transnational bankruptcy of voluntary social security providers

In recent months, hundreds of workers from several companies in the Basque Country have been affected by the bankruptcy of a company based in another EU country, which was responsible for paying part of their pension fund entitlements. These workers had taken out a policy, with an Antwerp insurance company, to complement the ordinary benefits covered by Social Security in Spain. After several companies were relocated, the workers were left unemployed, or took early retirement and, as well as Social Security benefits, began to receive the income support to which they were entitled from that Belgian company.

After the workers had begun to receive these complementary benefits, the Belgian insurance company was taken over by the country's federal authorities. The first consequence of the takeover, which took place at the end of 2011, was that the workers from the Basque companies stopped receiving the income support which had been included in their policy. After examining the events, the Spanish courts recognised the debts owed to the workers affected. Nevertheless, until now the workers have neither recovered the amounts which are owed to them, nor received a guarantee that payment of additional entitlements corresponding to their contributions will resume.

1. Does the Commission have any data, claims or complaints relating to this type ofproblem? If so, how many workers are affected and from which Member States?

2. Has any procedure been planned to facilitate claims in bankruptcy cases and/or businesstakeovers involving voluntary social security providers located in a given EU countrywhich affect the pension funds of workers who have paid the contributions forthem and who live in different EU countries?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the case mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Commission has invited the competent Belgian supervisory authority to keep the competent Spanish supervisory authority regularly informed on the progress of the liquidation process, as required by Article 18 of Directive 2001/17/EC on the reorganisation and winding-up of insurance undertakings ([1]).

Several EU Member States operate Insurance Guarantee Schemes to protect policy holders in the event of an insolvency of an insurance undertaking. In June 2010, the Commission proposed a package aimed at boosting consumer confidence in financial services. The package contained two legislative proposals for Directives on Deposit Guarantee Schemes and Investor Compensation Schemes, and a white paper on Insurance Guarantee Schemes. At this stage, and notably before further progress in the negotiation on the two legislative proposals, the Commission finds it premature considering a follow-up to the white paper.

([1]) OJ L 110, 20.4.2001, p. 28-39.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-009368/12
до Комисията
Ivailo Kalfin (S&D)
(16 октомври 2012 г.)

Относно: Въвеждане на такса за достъп до енергийната мрежа в България

С решение на енергийния регулатор ДКЕВР (Държавна комисия за енергийно и водно регулиране) от м. октомври 2012 г. в България бяха въведени ежемесечни такси, които производителите на енергия от възобновяеми източници трябва да плащат за достъп до енергийната мрежа. Таксата е между 10 и 39 % от цената на енергията от възобновяеми енергийни източници (ВЕИ). В резултат на решението се очакват незабавни фалити, предимно на малки и средни производители на енергия от ВЕИ, за които размерът й е непосилен.

Предложението предизвика силна реакция както сред представителите на бизнеса и потребителските организации, така и сред дипломатическите представители, акредитирани в България. 15 посланици, включително от 11 държави членки на ЕС, изпратиха на 8 октомври 2012 г. писмо до българския ресорен министър, в което изразяват сериозна загриженост във връзка с решението, което според тях влошава бизнес средата в България. Те призовават за незабавна намеса от страна на правителството. До този момент правителството на България не е предприело никакви действия — нито за отмяна на таксата, нито дори за мотивиране на нейното въвеждане.

Във връзка с това искам да запитам Европейската комисия:

Съответства ли въвеждането на въпросните такси, без обяснение за тяхната стойност, на европейското законодателство?

Предвиждането на различни размери на таксата в зависимост от периода за включване за предишни години не нарушава ли конкурентната среда?

Смята ли Европейската комисия да предприеме действия предвид очакваните фалити на производители на възобновяема енергия в България в резултат на въведените такси за достъп до енергийната мрежа?

Отговор, даден от г-н Йотингер от името на Комисията
(4 декември 2012 г.)

Европейската комисия знае за неотдавнашните промени в законодателството на България, с които се въвеждат такси за достъп до газопреносната мрежа в различен размер (на пръв поглед само) за производителите на електроенергия от възобновяеми енергийни източници. За да определи съвместимостта на тази мярка с достиженията на правото на ЕС в областта на енергетиката, Комисията започна разследване по системата „EU Pilot“.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009368/12
to the Commission
Ivailo Kalfin (S&D)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Introduction of an energy grid access charge in Bulgaria

By decision of the Bulgarian energy regulator SCEWR (State Commission for Energy and Water Regulation) in October 2012, renewable energy producers have been required to pay monthly charges for access to the grid. The charges represent between 10% and 39% of the price of the renewable energy. Bankruptcies are expected as an immediate result of the decision, particularly among small and medium-sized producers in the renewables sector, for whom the level of the charges is unrealistic.

When the charges were proposed there was a strong reaction both from the representatives of business and consumer organisations and from diplomatic representatives in Bulgaria. On 8 October 2012, ambassadors from 15 countries, including 11 EU Member States, wrote to the Minister responsible expressing serious concern about the decision, which, they said, would damage the business environment in Bulgaria. They called on the Government to intervene immediately. To date, however, the Bulgarian Government has moved neither to abolish the charge nor, indeed, to justify its introduction.

Does the Commission consider that the introduction of these charges, without any explanation as to their value, is in accordance with European law?

Does the Commission not consider the provision for varying levels of charge, depending on the period for which producers were connected to the grid in previous years, to be a distortion of competition?

Does the Commission plan to take any action in view of the anticipated bankruptcies among renewable energy producers in Bulgaria as a result of the introduction of charges for access to the grid?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the recent changes in Bulgaria's legislation introducing grid access tariffs (apparently only) for producers of electricity from renewable energy sources. In order to determine the compliance of such a measure with the EU energy *acquis*, the Commission has initiated an investigation under the EU Pilot system.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009369/12
an die Kommission
Martin Kastler (PPE)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Diskriminierung von Menschen mit Behinderung: Zutritt von Begleithunden

In Artikel 26 der Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union wird anerkannt, dass Menschen mit Einschränkungen das volle Recht auf „Unabhängigkeit, soziale und berufliche Eingliederung und Beteiligung am Gemeinschaftsleben“ haben. Im Europäischem Aktionsplan „Chancengleichheit für Menschen mit Behinderungen“ (KOM(2003)0650) wird der Grundsatz der absoluten Nichtdiskriminierung bekräftigt. Dennoch sind namentlich Fälle bekannt, in denen Menschen mit einer Sehbehinderung bzw. einer sonstigen Behinderung wegen ihres Begleithundes der Zutritt zu Restaurants bzw. zum Einzelhandel verwehrt wurde.

1. Gibt es angesichts des klaren europäischen Primärrechts zur Nichtdiskriminierung nationale Standards bzw. europaweit einheitliche Regelungen, denen zufolge ausgebildete Blinden- und Begleithunde als medizinisches Hilfsmittel eingestuft werden, so dass ihnen unabhängig von allgemeinen nationalen Vorschriften grundsätzlich Zutritt zu möglichst allen Orten ermöglicht wird?

2. Ist die Kommission auch der Ansicht, dass sie legislativ tätig werden muss, um diesen Missstand der Diskriminierung durch entsprechende klare europäische Rechtsvorschriften zu beenden?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(27. November 2012)

Der aktuelle EU-Rechtsrahmen bietet nur in Beschäftigung und Beruf ([1]) Schutz vor Diskriminierung aufgrund einer Behinderung. Der Besitzstand der EU enthält keine Vorschriften über den Zutritt von Menschen mit Behinderungen zu Restaurants oder Geschäften.

Die Mitgliedstaaten haben das VN-Übereinkommen über die Rechte von Menschen mit Behinderungen ratifiziert und sich darin verpflichtet, „den vollen und gleichberechtigten Genuss aller Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten durch alle Menschen mit Behinderungen zu fördern, zu schützen und zu gewährleisten und die Achtung der ihnen innewohnenden Würde zu fördern“. Die Vertragsstaaten müssen wirksame Maßnahmen zur Gewährleistung persönlicher Mobilität ergreifen, die Menschen mit Behinderung größtmögliche Unabhängigkeit bietet. Die EU ist diesem Übereinkommen 2010 ebenfalls beigetreten und ist im Rahmen ihrer Zuständigkeiten durch ihre Verpflichtungen gebunden. Zur Förderung der kohärenten Umsetzung des Übereinkommens in der EU hat die Kommission die EU-Strategie für Menschen mit Behinderungen 2010-2020 ([2]) auf den Weg gebracht.

([1]) Richtlinie 2000/78/EG des Rates vom 27. November 2000 zur Festlegung eines allgemeinen Rahmens für die Verwirklichung der Gleichbehandlung in Beschäftigung und Beruf (ABl. L 303 vom 2.12.2000, S. 16).

([2]) „Erneuertes Engagement für ein barrierefreies Europa“, KOM(2010)636 endg.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009369/12
to the Commission
Martin Kastler (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Discrimination against people with disabilities: accessibility for guide dogs

Article 26 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights recognises that persons with disabilities have the full and unrestricted right to 'independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community'. The European Action Plan for Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities (COM(2003) 0650), reiterates the principle of absolute non-discrimination. Cases have, however, come to light in which persons with a visual impairment or another disability were refused entry into restaurants or shops because they had a guide dog.

1. Given that European primary law unequivocally outlaws discrimination, are there national standards or EU-wide rules under which trained guide dogs for the blind are classified as medical equipment, and can thus, regardless of general national regulations, enter as many places as possible?

2. Would the Commission agree that it must take action to remedy this unacceptable, discriminatory state of affairs by ensuring the adoption of clear European legislation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

The current EU legal framework provides protection against discrimination on the grounds of disability only in the area of employment and occupation ([1]). The EU *acquis* does not contain rules concerning access of persons with disabilities to restaurants or shops.

Member States have to date ratified the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD) and thus committed 'to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity'. State Parties must take effective measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for persons with disabilities. The EU also became a party to the Convention in 2010 and is bound by its obligations to the extent of EU competences. In order to facilitate a coherent implementation of the Convention in the EU, the Commission has launched the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ([2]).

([1]) Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (OJ L 303, 02.12.2000, p. 16).

([2]) 'A renewed commitment to a barrier-free Europe', COM(2010) 636 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009370/12
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Mobile phone companies and 'bill shock'

The Commission has made much progress towards dealing with the issue of the shock of high mobile phone bills due to roaming costs, but a considerable source of bill shock remains in the form of the consequences of a mobile phone being stolen. Currently, many customers have difficulty in quickly communicating with their mobile provider in order to report a theft, as often this is done via a phone call, which is difficult if their phone has been stolen.

In the light of the consumer protection legislation, is the Commission of the view that mobile phone companies are doing enough to facilitate speedy alternative means of reporting mobile phones as stolen, perhaps via a common online portal?

Is the Commission aware of consumer disquiet over the issue and, if so, does it have any plans to investigate the European mobile phone market?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2012)

The Commission is aware of consumer disquiet over this issue and aims, within its competences, at addressing this matter. Although the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications does not define any specific requirements in the case of theft of a consumer's mobile devise, the relevant EU Directives contain a number of provisions which aim at protecting users' rights in the sector, in particular through Directive 2002/22/EC (Universal Service Directive) ([1]).

Article 20 contains general requirements regarding information to be included in contracts between subscribers and undertakings providing electronic communications services which may also include measures related to control of expenditure. The Commission is also working with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) on the adoption of reinforced procedures for cooperation between the relevant national authorities, and with the involvement of operators, in cases of fraud and misuse in the sector ([2]).

([1]) OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 51.
([2]) Article 28(2) Universal Service Directive: A harmonised BEREC cooperation process — Consultation paper: http://berec.europa.eu/eng/document_register/subject_matter/berec/public_consultations/?doc=979

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009371/12
to the Commission
Derek Vaughan (S&D)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Spinal cord removal in sheep

It is estimated that the cost to the Welsh sheep industry of removing the spinal cord from sheep could be as much as GBP 8.5 million per annum. It is therefore understandable that those in the industry feel strongly that this regulation should be amended. Does the Commission have plans to reconsider this matter?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

According to the Union law, the spinal cord from sheep aged over 12 months is a Specified Risk Material (SRM), i.e. an organ considered to harbour infectivity in an animal affected by a Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) and which can consequently pose a risk to human health if consumed. In the Union, the removal of SRM from the food and feed chains has been mandatory since 2000 and is the most important public health protection measure. The list of SRM is established based on scientific advice and any amendment of the current list of SRM should be based on new evolving scientific knowledge while maintaining the existing high level of consumer protection within the EU.

On 2 December 2010, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published a scientific opinion on TSE infectivity in the tissues of small ruminants ([1]). This opinion reviewed the distribution of TSE infectivity in small ruminant tissues and provided for the first time a quantification of the impact on public health of current SRM measures in small ruminants. EFSA confirmed that the removal of SRM such as the brain and spinal cord from animals going into the food chain protects consumers from TSE-related risks.

Considering this opinion, the Commission has no plan to reconsider the current rule related to the removal of the spinal cord in sheep.

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/1875.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009372/12
to the Commission
Catherine Bearder (ALDE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Superfast broadband

It has come to my attention that there is some uncertainty regarding the definition of 'superfast broadband'. In the light of this, can the Commission provide a precise definition which can be used?

In addition, Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that 'save as otherwise provided in the Treaties, any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the internal market'.

It has come to my attention that BDUK, which is part of the UK's Department for Culture, Media and Sport, is running a tendering process which effectively has only one tenderer, who will inevitably receive the state funding on offer. This will effectively duplicate the services of another company which is already providing broadband in the same area. The company currently providing the broadband will not be able to compete against a company receiving state money. Can the Commission therefore state whether this practice is in contravention of Article 107(1) TFEU?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

On 20 November 2012 ([1]), the Commission decided that the UK umbrella support scheme BDUK for investments in next generation access (NGA) broadband networks is in line with EU State aid rules. This scheme defines superfast broadband as speeds greater than those available on current generation network infrastructure, delivered over next generation networks with at least 30 Mbps download speed ([2]).

The measure targets basic broadband 'white areas' and/or 'white NGA areas' where no basic broadband and/or NGA networks exist now nor are likely to be built within three years by private investors on commercial terms ([3]).

The UK analysed the existing broadband infrastructure in detail. The consultation with existing operators in an open, transparent way ensures that any commercial operators' investment plans are taken into account, and public funds are used only where similar commercial investments do not exist and are not planned in the near future. Publishing all information related to the broadband scheme and individual projects will ensure a high level of transparency on the use of public funds.

The framework Agreement selection procedure was done in an open, non-discriminatory way in line with EU public procurement principles. The Commission did not identify any requirements of the framework Agreement that could have excluded any operators from bidding. If local authorities wish not to use the BDUK Framework Agreement, the UK confirmed that the tender process will be open, transparent and non-discriminatory. Therefore, aid for each project will always be allocated on the basis of an open tender process.

([1]) Press release IP/12/1244; the decision will be published once its confidentiality is cleared.
([2]) The Broadband Guidelines define NGA networks as follows: 'NGA networks are wired access networks which consist wholly or in part of optical elements and which are capable of delivering broadband access services with enhanced characteristics (such as higher throughput) as compared to those provided over existing copper networks'.
([3]) 'White NGA areas' are 'grey areas' from basic broadband point of view, as no two competing infrastructures would be in place (such as cable and xdsl networks).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009373/12
à la Commission
Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE)
(16 octobre 2012)

Objet: Conflits dans les zones minières en RDC

L'incapacité des autorités congolaises à faire face au regain de violence au Kivu en RDC ces derniers mois montre à quel point une situation de totale impunité s'est installée dans cette région. Cette impunité est d'autant plus prégnante au niveau des zones minières dans lesquelles les viols des femmes et des enfants sont perpétrés à une très grande échelle.

Les États-Unis avec la Section 1502 de la loi Dodd-Franck votée en 2010 ont franchi un pas décisif dans la lutte contre le commerce illicite de minerais en provenance de l'Est de la RDC. Dans son dernier rapport datant de décembre 2011, le Groupe d'experts des Nations-Unies sur la RDC constate que la loi Dodd-Franck a eu pour effet de diminuer les revenus des groupes armés et autres réseaux criminels.

À deux reprises déjà le Parlement européen a interpelé la Commission pour que l'UE envisage de mettre en place de tels dispositifs. Le Parlement a voté en décembre 2010 une première résolution dans le cadre de l'avenir du partenariat stratégique UE-Afrique, puis en mai 2012 l'Assemblée parlementaire ACP-UE dans sa résolution sur l'impact social et environnemental de l'exploitation minière a réitéré cette demande. Les Pays-Bas ont pris les devants et viennent d'adopter en septembre dernier le projet pilote «étain sans conflit» en RDC dans les mines d'étain du Sud Kivu. Cette initiative vise à introduire une chaîne d'approvisionnement étroitement contrôlée de ce minéral en dehors du contrôle des groupes armés.

Quelles initiatives législatives européennes la Commission compte-t-elle prendre pour aller dans ce sens, et selon quel calendrier?

Quelles sont les raisons de l'inaction de la Commission jusqu'à aujourd'hui?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(12 décembre 2012)

La Commission a connaissance des liens qui existent entre l'exploitation et le commerce illicites des minéraux et le conflit en République démocratique du Congo (RDC). Elle a encouragé une approche fondée sur la transparence des marchés physiques, des chaînes d'approvisionnement et des revenus.

Dans sa communication de 2012 intitulée «Commerce, croissance et développement» ([1]), la Commission a souligné l'importance de promouvoir une utilisation et un respect plus marqués des principes directeurs de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE) à l'intention des entreprises multinationales et du guide de l'OCDE sur le devoir de diligence pour la gestion responsable des chaînes d'approvisionnement. À cet égard, la Commission continue d'œuvrer, par l'intermédiaire des processus de l'OCDE associant de multiples parties prenantes, à la mise en application de ces principes directeurs et de ce guide, tout en développant sa propre stratégie en matière de responsabilité sociale des entreprises.

En outre, la Commission travaille en étroite collaboration avec le Service européen pour l'action extérieure (SEAE) afin d'examiner la possibilité de mettre en place une initiative globale de l'UE relative au devoir de diligence, dont la portée doit encore être définie. Une consultation publique devrait être lancée en 2013; les contributions du Parlement seront les bienvenues. Pour garantir une paix et une stabilité durables dans la région, il est primordial de restaurer l'autorité de l'État congolais et l'État de droit dans l'est de la RDC, de mettre en œuvre une vaste réforme du secteur de la sécurité et d'étendre les stratégies de développement.

La Commission et le SEAE étudient également les moyens à mettre en œuvre pour apporter un soutien politique et financier à l'«Initiative régionale de lutte contre l'exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles» de la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs (CIRGL), qui prévoit notamment la mise en place d'un mécanisme visant à certifier que les minéraux provenant de la région ne financent pas les conflits.

([1]) COM(2012) 22 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009373/12
to the Commission
Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Conflict in the mining areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The inability of the Congolese authorities to contain the fresh violence that broke out a few months ago in Kivu in the DRC reveals the extent to which a climate of total impunity now prevails in the region. The implications are particularly serious in the region's mining areas, where the rape of women and children is widespread.

By means of Section 1502 of the 2010 Dodd-Franck Act, the US has taken a decisive step forward in the fight against the illegal trade in minerals from the eastern DRC. In its latest report of December 2011, the UN Group of Experts on the DRC noted that the entry into force of the Dodd-Franck Act had served to cut the flow of money to armed groups and other criminal networks.

The European Parliament has already urged the Commission on two occasions to consider the possibility of introducing similar provisions in the EU. In December 2010, Parliament adopted a first resolution on the future of the EU-Africa strategic partnership, and then in May 2012, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly reiterated the call for new measures in its resolution on the social and environmental impact of mining. The Netherlands has taken the lead in this area, and in September 2012, the country launched a pilot project entitled 'conflict-free tin' in the tin mines of South Kivu. The aim of this initiative is to develop a closely-monitored tin supply chain outside the control of armed groups.

What EU legislative initiatives is the Commission planning to take in order to achieve that objective, and when?

What are the reasons for the Commission's failure to act until now?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the links between the illegal exploitation and trade of minerals and the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Commission has promoted an approach based on transparency of physical markets, supply chains and revenues.

In its 2012 Communication on 'Trade, Growth and Development' ([1]), the Commission highlighted the importance of promoting greater support for and use of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for multinational enterprises, and OECD due diligence guidance for responsible supply chains management. In this regard, the Commission continues to work at the OECD through multi-stakeholder processes on implementation of these Guidelines and the Guidance, as well as developing its corporate social responsibility strategy.

In addition, the Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) are working closely together on a possible comprehensive EU due diligence initiative, the scope of which still needs to be determined. A public consultation should be launched in 2013 and contributions from Parliament will be welcome. The restoration of Congolese state authority and the rule of law in the eastern regions of the DRC, along with a wide-ranging security sector reform, as well as broader development strategies are crucial to ensure a long-lasting peace and stability in the region.

The Commission and the EEAS are also exploring ways to provide political and financial support to the 'Regional Initiative on Illegal exploitation of Natural Resources' of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region which includes the establishment of a certification mechanism aiming at certifying conflict free minerals sourced in the region.

([1]) COM(2012) 22 final.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-009374/12
a Bizottság számára
Gáll-Pelcz Ildikó (PPE)
(2012. október 16.)

Tárgy: Az ételallergiával érintett családok részére biztosított kedvezményekről

Egy magyarországi felmérés rámutatott, hogy az ételallergiával érintett családok sokszor havi 100 euróval is többet költenek élelmiszerre, mint a nem diétázók, tekintettel arra, hogy akár 5-7-szeres különbség is lehet az ételallergiások számára fogyasztható élelmiszerek és a normál, nem diétás élelmiszerek ára között. A gluténmentes lisztek 5,3-szor drágábbak, mint a normál finomlisztek, és a gluténmentes kenyereknél is nagyságrendileg hasonló árkülönbséget mutat az 5,7-szeres eltérés a két átlagár között. Dietetikusok vizsgálata szerint ugyanazon fogás megfelelő elkészítése 27%-kal kerül többe a gluténmentes diétát követők számára. Kifejezetten a szegényebb rétegek esetében jelent ez kardinális kérdést, hiszen a jelenlegi magas árak mellett nagy valószínűséggel nem engedhetik meg maguknak a diétát, ami az egészségi állapotuk veszélyeztetésével járhat. Sokat javíthatna a lisztérzékenyek helyzetén, ha a speciális alapanyagokat receptre is megkaphatnák a gyógyszertárakban. Ilyen megoldásokat már Nyugat-Európában is alkalmaznak. Finnországban és Olaszországban adókedvezmény vagy havi anyagi támogatás segíti a gluténmentes táplálkozás fokozott költségeinek fedezését, Franciaországban pedig havi ellátmányt folyósítanak.

Nem gondolja-e a Bizottság, hogy az élelmiszer-allergiásokat sújtó anyagi nehézségek a számukra fogyasztható élelmiszerek kiugróan magas ára miatt – önhibájukon kívül – méltánytalanul hátrányos helyzetben vannak? Tervezi-e a Bizottság, hogy szabályozást kezdeményez az ételallergiások számukra fogyasztható élelmiszerek okozta jelentős terhek enyhítésére érdekében?

Mi a Bizottság álláspontja az egyes tagállamokban már bevezetett adókedvezményekről és az ételallergiásoknak juttatott rendszeres anyagi támogatásokról? A belső piac kiegyensúlyozottsága és az ételallergiások hátrányos helyzetének javítása érdekében milyen egyéb eszközöket, szabályozási lehetőségeket lát a Bizottság a fenti probléma orvoslására?

Tonio Borg biztos válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2012. december 6.)

A Bizottság tudatában van annak, hogy az élelmiszer-allergiák, illetve az élelmiszer-érzékenység rendkívül nagy hatást gyakorol az egészségre, és hogy a problémát jelentő élelmiszerek kerülése alapvetően fontos.

A Bizottságnak nem áll szándékában olyan jogszabályokat kidolgozni, melyek csökkentenék az élelmiszer-allergiában szenvedő személyekre háruló élelmiszer-költségek okozta terhet, mivel a Bizottság nem rendelkezik hatáskörrel a speciális étrenddel kapcsolatos élelmiszerköltségek visszatérítése terén, amely a tagállamok közvetlen felelőssége.

Mindazonáltal a táplálkozással, túlsúllyal és elhízással kapcsolatos egészségügyi kérdésekre vonatkozó európai stratégia ([1]) középpontjában az élelmiszerekre és a táplálkozásra vonatkozó, a fogyasztóknak szóló információk állnak, melyek kitérnek az étrenddel összefüggő körülményekre, az élelmiszer-allergiákra és az élelmiszer-érzékenységre is.

E tekintetben a 2000/13/EK irányelv ([2]) biztosítja, hogy azon összetevők jelenlétét, melyek köztudottan allergiás reakciókat válthatnak ki, a címkén és az összetevők listáján kötelező feltüntetni. Ezen összetevők uniós listája ([3]) magában foglalja a gluténtartalmazó gabonaféléket, valamint az azokból készült termékeket.

Az 1169/2011/EU rendelet ([4]) szerint 2014. december 13-ától az allergénekre vonatkozó valamennyi információt a nem előrecsomagolt élelmiszereken is fel kell tüntetni, a vendéglátó-ipari létesítmények és éttermek által készített és házhoz szállított ételeket is beleértve. Ezenkívül a gluténmentességre vonatkozó jelölések, mint például a „gluténmentes” vagy az „alacsony gluténtartalmú” jelölések tekintetében különös szabályok ([5]) kerültek elfogadásra.

([1]) COM(2007) 279 végleges.
([2]) Az Európai Parlament és a Tanács 2000/13/EK irányelve (2000. március 20.) az élelmiszerek címkézésére, kiszerelésére és reklámozására vonatkozó tagállami jogszabályok közelítéséről, HL L 109., 2000.5.6., 29. o.
([3]) A 2000/13/EK irányelv III. melléklete.
([4]) Az Európai Parlament és Tanács 1169/2011/EU rendelete (2011. október 25.) a fogyasztók élelmiszerekkel kapcsolatos tájékoztatásáról, HL L 304., 2011.11.22., 18. o.
([5]) HL L 14., 2009.1.20., 5. o.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009374/12
to the Commission
Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Allowances for families affected by food allergies

A study carried out in Hungary has shown that families affected by food allergies often pay EUR 100 per month more on food than those with no special dietary requirements, since foods suitable for sufferers from food allergies may cost five to seven times more than normal, non-diet foods. Gluten-free flours are 5.3 times more expensive than normal fine-grained flours, and gluten-free breads show a similar price differential of the order of 5.7 times between the two average prices. A study of people on special diets has shown that preparing the same dish properly costs 27% more for people on a gluten-free diet. Particularly for the poorer classes this is a crucial question, because given to the current high prices they very probably cannot afford the diet food they need, thus endangering their health. The situation of people with a sensitivity to flour could be improved considerably if the special basic foods could be obtained on prescription from chemists. Such solutions are already being applied in Western Europe. In Finland and Italy a tax allowance or monthly subsidy helps to cover the expense of gluten-free food, and in France monthly supplies are granted.

Does not the Commission consider that the financial difficulties affecting people with food allergies as a result of the excessively high price of the foods they need place them — through no fault of their own — at an unfair disadvantage? Does the Commission plan to initiate legislation with a view to alleviating the significant burdens caused by the cost of foods for people with food allergies?

What is the Commission's view on the tax allowances already introduced in some Member States, and on regular subsidies for people suffering from food allergies? In the interest of balancing the internal market and improving the adverse situation of those suffering from food allergies, what other instruments and legislative options does the Commission envisage to remedy this problem?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the health impact of food allergies or intolerance and avoidance of the foodstuff causing the problem is essential.

The Commission does not intend to develop legislation to alleviate the burden caused by the cost of food for people with food allergies as it has no role in reimbursement of food for special dietary requirements, which remains the direct responsibility of Member States.

Nevertheless, the strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related health issues ([1]) focuses on information to consumers about food and nutrition, taking into account diet related conditions, food allergies and intolerances.

In this regard, Directive 2000/13/EC ([2]) ensures that the presence of substances known for their ability to trigger allergic reactions is always indicated on the label and in the list of ingredients. The EU list of such substances ([3]) includes cereals containing gluten and products thereof.

According to Regulation 1169/2011 ([4]) as from 13 December 2014, all information on allergens will have to be provided also in the case of non-pre-packed foods, including foods prepared and delivered by catering establishments and restaurants. Moreover, specific rules ([5]) related to the indication of the absence of gluten such as 'gluten-free' or 'very low gluten' were adopted.

([1]) COM(2007) 279 final.
([2]) Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 March 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuff, OJ L 109, 6.5.2000, p. 29.
([3]) Directive 2000/13/EC, Annex III.
([4]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p.18.
([5]) OJ L 14, 20.1.2009, p.5.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009375/12
aan de Commissie
Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE)
(16 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Aanpak onveiligheid en oneerlijke concurrentie in de Europese transportsector

Is de Commissie bekend met de uitzending „Explosief Transport" van ZEMBLA op 12 oktober 2012 over het vervoer van gevaarlijke stoffen door chauffeurs die onvoldoende opgeleid zijn?

In hoeverre is de Commissie op de hoogte van gevallen waarbij het afgeven van diploma's aan chauffeurs voor het vervoer van gevaarlijke stoffen in alle EU-lidstaten op onordentelijk wijze geschiedt?

Welke actie is de Commissie van plan te ondernemen om dit grensoverschrijdende probleem aan te pakken en de veiligheid van het transport met gevaarlijke stoffen in de hele EU te garanderen?

Welke actie onderneemt de Commissie om de UNECE-regels en EU-Richtlijn aangaande „wegtransporten van gevaarlijke goederen (ADR)" qua naleving en controles te verbeteren?

Is de Commissie bekend met de praktijk waarin chauffeurs in de transportsector collectieve arbeidsovereenkomsten ontwijken via legale en illegale constructies zoals het opzetten van satellietvestigingen in EU-lidstaten met lagere lonen en een lagere sociale bescherming?

Welke actie is de Commissie van plan te ondernemen tegen deze oneerlijke concurrentie in de transportsector?

Is de Commissie bekend met het feit dat de Inspectie Leefomgeving en Transport in Nederland slechts 1 % van het vervoer controleert?

Is de Commissie als hoedster van de Verdragen van plan om minimumeisen aan arbeids- en veiligheidsinspectie te stellen zo.a. geldende EU-wetgeving op dit terrein correct wordt geïmplementeerd?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(5 december 2012)

De punten die het geachte Parlementslid aanhaalt, hebben betrekking op diverse delen van de EU-wetgeving inzake wegvervoer. Het betreft niet alleen de regels inzake markttoegang, maar ook regels voor het vervoer van gevaarlijke goederen, de opleiding van bestuurders en het gebruik van de tachograaf. Deze regels evolueren constant om de verkeersveiligheid te verbeteren en eerlijke concurrentie en veilige werkomstandigheden te garanderen.

De Commissie heeft minimumeisen vastgesteld voor controles op de naleving van de geldende EU-regels. De handhaving is echter een verantwoordelijkheid van de lidstaten, die de nodige maatregelen moeten treffen om te garanderen dat vervoersondernemingen en professionele bestuurders deze regels naleven. Inbreuken moeten worden bestraft overeenkomstig de nationale sanctieregeling, die effectief, evenredig, ontradend en niet-dicriminerend moet zijn. De lidstaten moeten regelmatig bij de Commissie verslag uitbrengen over de tenuitvoerlegging van de EU-wetgeving.

De Commissie houdt toezicht op de tenuitvoerlegging van deze wetgeving op basis van de verslagen van de lidstaten, waarin de effectiviteit van de regels wordt beoordeeld en de standpunten van het bedrijfsleven worden verzameld. Regelmatig worden vergaderingen gehouden om problemen met de handhaving met de lidstaten en sociale partners te bespreken. Indien nodig neemt de Commissie het initiatief om nieuwe wetgeving voor te stellen.

De Commissie is voornemens om in 2013 een initiatief te nemen met betrekking tot de markt voor wegvervoer. Dit initiatief kan maatregelen omvatten voor de indeling van ernstige inbreuken in categorieën en voor een versterkte geharmoniseerde handhaving. Ook sociale normen kunnen in dit wetgevingspakket aan bod komen. Nadere informatie hierover is beschikbaar op de websites van de Commissie ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/social_provisions/driving_time/doc/swd-2012-270.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/professional_drivers/report_on_periodic_training_of_professional_drivers_nl.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009375/12
to the Commission
Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Tackling safety problems and unfair competition in road haulage

Is the Commission aware of the broadcast of 12 October 2012 'Explosief Transport' forming part of the ZEMBLA series, which concerned the transport of dangerous substances by drivers without adequate training?

To what extent is the Commission aware of cases in which drivers have been improperly issued with certificates for the transport of dangerous substances in all EU Member States?

What action will the Commission take to tackle this international problem and guarantee the safety of the transport of dangerous substances throughout the EU?

What action will the Commission take to improve compliance with, and enforcement of, the UNECE rules and the EU Directive on the transport of dangerous goods by road (ADR)?

Is the Commission aware of the practice whereby drivers in road haulage evade collective agreements on terms of employment by means of both legal and illegal arrangements such as setting up satellite establishments in EU Member States with lower wages and poorer social protection?

What action will the Commission take against this unfair competition in the transport industry?

Is the Commission aware that the Environment and Transport Inspectorate in the Netherlands checks only 1% of transport?

As guardian of the Treaties, will the Commission draft minimum requirements applicable to labour and safety inspections so that EC law in this field is implemented correctly?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

The issues raised by the Honourable Member relate to various pieces of EU road transport legislation. Apart from market access these rules also include rules on transport of dangerous goods, driver training and the use of tachograph. These rules are under constant evolution to enhance road safety, fair competition, safe working conditions.

The Commission established minimum requirements for controlling compliance with the EU rules in force. However, enforcement is the responsibility of Member States, who must take the measures to ensure that transport companies and professional drivers comply with these rules. Any infringements should be sanctioned in accordance with the national system of penalties, which are designed to be effective, proportional, dissuasive and non-discriminatory. Member States must report regularly to the Commission on the implementation of EC laws.

The Commission monitors implementation of these laws on the basis of the Member States' reports, which assess the effectiveness of the rules and gather the views of the industry. Enforcement issues are reviewed with Member States and social partners at regular meetings. If appropriate, the Commission takes the initiative to propose new legislation.

In 2013 the Commission plans an initiative on the road transport market. This initiative could include actions on the categorisation of serious infringements and on enhanced harmonised enforcement. Social standards could also be part of this legislative package.

Detailed information is available on the Commission's websites ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/social_provisions/driving_time/doc/swd-2012-270.pdf and http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/professional_drivers/report_on_periodic_training_of_professional_drivers_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009376/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Finanzielle Fragen in Bezug auf den WTO-Fall Boeing

Die EU hat die Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) Ende September 2009 um Erlaubnis ersucht, gegenüber den Vereinigten Staaten (USA) wegen unrechtmäßiger Subventionen an Boeing (der „Fall Boeing") Gegenmaßnahmen einzuführen. Die WTO hat die USA verurteilt und die EU befindet sich derzeit im Prozess der Einleitung von Gegenmaßnahmen. Die Kommission schätzt, dass die Durchsetzung von Sanktionen noch ein bis zwei Jahre dauern wird ([1]).

1. Wie hoch sind bisher die Ausgaben der EU im Zusammenhang mit diesem Fall (darunter Nachforschungen und Untersuchungen zum Fall, das WTO-Beschwerdeverfahren, die Vorbereitung von Sanktionen sowie zusätzliche Ausgaben)?

2. Kann die Kommission voraussagen, wie hoch die Kosten des weiteren Verfahrens für die EU sein werden?

3. Wer wird die Kosten tragen, die der EU durch das Verfahren entstanden sind, nachdem diese den Fall gegen die USA nun gewonnen hat?

4. Welchem Haushalt wird die Kommission die erlangten Mittel zuweisen, falls die US-Seite eine Geldbuße zahlen muss und/oder die EU Zollzugeständnisse aussetzt?

5. Wird die EU Schadenersatz für die der europäischen Wirtschaft mutmaßlich entstandenen Schäden erhalten sowie die Kosten für die Verfolgung des Falles im Namen der EU zurückerhalten können, falls die USA innerhalb von einem oder zwei Jahren in Bezug auf die illegalen Subventionen Abhilfe schaffen?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(5. Dezember 2012)

Der Antrag der EU auf Genehmigung zur Aussetzung von Zugeständnissen oder sonstigen Pflichten gegenüber den Vereinigten Staaten im Rahmen der Streitigkeit über die Subventionierung des Wirtschaftszweigs für zivile Großraumflugzeuge durch die USA („Boeing-Fall") wurde im September 2012 gestellt. Dieser Antrag ist zurzeit bis zum Abschluss des Einhaltungsverfahrens ausgesetzt.

Antwort zu den Punkten 1 und 2: Die Kommission rechnet nicht damit, dass die Boeing-Streitigkeit die EU beträchtlich mehr kostet als WTO-Streitigkeiten vergleichbarer Größenordnung. Eine detaillierte Schätzung der Kosten ist jedoch — auch wegen noch laufender Verfahren — nicht möglich.

Bezüglich Punkt 3 merkt die Kommission an, dass im Rahmen des Streitbeilegungsmechanismus der WTO jede Seite die eigenen Kosten trägt.

In Bezug auf Punkt 4 weist die Kommission darauf hin, dass der Streitbeilegungsmechanismus der WTO keine Geldbußen vorsieht. Wie sich Gegenmaßnahmen der EU im Haushalt auswirken, hängt davon ab, wie über die Aussetzung von Zugeständnissen oder sonstigen Pflichten im Einzelnen entschieden wird.

Antwort zu Punkt 5: Die Kommission merkt an, dass es im Rahmen des Streitbeilegungsmechanismus der WTO nicht möglich ist, Schadenersatz oder die Erstattung von Kosten zu verlangen, die WTO-Mitgliedern im Zuge von Streitbelegungsverfahren entstehen.

([1]) Europäische Kommission: Pressemitteilung IP/12/1036, „WTO-Fall Boeing: EU beantragt Einführung von Gegenmaßnahmen gegen USA".

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009376/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Financial issues regarding the WTO Boeing case

At the end of September 2009, the EU asked the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for the right to impose counter-measures against the United States (US) for illegally subsidising Boeing (the 'Boeing case'). The WTO ruled against the US and the EU is currently in the process of enacting counter-measures. The Commission estimates that the enforcement of sanctions will take one to two more years. ([1])

1. To date, what costs have been incurred by the EU in pursuing this case (including research and investigation of the case, the WTO complaint process, the preparation of sanctions, and any additional costs)?

2. Can the Commission predict how much the remainder of the process will cost the EU?

3. Now that the EU has won the case against the US, who will bear the costs incurred by the EU in pursuing the case?

4. If the US has to pay a penalty and/or the EU suspends tariff concessions, under which budget will the Commission allocate the funds thus gained?

5. If the US addresses the illegal subsidies within a year or two, will the EU be able to recover the damages estimated to have been inflicted upon the EU economy, as well as the costs of pursuing the case on behalf of the EU?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

The EU request for authorisation to suspend concessions or other obligations against the United States in the dispute concerning US subsidisation to its Large Civil aircraft industry (the 'Boeing case') dates from September 2012. This request is currently suspended pending the completion of the compliance proceedings.

In response to points 1. and 2. the Commission would not expect that the Boeing dispute entails significant additional costs to the EU compared to World Trade Organisation (WTO) disputes of similar magnitude.A detailed estimate of the costs is however not possible, also because there are ongoing proceedings.

With respect to point 3. the Commission notes that under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism each side bears its own costs.

Regarding point 4. the Commission would observe that the WTO dispute settlement mechansim does not provide for the imposition of penalties. The budgetary implications of the EU countermeasures would depend on the exact nature of the suspension of concessions and other obligtaions which are not yet decided.

In response to points 5. the Commission notes that under the WTO dispute settlement mechanism it is not possible to recover damages or to recover costs incurred by WTO members in pursuing disputes.

([1]) European Commission: Press Release IP/12/1036, 'WTO Boeing case: EU requests to impose countermeasures against the US'.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009377/12
an die Kommission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Antidumping-Klage von EU ProSun vom 25.7.2012 und Anti-Subventions-Klage der Initiative vom 25. September 2012

Infolge der chinesischen Importe und Dumpingpreise bei Solaranlagen müssen immer mehr europäische Photovoltaik-Hersteller Insolvenz anmelden bzw. Arbeitskräfte entlassen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund hat die Industrieinitiative EU ProSun am 25. Juli 2012 eine Anti-Dumping-Klage bei der Kommission eingereicht, die zum Ziel hat, die chinesischen Importe schnellstmöglich registrieren zu lassen und, sofern das Dumping bestätigt wird, auch rückwirkend Maßnahmen zu verhängen. Am 6. September 2012 hat die Europäische Kommission offiziell eine Anti-Dumping-Untersuchung eingeleitet, deren Ergebnis Mitte bis Ende 2013 zu erwarten ist.

Da die chinesische Solarbranche durch massive Subventionen unterstützt wird, die laut internationalen Handelsregeln wettbewerbswidrig sind, hat EU ProSun am 25. September 2012 zusätzlich eine Anti-Subventions-Klage eingereicht.

Mit jeder neuen Woche melden weitere Solarfirmen Insolvenz an oder streichen Arbeitsplätze, so dass EU ProSun die Kommission aufgefordert hat, das Verfahren zu beschleunigen und die Registrierung der Importe frühzeitig zu eröffnen.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Wie ist der aktuelle Sachstand in den oben genannten Verfahren?

2. Inwiefern kommt die Kommission der Aufforderung, das Anti-Dumping-Verfahren zu beschleunigen, nach?

3. Ist die Kommission bereit, vergleichbare Maßnahmen wie die US-Regierung zu ergreifen?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(14. Dezember 2012)

Die Kommission sammelt derzeit Informationen für ihre Untersuchung zu den Anträgen auf Einleitung eines Antidumpingverfahrens und eines Antisubventionsverfahrens betreffend Fotovoltaikmodule aus kristallinem Silicium. Angesichts der großen Zahl betroffener Parteien hat die Kommission Stichproben der ausführenden Hersteller in China sowie der Hersteller und Einführer in der Union gebildet und um Beantwortung spezieller Fragebogen gebeten. Anhand dieser Antworten wird die Kommission feststellen können, ob Dumping und Subventionierung stattfinden und ob der Wirtschaftszweig der Union dadurch geschädigt wird. Auch andere interessierte Parteien, etwa die Verwender (und im Falle der Antisubventionsuntersuchung auch die chinesische Regierung) wurden um Übermittlung von Informationen ersucht. Die Kommission wird die übermittelten Informationen analysieren und überprüfen, bevor sie ihre vorläufigen Feststellungen trifft, was bis zum 5. Juni 2013 (Antidumpinguntersuchung) bzw. bis zum 5. August 2013 (Antisubventionsuntersuchung) zu geschehen hat.

Die Kommission ist an die von der Welthandelsorganisation und dem EU-Recht gesetzten Verfahrensfristen gebunden. Innerhalb dieser Fristen wird sie so zügig wie möglich arbeiten. Wie rasch das Verfahren abgewickelt werden kann, wird von seiner Komplexität und seinem Umfang abhängen, außerdem muss gewährleistet sein, dass die Untersuchungen ordnungsgemäß und sorgfältig durchgeführt werden und alle interessierten Parteien ihre Verfahrensrechte wahrnehmen können.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009377/12
to the Commission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: EU ProSun complaints of 25 July 2012 concerning dumping and of 25 September 2012 concerning unfair subsidies

Imports from China of solar energy systems marketed at dumping prices are forcing more and more European manufacturers of photovoltaic equipment to declare insolvency or lay off workers.

Against this background, on 25 July 2012 the EU ProSun trade association lodged a complaint with the Commission urging it to begin keeping a formal record of Chinese imports as soon as possible and, if dumping is confirmed, to impose retroactive penalties. On 6 September 2012 the Commission officially opened an anti-dumping investigation, the results of which are expected in mid-to-late 2013.

On 25 September 2012, EU ProSun filed another complaint against the massive subsidies propping up the Chinese solar industry, which breach international trade rules by distorting competition.

Since every week sees another solar energy company forced to declare insolvency or make workers redundant, EU ProSun has called on the Commission to speed up the procedure and begin keeping a formal record of Chinese imports as a matter of urgency.

1. What stage has been reached in the aforementioned procedure?

2. How is the Commission responding to the call to speed up the procedure?

3. Is the Commission willing to take measures similar to those implemented by the US Administration?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The Commission is in the phase of collecting information for its investigation into the anti-dumping and anti-subsidy complaints on crystalline silicon photovoltaic modules. Given the great number of parties involved, the Commission has selected samples of exporting producers in China and producers and importers in the Union, and has requested that they reply to specific questionnaires. The results of this exercise will allow the Commission to establish whether dumping and subsidisation are taking place and whether this is causing injury to the EU industry. Other interested parties, like users (and also the Government of China in the subsidy case), are also requested to provide information. The information, once received, will be analysed and verified before any preliminary findings are made by 5 June 2013 for the anti-dumping investigation and by 5 August 2013 for the anti-subsidy investigation.

The Commission is bound by procedural deadlines imposed by the World Trade Organisation and EU legislation. Within those deadlines, the Commission will work as speedily as possible.The speed of the case will be determined by its complexity and size as well as by the need to carry out out the investigations properly and accurately and the requirement to ensure due process for all interested parties.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009378/12
an die Kommission
Christian Ehler (PPE)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Schaffung von Normen auf dem Gebiet der Computer- und Netzsicherheit

Das Thema „Computer- und Netzsicherheit" gewinnt zunehmend an Bedeutung in der Europäischen Union. Nach einigen groß angelegten Hackerangriffen auf mehrere Mitgliedstaaten wird von der Kommission gegenwärtig der Entwurf für eine Strategie zur Computer- und Netzsicherheit ausgearbeitet.

Die Aktivitäten im Bereich der Computer- und Netzsicherheit reichen von der Spionage über Verbrechen bis hin zur Kriegführung. Bei jeder dieser Aktivitäten gibt es eigene Beweggründe und Ziele.

Politische Reaktionen und Versuche der Standardisierung gestalten sich zunehmend schwieriger, da die Aktivitäten und Anwendungsbereiche weit gefächert sind.

Hat die Kommission einen Überblick darüber, ob es innerhalb der EU nationale Strategien auf dem Gebiet der Computer- und Netzsicherheit gibt?

Hat die Kommission bereits nationale Standards zur Computer- und Netzsicherheit auf europäischer und internationaler Ebene untersucht? Falls ja, könnte sie Ergebnisse und Schlussfolgerungen mitteilen?

Bis jetzt gibt es keine gemeinsame Stimme der EU in internationalen Normungsgremien auf dem Gebiet der Computer- und Netzsicherheit.

Wie plant die Kommission, diese Situation zu ändern? Wird sich die EU zukünftig mehr in die Normungsverfahren auf dem Gebiet der Computer- und Netzsicherheit einbringen?

Falls ja, wie?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(30. November 2012)

Die Kommission teilt die Meinung des Herrn Abgeordneten hinsichtlich der Bedeutung der Computer- und Netzsicherheit als maßgeblicher wirtschaftlicher und gesellschaftlicher Faktor für die EU und hält es für ausgesprochen wichtig, dass alle Mitgliedstaaten wirksame nationale Strategien für die Computer- und Netzsicherheit umsetzen. Eine Reihe von Mitgliedstaaten hat der Kommission bereits die Verabschiedung nationaler Strategien für die Computer- und Netzsicherheit mitgeteilt. Die meisten dieser Strategien sind auch öffentlich zugänglich und wurden ins Englische übersetzt. Sie decken verschiedene Aspekte der Cybersicherheit ab, einschließlich Prävention und Robustheit, Forschung, Bekämpfung von Cyberkriminalität, Verteidigung und außenpolitische Aspekte.

Im Hinblick auf die Normung hat die Kommission im Jahr 2011 einen Programmauftrag ([1]) (M/487) erteilt, mit dem ein Überblick über den Sachstand bei der sicherheitsbezogenen Normung in Europa im Allgemeinen gewonnen werden soll (Phase 1) und spezifische Programme der sicherheitsbezogenen Normung mit Fahrplänen für ausgewählte Bereiche der Sicherheit ausgearbeitet werden sollen (Phase 2). Aspekte der Robustheit von Computern und Netzen werden in diesem Zusammenhang behandelt. In seinem Abschlussbericht zur Phase 1 hat der Normenausschuss CEN/TC 391 „Sicherheit der Gesellschaft und der Bürger" unter anderem europäische und internationale Normen für die Sicherheit der Informations- und Kommunikationstechnik und einschlägige laufende Normungstätigkeiten ([2]) aufgeführt. Das Mandat sowie der Abschlussbericht wurden auf der CEN-Internetseite ([3]) veröffentlicht. Die bevorstehende EU-Strategie für die Cybersicherheit sollte sich außerdem eingehender mit der Frage der Normung befassen. In Anbetracht der Einrichtung der Koordinierungsgruppe für die Cybersicherheit von CEN, Cenelec und ETSI unter dem Vorsitz des Herrn Abgeordneten sieht die Kommission einem weiteren Austausch zu diesem wichtigen Thema mit Interesse entgegen, insbesondere mit Blick auf die internationale Normung.

([1]) Programmauftrag an CEN, Cenelec und ETSI zur Ausarbeitung von Normen für die Sicherheit.
([2]) ETSI OCG Sec, 3GPP, ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 27, ITU-T SG 17.
([3]) http://www.cen.eu/cen/Sectors/Sectors/Security%20and%20Defence/Security/Pages/default.aspx.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009378/12
to the Commission
Christian Ehler (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Cybersecurity standardisation

The topic of cybersecurity is becoming increasingly important within the EU. After some major cyberattacks on several Member States, a European cybersecurity strategy is currently being drafted by the Commission.

Cybersecurity activities range from cyberespionage to cybercrime and cyberwar. Each of these has its own motivations and goals.

Policy responses and attempts at standardisation are becoming increasingly difficult due to the wide range of activities and areas of focus.

Does the Commission have an overview on whether any national cybersecurity strategies exist within the EU?

Has the Commission already analysed national cybersecurity standards at European and international level? If so, please could it share the results and conclusions?

Until now, there has been no EU voice on international standardisation bodies in the area of cybersecurity. How does the Commission plan to change this situation? Will the EU become more engaged in cyberstandardisation processes in the future? If so, how?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's views on the importance of cyber-security as a major economic and societal driver for the EU and believes that it is of the utmost importance that all Member States adopt effective national cyber-security strategies. A number of Member States have already informed the Commission that they have adopted national cyber-security strategies. Most of those strategies are also publicly available and have been translated into English. Those strategies cover various aspects of cyber-security including prevention and resilience, research, the fight against cybercrime, defence and its external dimension.

Regarding standardisation, in 2011 the Commission has issued a Programming Mandate ([1]) (M/487), aiming at providing an overview on the state of play in security standardisation in Europe in general (Phase 1), and at developing specific security standardisation programmes with roadmaps for selected security sectors (Phase 2). Cyber resilience aspects will be taken up in this context. In its final report of Phase 1, CEN/TC 391 'Societal and citizen security', among others, has identified European and international standards on ICT security, and relevant, ongoing activities ([2]). The mandate as well as this final report have been published on the website of CEN ([3]). Moreover, the forthcoming EU Cyber Security Strategy should further address the issue of standardisation. Finally, with the creation of the CEN, CENELEC and ETSI Cybersecurity Coordination Group (CSCG), which is chaired by the Honourable Member, the Commission is looking forward to further interaction on this important issue, with a particular view on international standardisation.

([1]) Programming Mandate addressed to CEN, CENELEC and ETSI to establish security standards.
([2]) ETSI OCG Sec, 3GPP, ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 27, ITU-T SG 17.
([3]) http://www.cen.eu/cen/Sectors/Sectors/Security%20and%20Defence/Security/Pages/default.aspx.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009379/12
προς το Συμβούλιο
Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κλιμακώνεται η επιθετικότητα του ισραηλινού κράτους ενάντια στον παλαιστινιακό λαό

Η επιθετικότητα του ισραηλινού κράτους ενάντια στον παλαιστινιακό λαό και η προκλητική αδιαλλαξία του απέναντι στο δίκαιο αγώνα του για τον τερματισμό της κατοχής και τη δημιουργία ανεξάρτητου, βιώσιμου και κυρίαρχου Παλαιστινιακού κράτους, εκδηλώθηκε ακόμη μία φορά με την ομιλία του Ισραηλινού πρωθυπουργού Μπ. Νετανιάχου, στην πρόσφατη Γενική Συνέλευση του ΟΗΕ, έχοντας τη στήριξη των ΗΠΑ και της ΕΕ.

Η εγκληματική δράση του ισραηλινού στρατού κατοχής κλιμακώνεται με δολοφονικές επιθέσεις ενάντια στον παλαιστινιακό λαό στη Λωρίδα της Γάζας και στα άλλα παλαιστινιακά εδάφη.

Οι ιμπεριαλιστικοί ανταγωνισμοί αυξάνουν τους κινδύνους γενικευμένου πολέμου, με ολέθριες συνέπειες για τους λαούς της ευρύτερης περιοχής.

Στο έδαφος αυτών των ανταγωνισμών, η ΕΕ αναβαθμίζει συστηματικά τις πολιτικές, οικονομικές, εμπορικές αλλά και τις στρατιωτικές της σχέσεις με το Ισραήλ, τόσο στα πλαίσια της Συμφωνίας Σύνδεσης ΕΕ-Ισραήλ, όσο και της ένταξης του Ισραήλ στο χώρο του Ενιαίου Ευρωπαϊκού Ουρανού.

Με πρόσφατη απόφαση του Συμβουλίου της ΕΕ συνάφθηκε πρωτόκολλο που προσαρτάται στην Ευρωμεσογειακή Συμφωνία Σύνδεσης μεταξύ των Ευρωπαϊκών Κοινοτήτων και του Ισραήλ, με το οποίο τα προϊόντα που παράγονται στα κατεχόμενα παλαιστινιακά εδάφη να εξάγονται ως ισραηλινά προϊόντα στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ.

Η συμφωνία αυτή ΕΕ-Ισραήλ ουσιαστικά αποτελεί ευθεία αναγνώριση και νομιμοποίηση της ισραηλινής κατοχής και των εγκλημάτων σε βάρος του παλαιστινιακού λαού.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

Προτίθεται να συνεχίσει αυτή την πολιτική στήριξης του Ισραήλ σε βάρος του παλαιστινιακού λαού και του δίκαιου αγώνα του, για τον τερματισμό της ισραηλινής κατοχής και τη δημιουργία ανεξάρτητου, βιώσιμου και κυρίαρχου παλαιστινιακού κράτους, στα σύνορα του 1967, με πρωτεύουσα την Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ, για το γκρέμισμα του απαράδεκτου τείχους, την απελευθέρωση των παλαιστινίων πολιτικών κρατουμένων στο Ισραήλ και το δικαίωμα επιστροφής όλων των παλαιστίνιων προσφύγων στις εστίες τους, με βάση τις σχετικές αποφάσεις του ΟΗΕ;

Απάντηση
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Η θέση της ΕΕ σχετικά με την ειρηνευτική διαδικασία στη Μέση Ανατολή καθορίζεται στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου της 14ης Μαΐου 2012, όπως συμπληρώθηκαν με τα συμπεράσματα της 19ης Νοεμβρίου 2012 και της 10ης Δεκεμβρίου 2012.

Η ΕΕ έχει εκφράσει τη δέσμευσή της για μια λύση που προβλέπει τη δημιουργία δύο κρατών και πιστεύει ότι οι συνεχιζόμενες εξελίξεις στον αραβικό κόσμο καθιστούν επιτακτικότερη την ανάγκη προόδου της ειρηνευτική διαδικασίας στην Μέση Ανατολή. Η εκπλήρωση των προσδοκιών των λαών της περιοχής, τόσο των Παλαιστινίων για απόκτηση κράτους, όσο και των Ισραηλινών για ασφάλεια, αποτελεί κρίσιμο στοιχείο για μόνιμη ειρήνη, σταθερότητα και ευημερία στην περιοχή.

Η επίλυση της σύγκρουσης συνάδει προς το καίριο συμφέρον τόσο της ΕΕ όσο και των ίδιων των μερών και της ευρύτερης περιοχής και μπορεί να επιτευχθεί μέσω μιας συνολικής ειρηνευτικής συμφωνίας, βασισμένης στις συναφείς αποφάσεις του Συμβουλίου Ασφαλείας των Ηνωμένων Εθνών, τις αρχές της Μαδρίτης — περιλαμβανομένης της αρχής «έδαφος για την ειρήνη» — τον οδικό χάρτη, τις συμφωνίες που επιτεύχθηκαν προηγουμένως από τα μέρη και την Αραβική Ειρηνευτική Πρωτοβουλία. Η ΕΕ υπενθυμίζει την εφαρμογή του διεθνούς ανθρωπιστικού δικαίου στα κατεχόμενα Παλαιστινιακά εδάφη, περιλαμβανομένης της εφαρμογής της τέταρτης Σύμβασης της Γενεύης περί προστασίας των πολιτών εν καιρώ πολέμου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009379/12
to the Council
Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Escalating aggression of the Israeli State towards the Palestinian people

The aggression of the Israeli State towards the Palestinian people and its provocative intolerance of its just struggle to end the occupation and create an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State has once again found expression in a speech given by Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu at the recent UN General Assembly. It was supported by the US and the EU.

The criminal actions of the Israeli army of occupation have culminated in murderous attacks against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the other Palestinian territories.

Imperialist rivalries increase the risks of a generalized war, with devastating consequences for the peoples of the region as a whole.

Against the backcloth of these rivalries, the EU is systematically upgrading political, economic, commercial and military relations with Israel, both within the framework of the EU-Israel Association Agreement and by including Israel in the Single European Sky.

A recent decision of the EU Council concluded a Protocol which has been annexed to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement between the European Communities and Israel, under which products produced in the occupied Palestinian territories can be exported as Israeli products to EU Member States.

This EU-Israel agreement essentially constitutes a straightforward recognition and legitimization to the Israeli occupation and its crimes against the Palestinian people.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

Will it pursue this policy in support of Israel against the Palestinian people and its just struggle for an end to the Israeli occupation and the establishment of an independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, for the removal of the unacceptable wall, for the release of Palestinian political prisoners in Israel and for the right of return of all Palestinian refugees to their homes, on the basis of the relevant UN resolutions?

Reply
(16 January 2013)

The EU position on the Middle East Peace Process is set out in the Council conclusions of 14 May 2012, completed by those of 19 November 2012 and 10 December 2012.

The EU is committed to a two-state solution and convinced that the ongoing changes across the Arab world make the need for progress on the Middle East peace process all the more urgent. Heeding the aspirations of the people in the region, including those of Palestinians for statehood and those of Israelis for security is a crucial element for lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

Ending the conflict is a fundamental interest of the EU as well as of the parties themselves and the wider region, and it can be achieved through a comprehensive peace agreement, based on the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the Madrid principles including land for peace, the Roadmap, the agreements previously reached by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative. The EU recalls the applicability of international humanitarian law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilians.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-009380/12
a Bizottság számára
Bánki Erik (PPE)
(2012. október 16.)

Tárgy: A parlagfűre vonatkozó kísérleti projektek

A közönséges parlagfű nemzetközileg igen elterjedt, és az egyre melegedő éghajlat következtében folyamatosan nagyobb és nagyobb területeket hódít meg. Az egyre növekvő pollenszint mintegy 50-60 millió európai polgár egészségére ártalmas, és súlyos közegészségügyi problémává vált az EU-ban, óriási költségeket és károkat okozva különösen egyes közép- és kelet-európai országokban, például Magyarországon.

Tájékoztatást tudna-e adni a Bizottság az alábbi kísérleti projektekről, amelyeket a Parlament kezdeményezett és a 2010-es uniós költségvetésben szerepeltek?

1. A közönséges parlagfű terjedésének és hatásainak értékelése és ellenőrzése Európában (HL 2010/S 137-210135. sz. ajánlati felhívás); valamint

2. A parlagfű terjedésének ellenőrzésére szolgáló módszerekre és a virágpor-allergiára vonatkozó komplex kutatási kísérleti projekt (támogatás).

Rendelkezésre állnak-e már a fent említett projektek teljesítményére/eredményeire vonatkozó adatok? Amennyiben igen, melyek ezek?

A fenti projektek eredményei alapján milyen további lépésekre készül a Bizottság a parlagfű által okozott súlyos közegészségügyi probléma kezelése érdekében?

Janez Potočnik válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2012. december 4.)

A parlagfű terjedésének ellenőrzésére szolgáló módszerek és a virágpor-allergia komplex kutatására vonatkozóan megrendelt kísérleti projekt (07.0322/2011/586608/ETU/B2) a közelmúltban zárult le, és eredményei hamarosan elérhetővé válnak a Környezetvédelmi Főigazgatóság honlapján. ([1])

A közönséges parlagfű európai terjedésének megállítására alkalmas módszerek komplex kutatása (07.0322/2010/586350/SUB/B2) még folyamatban van, és várhatóan 2014 derekára fejeződik be. A projekt lezárultát követően eredményei közzétételre kerülnek.

Foglalkozik a témával a hetedik kutatási és technológiafejlesztési keretprogram (FP7, 2007-2013) egyik kutatási projektje is: az ATOPICA projekt ([2]), amely az éghajlatváltozásnak és a levegő minőségének a virágpor-allergiákra gyakorolt hatásait vizsgálja, elsősorban a parlagfűre koncentrálva. A projekt szakmai ajánlásokat fog megfogalmazni a parlagfű-invázió visszaszorítására irányuló szakpolitikai kezdeményezések megalapozásához 2014-től kezdődően.

A Bizottság az EU biológiai sokféleséggel kapcsolatos, 2020-ig teljesítendő stratégiájának ([3]) megfelelően az invazív fajok okozta problémák kezelését célzó jogszabályok megerősítésére vonatkozó javaslatok készítésekor támaszkodik a tanulmányok eredményeire.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm
([2]) http://www.atopica.eu.
([3]) COM(2011) 244 végleges.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009380/12
to the Commission
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Pilot projects on ragweed

Common ragweed is widespread internationally and is constantly spreading into an even wider area, assisted by an increasingly mild climate. Increasing levels of pollen are harming the health of some 50-60 million European citizens and have become a serious public health problem in the EU, generating enormous costs and damage, especially in some central and eastern European countries such as Hungary.

Can the Commission provide information on the following pilot projects initiated by Parliament and included in the 2010 EU budget:

1. Assessing and controlling the spread and the effects of common ragweed in Europe (call for tender OJ 2010/S 137-210135); and

2. Pilot project on complex research on the methods of controlling the spread of ragweed and pollen allergies (grant).

Are the deliverables/results of the above projects already available? If so, what are they?

Based on the findings of these projects, what further steps/initiatives is the Commission planning to take in order to tackle the serious public health problem caused by ragweed?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The Study Contract 'Pilot project on complex research on the methods of controlling the spread of ragweed and pollen allergies' (07.0322/2011/586608/ETU/B2) was recently finalised and all deliverables will be made available on the DG ENV website soon ([1]).

The Grant 'Complex research on methods to halt the Ambrosia invasion in Europe' (07.0322/2010/586350/SUB/B2) is ongoing and is expected to be finalised by mid-2014. Deliverables will be shared after finalisation of the project.

An additional and related project, under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013), is the project ATOPICA ([2]), which is investigating the effects of climate change and air quality on pollen-induced allergies, focusing on ragweed. The project will deliver policy-relevant guidance to combat Ambrosia invasion as of 2014.

The Commission is using the results of the Study Contract in its proposals to strengthen legislation to tackle the problems caused by invasive species, as outlined in the communication on an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm
([2]) http://www.atopica.eu.
([3]) COM(2011)244 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009381/12
alla Commissione
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(16 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Aggiornamento elenco ausili medici

Vi sono diversi strumenti e apparecchiature tecnologiche, come ad esempio respiratori, carrozzine, deambulatori e materassi anti-decubito, che sono necessari per determinate categorie di pazienti, e che in Italia sono quindi garantiti dal Servizio Sanitario Nazionale.

Il Nomenclatore tariffario contiene l'elenco completo di questi strumenti, ma il suo ultimo aggiornamento risale a ben 13 anni or sono (Decreto n. 332/99 del Ministero della Salute); in teoria dovevano esservi adeguamenti periodici a scadenza massima triennale, ma quest'obbligo è stato completamente disatteso e la sua revisione ulteriormente rinviata.

La tecnologia in detto ambito si evolve in maniera piuttosto rapida, e i pazienti che necessitano di questi ausili si trovano di fronte a una difficile scelta, ovvero utilizzare strumenti obsoleti oppure dover pagare di tasca propria la differenza per poter usufruire di migliori servizi. A volte questa possibilità di scelta non viene neppure concessa, in quanto nel Nomenclatore sono completamente assenti alcune nuove innovazioni.

I continui tagli in ambito sanitario costringono inoltre molte ASL a cercare sul mercato i prodotti al minor costo, che spesso sono anche però di qualità scadente, come ad esempio molte carrozzine prodotte in Estremo Oriente.

Questi nuovi dispositivi non si caratterizzano per essere dei prototipi specifici, ma solamente delle innovazioni entrate oramai nell'uso comune in ambito sanitario.

1. Alla luce di tutto questo, quali misure può attuare la Commissione per cercare di risolvere questa situazione, lesiva dell'autonomia e della partecipazione di questi pazienti a una normale vita sociale e lavorativa?

2. Esiste a livello europeo un coordinamento per lo scambio delle migliori pratiche e tecniche innovative in ambito di dispositivi medici e sanitari?

3. Non ritiene la Commissione inoltre doveroso favorire una più ampia diffusione in Europa dei migliori strumenti attualmente disponibili?

Risposta di Maroš Šefčovič a nome della Commissione
(22 novembre 2012)

La problematica sollevata dall'onorevole deputato rientra nelle responsabilità degli Stati membri poiché, conformemente all'articolo 168 del trattato, l'azione dell'Unione rispetta le responsabilità degli Stati membri per la definizione della loro politica sanitaria e per l'organizzazione e la fornitura di servizi sanitari e di assistenza medica. In queste responsabilità rientra la gestione dei servizi sanitari e dell'assistenza sanitaria e lo stanziamento di risorse a tal fine.

La Commissione ritiene tuttavia importante identificare e condividere informazioni sulle innovazioni che intervengono nell'ambito degli ausili medici. La Commissione organizza perciò riunioni regolari in tema di tecnologie nuove e emergenti laddove le parti interessate, come ad esempio le autorità nazionali competenti, l'industria degli ausili medici, gli organismi notificati e gli organismi di normazione, possono scambiare i loro punti di vista e condividere le loro esperienze sui dispositivi innovativi che arrivano sul mercato europeo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009381/12
to the Commission
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Updating of list of medical devices

There are a number of instruments and pieces of technological equipment, such as respirators, wheelchairs, walking frames and anti-bedsore mattresses, which are necessary for certain categories of patient and which are therefore provided by the national health service in Italy.

The *Nomenclatore tariffario* (official list of NHS tariffs) includes a full list of these instruments, but it was last updated 13 years ago (by Ministry of Health Decree No 332/99). In theory, there were supposed to be regular adjustments, every three years at the most, but this requirement has been completely ignored and the revision of the decree further postponed.

Technology in this field is evolving fairly rapidly and patients who need these devices are faced with a difficult choice — either having to use outdated devices or having to pay the difference out of their own pockets in order to receive better services. Sometimes they do not even have that choice, as some new innovations are not even included on the official list.

The continuing health service cuts are also forcing many local health authorities (ASL) to seek lower-cost products on the market, but these are also often of poor quality, such as many wheelchairs that are manufactured in the Far East.

These new devices are not specific prototypes but are simply innovations that have now become commonplace in the health sector.

1. In the light of the above, what measures can the Commission take to try to resolve this situation, which is undermining the autonomy of these patients and preventing them from having a normal social and working life?

2. Is there, at EU level, any coordination with regard to the exchange of best practices and innovative techniques in the field of medical and health devices?

3. Does the Commission not think it should facilitate a wider dissemination in Europe of the best instruments currently available?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2012)

The matters raised by the Honourable Member fall under Member States' responsibilities since, in accordance with Article 168 of the Treaty, the Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. These responsibilities include the management of health services and medical care and the allocation of the resources assigned to them.

Nevertheless, the Commission believes it is important to identify and share information on innovation in the area of medical devices. The Commission therefore organises regular meetings on new and emerging technologies where interested parties such as national Competent Authorities, the medical device industry, Notified Bodies and standardisation bodies can exchange views and share expertise on innovative devices coming onto the European market.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009382/12
do Rady
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(16 października 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Środki finansowe z Pokojowej Nagrody Nobla

Wczoraj Unia Europejska otrzymała Pokojową Nagrodę Nobla za „budowanie pokoju na kontynencie, działania na rzecz praw człowieka oraz demokracji". W tym roku kwota, jaką został uhonorowany laureat wynosi 931 tys. euro.

Przypominam, że jednym z tegorocznych kandydatów był Aleś Bialacki, dzielny białoruski opozycjonista, który za swoją działalność odsiaduje wyrok 4 i pół roku więzienia.

Zwracam się z pytaniem, czy Rada nie uważa, że środki związane z przyznaniem nagrody mogłyby być przyznane na pomoc białoruskiemu społeczeństwu.

W skali budżetu Unii kwota niespełna miliona euro jest nieznacząca, natomiast gdyby przeznaczyć ją na wsparcie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego na Białorusi miałaby wymierne znaczenie i na pewno przyczyniła się do zniknięcia z mapy Europy ostatniej klasycznej dyktatury. To wstyd, że u granic Unii Europejskiej nadal rządzi dyktator.

Odpowiedź
(10 grudnia 2012 r.)

W dniu 15 października do Rady dotarła zaszczytna wiadomość, że Pokojową Nagrodę Nobla przyznano Unii Europejskiej, w uznaniu jej działań służących pojednaniu, demokracji, propagowaniu praw człowieka oraz rozpowszechnianiu pokoju i stabilności na cały kontynent. Rada podkreśliła wtedy, że nagroda jest też wyrazem uznania dla bezprecedensowego – w historii i w świecie – przedsięwzięcia w dziedzinie regionalnej, obejmującej coraz większy obszar integracji, dzięki której dawniej wrogie państwa są dziś zjednoczone w przyjaźni wokół pewnych zasadniczych wartości. Rada zobowiązała się, że nadal będzie niestrudzenie pracować na rzecz pokoju i propagowania podstawowych praw i wartości oraz że postara się, by jej działania zewnętrzne były bardziej spójne, całościowe i skuteczne.

Rada nie omawiała kwestii środków finansowych z Pokojowej Nagrody Nobla.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009382/12
to the Council
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Funds from the Nobel Peace Prize

Yesterday the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 'advancing peace, human rights and democracy on the continent'. This year the prize money awarded to the winner amounts to EUR 931 000.

One of this year's candidates was Ales Bialiatski, a courageous Belarusian opposition activist who is serving a four-and-a-half-year prison term for his activities.

Does the Council not think that the prize money from this award could be allocated to help Belarusian society?

Compared with the EU budget, the sum of less than a million euros is insignificant, yet spent in support of civil society in Belarus it would have a substantial impact and help to remove the last old-style dictatorship from the map of Europe. It is a disgrace that a dictator remains in power at the very border of the European Union.

Reply
(10 December 2012)

On 15 October, the Council welcomed the historic award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union in recognition of its work on reconciliation, democracy, promotion of human rights and in enlarging the area of peace and stability across the continent. The Council underlined that the prize also recognises the historically and globally unique project of regional integration and enlargement in Europe, where former enemies today are united as friends around a core set of values. The Council undertook to continue to work tirelessly for peace and in the promotion of fundamental rights and values and to strive to make its external action more coherent, comprehensive and effective.

The Council has not discussed the issue of funds from the Nobel Peace Prize.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009383/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(16 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Attacchi informatici iraniani contro obiettivi negli Stati Uniti e nel Golfo persico

In base ai rapporti pubblicati il 15 ottobre 2012, gli Stati Uniti avrebbero accusato la Repubblica islamica dell'Iran di lanciare attacchi informatici contro istituti finanziari statunitensi, nonché contro Aramco, la più grande società petrolifera al mondo, e RasGas, azienda qatariana produttrice di gas.

Secondo quanto riportato dal *Sunday Times*, il segretario della difesa statunitense, Leon Panetta, avrebbe dichiarato che il Pentagono intende intervenire con misure offensive nei confronti degli autori di tali attacchi, in modo da scongiurare una nuova «Pearl Harbour informatica». L'amministrazione USA è convinta che dietro l'atto, che ha colpito 30 000 computer presso Aramco, vi sia l'Iran. Secondo Leon Panetta si tratterebbe «probabilmente dell'attacco più distruttivo che abbia mai colpito il settore privato». Gli attacchi alle società finanziarie statunitensi si sono manifestati sotto forma di interruzioni del servizio, in quanto le reti sono state invase da messaggi generati da computer.

Mahdi Akhavan Bahabadi, segretario del centro nazionale iraniano del ciberspazio, ha negato il coinvolgimento dell'Iran negli attacchi. Ciononostante, si ritiene che gli attacchi siano stati lanciati in risposta alle sanzioni promosse dagli Stati Uniti e al worm digitale Stuxnet impiegato per paralizzare gli impianti nucleari iraniani.

1. In relazione a quanto suesposto, ritiene il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante che gli attacchi informatici lanciati dalla repubblica islamica abbiano colpito anche società europee?

2. Secondo la valutazione del Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante, in che misura gli interessi europei sono vulnerabili alla minaccia di attacchi informatici orchestrati dall'Iran?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(14 dicembre 2012)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton non è a conoscenza di attacchi informatici iraniani contro società europee. Al momento, la Commissione non intende fare congetture su disposizioni in materia di sicurezza adottate da società europee per difendersi da possibili attacchi informatici organizzati dallo Stato.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009383/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Iranian cyber attacks on US and Persian Gulf targets

According to reports published on 15 October 2012, the United States has accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of launching cyber attacks on US financial institutions, as well as on the world's largest oil company, Aramco, and on the Qatari gas company RasGas.

The *Sunday Times* reports US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta as saying that the Pentagon would move aggressively against perpetrators of such attacks to ward off a 'cyber-Pearl Harbour'. The US Administration is convinced that Iran was behind an attack that affected 30 000 computers belonging to Aramco. Mr Panetta said that this is 'probably the most destructive attack that the private sector has seen to date'. US financial firms have suffered from 'denial of service' attacks, as networks are swamped by computer-generated messages.

The secretary of Iran's National Centre of Cyberspace, Mahdi Akhavan Bahabadi, has denied Iranian involvement in the attacks. This notwithstanding, the attacks are believed to be in retaliation for US-led sanctions and for the Stuxnet computer worm used to cripple Iran's nuclear facilities.

1. In regard to the above, does the Vice-President/High Representative believe that any European companies have been affected by cyber attacks launched by the Islamic Republic?

2. According to the assessment of the Vice-President/High Representative, how vulnerable are European interests to the threat of Iranian-orchestrated cyber attacks?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The HR/VP is not aware of European companies having been targeted by Iranian cyber attacks. At this stage, the Commission does not intend to speculate with regard to security arrangements put in place by EU companies against possible state-lead cyber attacks.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009384/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(16 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Insegnanti thailandesi nel mirino dei ribelli

Il 10 ottobre 2012 Human Rights Watch (HRW) ha riferito che, nelle province meridionali della Thailandia, gruppi di ribelli starebbero mettendo in atto attacchi deliberatamente rivolti a insegnanti e istituti scolastici. Alcuni gruppi, quali i separatisti di Pattani, selezionano questi obiettivi in quanto simboli dello Stato thailandese buddista.

Il 24 settembre 2012 i presunti ribelli avrebbero fatto esplodere un ordigno all'ingresso di una scuola nel distretto di Bacho, nella provincia di Narathiwat, dove era in corso una riunione di dirigenti scolastici. Il 9 agosto 2012 è stata fatta esplodere una bomba all'interno di una scuola nel distretto di Su-ngai Padi, nella medesima provincia. La regione, la cui popolazione è in predominanza di etnia Malay e di fede musulmana, ha assistito al proliferarsi di questi attacchi dopo l'esplosione delle violenze nel gennaio 2004. Nell'arco di otto anni, i ribelli hanno dato alle fiamme più di 300 istituti scolastici statali, mentre numerosi insegnanti hanno subito imboscate mentre si recavano a scuola o sono stati uccisi nelle loro classi. Anche gli studenti sono stati al centro di brutali attacchi e sono rimasti feriti durante gli attentati dei ribelli contro il personale di sicurezza.

Secondo quanto riferito dal portavoce di HRW, «i gruppi separatisti utilizzano questi attacchi per dare prova del loro potere e screditare le autorità thailandesi, ma a farne le spese sono la gente comune e i loro bambini. Gli attentati alle scuole sembrano rientrare in un progetto più ampio da parte dei ribelli, che sfrutterebbero la violenza e il terrore per spingere i thailandesi buddhisti fuori dalle province meridionali e tenere i musulmani locali sotto il loro controllo.»

1. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante al corrente dei deliberati attacchi a scuole e insegnanti da parte dei gruppi di ribelli thailandesi nelle province meridionali del paese?

2. Ha discusso il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante la questione con il primo ministro thailandese Yingluck Shinawatra?

3. Quali misure concrete intende adottare il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante a sostegno degli insegnanti, degli studenti e degli istituti scolastici presi di mira dai gruppi di ribelli?

4. Eroga attualmente l'Unione europea una qualche forma di assistenza specifica?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(12 dicembre 2012)

L'Unione europea segue con apprensione il conflitto in Thailandia del sud e trova particolarmente allarmante la recrudescenza di violenza degli ultimi mesi.

L'Unione collabora con le autorità e altre parti in causa per contribuire a trovare una soluzione. Il governo deve garantire protezione a quanti sono nel mirino dei ribelli ma la soluzione militare non basta a dare sicurezza alle popolazione nel lungo termine. Per una pace duratura nella regione occorrono soluzioni politiche. Un certo grado di decentramento potrebbe risolvere in parte il problema se accompagnato da altre riforme politiche che ripristinino la giustizia e garantiscano alle comunità Malay maggiore risonanza culturale e più accesso all'istruzione.

L'Unione finanzia attualmente una serie di attività per dare voce alla società civile, favorire il dialogo tra le comunità buddiste e musulmane e promuovere lo sviluppo socio-economico nella Thailandia del sud.

Il presidente Barroso e l'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente hanno affrontato la questione della rivolta nella Thailandia del sud con il premier tailandese Yingluck in occasione delle loro recenti visite nel paese, rispettivamente a novembre e aprile 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009384/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Thai teachers targeted by insurgents

On 10 October 2012, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that in the southern provinces of Thailand insurgent groups are carrying out attacks that deliberately target teachers and schools. Groups such as Patani Independence Fighters choose these targets as they are viewed as symbols of the Thai Buddhist state.

On 24 September 2012, alleged insurgents detonated a bomb at the entrance of a school in the Bacho district of Narathiwat Province, where a meeting of school directors was being held. On 9 August 2012, a bomb was detonated inside a school in the Su-ngai Padi district in the same province. Such attacks became common after violence broke out in January 2004 in this predominantly ethnic Malay and Muslim region. Insurgents have set fire to more than 300 government schools in eight years, and teachers have been ambushed on their way to school or killed in their classrooms. Students have also fallen victim to brutal attacks, and been wounded in insurgent attacks targeting security personnel.

According to one HRW representative, 'separatist groups use these attacks to demonstrate their power and discredit Thai authorities, but it is ordinary people and their children who are suffering. These attacks on schools seem to be part of a larger campaign by insurgents to use violence and terror to drive Buddhist Thais out of the southern provinces and keep local Muslims under their control.'

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the deliberate targeting of schools and teachers by Thai insurgent groups in the country's southern provinces?

2. Has the Vice-President/High Representative discussed this issue with Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra?

3. What are some practical steps that the Vice-President/High Representative is prepared to take to support teachers, students and schools targeted by insurgent groups?

4. Is the EU currently providing any form of assistance in this regard?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The EU follows the conflict in Southern Thailand with concern. The EU is particularly alarmed by the surge of violence in the past few months.

The EU is engaged with the authorities and other stakeholders in addressing the issue. While the protection of all those targeted by the insurgents should be a priority for the Thai government, military solutions alone cannot provide security to the population over the long term. Sustainable peace in the region can be only guaranteed through political means. A degree of devolution may go a long way, if it is coupled with other political reforms aimed at restoring justice and providing a wider cultural and educational space for Malay communities.

The EU is currently funding a number of activities with a view to strengthening the voice of civil society, fostering dialogue between Buddhist and Muslim communities, and promoting social and economic development in Southern Thailand.

President Barroso and the HR/VP raised the matter of the insurgency in Southern Thailand with Prime Minister Yingluck during their recent visits to the country in November and April 2012 respectively.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-009385/12
Komisi
Evelyn Regner (S&D), Richard Falbr (S&D), Zita Gurmai (S&D), Jutta Steinruck (S&D) a Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(16. října 2012)

Předmět: Certifikace pečovatelů

Přibližně 72 % všech pečovatelů zaregistrovaných v Rakousku našlo zaměstnání přes agentury. Při poskytování těchto služeb se mnoho zprostředkovatelů a agentur uchyluje k nespravedlivým či dokonce mafiánským praktikám. Například od pečovatelů vyžadují pravidelné (měsíční) platby, ačkoliv jim zprostředkovatelskou službu poskytli jen jednorázově. Nelegální smlouvy s pečovateli nejsou výjimkou, v mnoha případech jsou jim vnuceny nátlakem, vydíráním, dochází i ke zpronevěře finančních prostředků, předstírané samostatně výdělečné činnosti, porušování smluvního práva a v některých případech dokonce i k porušování základních práv. ([1])

Jednou z možností, jak čelit tomuto problému, je zavést osvědčení pro pečovatelskou službu, která by se vztahovala jak na pečovatele, tak na zprostředkovatele a agentury. Taková osvědčení jsou jednak zárukou kvality z hlediska odborného, jazykového a právního a zároveň zlepšují situaci pečovatelů i těch, jimž je péče poskytována. Kromě toho napomáhají vytvářet nové pracovní příležitosti pro pečovatele a lektory jazyků. Taková osvědčení, která jsou vydávána v Rakousku i u jeho východních sousedů orgánem VOSBP ([2]), jsou užitečným a nezbytným opatřením, jehož posláním je chránit pracující i pacienty, bojovat proti nezaměstnanosti a kriminální činnosti, zlepšovat situaci na vnitřním trhu a snižovat administrativní náklady.

1. Je si Komise vědoma výše popsaného nebezpečí a má přístup k celounijním průzkumům tohoto jevu?

2. Jak Komise tento nástroj v dané situaci hodnotí?

3. Zvažuje Komise zavedení a podporu takových osvědčení po celé Unii?

4. Zvažuje Komise vzhledem k přeshraniční povaze této problematiky přijmout v této oblasti nějaká opatření?

Odpověď komisaře Andora jménem Komise
(12. prosince 2012)

Komisi je známo, že v některých členských státech mnohé rodiny využívají k péči o své starší příbuzné nehlášené migrující pracovníky ([3]). Nejisté postavení takových pečovatelů znamená, že mohou být více ohroženi protiprávním jednáním, a rovněž by mohlo vést k nedostatečné kvalitě poskytované péče. Neexistuje však žádný celoevropský průzkum věnovaný této problematice.

V členských státech, které zavedly přímou či nepřímou finanční podporu pro poskytování zdravotnické péče, často existuje systém pro uznávání kvalifikací a/nebo osvědčení. Každý členský stát čelí poněkud rozdílným problémům a je jejich odpovědností, aby prosazovaly platné předpisy k ochraně pečovatelů i těch, jimž je péče poskytována. Rakouský systém, o němž se zmiňují vážení páni poslanci, by však mohl zajímat jiné členské státy a mohl by být představen v souvislosti s přezkumnými činnostmi prováděnými pod dohledem Výboru pro sociální ochranu.

Komise nemá v úmyslu zavést osvědčení na celoevropské úrovni, mohla by však podporovat výměnu informací mezi členskými státy, pokud jde o otázky, jež by se prostřednictvím systémů osvědčení mohly řešit.

Komise bude jednat tehdy, vyskytne-li se mezera v právních předpisech EU, zejména pokud jde o právo pečovatelů z jiných členských států na volný pohyb. V pracovním programu Komise na rok 2013 se plánuje zřízení evropské platformy o nehlášené práci. Jejím cílem by mělo být posílit spolupráci a výměnu informací i osvědčených postupů na úrovni EU mezi různými donucovacími orgány, tak aby se dospělo k účinnějšímu a soudržnějšímu přístupu k boji proti nehlášené práci.

([1]) Příkladem nepřiměřených smluvních podmínek jsou nezákonná ustanovení, která opatrovníkům i pacientům zakazují hovořit o detailech smlouvy.
([2]) Verband österreichischer selbstständiger Betreuer und Pfleger.
([3]) Pracovní dokument útvarů Komise o využití potenciálu osobních služeb a služeb pro domácnost v oblasti zaměstnanosti, SWD(2012) 95 final ze dne 18. dubna 2012.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009385/12
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D), Richard Falbr (S&D), Zita Gurmai (S&D), Jutta Steinruck (S&D) und Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Zertifikate für Personenbetreuer

Etwa 72 % aller in Österreich registrierten Personenbetreuer finden mittels Agenturen einen Arbeitsplatz. Beim Erbringen solcher Dienstleistungen wenden viele Agenten und Agenturen unfaire oder sogar mafiaähnliche Methoden an. Zum Beispiel verlangen sie oft kontinuierliche (monatliche) Zahlungen von Personenbetreuern, für die sie nur einen einmaligen Vermittlungsservice erbracht haben. Gesetzwidrige Verträge mit Personenbetreuern sind nicht ungewöhnlich, in vielen Fällen werden diese durch Nötigung, Erpressung, missbräuchliche Verwendung von Geldern, Scheinselbstständigkeit, Verletzung der Vertragsrechte und in einigen Fällen sogar durch die Verletzung der Grundrechte erzwungen ([1]).

Eine praktikable Möglichkeit zur Bekämpfung dieses Problems ist die Einführung von Zertifikaten für die Personenbetreuung, die sowohl vom Betreuer als auch vom Agenten und der Agentur unterzeichnet werden. Einerseits wird mit solchen Zertifikaten in beruflicher, sprachlicher und rechtlicher Hinsicht für Qualitätssicherung gesorgt, andererseits wird mit ihnen die Situation sowohl des Betreuers als auch der betreuungsbedürftigen Person verbessert. Zusätzlich können so Arbeitsplätze für Betreuer und Sprachtrainer geschaffen werden. Solche Zertifikate — wie sie in Österreich und dessen östlichen Nachbarländern vom VOSBP ([2]) ausgestellt werden — sind eine nützliche und notwendige Maßnahme, um Arbeitnehmer und Patienten zu schützen, Arbeitslosigkeit und kriminelle Tätigkeiten zu bekämpfen, den Binnenmarkt zu verbessern und Verwaltungskosten zu verringern.

1. Ist der Kommission dieses Problem bekannt und hat sie Zugang zu EU-weiten Studien zu diesem Thema?

2. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Möglichkeit, in diesem Zusammenhang Zertifikate auszustellen?

3. Erwägt die Kommission, solche Zertifikate innerhalb der Union einzuführen oder zu fördern?

4. Erwägt die Kommission, angesichts des grenzüberschreitenden Charakters des Problems in diesem Bereich tätig zu werden?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(12. Dezember 2012)

Die Kommission weiß, dass in einigen Mitgliedstaaten viele Familien bei der Betreuung ihrer älteren Familienangehörigen auf nicht angemeldete Migranten zurückgreifen ([3]). Die unsichere Stellung dieser Betreuungskräfte würde diese anfällig für Ausbeutung machen und könnte denjenigen, die sie versorgen, keine ausreichenden Qualitätsgarantien geben. Zu diesem Thema gibt es jedoch keine EU-weiten Erhebungen.

In den Mitgliedstaaten, die Betreuungsdienste direkt oder indirekt finanziell unterstützen, gibt es häufig eine Zulassung und/oder Zertifizierung. Die Probleme dürften sich von Mitgliedstaat zu Mitgliedstaat unterscheiden; für die Durchsetzung der geltenden Rechtsvorschriften zum Schutz von Betreuungskräften und betreuten Personen sind die Mitgliedstaaten zuständig. Die Erfahrungen aus Österreich, auf die sich die Abgeordneten beziehen, könnten jedoch für andere Mitgliedstaaten interessant sein und im Kontext der Peer-Review-Aktivitäten unter Federführung des Ausschusses für Sozialschutz vorgestellt werden.

Die Kommission beabsichtigt nicht, EU-weit Zertifikate einzuführen; sie könnte allerdings den Informationsaustausch zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten über Fragen fördern, die durch Zertifizierungssysteme geregelt werden könnten.

([1]) Beispiele für missbräuchliche Vertragsklauseln sind rechtswidrige Klauseln, denen zufolge es sowohl den Betreuern als auch den Patienten untersagt ist, über Vertragseinzelheiten zu sprechen.
([2]) Verband der österreichischen selbstständigen Betreuer und Pfleger.
([3]) Arbeitsunterlage der Kommissionsdienststellen über die Nutzung des Potenzials von personenbezogenen Dienstleistungen und Dienstleistungen im Haushalt, SWD(2012) 95 final vom 18.4.2012.

Die Kommission wird tätig werden, sofern ein Verstoß gegen EU-Recht vorliegt, insbesondere gegen das Recht auf Freizügigkeit von Betreuungskräften. Die Einrichtung einer EU-Plattform zum Thema nicht angemeldeter Erwerbstätigkeit ist im Arbeitprogramm 2013 der Kommission vorgesehen. Ziel dieser Plattform wäre die Ausweitung der Zusammenarbeit und der Austausch von Informationen und bewährten Verfahren auf EU-Ebene zwischen verschiedenen Durchsetzungsstellen, um einen wirksameren und kohärenteren Ansatz zur Bekämpfung nicht angemeldeter Erwerbstätigkeit zu verwirklichen.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-009385/12
a Bizottság számára
Evelyn Regner (S&D), Richard Falbr (S&D), Gurmai Zita (S&D), Jutta Steinruck (S&D) és Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(2012. október 16.)

Tárgy: A személyi gondozók tanúsítása

Az Ausztriában nyilvántartásba vett személyi gondozók 72%-a ügynökségek útján talál munkát. E szolgáltatás kapcsán sok ügynök és ügynökség alkalmaz tisztességtelen, olykor szinte a maffiára jellemző módszereket. Például gyakran követelnek folyamatos (havi) fizetést azoktól a személyi gondozóktól, akiknek csupán egyszeri közvetítői szolgáltatást nyújtottak. Nem ritka, hogy illegális szerződést kötnek személyi gondozókkal, és e szerződéseknek gyakran kényszerítéssel, zsarolással, sikkasztással, színlelt önfoglalkoztatással, a szerződéses jogok megsértésével és bizonyos esetekben akár az alapvető jogok megsértésével szereznek érvényt ([1]).

A probléma orvoslására az egyik megvalósítható lehetőség egy, a gondozóra és az ügynökre vagy ügynökségre egyaránt vonatkozó tanúsítási rendszer bevezetése. E tanúsítási rendszer egyrészt minőségbiztosítási eszközt jelent szakmai, nyelvi és jogi szempontból. Másrészt javítja a személyi gondozó és a gondozott helyzetét is. Ráadásul munkahelyek jöhetnek létre gondozók és nyelvtanárok számára. Az – Ausztriában és keleti szomszédainál a VOSBP ([2]) által kiadotthoz hasonló – ilyen tanúsítványok hasznos és szükséges eszközt jelentenek a munkavállalók és a betegek számára, hozzájárulnak a munkanélküliség és a bűnözés elleni fellépéshez, javítják a belső piac működését, valamint csökkentik az adminisztratív költségeket.

1. Ismeri-e a Bizottság a fenti problémát, és rendelkezik-e az egész EU-ra kiterjedő felmérésekkel e témában?

2. Mindezek alapján hogyan értékeli a Bizottság a tanúsítási rendszert?

3. Tervezi-e a Bizottság ilyen tanúsítási rendszer bevezetését vagy előmozdítását szerte az Unióban?

4. Tervez-e fellépni a Bizottság e területen, tekintve a probléma határokon átnyúló jellegét?

Andor László válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2012. december 12.)

A Bizottság tisztában van azzal, hogy egyes tagállamokban sok család bízza idős hozzátartozóik gondozását be nem jelentett migráns munkavállalókra ([3]). Az ilyen gondozók bizonytalan helyzetüknél fogva könnyebben kihasználhatók, és helyzetük a gondozottak szempontjából elégtelen minőségbiztosítást jelenthet. Ugyanakkor az egész Unióra kiterjedően nem készült felmérést ezekről a kérdésekről.

A tagállamokban gyakran találkozunk olyan csoportosulásokkal/minősítési rendszerekkel, amelyek közvetett vagy közvetlen finanszírozást biztosítanak az egészségügyi tevékenységek számára. Az egyes tagállamokban nagy valószínűséggel eltér a problémák jellege, és a tagállamok felelősségi körébe tartozik a vonatkozó jogszabályok végrehajtása a gondozók és a gondozásban részesülők védelmében. A tisztelt képviselő által említett osztrák példa ugyanakkor más tagállamok érdeklődésére is számot tarthat, és a szociális védelemmel foglalkozó bizottság égisze alatt végzett szakértői felülvizsgálati tevékenység keretében mutathatják be.

A Bizottság nem tervezi az egész Európai Unióra kiterjedő minősítés bevezetését, azonban elősegítheti a tagállamok közötti információcserét a minősítési rendszeren keresztül kezelendő kérdésekkel kapcsolatban.

A Bizottság fel fog lépni az uniós jog megsértése esetén, különösen ha egy másik tagállamból származó gondozók szabad mozgásáról van szó. A Bizottság 2013-as munkaprogramjában szerepel a be nem jelentett munkavégzés európai platformjának létrehozása. A platform célja az lenne, hogy fokozza a különböző végrehajtó szervek közötti európai szintű együttműködést, illetve az információk és a bevált módszerek egymással való megosztását, hogy ezáltal a be nem jelentett munka elleni küzdelem terén hatékonyabb és koherensebb megközelítés alakuljon ki.

([1]) A tisztességtelen szerződéses feltételek közé tartozik például olyan illegális záradékok alkalmazása, amelyek értelmében a gondozók és a betegek nem beszélhetnek a szerződés részleteiről.
([2]) Verband österreichischer selbstständiger Betreuer und Pfleger.
([3]) A személyre szabott és háztartási szolgáltatásokban rejlő foglalkoztatási lehetőségek kiaknázásáról szóló bizottsági szolgálati munkadokumentum SWD(2012)95 final, 2012.04.18.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009385/12
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D), Richard Falbr (S&D), Zita Gurmai (S&D), Jutta Steinruck (S&D) and Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Certification of personal caretakers

About 72% of all personal caretakers registered in Austria find employment through agencies. In providing such services, many agents and agencies apply unfair or even mafia-like methods. For instance, they often demand continuous (monthly) payments from personal caretakers for whom they have only provided a one-time mediation service. Illegal contracts with personal caretakers are not uncommon, in many cases enforced through coercion, extortion, misappropriation of funds, bogus self-employment, infringement of contract rights, and, in some cases, even of violation of fundamental rights. ([1])

To counter this problem, one feasible option is to introduce certificates for personal care that certify the caretaker as well as the agent and agency. On the one hand, such certificates provide quality assurance in professional, linguistic and legal terms. On the other hand, they improve the situation for both the caretaker and the person receiving care. In addition, jobs can be created for caretakers and language trainers. Such certificates — as they are issued in Austria and its eastern neighbours by VOSBP ([2]) — are a useful and necessary measure to protect workers and patients, combat unemployment and criminal activity, improve the internal market and reduce administrative costs, .

1. Is the Commission aware of the problem described above, and does it have access to EU-wide surveys on this issue?

2. How does the Commission assess the instrument of certification in this context?

3. Is the Commission considering introducing or promoting such certifications throughout the Union?

4. Is the Commission considering taking action in this field, given its cross-border nature?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission is aware that in some Member States many families rely on undeclared migrant workers to provide care for their elderly relatives ([3]). The precarious status of such care workers would make them vulnerable to abuse and could also imply insufficient quality assurances for care receivers. However, there are no EU-wide surveys on these issues.

Often aggregation and/or certification exists in the Member States which put into place direct or indirect financial support for healthcare activities. The problems are likely to differ from one Member State to another, and it is the responsibility of Member States to enforce the applicable legislation to protect care workers and care receivers. However, the experience from Austria referred to by the Honourable Member could be of interest to other Member States and could be presented in the context of the peer review activities under the auspices of the Social Protection Committee.

The Commission has no plans for introducing an EU-wide certification, but could promote the exchange of information among Member States on the issues to be addressed through certification schemes.

The Commission will act if there is a breach of EU legislation, notably concerning the right to free movement of carers from other Member States. The establishment of a European Platform on undeclared work is foreseen in the 2013 Commission Work Programme. Its aim would be to enhance cooperation and exchange information as well as best practices at EU level between different enforcement bodies to achieve a more effective and coherent approach to the fight against undeclared work.

([1]) Examples of the unfair contract terms are illegal clauses, which prohibit the caretakers as well as the patients to talk about the contract details.
([2]) Verband österreichischer selbstständiger Betreuer und Pfleger.
([3]) Staff working document on 'Exploiting the employment potential of the personal and household services' SWD(2012) 95 final, 18.4.2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009386/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(16 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Crimini sessuali in Colombia: seguiti di un conflitto armato

Amnesty International ha diffuso il 4 ottobre un nuovo rapporto, intitolato «Al riparo dalla giustizia. Impunità per la violenza sessuale collegata al conflitto», denunciando la reazione di passività del governo colombiano nei confronti dei responsabili dei crimini sessuali legati al conflitto armato, in corso da oltre 45 anni nel paese. Pochissimi, infatti, sono stati i responsabili portati di fronte alla giustizia e puniti per i reati commessi. Il messaggio che palesemente deriva da tale atteggiamento governativo è di impunità e tolleranza nei confronti di criminali che ogni giorno calpestano i diritti umani delle loro vittime.

Rispetto ai 12 732 casi sospetti di violenza sessuale del 2000, nel 2011 l'Istituto nazionale di medicina legale e scienza forense ha eseguito controlli su 22 597 pazienti.

In situazioni di conflitto armato, la violenza sessuale contro le donne viene praticata per seminare il terrore tra le comunità, allo scopo di spingerle alla fuga e vendicarsi contro il nemico. In tale contesto permeato di violenza cronica, raramente i crimini sessuali vengono denunciati. I maggiori ostacoli all'accesso alla giustizia sono dati dal timore di stigmatizzazione e alla mancata percezione di reale sicurezza per le vittime sopravvissute e coinvolte nei processi legali. Inoltre, lentezze burocratiche, mancanza di fondi e infiltrazione dei gruppi armati nelle istituzioni locali rendono il procedimento giuridico inadeguato rispetto alle esigenze di protezione e umanità delle vittime.

La vera problematica del Paese non è data da una mancanza di leggi punitive nei confronti dei responsabili di reati sessuali, ma da un'inesistente applicazione reale e omogenea di queste.

Come intende dunque monitorare il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante l'attività delle autorità colombiane in materia di tutela delle donne da violenze sessuali e assicurarsi che alle vittime sia garantito un accesso sicuro alla giustizia in nome del rispetto dei diritti fondamentali?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(4 dicembre 2012)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza dell'elevata incidenza di violenze sessuali nell'ambito del conflitto armato in Colombia e dell'impunità per tali reati.

Il governo colombiano ha fatto sforzi significativi volti a rafforzare lo stato di diritto e ridurre l'impunità per la violazione dei diritti umani in tutto il paese. Detti sforzi sono tuttavia ostacolati dalla continuazione di questo conflitto complesso e dalle mille sfaccettature, che rappresenta una sfida costante sul piano dei diritti umani e un ostacolo di più all'efficiente amministrazione della giustizia.

La questione dell'impunità e dell'esigenza di proteggere i gruppi vulnerabili della popolazione è regolarmente sollevata dall'UE, in particolare nel suo dialogo bilaterale con la Colombia in tema di diritti umani. L'UE sostiene inoltre da tempo tali sforzi mediante il programma in corso «Rafforzamento istituzionale per assistere le vittime dei conflitti» (7.4 milioni di euro), tra i cui obiettivi rientra il rafforzamento delle capacità investigative dell'ufficio del procuratore generale.

Il tema «donne e conflitti armati» è entrato a far parte della strategia nazionale dell'UE per i diritti umani, in corso d'adozione. Questo è anche uno dei temi che verranno discussi al seminario sui diritti umani che la delegazione UE di Bogotá sta organizzando per il novembre 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009386/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Sex crimes in Colombia: the consequences of armed conflict

On 4 October Amnesty International issued a new report entitled 'Hidden from justice. Impunity for conflict-related sexual violence', condemning the Colombian Government's passive reaction to those responsible for sex crimes related to the armed conflict that has been continuing for over 45 years in the country. Indeed, very few of the perpetrators have been brought to justice and punished for the crimes committed. The message that clearly emerges from the government's attitude is one of impunity and tolerance towards criminals who trample on the human rights of their victims every day.

In 2011 the National Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences carried out a total of 22 597 examinations into suspected cases of sexual violence, compared to 12 732 in 2000.

In situations of armed conflict, sexual violence against women is carried out to sow terror among communities, to force them to flee and to wreak revenge on the enemy.

In such a situation of chronic violence, sex crimes are rarely reported. The main obstacles to access to justice are the fear of being stigmatised and the perceived lack of real security for surviving victims involved in legal proceedings. In addition, administrative delays, a lack of funds and the infiltration of armed groups into local institutions make the legal process inadequate to meet the victims' needs for protection and humanity.

The real problems in the country are not due to a lack of laws to punish sex offenders, but to the fact that those laws are not genuinely and consistently enforced.

How will the Vice-President/High Representative therefore monitor the activities of the Colombian authorities to protect women from sexual violence and ensure that victims are guaranteed secure access to justice in the name of respect for fundamental rights?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The HR/VP is well aware of the high incidence of sexual violence in the context of Colombia's armed conflict, and of the impunity for these crimes.

The Colombian government has made significant efforts to strengthen the rule of law and to reduce impunity for human rights violations throughout the country. However, these are hampered by the continued existence of the complex and multifaceted conflict, which represents a persistent human rights challenge and a formidable obstacle to the effective administration of justice.

The issue of impunity and the need to protect vulnerable population groups is regularly raised by the EU, notably in its bilateral human rights dialogue with Colombia. Moreover, the EU has long supported related efforts, i.a. through the ongoing 'Institutional Strengthening for assisting conflict victims' programme (EUR 7.4 million), whose aims include the strengthening of the investigative capacity of the Prosecutor General's Office.

The theme 'women and armed conflict' has been included in the EU's country strategy for human rights that is currently being adopted. It is also one of two themes that will be discussed at the human rights seminar which the EU Delegation in Bogotá is organising for November 2012.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009387/12
aan de Commissie
Judith A. Merkies (S&D)
(16 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Verkoop illegaal afval door overheid

Over vijf jaar moet in alle lidstaten 85 % van de verkochte elektrische en elektronische apparaten ook weer ingezameld worden. In Nederland is het inzamelpercentage momenteel 45 %. Reden voor inzameling is optimale recycling en het tegengaan van illegale export, dump en verwerking. Veel kostbare grondstoffen gaan alsnog verloren, de arbeidsomstandigheden bij veel recycling buiten Europa laten te wensen over en milieuvervuiling is een groot risico.

De lidstaten moeten de inzameling en verwerking van deze afvalstromen organiseren. De overheid certificeert instanties die de inzameling mogen doen. In Nederland blijkt nu dat er sprake is van illegale handel tussen lagere overheden en niet gecertificeerde handelaren van elektrisch en elektronisch afval (De Telegraaf, blz. 1 en 23, 12.10.2012).

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van handel van elektrisch en elektronisch afval tussen lokale overheden en ongecertificeerde handelaren?

2. Welke acties onderneemt de Commissie om illegale handel tussen overheden en ongecertificeerde inzamelaars tegen te gaan?

3. In hoeverre zijn lidstaten verplicht aan te tonen aan de Commissie wat er met het niet geregistreerde percentage afvalstromen gebeurt?

4. In hoeverre verplicht de Commissie lidstaten aan te tonen welke problemen er zijn bij de inzameling van deze afvalstromen en welke acties de lidstaten nemen om deze problemen op te lossen?

5. Welke actie onderneemt de Commissie als een lidstaat in gebreke blijft bij de inzameling van het afval en transparantie van wat er met deze afvalstromen gebeurt?

6. Welke actie onderneemt de Commissie om inzage te krijgen in wat er gebeurt met de hoeveelheid elektrisch en elektronisch afval dat niet ingezameld wordt?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(5 december 2012)

1. Bij Richtlijn 2008/98/EG betreffende afvalstoffen ([1]) is bepaald dat handelaars in afvalstoffen, waaronder afgedankte elektrische en elektronische apparatuur (AEEA), over een vergunning overeenkomstig artikel 23 moeten beschikken, of ten minste moeten zijn geregistreerd overeenkomstig artikel 26. De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van gevallen waarin plaatselijke overheden in de lidstaten hebben gehandeld met handelaren die niet aan deze voorwaarden voldoen.

2. 5. en 6. Het is de taak van de EU-lidstaten te zorgen voor de naleving van de EU-richtlijnen op hun grondgebied. De Commissie zal de Nederlandse overheid vragen om nadere gegevens betreffende het specifieke geval waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst.

3. Op grond van artikel 12 van Richtlijn 2002/96/EG ([2]) en artikel 16 van Richtlijn 2012/19/EU ([3]) zijn de lidstaten verplicht jaarlijks informatie te verzamelen over AEEA „die langs alle wegen werden ingezameld". Deze informatie kan bestaan uit degelijke ramingen betreffende de niet-geregistreerde hoeveelheden ingezamelde AEEA.

([1]) PB L 312 van 22.11.2008.
([2]) Oude AEEA-richtlijn: PB L 37 van 13.2.2003.
([3]) Nieuwe AEEA-richtlijn — PB L 197 van 24.7.2012.

4. Overeenkomstig artikel 12 van Richtlijn 2002/96/EG en artikel 16 van Richtlijn 2012/19/EU moeten de lidstaten om de drie jaar over de uitvoering van de richtlijnen rapporteren. De betrokken verslagen moet een evaluatie bevatten van de positieve en de negatieve ervaringen met de tenuitvoerlegging van de richtlijn ([4]). De Commissie verzamelt de in de genoemde artikelen bedoelde informatie en publiceert een verslag over de uitvoering van de richtlijn ([5]).

([4]) Zie voor meer gegevens over de verslaglegging overeenkomstig Richtlijn 2002/96/EG: Beschikking 2004/249/EG — PB L 78, 16.3.2004.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/reporting/index.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009387/12
to the Commission
Judith A. Merkies (S&D)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Sale of illegal waste by public authorities

In five years' time, it will become a requirement in all Member States that 85% of electrical and electronic goods sold should be collected again. In the Netherlands, the collection percentage is currently 45%. The aim of collecting it is to ensure optimal recycling and to combat illegal exports, dumping and processing. Large quantities of valuable raw materials go to waste, working conditions for those who perform recycling outside Europe often leave much to be desired, and there is a major risk of environmental pollution.

Member States are required to organise the collection and recycling of these waste flows. The public authorities certify bodies which are permitted to collect waste. In the Netherlands, it has now become apparent that illegal trading is going on between local authorities and uncertified dealers in electrical and electronic waste (*De Telegraaf*, 12.10.2012, pp.1 and 23).

1. Is the Commission aware of dealing in electrical and electronic waste between local authorities and uncertified dealers?

2. What action does the Commission take to combat illegal trade between authorities and uncertified collectors?

3. To what extent are Member States required to demonstrate to the Commission what happens to the unregistered part of waste flows?

4. To what extent does the Commission require Member States to demonstrate what problems exist in the collection of these waste flows and what action the Member States are taking to solve these problems?

5. What action does the Commission take if a Member States fails to collect waste in the required manner and does not ensure sufficient transparency regarding what happens to these waste flows?

6. What action does the Commission take to ascertain what is happening to electrical and electronic waste which is not collected?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

1. Directive 2008/98/EC ([1]) on waste requires dealers of waste, including waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), to hold a permit according to Article 23, or at least, to be registered according to Article 26. The Commission is not aware of cases where local authorities in Member States have traded with dealers which do not fulfil these requirements.

2, 5 and 6. It falls to EU Member States to enforce EU Directives on their territory. The Commission will ask the Dutch authorities for further information on the specific case to which the Honourable Member refers.

3. Article 12 of Directive 2002/96/EC ([2]) and Article 16 of Directive 2012/19/EU ([3]) require Member States, on an annual basis, to collect information on WEEE 'collected through all routes'. This information may contain substantiated estimates concerning the unregistered quantities of WEEE collected.

4. Member States must report on the implementation of the directives, at three- year intervals, as required by Article 12 of Directive 2002/96/EC and Article 16 of Directive 2012/19/EU. Such reports should include an evaluation of the positive and negative experiences with the implementation of the directive ([4]). The Commission collects the information referred to in these Articles and publishes a report on the implementation of the directive ([5]).

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([2]) Old WEEE Directive: OJ L 37, 13.2.2003.
([3]) New WEEE Directive: OJ L 197, 24.7.2012.
([4]) See for more details on reporting requirements under Directive 2002/96/EC Commission Decision 2004/249/EC, OJ L 78, 16.3.2004.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/reporting/index.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009388/12
an die Kommission
Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (PPE)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Finanzierung von Flughäfen und Gewährung staatlicher Anlaufbeihilfen für Luftfahrtunternehmen auf Regionalflughäfen (Überarbeitung der Leitlinien)

Mehr als 500 Millionen Flugpassagiere pro Jahr benutzen regionale Flughäfen in Europa. Diese regionalen Flughäfen sind von entscheidender Bedeutung für den inner- und außereuropäischen Luftverkehr, die Erreichbarkeit der Regionen und die Mobilität der Bürger. Es ist gleichzeitig allgemein anerkannt, dass Flughäfen mit weniger als einer Million Passagieren wirtschaftlich nicht rentabel sind und ohne öffentliche Beihilfen nicht weiterbetrieben werden können.

Wird die Kommission diese wirtschaftliche Realität in ihrem Entwurf für überarbeitete Leitlinien berücksichtigen und insbesondere Betriebsbeihilfen für Flughäfen mit weniger als einer Million Passagieren genehmigen?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(27. November 2012)

Regionalflughäfen können eine wichtige Rolle für die lokale Entwicklung und die Anbindung von Regionen spielen. Es ist jedoch auch wichtig, übermäßige Wettbewerbsverzerrungen und die Verschwendung öffentlicher Mittel zu vermeiden, und dieses Risiko ist besonders hoch, wenn zusätzlich zu bestehenden Flughäfen wirtschaftlich nicht rentable Flughäfen betrieben werden.

Die Kommission wird all diese Aspekte bei der Überarbeitung der Luftverkehrsleitlinien berücksichtigen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009388/12
to the Commission
Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Financing of airports and start-up aid to airlines departing from regional airports (revision of guidelines)

Over 500 million passengers a year use regional airports in Europe. These regional airports are vital for intra- and extra-European air transport, the accessibility of regions and the mobility of citizens. It is also generally accepted that airports with fewer than one million passengers are not economically viable and cannot continue to operate without state aid.

Will the Commission take this economic reality into account when drafting its revised guidelines and, in particular, authorise operating aid for airports with fewer than one million passengers?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

Regional airports can play an important role in local development and accessibility. Nevertheless, it is also important to avoid undue distortions of competition and wasting public resources. This risk is particularly high in cases of duplication of non-profitable airports.

The Commission will take all these elements into account when revising the Aviation guidelines.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009389/12
til Kommissionen
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(16. oktober 2012)

Om: Anden og tredje energiliberaliseringspakke

Kommissionen og energikommissæren har tidligere besvaret en lang række spørgsmål vedrørende implementeringen af anden og tredje energiliberaliseringspakke.

Kan Kommissionen for overskuelighedens skyld forelægge en komplet oversigt over, hvilke medlemsstater der har modtaget en åbningsskrivelse og en begrundet udtalelse, samt over, hvilke medlemsstater der er indbragt for EU-Domstolen, samt sikre, at oversigten opdeles efter retsakt?

Vil Kommissionen derudover oplyse, hvilke retsakter fra anden og tredje liberaliseringspakke de enkelte medlemsstater har implementeret korrekt?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne Af Günther Oettinger
(10. december 2012)

På foranledning af det ærede medlems forespørgsel om en komplet oversigt over de overtrædelsesprocedurer, som Kommissionen har indledt med hensyn til gennemførelsen af den anden ([1]) og tredje energipakke ([2]), henviser Kommissionen til sin meddelelse om det indre energimarked ([3]), som blev offentliggjort den 15. november 2012, og som indeholder detaljerede oplysninger om Kommissionens håndhævelsespolitik inden for området elektricitet og gas.

Desuden henviser Kommissionen til de oversigter over dette emne, som er blevet sendt til det ærede medlem og til Parlamentets sekretariat. Den første oversigt giver et overblik over de overtrædelsesprocedurer, der er blevet indledt vedrørende manglende meddelelse af gennemførelsesforanstaltninger for direktiverne om elektricitet og gas i den tredje energipakke (direktiv 2009/72/EF og direktiv 2009/73/EF).

Den anden oversigt giver et overblik over de overtrædelsesprocedurer, der er blevet indledt vedrørende gennemførelse af den anden energipakkes forordninger om elektricitet og gas (forordning (EF) nr. 1228/2003 og (EF) nr. 1775/2005).

Den tredje oversigt giver et overblik over de overtrædelsesprocedurer, der er blevet indledt vedrørende gennemførelsen af direktiverne om elektricitet og gas i den anden energipakke (direktiv 2003/54/EF og direktiv 2003/55/EF).

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2003/54/EF af 26. juni 2003 om fælles regler for det indre marked for elektricitet og om ophævelse af direktiv 96/92/EF, EUT L 176 af 15.7.2003, Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2003/55/EF af 26. juni 2003 om fælles regler for det indre marked for naturgas og om ophævelse af direktiv 98/30/EF, EUT L 176 af 15.7.2003, forordning (EF) nr. 1228/2003 af 26. juni 2003 om betingelserne for netadgang i forbindelse med grænseoverskridende elektricitetsudveksling, EUT L 176 af 15.7.2003, forordning (EF) nr. 1775/2005 af 28. september 2005 om betingelserne for adgang til naturgastransmissionsnet, EUT L 289 af 3.11.2005.

([2]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2009/72/EF af 13. juli 2009 om fælles regler for det indre marked for elektricitet og om ophævelse af direktiv 2003/54/EF, EUT L 211 af 14.8.2009, Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2009/73/EF af 13. juli 2009 om fælles regler for det indre marked for naturgas og om ophævelse af direktiv 2003/55/EF, EUT L 211 af 14.8.2009, Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 713/2009 af 13. juli 2009 om oprettelse af et agentur for samarbejde mellem energireguleringsmyndigheder, EUT L 211 af 14.8.2009, Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 714/2009 af 13. juli 2009 om betingelserne for netadgang i forbindelse med grænseoverskridende elektricitetsudveksling og om ophævelse af forordning (EF) nr. 1228/2003, EUT L 211 af 14.8.2009, Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 715/2009 af 13. juli 2009 om betingelserne for adgang til naturgastransmissionsnet og om ophævelse af forordning (EF) nr. 1775/200, EUT L 211 af 14.8.2009.

([3]) Arbejdsdokumentet fra Kommissionens tjenestegrene »Energy Markets in the European Union in 2011«, del III, som ledsager meddelelsen fra Kommissionen til Europa-Parlamentet, Rådet, Det Europæiske Økonomiske og Sociale Udvalg og Regionsudvalget »Et fungerende indre energimarked«, Bruxelles, 15.11.2012, SWD(2012) 368 endelig.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009389/12
to the Commission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Second and third energy liberalisation packages

The European Commission and the Commissioner for Energy have previously answered many questions concerning the implementation of the second and third energy liberalisation packages.

For the sake of clarity, the Commission is requested to provide a comprehensive overview of which countries have received letters of formal notice and reasoned opinions, and which countries have been the subject of a case brought before the European Court of Justice. This overview should be broken down by legal instrument.

The Commission is also requested to state which legal instruments from the second and third energy liberalisation packages have been correctly implemented by the individual countries.

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

In view of the request of the Honourable Member to receive a comprehensive overview of the infringement proceedings opened by the Commission concerning the implementation of the Second ([1]) and Third Energy Package ([2]), the Commission refers to its communication on the Internal Energy Market ([3]), which was issued on 15 November 2012, and which provides detailed information on the enforcement policy of the Commission in the area of electricity and gas.

In addition, the Commission refers to the tables on this topic sent to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat. The first table provides an overview of the infringement proceedings opened for non-communication of transposition measures for the Electricity and Gas Directives of the Third Energy Package (Directive 2009/72/EC and Directive 2009/73/EC).

The second table provides an overview of the infringement proceedings opened concerning the implementation of the Electricity and Gas Regulations of the Second Energy Package (Regulation (EC) No 1228/2003 and Regulation (EC) No 1775/2005).

The third table provides an overview of the infringement proceedings opened in view of the implementation of the Electricity and Gas Directives under the Second Energy Package (Directive 2003/54/EC and Directive 2003/55/EC).

([1]) Directive 2003/54/EC of the Parliament and the Council of 26 June 2003 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 96/92/EC, OJ L 176 , 15.7.2003, Directive 2003/55/EC of theParliament and the Council of 26 June 2003 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas and repealing Directive 98/30/EC, OJ L 176, 15.7.2003, Regulation (EC) no 1228/2003 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity, OJ L 176, 15.7.2003, Regulation (EC) no 1775/2005 on conditions for access to the natural gas transmission networks, OJ L 289, 3.11.2005.

([2]) Directive 2009/72/EC of the Parliament and the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and repealing Directive 2003/54/EC, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009, Directive 2009/73/EC of the Parliament and the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas and repealing Directive 2003/55/EC, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009, Regulation (EC) No 713/2009 of the Parliament and the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009, Regulation (EC) No 714/2009 of the Parliament and the Council of 13 July 2009 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity and repealing Regulation (EC) no 1228/2003, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009, Regulation (EC) No 715/2009 of the Parliament and the Council of 13 July 2009 on conditions for access to the natural gas transmission networks and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1775/2005, OJ L 211, 14.8.2009.

([3]) Commission staff working document, 'Energy Markets in the European Union in 2011', part III, accompanying the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Making the internal energy market work', Brussels, 15.11.2012, SWD(2012) 368 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009390/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Eliminación de la procedencia de la pesca en el etiquetado: trazabilidad y derechos sociales y laborales en origen

La aprobación de la Resolución legislativa del Parlamento Europeo del pasado 12 de septiembre por la que se establece la organización común de mercados en el sector de los productos de la pesca y de la acuicultura supone una significativa modificación de la propuesta de la Comisión.

De entre las numerosas enmiendas presentadas al texto original destaca una en particular, que suprime el artículo 42, apartado 2, evadiendo la responsabilidad de especificar la procedencia del producto en el etiquetado. Esta modificación elimina la obligación de los productores de informar al cliente sobre la procedencia del producto que comercializan.

Esta nueva normativa obstaculiza la trazabilidad de los productos pesqueros, al no garantizar la posibilidad de conocer en qué lugar fueron pescados y, por tanto, bajo qué régimen laboral y social. Así dificulta la promoción de un consumo responsable que pueda evaluar aspectos tan importantes como el impacto social, económico y ambiental, imposible si no se puede conocer de qué aguas proceden las capturas que procesan las compañías envasadoras y en qué condiciones son producidas.

Este aspecto afectará a las pequeñas empresas conserveras que tratan de producir mercancías con un mayor valor añadido gracias al componente de calidad y certificación de origen, que respetan unos estándares sociales y laborales para sus trabajadores, y que tendrán que vender su producto sin capacidad para informar al cliente de la procedencia de su producto. Así, de este cambio en la normativa propuesta solo salen beneficiadas las grandes conserveras que transforman toneladas de pescado al menor coste posible sin evaluar las necesidades de protección, el impacto ambiental de la actividad o las más mínimas normas ambientales. Esto solo puede generar un consumo irresponsable, no sostenible y desinformado de las conservas pesqueras en lugar de una apuesta por la calidad, la sostenibilidad y el respeto al medio ambiente dentro de la actividad pesquera.

1. ¿Considera la Comisión suficientemente informados a los consumidores a través de un etiquetado sin la procedencia de la captura?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión compatible esta normativa de etiquetado con las ayudas al sector pesquero que pretenden mantener la actividad pesquera en las costas europeas apostando por el valor añadido de la certificación de origen?

3. ¿Estima la Comisión que la producción en costas europeas que cumple altos estándares ambientales podrá competir con cualquier otra región del mundo para abastecer a la industria conservera si no se elaboran e implementan medidas para conseguir la trazabilidad en el sector?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión considera que disponer de una mejor información sobre los productos de la pesca y la acuicultura contribuirá a que los consumidores de la UE puedan elegir mejor, en concreto en lo que concierne a la calidad de los productos que adquieren.

En su propuesta de reforma de la PPC, la Comisión ha incluido, por lo tanto, disposiciones sobre la información obligatoria que debe proporcionarse a los consumidores acerca de todos los productos del mar (frescos, congelados y transformados) que se venden en la EU. Esta información incluye la denominación comercial, el método de producción (captura o acuicultura) y la procedencia (zonas, subzonas o divisiones de captura, o país de producción en el caso de los productos de la acuicultura ([1])).

([1]) COM(2011) 416, capítulo IV.

Se puede proporcionar a los consumidores con carácter voluntario información adicional (de tipo medioambiental y social, sobre la calidad, sobre marcas locales o regionales, etc.), siempre y cuando se garantice su exactitud y tal información no induzca a error al consumidor. La Comisión ha propuesto elaborar unos criterios mínimos cuando sea necesario para garantizar la fiabilidad de la información proporcionada. Esta postura es plenamente compartida por el BEUC ([2]).

El etiquetado de los productos de la pesca y la acuicultura forma parte integral de la reforma y tiene en cuenta las disposiciones del Reglamento de control, en particular aquellas en materia de trazabilidad. Las disposiciones propuestas acerca de la información a los consumidores pueden contribuir a garantizar unas condiciones de competencia equitativas. Los consumidores de la UE podrán distinguir las especies de que se trate y conocer su procedencia. También podrán saber la fecha de captura o recolección y si el producto es fresco o ha sido descongelado.

Todo ello redundará en beneficio de los productores de la UE, tanto del sector extractivo (particularmente los pescadores costeros), como del sector de la acuicultura, pues permitirá la diferenciación de los productos, el incremento del valor añadido y la promoción de nuevas salidas comerciales. La propuesta relativa al FEMP ([3]) incorpora medidas cuyo objetivo es apoyar estas iniciativas de comercialización.

([2]) Organización de consumidores europea.
([3]) Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de Pesca.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009390/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Deleting the origin of fish from labels: traceability and social and labour rights at the point of origin

The adoption of the European Parliament legislative resolution of 12 September 2012 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products presupposes a significant alteration to the Commission's proposal.

One amendment in particular to the original text stands out among the many tabled. This amendment deletes Article 42(2), evading responsibility for stating the product's origin on the label. It removes the obligation on producers to inform customers about the origin of the product they are selling.

This new piece of legislation will make it difficult to trace fish products as there will be no guarantee that where fish were caught, and hence what labour and social system applied, will be known. This will make promoting responsible consumption difficult as it will be impossible to judge important factors such as the social, economic and environmental impact if there is no way of knowing in which waters fish processed by canning companies were caught and under what conditions.

This will affect small canning companies which try to produce goods whose quality and certification of origin give them added value, which comply with social and labour standards for their workers, and which will have to sell their product without being able to inform customers about its origin. Thus only the big canning firms will benefit from this change to the proposed legislation, firms who process tonnes of fish at the lowest possible cost without considering protection needs, the environmental impact of their production or the most basic of environmental standards. This can only lead to irresponsible, unsustainable and uninformed consumption of tinned fish instead of a commitment by the fishing industry to quality, sustainability and care for the environment.

1. Does the Commission believe that labels which do not include the product's origin provide consumers with sufficient information?

2. Does the Commission consider this legislation on labelling to be compatible with subsidies to the fishing industry which claim to support EU coastal fishing through the added value brought about by certification of origin?

3. Does the Commission think that EU coastal fishing, which complies with high environmental standards, will be able to compete with other regions in the world in supplying the canning industry, without measures being implemented to ensure traceability within the sector?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission believes that improved information on seafood products will help EU consumers to make more informed choices, including on the quality of the products they buy.

In its proposals for the CFP reform, the Commission has therefore included provisions on mandatory information to consumers for all seafood products (fresh, frozen and processed ones) sold in the EU. It includes the commercial name, the production method (catch or aquaculture) and the provenance (catch areas, sub areas or divisions, or country of production for aquaculture products ([1])).

Additional voluntary information can be provided to consumers (environmental, social, quality, local or regional brands …) as long as accuracy is ensured and information does not mislead the consumer. The Commission proposed to develop minimum criteria when needed to ensure the reliability of such information. These views are fully supported by the BEUC ([2]).

Labelling of fisheries and aquaculture products is an integrated part of the reform and takes into account provisions of the Control Regulation, in particular on traceability. Proposed provisions on information to consumers can contribute to ensure a level playing field in terms of competition. EU consumers will be able to know the species concerned and its provenance. They will also know the date of catch or harvest and if a product is fresh or has been defrosted.

([1]) COM(2011) 416 Chapter IV.
([2]) European Consumers Organisation.

This could be beneficial for EU producers both in the catching sector, in particular the coastal fishermen, as well as in aquaculture for differentiating their products, increasing added value and fostering new outlets. There are measures included in the proposed EMFF ([3]) designed to support such marketing initiatives.

([3]) European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009391/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(16 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: «Decreto sviluppo 2»: campi elettromagnetici e diritto alla salute

Lo scorso 4 ottobre il governo italiano ha presentato il cosiddetto «Decreto sviluppo 2», volto a favorire la crescita e l'occupazione. Tuttavia, secondo una disposizione contenuta all'interno del decreto stesso, è stato previsto che il proprietario o il condominio non possono opporsi all'accesso dell'operatore di comunicazione al fine di installare, collegare o manutenere gli elementi di rete, quali cavi, fili, riparti, linee o apparati, incluse le nuove antenne. Pertanto non sarà più possibile nessuna lite giudiziaria se arriva una compagnia telefonica e installa un'antenna o un ripetitore non graditi sul proprio palazzo. D'ora in poi, infatti, l'appartamento o le parti comuni dell'edificio saranno territorio libero per i giganti delle telecomunicazioni e, per di più, le stesse aziende saranno esentate dalla tassa per l'occupazione di suolo pubblico. In cambio, sarà stabilita un'indennità al proprietario in base all'effettiva diminuzione del valore, come se si trattasse di un esproprio forzato.

Inoltre, sempre in nome delle autostrade digitali, anche l'iter per installare i cavi della banda larga e ultra-larga nel sottosuolo delle strade cittadine sarà più veloce: i tempi per l'accoglimento della domanda da parte dei Comuni passano da 90 a 45 giorni nei casi normali, da 30 a 15 giorni per scavi inferiori ai 200 metri, con l'inserimento del termine ridotto di 10 giorni per «buche, apertura chiusini, posa di cavi o tubi aerei su infrastruttura esistente, allacciamento utenti»; in caso contrario, se il Comune non dovesse rispettare i tempi stabiliti, scatterà automaticamente il principio del silenzio-assenso. Tale liberalizzazione, dunque, rischia di causare una moltiplicazione incontrollata di antenne sui condomini, con un conseguente aumento di inquinamento elettromagnetico.

Tutto ciò premesso, si interroga la Commissione per sapere:

1. se sono state rispettate le disposizioni degli articoli 168 e 169 del TFUE e dell'articolo 35 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE;

2. se sono state rispettate le indicazioni contenute nella raccomandazione 1999/512/CE e nella raccomandazione 1999/519/CE relative alla limitazione dell'esposizione della popolazione ai campi elettromagnetici;

3. un quadro generale della situazione.

Risposta di Maroš Šefčovič a nome della Commissione
(27 novembre 2012)

1. Le disposizioni di cui agli articoli 168 e 169 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea non conferiscono alla Commissione la competenza a legiferare nel campo della protezione della popolazione dagli effetti potenzialmente nocivi dei campi elettromagnetici e ne lasciano la responsabilità primaria agli Stati membri. Quindi, per quanto riguarda il pubblico in generale, non esistono prescrizioni specifiche dell'UE che le autorità italiane devono rispettare. Per quanto riguarda più in particolare le questioni sollevate dall'onorevole parlamentare in materia di diritti fondamentali, segnatamente la compatibilità delle misure nazionali con l'articolo 35 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, la Commissione ricorda che, conformemente all'articolo 51, paragrafo 1 di tale Carta, le disposizioni in essa contenute sono destinate agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione.

2. L'Italia ha rispettato le indicazioni contenute nella raccomandazione 1999/519/CE ([1]) del Consiglio, relativa alla limitazione dell'esposizione della popolazione ai campi elettromagnetici (da 0 Hz a 300 GHz), avendo istituito limiti di esposizione più severi (inferiori).

3. La Commissione non effettua alcun monitoraggio delle radiazioni elettromagnetiche nell'UE, in quanto ciò è di competenza delle autorità degli Stati membri. Tuttavia, la Commissione segue l'evoluzione delle conoscenze scientifiche invitando periodicamente i suoi comitati scientifici ad analizzare i più recenti dati scientifici. Pertanto, la Commissione ha chiesto al comitato scientifico per i rischi sanitari emergenti e recentemente identificati (CSRSERI) di procedere all'aggiornamento del suo parere del 2009 ([2]), previsto per il secondo trimestre del 2013.

([1]) GU L 199 del 30.7.1999.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_q_029.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009391/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: 'Second Development Decree': electromagnetic fields and the right to health

On 4 October 2012, the Italian Government presented the 'Second Development Decree', whose purpose is to promote growth and employment. However, according to one of the provisions of the decree itself, an owner or co-owner cannot deny access to a telecommunications operator if the latter wishes to install, connect or maintain network elements such as cables, wires, distributors, lines or devices, including new antennas. Accordingly, it will no longer be possible to take any legal action if a telephone company arrives and installs an unwelcome antenna or distributor on one's house. From now on, an apartment or the communal parts of the building will be freely available to large telecommunications companies and, moreover, these same businesses will be exempt from tax for the use of public land. In return, a payment to owners will be set on the basis of the actual reduction in value of the property, as if this were a case of compulsory purchase.

In addition, likewise in the name of the digital super-highways, the procedure for installing underground broadband and ultra-broadband cables beneath public roads will be accelerated: the time limits within which local authorities are required to process applications will be reduced from 90 days to 45 in normal cases, from 30 days to 15 for excavations less than 200 metres in length, and shorter still — 10 days — for 'holes, drains, the installation of cables or aerial tubes on existing infrastructure, user connections'; otherwise, if the local authority fails to respect the set time limits, this will automatically be taken as signifying consent. There is a danger, therefore, that this liberalisation may result in an uncontrolled multiplication of the number of antennas appearing on the roofs of blocks of flats, which will increase levels of electromagnetic pollution.

1. Have the provisions of Articles 168 and 169 TFEU and Article 35 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights been complied with?

2. Have the indications given in Recommendation 1999/512/EC and Recommendation 1999/519/EC on limiting exposure of the public to electromagnetic fields been complied with?

3. Can the Commission provide a general overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

1. The provisions of Articles 168 and 169 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union do not confer the Commission (or EU) competence to legislate in the area of protection of the general public from potential harmful effects of EMF and leaves the primary responsibility with the Member States. Therefore, as far as the general public is concerned, there are no specific EU provisions that the Italian authorities need to comply with. Regarding more particularly the fundamental rights issues raised by the Honourable Member, notably the compatibility of the national measures with Article 35 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, 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 Union law.

2. The instructions set out in Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC ([1]) on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz) have been complied with because Italy has already instituted stricter (lower) exposure limits.

3. The Commission does not carry out any monitoring of the electromagnetic radiation in the EU as this is the responsibility of the Member State authorities. However, the Commission follows the development of scientific knowledge and periodically asks its Scientific Committees to review the latest scientific evidence. Therefore the Commission has asked the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) to update its 2009 opinion ([2]), which is expected in the second quarter of 2013.

([1]) OJ L 199, 30.7.1999.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_q_029.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009392/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Participaciones preferentes en Caixa Galicia y Caixanova

El 20 de julio de 2012, se produjo la firma del Memorando de Entendimiento sobre las condiciones de política sectorial financiera entre la Unión Europea y España. En dicho memorando, se prevé la creación de normas para garantizar la responsabilidad subordinada. Esta responsabilidad subordinada supone garantizar el derecho de los acreedores sobre los fondos que posean las entidades financieras españolas, así como sobre los fondos de cierto tipo de clientes que hayan asumido riesgo subsidiario con la entidad. Entre estos clientes se encuentran los titulares de participaciones preferentes de Caixa Galicia y Caixanova.

Estas dos cajas gallegas comenzaron a comercializar participaciones preferentes desde 2003 y 2005 respectivamente, recabando millones de euros para las ampliaciones de capital. Todas estas operaciones que durante años permiten la expansión del sistema financiero español se llevaron a cabo bajo un supuesto fraude de ley (art. 6 y 7 del Código Civil) al conocer y no hacer cumplir la normativa vigente recogida en la Directiva 2004/39/CE del 21 de abril de 2004, que especifica los derechos del consumidor de este tipo de productos financieros, así como la normativa de la Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores que regula la adquisición de este tipo de productos. Para poder comercializarlos, las entidades financieras debían facilitar grandes cantidades de información sobre los productos financieros, así como advertir con exactitud de los riesgos a los que se exponen los clientes. En ningún caso se cumplieron estos requisitos mínimos dispuestos por la normativa, informando de manera errónea, ocultando información y estafando a clientes para comercializar todos estos complejos productos financieros entre personas sin preparación específica.

En el Derecho civil de España el «vicio de consentimiento» es suficiente para invalidar cualquier contrato (art. 1265 del Código Civil). En el caso de estas participaciones preferentes, no cumplir con la normativa existente supondría un vicio de consentimiento que invalidaría los contratos.

¿Es consciente la Comisión de la posible invalidez, según la normativa española, de buena parte de las participaciones preferentes de Caixa Galicia y Caixanova que se verían afectadas por el Memorando de Entendimiento citado?

En caso de invalidez de origen de estas participaciones preferentes, ¿cómo pretende hacer cumplir la Comisión el Memorando de Entendimiento sin afectar a los fondos de estos miles de pequeños ahorradores estafados?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión aprobó el 28 de noviembre de 2012 el plan de reestructuración de NCG Banco (resultado de la integración de Caixanova y la Caja de Ahorros de Galicia). Todas las medidas previstas en el plan tienen por objeto garantizar la solidez y la viabilidad del banco en cumplimiento de las normas sobre las ayudas estatales. Además, el memorando de entendimiento firmado entre las autoridades españolas y la Comisión, en nombre de los Estados miembros de la zona del euro, establece que los ejercicios de responsabilidad subordinada deben llevarse a cabo en relación con los instrumentos híbridos de capital, incluidas las acciones preferentes.

La Comisión conoce las acusaciones de posibles ventas abusivas de acciones preferentes por algunos bancos. Incumbe al sistema judicial español investigar y valorar esas acusaciones.

Su Señoría puede estar seguro de que la Comisión promueve los principios de la protección de los consumidores. Más concretamente, el memorando de entendimiento establece que debe reforzarse la protección de los consumidores en lo relacionado con los instrumentos híbridos de capital. A la luz de todo ello, las autoridades españolas aprobaron la Ley 9/2012 de reestructuración y resolución de entidades de crédito (antiguo Real Decreto-Ley 24/2012), que establece determinadas normas dirigidas a limitar la venta de acciones preferentes e instrumentos de deuda subordinada por los bancos a clientes minoristas no cualificados.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009392/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Preferred shares in CaixaGalicia and CaixaNova

The Memorandum of Understanding on Financial-Sector Policy Conditionality was signed by the European Union and Spain on 20 July 2012. The memorandum provides for rules to be established to guarantee subordinated liability. Subordinated liability means creditors' rights over funds held by Spain's financial institutions, and over the funds of customers of a particular kind who have accepted a subsidiary risk with the institution, are protected. The latter customers include holders of Caixa Galicia and Caixanova preferred shares.

These two savings banks in Galicia began marketing preferred shares in 2003 and 2005 respectively, raising millions of euros to expand their capital. All these transactions which for years enabled Spain's financial system to expand were carried out under what is alleged to be fraud in law (Articles 6 and 7 of the Civil Code), as legislation in force stemming from Directive 2004/39/EC of 21 April 2004, which lays down the rights of consumers of financial products of this kind, and the rules of the Spanish Securities and Exchange Commission concerning the purchase of products of this kind were known but not complied with. In marketing these financial products financial institutions should have provided large quantities of information about them and warned their customers of the precise risks they would be running. These minimum legal requirements were not met in any of these cases; information was wrong or even concealed, tricking people who did not have any training in finance in order to sell these complex financial products.

Spain's civil law allows any contract to be invalidated on the simple grounds of 'vicio de consentimiento' or 'imperfect consent' (Article 1265 of the Civil Code). In the case of these preferred shares, failure to comply with existing legislation would presuppose imperfect consent which would invalidate the contracts.

Is the Commission aware that a large number of Caixa Galicia's and Caixanova's preferred shares — which would be affected by the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding — may well be invalid under Spanish law?

Should these preferred shares prove to be invalid, how will the Commission enforce the memorandum of understanding without affecting the funds of the thousands of small savers who were tricked in this way?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission approved on 28 November 2012 the restructuring plan for NCG Banco (result of the integration of Caixanova and Caja de Ahorros de Galicia). All measures envisaged in the plan aim at ensuring the soundness and the viability of the bank in compliance with state aid rules. In addition to this, the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the Spanish authorities and the Commission, acting on behalf of the euro area Member States, establishes that subordinated liability exercises have to be conducted for hybrid capital, including preference shares.

The Commission is aware of allegations of potential mis-selling as regards the sale of preference shares by some banks. Such allegations are for the Spanish judicial system to investigate and assess.

The Honourable Member can rest assured that the Commission promotes consumer protection principles. More concretely, the MoU establishes that consumer protection should be strengthened as regards hybrid instruments. In light of this, the Spanish authorities approved Law 9/2012 on the restructuring and resolution of credit institutions (former Royal Decree-Law 24/2012) that envisages certain rules in order to limit the sale by banks of preference shares and subordinated debt instruments to non-qualified retail clients.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009393/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Έξοδος ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων από τη χώρα

Πρόσφατα ανακοινώθηκε η πρόθεση δύο εκ των μεγαλύτερων ελληνικών επιχειρήσεων να αλλάξουν έδρα. Συγκεκριμένα, η εταιρία ΦΑΓΕ αποφάσισε να μετακινήσει την έδρα της στο Λουξεμβούργο, ενώ η εταιρία COCA COLA 3E ΑΕ αποφάσισε τη μετακίνησή της στην Ελβετία. Οι κινήσεις αυτές αποτελούν σαφέστατα ένα πρώτο βήμα πριν την απεγκατάσταση και των παραγωγικών τμημάτων αυτών των επιχειρήσεων, ενώ, σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες, θεωρείται βέβαιο ότι την ίδια πρακτική σκοπεύουν να ακολουθήσουν σύντομα και άλλες ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις. Όλα αυτά συμβαίνουν ενώ η εφαρμοζόμενη πολιτική του μνημονίου στην Ελλάδα επιφέρει, εκτός των άλλων, συνεχείς μειώσεις μισθών, κατάργηση των συλλογικών συμβάσεων εργασίας καθώς και εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων.

Οι υπό αποχώρηση επιχειρήσεις αιτιολογούν τις αποφάσεις τους τονίζοντας ότι «η δραστηριότητα στην Ελλάδα συρρικνώνεται λόγω περιορισμού της ζήτησης», «τα επενδυτικά σχήματα φεύγουν από τη Νότια Ευρώπη λόγω του ρίσκου, το οποίο οφείλεται κυρίως στις ευρωπαϊκές πολιτικές» και ότι «οι ξένες τράπεζες ζητούν υπέρογκα επιτόκια λόγω του ρίσκου της χώρας … μόνο από την αλλαγή έδρας, μία ομολογία ελληνικής εταιρίας μπορεί να γίνει δεκτή με 8% έναντι 14% αν είχε έδρα την Ελλάδα». Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

α. Ποια είναι η δική της αιτιολόγηση για το φαινόμενο ότι, παρά την πρωτοφανή μείωση του εργατικού κόστους, οι επιχειρήσεις αποφασίζουν τη μετακίνησή τους εκτός Ελλάδας; Πώς απαντάει στο ότι, «τα επενδυτικά σχήματα φεύγουν από τη Νότια Ευρώπη λόγω του ρίσκου, το οποίο οφείλεται κυρίως στις ευρωπαϊκές πολιτικές»;

β. Τι πολιτική προτίθεται να εφαρμόσει ώστε να επανέλθει το κλίμα εμπιστοσύνης στην ελληνική αγορά, και, αφ' ενός να επιστρέψουν οι επιχειρήσεις αυτές στη χώρα, αφ' ετέρου να αποφευχθεί η συνέχιση της μετεγκατάστασης και άλλων επιχειρήσεων; Με ποιον τρόπο θα αναστρέψει το ιδιαίτερα δυσμενές κλίμα που έχει δημιουργηθεί στις διεθνείς αγορές απέναντι στις ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις;

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

Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί κρίσιμο να διασφαλιστεί η ανάκτηση της δημοσιονομικής βιωσιμότητας της Ελλάδας και η χώρα να προβεί στις αναγκαίες διαρθρωτικές και δημοσιονομικές μεταρρυθμίσεις που μπορούν αμφότερες να συμβάλλουν στην έγκαιρη επιστροφή στη χρηματοδότηση από τις χρηματαγορές. Εν προκειμένω, τα μέτρα που έχει ήδη λάβει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής η σημαντική δέσμη μέτρων χρηματοδότησης και μείωσης του χρέους που συμφωνήθηκε από το Eurogroup στις 27 Νοεμβρίου θα συμβάλουν στη δημιουργία ευνοϊκότερου κλίματος για τις ελληνικές επιχειρήσεις στις διεθνείς αγορές.

Η Ελλάδα έχει από την πλευρά της σημειώσει σημαντική πρόοδο στη βελτίωση της ανταγωνιστικότητάς της σε όρους μοναδιαίου κόστους εργασίας και βελτίωσης του επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος, ανεβαίνοντας 11 θέσεις το 2013 στην κατάταξη της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζας όσον αφορά το επιχειρείν («Doing Business 2013»). Εφόσον η κατάσταση αυτή διατηρηθεί μακροπρόθεσμα θα ενθαρρυνθούν οι πρόσθετες ροές άμεσων ξένων επενδύσεων και η αύξηση της παραγωγής στη χώρα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009393/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Exit of Greek companies from Greece

It was recently announced that two of the largest Greek companies intended to relocate their headquarters abroad. More specifically, the company FAGE has decided to move its headquarters in Luxembourg, while the company COCA COLA 3E Ltd has decided to move to Switzerland. These moves are quite clearly a first step before the dismantling of the production departments of these companies, and according to reports, it is certain that other Greek companies intend to follow their lead soon. All this is taking place while the Memorandum policy being implemented in Greece is producing, *inter alia*, constant salary reductions and the elimination of collective bargaining agreements and workers' rights.

The companies that are relocating justify their decision by emphasising that economic activity in Greece is shrinking due to falling demand; that investment projects are fleeing southern Europe because of the risk, which is due mainly to European policies; and that foreign banks are imposing exorbitant rates of interest because of the risk that Greece represents. It is thus only by relocating that a Greek company can obtain interest rates of 8% compared to 14% if it were based in Greece.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

A. How does it explain the phenomenon that, despite the unprecedented reduction in labour costs, Greek companies are deciding to move abroad? How does it respond to the statement that 'investment projects are fleeing southern Europe because of the risk, which is mainly due to European policies'?

B. What policy does it intend to pursue so as to restore a climate of confidence in the Greek market and so that, on the one hand, these companies return to Greece and, on the other, more undertakings are dissuaded from also relocating? How will it reverse the highly unfavourable climate created in international markets towards Greek companies?

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

The Commission considers it crucial to ensure that Greece regains fiscal sustainability and undertakes the necessary structural and fiscal reforms which both will contribute to a timely return of private investment. In this respect, the measures already taken by the Greek Government in context of the economic adjustment programme and their continued firm implementation, as well as the the substantial package of financing and debt-reduction measures agreed by the European partners will help to create a more favourable climate for Greek companies in international markets.

Greece has made substantial progress in improving its competitiveness in terms of unit labour costs and improving its business environment, with the country rising 11 places in the World Bank's 'Doing Business 2013' rankings. If sustained in the longer term this will encourage additional foreign direct investment inflows and production in the country.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009394/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Υπόθεση δωροδοκιών της εταιρίας DAIMLER και ενέργειες της Επιτροπής

Οι αρχές των ΗΠΑ, μετά από έρευνα, επέβαλαν πρόστιμο 185 εκατομμυρίων δολαρίων στη γερμανική εταιρία DAIMLER AG διότι η εν λόγω εταιρία και οι θυγατρικές της προχώρησαν σε «ανάρμοστες πληρωμές» ύψους «δεκάδων εκατομμυρίων δολαρίων σε ξένους αξιωματούχους» από τουλάχιστον 22 χώρες, (ανάμεσα τους και η Ελλάδα για την περίοδο 1998-2008) για να βοηθήσουν «στην εξασφάλιση των συμβάσεων για την αγορά των οχημάτων της DAIMLER AG».

Με δεδομένα ότι:

— έρευνα διεξήγαγε και η γερμανική δικαιοσύνη για τις ίδιες περιπτώσεις.

— η Επιτροπή οφείλει να υπερασπίζεται το κοινοτικό δίκαιο και τα χρήματα των ευρωπαίων φορολογούμενων πολιτών,

— υπάρχει δεδικασμένο από την αμερικανική δικαιοσύνη που καταδίκασε τη γερμανική εταιρία για δωροδοκία.

— η Επιτροπή είχε απαντήσει (E-002442/2010) μεταξύ άλλων, σε προηγούμενη ερώτηση μου ότι: «η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει στοιχεία με την συμμετοχή της εταιρίας DAIMLER σε διαγωνισμούς στην Ελλάδα» και ότι «δεν έχει υποβληθεί στην Επιτροπή ή απευθείας στην Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Καταπολέμησης της Απάτης (OLAF) καταγγελία στηριζόμενη στα όσα αναφέρονται στη γραπτή ερώτηση».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ζήτησε στοιχεία ή προτίθεται να ζητήσει στοιχεία με την συμμετοχή της εν λόγω εταιρίας σε διαγωνισμούς στην Ελλάδα;

2. Γνωρίζει το αποτέλεσμα των ερευνών που διεξήγαγε η γερμανική δικαιοσύνη για τις υποθέσεις δωροδοκιών της εταιρίας DAIMLER AG; Αν ναι, ποιο το αποτέλεσμα των ερευνών;

3. Με δεδομένη την καταδικαστική απόφαση της αμερικανικής δικαιοσύνης, σε ποιες ενέργειες προχώρησε η Επιτροπή ώστε να διερευνήσει και αυτή αν υπήρξαν ατασθαλίες σε ό,τι αφορά τις κρατικές προμήθειες, προκειμένου να υπερασπιστεί το κοινοτικό δίκαιο και τα χρήματα των ευρωπαίων πολιτών;

4. Απαγορεύεται από το κοινοτικό δίκαιο να αναλάβει η ίδια πρωτοβουλίες για τη διερεύνηση αυτού του δεδικασμένου και τεράστιου σκανδάλου αντί να περιμένει από τρίτους να της προσκομίσουν στοιχεία; Δεν αποτελεί στοιχείο η οριστική καταδίκη από χώρα όπως οι ΗΠΑ;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Οι αποφάσεις των δικαστηρίων των ΗΠΑ και της Γερμανίας στις οποίες αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου αφορούν, όπως φαίνεται, περιστατικά απάτης και δωροδοκίας. Ως προς το θέμα αυτό, είναι απαραίτητη η υπενθύμιση ότι η άσκηση ποινικής δίωξης για μεμονωμένες υποθέσεις διαφθοράς εμπίπτει στην αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών. Η Επιτροπή δεν παρακολουθεί τις έρευνες που διεξάγονται σε εθνικό επίπεδο, αν και είναι πιθανό να εξετάζει ορισμένες υποθέσεις μόνον εφόσον συνεπάγονται συγκεκριμένες παραβιάσεις της κοινοτικής νομοθεσίας.

Εντούτοις, βάσει των πληροφοριών που διαβιβάστηκαν, φαίνεται ότι οι εν λόγω συμβάσεις συνήφθησαν μεταξύ 1998 και 2004 και έχουν ήδη εκτελεστεί. Συνεπώς, δυνάμει της νομολογίας του Δικαστηρίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, προκύπτει ότι η Επιτροπή δεν είναι σε θέση να ερευνήσει περαιτέρω τις επίμαχες συμβάσεις όσον αφορά πιθανές παραβιάσεις του ενωσιακού δικαίου ([1]). Σε περίπτωση που το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου ενημερώσει την Επιτροπή ότι υφίστανται συμβάσεις υπό εξέλιξη, η Επιτροπή θα τις ερευνήσει προκειμένου να εκτιμήσει αν σημειώθηκαν παρατυπίες από την άποψη της νομοθεσίας για τις δημόσιες συμβάσεις.

([1]) Βλ. υπόθεση C-362/90, Επιτροπή κατά Ιταλικής Δημοκρατίας, Συλλογή 1992 σ. I-02353.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009394/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Case involving bribery by DAIMLER AG and action taken by the Commission

Following an investigation, the U.S. authorities has fined the German company DAIMLER AG USD 185 million because the company and its subsidiaries had made 'improper payments' worth 'tens of millions of dollars to foreign officials' from at least 22 countries (including Greece for the period 1998-2008) in return for assistance 'in securing contracts … for the purchase of Daimler vehicles …'

Given that

— The German judicial authorities have also conducted an investigation into the same cases;

— The Commission has a duty to defend Community law and safeguard European taxpayers' money;

— A US court has already found the German company guilty of bribery;

— The Commission had answered *inter alia* to my previous question (E-002442/2010) that: 'The Commission …does not possess any information related to the participation of the Daimler company in tenders in Greece' and that 'no complaint based on the facts referred to in the written question has so far been lodged before the Commission, or directly before the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Has it requested information, or does it intend to do so in future, on the participation of the company in question in tenders in Greece?

2. Is it aware of the findings of the investigations conducted by the German courts into corruption cases involving the company DAIMLER AG? If so, what was the outcome of the investigations?

3. Given that the US courts have found DAIMLER AG guilty, what action has the Commission taken also to investigate whether there have been any irregularities relating to public procurement in order to defend Community law and safeguard European taxpayers' money?

4. Is it prohibited under Community law from taking initiatives of its own to investigate this *res judicata* which constitutes a huge scandal, instead of waiting for third parties to submit information to it? Does the final conviction of the company in country like the U.S. not constitute such information?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(11 January 2013)

It appears that the decisions of the US and German courts which are mentioned by the Honourable Member concern acts of fraud and bribery. In this respect, it should be recalled that the criminal prosecution of individual corruption cases falls within the competence of Member States. National investigations are not monitored by the Commission, which may look into specific cases only to the extent that they would entail concrete violations of EU legislation.

On the basis of the information communicated, it appears however that the contracts in question have been concluded between 1998 and 2004 and that they have already been performed. This implies that, following the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union, the Commission is not in a position to further investigate the contracts at stake for possible violations of EC law ([1]). Should the Honourable Member communicate to the Commission that there are ongoing contracts, it would look into them in order to appreciate whether there have been irregularities from a public procurement perspective.

([1]) See Case C-362/90, Commission v. Italian Republic, [1992] ECR I-02353.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009395/12
to the Commission
Julie Girling (ECR)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: National bans on the use of bisphenol A

In the past eight months, France, Belgium and Sweden have notified their intention to adopt national bans on the use of bisphenol A, also known as BPA, in certain food contact materials. This is despite the fact that the EU and worldwide regulators, including the World Health Organisation and the European Food Safety Authority, have assessed the substance and concluded that there is no risk deriving from BPA in its intended uses.

These bans, if implemented, would de facto create disruption within the single market as well as in the international trade of these goods. They would also send confused signals to both consumers and businesses, given that they run counter to the international scientific assessments mentioned above.

2012 represents a milestone for the European single market, marking its 20th anniversary. The European project itself is founded on the idea of the single market. The Commission has the important task of guaranteeing that obstacles to the movement of products, services, innovation and creativity are removed.

1. What are the Commission's views on these national measures threatening the single market?

2. How will the Commission act to redress the situation?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Member States referred to in the question have justified their national measures on the grounds of protection of health. In accordance with the framework Regulation on food contact materials ([1]), the Commission has referred the scientific justification provided by the Member States to the European Food Safety Authority which is expected to issue an opinion in May 2013. This opinion should also take account of the most recent scientific data on Bisphenol A.

The Commission awaits EFSA opinion before taking a decision on the national measures and a possible revision of the status of Bisphenol A as food contact material.

([1]) Art. 18 of Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on materials and articles intended to come into contact with food and repealing Directives 80/590/EEC and 89/109/EEC; OJ L338, 13.11.2004; p. 12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009397/12
to the Commission
Bill Newton Dunn (ALDE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Access to vaccines in developing countries

Through the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), the Commission's research budget supports the development of new health products, such as diagnostic tools, vaccines and treatments, for poverty-related and neglected diseases. The EU also supports action to combat such diseases through the Global Fund, the success of which was acknowledged by the Commissioner at the meeting of the Committee on Development of 9 October 2012. As we know, 20% of EU development spending is to be earmarked for health and basic education.

However, it is clear that the right supporting environment in the developing countries where these diseases are often endemic — including adequate local manufacturing capacity, functioning healthcare infrastructures and realistic pricing mechanisms — must be in place if these products are ever going to be made available to those who need them most.

In the light of the above, and in the interest of Policy Coherence for Development, can the Commission say:

1. which EU development instruments and programmes could support the dissemination of new health products for poverty-related diseases?

2. in which specific ways development funds could be channelled to increase access to the health products being developed, in order to ensure that we get the maximum benefit from the taxpayers' money spent in this area through the EU research budget? How might the Commission cooperate specifically with the private sector on this?

3. to what extent the Commission's development and research DGs are cooperating in the development of the second phase of the EDCTP?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(4 January 2013)

The European Union's geographic development instruments aim to strengthen countries' health systems as a whole in order to establish functioning health services that allow health products, new medicines or vaccines, to find a market and reach the population. The Development Cooperation Instrument and European Development Fund have been used to support Global Health initiatives to provide affected countries with new health products.

The authorisation to import medical products is based on the comparative advantages the product could have for its population and is the responsibility of countries' Pharmaceutical Regulatory Authorities. The Global Alliance Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) is already an example of support for public-private partnerships to ensure the dissemination of new vaccines in developing countries after selection of the most interesting products.

Horizon 2020 and the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership II (EDCTP II) are opportunities to ensure strong coherence between research and development objectives.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009398/12
al Consejo
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Armas nucleares en Israel

La posición del Consejo sobre el cumplimiento del Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear está siendo muy estricta con ciertos países en múltiples foros de la comunidad internacional. Esta presión está siendo ejercida continuamente y de manera focalizada con algunos de los países firmantes de dicho Tratado, pero, con vistas a la seguridad internacional, este Tratado no puede suponer el límite de la intervención diplomática del Consejo en este ámbito. La proliferación nuclear es, sin ningún lugar a dudas, la mayor amenaza para la seguridad internacional, así como para los respectivos equilibrios regionales. Más allá de los países firmantes del Tratado de No Proliferación existen otras potencias militares sobre las que pesan numerosas acusaciones y sospechas sobre la posesión de armamento nuclear.

Una de estas potencias militares no firmantes del citado Tratado es Israel. El Gobierno de Israel ha sido acusado en múltiples ocasiones de disponer de dicho tipo de armamento y la comunidad internacional no ha desarrollado ninguna medida importante de presión diplomática para su verificación.

Israel es un país que ha provocado numerosos conflictos en la zona, viola continuamente numerosas resoluciones de las Naciones Unidas, así como la soberanía de prácticamente todos sus vecinos. Es conocida su continua violación de los derechos humanos, dispone de una de las tecnologías militares más avanzadas y es la primera potencia militar de la zona. Creemos suficiente la importancia de estos hechos como para considerar necesario establecer acciones diplomáticas orientadas a la verificación sobre la posesión de armamento nuclear.

El pasado 12 de o*ctubre, la televisión libanesa Al-Manar difundía imágenes tomadas mediante un avión espía que demostraban la existencia de armamento nuclear en territorio israelí.*

Ante estas nuevas pruebas sobre el potencial nuclear de Israel, *¿está valorando el Consejo la potencial posesión de armamento nuclear por parte de Israel? En caso afirmativo, ¿establecerá el Consejo alguna vía diplomática para verificar la posesión de este tipo de armamento fuera del Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear?*

En caso de confirmarse la posesión de armas nucleares, ¿que tipo de medidas o sanciones plantearía el Consejo a Israel?

Respuesta
(11 de febrero de 2013)

La proliferación de armas de destrucción masiva y sus vectores constituye, según la Estrategia Europea de Seguridad, una de las mayores amenazas para la seguridad tanto internacional como de la Unión Europea y, por tanto, hay que abordarla en el plano internacional. La UE utiliza constantemente todos los instrumentos políticos y diplomáticos que tiene a su disposición para afrontar esa amenaza, y ha reiterado abundantemente la importancia de que se incorporen al ordenamiento jurídico de cada país los tratados y acuerdos vigentes de desarme y no proliferación, y las demás obligaciones en virtud del Derecho internacional, y la necesidad de que se apliquen plenamente. Asimismo, la UE ha hecho repetidos llamamientos a todos los países para que establezcan sistemas nacionales efectivos de control de las exportaciones, con el fin de vigilar la exportación y el tránsito de mercancías relacionadas con las armas de destrucción masiva.

En particular, la UE lleva tiempo insistiendo en la importancia de la adhesión universal al Tratado sobre la No Proliferación de las Armas Nucleares, que sigue siendo la piedra angular del régimen internacional contra la proliferación, y ha exhortado a los países que aún no lo han firmado, a que lo hagan, en calidad de Estados no poseedores de armas nucleares.

De acuerdo con el principio de multilateralismo eficaz, que constituye el núcleo de la Estrategia de la UE contra la Proliferación de Armas de Destrucción Masiva, la UE mantiene un diálogo político regular con una serie de países, entre ellos los que todavía no se han adherido al Tratado de No Proliferación, diálogo que incorpora temas de interés en el ámbito del desarme y la no proliferación de armas nucleares.

Desde la Declaración de Barcelona de 1995, la UE lleva poniendo todo su empeño en la creación de una zona libre de armas de destrucción masiva en Oriente Medio, y tratando de alcanzar este objetivo por la libre voluntad de los países de la región; por otra parte, ha apoyado los planes de acción que se adoptaron al respecto en 2010 y que preveían la convocatoria de una conferencia en 2012 para tratar la cuestión. El pasado noviembre se decidió aplazar su celebración. La UE desea que esta conferencia se vuelva a convocar cuanto antes en 2013 y está animando a todos los Estados partes interesados a asistir a ella con espíritu de compromiso. La UE también colabora estrechamente con el Organismo Internacional de Energía Atómica (cuya función es verificar que los programas de energía nuclear se desarrollan conforme a los requisitos más estrictos de seguridad y no proliferación) y con la Organización del Tratado de Prohibición Completa de los Ensayos Nucleares, encargada de verificar el cumplimiento de dicho Tratado.

La UE no cuenta con información de fuentes independientes que le permita determinar que Israel está en posesión de armas nucleares.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009398/12
to the Council
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Nuclear weapons in Israel

The Council is taking a very strict stance in many of the international community's fora in regard to compliance by some countries with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It is exerting constant and focused pressure on certain countries signatory to this Treaty. However international security requires that the Council's diplomatic action in this field does not begin and end with this Treaty. Nuclear proliferation is, without doubt, the greatest threat to international security and regional stability. It is not just countries signatory to the Treaty that have nuclear weapons. Other military powers are often accused or suspected of possessing nuclear weapons too.

Israel is one of the military powers that have not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Israeli Government has often been accused of having nuclear weapons but the international community has not exerted any significant diplomatic pressure to verify this.

Israel has sparked off a good many conflicts in the region, it constantly breaches numerous UN resolutions, and infringes the sovereignty of practically all its neighbours. Its continual violation of human rights is well known, its military technologies are extremely advanced and it is the top-ranking military power in the region. These facts are grounds alone to justify diplomatic steps being taken to ascertain whether Israel does have nuclear weapons.

On 12 October 2012, the Lebanese TV station Al-Manar broadcast pictures taken by a spy plane which prove the existence of nuclear weapons on Israeli territory.

In view of this new proof of Israel's nuclear potential, is the Council assessing Israel's potential possession of nuclear weapons? If so, will the Council open a diplomatic channel to ascertain whether Israel possesses nuclear weapons outside of the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

Should possession of nuclear weapons be confirmed, what kind of measures or sanctions will the Council impose on Israel?

Reply
(11 February 2013)

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has been identified in the European Security Strategy as one of the greatest threats to international and EU security, one that requires a global approach. The EU has continued to make use of all political and diplomatic instruments at its disposal to address that threat, and has constantly underlined the importance of full compliance with, and national implementation of, existing disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements and other relevant international obligations. Furthermore, the EU has been calling on all countries to establish effective systems of national export controls, to monitor the export and transit of WMD-related goods.

In particular, the EU has constantly emphasised the importance of universalising the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and calls on States that have not yet done so to sign up to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon states.

In line with the principle of effective multilateralism, which is at the core of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the EU holds a regular political dialogue with a number of countries, including those that have not yet joined the NPT, which covers topics of interest in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Since the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, the EU has been committed to pursuing a Middle East Zone free of weapons of mass destruction, freely arrived at by the countries of the region, and has supported the NPT action plans adopted in 2010 that called for a Conference to be held on the issue in 2012. The Conference was postponed in November. The EU would like the Conference to be reconvened as soon as possible in 2013 and is calling upon all State parties concerned to attend the Conference in a spirit of compromise. The EU also cooperates closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (in charge of verifying that nuclear energy programmes are developed in accordance with the highest standards of safety, security and non-proliferation), and with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation in charge of the verification of the CTBT.

The EU has no independent information that would allow it to ascertain the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009399/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Παραβίαση των ελληνικών χωρικών υδάτων από την Τουρκία

Στα ελληνικά χωρικά ύδατα εισήλθε το περασμένο Σάββατο η τουρκική κορβέτα «Bafra», κατά τον πλου της μεταξύ Εύβοιας-Άνδρου.

Σύμφωνα με ανακοίνωση του ΓΕΕΘΑ, που εξεδόθη τη Δευτέρα 15.10.2012: η τουρκική κορβέτα «BAFRA», εξερχόμενη από το λιμάνι της Σμύρνης, εισήλθε την 13η Οκτωβρίου (19:00) σε ελληνικά χωρικά ύδατα μεταξύ Εύβοιας-Άνδρου και, κινούμενη μεταξύ Κέας-Κύθνου, εξήλθε την 13η Οκτωβρίου (22:00) ΝΔ της Κύθνου. Στη συνέχεια κινήθηκε σε διεθνή ύδατα δυτικά της Μήλου, ΒΔ της Κρήτης, Νότια της Κρήτης και με ανατολική πορεία απομακρύνθηκε τις πρώτες πρωινές ώρες της 15ης Οκτωβρίου εκτός ορίων FIR Αθηνών.

Η παραβίαση των ελληνικών χωρικών υδάτων από την τουρκική κορβέτα στο Αιγαίο, ήλθε τρεις μέρες μετά την ολοκλήρωση της επίσκεψης του υπουργού Εξωτερικών της Τουρκίας Αχμέτ Νταβούτογλου στην Αθήνα, όπου συμφωνήθηκε η επανέναρξη των διερευνητικών επαφών για την οριοθέτηση της υφαλοκρηπίδας ανάμεσα στην Ελλάδα και στην Τουρκία, ο οποίος και μεταξύ άλλων δήλωσε: «Εμείς πάντοτε επιθυμούμε το Αιγαίο, ως μία θάλασσα ειρήνης και φιλίας, να είναι ανοικτό σε κάθε είδους συνεργασία».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Γιατί η Τουρκία συνεχίζει απτόητη την τελευταία περίοδο τις προκλητικές της παραβιάσεις, και αν αυτή η αδιάλλακτη στάση από την πλευρά της Τουρκίας συνδέεται με την ανοχή που επιδεικνύουν ΕΕ και ΝΑΤΟ σε σχέση με το θέμα της Συρίας που απασχολεί την ΕΕ και το Νάτο κατά το τελευταίο διάστημα;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή υπενθυμίζει ότι η απαίτηση για καλές σχέσεις γειτονίας αντικατοπτρίζεται στο διαπραγματευτικό πλαίσιο για την Τουρκία που συμφωνήθηκε τον Οκτώβριο του 2005, το οποίο ορίζει ότι η πρόοδος των ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων θα αξιολογείται σε συνάρτηση, μεταξύ άλλων, με «τη σαφή δέσμευση της Τουρκίας για σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας».

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου που περιλαμβάνονται στην έκθεση προόδου του 2012 ([1]), όπου αναφέρεται ότι «η Τουρκία πρέπει να δεσμευτεί κατηγορηματικά υπέρ των σχέσεων καλής γειτονίας και του ειρηνικού διακανονισμού διαφορών βάσει του Χάρτη των Ηνωμένων Εθνών, προσφεύγοντας κατά περίπτωση στο Διεθνές Δικαστήριο. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η Ένωση εκφράζει σοβαρές ανησυχίες και απευθύνει έκκληση για την αποφυγή κάθε απειλής, αιτίας προστριβών ή ενεργειών που μπορούν να βλάψουν τις σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας και τον ειρηνικό διακανονισμό διαφορών.»

Η Επιτροπή επαναλαμβάνει συνεχώς αυτή τη θέση σε κάθε κατάλληλη ευκαιρία.

Η Επιτροπή ελπίζει ότι η διαδικασία των διερευνητικών συνομιλιών μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Τουρκίας που αποσκοπεί στην αντιμετώπιση ορισμένων θεμάτων που ανακύπτουν στις διμερείς σχέσεις θα έχει πιο θετικά αποτελέσματα από αυτά του τελευταίου γύρου των συνομιλιών που πραγματοποιήθηκαν στις 18 Οκτωβρίου 2012.

Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι σε θέση να σχολιάσει θέματα που εμπίπτουν στην αρμοδιότητα άλλων οργανώσεων, όπως στη συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση του ΝΑΤΟ ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf
([2]) ΝΑΤΟ = Οργανισμός Βορειοατλαντικού Συμφώνου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009399/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Infringement by Turkey of Greek territorial waters

Last Saturday, the Turkish corvette 'Bafra' entered Greek territorial waters, setting a course between Evvoia and Andros.

According to the Greek Chiefs of Staff (GEETHA), whose statement was issued on Monday 15 October 2012, the Turkish corvette 'Bafra', sailing from the port of Izmir, entered Greek territorial waters on 13 October (19.00), setting a course between Evvoia and Andros and between Kea and Kythnos, before leaving again southwest of Kythnos (22.00) and re-entering international waters, setting a course taking it west of the island of Milos, northwest of Crete and south of Crete, before turning east outside the Athens FIR limits and moving away in the early hours of 15 October.

This infringement of Greek territorial waters by a Turkish corvette in the Aegean occurred just three days after Ahmed Davutoglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister, concluded his visit to Athens, where it was agreed to resume exploratory contacts for the purpose delimiting the continental shelf between Greece and Turkey. The Minister declared, 'We have always wished the Aegean to be peaceful, friendly and open to all forms of cooperation.'

In view of this:

Can the Commission given any explanation for Turkey's recent repeated encroachments and say whether this persistent provocation might in any way be related to the acquiescence displayed by the EU and NATO in respect of the Syrian crisis, which has recently been causing them causing such concern?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission recalls that the requirement of good neighbourly relations is reflected in the negotiating framework for Turkey agreed in October 2005, which sets out that progress in the accession negotiations is to be measured, among other things, against 'Turkey's unequivocal commitment to good neighbourly relations.'

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the Council's conclusions quoted in the 2012 Progress Report ([1]), which read that, 'Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice. In this context, the Union expresses serious concerns and urges the avoidance of any kind of threat, source of friction or action which could damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes.'

The Commission consistently reiterates this position on all appropriate occasions.

The Commission hopes that the process of exploratory talks between Greece and Turkey — aimed at addressing certain issues arising in bilateral relations — will have a positive outcome further to the latest round of the talks on October 18 2012.

The Commission is not in a position to comment on issues falling in the competence of other organisations, in this case NATO ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf
([2]) NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009400/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ένταξη της τέως Ανατολικής Γερμανίας στην ΕΕ

Η πρώην κομμουνιστική Ανατολική Γερμανία εντάχθηκε στις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 1990 στην τότε ΕΟΚ. Το κόστος για την ένταξη της υπανάπτυκτης αυτής χώρας και η σύγκλισή της προς την υπόλοιπη τότε ΕΟΚ ήταν τεράστιο και είχε βαρύτατες συνέπειες για τη συνοχή των χωρών, τις χώρες συνοχής, μεταξύ των οποίων και της Ελλάδας, οι οποίες έχασαν πολύτιμους κοινοτικούς πόρους προς όφελος της Ανατολικής Γερμανίας. Για την ένταξη της τέως κομμουνιστικής (και άκρως προβληματικής) αυτής περιοχής ουδέποτε ερωτήθηκαν οι υπόλοιπες χώρες μέλη της τότε ΕΟΚ και σήκωσαν — χωρίς να διαμαρτυρηθούν — οικονομικό βάρος που δεν τους αναλογούσε.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιο ήταν το συνολικό κόστος για την ΕΕ από την ένταξη της πρώην Ανατολικής Γερμανίας στην Ένωση;

2. Ποιο το συνολικό ποσό που έλαβε η περιοχή αυτή από τα Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία και την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων (ως χαμηλότοκα δάνεια) από το 1990 ως σήμερα;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Τα διαθέσιμα στοιχεία αφορούν τα προγράμματα για όλες τις περιφέρειες της πρώην Ανατολικής Γερμανίας από το 1994 και έπειτα. Η χρηματοδότηση προέρχεται από τα εξής όργανα: το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΤΠΑ)· το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (ΕΚΤ) και το Ευρωπαϊκό Γεωργικό Ταμείο Προσανατολισμού και Εγγυήσεων (ΕΓΤΠ). Η χρηματοδότηση για το πρόγραμμα υποδομών «Bundesprogramm Verkehr» (Ομοσπονδιακό πρόγραμμα μεταφορών) από το ΕΤΠΑ έχει κατανεμηθεί μόνο σε περιφέρειες της πρώην Ανατολικής Γερμανίας και, επομένως, περιλαμβάνεται στον υπολογισμό για την περίοδο 2007-2013.

Τα εν λόγω δεδομένα δεν περιλαμβάνουν προγράμματα ή πρωτοβουλίες της Κοινότητας σε ομοσπονδιακό επίπεδο, καθώς η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να αποκτήσει αξιόπιστα δεδομένα σχετικά με τη διάθεση συγκεκριμένων χρηματοδοτήσεων σε περιφέρειες της πρώην Ανατολικής Γερμανίας. Στις περιπτώσεις που τα δεδομένα για το Βερολίνο περιελάμβαναν το ανατολικό και το δυτικό μέρος της πόλης, τα εν λόγω στοιχεία δεν συμπεριλήφθησαν στους υπολογισμούς. Αν και τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία για συγκεκριμένες περιόδους περιελάμβαναν, επίσης, το Χρηματοδοτικό Μέσο Προσανατολισμού για την Αλιεία (ΧΜΠΑ) και το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Αλιείας (ΕΤΑ), καθώς η διαχείρισή τους πραγματοποιείται σε εθνικό επίπεδο, τα στοιχεία για την περιφερειακή κατανομή των χρηματοδοτήσεων στις περιφέρειες της πρώην Ανατολικής Γερμανίας δεν μπορούσαν να εξακριβωθούν.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τα παραπάνω, οι περιφέρειες της πρώην Ανατολικής Γερμανίας έχουν λάβει μέχρι και σήμερα 39,5 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία.

Όσον αφορά το συνολικό ποσό που έχει λάβει η περιοχή αυτή από την Ευρωπαϊκή Τράπεζα Επενδύσεων (ΕΤΕ), η Επιτροπή δεν έχει στη διάθεση της αυτές τις πληροφορίες και προτείνει στον κ. βουλευτή να επικοινωνήσει απευθείας με την ΕΤΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009400/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Accession of former East Germany to the EU

In the early 1990s, the former Communist East Germany became a member of what was then the EEC, despite lagging behind in terms of growth. The cost of its entry and convergence with other Member States had a massive impact on the cohesion countries, including Greece, which forfeited valuable Community funding as a result. The other EEC Member States were never at any moment consulted regarding the entry of this former Communist country (which was facing acute difficulties) and they bore a disproportionately heavy burden without demur.

In view of this:

1. What has been the total cost to the EU of the accession of former East Germany?

2. What has been the total amount received by this country from the structural funds and the European Investment Bank (in the form of low-interest loans) from 1990 up to the present day?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

The figures available include the programmes from all Eastern German regions from 1994 onwards. The funding derives from the following instruments: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); European Social Fund (ESF) and European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). The ERDF funded infrastructure programme 'Bundesprogramm Verkehr' is only allocated to Eastern German regions and is therefore also included in the calculation for the 2007-13 period.

The data does not include programmes or Community Initiatives at federal level as the Commission cannot obtain reliable data on the allocation of specific funding to Eastern German regions. When data for Berlin included both the eastern and western part of the city, it was excluded from the calculations. Although the Structural Funds for certain periods also included the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), as they are managed at national level, data on the regional allocation of the funding to Eastern German regions could not be retrieved.

Taking the above into account, the Eastern German regions have received up to now EUR 39.5 billion from the Structural Funds.

Concerning the total amount received from the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Commission does not have this information and suggests that the Honourable Member contacts directly the EIB.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009401/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Μεταναστευτικά ρεύματα από τη Συρία

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατα στοιχεία της Ύπατης Αρμοστείας του ΟΗΕ για του Σύριους, 294 000 Σύριοι πέρασαν σε γειτονικές χώρες, ενώ ενδέχεται ο αριθμός αυτός να εκτοξευτεί στις 700 000 στα τέλη του τρέχοντος έτους, εξαιτίας των συνεχιζόμενων συγκρούσεων. Αξίζει να διαβάσουμε τα δημοσιεύματα που αναφέρονται στο «Σχέδιο φιλοξενίας 20 000 προσφύγων από τη Συρία σε Ρόδο και Κρήτη» και να σκεφτούμε την ανείπωτη ανθρώπινη τραγωδία που κρύβεται πίσω από τις λέξεις. Έτσι λοιπόν «Η Ελλάδα ετοιμάζεται να φιλοξενήσει έως και 20 000 πρόσφυγες από τη Συρία, σύμφωνα με το χρονοδιάγραμμα που προβλέπεται από το Υπουργείο Δημόσιας Τάξης, στο πλαίσιο του Χάρτη των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για την υποδοχή των προσφύγων, δήλωσε την Πέμπτη το Υπουργείο».

Με δεδομένο ότι δεν τηρείται καμία συμφωνία από την Τουρκία, η οποία, αφενός, δεν έχει κανένα συμφέρον από τη διαφύλαξη των συνόρων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και, αφετέρου, φαίνεται ότι κλιμακώνει την ένταση μεταξύ αυτής και της Συρίας και με δεδομένο ότι η Ελλάδα αποτελεί τον πρώτο σταθμό για τους Σύριους πρόσφυγες,

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Τι μέτρα σκοπεύει να λάβει ώστε να θέσει ξεκάθαρες κόκκινες γραμμές στις συνεχιζόμενες παραβιάσεις της Τουρκίας εις βάρος της Ελλάδας;

2. Πώς προτίθεται να αντιμετωπίσει το νέο κύμα προσφύγων προς στην Ελλάδα, με δεδομένη την οικονομική κατάσταση της χώρας, αλλά και το ποσοστό λαθρομεταναστών που έχει ξεπεράσει κάθε προηγούμενο συγκριτικά με τον πληθυσμό της χώρας και προσλαμβάνει καθημερινά διαστάσεις ωρολογιακής βόμβας για την κοινωνική συνοχή του έθνους;

Απάντηση της κας Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Τα κράτη μέλη πρέπει να διασφαλίζουν ότι οι εθνικές πολιτικές τους για το άσυλο και τη μετανάστευση είναι προστατευτικές και αποτελεσματικές.

Η Επιτροπή, από κοινού με τους οργανισμούς της Ένωσης στηρίζει αδιαλείπτως την Ελλάδα για τη μεταρρύθμιση των πολιτικών της στον τομέα του ασύλου και της μετανάστευσης.

Η Επιτροπή βρίσκεται σε στενή επαφή με τις ελληνικές αρχές και είναι έτοιμη να παράσχει την αναγκαία στήριξη για να αντιμετωπίσει η Ελλάδα τις προκλήσεις που συνδέονται με τις αφίξεις υπηκόων τρίτων χωρών από τη Συρία. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, μπορούν επίσης να αποσταλούν εμπειρογνώμονες στον τομέα του ασύλου της ΕΥΥΑ για παροχή βοήθειας επιτόπου.

Έχοντας ολοκληρώσει τη διαπραγμάτευση της συμφωνίας επανεισδοχής ΕΕ-Τουρκίας, στις 21 Ιουνίου 2012, η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να καταβάλλει προσπάθειες για να πείσει τις τουρκικές αρχές να υπογράψουν την εν λόγω συμφωνία και να την κυρώσουν το συντομότερο δυνατό. Μέχρι τη θέση σε ισχύ της συμφωνίας επανεισδοχής ΕΕ-Τουρκίας, η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει επίσης να υπενθυμίζει στις τουρκικές αρχές την ανάγκη να εφαρμόσουν πλήρως και αποτελεσματικά τις υποχρεώσεις επανεισδοχής με όλα τα κράτη μέλη, καθώς και να εντείνουν τις προσπάθειές τους για να παρεμποδίζουν τις παράνομες μεταναστευτικές ροές να εξέρχονται από το τουρκικό έδαφος κατευθυνόμενες προς την ΕΕ. Σύμφωνα με τα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου που εγκρίθηκαν στις 21 Ιουνίου 2012, η Επιτροπή βρίσκεται σε επαφή με τις τουρκικές αρχές για να δρομολογήσει ένα πλαίσιο διαλόγου και συνεργασίας για όλα τα θέματα που αφορούν τον τομέα της δικαιοσύνης και των εσωτερικών υποθέσεων, καθώς και να λάβει μέτρα για την ελευθέρωση των θεωρήσεων, παράλληλα με την υπογραφή της συμφωνίας επανεισδοχής μεταξύ της Τουρκίας και της ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009401/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Influx of immigrants from Syria

According to recent figures from the UNHCR regarding Syrians, 294 000 Syrians have crossed into neighbouring countries, a figure that is likely to soar to 700 000 by the end of this year because of the ongoing conflict. The publications referred to in the plan to accommodate 20 000 refugees from Syria in Rhodes and Crete make interesting reading and we should pause to consider the unspeakable human tragedy behind the words. The Ministry stated on Thursday that Greece was preparing to accommodate up to 20 000 refugees from Syria, according to the timetable set by the Ministry of Public Order, under the UN Convention on refugees.

Given that no agreement is respected by Turkey, which has no interest in securing the borders of the European Union, and that tension between it and Syria seems to be rising, and given that Greece is the first stop for Syrian refugees;

Will the Commission say:

1. What steps does it intend to take to put down clear red lines as regards the ongoing violations by Turkey in respect of Greece?

2. How does it intend to deal with the new wave of refugees to Greece, given the economic situation of the country, but also the percentage of illegal immigrants which has exceeded all previous crises in relation to the population of the country and which is increasingly becoming a time bomb for social cohesion in Greece?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

Member States should ensure that their national asylum and migration policies are both protective and efficient.

The Commission, together with Union Agencies and other stakeholders, is continuously supporting Greece towards reforming its asylum and migration policies.

The Commission is in close contact with the Greek authorities and stands ready to provide the necessary support to Greece to cope with challenges linked to the arrivals of third-country nationals from Syria. In this context EASO asylum experts can also be deployed to provide assistance on the ground.

Having concluded the negotiation of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement on 21 June 2012, the Commission will continue making efforts in view of persuading the Turkish authorities to sign this agreement and to ratify it as soon as possible. Until the entry into force of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement, the Commission also will continue to remind the Turkish authorities about the need to fully and effectively implement their readmission obligations with all Member States, as well as to step up their efforts to prevent irregular migration flows from exiting Turkish territory directed towards the EU. In line with the Council conclusions adopted on 21 June 2012, the Commission is in contact with the Turkish authorities in view of launching a dialogue and cooperation framework in all Justice and Home Affairs matters, and to take steps toward visa liberalisation, in parallel to the signature of the readmission agreement between Turkey and the EU.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009403/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(16 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Informe de la ciudadanía de la UE de 2013 y la violencia contra las mujeres

La DG Justicia llevó a cabo una consulta pública sobre el Informe de la Ciudadanía de la Unión Europea de 2013 bajo el título «Ciudadanos de la UE — Tus derechos, tu futuro» entre el 9 de mayo y el 9 de septiembre de 2012.

La violencia contra las mujeres sigue siendo un problema grave en los Estados miembros de la UE puesto que socava los principales derechos fundamentales de la mujer. La igualdad entre las mujeres y los hombres es un principio fundamental de la UE que es reconocido en los tratados de la UE y en la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea. Efectivamente, el problema de la violencia contra las mujeres se aborda en varios artículos de la Carta, por ejemplo, en aquellos artículos relativos a la dignidad humana (artículo 1), al derecho a la vida (artículo 2), al derecho a la integridad de la persona (artículo 3), a la prohibición de la tortura y de las penas o los tratos inhumanos o degradantes (artículo 4), al derecho a la libertad y a la seguridad (artículo 6) y a la no discriminación (artículo 21). La Comisión ha reiterado la determinación de la UE de combatir la violencia de género en su «Estrategia para la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres 2010-2015» de 21 de septiembre de 2010.

Sin embargo, en la consulta mencionada anteriormente, solo una de las preguntas versaba sobre discriminación (pregunta número 4, con respecto a la discriminación por razón de nacionalidad).

1. ¿Por qué la Comisión no ha incluido ninguna pregunta relativa a la violencia contra las mujeres, ya que este asunto afecta a los derechos fundamentales de la mujer y es un factor determinante para el futuro de las mujeres en la EU?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que el paquete de medidas en favor de las víctimas presenta un enfoque holístico hacia este problema de gran envergadura? ¿Es por ello que no se ha incluido ninguna pregunta relativa a la violencia contra las mujeres en el Informe de la Ciudadanía de la UE de 2013?

3. ¿Considerará la Comisión la elaboración de una directiva integral sobre la violencia de género contra las mujeres?

4. ¿Tiene la intención la Comisión de reconocer públicamente la falta de perspectiva de género en la consulta pública mencionada anteriormente?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de diciembre de 2012)

El objetivo de la consulta pública en línea sobre la ciudadanía de la UE que la Comisión abrió el 9 de mayo de 2012 y que concluyó en septiembre de 2012, es ayudar a la Comisión a identificar los obstáculos con que se encuentran los ciudadanos de la Unión en el ejercicio de los derechos que les otorga la UE en situaciones transfronterizas y hallar soluciones concretas para eliminarlos. Los resultados de la consulta se reflejan en el Informe sobre la ciudadanía de la Unión de 2013 elaborado por la Comisión.

El hecho de que la UE se comprometa a facilitar la vida de los ciudadanos de la UE en situaciones transfronterizas y se esfuerce por hacer realidad la ciudadanía de la Unión no significa que no promueva los valores de la UE y no proteja los derechos fundamentales de todos los ciudadanos en la EU.

La Comisión está firmemente comprometida en pro de reforzar la política de lucha contra todas las formas de violencia contra la mujer, tanto en el territorio de la UE como en el ámbito de las relaciones exteriores.

El paquete legislativo relativo a las víctimas ([1]) elaborado por la Comisión aborda, en el contexto de los procedimientos judiciales, las necesidades de las mujeres que son víctimas de la violencia. Estos instrumentos ofrecen un enfoque general para la protección y asistencia a todas estas mujeres.

([1]) Compuesto por la Directiva, recientemente adoptada, por la que se establecen normas mínimas sobre los derechos, el apoyo y la protección de las víctimas de delitos y la propuesta de Reglamento sobre el reconocimiento mutuo de las medidas de protección materia civil, destinado a complementar la Directiva de 2011 sobre la orden europea de protección.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009403/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: 2013 EU Citizenship Report and violence against women

A public consultation on the 2013 EU Citizenship Report entitled 'EU citizens — your rights, your future' was carried out by DG Justice between 9 May and 9 September 2012.

Violence against women continues to be a pressing problem across the EU Member States, undermining women's fundamental rights. Equality between women and men is a core EU principle, which is recognised in the EU treaties and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Violence against women can be seen as being addressed by several Articles of the Charter — such as those referring to the rights to human dignity (Article 1), life (Article 2) and integrity of the person (Article 3), the prohibition of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 4), and the rights to liberty and security (Article 6) and non-discrimination (Article 21). The European Commission reaffirmed the EU's determination to combat gender-based violence in its 'Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015' (21 September 2010).

However, only one question in the consultation was related to discrimination (question 4, about national discrimination).

1. Why did the Commission not include any question about violence against women, given that this issue affects women's fundamental rights and is of key importance to the future of European women?

2. Does the Commission consider that the Victims' Package offers a holistic approach to this core problem? Was this why it was not included in the 2013 EU Citizenship Report?

3. Will the Commission consider the preparation of an integral Directive on gender-based violence against women?

4. Does the Commission intend to publicly recognise the lack of gender perspective in the abovementioned public consultation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(7 December 2012)

The objective of the public online consultation on EU Citizenship launched by the Commission on 9 May 2012, and closed end September 2012, is to help the Commission identify remaining obstacles EU citizens encounter in the enjoyment of their EU rights in cross border situations, as well as concrete solutions to remove these obstacles. The results of this consultation will be reflected in the Commission's 2013 EU Citizenship Report.

The fact that the EU endeavours to make the life of its EU citizens in cross border situations easier and strives to give substance to the status of EU citizenship does not mean that it is not carrying out policies to promote EU values and protect the fundamental rights of all citizens within the EU.

The Commission is notably committed to a strengthened policy response to combat all forms of violence against women within the EU territory and in its external relations policies.

The Commission's Victims Package ([1]) addresses the needs of women who are victims of violence in the context of judicial proceedings. These instruments offer a comprehensive approach to the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women.

([1]) Consisting of the recently adopted Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and the proposed Regulation on the mutual recognition of civil law protection measures, to complement the 2011 Directive on the European Protection Order.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009404/12
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Child soldiers in Mali

The Commission has pledged its commitment to promoting children's universal rights and responding to their basic needs both within the EU and within a global context. The Commission's Action Plans on 'Children's Rights in External Action' and 'Children in Situations of Emergency and Crisis' clearly lay down a framework for child protection in the areas of separation from parents, armed forces or groups, and education.

Could the Commission therefore state what action it proposes to take in Mali, where the UN and the BBC believe that children are being bought from families by extremist Islamist militants and used as child soldiers and even as possible suicide bombers?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

In accordance with EU Guidelines on children and armed conflict, especially its 2010 Revised Implementation Strategy, the EU monitors closely any reports concerning violation of children's rights and remains in close relation with Human Rights and grassroots organisations in northern Mali, who are monitoring events through field visits.

However, given the situation in Mali at present, it is difficult to have an impact through the use of any of the usual diplomatic tools (informal contacts with the govt, political dialogue, démarches…).

On 15 October 2012, the Council expressed its concern about human rights violations and its full commitment to resolve the current crisis in Mali. It also recalled the possibility of adopting sanctions against those involved in terrorist groups in northern Mali.

The EU, through its humanitarian budget, is providing protection and assistance to the victims of the conflict in North Mali. All humanitarian agencies are mainstreaming the protection of civilians, including children, in their programmes. Recently, additional EU humanitarian funds have been provided to the ICRC for major food assistance in North Mali. All ICRC programmes include dissemination of international humanitarian law against the enrolment of children to armed groups.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009405/12
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(16 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Commissaris Kroes en de Nederlandse TweedeKamerverkiezingen

Ik dank de heer Barroso voor zijn antwoord op mijn eerdere vragen over commissaris Kroes, die zich heeft bemoeid met de verkiezingscampagne in Nederland (E-007890/2012). Uit zijn antwoord maak ik op dat mevrouw Kroes van mening is dat zij geen campagne heeft gevoerd tijdens de Nederlandse Tweedekamerverkiezingen, maar slechts feitelijke informatie heeft verstrekt over de EU en dat zij hem daarom niet in kennis heeft gesteld van haar politieke activiteiten tijdens die verkiezingen.

Ik hecht eraan te stellen dat mevrouw Kroes niet slechts onjuiste informatie heeft gecorrigeerd maar zich herhaaldelijk heeft uitgesproken tegen een bepaalde politieke partij die kan worden gezien als een rivaal voor haar eigen partij. Als zodanig heeft zij wel degelijk campagne gevoerd tegen de PVV en daarmee vóór haar eigen partij, de VVD.

Daarbij heeft mevrouw Kroes zich niet beperkt tot het geven van informatie, maar heeft zij zich in politieke zin uitgelaten. Zij heeft meermalen gesproken over uitsluiting van de PVV als coalitiepartner (op 1.9.2012 op Zafira-net en in het Algemeen Dagblad) ([1]).

In de Nederlandse politieke verhoudingen is het al dan niet kunnen toetreden tot een coalitie van groot belang. Het uitsluiten van de PVV van deelname aan een coalitie met de VVD door mevrouw Kroes is een belangrijk politiek feit. Dat brengt mij tot de volgende vragen:

1. Heeft mevrouw Kroes de Commissievoorzitter in kennis gesteld van haar partijpolitieke activiteiten tijdens de Nederlandse Tweedekamerverkiezingen?

2. Heeft de voorzitter haar daarvoor van tevoren toestemming verleend?

3. Op welke grond heeft de voorzitter geoordeeld dat het gedrag van mevrouw Kroes voldoet aan de gedragscode voor commissarissen, gezien haar uitspraken op 1 september jl.?

Antwoord van de heer Barroso namens de Commissie
(13 november 2012)

1-2. De Commissie bevestigt haar antwoord op de vorige vraag van het geachte Parlementslid (E-07890/2012). Hiermee drukt ze uit dat de uitlatingen van de voor de digitale agenda verantwoordelijke vicevoorzitter van de Commissie in de door bovengemelde vraag vermelde video-uitzending niet als inmenging in de recente Nederlandse verkiezingscampagne kunnen worden beschouwd. De deelname van de vicevoorzitter voor de digitale agenda van de Commissie samen met persoonlijkheden van andere politieke partijen aan een gezamenlijk initiatief kan in geen geval worden beschouwd als politieke campagnevoering voor een specifieke partij.

3. De Commissieleden zijn politieke persoonlijkheden. De Gedragscode voor Commissieleden erkent dat zij politiek actief mogen zijn op voorwaarde dat dit hun beschikbaarheid ten dienste van de Commissie of hun onafhankelijkheid in hun functie niet in het gedrang brengt.

([1]) 1 september 2012, Tweedekamerverkiezingen.2012.zafira.net. Eurocommissaris Neelie Kroes wil dat de VVD een nieuwe samenwerking met de PVV uitsluit. 1 september 2012, Algemeen Dagblad. (Over de PVV) „Daar moet je niet mee in zee willen, alles hangt af van de stemming waarmee één man's ochtends uit bed is gestapt".

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009405/12
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Commissioner Kroes's involvement in the Dutch general election campaign

I should like to thank Mr Barroso for his answer to my previous question concerning the part played by Commissioner Kroes in the Dutch general election campaign (E-007890/2012). I gather from that answer that Ms Kroes takes the view that in making her statements she was not getting involved in the general election campaign, but merely providing factually correct information about the EU, which is why she did not inform Mr Barroso about her political activities during the election campaign.

I should like to make it clear that Ms Kroes did not merely correct factually inaccurate information, but repeatedly spoke out against a particular political party which can be seen as a rival to her own. On that basis, she certainly did campaign against the PVV and for her own party, the VVD.

In other words, Ms Kroes did not confine herself to providing information, but made political statements relevant to the campaign. On several occasions she emphasised the unsuitability of the PVV as a coalition partner (on 1 September 2012 on Zafira-net and in the *Algemeen Dagblad*) ([1]).

In Dutch politics, participation or otherwise in a coalition is a big deal. Ms Kroes's wish to see the PVV excluded from a coalition with the VVD is an important political matter, and one which prompts the following questions:

1. Did Ms Kroes inform the Commission President of her party political activities during the Dutch general election campaign?

2. Did the Commission President approve those activities in advance?

3. In the light of the statements Ms Kroes made on 1 September 2012, on what basis did the Commission President decide that her actions were consistent with the Code of Conduct for Commissioners?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(13 November 2012)

1-2. The Commission confirms its answer to the Honourable Member' previous question (E-07890/2012) stating that the declarations of the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda contained in the video broadcast mentioned in the above referred question can not be considered as a participation in the recent Dutch election campaign. The participation of the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for the Digital Agenda, together with personalities from other political parties, to a joint initiative can in no way be considered as an act of political campaign for a specific party.

3. The Members of the Commission are political personalities. The Code of Conduct for Commissioners acknowledges that they may be politically active provided that this does not compromise their availability for service in the Commission or their independence in their functions.

([1]) 1 September 2012, Tweedekamerverkiezingen.2012.zafira.net. Commissioner Neelie Kroes wants the VVD to rule out further cooperation with the PVV. 1 September 2012, Algemeen Dagblad (about the PVV): 'I don't think we should throw in our lot with them again, given that everything depends on one man's mood when he gets up in the morning'.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009406/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Kafkaesque treatment of air passengers

What, if anything, has the Commission done to rectify the situation, exposed in my previous questions to it, whereby alcohol can be randomly confiscated halfway through a journey when changing planes?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The restrictions on the carriage of liquids that are applicable at airports in the European Union serve to address the threat posed by liquid explosives that may be concealed in liquids, aerosol, or gel containers.

The Commission is working towards the removal of all restrictions on the carriage of liquids in hand luggage. Restrictions would be replaced by methods for screening liquids for potential threat substances.The Commission has recommended that starting in January 2014, passengers transfering at EU airports should be able to carry as hand luggage liquids, gels and aerosols purchased as duty free at non-EU airports and on non-EU air carriers. Certain conditions would apply, however, for example, those purchases would need to be sealed inside a Security Tamper-Evident Bag. To implement these recommendations, the Commission intends to bring forward proposals in autumn 2012.

In the light of the experience gained by this step forward, the Commission would then, if appropriate, bring forward proposals for subsequent phases of removing restrictions more widely with the final objective of a total end to the ban while maintining a high level of security.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009407/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Motorway tolls and taxpayers

What, if any, stretches of motorway have been contributed to or paid for by EU taxpayers' money but are nonetheless tolled if those same taxpayers use them?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

Most motorways in the European Union are built with EU taxpayers' money, including those funded by national authorities only.

Those which are supported from the European Union budget are supported in line with the shared management principle used for the implementation of cohesion policy. Member States are responsible for selecting and implementing these projects, and the Commission does not maintain comprehensive lists of individual projects.

Member States are also responsible for deciding whether and how to introduce road tolling on EU funded motorways. The Commission welcomes the introduction of road tolling as it provides a revenue stream which can finance the maintenance of the road infrastructure and thus guarantees the financial sustainability of the initial investment. Moreover, road tolling is in line with the polluter pays principle as one of the guiding principles of cohesion policy.

Projects co-financed by cohesion policy need to undergo a financial gap analysis. Future revenues from road tolling are taken into account, which reduces the financial gap and thus the contribution from the EU budget.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009408/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Born Free Foundation

Will the Commission confirm whether it has ever instructed, requested or commissioned the Born Free Foundation, of Horsham, Sussex (UK), to carry out a survey entitled 'The EU Zoo Inquiry 2011' on how Council Directive 1999/22/EC on the keeping of wild animals in zoos is being implemented in the Member States?

If the Commission did instruct, request or commission the Born Free Foundation to do any work on its behalf, will it supply details of the remit?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

As stated on previous occasions when responding to similar enquiries from the general public, stakeholders, and Member States, including a significant number of Parliamentary questions on the same issue (e.g. E-004837/2012, E-005760/2011, E-006006/2011, E-000747/2011, E-000705/2011, E-000831/2011, E-0001259/2011) the Commission confirms that it has never instructed, requested or commissioned the Born Free Foundation, of Horsham, Sussex (UK), to carry out a survey entitled 'The EU Zoo Inquiry 2011' on how Council Directive 1999/22/EC ([1]) on the keeping of wild animals in zoos is being implemented in the Member States. While the Commission has been kept informed about its findings and has made clear that it will investigate any alleged breaches of the Zoos Directive that are brought to its attention, it has not endorsed the results of this particular inquiry.

([1]) OJ L 94, 9.4.1999.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009409/12
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR) and Ashley Fox (ECR)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Problems at the border between Gibraltar and Spain

A UK resident of Gibraltarian origin has alleged in writing that the Spanish Government has recently stepped up local border go-slow measures against residents of Gibraltar. Current delays at the frontier exceed five or six hours and would, if deliberately imposed, constitute a breach by Spain of the EU principle of freedom of movement of persons, with potentially serious ramifications. Gibraltar's roads are being blocked by these queues, which are clogging up the territory's already limited road network. This means, for instance, that emergency services are unable to move as freely as before these restrictions were applied, which could unnecessarily put people's lives at risk in the case of a fire or accident. A gridlocked road system will also inevitably have longer-term implications for the economy.

Around 8 000-12 000 people (many of them Spanish citizens) cross into Gibraltar every day to work and these people are being forced to endure hours of queuing both into and out of Gibraltar. As well as economic consequences, there will be environmental and air quality consequences due to static or slow-flowing traffic.

Is the Commission aware of any recent downturn in relations between Spain and Gibraltar? Can it investigate whether these allegations are a deliberate attempt by Spain to make life more difficult for Gibraltarians and therefore constitute economic sanctions against the territory of another Member State (the UK)? Will it raise these concerns with the Government of the Kingdom of Spain?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

Gibraltar is neither part of the area without internal border controls nor of the customs territory of the European Union. Checks on people and goods are therefore carried out at its border with Spain. Under the Schengen Borders Code, all people entering and exiting the Schengen area, including those enjoying the Union right of free movement, should undergo a minimum check to establish their identities on the basis of the production or presentation of their travel documents. This should normally consist of a rapid and straightforward verification.

On entering and exiting the Schengen area, third-country nationals, who are likely to be among those crossing between Spain and Gibraltar, should be subject to thorough checks, involving a detailed examination verifying that they fulfil all entry conditions.

While efficient border management should allow for the smooth flow of legitimate trade and movement of people, border checks may involve delays affecting traffic and travellers.

The Commission has no indications that Spain is deliberately carrying out undue checks on those crossing the border for work, which would restrict their right to free movement.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009410/12
til Kommissionen
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE), Daniel Caspary (PPE) og Esther de Lange (PPE)
(16. oktober 2012)

Om: Ny norsk told på udvalgte landbrugsprodukter

Mandag den 8. oktober 2012 fremlagde den norske regering sit forslag til finanslov for 2013. Et forslag vedrørende budgettet vedrører en omlægning fra specifik told til værditold for seks toldpositioner, herunder oksekød, lammekroppe og hårde oste. Disse ændringer vil træde i kraft fra 1. januar 2013 og reelt øge tolden på udvalgte landbrugsprodukter fra EU.

Den nye foreslåede værditold er på 344 % for oksekød, 429 % på hele og halve slagtekroppe af lam (friske, kølede og frosne), og 277 % på udvalgte oste. 14 udvalgte oste bevarer den nuværende told på 27,15 NOK/kg (Appenzeller, Beaufort, Comté, Gamle Ole, Grana Padano, Gruyère, Le Vieux Pane, Morbier, Munster, parmigiano reggiano, Queso Manchego, Pecorino, Saint Albray og Västerbotten) ([1]).

Er de foreslåede ændringer i beregningen af told forenelige med artikel 19 i aftalen om Det Europæiske Økonomiske Samarbejdsområde?

Blev Kommissionen underrettet om disse forslag før offentliggørelsen, eller har den norske regering ensidigt har besluttet at foretage de foreslåede ændringer?

Er Kommissionen villig til at overveje eventuelle sanktioner eller modforanstaltninger?

Vil den norske regerings forslag påvirke de igangværende forhandlinger mellem Norge og EU om omsætning og gennemførelse af direktivet om posttjenester og bankindskudsgarantiordningen?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Dacian Cioloş
(10. december 2012)

Artikel 19 i aftalen om Det Europæiske Økonomiske Samarbejdsområde (EØS-aftalen), som de ærede medlemmer henviser til, fastsætter en fælles målsætning om, at parterne er forpligtet til at bestræbe sig på at opnå en gradvis liberalisering af handelen med landbrugsprodukter. Forslaget fra den norske regering om at omlægge fra specifik told til værditold strider mod ånden i denne artikel. Kommissionen har understreget, at den er stærkt imod ændringen, og vil, i tilfælde af at ændringen vedtages, undersøge mulighederne for domstolsprøvelse.

Kommissionen blev den 18. september 2012 officielt informeret om, at den norske regering havde besluttet at foreslå en ændring af tolden i budgetforslaget.

Med hensyn til mulige sanktioner eller gengældelsesforanstaltninger, hvis den pågældende ændring vedtages, vil Kommissionen overveje alle de muligheder, der foreligger.

Kommissionen er forpligtet til at sikre, at alle EU's retsakter af relevans for EØS indføjes i EØS-aftalen, herunder det tredje postdirektiv (2008/6/EF) ([2]) og direktivet om indskudsgarantiordninger (2009/14/EF) ([3]). Kommissionen mener ikke, at de seneste forslag fra den norske regering om told på landbrugsprodukter berører de igangværende forhandlinger mellem EU og EØS/EFTA-landene (Island, Liechtenstein og Norge) med hensyn til disse to EU-retsakter af relevans for EØS. Kommissionen vil fortsætte med at presse på for at få en hurtig afslutning af forhandlingerne om disse retsakter inden for den relevante institutionelle ramme for EØS-aftalen.

([1]) De særlige toldændringer kan ses på følgende officielle regeringswebsite: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/press-center/pressemeldinger/2012/changes-to-border-protection-for-selecte.html?id=701321
([2]) EUT L 52 af 27.2.2008, s. 3-20.
([3]) EUT L 68 af 13.3.2009, s. 3-7.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009410/12
an die Kommission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE), Daniel Caspary (PPE) und Esther de Lange (PPE)
(16. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Neue norwegische Zollsätze auf bestimmte landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse

Am Montag, dem 8. Oktober 2012, legte die norwegische Regierung einen Entwurf des Staatshaushaltsplans für das Jahr 2013 vor. Laut einem der Vorschläge im Haushaltsentwurf sollen bei sechs Zolltariflinien, u. a. Beefsteaks und Rinderfilets, Tierkörper von Lämmern und Hartkäse, spezifische Zollsätze durch Wertzollsätze ersetzt werden. Diese Änderungen sollen am 1. Januar 2013 in Kraft treten und werden zu einem Anstieg der Zollsätze auf bestimmte landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse aus der EU führen.

Die neuen vorgeschlagenen Wertzollsätze auf Beefsteaks und Rinderfilets liegen bei 344 %, auf ganze oder halbe Tierkörper von Lämmern (frisch, gekühlt oder gefroren) bei 429 % und auf bestimmte Hartkäsesorten bei 277 %. Bei 14 ausgewählten Käsesorten wird der gegenwärtige Zollsatz von NOK 27,15/kg beibehalten (Appenzeller, Beaufort, Comté, Gamle Ole, Grana Padano, Gruyère, Le Vieux Pané, Morbier, Munster, Parmiggiano Reggiano, Queso Manchego, Pecorino, Saint Albray, Västerbotten) ([1]).

Sind die vorgeschlagenen Änderungen bei der Berechnung der Zollsätze mit Artikel 19 des Abkommens über den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum vereinbar?

Wurde die Kommission vor der Veröffentlichung dieses Entwurfs darüber in Kenntnis gesetzt oder hat die norwegische Regierung einseitig entschieden, die vorgeschlagenen Änderungen durchzuführen?

Ist die Kommission bereit, mögliche Sanktionen oder Vergeltungsmaßnahmen in Betracht zu ziehen?

Wird der Entwurf der norwegischen Regierung gegenwärtige Verhandlungen zwischen Norwegen und der EU über die Umsetzung und Durchführung der Richtlinie über Postdienste und des Bankeinlagensicherungssystems beeinflussen?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(10. Dezember 2012)

Laut dem von der Frau und den Herren Abgeordneten angesprochenen Artikel 19 des Abkommens über den Europäischen Wirtschaftsraum (EWR) verpflichten sich die Vertragsparteien auf das gemeinsame Ziel, ihre Bemühungen um eine schrittweise Liberalisierung des Agrarhandels fortzusetzen. Der Vorschlag der norwegischen Regierung, spezifische Zollsätze durch Wertzollsätze zu ersetzen, widerspricht dem Geist dieses Artikels. Die Kommission hat darauf hingewiesen, dass sie diese Änderung entschieden ablehnt und prüfen wird, welche rechtlichen Möglichkeiten bestehen, wenn der Vorschlag angenommen wird.

Die Kommission wurde am 18. September 2012 offiziell darüber informiert, dass die norwegische Regierung in ihrem Staatshaushaltsplan die Umstellung der Zollsätze vorgeschlagen hat.

Wird die betreffende Änderung erlassen, so wird die Kommission alle Möglichkeiten von Sanktionen oder Vergeltungsmaßnahmen prüfen.

Die Kommission ist bemüht, alle EU-Rechtsakte, die für den EWR von Bedeutung sind, in das EWR-Abkommen einzubeziehen, so u. a. auch die dritte Postrichtlinie (2008/06/EG) ([2]) und die Richtlinie über Einlagensicherungssysteme (2009/14/EG) ([3]). Die jüngsten Vorschläge der norwegischen Regierung über Zölle auf landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse haben nach Auffassung der Kommission keine Auswirkungen auf die laufenden Verhandlungen zwischen der EU und den EWR/EFTA-Ländern (Island, Liechtenstein und Norwegen) über diese beiden EWR-relevanten EU-Rechtsakte. Die Kommission wird weiterhin darauf hinwirken, dass die Verhandlungen über diese Richtlinien innerhalb der geeigneten EWR-Organe zügig zum Abschluss gebracht werden.

([1]) Die spezifischen Änderungen bei den Zolltariflinien können auf folgender offiziellen Website der Regierung eingesehen werden: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/press-center/pressemeldinger/2012/changes-to-border-protection-for-selecte.html?id=701321
([2]) ABl. L 52 vom 27.2.2008, S. 3.
([3]) ABl. L 68 vom 13.3.2009, S. 3.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009410/12
aan de Commissie
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE), Daniel Caspary (PPE) en Esther de Lange (PPE)
(16 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Nieuwe Noorse douanerechten op landbouwproducten

Op maandag 8 oktober 2012 heeft de Noorse regering haar voorstellen voor de nationale begroting van 2013 gepresenteerd. Een van de begrotingsvoorstellen betreft een overgang van specifieke douanerechten naar ad valorem rechten voor zes tarieflijnen, waaronder die voor rundersteaks en -filets, geslachte lammeren en harde kazen. Deze wijzigingen worden op 1 januari 2013 van kracht, hetgeen in feite betekent dat de douanerechten voor bepaalde landbouwproducten uit de EU omhoog gaan.

De nieuwe voorgestelde ad valorem rechten bedragen 344 % voor rundersteaks- en filets, 429 % voor hele en halve geslachte lammeren (vers, gekoeld en ingevroren), en 277 % voor bepaalde harde kazen. Voor veertien specifieke kazen blijft het huidige recht van 27,15 NOK/kg gelden (Appenzeller, Beaufort, Comté, Gamle Ole, Grana Padano, Gruyère, Le Vieux Panè, Morbier, Munster, Parmiggiano Reggiano, Queso Manchego, Pecorino, Saint Albray, Västerbotten) ([1]).

Kan de Commissie bijgevolg antwoord geven op de volgende vragen:

Zijn de voorgestelde wijzigingen ten aanzien van de berekening van de douanerechten in overeenstemming met artikel 19 van de Overeenkomst betreffende de Europese Economische Ruimte?

Is de Commissie voorafgaand aan de publicatie ervan in kennis gesteld van deze voorstellen of heeft de Noorse regering unilateraal besloten de voorgestelde wijzigingen door te voeren?

Is de Commissie bereid eventuele sancties of vergeldingsmaatregelen te overwegen?

Zijn de voorstellen van de Noorse regering van invloed op de lopende onderhandelingen tussen Noorwegen en de EU over de omzetting en tenuitvoerlegging van de richtlijn inzake postdiensten en de bankdepositogarantieregeling?

Antwoord van de heer Cioloş namens de Commissie
(10 december 2012)

In artikel 19 van de Overeenkomst betreffende de Europese Economische Ruimte (EER), waarnaar de geachte Parlementsleden verwijzen, is als gezamenlijke doelstelling bepaald dat de partijen hun inspanningen moeten voortzetten om te komen tot een geleidelijke liberalisering van de handel in landbouwproducten. Het voorstel van de Noorse regering om van specifieke douanerechten naar ad-valoremrechten over te schakelen is in strijd met de geest van dit artikel. De Commissie heeft benadrukt dat zij sterk gekant is tegen die wijziging en dat, als die wordt goedgekeurd, zij zal onderzoeken welke juridische stappen kunnen worden ondernomen.

De Commissie werd op 18 september 2012 officieel ervan op de hoogte gebracht dat de Noorse regering had besloten een wijziging van de rechten in het begrotingsvoorstel voor te stellen.

Wat mogelijke sancties of vergeldingsmaatregelen betreft, zal de Commissie, als de betrokken wijziging wordt goedgekeurd, alle mogelijke opties in overweging nemen.

De Commissie heeft zich ertoe verbonden ervoor te zorgen dat alle EU-handelingen die voor de EER relevant zijn, in de EER-overeenkomst worden opgenomen, waaronder ook de derde postrichtlijn (2008/06/EG) ([2]) en de richtlijn inzake de depositogarantiestelsels (2009/14/EG) ([3]). De Commissie is niet van oordeel dat de recente voorstellen van de Noorse regering betreffende de douanerechten voor landbouwproducten van invloed zijn op de onderhandelingen die momenteel tussen de EU en de EER/EVA-landen (IJsland, Liechtenstein en Noorwegen) worden gevoerd met betrekking tot deze twee, voor de EER relevante EU-handelingen. De Commissie zal in het passende institutionele kader van de EER blijven aandringen op een snelle afronding van de onderhandelingen over deze handelingen.

([1]) Deze specifieke tarieflijn kan worden gevonden op de volgende officiële overheidswebsite: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/press-center/pressemeldinger/2012/changes-to-border-protection-for-selecte.html?id=701321.
([2]) PB L 52 van 27.2.2008, blz. 3-20.
([3]) PB L 68 van 13.3.2009, blz. 3-7.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009410/12
to the Commission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE), Daniel Caspary (PPE) and Esther de Lange (PPE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: New Norwegian duties on selected agricultural products

On Monday, 8 October 2012, the Norwegian Government presented its proposals for the National Budget for 2013. One of the budget proposals concerns a change from specific duties to *ad valorem* duties for six tariff lines comprising beef steaks and fillets, lamb carcasses, and hard cheeses. These changes will take effect from 1 January 2013, effectively increasing the duties on selected agricultural products from the EU.

The new proposed *ad valorem* duties are 344% on beef steaks and fillets; 429% on carcasses and half-carcasses of lamb (fresh, chilled, and frozen); and 277% on selected hard cheeses. 14 selected cheeses retain the current NOK 27.15/kg duty (Appenzeller, Beaufort, Comté, Gamle Ole, Grana Padano, Gruyère, Le Vieux Panè, Morbier, Munster, Parmiggiano Reggiano, Queso Manchego, Pecorino, Saint Albray, Västerbotten) ([1]).

Are the proposed changes to the calculation of custom duties compatible with Article 19 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area?

Was the Commission informed of these proposals prior to their publication, or has the Norwegian Government unilaterally decided to make the proposed changes?

Is the Commission willing to consider possible sanctions or retaliation measures?

Will the Norwegian Government's proposals affect ongoing negotiations between Norway and the EU on the transposition and implementation of the Postal Services Directive and the Bank Deposit Guarantee Scheme?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

Article 19 of the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement highlighted by the Honourable Members stipulates a common objective to continue the efforts of the parties with a view to achieving progressive liberalisation of agricultural trade. The proposal by the Norwegian government to change from specific to *ad valorem* duties is contrary to the spirit of this Article. The Commission has underlined its strong opposition to the change and, if it is adopted, the Commission will explore the available possibilities of legal action.

The Commission was officially informed on 18 September 2012 that the Norwegian Government had decided to propose the change of duties in the budget proposal.

Regarding possible sanctions or retaliation measures, if the change in question is adopted the Commission will consider all available options.

The Commission is committed to ensuring the incorporation of all EU acts of EEA-relevance into the EEA Agreement, including the Third Postal Directive (2008/06/EC) ([2]) and the directive on Deposit Guarantee Schemes (2009/14/EC) ([3]). The Commission does not consider that the latest proposals by the Norwegian Government concerning customs duties on agricultural products affect the ongoing negotiations between the EU and the EEA EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) with regard to these two EU acts of EEA relevance. The Commission will continue to press for a rapid conclusion of the negotiations on these acts within the appropriate EEA institutional framework.

([1]) The specific tariff line changes can be seen on the following official government website: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/lmd/press-center/pressemeldinger/2012/changes-to-border-protection-for-selecte.html?id=701321
([2]) OJ L 52, 27.2.2008, p. 3-20.
([3]) OJ L 68, 13.3.2009, p. 3-7.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009411/12
alla Commissione
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(16 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Problema amianto in Italia

La questione amianto in Italia, nonostante la messa al bando ormai ventennale e gli interventi legislativi, pur se tardivi, di adeguamento alla normativa europea, è estremamente attuale. Oltre ai numerosi processi in corso (uno su tutti, quello che si tiene a Torino che riguarda ben 2 191 morti), vi sono i dati dell'Istituto superiore della Sanità, che indicano che tra il 2015 e il 2020 vi sarà il picco di morti per amianto in Italia. L'Osservatorio Nazionale Amianto ha di recente affermato che vi sono oltre 2 400 scuole con presenza di amianto. Analoga denuncia ha riguardato la questione della presenza dell'amianto in caserme della Guardia di Finanza (ad esempio la «Cefalonia Corfù» a Roma). Questo quadro, che solo per ragioni di sintesi non può essere delineato nel dettaglio, lascia emergere una situazione italiana in cui non esiste un vero e proprio piano di intervento per la mappatura e la bonifica ambientale e sanitaria del territorio, e la questione della sorveglianza sanitaria degli esposti ed ex esposti nonché l'assistenza, il sostegno e il riconoscimento dei benefici alle vittime non risultano all'altezza della profondità e della dimensione di tale problematica.

Alla luce di quanto sopra esposto, si chiede pertanto alla Commissione:

1. Qual è il seguito dato alla risposta fornita all'interrogazione E-009222/2010 ([1]) rispetto alla verifica dell'esistenza di difformità tra le varie Regioni italiane rispetto alla creazione del registro di esposizione all'amianto e ai controlli sanitari sui lavoratori (esposti ed ex-esposti)?

2. Qual è il seguito della sua risposta a una serie di interrogazioni presentate nel 2010 (tra cui P-010446/2010 ([2]), E-8199/10, E-8313/10, E-8309/10 ([3])) relativamente alle possibili iniziative legislative in ambito europeo sulla tutela dei lavoratori esposti ad amianto e sul riconoscimento dello status di vittime del dovere e dei connessi benefici?

3. Quali interventi intende realizzare la Commissione — tra i quali si suggerisce l'invio di un'approfondita richiesta di informazioni alle autorità italiane — in corrispondenza di una serie di denunce documentate (si veda il sopracitato caso della Caserma della Guardia di Finanza «Cefalonia Corfù» di Roma, ovvero altri già segnalati nelle interrogazioni E-004035/2012 ([4]) e E-002891/2012 ([5])), per verificare lo stato di attuazione in tutta Italia della normativa europea?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(13 dicembre 2012)

1. La Commissione sta raccogliendo e analizzando tutte le informazioni relative alla questione sollevata dall'onorevole deputata al fine di accertare la situazione nelle diverse regioni d'Italia e prendere, se del caso, le misure appropriate.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-9222&language=IT.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2010-010446&language=IT.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-8304&language=IT.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2012-004035 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0 %2f%2fIT&language=IT.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2012-002891 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0 %2f%2fIT&language=IT.

2. La Commissione ha appena ricevuto la relazione finale relativa allo studio sulle malattie professionali in Europa cui si accennava nella risposta all'interrogazione E-8199/10 ([6]). La relazione verrà caricata quanto prima sul sito web. Assieme ai risultati di una conferenza sulle malattie professionali che la Commissione organizzerà nel 2013, gli esiti dello studio serviranno a determinare la migliore linea d'azione per quanto concerne il riconoscimento delle malattie professionali in generale e, se del caso, di quelle provocate dall'esposizione all'amianto. In linea con le disposizioni delle direttiva Amianto 2009/148/CE, in particolare dell'articolo 14, punto 3, la Commissione ha sviluppato linee guida pratiche per la formazione dei lavoratori adibiti alla rimozione dell'amianto ([7]). Il comitato degli alti responsabili dell'Ispettorato del lavoro ha anch'esso pubblicato una guida pratica sulle prassi ottimali per prevenire o minimizzare i rischi legati all'amianto durante i lavori che comportano (o possono comportare) la manipolazione di amianto: la guida è rivolta ai datori di lavoro, ai lavoratori e agli ispettori del lavoro. Questa e altre guide affini sono reperibili sul sito web dell'OSHA ([8]).

In seguito alla pubblicazione delle linee guida per la formazione dei lavoratori adibiti alla rimozione dell'amianto, per l'anno prossimo è prevista una riunione con rappresentanti degli Stati membri.

3. La Commissione desidera rammentare all'onorevole deputata la propria risposta all'interrogazione E-2891/12 ([9]) che concerne anch'essa tale tematica.

([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=716&langId=en&intPageId=225.
([8]) http://osha.europa.eu/en/site_search?q=asbestos%20guide.
([9]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009411/12
to the Commission
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(16 October 2012)

Subject: Asbestos problem in Italy

The issue of asbestos in Italy, despite the ban dating back twenty years and the (albeit belated) legislative measures taken to comply with EU legislation, is still a matter of extreme current concern. In addition to the numerous court proceedings under way (for example, the trial currently being held in Turin concerning as many as 2 191 deaths), data from the *Istituto Superiore della Sanità* (National Health Institute) indicate that between 2015 and 2020 deaths from asbestos in Italy will reach their peak. The National Asbestos Monitoring Centre has recently stated that there are more than 2 400 schools that contain asbestos. A similar complaint has been made in relation to the presence of asbestos in the barracks of the *Guardia di Finanza* financial police (e.g. in the 'Cefalonia Corfu' barracks in Rome). This issue, which it is impossible to look at in detail here, suggests that in Italy there is no real action plan for the mapping of the asbestos problem and the environmental remediation and cleanup of the land. Moreover, the health monitoring of people who have been exposed and those who used to be exposed to asbestos, not to mention the assistance, support and granting of benefits to victims, are inadequate in relation to the major impact and extent of this problem.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. What action has been taken further to the answer given to Written Question E-009222/2010 ([1]), with a view to determining whether there are indeed differences between the Italian regions with regard to the establishment of a register of exposure to asbestos and health checks on workers and former workers exposed to asbestos?

2. What action has been taken in the wake of the Commission's answer to a series of written questions submitted in 2010 (including P-010446/2010 ([2]), E-8199/10, E-8313/10, E-8309/10 ([3])) regarding possible EU legislative initiatives on the protection of workers who have been exposed to asbestos and on the recognition of the status of victims of duty and related benefits?

3. What action does the Commission intend to take (it is suggested, *inter alia*, that a detailed request for information be sent to the Italian authorities), in response to a series of official complaints (see the abovementioned case of the *Guardia di Finanza* 'Cefalonia Corfu' barracks in Rome, and others already reported in Questions E-004035/2012 ([4]) and E-002891/2012 ([5])), to check the state of implementation of EU legislation throughout Italy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

1. The Commission is in the process of gathering and analysing all the information concerning the issue put forward by the Honourable Member with a view to determine the situation in the different Regions of Italy and take if necessary the appropriate measures.

2. The Commission has just received the final report on the study on Occupational Diseases in Europe alluded to in reply to E-8199/10 ([6]). The report will be put in its website soon. Together with the outcome of an occupational diseases conference to be organised by the Commission in 2013, the respective results will inform on the best way to proceed as regards recognition of occupational diseases in general, and if appropriate on those caused by exposure to asbestos. In line with the provisions of the Asbestos Directive 2009/148/EC, in particular its Article 14, point 3, Practical guidelines for the training of asbestos removal workers were developed by the Commission ([7]). The Senior Labour Inspectors Committee also issued a practical guide on best practice to prevent or minimise asbestos risks in work that involves (or may involve) asbestos: for the employer, the workers and the labour inspector. This and other similar guides are available in the OSHA website ([8]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-9222&language=EN.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2010-010446&language=EN.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2010-8304&language=EN.
([4]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2012-004035%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fIT&language=EN.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2012-002891%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fIT&language=EN.
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=716&langId=en&intPageId=225.
([8]) http://osha.europa.eu/en/site_search?q=asbestos%20guide.

Following the publication of the guidelines for the training of asbestos removal workers a meeting with Member States' representatives is foreseen for next year.

3. The Commission would like to remind the Honourable Member of the reply to Question E-2891/12 ([9]) which applies also to this question.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009412/12
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Consistenti escavazioni di ghiaia nel greto del fiume Piave, in zona SIC e ZPS, con possibili danni all'ecosistema

Nei comuni trevigiani di Cimadolmo, Maserada sul Piave, Ormelle, Breda di Piave e Ponte di Piave, attraversati dal fiume Piave, in corrispondenza di un'area golenale lunga circa 15 chilometri in zona pianeggiante, dove ricadono un SIC ([1]) e una ZPS ([2]), nell'anno 2011 hanno avuto inizio significativi lavori per la disostruzione dell'alveo del fiume, con creazione di diverse piste di accesso per camion. Tale intervento veniva considerato necessario e urgente dalla Regione Veneto a seguito di una piena del novembre 2010, quando furono registrati 1700 metri cubi d'acqua al secondo. In considerazione delle presunte esigenze di sicurezza, il Genio Civile di Treviso ([3]) ha ritenuto di non dover eseguire la V.I.A. ([4]), effettuando però quattro V.INC.A. ([5]) conclusesi con la valutazione dell'assenza di conseguenze negative per l'area.

Tuttavia, è ragionevole ritenere che non sussistesse alcuna urgenza legata alla pubblica sicurezza, come dimostra l'effettiva data di inizio dei lavori (febbraio 2011) a oggi non ancora ultimati; l'incolumità pubblica, invece, potrebbe essere messa in pericolo proprio dai lunghi canaloni creati con le escavazioni all'interno del letto del fiume, oramai privo della sua naturale conoide alluvionale, che potrebbero facilitare il crearsi di un effetto di «collo di bottiglia» nel tratto meridionale del fiume (in zona Ponte di Piave). Va sottolineato che nelle estati 2011 e 2012 si sono registrate delle anomale situazioni di secca del fiume e dei torrenti di risorgiva da esso alimentati che potrebbero essere state causate anche da questi interventi.

Nelle V.INC.A. effettuate è completamente assente un'analisi puntuale dello stato di fatto degli alvei fluviali e non vi è traccia di una relazione idraulica che dimostri che l'intervento possa mettere in sicurezza il sito; non vengono analizzate, inoltre, né le specie previste dalle direttive «Habitat» (direttiva 92/43/CEE) e «Uccelli» (direttiva 147/2009/CEE) — nonostante il sito ospiti specie prioritarie — né tantomeno la stagionalità delle presenze animali.

I prosciugamenti dei rami laterali del fiume, in particolare, hanno sicuramente interferito con la riproduzione e la sopravvivenza delle specie prioritarie dello Scazzone (*Cottus gobio*), della Lampreda padana (*Lethenteron Zanandreai*) nonché dell'Occhione (*Burhinus Oedicnemus*); quest'ultimo, nello specifico, nidifica proprio nelle zone di deposito alluvionale oggetto degli interventi di movimentazione e asporto ([6]).

Alla luce di quanto esposto, la Commissione ritiene che le direttive «V.I.A.», «Habitat», «Uccelli» e «Acque» (direttiva 2000/60/CE) siano state rispettate? E in caso contrario come intende intervenire?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(9 gennaio 2013)

Il progetto cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare rientra nel campo di applicazione dell'allegato II, paragrafo 10, lettera f), «Costruzione di vie navigabili interne non comprese nell'allegato I, opere di canalizzazione e di regolazione dei corsi d'acqua», della direttiva 2011/92/UE ([7]). Per i progetti di cui all'allegato II, gli Stati membri devono determinare, mediante un esame caso per caso o sulla base di soglie o criteri (procedura detta *screening*), se il progetto debba essere sottoposto a una VIA a causa dei suoi probabili effetti rilevanti sull'ambiente, tenendo conto dei relativi criteri di selezione riportati nell'allegato III della direttiva. Se le autorità degli Stati membri stabiliscono che il progetto può avere un impatto rilevante sull'ambiente, deve essere effettuata una VIA. Gli Stati membri devono adoperarsi affinché la valutazione ambientale effettuata dalle autorità competenti sia resa pubblica.

([1]) Sito di Importanza Comunitaria, IT 3240030.
([2]) Zona di Protezione Speciale, IT 3210023.
([3]) Ente pubblico della Regione Veneto.
([4]) Valutazione di impatto ambientale, direttiva 2011/92/UE (già 85/337/CEE).
([5]) Valutazione di incidenza ambientale, direttiva 92/43/CEE.
([6]) v. link del video girato dall'associazione «Qui Piave Libera!»: http://www.quipiavelibera.org/video-piave-canalizzato-rischio-aumentato/.
([7]) Direttiva 2011/92/UE, GU L 26 del 28.1.2012, pag. 1.

La Commissione non dispone di informazioni sufficienti per stabilire se le autorità italiane abbiano rispettato la direttiva VIA nel caso in esame. La Commissione si metterà in contatto con le autorità italiane per ottenere maggiori informazioni al fine di stabilire se vi sia stata una violazione della direttiva VIA, della direttiva quadro in materia di acque ([8]), per quanto riguarda il deterioramento dello stato delle acque dovuto a modifiche fisiche dell'alveo del fiume, o della direttiva «Habitat» ([9]).

([8]) Direttiva 2000/60/CE, GU L 327 del 22.12.2000.
([9]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009412/12
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Substantial excavation of gravel in the bed of the River Piave, near an SCI and SPA, with possible damage to the ecosystem

In the municipalities around Treviso that are crossed by the River Piave — Cimadolmo, Maserada sul Piave, Ormelle, Breda di Piave and Ponte di Piave — on a 15-km-long floodplain containing an SCI ([1]) and SPA ([2]), major work began in 2011 to clean up the river bed, and several access tracks for lorries were created. The Veneto Region considered this action to be necessary and urgent following a flood in November 2010, when 1 700 cubic metres of water per second were recorded. In view of these alleged safety requirements, the *Genio Civile* (civil engineering department) of Treviso ([3]) decided that it did not have to carry out an EIA ([4]). It did, however, carry out four assessments on the environmental implications ([5]), concluding that there would be no negative impact on the area.

However, it is reasonable to assume that there was no urgency related to public safety, as is shown by the actual date of commencement of the work (February 2011), which, to date, has not yet been completed. Public safety, on the contrary, could be endangered precisely by the long channels created by the excavations in the river bed, which has now been stripped of its natural alluvial fan and which could therefore cause a bottleneck effect in the southern part of the river (near Ponte di Piave). It is worth stressing that in the summers of 2011 and 2012, the river and its surrounding effluent streams dried up to an abnormal extent at times, and that this could also have been caused by the abovementioned work.

In the environmental implication assessments carried out, there was absolutely no detailed analysis of the current state of the river beds and there is no trace of any report showing that the work in question could make the site safer. Moreover, neither the species under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the Birds Directive (Directive 147/2009/EEC) nor the seasonal presence of animals in the area have been examined, despite the fact that the site is home to a number of priority species.

The draining of the lateral branches of the river, in particular, have certainly interfered with the reproduction and survival of the following priority species: the bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), the Po lamprey (*Lethenteron zanandreai*) and the stone-curlew (*Burhinus oedicnemus*); the latter, more specifically, nests precisely in the alluvial deposit areas which are currently undergoing excavation and earth removal ([6]).

In the light of the above information, does the Commission believe that the EIA, Habitats, Birds and Water (Directive 2000/60/EC) directives have been complied with? If not, what action does it intend to take?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2013)

The project referred to by the Honourable Member falls within Annex II 10(f) 'Inland-waterways construction not included in Annex I, canalization and flood-relief works' of the EIA Directive ([7]). For Annex II projects, Member States have to determine, either through a case by case examination or according to thresholds or criteria (a procedure known as screening), whether the project is to be made subject to an EIA because of its likely significant effects on the environment taking into account the relevant selection criteria set out in Annex III of the directive. If Member State authorities determine that the project is likely to have significant effects on the environment, an EIA has to be carried out. Member States have to ensure that the determination by the competent authorities is made available to the public.

([1]) Site of Community importance IT 3240030.
([2]) Special Protection Area IT 3210023.
([3]) A public body of the Veneto Region.
([4]) Environmental impact assessment, Directive 2011/92/EU (formerly 85/337/EEC).
([5]) Directive 92/43/EEC.
([6]) See link to the video made by the association 'Qui Piave Libera!': http://www.quipiavelibera.org/video-piave-canalizzato-rischio-aumentato/.
([7]) Directive 85/337/EEC, OJ L 175, 5.7.1985.

The Commission does not have sufficient information to establish whether the Italian authorities have complied with the EIA Directive in this case. The Commission will contact the Italian authorities to obtain more information with a view to establish if there has been a breach of the EIA Directive, or the Water Framework Directive ([8]) as regards the deterioration of status due to the physical modification of the river bed, or of the Habitats Directive ([9]).

([8]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.
([9]) Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009413/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οικονομική κάλυψη των δαπανών της Ομάδας Δράσης (Task Force)

Πριν από ένα χρόνο ξεκίνησε τις εργασίες της η Ομάδα Δράσης για την Ελλάδα (Task Force for Greece — TFGR), στηρίζοντας την ελληνική διοίκηση στον εντοπισμό και την παροχή τεχνικής βοήθειας για την διαδικασία μεταρρύθμισης της χώρας. Για την δραστηριοποίηση της Ομάδας απαιτούνται όπως είναι αναμενόμενο συγκεκριμένα κεφάλαια για τις δαπάνες και τα λειτουργικά της έξοδα (μισθοί, μεταφορές κτλ).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιο είναι το ποσό που έχει μέχρι σήμερα χρειαστεί για την κάλυψη των παραπάνω δαπανών και ποιο αναμένεται να είναι τα επόμενα χρόνια;

2. Από ποιον προϋπολογισμό (ΕΕ, κράτους-μέλους) καλύπτονται τα συγκεκριμένα ποσά και ποιο είναι το ποσοστό συμμετοχής κατά περίπτωση (εάν είναι περισσότερες από μια οι πηγές χρηματοδότησης);

Απάντηση του κ. Šefčovič εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(17 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Για το 2011, το συνολικό ποσό των δαπανών λειτουργίας (ταξίδια, συνεδριάσεις, κατάρτιση, αντιπροσώπευση κ.λπ.) ανερχόταν σε 135 569 ευρώ. Το 2012 (πρώτο έτος πλήρους εφαρμογής) το ποσό αυτό αυξήθηκε σε 747 368 ευρώ και για το 2013 έχει διατεθεί εκ των προτέρων ποσό ύψους 840 138 ευρώ, στο πλαίσιο του σχεδίου προϋπολογισμού του 2013.

Οι προαναφερθείσες δαπάνες λειτουργίας χρηματοδοτήθηκαν από τον διοικητικό προϋπολογισμό της Επιτροπής.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009413/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Funding for Task Force expenses

One year ago the Task Force for Greece commenced its activities, helping the Greek administration identify necessary reforms and providing technical support for this purpose. As only to be expected, the Task Force requires funding for its outlay and operating expenses (pay, transport, etc.).

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say what funding has been needed to date to cover these additional expenses and what are the estimates for the future?

2. From which budget (EU or Member States) are the amounts provided and, if the funding comes from more than one source, what percentage is provided by each?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

For 2011, the total amount of operating expenses (travel, meetings, training, representation, etc.) was EUR 135 569. In 2012 (first full year) it increased to EUR 747 368 and for 2013 an amount of EUR 840 138 has been pre-allocated in the framework of the 2013 Draft Budget.

The above operating expenses are financed from the administrative budget of the Commission.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009414/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Φορολογικά κίνητρα για την βελτίωση της πρόσβασης των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας

Σύμφωνα με τις εθνικές εκθέσεις για την νεολαία, ορισμένα κράτη μέλη προβαίνουν σε αλλαγές στην εργασιακή τους νομοθεσία προκειμένου να παρέχουν φορολογικά κίνητρα για την βελτίωση της πρόσβασης των νέων στην αγορά εργασίας και την καταπολέμηση του απαράδεκτου επιπέδου ανεργίας στην Ευρώπη.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει για συγκεκριμένες καλές πρακτικές κρατών μελών στον συγκεκριμένο τομέα; Υπήρξαν μετρήσιμα αποτελέσματα;

2. Στο πλαίσιο των μέτρων δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής που εφαρμόζει η Ελλάδα και, καθώς η ανεργία στις νεανικές ομάδες του πληθυσμού είναι η μεγαλύτερη στην ΕΕ, συνηγορεί η Επιτροπή στην παροχή φοροελαφρύνσεων σε πολιτικές που συμβάλουν στην αντιμετώπιση της νεανικής ανεργίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή επιθυμεί να διασφαλίσει ότι το φορολογικό σύστημα δεν αποτελεί φραγμό στην απασχόληση των νέων. Επομένως, ζητεί από τα κράτη μέλη να ευνοήσουν τις προσλήψεις με τη φορολογική ελάφρυνση και τη μείωση των κοινωνικών εισφορών των εργαζομένων, ιδίως εκείνων των οποίων η απασχολησιμότητα κινδυνεύει περισσότερο, π.χ. άτομα με χαμηλή ειδίκευση και νέοι. Αυτό μπορεί να γίνει με τη μείωση του μη μισθολογικού μέρους του κόστους εργασίας (π.χ. εισφορές κοινωνικής ασφάλισης ή φορολογικοί συντελεστές) επί της εργασίας, έτσι ώστε να γίνουν οι προσλήψεις φθηνότερες και να μειωθεί η φορολογική επιβάρυνση. Οι επιδοτήσεις για τις προσλήψεις μπορούν επίσης να βοηθήσουν, αλλά θα πρέπει να συνδυαστούν με άλλα μέτρα υποστήριξης, έτσι ώστε να μεγιστοποιηθεί ο αντίκτυπός τους και να βελτιστοποιηθεί η σχέση κόστους-αποτελεσματικότητας.

Στην περίπτωση της Ελλάδας, το πρόγραμμα χρηματοδοτικής ενίσχυσης ΕΕ/ΔΝΤ προβλέπει τη μείωση των συντελεστών των κοινωνικών εισφορών για να εξασφαλιστούν μεγαλύτερα περιθώρια για τη δημιουργία θέσεων απασχόλησης. Ειδικότερα, μια μεταρρύθμιση για τη μείωση των συντελεστών των κοινωνικών εισφορών θα προετοιμαστεί το 2013. Αυτό θα συμβάλλει στη μείωση του μη μισθολογικού κόστους της εργασίας, καθώς και στη μείωση των στρεβλωτικών συνεπειών της φορολογίας, αυξάνοντας έτσι τα κίνητρα για την απασχόληση. Η μεταρρύθμιση αναμένεται να επιτρέψει μια ουδέτερη από άποψη εσόδων σταδιακή μείωση των συντελεστών των κοινωνικών εισφορών κατά την περίοδο εκτέλεσης του προγράμματος, με την απλούστευση και την εναρμόνιση των συντελεστών στα διάφορα ταμεία που υφίστανται σήμερα και, ταυτόχρονα, με τη διεύρυνση των βάσεων για τις εισφορές. Οι λεπτομέρειες και το ακριβές χρονοδιάγραμμα της εν λόγω μεταρρύθμισης πρέπει ακόμη να αποφασιστούν, αλλά συνολικά οι συντελεστές των κοινωνικών εισφορών αναμένεται να μειωθούν κατά 5 εκατοστιαίες μονάδες σε σύγκριση με τα μέσα του 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009414/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Tax incentives to improve young people's access to the labour market

According to the national reports on youth, some Member States are make changes in their employment legislation so as to provide tax incentives to improve young people's access to the labour market and combat the unacceptable level of unemployment in Europe.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Can it provide information about specific best practices of Member States in this area? Have there been any measurable results?

2. In the context of the fiscal consolidation measures being implemented by Greece, since youth unemployment is the highest in the EU, is the Commission in favour of providing tax relief as part of policies that help address youth unemployment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission wishes to ensure that the tax system does not function as a barrier to youth employment. It is therefore asking Member States to stimulate recruitment by shifting taxes and social contributions away from labour, especially for those whose employability is more at risk, e.g. low-skilled individuals and young people. This can be done by reducing non-wage labour costs (e.g. social security contribution or tax rates) on labour which makes hiring cheaper and reduces the 'tax wedge'. Hiring subsidies can also encourage recruitment, but they should be combined with other support measures to maximise impact and cost effectiveness.

In the case of Greece, the EU/IMF financial assistance programme calls for a reduction of social contribution rates to create more room for job creation. In particular, a reform to reduce social contribution rates will be prepared in 2013. That will help in reducing non-wage labour costs, also by making taxation less distortive, thereby increasing incentives for employment. The reform is expected to allow for a revenue-neutral gradual reduction in social contribution rates over the programme period by simplifying and harmonising the rates across the various funds now in place, while at the same time broadening the bases for contributions. Details and exact phasing in of this reform are still to be decided but in total contribution rates are expected to decline by 5 percentage points compared with their mid-2012 levels.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009415/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αντίκτυπος της στρατηγικής της ΕΕ για την νεολαία

Σε ανακοίνωσή της, στις 10.9.2012 (COM(2012)0495), η Επιτροπή σημειώνει ότι όλα σχεδόν τα κράτη μέλη έχουν αναφέρει ότι η στρατηγική της ΕΕ για την νεολαία έχει ενισχύσει τις υπάρχουσες προτεραιότητες σε εθνικό επίπεδο ενώ αρκετά κράτη μέλη υπογραμμίζουν ότι είχε άμεσο αντίκτυπο (Λιθουανία, Αυστρία).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει για την περίπτωση της Ελλάδας;

2. Μπορεί να παραθέσει συγκεκριμένες καλές πρακτικές που εφάρμοσαν κράτη μέλη με επιτυχημένα αποτελέσματα στον τομέα αυτό;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Σύμφωνα με την έκθεση της Ελλάδας για τη νεολαία, η οποία υποβλήθηκε στην Επιτροπή ώστε να συμπεριληφθεί στην έκθεση της ΕΕ για την νεολαία 2012, είναι σαφές ότι η στρατηγική της ΕΕ για τη νεολαία έχει ενισχύσει τις τρεις βασικές προτεραιότητες της Γενικής Γραμματείας Νέας Γενιάς στην Ελλάδα.

Η πρώτη προτεραιότητα αφορά την ανεργία και τις εργασιακές σχέσεις. Η Ελλάδα σχεδίασε την «Κάρτα Σταδιοδρομίας», ώστε να βοηθήσει τους νέους να καταστούν περισσότερο απασχολήσιμοι μέσω της περαιτέρω κατάρτισης. Οι διασυνοριακές ευκαιρίες προωθούνται μέσω της εξ αποστάσεως εκπαίδευσης, η οποία έχει ως επίκεντρο τους νέους που ζουν σε απομακρυσμένες περιοχές. Επιπλέον, μία ακόμη πρωτοβουλία αναπτύσσει συγκεκριμένες δεξιότητες για τους ανέργους νέους στον τομέα της αειφόρου οικονομικής ανάπτυξης.

Το πεδίο της δεύτερης προτεραιότητας σχετίζεται με την κοινωνική ένταξη, τα δικαιώματα των νέων και τη συμμετοχή. Η Ελλάδα εστιάζει το ενδιαφέρον της στην εργασία των νέων και τα κέντρα νεότητας για την καταπολέμηση του κοινωνικού αποκλεισμού. Επιπλέον, δημιούργησε ειδικά προγράμματα στα σχολεία με σκοπό να αποτραπεί η πρόωρη εγκατάλειψή του. Όσον αφορά την προώθηση της συμμετοχής, η Γενική Γραμματεία Νέας Γενιάς χρησιμοποιεί διάφορα μέσα. Μερικά από αυτά είναι ο διαρθρωμένος διάλογος με τη νεολαία, καθώς και η σύσταση μιας διαδικτυακής πύλης (OPENGOV).

Το περιβάλλον, η κλιματική αλλαγή και η πράσινη ανάπτυξη συνιστούν τα θέματα της τρίτης προτεραιότητας. Η Ελλάδα διατίθεται να ευαισθητοποιήσει τους νέους και να τους ενθαρρύνει να συμμετάσχουν στον οικολογικό εθελοντισμό.

Επιπλέον, η πολιτική της Γενικής Γραμματείας Νέας Γενιάς βασίζεται στη φιλοσοφία της αλληλεγγύης μεταξύ των γενεών υιοθετώντας μια διατομεακή προσέγγιση.

Περισσότερα παραδείγματα ορθών πρακτικών στην Ελλάδα και σε άλλα κράτη μέλη παρατίθενται στην έκθεση της Επιτροπής «Τα αποτελέσματα του πρώτου κύκλου της ΑΜΣ στον τομέα της νεολαίας (2010-2012)» ([1]), καθώς και στις εκθέσεις των κρατών μελών για τη νεολαία που διατίθενται στο διαδίκτυο ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/national_youth_reports_2012/eu_youth_report_swd_results_of_eu_youth_strategy_2010-2012.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/national_reports_2012.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009415/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Impact of EU youth strategy

According to Commission Communication COM(2012)0495 of 10 September 2012, nearly all Member States report that the EU youth strategy has reinforced existing priorities at national level, with several Member States (Lithuania, Austria) emphasising its direct impact.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission outline the situation with regard to Greece?

2. Can it quote specific examples of good practice by Member States which have produced successful results in this area?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

According to the National Youth Report of Greece, submitted to the Commission as an input to the EU Youth Report 2012, the EU Youth Strategy has reinforced the three main priorities of the General Secretariat for Youth in Greece.

The first priority concerns unemployment and labour relationships. Greece designed a 'Career Card' to help young people become more employable through additional training. Cross-border opportunities are promoted through distance-learning targeting young people in remote areas. Yet another initiative develops specific skills for young unemployed in sustainable economic development.

The second priority area addresses social inclusion, youth rights and participation. Greece focuses on youth work and youth centres in combating social exclusion. It has also developed specific programmes in schools to prevent early school leaving. To promote participation, the General Secretariat for Youth uses different channels. One is the Structured Dialogue with youth, another is the establishment of an online portal (OPENGOV).

Environment, climate change and green development are the topics of the third priority.

Greece intends to raise the awareness of young people and to encourage them to participate in green volunteering.

In addition, the General Secretariat for Youth policy is based on the philosophy of intergenerational solidarity and has embraced a cross-sectoral approach.

Further examples of good practice in Greece and other Member States are cited in the Commission's report on 'Results of the first cycle of the OMC in the youth field (2010-2012)' ([1]) as well as the National Youth Reports posted online ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/youth/documents/national_youth_reports_2012/eu_youth_report_swd_results_of_eu_youth_strategy_2010-2012.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/national_reports_2012.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009416/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αριθμός Σύρων Προσφύγων στην Τουρκία και ετοιμότητα της ΕΕ

Την Δευτέρα 15.10.2012, ο τούρκος υπουργός Ευρωπαϊκών Υποθέσεων, Εγκεμέν Μπαγίς, κάλεσε, σε συνέντευξή του σε γερμανική εφημερίδα, την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να βοηθήσει την Τουρκία για την διαχείριση του μεγάλου αριθμού προσφύγων από την Συρία. Μάλιστα, την ίδια μέρα η τουρκική υπηρεσία διαχείρισης καταστροφών (AFAD) ανέφερε ότι ο αριθμός των Σύρων που έχουν βρει καταφύγιο στην Τουρκία από τον εμφύλιο έχει ξεπεράσει τις 100 000 — επίπεδο το οποίο η Άγκυρα είχε αναφέρει προ εβδομάδων ως όριο για τους πρόσφυγες που μπορούσε να δεχθεί στους καταυλισμούς που έχει δημιουργήσει.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει υποβληθεί επίσημο αίτημα της Τουρκίας προς την Επιτροπή για την διαχείριση του κύματος προσφύγων από την Συρία;

2. Καθώς η Τουρκία επιζητεί μεταφορά προσφύγων σε κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, η Επιτροπή προκρίνει την συγκεκριμένη πρόταση ή εκτιμά ως αποτελεσματικότερη την στήριξη των τουρκικών αρχών για την φιλοξενία των προσφύγων;

3. Έχει καταστρωθεί σχέδιο έκτακτης ανάγκης σε περίπτωση που η Τουρκία δηλώσει αδυναμία φιλοξενίας περισσότερων προσφύγων προωθώντας αριθμό αυτών στα σύνορα της με την ΕΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(8 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Μέχρι τώρα, η Τουρκία δεν έχει υποβάλει στην Επιτροπή επίσημο αίτημα για τη διαχείριση της εισροής Σύρων προσφύγων. Ωστόσο, η Τουρκία απηύθυνε επίσημη έκκληση στη διεθνή κοινότητα χορηγών για την παροχή μιας τέτοιας βοήθειας.

Αυτή τη στιγμή, η ΕΕ παρέχει στήριξη στην Τουρκία για την αντιμετώπιση του προβλήματος των Σύρων προσφύγων με την παροχή επείγουσας ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας και — σύντομα — με το Μέσο Σταθερότητας (ΜΣ), μετά την πρόσφατη έκδοση απόφασης νέας χρηματοδότησης του ΜΣ για την παροχή στήριξης στην Τουρκία και σε άλλες χώρες της περιοχής που επηρεάζονται από την κρίση στη Συρία. Εξετάζεται επίσης η χρήση του Μηχανισμού Προενταξιακής Βοήθειας. Επιπλέον, εστάλη εμπειρογνώμονας της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής σε ανθρωπιστικά θέματα για την παρακολούθηση της κατάστασης επιτόπου και την αναζήτηση λύσεων για περαιτέρω ανθρωπιστική συνεργασία/βοήθεια μέσω των εταίρων της Επιτροπής σε ανθρωπιστικά θέματα, ιδίως μέσω οργανισμών των Ηνωμένων Εθνών και του κινήματος του Ερυθρού Σταυρού/Ερυθράς Ημισελήνου.

Παράλληλα, ανταποκρινόμενη σε έκκληση της UNHCR ([1]), η Επιτροπή ενθαρρύνει τα κράτη μέλη να επιδείξουν αλληλεγγύη προς τα όμορα της Συρίας κράτη, περιλαμβανομένης της Τουρκίας, προσφέροντας επανεγκατάσταση σε ορισμένες κατηγορίες προσφύγων που εκτοπίσθηκαν λόγω της σύγκρουσης, ιδίως των ευάλωτων προσώπων ή εκείνων που έχουν ήδη μέλη της οικογένειάς τους στην ΕΕ. Προς το παρόν, η UNHCR δεν απηύθυνε έκκληση για επανεγκατάσταση μεγάλης κλίμακας, δεδομένης της αβεβαιότητας για το κατά πόσον η κατάσταση θα εξελιχθεί σε παρατεταμένη προσφυγική κατάσταση.

Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή είναι πρόθυμη να παράσχει ή να συντονίσει οικονομική βοήθεια και βοήθεια σε εμπειρογνωσία μέσω της ΕΥΥΑ ([2]) εάν μεγάλη εισροή εκτοπισθέντων στην Ένωση δημιουργήσει ιδιαίτερη πίεση στο σύστημα ασύλου οποιουδήποτε κράτους μέλους.

([1]) Ύπατη Αρμοστεία των Ηνωμένων Εθνών για τους Πρόσφυγες.
([2]) Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Υποστήριξης για το Άσυλο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009416/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Number of Syrian refugees in Turkey and EU readiness to act

On Monday 15 October 2012, Egemen Bağış , Turkish Minister for European Affairs called in an interview with a German newspaper for EU assistance in coping with the massive influx of refugees from Syria. On the same day, the Turkish Disaster Management Authority (AFAD) indicated that the number of Syrians fleeing civil strife and seeking shelter in Turkey had exceeded 100 000, this being, as Ankara announced weeks ago, the maximum number of refugees which can be accommodated in the camps set up for this purpose.

In view of this:

1. Has Turkey made a formal request to the Commission for assistance in dealing with the influx of refugees from Syria?

2. Would the Commission be prepared to countenance moves by Turkey to channel refugees towards EU Member States or does it consider that it would be more effective to provide assistance to the Turkish authorities in continuing to accommodate the refugees?

3. Has a contingency plan been drawn up to cover the eventuality of Turkey declaring itself unable to accommodate any more refugees and channelling them towards its border with the EU?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

So far, Turkey has not submitted a formal request to the Commission for assistance in dealing with the influx of the Syrian refugees. However, Turkey has officially called upon the international donor community to provide such aid.

The EU is currently providing support to Turkey to cope with the Syrian refugees through emergency humanitarian assistance and — soon — through the Instrument for Stability (IfS), following the recent adoption of a new IfS Financing Decision to provide support in Turkey and other countries in the region affected by the Syrian crisis. The use of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance is also being considered. In addition, a European Commission humanitarian expert has been deployed in Turkey to monitor the situation on site and explore options for further humanitarian cooperation/assistance through the Commission's humanitarian partners, notably agencies of the United Nations and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement.

In parallel, in response to a call by UNHCR ([1]), the Commission encourages Member States to show solidarity with the countries bordering Syria, including Turkey, by offering to resettle certain specific categories of refugees displaced by the conflict, in particular those who are vulnerable or who have family members already in the EU. For the time being, UNHCR has not called for large-scale resettlement, given the uncertainty as to whether this will develop into a protracted refugee situation.

In addition, the Commission stands ready to provide or coordinate financial assistance and expert support from the EASO ([2]) if a large influx of displaced persons into the Union were to place particular pressure on the asylum system of any Member States.

([1]) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
([2]) European Asylum Support Office.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009417/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αποτελεσματικότητα της πολιτικής της ΕΕ για τα ανοιχτά στο κοινό δεδομένα της Ένωσης και η περίπτωση των κρατών μελών

Σε συνέντευξη τύπου πριν από ένα χρόνο (20.10.2011), η Επίτροπος Ν. Κρους δήλωσε ένθερμη υποστηρίκτρια στο πλήρες άνοιγμα των εγγράφων και των δεδομένων της ΕΕ στους πολίτες. Μάλιστα η Επίτροπος δήλωσε πως το 2013 θα τεθεί σε εφαρμογή μία πανευρωπαϊκή Πύλη Ανοικτών Δεδομένων. Σε οικονομικό επίπεδο, η ίδια η Επιτροπή σημειώνει στη στρατηγική της για ανοικτά δεδομένα ότι μια τέτοια πολιτική μπορεί να αποφέρει έως και 140 δις ευρώ λόγω εξοικονόμησης χρημάτων από την λιγότερη γραφειοκρατία αλλά και χάρη στην διευκόλυνση των επενδύσεων.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Διαθέτει συγκριτικά στοιχεία μεταξύ των κρατών μελών σχετικά με τον βαθμό ανοίγματος των δημοσίων εγγράφων και των δεδομένων στους πολίτες; Ελέγχει τις πολιτικές των κρατών μελών στον συγκεκριμένο τομέα; Ποια είναι η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας;

2. Στην περίπτωση της Ελλάδας, ποιο είναι το ύψος των κοινοτικών πόρων που καλείται να αξιοποιήσει η χώρα γι' αυτόν τον σκοπό και ποιο το ποσοστό απορρόφησης μέχρι σήμερα;

3. Διαθέτει και μπορεί να παραθέσει καλές πρακτικές και παραδείγματα από κράτη μέλη που αποδεικνύουν πως η συγκεκριμένη πολιτική οδήγησε σε αύξηση των επενδύσεων, της καινοτομίας και της επιχειρηματικότητας;

Απάντηση της κ. Kroes εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Η νομοθεσία και οι συναφείς πρακτικές που ακολουθούνται από τα κράτη μέλη ως προς την περαιτέρω χρήση των πηγών πληροφόρησης τις οποίες διαθέτουν και η σχετική με τη χρήση αυτή νομοθεσία παρουσιάζουν σημαντικές διαφορές. Με την οδηγία 2003/98/ΕΚ σχετικά με την περαιτέρω χρήση πληροφοριών του δημόσιου τομέα (ΠΔΤ), η οποία ενσωματώθηκε στο ελληνικό δίκαιο με τον νόμο 3448/2006 (όπως τροποποιήθηκε το 2007), επιτεύχθηκε εναρμόνιση έως έναν βαθμό. Η οδηγία βασίζεται σε εθνικούς κανόνες για την πρόσβαση σε πληροφορίες και επικεντρώνεται στα προσκόμματα για την περαιτέρω χρήση πληροφοριών. Δεδομένου ότι εξακολουθούν να υφίστανται σημαντικές διαφορές μεταξύ κρατών μελών όσον αφορά τις συνθήκες της περαιτέρω χρήσης πληροφοριών, η Επιτροπή πρότεινε, τον Δεκέμβριο του 2011, αναθεώρηση της οδηγίας. Στο Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο, οι σχετικές συζητήσεις συνεχίζονται ([1]).

Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με την κατάσταση στα επιμέρους κράτη μέλη ανατρέξτε επίσης στη χρηματοδοτούμενη από την Επιτροπή ιστοσελίδα: http://epsiplatform.eu

Η εφαρμογή της στρατηγικής ανοικτών δεδομένων στη δημόσια διοίκηση έχει τη δυνατότητα να οδηγήσει σε σημαντική εξοικονόμηση πόρων, τονώνοντας ταυτόχρονα την οικονομική δραστηριότητα. Η Επιτροπή ενθαρρύνει μεν την αξιοποίηση των κατάλληλων κοινοτικών προγραμμάτων χρηματοδότησης προκειμένου να εφαρμοστούν οι πρακτικές ανοιχτών δεδομένων, ωστόσο η χρήση των εν λόγω πόρων δεν είναι υποχρεωτική.

Στην εκτίμηση του αντίκτυπου ([2]), η οποία συνοδεύει την πρόταση της Επιτροπής για αναθεώρηση της οδηγίας ΠΔΤ, παρουσιάζεται ο αντίκτυπος της πολιτικής των ΠΔΤ για τις επενδύσεις, την καινοτομία και την επιχειρηματικότητα. Στο πλαίσιο των μελετών στις οποίες βασίζεται η εκτίμηση του αντίκτυπου δίνεται έμφαση στον τρόπο με τον οποίο οι αλλαγές στις πολιτικές για την περαιτέρω χρήση πληροφοριών είχαν θετικό αποτέλεσμα τόσο σε φορείς του δημόσιου τομέα όσο και στους ίδιους τους χρήστες ([3]). Για παράδειγμα, στην περίπτωση της αυστριακής υπηρεσίας κτηματολογίου, η μείωση των τιμών έως και κατά 97% οδήγησε σε συνολική αύξηση των πωλήσεων ανοιχτών δεδομένων κατά 46%, ενώ, παράλληλα, έδωσε το έναυσμα για τη δημιουργία ενός φάσματος καινοτόμων χρήσεων.

([1]) Βλ. νομοθετικό φάκελο 2011/0430 (COD).
([2]) SEC(2011)1552.
([3]) Βλ: G. Vickery, στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/docs/pdfs/report/psi_final_version_formatted.docx
Deloitte, POPSIS, Models of Supply and Charging of Public Sector Information (Μοντέλα προσφοράς και χρέωσης πληροφοριών του δημόσιου τομέα), στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: .
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/docs/pdfs/report/11_2012/models.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009417/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Effectiveness of EU policy on EU data open to the public and the situation in Member States

At a press conference a year ago (20 October 2011), Commissioner Neelie Kroes declared her fervent support for the full disclosure of EU documents and data to citizens. Indeed, the Commissioner said that in 2013 a pan-European open data portal would be set up. In economic terms, the Commission itself notes in its open data strategy that such a policy could lead to savings of up to 140 billion euros due to less bureaucracy but also to the facilitation of investments.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have any comparative data about Member States on the degree to which their citizens have access of public documents and data? Does it control Member States' policies in this field? What is the situation in Greece?

2. In Greece's case, how much EU funding is the country required to use for this purpose and what has been the take-up rate so far?

3. Does it have available best practices and examples from Member States showing that this policy has led to increased investment, innovation and entrepreneurship? If so, can it cite them?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2012)

The practices and laws in the Member States dealing with the reuse of their information resources differ considerably. A certain level of harmonisation was achieved through Directive 2003/98/EC on reuse of public sector information that was transposed into Greek law by law 3448/2006 (as amended in 2007). The directive builds on national rules for access to information, and focuses on the barriers to re-use. As there continue to be significant differences between conditions for the re-use of information in Member States, the Commission made a proposal to revise the directive in December 2011. Discussions in the European Parliament and in Council are progressing ([1]).

For more information on the situation in the individual Member States, please see also the Commission-funded website http://epsiplatform.eu.

Implementing Open Data inside public administrations has the potential to lead to considerable cost savings, while at the same time boosting economic activity. While the Commission encourages the use of the appropriate EU funding programmes in order to implement Open Data, there is no obligation to use such funding.

The Impact Assessment ([2]) accompanying the Commission proposal to revise the PSI Directive. shows the impact of the PSI policy on investment, innovation and entrepreneurship. The studies underpinning the Assessment highlight how changes in reuse policies have had positive effects for public sector bodies and re-users alike ([3]). For example, in the case of the Austrian cadastral service, a price cut by up to 97% lead to an overall increase in sales of the data by 46%, while triggering a range of innovative uses.

([1]) Please see legislative dossier 2011/0430 (COD).
([2]) SEC(2011) 1552.
([3]) Please see: G. Vickery, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/docs/pdfs/report/psi_final_version_formatted.docx
Deloitte, POPSIS, Models of Supply and Charging of Public Sector Information, available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/psi/docs/pdfs/report/11_2012/models.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009419/12
aan de Raad
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Uitspraken Schäuble inzake hervorming eurozone

1. Is de Raad op de hoogte van de uitspraken van minister Schäuble ([1]) ([2]) inzake hervormingen van de eurozone en de installatie van een „valuta commissaris"? Zo ja, deelt hij diens opvattingen? Zo ja op grond waarvan? Zo nee, waarom of welke niet?

2. Wil of kan de Raad aangeven of minister Schäuble deze plannen vooraf met hem heeft besproken?

3. Minister Schäuble wil de zogenaamde „valuta commissaris" zoveel macht geven, dat hij nationale regeringen en parlementen kan overrulen. Deelt de Raad zijn visie? Zo ja, waarom? Zo nee, waarom niet?

4. Verder stelt minister Schäuble voor om stemmingen in het Europees Parlement te wijzigen. Voortaan zouden alleen die lidstaten mogen stemmen wier belang door een onderhavige kwestie worden geraakt. Deelt de Raad de opvattingen van minister Schäuble? Zo ja waarom? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord
(10 december 2012)

De voorzitter van de Europese Raad heeft op 26 juni 2012 het rapport „Naar een echte economische en monetaire unie" ([3]) gepresenteerd. Het rapport werd in nauwe samenwerking met de voorzitter van de Commissie, de voorzitter van de Eurogroep en de president van de Europese Centrale Bank opgesteld, en is gericht op het formuleren van een visie voor de EMU als waarborg voor stabiliteit en duurzame welvaart. De Europese Raad heeft in juni over deze kwestie van gedachten gewisseld ([4]). In zijn bijeenkomst van oktober heeft de Europese Raad de bespreking ervan voortgezet op basis van een tussentijds verslag, en geconcludeerd dat hij uitziet naar een specifieke, aan een tijdpad gebonden routekaart die tijdens zijn bijeenkomst van december 2012 zal worden gepresenteerd, teneinde vorderingen te maken met betrekking tot alle essentiële bouwstenen voor een echte EMU ([5]).

De Raad heeft geen bespreking gewijd aan de specifieke voorstellen voor de instelling van een „valutacommissaris", en evenmin aan de regeling voor het stemmen in het Europees Parlement. Minister Schäuble heeft een aantal van zijn standpunten betreffende hervormingen gepresenteerd aan de Eurogroep.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/schaeuble-presents-euro-reforms-and-broad-new-powers-for-eu-a-861529.html
([2]) http://www.ftd.de/politik/europa/:eu-umbau-schaeuble-stoesst-auf-widerstand/70105070.html
([3]) EUCO 120/12.
([4]) EUCO 76/12.
([5]) EUCO 156/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009419/12
to the Council
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Statements by Schäuble on reforming the eurozone

1. Is the Council aware of the statements by the Minister Mr Schäuble ([1]) ([2]) concerning reforms of the eurozone and the establishment of a Commissioner responsible for currency? If so, does it endorse his views? If so, on what grounds? If not, why not, or which does it not endorse?

2. Will or can the Council indicate whether Mr Schäuble discussed these plans with it in advance?

3. Mr Schäuble wishes to give the 'currency Commissioner' so much power that he can overrule national governments and Parliaments. Does the Council endorse his ideas? If so, why? If not, why not?

4. Mr Schäuble also proposes altering the system of voting in the European Parliament. In future, only those Member States should be permitted to vote whose interests are affected by the question at issue. Does the Council endorse Mr Schäuble's views? If so, why? If not, why not?

Reply
(10 December 2012)

On 26 June 2012, the President of the European Council presented the report 'Towards a genuine Economic and Monetary Union' ([3]). The report was prepared in close cooperation with the President of the Commission, the President of the Eurogroup and the President of the European Central Bank and aimed at developing a vision for the EMU to ensure stability and sustained prosperity. The European Council held an exchange of views on the matter at its meeting in June ([4]). In its October meeting, the European Council further discussed the issue on the basis of an interim report and concluded by looking forward to a specific and time-bound roadmap to be presented at its December 2012 meeting, to enable it to move ahead on all essential building blocks on which a genuine EMU should be based ([5]).

The Council has not discussed the specific proposals of establishing a 'Commissioner responsible for currency' nor the system of voting in the European Parliament. Minister Schäuble presented some of his views concerning reforms to the Eurogroup.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/schaeuble-presents-euro-reforms-and-broad-new-powers-for-eu-a-861529.html
([2]) http://www.ftd.de/politik/europa/:eu-umbau-schaeuble-stoesst-auf-widerstand/70105070.html
([3]) EUCO 120/12.
([4]) EUCO 76/12.
([5]) EUCO 156/12.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009420/12
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Uitspraken Schäuble inzake hervorming eurozone

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de uitspraken van minister Schäuble ([1]) ([2]) inzake hervormingen van de eurozone en de installatie van een „valuta commissaris"? Zo ja, deelt zij diens opvattingen? Zo ja op grond waarvan? Zo nee, waarom of welke niet?

2. Wil of kunt de Commissie aangeven of minister Schäuble deze plannen vooraf met haar heeft besproken?

3. Minister Schäuble wil de zogenaamde „valuta commissaris" zoveel macht geven, dat hij nationale regeringen en parlementen kan overrulen. Deelt de Commissie zijn visie? Zo ja, waarom? Zo nee, waarom niet?

4. Verder stelt minister Schäuble voor om stemmingen in het Europees Parlement te wijzigen. Voortaan zouden alleen die lidstaten mogen stemmen wier belang door een onderhavige kwestie worden geraakt. Deelt de Commissie de opvattingen van minister Schäuble? Zo ja waarom? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Rehn namens de Commissie
(14 januari 2013)

De Commissie geeft geen commentaar op in de pers verschenen informele uitspraken van anderen.

De Commissie heeft haar standpunt ten aanzien van zowel de eventuele uitbreiding van de rol van het Commissielid voor Economische en monetaire zaken en de euro, als de mogelijke oprichting van een „eurocommissie" binnen het Europees Parlement uiteengezet in haar mededeling met als titel „Blauwdruk voor een hechte economische en monetaire unie" ([3]). De redenering achter de in de mededeling over de blauwdruk gepresenteerde opties berust op het beginsel dat de democratische controle op politieke besluiten moet plaatsvinden op hetzelfde niveau als dat waarop deze besluiten worden genomen. Als er een zekere mate van soevereiniteit van de lidstaten aan het Europese niveau wordt overgedragen, moet er derhalve ook tot een evenredige aanpassing van de democratische controle op Europees niveau worden overgegaan. Elke stap in de richting van de integratie van het budgettaire en economische beleid zou een pooling van nationale soevereiniteit inhouden en dus hoe dan ook een Verdragswijziging vereisen.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/schaeuble-presents-euro-reforms-and-broad-new-powers-for-eu-a-861529.html
([2]) http://www.ftd.de/politik/europa/:eu-umbau-schaeuble-stoesst-auf-widerstand/70105070.html
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2012/11/pdf/blueprint_en.pdf, deze kwesties komen meer in het bijzonder aan de orde op de bladzijden 38 en 39 van de Engelstalige mededeling.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009420/12
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Wolfgang Schäuble's remarks concerning the reform of the eurozone

1. Is the Commission aware of the remarks made by the German Finance Minister, Wolfgang Schäuble ([1]) ([2]), concerning the reform of the eurozone and the appointment of a 'currency Commissioner'? If so, does it share his views, and why? If not, why not? Which of his views does it not share?

2. Can or will the Commission state whether Mr Schäuble discussed these plans with it in advance?

3. Mr Schäuble wants to give the so-called 'currency Commissioner' so much power that he or she would be able to overrule national governments and parliaments. Does the Commission endorse this approach? If so, why? If not, why not?

4. What is more, Mr Schäuble wants to change the voting arrangements in the European Parliament. In future, only MEPs from those Member States affected by a given policy proposal would be able to vote on it. Does the Commission share Mr Schäuble's views? If so, why? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2013)

The Commission does not comment on press reporting about views expressed informally by others.

The Commission has set out its views regarding the possible development of the role of the Commissioner for economic and monetary affairs and the Euro as well as the possibility of creating a 'Euro Committee' within the European Parliament in its communication 'A Blueprint for a deep and genuine EMU' ([3]). The rationale behind the options presented in the Blueprint Communication results from the principle that the democratic scrutiny of political decisions has to take place at the same level, where these decisions are taken. Hence, to the extent that there is a transfer of sovereignty from the national to the European level, this would also have to be reflected in a commensurate adjustment of the democratic scrutiny at the European level. Any steps towards integration in budgetary and economic policy would imply a pooling of national sovereignty and therefore in any case require a change of the Treaties.

([1]) http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/schaeuble-presents-euro-reforms-and-broad-new-powers-for-eu-a-861529.html
([2]) http://www.ftd.de/politik/europa/:eu-umbau-schaeuble-stoesst-auf-widerstand/70105070.html
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2012/11/pdf/blueprint_en.pdf, These issues are discussed in particular on pages 38 and 39 of the communication.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009421/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Proposta di legge sulla responsabilità civile per diffamazione in Macedonia quale limite potenziale alla libertà di espressione

Coloro che criticano la proposta di legge sulla «responsabilità civile per gli insulti e la diffamazione» in Macedonia affermano che la sua eventuale applicazione senza modifiche comporterebbe una grave limitazione della libertà di espressione su internet. Le preoccupazioni sollevate riguardano in particolare la possibilità di blocco o filtraggio dei fornitori di servizi internet e la censura di alcuni siti web, tra cui quelli contenenti articoli di giornalisti e commenti dei lettori.

Nel giugno 2012, l'UE ha accolto con favore l'annuncio del governo macedone in merito all'eliminazione della diffamazione dal codice penale, nell'ambito di un accordo con l'associazione dei giornalisti ZNM. La proposta di legge risultante da questo cambiamento sembra tuttavia andare nella direzione sbagliata. La legge attualmente all'esame infatti obbligherebbe i fornitori di servizi e gli autori al «risarcimento dei danni derivanti dal consentire l'accesso a informazioni offensive o diffamatorie». Ciò limiterebbe l'attività giornalistica, i blog nonché la possibilità per i lettori di lasciare liberamente dei commenti su questi siti web.

Alla luce delle considerazioni sopraesposte, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. è la Commissione a conoscenza del fatto che la legge in oggetto ha già superato la prima lettura nel parlamento macedone? In caso di approvazione, quale ritiene possa essere il livello di gravità della limitazione della libertà di espressione imposta da tale legge?

2. Poiché la libertà di espressione costituisce un valore fondamentale dell'Unione europea, l'approvazione di questa legge potrebbe avere ripercussioni negative sullo status della Macedonia come paese candidato all'adesione all'UE?

3. Questo nuovo disegno di legge è attualmente discusso nel quadro del dialogo ad alto livello per l'adesione?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(4 gennaio 2013)

L'allineamento della legislazione sulla diffamazione alle norme giuridiche europee è uno degli argomenti trattati nell'ambito del dialogo ad alto livello sull'adesione tra la Commissione e il governo dell'ex Repubblica iugoslava di Macedonia.

Il 9 novembre 2012 il Parlamento macedone ha emendato il codice penale abrogando gli articoli che criminalizzavano l'insulto e la diffamazione. Il 12 novembre 2012, dopo oltre un anno di consultazione tra il governo e l'associazione dei giornalisti, è stata adottata una nuova legge sulla responsabilità civile per gli insulti e la diffamazione. Il governo ha anche richiesto il parere degli esperti del Consiglio d'Europa.

In base alle informazioni ricevute dalla Commissione, la nuova disposizione legislativa relativa alla responsabilità dei fornitori di servizi internet è volta ad armonizzare la legislazione nazionale con la direttiva sul commercio elettronico ([1]).

La Commissione seguirà da vicino l'attuazione del nuovo quadro giuridico da parte dei tribunali nazionali che, oltre ad essere vincolati dalla legislazione nazionale, devono altresì rispettare l'articolo 10 della Convenzione europea sui diritti dell'uomo e i principi sanciti dalla Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo.

([1]) Direttiva 2000/31/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, dell'8 giugno 2000, relativa a taluni aspetti giuridici dei servizi della società dell'informazione, in particolare il commercio elettronico, nel mercato interno («Direttiva sul commercio elettronico»), GU L 178 del 17.7.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009421/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Draft law on civil liability for defamation in Macedonia could limit freedom of expression

Critics united against the draft law on 'Civil Liability for Insult and Defamation' in Macedonia say that if the law is implemented without amendment, freedom of expression via the Internet will be severely limited. Concerns cited focus on the possibility that Internet providers may be blocked or filtered, and that certain websites including journalists' texts and readers' comments may be censored.

In June 2012 the EU supported the Macedonian Government's announcement that it would remove defamation from the penal code as part of an agreement with the Journalists' Association, ZNM. However, the draft law that resulted from this change appears to be heading in a counter direction. The proposed law makes service providers and authors responsible for 'compensating for damage arising from providing access to offensive or defamatory information.' This would limit journalism, blogs, and the ability of the public to comment freely on such websites.

In the light of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of this law passing its first reading in the Macedonian Parliament? If so, how severely does it believe the law will limit the freedom of expression if it were adopted?

2. Given that freedom of expression is an essential value of the EU, would the adoption of this law negatively affect Macedonia's status as a candidate country for accession to the EU?

3. Is this newly proposed law being discussed as part of the high-level accession dialogue?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 January 2013)

Alignment of defamation legislation with European legal standards was one of the topics discussed as part of the High Level Accession Dialogue between the Commission and the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

On 9 November 2012 Parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, repealing articles which criminalised insult and defamation. On 12 November 2012, a new law on Civil Liability for Insult and Defamation was adopted. This resulted from over one year of consultation between the government and the Association of Journalists. The Government also sought expert advice from the Council of Europe.

According to information received by the Commission, the new legal provision relating to liability of Internet services providers aims to harmonise the domestic law with the e-commerce Directive ([1]).

The Commission will closely monitor the implementation of the new legal framework by the national courts, which are not only bound by domestic legislation but must also comply with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the principles set out by the European Court of Human Rights.

([1]) Directive 2000/31/EC of 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 (Directive on electronic commerce), OJ L 178, 17.7.2000.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009422/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Nuovi problemi in materia di diritti umani nell'industria cotoniera in Uzbekistan

L'Uzbekistan è uno dei maggiori produttori di cotone al mondo, e l'industria cotoniera rappresenta uno dei pilastri dell'economia del paese. All'inizio del 2012, in risposta all'impegno assunto da alcuni grandi distributori internazionali a favore dell'importazione del cotone da paesi che non utilizzano lavoro minorile, il primo ministro uzbeko ha proibito ai bambini di lavorare nei campi di cotone. Tuttavia, in un paese in cui il governo mantiene uno stretto controllo sulla produzione di cotone e impone quote rigide al fine di velocizzare la raccolta, sono ora costretti a raccogliere il cotone non solo gli impiegati ma anche medici e infermieri.

Quest'anno, infatti, al personale medico uzbeko è stato ordinato di partecipare alla raccolta del cotone. A partire dall'entrata in vigore di questa politica si segnalano casi di pazienti cui sono state negate le cure a causa dell'assenza dei medici, impegnati nel lavoro nei campi di cotone. Le autorità di Tashkent hanno stabilito che ogni distretto debba inviare 330 unità di personale medico. Inoltre, i bambini di età superiore ai 15 anni hanno tuttora l'obbligo di raccogliere la quantità di cotone prevista, che corrisponde a 60 chilogrammi giornalieri ciascuno. Tutti i gruppi che partecipano alla raccolta forzata del cotone sono stati colpiti da vari problemi di salute a causa del duro lavoro e dell'orario eccesivo.

Il documento di strategia regionale per l'Asia centrale 2007-2013 della Commissione indica che le pratiche di sfruttamento messe in atto nella produzione del cotone impediscono un'equa distribuzione del reddito e sono causa di barriere sociali per le donne e le ragazze. Alla luce di quanto sopra e del fatto che l'UE è il terzo maggiore partner commerciale dell'Uzbekistan, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. è a conoscenza della politica della politica di lavoro forzato nei campi di cotone attuata quest'anno dal governo uzbeko nei confronti dei medici e di altri professionisti? Nell'affermativa, qual è la sua posizione in merito?

2. Intende la Commissione fornire maggiori informazioni nel prossimo documento di strategia regionale in merito alle pratiche di sfruttamento messe in atto in questo settore?

3. Tenuto conto di queste violazioni dei diritti umani perpetrate dall'Uzbekistan in un settore strettamente legato a quello tessile, può la Commissione illustrare le relazioni commerciali tra l'UE e l'Uzbekistan che coinvolgono l'industria cotoniera di quest'ultimo?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(6 dicembre 2012)

L'UE segue attentamente la questione, in particolare per quanto attiene al lavoro minorile.

Il tema è stato ripetutamente sollevato nell'ambito del dialogo politico, e più recentemente in occasione dell'ultimo comitato di cooperazione UE-Uzbekistan nonché nel corso del dialogo annuale UE-Uzbekistan sui diritti umani.

L'AR/VP ha preso atto dell'intenzione delle autorità uzbeke di far rispettare il divieto di ricorrere al lavoro minorile e di intensificare i relativi controlli. L'AR/VP è anche a conoscenza del fatto che quest'anno, per diminuire il ricorso al lavoro minorile, sono state temporaneamente richiamate alcune categorie di dipendenti pubblici.

L'Uzbekistan ha invitato la Commissione e l'OIL a un seminario internazionale che si è svolto a Tashkent il 2 maggio 2012. A margine dell'evento, la Commissione e l'OIL hanno discusso le prospettive insieme alle autorità uzbeke. In occasione del decimo comitato di cooperazione UE-Uzbekistan, riunitosi a Tashkent il 19 luglio 2012, la Commissione ha ribadito la sua posizione alle autorità uzbeke. L'OIL e le autorità uzbeke stanno conducendo discussioni affinché venga consentito all'OIL di monitorare l'attuazione delle convenzioni OIL in Uzbekistan e la Commissione sostiene attivamente questa iniziativa.

I dati raccolti presso varie fonti indicano per quest'anno un contenimento significativo del fenomeno del lavoro minorile, il che rappresenta un importante progresso.

Per quanto riguarda gli scambi commerciali, le relazioni bilaterali UE-Uzbekistan sono complessivamente assai limitate con una netta prevalenza delle esportazioni dell'UE. Il settore tessile rappresenta una quota marginale, pari appena al 14 % delle importazioni dell'UE, ossia al 2 % degli scambi totali tra l'UE e l'Uzbekistan.

L'UE, che ha recentemente istituito una delegazione in Uzbekistan, continuerà senz'altro a seguire con la massima attenzione la questione dell'industria cotoniera.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009422/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: New human rights problems posed by Uzbekistan's cotton industry

Uzbekistan is one of the world's largest producers of cotton, and the country's cotton industry is one of the mainstays of its economy. Earlier in 2012, in response to a pledge by certain large international retailers to source their cotton from countries that do not use child labour, Uzbekistan's Prime Minister banned children from working in the cotton fields. Instead — in a country where the Government maintains a tight control over cotton production and enforces strict quotas in order to speed the harvest — not only office workers but also doctors and nurses are now being forced to pick cotton.

This year, medical personnel in Uzbekistan have been ordered to help with the cotton harvest. Since this policy has been put into effect, there have been reports of patients being denied medical treatment because their doctors are away in the cotton fields. The authorities in Tashkent have decreed that every district is to contribute 330 medical staff. In addition, children over the age of 15 are still required to each pick the required amount of 60 kilograms of cotton a day. All groups involved in the forced cotton harvest have been affected by various health problems as a result of the heavy work and long hours.

The EC Regional Strategy Paper for Central Asia 2007-2013 lists exploitative practices in cotton production as a barrier to equal income distribution and as causing social barriers for women and girls. In light of the above, and of the fact that the EU is Uzbekistan's third largest trade partner, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Is the Commission aware of the Uzbekistan Government's policy of forcing medical and other professionals to labour in Uzbekistan's cotton fields this year? If so, what is its stance on this issue?

2. Does the Commission plan to provide more information on this exploitative industry in its next regional strategy paper?

3. Considering these human rights violations by Uzbekistan, in an industry closely related to the textile industry, could the Commission outline any trade ties between the EU and Uzbekistan that involve the latter's cotton industry?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

The EU has been following very closely this issue, especially the child labour dimension.

It has continuously been raised in political dialogue, most recently on the occasion of the last EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee and during the annual EU-Uzbekistan Human Rights Dialogue.

The HR/VP has taken good note of the intention of the Uzbek authorities to enforce the prohibition of child labour and step up their monitoring. The HR/VP is also aware that this year, in order to diminish the reliance on child labour, some categories of public servants have been temporarily called in.

Uzbekistan has invited the Commission and the ILO to an international seminar in Tashkent on 2nd May 2012. In the margins of this event, the Commission and the ILO discussed with the Uzbek authorities the way forward. At the occasion of the 10th EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee, which was held in Tashkent on 19th July 2012, the Commission reiterated its position to the Uzbek authorities. Discussions between the ILO and the Uzbek authorities are ongoing with a view to allow the ILO to observe implementation of ILO Conventions in Uzbekistan. The Commission is actively supporting this process.

The indications gathered from various sources suggest that for the current year the phenomenon of child labour has been significantly curbed, which is a significant step forward.

As regards trade, EU-Uzbekistan bilateral relations are overall very limited and are dominated by EU exports. The textile sector represents a marginal part, merely 14% of EU imports, or 2% of total EU-Uzbek trade.

With its newly established EU Delegation in Uzbekistan, the EU will obviously keep following the issue of the cotton industry very closely.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009423/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Ampliación del embalse de Yesa y carga policial contra los vecinos de Artieda

En el año 1983 se presentó el primer proyecto de recrecimiento del embalse Yesa, embalse situado entre las Comunidades Autónomas de Aragón y Navarra. Desde entonces, cada vez que la Confederación Hidrográfica del Ebro trata de desarrollar el proyecto numerosas organizaciones ambientalistas y, especialmente, la población potencialmente afectada del pueblo aragonés de Artieda despliegan su oposición al proyecto.

Este proyecto ha sido reimpulsado por el actual Ministerio de Agricultura, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente del Gobierno de España sobre la base de los acuerdos del Pacto del Agua derivados de las Cortes de Aragón, pretendiendo desarrollar el proyecto de construcción que data de 1992.

Sobre este proyecto y más allá de las afecciones sociales, patrimoniales o ambientales existentes, se ha dado un hecho que ha cuestionado la construcción del mismo, como es el desplazamiento geológico de las laderas de la futura presa, lo que ha motivado incrementos muy importantes en las partidas económicas.

Por otro lado, hay que señalar que los vecinos de Artieda se habían concentrado el pasado miércoles 10 de octubre para tratar de paralizar las expropiaciones. Sin embargo, pese a la tradición de resistencia pacífica de este movimiento, ha sido brutalmente reprimido por la violenta carga de los antidisturbios de la Guardia Civil.

Ante el avance de este y otros proyectos similares y teniendo en cuenta el procedimiento de infracción por vulneración de la Directiva marco del agua abierto contra España (2010/2083),

¿Considera la Comisión que este proyecto vulnera la Directiva marco del agua? De ser así, ¿tiene alguna fórmula para controlar estas infracciones?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de diciembre de 2012)

La Directiva 2000/60/CE, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas ([1]), obliga a los Estados miembros a notificar a la Comisión sus planes hidrológicos de cuenca (PHC), los cuales deben incluir medidas tendentes a evitar el deterioro de las aguas y a lograr un buen estado de estas.

La Comisión desconoce los detalles del proyecto a que alude Su Señoría. La compatibilidad del proyecto con la Directiva Marco del agua debe quedar reflejada en el plan hidrológico de la cuenca del Ebro, pero España no ha presentado todavía este plan.

Una vez presentado el plan, la Comisión analizará si se han observado los requisitos de la DMA.

Debido al retraso en la adopción de los PHC, la Comisión incoó un procedimiento de infracción contra España (asunto 2010/2083) por no haberlos adoptado ni notificado a la Comisión. El 4 de octubre de 2012, el Tribunal de Justicia dictó su sentencia (asunto C-403/11), que condenaba a España por no haber adoptado los planes hidrológicos de cuenca ni haber iniciado las consultas sobre los planes correspondientes a algunas demarcaciones hidrográficas.

([1]) DO L 327 de 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009423/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Enlargement of the Yesa reservoir and police brutality against the residents of Artieda

The Yesa reservoir is situated between the Autonomous Communities of Aragon and Navarra. In 1983, the first reservoir enlargement project was put forward. Since then, every time the Ebro Hydrographic Confederation attempts to launch the project, many environmental organisations and, most especially, the residents of the village of Artieda in Aragon who might potentially be affected by the scheme, voice their opposition.

The project has been relaunched by the current Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment on the basis of agreements on the Water Pact reached by the Aragon Regional Parliament, which is hoping to carry out the construction project dating from 1992.

Beyond the existing social and environmental objections, as well as the negative impact on the region's heritage, another factor has called into question this construction project, namely the geological displacement of the slopes surrounding the planned dam. This has meant that the cost of the project has increased significantly.

On Wednesday, 10 October 2012, the residents of Artieda assembled to try to stop the expropriations. However, despite the group's history of peaceful resistance, the demonstration was brutally repressed by a violent charge by riot police from the Spanish Civil Guard.

In the light of the progress of this and other similar projects, and bearing in mind the infringement procedure opened against Spain for failure to comply with the Water Framework Directive (2010/2083),

Does the Commission believe that this project breaches the Water Framework Directive? If so, does the Commission have a way of monitoring such infringements?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy ([1]) requires Member States to report to the Commission their River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), which should include measures aiming at preventing water status deterioration and at achieving good status.

The Commission is not aware of the details of the project referred to by the Honourable Member. The compatibility of the project with the Water Framework Directive should be reflected in the Ebro River Basin Management Plan (RBMP). However, Spain has not yet submitted this plan.

Once the plan is presented, the Commission will analyse whether the requirements of the WFD have been respected.

Given the delay in the adoption of the Spanish RBMPs, the Commission opened an infringement procedure against Spain (Case 2010/2083) for failing to adopt its RBMPs and report them to the Commission. On 4 of October 2012, the Court of Justice issued its ruling (Case C-403/11) condemning Spain for not having adopted the RBMPs and for not having started the consultations on the plans in a number of River Basin Districts (RBDs).

([1]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009425/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(17 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Fomento de la implicación ciudadana en la recogida selectiva de residuos

La Directiva 2008/98/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo de 19 de noviembre de 2008 sobre residuos considera que la implicación de la ciudadanía en la política de gestión de residuos, especialmente en lo que se refiere a modificación de las pautas de consumo y a la cooperación con las políticas de recogida selectiva de residuos, es un factor decisivo para que se incremente el reciclaje en Europa. Por ello, en su artículo 4 se establece una jerarquía para priorizar la legislación y política en la materia por parte de los Estados miembros y se obliga a que todos ellos garanticen que «el desarrollo de la legislación y política sobre residuos sea un proceso plenamente transparente en el que se observen las normas nacionales relativas a la consulta y participación de los ciudadanos y partes interesadas».

A la vista de estas previsiones,

1. ¿Dispone la Comisión de estudios o información sobre la influencia que la participación de la ciudadanía tiene en el adecuado progreso del reciclado de residuos en Europa? ¿Se ha incluido el nivel de participación como indicador de la idoneidad de la política de gestión de recursos que aplican los Estados miembros?

2. ¿Cuáles considera la Comisión que son los procesos clave en los que la implicación de la ciudadanía es básica para fomentar el éxito del reciclaje?

3. ¿Puede citar la Comisión las características comunes que reúnen los ejemplos de «buenas prácticas» en este ámbito de las campañas de concienciación de la ciudadanía sobre mejora de hábitos de consumo y prácticas de reciclado? ¿Se incluye entre ellas que las instituciones representativas del nivel administrativo que desarrolle y ejecute las políticas de gestión de recursos aprueben por mayoría dichos planes?

4. ¿Considera la Comisión que debería evitarse en todo caso la imposición de procedimientos, especialmente en ámbitos críticos como la recogida selectiva de residuos, en los que es vital la implicación ciudadana?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión publicó en 2011 un informe analítico[1] sobre las actitudes de los europeos en relación con la eficiencia en el uso de los recursos.

Los ciudadanos pueden desempeñar un papel crucial en la formulación y aplicación de los planes de gestión de residuos urbanos, desde la elección del emplazamiento de las instalaciones de tratamiento de residuos hasta el éxito de los programas de separación de residuos en los hogares. Un reciclado de alta calidad depende principalmente de los sistemas de recogida selectiva de residuos, los cuales dependen a su vez de la concienciación y el comportamiento de los ciudadanos.

La prevención y el reciclado de residuos son elementos importantes ambos de la Hoja de ruta hacia una Europa eficiente en el uso de los recursos[2]. Cambiar las pautas de consumo de los ciudadanos mediante la política de residuos puede tener un efecto positivo en la prevención de residuos y encaminar más residuos urbanos hacia el reciclado. Los planes de gestión de residuos y los programas de prevención de residuos deben aunarse de cara a estos objetivos. La Comisión tiene conocimiento de varios campañas eficaces de concienciación de los ciudadanos organizadas por las administraciones locales y nacionales, ONG o movimientos cívicos como las «jornadas de limpieza»[3]. También ha apoyado campañas de concienciación como la Semana Europea de la Prevención de Residuos[4].

El artículo 11 de la Directiva marco de residuos[5] exige la organización para 2015 de la recogida selectiva como mínimo del papel, los metales, el plástico y el vidrio para facilitar el cumplimiento del objetivo de reciclado de un 50 % de residuos urbanos para 2020. Corresponde a las autoridades competentes de los Estados miembros formular políticas y planes en que se tenga debidamente en cuenta la participación de los ciudadanos.

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(1) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_316_en.pdf
(2) COM(2011) 571 final.
(3) http://www.letsdoitworld.org/
(4) Proyecto con una duración de tres años financiado por el programa LIFE+: http://www.ewwr.eu/
(5) Directiva 2008/98/CE (DO L 312 de 22.11.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009425/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Encouraging citizen involvement in separate waste collection

Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste considers that citizen involvement in waste management policy, especially in regard to changing consumption patterns and cooperating with separate waste collection policies, is a determining factor for increasing recycling in Europe. Therefore, in Article 4 a hierarchy is established to set out a priority order for legislation and policy on waste prevention and management by Member States. It obliges them to ensure that 'the development of waste legislation and policy is a fully transparent process, observing existing national rules about the consultation and involvement of citizens and stakeholders.'

Given these provisions,

1. Does the Commission have any studies or information available on how citizeninvolvement affects progress on waste recycling in Europe? Has the level ofinvolvement been used as an indicator to measure the performance of the wastemanagement policies implemented by Member States?

2. In which main areas does the Commission think that citizen involvement is essential forensuring the success of recycling policies?

3. Can the Commission specify what the examples of good practice for citizen awarenesscampaigns on changing consumption patterns and recycling practices have in common?Do these shared features include majority approval of waste management policies byrepresentative institutions at the level of the administrative bodies responsible fordrawing up and implementing them?

4. Does the Commission think that it should avoid imposing procedures, especially in areaswhere citizen involvement is vital, such as separate waste collection?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

In 2011, the Commission published an analytical report ([1]) on the attitudes of Europeans towards Resource Efficiency.

Citizens can play a crucial role in the drawing and implementation of municipal waste management plans, from choosing the location of waste treatment plants to the success of waste separation schemes involving households. High quality recycling is mainly dependent on waste separate collection schemes, which are in turn dependant also on awareness and behaviour of individual citizens.

Waste prevention and recycling are both important elements of the Resource Efficiency Roadmap ([2]). Changing citizens' consumption patterns through waste policy can have a beneficial impact on waste prevention and can channel more municipal waste into recycling. Waste management plans and waste prevention programmes should work together towards these aims. The Commission is aware of several effective campaigns for citizens' awareness, either organised by local and national administrations, NGOs or civic movements such as 'Clean up Days' ([3]). It has supported awareness campaigns such as the European Week of Waste Reduction ([4]).

Article 11 of the Waste Framework Directive ([5]) requests by 2015 the setting up of separate collection for at least: paper, metal, plastic and glass in order to facilitate the fulfilment of the 50% recycling target on municipal waste by 2020. It is up to the competent authorities in Member States to draw up waste policy and plans where the citizens involvement is duly taken into account.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_316_en.pdf
([2]) COM(2011)571 final.
([3]) http://www.letsdoitworld.org/.
([4]) A 3 year project funded by the Life+ programme: http://www.ewwr.eu/.
([5]) Directive 2008/98/EC, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009426/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(17 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Informes europeos de evaluación en materia de gestión de residuos

La Directiva 2008/98/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo de 19 de noviembre de 2008 sobre residuos establece en su artículo 17 que los Estados miembros deberán remitir a la Comisión cada tres años un informe sectorial sobre la aplicación de la citada normativa europea. Esta disposición incorpora a las estadísticas que ya se venían efectuando en torno al reciclado y valorización de los residuos en Europa los progresos que se hayan observado en la gestión de aceites usados y los programas de prevención de residuos y medidas adoptadas para fomentar la responsabilidad aplicada del fabricante.

Vistas las previsiones que la propia Directiva incorpora a efectos de trasposición a la legislación de los Estados miembros (2010) y visto el tiempo transcurrido desde la aprobación de dicha norma,

1. ¿Ha recibido la Comisión ya algún informe de evaluación de los previstos en su artículo 17? ¿Cuándo prevé la Comisión que estará disponible el primer informe europeo sobre la ejecución de esta Directiva?

2. A la vista de los nuevos datos disponibles, ¿en qué Estados se registran las más altas tasas de recogida selectiva de residuos urbanos domésticos en la Unión Europea? ¿Cuáles son los países de la UE que más reciclan?

3. ¿Cuáles son los sistemas de cierre de los procesos de tratamiento que contemplan los países que más reciclan en Europa?

4. Con las tecnologías y procedimientos existentes en la actualidad, ¿cómo evoluciona el porcentaje entre residuos reciclables o reutilizables y la fracción no reciclable?

5. Para el tratamiento final de la fracción resto, ¿se considera desde las instituciones europeas que la valorización energética mediante incineración es una solución preferible y más sostenible que el vertedero?

6. ¿Cómo valoraría la Comisión el hecho de almacenar en canteras y en zonas naturales, una vez embalados y secados, los residuos no reciclables? ¿Es esta una buena alternativa a la valorización energética mediante incineración de los residuos no reciclables?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión no ha recibido todavía ningún informe de evaluación. El próximo informe de aplicación cubrirá el período de 2010-2012. De conformidad con el artículo 37, apartado 4, de la Directiva marco de residuos ([1]), el primer informe deberá presentarse para el 12 de diciembre de 2014.

Un reciente estudio de la Comisión ([2]) indica una correlación lineal entre la utilización de unas prácticas de gestión de residuos sólidas (recogida selectiva de residuos) basadas en instrumentos económicos (impuestos por vertido y prohibiciones) y unos índices altos de reciclado. Austria, Alemania, Suecia, Bélgica, Dinamarca y los Países Bajos son los Estados miembros que depositan en vertederos menos del 5 % de los residuos urbanos y reciclan entre el 45 % (Dinamarca) y más del 70 % (Bélgica).

Los Estados miembros mencionados también están trabajando en materia de prevención de residuos mediante el uso de instrumentos económicos (sistemas de pago por generación de residuos) y regímenes de responsabilidad ampliada de los productores (diseño ecológico).

La tecnología de tratamiento de residuos sigue desarrollándose con vistas a una mayor eficiencia. No obstante, hay que destacar que es posible actuar en origen mediante la responsabilidad ampliada de los productores a fin de prevenir la generación de residuos y facilitar un reciclado de alta calidad.

La incineración con recuperación de energía figura en un lugar más alto de la jerarquía de residuos que el vertido, tal como se establece en el artículo 4 de la Directiva marco de residuos.

([1]) Directiva 2008/98/CE (DO L 312 de 22.11.2008).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/final_report_10042012.pdf

Las autoridades competentes pueden autorizar el uso como materiales de relleno siempre que los residuos sean idóneos, se utilicen con fines de regeneración en zonas excavadas o en obras de ingeniería paisajística y sustituyan a materiales que no sean residuos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009426/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: European assessment reports on waste management

Article 37 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste provides that Member States shall inform the Commission of the implementation of this directive by submitting a sectoral report every three years. This article provides for the information on the progress achieved in management of waste oil and waste prevention programmes, and the measures adopted to encourage extended producer responsibility, to be added to the statistics which are already being compiled on waste recycling and recovery in Europe.

Given the provisions incorporated into this directive for transposition into legislation in the Member States (2010), and the time that has elapsed since it was adopted,

1. Has the Commission received any assessment reports, as provided for in Article 37?When does the Comission envisage that the first European report on the implementationof this directive will be available?

2. In the light of new data available, which Member States have the highest rates of separatewaste collection from urban households in the EU? Which EU countries recycle themost?

3. What systems are being considered for putting an end to waste treatment by the countrieswhich recycle the most in Europe?

4. To what extent does the difference between the percentage of recyclable or reusable wasteand non-recyclable waste change with current technologies and processes?

5. Do the European institutions think that energy recovery through incineration is a betterand more sustainable solution than waste going to landfill as the final treatment option forthe remaining waste?

6. What does the Commission think of storing non-recyclable waste in quarries and naturalareas, once it has been baled and dried? Is this a good alternative to energy recoverythrough incineration of non-recyclable waste?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The Commission has not received any assessment reports yet. The upcoming implementation report shall cover the years 2010-2012. According to Article 37 (4) of the Waste Framework Directive ([1]), the first report intervenes by 12 December 2014.

A recent Commission study ([2]) shows a linear correlation between the use of sound waste management practices (waste separate collection) underpinned by economic instruments (landfill taxes and bans) and high recycling rates. Austria, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands are Member States that landfill less than 5% of municipal waste and recycle from 45% (DK) to over 70% (BE).

The abovementioned Member States are also working on waste prevention through the use of economic instruments (pay-as-you-throw schemes) and extended producer responsibility (eco-design).

Waste treatment technology continues to be developed in order to gain in efficiency. However, it is noteworthy that it is possible to act upstream through the extended producers' responsibility in order to prevent waste from being generated and facilitate high quality recycling.

Incineration with energy recovery ranks higher in the waste hierarchy than landfilling, as set out in Article 4 of the Waste Framework Directive.

([1]) Directive 2008/98/EC, OJ L 312 of 22.11.2008.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/final_report_10042012.pdf

Backfilling can be authorised by the competent authorities on the proviso that the waste is suitable and used for reclamation purposes in excavated areas or for engineering purposes in landscaping and where the waste is a substitute for non-waste materials.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009427/12
a la Comisión
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(17 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Comunicación de planes de gestión y prevención de residuos

La Directiva 2008/98/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo de 19 de noviembre de 2008 sobre residuos establece en sus artículos 4, 13, 16, 28 y 29 diversas disposiciones relacionadas con la redacción de planes de gestión de residuos y programas de prevención de residuos que cubran todo el territorio de los Estados miembros y detalla los elementos que dichos planes deben incorporar. Igualmente en el artículo 33 se obliga a los Estados miembros a informar de los planes una vez adoptados o de cualquier revisión sustancial de los planes y programas. Tras la aprobación de esta Directiva y su ya consumada trasposición a las legislaciones estatales (que debía finalizar en 2010),

1. ¿Ha recibido la Comisión información sobre los planes de gestión que se aplican en cada Estado miembro y, en su caso, de los cambios sustanciales producidos en ellos?

2. Cuando las competencias están descentralizadas, ¿quién es la institución responsable de presentar los planes de gestión ante las autoridades europeas?

3. En los planes recibidos hasta la fecha y en materia de valoración de la denominada fracción resto, es decir, de los recursos que no se pueden reciclar, ¿cuáles son las fórmulas mayoritariamente adoptadas por los Estados miembros?

4. En cuanto a la valorización de los biorresiduos, ¿cuáles son las fórmulas mayoritariamente presentes en los planes de gestión declarados por los Estados miembros?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión ha recibido información sobre los planes de gestión de residuos adoptados por algunos Estados miembros. El 27 de septiembre de 2012, se pidió a los que no habían notificado dichos planes que lo hicieran en el plazo de dos meses, de conformidad con el artículo 33 de la Directiva marco sobre residuos (DMR) ([1]). La Comisión espera recibir los planes restantes a finales de 2012 y luego evaluará en 2013 su contenido, incluidos los métodos de gestión de los residuos más comunes.

La administración central es la autoridad competente responsable de la presentación de los planes de gestión de residuos a la Comisión, aun en los casos en que las competencias están descentralizadas.

([1]) Directiva 2008/98/CE (DO L 312 de 22.11.2008).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009427/12
to the Commission
Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Communication of waste management and prevention plans

Articles 4, 13, 16, 28 and 29 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste lay down various provisions relating to the drafting of waste management plans and waste prevention programmes by Member States, and specify what elements these plans must include. Equally, Article 33 stipulates that Member States must inform the Commission of these plans and programmes, once adopted, and of any substantial revisions. Following the adoption of Directive 2008/98/EC and its subsequent transposition into national legislation (which was required by 2010),

1. Has the Commission received information about the waste management plans in place in each Member State, and if so, of any substantial revisions to these plans?

2. When competences are decentralised, which institution is responsible for presenting waste management plans to the EU authorities?

3. In the plans received until now, what are the most common methods adopted by Member States for dealing with so-called remaining waste (that is to say, non-recyclable waste)?

4. In the waste management plans submitted by Member States, what are the most common methods of dealing with bio-waste?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

The Commission has received information about the waste management plans adopted by some Member States. On 27 September 2012, those who had failed to notify such plans were asked to do so within two months in compliance with Article 33 of the Waste Framework Directive ([1]) (WFD). The Commission expects to receive the remaining plans by the end of 2012 and will then assess their content, including most common waste management methods, during 2013.

The central government is the competent authority responsible for submitting the waste management plans to the Commission, even in cases where competences are decentralised.

([1]) Directive 2008/98/EC, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-009428/12
Komisi
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(17. října 2012)

Předmět: Satelitní karty Skylink a CS Link a možné klamání evropských spotřebitelů

Společnosti Skylink a CS Link nabízely spotřebitelům v České republice dekódovací karty pro neplacené televizní kanály. Při úhradě jednorázového poplatku byla spotřebitelům dodána karta s deklarovanou zárukou doživotního bezplatného užívání.

Koncem roku 2011 se majitelem obou společností stala firma M77 Group S.A. se sídlem v Lucemburku. V současné době poskytovatelé služeb Skylink a CS Link přistupují ke spotřebitelům z pozice jedné firmy a podle dostupných informací ovládly fúzí přibližně 85 % trhu.

V červnu 2012 obě společnosti uvedly v platnost „Nové obchodní podmínky" a rozeslaly spotřebitelům oznámení, že podle těchto nových podmínek jsou povinni hradit měsíční poplatek a za další poplatek vyměnit starší karty. V případě neuhrazení hrozí společnosti vypovězením stávající smlouvy a odpojením příjmu ze všech neuhrazených karet.

Podle šetření spotřebitelských organizací existuje podezření, že zavedením měsíčního poplatku u původně avizované bezplatné služby (za podmínky uhrazení jednorázového vysokého poplatku) došlo k oklamání vysokého počtu spotřebitelů.

Ke dnešnímu dni (16.10.) má společnost na stránkách ([1]) stále reklamní sdělení: „České, slovenské a stovky zahraničních televizních programů i rozhlasových stanic poskytujeme bezplatně. Podmínkou je jen úhrada Servisního poplatku (29 Kč/měsíčně)".

Na základě výše uvedeného se obracím na Komisi, zda prověřila, jestli:

1. nedošlo k oklamání spotřebitelů slíbením a následným nedodržením záruky doživotního bezplatného užívání dané služby?

2. nedošlo ke zneužití dominantního postavení na trhu?

3. se společnost nedopustila dle směrnice EP a Rady 2009/29/ES klamavých obchodních praktik v souvislosti s použitím termínu „bezplatně"?

Odpověď paní Redingové jménem Komise
(4. prosince 2012)

Směrnice 2005/29/ES ([2]) obchodníkům zakazuje, aby vůči spotřebitelům používali klamavé a agresivní obchodní praktiky. V souladu s ustanoveními této směrnice by obchodníci měli zavčas poskytnout jasné a srozumitelné závažné informace, které spotřebitelé potřebují k informovanému rozhodnutí o koupi, včetně informací o hlavních znacích a ceně produktu. V příloze 1 směrnice je navíc uveden zákaz, který se za všech okolností použije na praktiky popsané slovy „gratis", „zdarma", „bezplatně" a podobné, pokud musí spotřebitel zaplatit jakékoli jiné náklady než jen nevyhnutelné náklady spojené s reakcí na obchodní praktiku.

Vážená paní poslankyně by si měla být nicméně vědoma toho, že vnitrostátní orgány a soudy mají základní pravomoc prošetřit praktiky konkrétních společností, jež působí na jejich území. Pouze vnitrostátní donucovací orgány mohou při zohlednění všech skutečností a okolností případu posoudit, zda společnost použila nekalé obchodní praktiky nebo klamavou reklamu.

Komise má v úmyslu v blízké době předložit zprávu o uplatňování směrnice 2005/29/ES, která bude zejména obsahovat seznam nejčastějších nekalých obchodních praktik zaznamenaných v členských státech.

([1]) http://www.skylink.cz/web/structure/2.html
([2]) Směrnice 2005/29/ES o nekalých obchodních praktikách, Úř. věst. L 149, 11.6.2005, s. 22.

Pokud jde o možné zneužívání dominantního postavení některými podniky na českém trhu s placenou satelitní televizí, je třeba připomenout, že uplatnění článku 102 Smlouvy o fungování Evropské unie závisí na řadě skutkových, právních a hospodářských prvků. Informace, které vážená paní poslankyně poskytla, nám neumožňují dospět k závěru, že popisované chování představuje zneužívání podle článku 102 Smlouvy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009428/12
to the Commission
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Skylink and CS Link satellite TV cards and possible misleading of European consumers

The companies Skylink and CS Link offered consumers in the Czech Republic decoder cards for free TV channels. On payment of a one-off fee consumers were issued with a decoder card with a stated guarantee of lifetime use free of charge.

At the end of 2011, M77 Group S.A., a firm based in Luxembourg, became the owner of both these companies. Currently, the service providers Skylink and CS Link are both acting as one in their relations with consumers; according to available information, they command about 85% of the market between them through their merger.

In June 2012, both companies introduced 'new terms of business' and sent consumers a notification that under these new terms they are required to pay a monthly fee, and in the case of older cards, required to change the card, for a further fee. If the fee is not paid, they threaten to terminate existing contracts and to disconnect all cards for which no fee has been paid.

According to investigations by consumer organisations, introducing a new monthly fee for a service originally announced as free of charge (subject to payment of a substantial, initial one-off charge) has resulted in large numbers of consumers being misled.

At present (16 October), the company still has on its website ([1]) the following announcement: 'We provide Czech, Slovak and hundreds of foreign television programes and radio stations free of charge. The only condition is the payment of a service charge (29 Czech crowns per month).'

In the light of the above, can the Commission say if it has verified whether:

1. promising, and subsequently denying, consumers the guarantee of lifetime use of a service free of charge has not resulted in their being misled?

2. what has happened is not an abuse of a dominant market position?

3. the company has not engaged in unfair commercial practices under Directive 2005/29/EC in connection with the use of the term 'free of charge'?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

Directive 2005/29/EC ([2]) prohibits traders from engaging in misleading and aggressive commercial practices towards consumers. According to its provisions, traders should provide in a clear, intelligible and timely manner, material information that consumers need in order to make an informed purchase decision, including on the main characteristics and the price of the product. In addition Annex A of the directive prohibits, in all circumstances, the practice of describing as 'free', 'without charge' or similar if the consumer has to pay anything more that the unavoidable cost of responding to the commercial practice.

This being said, the Honourable Member should know that it is the primary competence of the national authorities and courts to investigate the practices of particular companies operating on their territories. Only national enforcement authorities are in a position to assess whether, taking into account all facts and circumstances of a case, a company has engaged in an unfair commercial practice or misleading advertising.

The Commission plans to present shortly a report on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC which will, in particular, provide a list of the most common unfair commercial practices encountered in the Member States.

([1]) http://www.skylink.cz/web/structure/2.html
([2]) Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices, OJ L149 of 11.6.2005, p.22.

As regards potential abuses of dominant position by certain undertakings in the Czech satellite pay-tv market, it should be reminded that the application of Article 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union depends on a range of factual, legal and economic elements. The information provided by the Honourable Member does not allow us to conclude that the described behaviour amounts to an abuse under Article 102 of the Treaty.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009429/12
an die Kommission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Verschuldung spanischer Fußballklubs

Spaniens Profifußballklubs dürfen nun nach letzten Meldungen auf eine Reduzierung ihrer Steuerschulden hoffen. Laut Sportminister Miguel Cardenal plant die spanische Regierung, zumindest Teile ihrer Steuer- und Sozialversicherungsschulden zu erlassen.

1. Sind der Kommission die Schulden der spanischen Profiklubs bei den Banken und beim Staat bekannt?

Wenn ja, können die Finanzprobleme im spanischen Profisport durch Mittel des Bankenhilfspakets oder andere Finanzhilfen gelöst werden und sind derartige staatliche Beihilfen wettbewerbsrechtlich überhaupt zulässig?

2. Wie ist in diesem Zusammenhang ein genereller Steuerschuldenerlass bzw. eine Reduzierung der Schulden (Steuerschulden und Sozialversicherungsschulden) von Profiklubs durch den spanischen Staat europarechtlich zu beurteilen?

3. Muss eine (Teil-)Entschuldung durch den Staat oder sogar ein genereller Schuldenverzicht durch die Gläubiger (Banken, Staat, Sozialversicherung) nach dem europäischen Wettbewerbsrecht als unzulässige staatliche Beihilfe beurteilt werden?

5. Gibt es zu dieser Beihilfenproblematik im Sport bereits eine Rechtsprechung des EuGH?

Wenn ja, wie werden derartige staatliche Beihilfen im Sport durch den EuGH beurteilt?

6. Welche Zahlen liegen dem Ressort zur Verschuldung von Profiklubs (Fußball) in den anderen Mitgliedstaaten der EU vor (Aufschlüsselung auf Staaten)?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(27. November 2012)

1. Die Kommission hat Kenntnis von Presseberichten über Steuer- und Sozialversicherungsrückstände spanischer Profifußballvereine sowie von einer Vereinbarung zwischen dem spanischen Sportminister und den Vereinen, die einen Plan für die Begleichung dieser Schulden enthält. Von Plänen, den Vereinen einen Teil dieser Schulden zu erlassen, ist der Kommission nichts bekannt.

2. und 3. Was die Anwendbarkeit der Beihilfevorschriften auf den Sportbereich betrifft, so gilt das EU-Wettbewerbsrecht insoweit für den Sportsektor, als eine wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit vorliegt. Beim Profifußball ist das zweifelsohne der Fall. Der Begriff der staatlichen Beihilfen umfasst auch entgangene Einnahmen der öffentlichen Hand zugunsten von Unternehmen. In Anbetracht der Vielzahl der Märkte, auf denen Profifußballvereine tätig sind, würden staatliche Beihilfen, durch die einem solchen Verein ein Vorteil gewährt würde, die Gefahr bergen, dass es zu Wettbewerbsbehinderungen und einer Beeinträchtigung des Handels zwischen Mitgliedstaaten im Sinne von Artikel 107 Absatz 1 AEUV kommt. Derartige Beihilfen müssten bei der Kommission angemeldet werden, damit sie nicht als rechtswidrig eingestuft werden. Maßnahmen von Banken stellen hingegen in der Regel keine staatlichen Beihilfen dar, sofern sie nicht dem Staat zuzurechnen sind.

5. Der Gerichtshof hat noch keinen Anlass gehabt, ein Urteil über staatliche Beihilfen für den Sportbereich zu erlassen. Er hat jedoch angemerkt, dass das EU-Wettbewerbsrecht grundsätzlich auf den Profisport anwendbar sein kann ([1]).

6. Im Oktober 2012 haben die Kommissionsdienststellen einige Mitgliedstaaten in einem Schreiben gebeten, ihre Praktiken in Bezug auf die Finanzierung des Profifußballs darzulegen, um sich einen Überblick zu verschaffen und prüfen zu können, welche Auswirkungen die Beihilfevorschriften des AEUV gegebenenfalls auf diese Finanzierung haben. Die Kommission führt kein Verzeichnis zur Verschuldung von Profifußballvereinen. Derartige Angaben sind möglicherweise einschlägigen Berichten der UEFA zu entnehmen.

([1]) EuGH, Urteil vom 15. Dezember 1995, Bosman, Rechtssache C 415/93, Randnummer 73, EuGH, Urteil vom 18. Juli 2006, Meca-Medina und Majcen/Kommission, Rechtssache C 519/04 P, Randnummer 22, und EuGH, Urteil vom 16. März 2010, Olympique Lyonnais, Rechtssache C 325/08, Randnummer 23.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009429/12
to the Commission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Indebtedness of Spanish Football clubs

According to recent reports, Spain's professional football clubs are likely to have their tax debt reduced. Sports Minister Miguel Cardenal has stated that the Spanish Government intends to wipe out, at least in part, the clubs' tax and social insurance debts.

1. Is the Commission aware of the debts owed by Spanish professional football clubs to banks and the state?

If so, can the financial problems in Spanish professional sport be solved by means of banking bailout packages or other financial aid, and is such state aid indeed permissible under competition law?

2. In this context, what would be the implications under EC law of the partial reduction or wholesale expunging of the professional clubs' tax and social insurance debt by the state?

3. Would the full or partial expunging of tax debt by the state or creditors (banks, the state and social insurance) constitute illegal state aid under EU competition law?

5. Has there been a European Court of Justice ruling in respect of financial aid in sport?

If so, what view did the Court of Justice take of such state aid in sport?

6. In how much debt are professional football clubs in other Member States (give a country-by-country breakdown)?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

1. The Commission is aware of press reports regarding arrears of taxes and social security contributions by Spanish professional football clubs and of an agreement between the Sports Minister of Spain and the clubs which sets out a road map for paying off these debts. The Commission is not aware of any decision to wipe out part of those arrears.

2 and 3. Regarding the application of state aid rules to sport in general, it is subject to EU competition law insofar as it constitutes an economic activity. This is undoubtedly the case for professional football. The concept of state aid also covers foregone income by public authorities in favour of undertakings. In view of the many markets on which professional football clubs are active, State aid providing such an advantage to a professional football club will in all likelihood have the potential to distort competition and affect trade between Member States in the meaning of Article 107(1) TFEU. Such aid would need to be notified to the Commission in order not to become illegal. Actions of banks will normally not constitute state aid unless they are imputable to the State.

5. The Court of Justice has not had the opportunity to rule in respect of state aid to sport. However it has stated that EU competition rules may in principle apply to professional sport. ([1])

6. In October 2012 the Commission services wrote to Member States enquiring about their practices regarding the financing of professional football to obtain an overview on it and to assess possible impact of the state aid rules of the Treaty on this financing. The Commission does not compile a list of debts of professional football clubs but would refer the Honourable Member to the reports published by UEFA.

([1]) Case C-415/93 Bosman, paragraph 73, Case C-519/04 P Meca-Medina and Majcen v Commission, paragraph 22, and C-325/08 Olympique Lyonnais, paragraph 23.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009430/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(17 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ανορθολογική χρήση των νερών του Αλιάκμονα για την τροφοδοσία των λιγνιτικών σταθμών της ΔΕΗ

Ως το 1997, ο λιγνιτικός ΑΗΣ ([1]) Αμυνταίου, στην Περιφέρεια Δυτικής Μακεδονίας τροφοδοτούνταν με 20 hm^3 νερού/έτος από τη λίμνη Βεγορίτιδα, πράγμα που συνετέλεσε σημαντικά στην ταπείνωση της στάθμης της λίμνης κατά 32,5 μέτρα από το 1955 έως το 2002 ([2]). Εξαιτίας αυτού του γεγονότος αλλά και της εξάντλησης του υπόγειου υδροφορέα της περιοχής, το 1997 ο ΑΗΣ Αμυνταίου άρχισε να υδροδοτείται από τον Αλιάκμονα (ταμιευτήρας Πολυφύτου) με περίπου 10 hm^3/έτος. Σημειώνεται ότι ο Αλιάκμονας είναι περίπου 60 χλμ. μακριά από τον ΑΗΣ Αμυνταίου, με τον οποίο έχει αρνητική υψομετρική διαφορά 390 μέτρων, πράγμα που επιβαρύνει οικονομικά τη μεταφορά νερού λόγω του κόστους των αγωγών αλλά και των λειτουργικών δαπανών των αντλιοστασίων. Προσφάτως, η ΔΕΗ αποφάσισε να καλύψει εξ ολοκλήρου τις ανάγκες σε νερό των ΑΗΣ Αμυνταίου και Πτολεμαΐδας από τη λίμνη Πολυφύτου που τροφοδοτείται από τον ποταμό Αλιάκμονα. Σύμφωνα με τη ΜΠΕ ([3]) που αφορά την κατασκευή των αγωγών μεταφοράς του νερού, «*οι δεσμευόμενες ποσότητες νερού από τον ταμιευτήρα Πολυφύτου θα αυξηθούν κατά 17* hm^3*/έτος σε σχέση με την υφιστάμενη σήμερα κατάσταση*». Αυτή η ποσότητα νερού θα προστεθεί στα 55 hm^3 που εκτιμάται ότι ως τώρα η ΔΕΗ αντλεί κάθε χρόνο από τον Αλιάκμονα για την υδροδότηση όλων των ΑΗΣ της στο λεκανοπέδιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας ([4]). Επίσης, ο Αλιάκμονας επιβαρύνεται επιπλέον από τα υπάρχοντα 4 μεγάλα υδροηλεκτρικά φράγματα της ΔΕΗ συνολικής ισχύος 922 MW ([5]), ενώ σχεδιάζονται και 2 νέα στο Ελάφιο (135 MW) ([6]) και το Νεστόριο (7 MW) ([7]), τη στιγμή που δεν έχει ακόμα εκπονηθεί σχέδιο διαχείρισης για το υδατικό διαμέρισμα (ΥΔ) 09 (Δυτ. Μακεδονία).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει για την προστασία του Αλιάκμονα έως ότου εκπονηθούν τα σχέδια διαχείρισης για το υδατικό διαμέρισμα Δ. Μακεδονίας σύμφωνα με την Οδηγία 2000/60/ΕΚ;

2. Έχει στη διάθεσή της ή σκοπεύει να ζητήσει στοιχεία από τις ελληνικές αρχές σχετικά με το κόστος υδροδότησης των λιγνιτικών σταθμών της ΔΕΗ;

3. Σκοπεύει να προτείνει στις ελληνικές αρχές να συμπεριληφθεί η αποκατάσταση της λίμνης Βεγορίτιδας στα προς εκπόνηση σχέδια διαχείρισης του ΥΔ 09, με συγχρηματοδότηση της ΔΕΗ;

4. Σκοπεύει να ζητήσει από το κράτος μέλος και τη ΔΕΗ την εκπόνηση προγράμματος εξοικονόμησης νερού-ατμού στις λιγνιτικές της μονάδες;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Οι ελληνικές αρχές οφείλουν να καθορίσουν τα ενδεδειγμένα μέτρα στο σχέδιο διαχείρισης της λεκάνης απορροής του ποταμού Αλιάκμονα, όπως απαιτεί η οδηγία-πλαίσιο για τα ύδατα (ΟΠΥ, 2000/60/ΕΚ ([8])), ώστε να διασφαλισθεί η καλή κατάσταση όλων των υδάτων μέχρι το 2015. Εν προκειμένω ως καλή κατάσταση νοείται η καλή ποιότητα, προκειμένου για τα επιφανειακά ύδατα, και η καλή ποιότητα και ικανοποιητική ποσότητα, προκειμένου για τα υπόγεια ύδατα. Η επίτευξη του εν λόγω στόχου προϋποθέτει τη θέσπιση προγραμμάτων παρακολούθησης και τη λήψη οικονομικά αποδοτικών μέτρων για την αντιμετώπιση των σοβαρών πιέσεων που επηρεάζουν την κατάσταση των υδάτων.

([1]) Ατμοηλεκτρικός Σταθμός.
([2]) Στάμος Αλκιβιάδης 2010. «Παρακολούθηση ισοζυγίου άνω ρου Αλιάκμονα, Βερμίου, Πτολεμαΐδας (Υδατικό διαμέρισμα 09)», Μελέτη στα πλαίσια του Γ' ΚΠΣ για την καταγραφή και την αποτίμηση των υδρογεωλογικών χαρακτηριστικών του υδατικού δυναμικού της χώρας, Υποέργο 3.
([3]) Μελέτη Περιβαλλοντικών Επιπτώσεων.
([4]) ΕΝΗΜΕΡΩΤΙΚΟ ΣΗΜΕΙΩΜΑ για τη γνωμοδότηση του Περιφερειακού Συμβουλίου επί της Μελέτης Περιβαλλοντικών Επιπτώσεων του έργου: «Υδροδότηση ΑΗΣ Αμυνταίου και Πτολεμαΐδας από δεξαμενές Δρεπάνου 110 000 m3 και 30 000 m^3)».
([5]) Υδροηλεκτρικό Πολυφύτου 375 MW, Σφηκιάς 315 MW, Ιλαρίωνας 124 MW, Ασωμάτων 108 MW — περίπου το 1/3 της υδροηλεκτρικής ισχύος που είναι εγκατεστημένη σε ολόκληρη τη χώρα.
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-000623+0+DOC+XML+V0//EL&language=EL.
([7]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-000198+0+DOC+XML+V0//EL&language=EL.
([8]) ΕΕ L 327 της 22.12.2000.

Η Ελλάδα δεν έχει υποβάλει στην Επιτροπή σχέδια διαχείρισης λεκανών απορροής ποταμών (ΣΔΛΑΠ). Ως εκ τούτου, η Επιτροπή κίνησε διαδικασία επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας (υπόθεση C-297/11, απόφαση της 19.4.2012.), επειδή η χώρα δεν είχε θεσπίσει ούτε είχε υποβάλει ΣΔΛΑΠ. Η Ελλάδα έχει ανεπίσημα ενημερώσει την Επιτροπή ότι τα ΣΔΛΑΠ θα υποβληθούν τους προσεχείς μήνες. Μετά τη διαβίβαση των ΣΔΛΑΠ, η Επιτροπή θα τα αξιολογήσει και θα τα αναλύσει ώστε να διαπιστωθεί κατά πόσον τηρήθηκαν οι απαιτήσεις της ΟΠΥ. Εν ανάγκη, η Επιτροπή θα λάβει περαιτέρω μέτρα με βάση την ως άνω αξιολόγηση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009430/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Unjustifiable use of water from the river Aliakmonas to supply the Greek Electricity Board's lignite plants

Until 1997, Amydaio lignite plant ([1]) in Western Macedonia was supplied with 20 hm^3 of water/year from Lake Vegoritida, which contributed significantly to the lowering of the water level by 32.5 metres between 1955 and 2002 ([2]). Because of this and the depletion of the underground aquifers in the area, in 1997 Amydaio lignite plant began to be supplied from the river Aliakmonas (Polyfyto reservoir) with about 10 hm^3/year. It should be noted that the river Aliakmonas is about 60 km away from Amydaio lignite plant, with which it has a negative elevation difference of 390 metres, which increases water transportation costs because of the cost of the pipeline and the operating costs of pumping. Recently, the Greek Electricity Board decided to meet the entire water needs of Amydaio and Ptolemaida plants from Lake Polyfyto which is supplied by the river Aliakmonas. According to the EIA ([3]) on the construction of the water pipelines, 'the committed amounts of water from Polyfyto reservoir will increase by 17 hm^3/year compared to the current volume.' This volume of water will be added to the estimated 55 hm^3 that the Greek Electricity Board currently draws each year from the river Aliakmonas to supply all the steam-electric power generation plants in Western Macedonia ([4]). Moreover, there are also 4 large Greek Electricity Board hydroelectric dams on the river Aliakmonas with a total capacity of 922 MW ([5]), and 2 new dams are planned at Elafio (135 MW) ([6]) and Nestorio (7 MW) ([7]), even though no management plan has yet been drawn up for Water Section 09 of West Macedonia.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What steps will it take to protect the river Aliakmonas until management plans have been drawn up for the Water Section of Western Macedonia in line with Directive 2000/60/EC?

2. Does it have — or does it intend to seek from the Greek authorities — information about the cost of supplying water to the Greek Electricity Board's lignite plants?

3. Will it propose to the Greek authorities that the rehabilitation of Lake Vegoritida should be included in the Water Section 09 management plans which are due to be drawn up, with Greek Electricity Board co-funding?

4. Does it intend to ask the Member State concerned and the Greek Electricity Board to draw up a water-steam electricity generation saving programme at its lignite units?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The Greek authorities have to identify the adequate measures in the River Aliakmonas Basin management Plan, as required by Directive (WFD 2000/60/EC ([8])), to ensure good status of all waters by 2015. Good status means good quality for surface water and good quality and quantity for groundwater. To achieve this objective requires monitoring programmes to be established and cost effective measures to be put in place to address significant pressures impacting on the status.

([1]) Steam-electric power generation plant.
([2]) Stamos Alkiviadis 2010 'Monitoring the level at the head waters of the river Aliakmonas at Vermio and Ptolemaida (Section 09)', a study carried out within the framework of the 3rd CSF in order to record and assess the hydrogeological characteristics of the aquatic potential of the country, sub-project 3.
([3]) Environmental Impact Assessment.
([4]) Information Note on the Regional Council's opinion on the EIS in respect of the project: 'Supply of water to Amydaio and Ptolemaida plants from Drepano reservoirs 110 000m^3 and 30 000m^3'.
([5]) Polyfyto hydroelectric plant 375 MW, Sfikia 315 MW, Ilarion 124 MW, Asomata 108 MW — accounting for approximately one third of Greece's hydroelectric capacity.
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-000623+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN.
([7]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-000198+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN.
([8]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

Greece has not reported its River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) to the Commission. The Commission has therefore opened an infringement procedure against Greece (Case C-297/11, ruling 19.4.2012.), for failing to adopt and report its RBMPs. Greece has informally informed the Commission that the RBMPs will be reported in the coming months. Once the RBMPs will be transmitted, the Commission will assess them and analyse whether the requirements of the WFD have been respected. If appropriate, the Commission will take further steps on the basis of this assessment.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009431/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 octobre 2012)

Objet: Google et le traitement des données personnelles des citoyens

Après plusieurs mois d'enquête menée par la CNIL sur les nouvelles règles de confidentialité de Google entrées en vigueur le 1er mars dernier, les autorités européennes de protection des données ont publié leurs conclusions communes. Elles recommandent une information plus claire des personnes et demandent à Google d'offrir aux utilisateurs un meilleur contrôle de la combinaison des données entre les nombreux services que cette société propose. Enfin, elles souhaitent que Google modifie les outils utilisés afin d'éviter une collecte excessive de données.

Deux questionnaires successifs ont été envoyés et Google a fourni ses réponses les 20 avril et 21 juin, plusieurs d'entre elles s'étant avérées incomplètes ou approximatives. En particulier, Google n'a pas fourni de réponses satisfaisantes sur des points essentiels, comme la description de tous les traitements de données personnelles qu'elle opère ou la liste précise de la soixantaine de politiques de confidentialité qui ont été fusionnées dans les nouvelles règles.

1. Comment la Commission réagit-elle face au fait que Google ne fournisse pas d'informations claires et complètes sur les données qu'elle collecte ni sur les finalités de chacun de ces traitements de données personnelles?

2. Comment la Commission réagit-elle face au fait que chez Google, la combinaison de données entre services poursuit des finalités différentes, comme la fourniture du service demandé par la personne, le développement de nouveaux produits, la sécurité, la publicité, la création du compte Google ou encore la recherche universitaire?

3. Comment la Commission réagit-elle face au fait que Google n'octroie pas aux utilisateurs un réel contrôle sur la combinaison de données en centralisant et simplifiant leur droit d'opposition?

4. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle réagir au fait que Google ait refusé de s'engager sur des durées de conservation pour les données personnelles qu'elle traite?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(21 décembre 2012)

Les règles de confidentialité de Google entrées en vigueur le 1er mars dernier suscitent l'attention particulière de la Commission européenne. La Commission suit avec intérêt l'enquête des autorités européennes de protection de données concernant Google.

En application de la Directive 95/46/CE ([1]) et sans préjudice des pouvoirs de la Commission en tant que gardienne des traités, il revient aux autorités nationales compétentes de veiller à la mise en œuvre de cet instrument législatif.

Le 16 octobre 2012, 29 autorités européennes de protection des données, ont indiqué dans une lettre conjointe à Google, que l'entreprise ne fournissait pas suffisamment d'information à ses utilisateurs. Elles lui ont ainsi demandé de mettre ses traitements en conformité avec la législation européenne. À cette fin, les autorités ont formulé une série de recommandations à son égard ([2]).

La Commission européenne se réjouit des mesures prises par la CNIL au nom des 27 autorités nationales de protection des données de l'UE. Ces mesures montrent que les 1 500 personnes qui travaillent au sein de ces autorités en Europe parviennent à relever avec succès les défis en matière de respect de la vie privée et à parler d'une seule voix. Cette collaboration reflète la réalité du monde numérique actuel, dans lequel les décisions d'une seule autorité de protection des données concernent les citoyens de toute l'Europe.

([1]) Directive 95/46/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil, du 24 octobre 1995, relative à la protection des personnes physiques à l'égard du traitement des données à caractère personnel et à la libre circulation de ces données.

([2]) http://www.cnil.fr/la-cnil/actualite/article/article/regles-de-confidentialite-de-google-une-information-incomplete-et-une-combinaison-de-donnees/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=2&cHash=0f081a5b92490c4ce22c52c986f90c4.

La proposition de Règlement ([3]) de la Commission du 25 janvier 2012 révise le cadre juridique de la protection des données dans l'Union. Cette proposition réaffirme les principes fondamentaux de licéité, de loyauté, d'information et de transparence des traitements de données et accroît tant la protection des individus que les pouvoirs de sanction des autorités de contrôle nationales. La proposition ouvre également de nouvelles voies de recours aux individus à l'égard des responsables de traitement.

([3]) Proposition de règlement général sur la protection des données COM(2012)11 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009431/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Google and personal data processing

Following an investigation lasting several months, led by the French National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties (CNIL), into Google's new privacy policy, which came into effect on 1 March 2012, the European data protection authorities have published their joint conclusions. They urge Google to provide clearer information to the public and to offer its users greater control over data combination across the company's many services. Their ultimate aim is for Google to change its practices in order to avoid collecting an unnecessarily large amount of data.

Two questionnaires were sent out, and on 20 April and 21 June 2012 Google submitted its answers, several of which turned out to be incomplete or unclear. In particular, Google failed to give satisfactory answers on some key points, such as providing details of all the types of personal data processing it carries out or a full list of the 60 or so privacy policies which have been combined to form the new one.

1. What is the Commission's response to Google's failure to provide clear and completeinformation on the data which it collects and the purpose of each type of dataprocessing?

2. What is the Commission's response to Google's use of data combination across its servicesfor a range of purposes, such as providing a service requested by a user, developing new products, security, advertising, opening a Google account, or even academic research?

3. What is the Commission's response to Google's failure to give its users real control over data combination, when it could do so by centralising and simplifying the procedures by means of which they can exercise their right to object?

4. How does the Commission plan to respond to Google's failure to specify how long the data it processes will be held?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

The European Commission has been paying particular attention to Google's privacy policy, which came into effect on 1 March 2012, and has been closely following the investigation into Google by the European data protection authorities.

Pursuant to Directive 95/46/EC ([1]), and without prejudice to the powers of the Commission as the guardian of the Treaties, the implementation of this legislative instrument falls within the competence of the national authorities.

On 16 October 2012, 29 European data protection authorities stated in a joint letter to Google that the company did not provide sufficient information to its users. They therefore requested that it bring its processing into line with European legislation. For this purpose, the authorities provided a series of recommendations ([2]).

The European Commission welcomes the action taken by CNIL on behalf of the 27 national DPAs in the EU. It shows that the 1500 people working in the national DPAs in Europe are successfully addressing global privacy challenges and are able to speak with one voice. This reflects the reality of today's digital world, in which the decisions of one DPA are relevant for citizens all across Europe.

([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.

([2]) http://www.cnil.fr/english/news-and-events/news/article/googles-new-privacy-policy-incomplete-information-and-uncontrolled-combination-of-data-across-ser/.

The Commission's proposal for a regulation ([3]) of 25 January 2012 revises the legal framework of data protection in the Union. This proposal reaffirms the fundamental principles of lawfulness, fairness, information and transparency of data treatment and increases both the protection of individuals and national authorities' powers to impose penalties. The proposal also opens up new remedies for individuals in respect of the processors.

([3]) Proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation, COM(2012)11 final.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009432/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Acordo de Pesca UE-República da Guiné-Bissau

— Tendo em conta que o Acordo de Parceria no domínio da Pesca (APP) entre a UE e a República da Guiné-Bissau está suspenso até ao restabelecimento da ordem democrática no país;

— Tendo em conta que durante o anterior acordo foram assinalados pela Comissão problemas ao nível da absorção das verbas referentes ao apoio setorial (assunto já abordado na pergunta E-001574/2011);

Solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Qual o ponto de situação relativamente às embarcações europeias que exerciam atividade nas águas guineenses ao abrigo deste acordo? Quantas eram essas embarcações e de que países? Estão previstas compensações financeiras para os armadores e pescadores dessas embarcações?

2. Como avalia a Comissão a aplicação do apoio setorial no acordo anterior, em especial depois de terem sido restabelecidos os pagamentos que a Comissão entendeu a dada altura suspender?

3. Que medidas foram tomadas no atual Acordo para evitar os problemas surgidos no passado com a absorção dos fundos referentes ao apoio setorial?

Resposta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(17 de dezembro de 2012)

1. A partir de 16 de junho de 2012, as embarcações europeias que costumavam pescar na zona económica exclusiva (ZEE) da Guiné-Bissau tiveram de suspender a sua atividade na zona, devido ao termo do protocolo anterior e à suspensão do procedimento de adoção do protocolo rubricado em fevereiro de 2012. No início de 2012, possuíam licença de pesca na Guiné-Bissau 65 embarcações da UE: 17 arrastões de peixes ósseos e cefalópodes (da Espanha e da Grécia), 13 camaroeiros (da Espanha e de Portugal), 8 embarcações de pesca com canas (da França e da Espanha) e 23 atuneiros cercadores (da França, da Espanha e de Portugal). Desde que foram interrompidas as atividades de pesca, os Estados-Membros não receberam compensações financeiras para essas embarcações.

2. A partir de outubro de 2010, com o início da prestação de assistência técnica, a aplicação do apoio setorial na Guiné-Bissau melhorou muito, justificando o restabelecimento dos pagamentos. Em fevereiro de 2012, a Guiné-Bissau utilizara as três primeiras prestações previstas no protocolo, tendo as duas partes acordado no pagamento parcial da última prestação. Todavia, tal como indicado na pergunta E-1574/2011 ([1]), na sequência do golpe de Estado de 12 de abril de 2012, este pagamento foi suspenso *sine die*.

3. O protocolo rubricado em fevereiro de 2012, coerente com a reforma da política comum das pescas (PCP), reforça ainda mais o controlo e a condicionalidade do apoio setorial (artigos 3.° e 14.°).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009432/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: EU-Guinea-Bissau fisheries agreement

The fisheries partnership agreement (FPA) between the EU and Guinea-Bissau is suspended until such time as democracy has been restored in Guinea-Bissau.

During the life of the previous agreement the Commission identified problems as regards the uptake of sectoral support appropriations (that subject was raised in the earlier Question E-001574/2011).

1. What is the state of play regarding the European vessels that used to fish in Guinea-Bissau waters under the agreement? How many vessels were involved and from what countries did they come? Is financial compensation being granted to the vessel owners and fishermen concerned?

2. How successfully does the Commission think that sectoral support was implemented under the previous agreement, especially after the release of the payments which the Commission proposed at one time to suspend?

3. What steps have been taken under the present agreement to avert any repetition of the take-up problems affecting sectoral support funding?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

1. Since 16 June 2012, EU vessels that used to fish in Guinea Bissau's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have had to stop fishing in this area due to the termination of the previous protocol and the suspension of the adoption procedure of the protocol initialled in February 2012. At the beginning of 2012, 65 EU vessels had a licence to fish in Guinea Bissau: 17 fin fish and cephalopods trawlers (from Spain and Greece), 13 shrimp trawlers (from Spain and Portugal), 8 pole and line tuna vessels (from France and Spain) and 23 tuna seiners (from France, Spain and Portugal). Since the interruption of fishing activities, no financial compensation has been granted by Member States to these vessels.

2. Since the recruitment of a technical assistant in October 2010, the implementation of sectoral support in Guinea Bissau had much improved, justifying the release of the payments. In February 2012, Guinea Bissau had made use of the three first instalments foreseen by the protocol and the two parties agreed to proceed to the partial payment of the last instalment. However, as indicated in the reply to Question E-1574/2011 ([1]), following the coup d'état of 12 April 2012, this payment has been suspended sine die.

3. Consistent with the common fisheries policy (CFP) reform, the protocol initialled in February 2012 reinforced further the monitoring and the conditionality of sectoral support (Articles 3 and 14).

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

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009433/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Luta no setor marítimo-portuário contra a revisão do regime de trabalho

Em Portugal, têm-se sucedido as ações de luta dos trabalhadores do setor marítimo-portuário, contra a alteração do regime laboral do setor, desencadeada pelo Governo. O combate centra-se na proposta de lei de revisão do regime de trabalho portuário, que o Governo aprovou no dia 20 de setembro, uma semana depois de ter obtido o acordo de organizações sindicais minoritárias. Consideram os trabalhadores que as modificações pretendidas pelo Governo põem em causa os interesses e o emprego dos trabalhadores do setor e contrariam também os interesses do país.

Os portos de todo o País encerraram devido às greves dos pilotos de barra e do pessoal do controlo marítimo, nos dias 17, 18 e 25; dos estivadores, a 19 e 20 (apenas não encerrou o porto de Leixões); dos trabalhadores das administrações portuárias, nos dias 21 e 24.

No dia 25, terça-feira, trabalhadores portuários de vários países da Europa (Espanha, Itália, França, Dinamarca, Grécia, Chipre, Suécia, Malta) realizaram uma greve simbólica de uma hora, em solidariedade com a luta no nosso país.

Várias organizações sindicais de diversos países têm vindo a condenar a postura da Comissão Europeia, por considerarem que estamos perante uma nova tentativa de liberalizar a organização do trabalho portuário, depois de a Diretiva dos Portos ter sido rejeitada já por duas vezes. Afirmam estas organizações que a Comissão estará a pressionar governos, como o português e o grego, para tentar forçar a aplicação, na prática, do conteúdo da Diretiva nestes países, visando depois o seu alargamento progressivo aos demais.

Em face do exposto, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Qual o envolvimento da Comissão no processo em curso de revisão do regime de trabalho no setor portuário em Portugal?

2. A rejeição da proposta de Diretiva dos Portos levou a Comissão a abandonar a visão de liberalizar a organização do trabalho portuário ou, pelo contrário, tenciona insistir nas mesmas propostas anteriormente rejeitadas?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(11 de dezembro de 2012)

1. A revisão do quadro jurídico que rege o regime laboral no setor portuário português insere-se no programa de ajustamento económico (PAE) acordado entre a República Portuguesa e a Comissão, o Banco Central Europeu e o Fundo Monetário Internacional (CE/BCE/FMI). Trimestralmente, esta tríade reúne com as autoridades portuguesas para avaliar o cumprimento dos termos e condições definidos no PAE ([1]).

2. Desde a rejeição das propostas da diretiva relativa ao acesso ao mercado dos serviços portuários, em 2003 e 2005, a situação nos portos europeus alterou-se consideravelmente; vários foram os Estados-Membros (por exemplo, a Finlândia, a França, a Alemanha e a Espanha) que procederam a reformas importantes. No contexto dos programas de assistência financeira, não só Portugal, mas também a Grécia e a Irlanda, procedem a reformas estruturais nos portos.

Em 2011, a Comissão iniciou uma análise da política portuária da UE, implicando consultas exaustivas às partes interessadas e uma ampla avaliação de impacto. Esta análise está ainda a decorrer, para permitir à Comissão adotar as opções adequadas. O objetivo consiste em contribuir para o crescimento económico, reforçando o mercado interno e desbloqueando simultaneamente o potencial dos portos em termos de emprego e investimento. A Comissão prepara a apresentação de propostas em 2013.

([1]) Ver http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp117_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009433/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Campaign in the maritime and port sector against the revision of working arrangements

In Portugal, workers in the maritime and port sector have been campaigning against the changes being made to their working arrangements at the instigation of the Government. The main subject of dispute is the draft law revising port working arrangements, which the Government approved on 20 September 2012, a week after it had secured the agreement of minority trade unions. The workers believe that the changes being sought by the Government will jeopardise their interests and employment and also run counter to the national interest.

Ports in all parts of Portugal were closed because of strikes by port pilots and surveillance personnel, on 17, 18, and 25 September 2012, by dockers, on 19 and 20 September 2012 (Leixões was the only port not to be closed), and by port authority employees, on 21 and 24 September 2012.

On Tuesday, 25 September 2012 port workers in several European countries (Spain, Italy, France, Denmark, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, and Malta) staged a one-hour sympathy strike in support of the Portuguese campaign.

Trade unions in a number of countries have been speaking out against the attitude of the Commission, since they think that a fresh attempt is being made to liberalise port working patterns, the Ports Directive having already been rejected twice. They maintain that the Commission is pressuring the Portuguese, Greek, and other governments into enforcing the substance of the directive, de facto, in their countries, its aim thereafter being to extend the scope of the directive by degrees to encompass the remaining Member States.

In the light of the foregoing:

1. In what way is the Commission involved in the current revision of port working arrangements in Portugal?

2. Given that the proposed Ports Directive has been rejected, has the Commission abandoned the idea of liberalising port working patterns or does it intend, on the contrary, to push through the proposals previously rejected?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

1. The revision of legal framework governing port work in Portugal is part of the Economic Adjustment Programme (EAP) agreed between the Portuguese authorities and the Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Every three months, a joint EC/ECB/IMF mission meets with the Portuguese authorities to assess compliance with the terms and conditions set out in the EAP ([1]).

2. Since the rejections of the proposals for a directive on market access to port services in 2003 and 2005, the situation in European ports has changed considerably; different Member States, for example Finland, France, Germany or Spain, undertook important port reforms. In the context of the financial assistance programmes, not only Portugal, but also Greece and Ireland are embarking on structural reforms in ports.

In 2011, the Commission started a review of the EU ports' policy, involving extensive consultation with stakeholders and extended impact assessment. The Commission is still conducting its analysis so as to arrive at appropriate policy options. The aim is to contribute to economic growth by strengthening the internal market, unlocking at the same time the potential of ports in terms of jobs and investments. The Commission will deliver relevant proposals in 2013.

([1]) See http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp117_en.pdf

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009434/12
adresată Comisiei
Adrian Severin (NI)
(17 octombrie 2012)

Subiect: Cerere de clarificare a răspunsului Comisiei privind demiterea Președintelui României Traian Băsescu văzută ca puci parlamentar

La data de 10 octombrie 2012 am primit din partea Comisarului pentru Justiție, doamna Viviane Reding, un așa zis răspuns la întrebarea scrisă depusă de mine pe 22 septembrie 2012, cu codul de referință E-007924/12.

Documentul în cauză constă într-o simplă trimitere la răspunsurile date unor întrebări puse de alți deputați din PE (cod ref.: E-007112/2012, E-007534/2012). Cum întrebarea mea avea un cu totul alt sens decât celelalte întrebări vizate, răspunsul oferit acelora nu satisface cererea mea.

Întrebarea mea urmărea să clarifice motivele pentru care Comisarul Reding a definit acțiunea demiterii Președintelui Traian Băsescu ca „puci parlamentar", respectiv „lovitură de stat". În acest sens, am cerut doamnei Reding să îi indice pe complotiștii puciului, precum și violențele la care s-au dedat aceștia. De asemenea solicităm argumente și probe, iar nu referiri la zvonuri și prejudecăți, pe baza cărora să se poată concluziona că procedura de demitere a Președintelui României a fost ilegală.

Dincolo de faptul că nu răspunde întrebărilor mele, textul Comisarului Reding conține, involuntar, recunoașterea abuzului săvârșit atunci când CE a cerut Primului Ministru român anularea unor acte care nu încălcau acquis-ul comunitar (referitor la înlocuirea șefilor de instituții, formarea Guvernului sau legiferarea prin ordonanță, CE nu are competențe), împiedicarea președintelui țării să își îndeplinească atribuțiile constituționale (Guvernul nu avea dreptul de a-i cere Președintelui să renunțe la prerogativa grațierii) sau îndreptarea unor greșeli care nu fuseseră comise (pretinsa nerespectare a hotărârilor Curții Constituționale).

În consecință, reiterând cererile anterioare, rugăm Comisia să ne precizeze:

1. Cine au fost complotiștii „loviturii de stat" din România (perioada iulie-august 2012) și în ce au constat violențele justificând calificativul de „puci"?

2. Care sunt argumentele care susțin ideea că procedura urmată pentru demiterea Președintelui României a fost ilegală?

3. În ce fel își asumă dna Comisar Reding răspunderea pentru acuzele nefondate?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(4 decembrie 2012)

Comisia și-a exprimat poziția cu privire la gravitatea situației politice și instituționale datorate evenimentelor care au avut loc vara trecută în România în răspunsurile sale la întrebările cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007112/2012 și E-007534/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009434/12
to the Commission
Adrian Severin (NI)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Request for clarification on the dismissal of Traian Băsescu, President of Romania — a parliamentary putsch?

On 10 October 2012, I received a so-called answer from the Justice Commissioner, Viviane Reding, to my Written Question E-007924/12 of 22 September 2012.

Her answer consists simply of forwarding the replies given to questions tabled by other MEPs (E-007112/2012 and E-007534/2012). Given that my question was quite different from theirs, the answer given to those questions does not provide any response to my own question.

The purpose of my question was to clarify the reasons that led Commissioner Reding to describe the dismissal of President Traian Băsescu as a 'parliamentary putsch' or a 'coup d'état'. Accordingly, I asked her to identify the conspirators involved in the putsch and say in what way they had acted violently. I also requested arguments and evidence, rather than rumours and preconceived ideas, on the basis of which it might be concluded that the procedure followed in connection with the Romanian President's dismissal was not legal.

Leaving aside the fact that she did not answer my questions, Commissioner Reding's reply contains an involuntary recognition of the abuse that occurred when the Commission called on the Romanian Prime Minister to annul acts that did not breach the *acquis communautaire* (the Commission has no competence in relation to the replacement of heads of institutions, the formation of a government and legislating by decree), prevent the country's president from carrying out constitutional duties (the Government had no right to ask the President to forego prerogatives in relation to pardons) and remedy errors that had not been committed (alleged failure to comply with decisions of the Constitutional Court).

I am therefore once again asking the Commission to answer the following questions:

1. Who were the conspirators in the 'coup d'état' in Romania (in the period July to August 2012), and what acts of violence would justify the use of the term 'putsch'?

2. What arguments are there to indicate that the procedure followed in connection with the Romanian President's dismissal was not legal?

3. How will Commissioner Reding take responsibility for unfounded accusations?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The Commission has expressed its position on the seriousness of the political and institutional developments of last summer in Romania in its reply to written questions E-007112/2012 and E-007534/2012 ([1]).

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009435/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Niebler (PPE)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Fusionskontrollverfahren

In den letzten Jahren sind Entscheidungen zur Fusionskontrolle der Generaldirektion Wettbewerb der Europäischen Kommission mehrfach durch den Gerichtshof auf den Prüfstand gestellt worden. So wurden z. B. im Juli 2007 offenkundige Rechtsverstöße durch die Kommission im Fusionskontrollverfahren zwischen Schneider Electric S.A. und Legrand S.A. festgestellt und die Kommission wurde verurteilt, der Schneider Electric S.A. einen Teil des Schadens zu erstatten, der aufgrund der untersagten Fusion entstanden ist. Die Kommission hatte seinerzeit eine Schadenersatzpflicht u. a. mit dem Argument abgelehnt, sie könne ihre Aufgabe als Wettbewerbshüterin nicht vollumfänglich wahrnehmen, wenn sie dem Risiko von Schadenersatzansprüchen ausgesetzt sei. Die Geltendmachung von Schadenersatzansprüchen könnte sich hemmend auf ihren Entscheidungsspielraum auswirken.

In einem weiteren Fusionskontrollverfahren (MyTravel plc und First Choice plc) wurde eine Schadenersatzklage gegen die Kommission beim Europäischen Gericht angestrengt. Das Gericht kam in dieser Entscheidung jedoch zu dem Ergebnis, dass die Kommission keinen Rechtsverstoß begangen habe, der eine Haftung ausreichend begründen würde.

1. Haben sich die Bedenken der Kommission gegen eine Haftung für Verstöße wie bei Schneider/Legrand im Rückblick als berechtigt erwiesen? Welche Vorkehrungen trifft die Kommission, um Haftungsrisiken zu minimieren?

2. Wurden eventuell Zusammenschlüsse zwischen Unternehmen freigegeben aufgrund der Befürchtung, in die Haftung genommen zu werden, obwohl aus wettbewerbsrechtlicher Sicht eine Untersagung der Fusion hätte ausgesprochen werden müssen?

3. Wurden Verfahrensabläufe im Fusionskontrollverfahren geändert, um Haftungstatbestände zu vermeiden?

4. Hat sich der Ermittlungs- und Begründungsaufwand erhöht, um Entscheidungen besser begründen zu können, und dauern die Prüfverfahren daher länger?

5. Haben evtl. geänderte Verfahrensabläufe dazu beigetragen, dass es zu keinen weiteren Haftungsfällen nach der Entscheidung Schneider/Legrand kam?

6. Wurden und werden Vorkehrungen für Haftungsfälle, beispielsweise in Form von Rückstellungen, getroffen?

7. Hat die Rechtsprechung die Effektivität der fusionskontrollrechtlichen Aufsicht durch die Kommission beeinträchtigt?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(19. Dezember 2012)

1.-5. Schneider Electric und MyTravel reichten eine Schadenersatzklage ein, nachdem das Gericht Entscheidungen, mit denen Unternehmenszusammenschlüsse untersagt worden waren, für nichtig erklärt hatte. Der EuGH urteilte 2009, dass die EU Schneider die Kosten erstatten muss, die dem Unternehmen durch die Wiederaufnahme des Fusionskontrollverfahrens nach der Nichtigerklärung entstanden, wies jedoch die übrigen Schadenersatzanträge von Schneider zurück ([1]). Die Klage von MyTravel wurde 2008 abgewiesen ([2]).

Die Tatsache, dass gegen die Kommission Schadenersatzklagen erhoben werden können, hat sich nicht auf die Rolle der Kommission als Wettbewerbsbehörde ausgewirkt. Die Kommission hat nie aus solchen Erwägungen von dem Verbot eines Zusammenschlusses oder der Forderung nach wirksamen Abhilfemaßnahmen Abstand genommen, sondern eine Reihe von Maßnahmen ergriffen, um die Verfahren und die Qualität der Fusionskontrollbeschlüsse zu verbessern.

([1]) Rechtssache C 440/07 P, Kommission/Schneider Electric, Slg. 2009, I-6413; siehe auch den Beschluss zur Festsetzung der endgültigen Höhe des Schneider zu ersetzenden Schadens, Beschluss vom 9. Juni 2010, Slg. 2010, I-73.
([2]) Rechtssache T-212/03, MyTravel/Kommission, Slg. 2008, II-1967.

Auf der Verfahrensebene wurden mehr Prüfinstrumente entwickelt ([3]) und in der GD Wettbewerb das Team des Chefökonomen eingerichtet. Inhaltlich wurde durch die Fusionskontrollverordnung 139/2004 ([4]) der Marktbeherrschungstest durch das Kriterium der „erheblichen Behinderung wirksamen Wettbewerbs" ersetzt, das auf den voraussichtlichen Auswirkungen des Zusammenschlusses auf den Marktwettbewerb basiert. Die Kommission analysiert die einzelnen zu erwartenden Auswirkungen eines jeden Zusammenschlusses, gegebenenfalls mithilfe einer zusätzlichen quantitativen Analyse ([5]).

Obwohl die Zahl der Prüfverfahren gestiegen ist und die Fälle komplexer geworden sind, prüft die Kommission trotz begrenzter Personalausstattung alle angemeldeten Zusammenschlüsse innerhalb der kurzen vorgeschriebenen Fristen ([6]). Die überwiegende Mehrheit der Beschlüsse hat der gerichtlichen Überprüfung standgehalten. Seit 2002 hat das Gericht keinen Beschluss zur Untersagung eines Zusammenschlusses für nichtig erklärt ([7]). Auch wurden in keinem Fall Schadenersatzzahlungen der Kommission wegen etwaiger fehlerhafter Fusionskontrollbeschlüsse angeordnet.

6. Nein, außer in der Sache Schneider.

7. Die Kommission kann alle in ihre Zuständigkeit fallenden Zusammenschlüsse wirksam prüfen, selbst wenn eine eingehende gerichtliche Überprüfung folgt ([8]).

([3]) Zum Beispiel die Peer-Review-Panels, die die Qualität von Beschlussentwürfen prüfen.

([4]) ABl. L 24 vom 29.1.2004, S. 1.

([5]) Sie hat außerdem Leitlinien zur Prüfung horizontaler und nichthorizontaler Zusammenschlüsse veröffentlicht: Leitlinien zur Bewertung horizontaler Zusammenschlüsse gemäß der Ratsverordnung über die Kontrolle von Unternehmenszusammenschlüssen (ABl. C 31 vom 5.2.2004, S. 5); Leitlinien zur Bewertung nichthorizontaler Zusammenschlüsse gemäß der Ratsverordnung über die Kontrolle von Unternehmenszusammenschlüssen (ABl. C 265 vom 18.10.2008, S. 6).

([6]) Dagegen werden die Parteien in den Fusionskontrollverfahren von deutlich mehr Juristen und Wirtschaftsberatern unterstützt.

([7]) Zwei nach 2002 erlassene Zusammenschlussverbote wurden vielmehr vom Gericht erster Instanz bestätigt (Rechtssache T-87/05 EDP/Kommission, Slg. 2005, II-3745, und Rechtssache T-342/07, Ryanair/Kommission, Slg. 2010, II-3457).

([8]) Seit 2002 hat die Kommission vier Zusammenschlüsse untersagt; 6-8 % aller angemeldeten Zusammenschlüsse werden unter Auflagen genehmigt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009435/12
to the Commission
Angelika Niebler (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Merger control procedures

In recent years, certain decisions by the Commission's Directorate-General for Competition have been challenged in court. In July 2007 the Commission was found to have clearly breached the law in its merger control proceedings against the acquisition by Schneider Electric SA of Legrand SA, and it was ordered to pay Schneider Electric part compensation for the losses occasioned by the prohibition of the merger. The Commission refused to accept that it had any duty to pay compensation, arguing *inter alia* that it could not properly perform its role of defending competition if it was exposed to claims for damages: the enforcement of such claims could constrain its decision making.

The Commission was also sued for damages in the European Court of Justice in relation to another merger control procedure (MyTravel plc and First Choice plc) but in that case the Court ruled that it had not committed any breach of the law sufficient to establish liability.

1. In retrospect, were the Commission's misgivings about liability for breaches of the law as in the Schneider/Legrand case justified? What precautionary measures is the Commission taking to reduce its liability exposure?

2. Has fear of being held liable for damages led to the granting of permission for any corporate mergers which ought to have been prohibited on competition-related grounds?

3. Has the Commission changed the way it conducts merger control procedures, so as to avoid practices that could give rise to liability?

4. Is more effort being expended on investigating cases and justifying decisions, so that the grounds for them are more solid, and are the investigation procedures taking longer?

5. Have any changes in the conduct of merger control procedures contributed to the avoidance of further liability disputes in the years since the Schneider/Legrand ruling?

6. Have any precautionary measures — such as the constitution of reserves — been taken with a view to liability disputes and, if so, are they ongoing?

7. Did the Schneider/Legrand ruling impair the effectiveness of the supervisory function under merger control law?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

1-5. Schneider Electric and MyTravel brought actions for damages after the General Court annulled merger prohibition decisions. The ECJ held in 2009 that the EU must compensate Schneider for costs it incurred in the resumed merger procedure following the annulment, but rejected Schneider's further claims for damages ([1]). MyTravel's claim was dismissed in 2008 ([2]).

The risk of damage claims affecting the Commission's role as competition authority has not materialised. The Commission has never refrained from prohibiting a merger or requiring effective remedies for that reason, but has taken a number of measures to improve procedures and the quality of merger decisions.

([1]) Case C-440/07 P *Commission* v *Schneider Electric*, [2009] ECR I-6413; see also the order setting the final amount of the damages to be paid to Schneider order of 9 June 2010 [2010] ECR I-73.
([2]) Case T-213/03 *MyTravel* v *Commission*, [2008] ECR II-1967.

Procedurally, more scrutiny instruments have been developed ([3]), and the Chief Economist team was set up within DG Competition. In terms of substance, the Merger Regulation 139/2004 ([4]) replaced the dominance test by the criterion 'significant impediment to effective competition' based on the expected impact on competition in the markets. The Commission analyses in detail the specific anticipated effects of each concentration, in appropriate cases by a supplementary quantitative analysis ([5]).

The workload has grown and cases are more complex. Yet the Commission examines every notified concentration within short legally binding time limits, in spite of limited staff resources and more complex investigations ([6]). The vast majority of decisions have withstood judicial review. Since 2002, the Court has never annulled a prohibition decision ([7]), nor has it ordered the Commission to pay damages due to faulty merger decision.

6. No, except in the Schneider case.

7. The Commission can effectively examine all mergers in its jurisdiction even under conditions of thorough judicial review ([8]).

([3]) Such as 'peer review panels' for checking the quality of draft decisions.

([4]) OJ L 24, 29.1.2004, p. 1.

([5]) It has also published guidelines for examining horizontal and non-horizontal mergers: Guidelines on the assessment of horizontal mergers under the Council Regulation on the control of concentrations between undertakings, OJ C 31, 5.2.2004, p. 5; Guidelines on the assessment of non-horizontal mergers under the Council Regulation on the control of concentrations between undertakings, OJ C 265, 18.10.2008, p. 6.

([6]) By contrast, many more lawyers and economic consultants are involved in merger procedures on behalf of the parties.

([7]) On the contrary, two prohibitions issued after 2002 were confirmed by the General Court (Case T-37/05 *EDP* v *Commission* [2005] ECR II-3745 and Case T-342/07 *Ryanair* v *Commission* [2010] ECR II-3457).

([8]) Since 2002 the Commission has prohibited four mergers and on average 6-8% of all notified mergers are cleared subject to remedies.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009436/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Mögliche Flughafeninvestitionen in Österreich

Die Kommission sieht die Notwendigkeit beträchtlicher Investitionen im Flugverkehr, vor allem beim Aus- und Aufbau von Drehkreuzen (siehe Memo 12/714 vom 27. September 2012).

1. Sieht die Kommission für österreichische Flughäfen einen Investitionsbedarf?

2. Wenn ja, wie hoch schätzt die Kommission den Investitionsbedarf für den jeweiligen Flughafen ein?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(13. Dezember 2012)

Investitionen in Flughafeninfrastrukturen sowie in den Auf- und Ausbau von Drehkreuzen sind von entscheidender Bedeutung für die globale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der europäischen Drehkreuze. Österreich ist ein wichtiges Drehkreuz in Europa und verfügt bereits über eine effiziente und wettbewerbsfähige Luftverkehrsinfrastruktur.

Die derzeitige Regierungskoalition hat im November 2011 einen Entwicklungsplan für die Luftfahrt (Road Map Luftfahrt 2020) gebilligt — ein Hinweis darauf, dass Österreich Maßnahmen trifft, um seine Österreichs Position in diesem Bereich zu festigen. Der kürzlich eröffnete neue Terminal (Skylink) bietet den Fluggästen einen modernen Flughafen, dessen Komfort, Service und Sicherheit sich auf dem neuesten Stand befinden.

Die Kommission hat die Aufgabe, die Mitgliedstaaten und Akteure durch eine Bestandsaufnahme der Lage zu unterstützen. So wird beispielsweise Eurocontrol in Zusammenarbeit mit der Kommission bis Mitte 2013 eine Aktualisierung des Berichts „Challenges to Growth“ fertig stellen, in dem die Lage in Europa, unter anderem in Bezug auf die Flughafenkapazität, analysiert wird. Auf der Grundlage der Ergebnisse dieses Berichts könnte die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten auffordern, unter Berücksichtigung aller Auswirkungen auf die Netze und vor allem der Notwendigkeit, den Erfolg des einheitlichen europäischen Luftraums zu gewährleisten, nationale Strategien zur Flughafenkapazität zu entwickeln.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009436/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Possibility of investment in Austrian airports

The Commission envisages a need for substantial investment in air traffic, especially in establishing and developing hubs (see its memo No 12/714 of 27 September 2012).

1. Does the Commission consider there is a need for investment in Austrian airports?

2. If so, what level of investment does it estimate to be necessary at which airports?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

Investments in airport infrastructure and development of hubs are crucial for allowing European hubs to compete in the world. Austria is an important hub in Europe, with an effective and competitive air transport infrastructure.

The current government coalition has approved a development plan for aviation (Road Map Luftfahrt 2020) in November 2011, showing that actions are being taken to secure Austria's position in aviation. The recent opening of the new terminal (Skylink) has offered passengers a modern airport with up-to-date comfort, service and safety.

The role of the Commission is to assist Member States and stakeholders by taking stock of the situation. For instance, Eurocontrol, in conjunction with the Commission, will finalise by mid-2013 an update of the 'Challenges to Growth' report that analyses the situation in Europe regarding, among others airport capacity. Based on the results, the Commission could ask Member States to develop and provide national strategies on airport capacity, taking into account all network implications and in particular the need to ensure the success of the SES.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009438/12
an die Kommission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Foltervorwürfe in Ruanda

Am 8. Oktober 2012 legte Amnesty International einen Bericht mit dem Titel „Ruanda: Geheim: Rechtswidrige Inhaftierung und Folter durch den militärischen Nachrichtendienst“ vor.

Wie beurteilt die Kommission diese Angelegenheit?

Was hat die Kommission unternommen beziehungsweise was gedenkt sie angesichts dieser schwerwiegenden Foltervorwürfe zu unternehmen?

Welche Folgen hat dies für die künftigen Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Ruanda?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(6. Dezember 2012)

Die EU misst der Achtung der Menschenrechte höchste Priorität bei und unterstützt die Einhaltung der Verpflichtungen, die Ruanda aufgrund der allgemeinen regelmäßigen Überprüfung (UPR) vom 24. Januar 2011 und der damit verknüpften Empfehlungen eingegangen ist. Sie verfolgt die Menschenrechtslage in Ruanda genau und hat den von Amnesty International vorgelegten Bericht über rechtswidrige Inhaftierung und Folter durch den militärischen Geheimdienst mit Besorgnis zur Kenntnis genommen.

Die EU unterhält regelmäßige formelle und informelle Kontakte mit Menschenrechtsorganisationen und Menschenrechtsverteidigern und unterstützt zivilgesellschaftliche Organisationen im Rahmen thematischer Haushaltslinien und des EEF. Zudem erörtern die EU und Ruanda Menschenrechtsfragen regelmäßig im Rahmen des politischen Dialogs. Bei der jüngsten Sitzung nach Artikel 8 mit Justizminister Tharcisse Karugarama am 7. November standen die im Bericht von Amnesty International beschriebenen Sachverhalte im Vordergrund.

Die ruandische Regierung hat ein spezielles Team damit beauftragt, die Inhaftierungseinrichtungen landesweit zu überprüfen. Bis Ende des Jahres soll ein Abschlussbericht vorliegen. Regierungsvertreter teilten mit, dass allen Vorwürfen illegaler Inhaftierung und Folter nachgegangen werde und dass gegen die Verantwortlichen bereits Maßnahmen ergriffen worden seien.

Die EU wird diese Angelegenheit weiterhin sehr aufmerksam verfolgen und bei ihren nächsten Gesprächen nach Artikel 8 mit der ruandischen Regierung erneut aufgreifen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009438/12
to the Commission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Torture allegations in Rwanda

On 8 October 2012, Amnesty International released a report entitled 'Rwanda: Shrouded in secrecy: Illegal detention and torture by military intelligence'.

What is the Commission's view on the matter?

What has the Commission done, or what does it plan to do, in response to these serious torture allegations?

What impact does the matter have on EU-Rwanda relations?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

The protection of human rights is a top priority for the EU and the EU supports the realisation of the commitments that Rwanda made towards implementing the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations of 24 January 2011. The EU is closely monitoring the situation of human rights in Rwanda and is concerned about Amnesty International's report on illegal detention and torture by military intelligence.

The EU maintains regular formal and informal contacts with human rights organisations and defenders and supports civil society organisations through the thematic budget lines and the EDF. Moreover, human rights issues are regularly on the agenda of the political dialogue between the EU and Rwanda. The last Article 8 meeting with the Minister of Justice Tharcisse Karugarama which took place on 7 November focused on the elements contained in Amnesty International's report.

The Rwandan Government has commissioned a team to check detention facilities around the country. A final report should be released by the end of the year. According to government officials, all accusations of illegal detention and torture are being investigated and measures have already been taken against perpetrators.

The EU will continue to follow very closely this case and if necessary will raise it again during the next art 8 dialogue with the Rwandan Government.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009440/12
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Incentivi volti a facilitare le assunzioni nelle PMI

Nel territorio dell'Unione europea operano 45 milioni di piccole e medie imprese.

Data la grave crisi economica in atto sembra opportuno prevedere misure innovative per incentivare le assunzioni, in particolare nelle PMI.

L'iniziativa dovrebbe prevedere agevolazioni per le piccole e medie imprese che assumono per un anno una persona che si trova senza lavoro, a prescindere dalla categoria di cui fa parte (non si pensa dunque a sostegni differenziati in base a sesso, età o altri parametri).

Intende la Commissione sperimentare tale azione finalizzata a assumere per un anno una persona per ogni piccola-media impresa?

Risposta di A. Tajani a nome della Commissione
(17 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione riconosce il ruolo cruciale svolto dalle PMI nell'economia europea ed é consapevole di quanto severamente siano state colpite dalla crisi. Per questo ha messo le PMI al centro delle sue politiche, lanciando lo «(Small Business Act») (SBA) per l'Europa nel 2008 e adottandone una revisione nel 2011. L'SBA e la sua revisione hanno istituito una serie completa di misure riguardanti soprattutto tre ambiti prioritari: migliorare l'accesso delle PMI ai finanziamenti, semplificare il contesto normativo e promuovere l'accesso delle PMI ai mercati. Le iniziative della Commissione in tale ambito intendono sostenere la crescita delle PMI migliorando il contesto imprenditoriale in generale. Di conseguenza esse non comprendono sistemi specifici per le PMI che prevedono l'assunzione di un disoccupato per un anno e, attualmente, la Commissione non intende istituire tali sistemi.

Dall'altro lato la Commissione, negli orientamenti per il sostegno all'occupazione in quanto fattore di crescita ([1]), ha identificato le prassi migliori degli Stati membri in relazione agli incentivi all'assunzione e ha presentato soluzioni innovative per riunire le risorse, ad esempio le strategie sulle risorse umane, grazie alle quali le PMI potrebbero assumere di più.

Nell'Analisi annuale della crescita 2012 la Commissione aveva chiesto che fosse accordata priorità alla promozione di contratti di apprendistato e di tirocinio qualitativamente validi. Nelle raccomandazioni specifiche per paese rivolte agli Stati membri durante quest'anno, oltre la metà degli Stati erano stati invitati ad agevolare il passaggio dalla scuola al mondo del lavoro attraverso incentivi per le imprese che assumono giovani con contratti di apprendistato o attraverso l'apprendimento basato sul lavoro.

([1]) COM(2012)173 «Verso una ripresa fonte di occupazione», 18.4.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009440/12
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Incentives for SMEs to taken on new staff

There are 45 million small and medium-sized enterprises in the European Union.

In view of the serious economic difficulties Europe is currently experiencing, innovative steps need to be taken to encourage businesses — in particular SMEs — to take on new staff.

This should involve granting SMEs special concessions for taking on an unemployed person for one year, regardless of social group (i.e. the support would not be differentiated on the basis of gender, age or other factors).

Does the Commission intend to introduce such a scheme on a trial basis, with each SME being given an opportunity to take on one unemployed person for one year?

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

The Commission recognises the crucial role played by SMEs in the European economy and is well aware that they were severely hit by the crisis. For this reason it has placed the SMEs at the centre of its policies, launching the 'Small Business Act' for Europe (SBA) in 2008 and adopting an SBA Review in 2011. The SBA and its Review set out a comprehensive set of measures focusing on three priority areas: improving SMEs' access to finance, simplifying the regulatory environment and enhancing SMEs' access to markets. The Commission initiatives in this framework seek to support the growth of SMEs by improving the general business environment. They do not include specific schemes for SMEs to take on an unemployed person for one year and the Commission currently does not plan to introduce such schemes.

Conversely, the Commission in its guidance to support labour as a driver of growth ([1]) identified Member States' best practice in targeting hiring subsidies and put forward innovative ways for pooling resources, such as human resource strategies, which could allow improved recruitment by SMEs.

In its Annual Growth Survey 2012, the Commission called for priorities to be given to the promotion of quality apprenticeships and traineeship contracts. In the country specific recommendations issued to Member States earlier this year more than half of the Member States were encouraged to facilitate the transition from school to work by incentivising companies to hire young people through apprenticeships and work-based learning.

([1]) COM(2012) 173 'Towards a job-rich recovery', 18.04.2012 .

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009442/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Biocombustíveis

No contexto do Comité de Segurança Alimentar Mundial 2012, foi publicado um relatório ([1]) que defende que o uso intensivo de biocombustível é a principal causa na origem do aumento dos preços dos bens alimentares.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento se, na EU, a produção de biocombustíveis está na origem do aumento dos preços dos bens alimentares?

2. Existem mecanismos, na EU, que garantam que a produção de bens alimentares se destina, antes de mais, à alimentação?

Resposta dada por Günther Oettinger em nome da Comissão
(4 de dezembro de 2012)

A procura de culturas para produção de biocombustíveis constitui apenas um fator entre muitos outros que podem levar ao aumento e a uma maior volatilidade do preço das culturas, entre os quais se incluem as más colheitas ligadas a fenómenos meteorológicos extremos, os elevados preços da energia e do petróleo que fazem aumentar os custos dos meios de produção alimentar e dos transportes, o rácio reservas-utilização, políticas comerciais restritivas, as condições macroeconómicas, transações especulativas, etc.

A FAO reconheceu em vários documentos que a boa gestão dos biocombustíveis pode também contribuir para o desenvolvimento agrícola e rural e a segurança alimentar, a atenuação das alterações climáticas e a segurança energética ([2]).

A análise da Comissão mostra que o impacto, em termos de preços, da política da UE em matéria de energias renováveis é muito limitado para os cereais e moderado para os óleos vegetais. A UE utiliza atualmente cerca de 3 % da sua colheita de cereais para o fabrico de etanol que, ao mesmo tempo, permite fornecer alimentos proteicos para animais que funcionam como substitutos de outras fontes proteicas, incluindo a farinha de soja importada da América do Sul ([3]).

A Diretiva Energias Renováveis da UE ([4]) inclui requisitos de monitorização e apresentação de relatórios para os Estados-Membros e a Comissão sobre vários aspetos da política de biocombustíveis da UE, incluindo o seu impacto na segurança alimentar. A Comissão deve propor, se for caso disso, medidas corretivas, nomeadamente se existirem elementos que atestem que a produção de biocombustíveis tem um impacto considerável sobre o preço dos géneros alimentícios. O primeiro relatório bianual da Comissão será brevemente publicado.

No que se refere às ações da UE para resolver o problema do aumento e da volatilidade dos preços dos produtos alimentares, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a resposta à pergunta escrita E-007644/2012 do Deputado Franz Obermayer.

([1]) http://actionaidusa.org/assets/pdfs/Food_Crisis_web.pdf
([2]) Os pontos de vista da FAO e as notícias sobre a bioenergia, incluindo os biocombustíveis, estão disponíveis na página web da FAO: http://www.fao.org/bioenergy/47280/en/.
([3]) Comissão Europeia, Direção-Geral da Agricultura e do Desenvolvimento Rural — Short Term Outlook (Perspetivas a curto prazo) — n.° 4 — setembro de 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/markets/sto-crop-meat-dairy/2012-09_en.pdf
([4]) Diretiva 2009/28/CE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009442/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Biofuels

In the context of the Committee on World Food Security 2012, a report was published ([1]) arguing that the intensive use of biofuels is the main cause of the rise in food prices.

I would therefore ask the Commission:

1. Is it aware whether, in the EU, the production of biofuels is behind the rise in food prices?

2. Are there mechanisms in the EU to ensure that foodstuff production is primarily for consumption as food?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

Demand for crops for making biofuels is but one factor among many others that may lead to increased crop price and volatility, including poor harvests linked to extreme weather events, high oil and energy prices raising the cost of inputs for food production and transport, stock-to-use ratio, restrictive trade policies, macroeconomic conditions, speculative transactions, etc.

FAO has recognised in several documents that well-managed biofuels can also contribute to agricultural and rural development and food security, climate change mitigation and energy security ([2]).

The Commission's analysis shows that the price impact of the EU's renewable energy policy is very limited for cereals and moderate for vegetable oils. The EU currently uses about 3% of its grain harvest for making ethanol which at the same time delivers protein-rich feed that acts as a substitute for other protein sources, including imported soybean meal from South America ([3]).

The EU Renewable Energy Directive ([4]) includes monitoring and reporting requirements for the Member States and the Commission on several aspects of EU biofuel policy, including its impact on food security. If appropriate, the Commission has to propose corrective action, in particular if evidence shows that biofuel production has a significant impact on food prices. The first biannual report of the Commission will be published shortly.

As regards EU actions to address the issue of food price increase and volatility, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Questions E-007644/2012 by Mr Obermayer.

([1]) http://actionaidusa.org/assets/pdfs/Food_Crisis_web.pdf
([2]) FAO views and news on bioenergy, including biofuels is available on FAO homepage: http://www.fao.org/bioenergy/47280/en/.
([3]) European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development — Short Term Outlook — No 4 — September 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/markets/sto-crop-meat-dairy/2012-09_en.pdf
([4]) Directive 2009/28/EC.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009444/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Direitos dos animais

Tendo em conta o grande número de petições de cidadãos da UE que solicitam a criação de um quadro jurídico da UE para a proteção dos animais de companhia e dos animais vadios,

Tendo em conta o benefício reconhecido da interação entre as pessoas e os animais de companhia, nomeadamente em termos de saúde física e mental,

Tendo em conta a diversidade de tratamento em relação aos animais nos países da UE, muitos deles indescritíveis e inqualificáveis,

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Pretende intervir a nível da harmonização das regras europeias no sentido de proteger os animais domésticos?

2. Pretende criar regras que proíbam a matança de animais vadios e que interditem os canis sem estabelecimento legal?

3. Concorda com que a proteção dos animais domésticos deve passar pela responsabilização dos donos dos animais?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(17 de dezembro de 2012)

A Comissão remete para as respostas às perguntas escritas E-006543/2011, E-007161/2011, E-009002/2011 e E-002062/2012, e E-008179/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009444/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Animal rights

Considering the large number of petitions from EU citizens requesting the establishment of an EU legal framework for the protection of pets and stray animals,

Considering the recognised benefit which people gain from interaction with pets, not least in terms of physical and mental health,

Considering the differences in the way animals are treated in the EU Member States, many of which are so bad as to defy description,

I would like to ask the Commission:

1. Does it intend to take action with a view to harmonising EU rules on the protection of domestic animals?

2. Does it intend to create rules prohibiting the killing of stray animals and outlawing illicit kennels?

3. Does it agree that making pet owners more responsible is an essential step in the protection of domestic animals?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

The Commission refers to the answers to written questions E-006543/2011, E-007161/2011, E-009002/2011 and E-002062/2012, and E-008179/2012 ([1]).

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

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009450/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Sustentabilidade da indústria pesqueira da UE

Notícias recentes dão conta de um relatório da WWF realizado pela consultora holandesa Framian BV, segundo o qual, a manter-se o presente esforço de pesca, os navios europeus pescarão 1,4 milhões de toneladas em 2022, o que equivaleria a menos 30 % do que é atualmente pescado.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento deste estudo?

2. Que comentários lhe merece? Acha-o credível?

3. Considera que as medidas entretanto tomadas pela Comissão minoram adequadamente o risco de semelhante decréscimo de capturas?

Resposta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(26 de novembro de 2012)

A Comissão tem conhecimento deste relatório do WWF, que analisa as consequências económicas decorrentes de níveis diferentes para as unidades populacionais de peixes. O estudo examina diversos cenários, concluindo que a deterioração das unidades populacionais produzirá um decréscimo do valor dos desembarques, do tamanho da frota, do emprego e do valor no setor. Conclui também que a recuperação das unidades populacionais de peixes produzirá um acréscimo dos desembarques, um pequeno decréscimo do número de navios na frota e um acréscimo do valor do setor.

Na avaliação de impacto da reforma da política comum das pescas ([1]), foi estudado o impacto das várias opções estratégicas na presumível evolução das unidades populacionais, atendendo simultaneamente aos aspetos comerciais. Com base nessa avaliação de impacto, a Comissão propôs um pacote de reforma da PCP que visa muito mais do que simplesmente atenuar o impacto de uma evolução negativa das unidades populacionais. Na verdade, o referido pacote visa recuperar de uma evolução negativa das unidades ou preveni-la, pescando a níveis que não ponham em perigo o potencial produtivo das unidades e, desse modo, gerando um rendimento máximo sustentável (MSY) para as gerações vindouras.

A Comissão considera o estudo credível e pode apontar exemplos da sua experiência recente. Em 2009, só 5 unidades populacionais de peixe foram capturadas com atenção ao nível do rendimento máximo sustentável. Atualmente, a quantidade eleva-se a 27 unidades populacionais, graças ao que foi possível aumentar as quotas de captura, gerando para o setor da pesca um acréscimo de 135 milhões de euros em desembarques.

([1]) Avaliação de impacto relativa à proposta da Comissão para a reforma da política comum das pescas em 2012; SEC(2011) 891.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009450/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Sustainability of the EU fishing industry

According to a recent WWF report produced by the Dutch consultancy firm Framian BV, if the current fishing effort is maintained, EU boats will land 1.4 million tonnes (or 30%) less fish in 2022 than they currently land.

1. Is the Commission aware of this study?

2. What comments does it have to make about it? Does it think it is credible?

3. Does it believe that the measures taken by the Commission in the meantime sufficiently mitigate the risk of such a decline in catches?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2012)

The Commission is aware of this particular report by WWF which analyses the economic implications of having fish stocks at different levels. The study examines different scenarios and concludes that the deterioration of fish stocks will lead to decreased landings value, decreased size of fleet, less employment and value in the sector. It also concludes that the recovery of fish stocks will lead to increased landings of fish, a small decrease in the number of vessels in the fleet, as well as an increase in the value of the sector.

In its Impact Assessment on the reform of the common fisheries policy ([1]), the impact of various policy options has been considered on the likely evolution of fish stocks, while taking market aspects into consideration. On the basis of this impact assessment, the Commission has proposed a CFP reform package which aims at much more than simply mitigating the impact of a negative evolution of the stocks. Instead, the CFP reform package aims at preventing or recovering from a negative evolution of the stocks by fishing at levels that do not endanger the productive potential of these stocks, thus generating maximum sustainable yield (MSY) for generations to come.

The Commission finds the study credible and can point to examples from recent experience. In 2009 only five fish stocks were fished in a way taking into account the sustainable MSY level. Today this figure has increased to 27 stocks fished sustainably. Thanks to this it was possible to increase fish quotas, which has brought an additional 135 million EUR in landings to the fishing industry.

([1]) Impact assessment concerning the Commission's proposal for the 2012 reform of the common fisheries policy; SEC(2011) 891 .

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009451/12
ao Conselho (Presidente do Conselho Europeu)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: PCE/PEC — Prémio Nobel da Paz 2012

O Comité Nobel concedeu o Prémio da Paz 2012 à União Europeia pelo seu papel na promoção da unidade e da reconciliação.

Assim, pergunto ao Presidente do Conselho:

1. Que apreciação faz desta atribuição? Que comentário lhe merece?

2. Que principais conquistas destaca e que desafios assinala à União enquanto promotora da paz a nível interno e externo?

3. Que papel deve assumir o Presidente do Conselho neste aspeto?

Resposta
(3 de dezembro de 2012)

Relativamente às duas primeiras perguntas, o Presidente remete o Sr. Deputado para as suas observações sobre a questão feitas durante o debate realizado no Parlamento Europeu em 23 de outubro, assim como para o comunicado à imprensa conjunto com o Presidente Barroso, de 12 de outubro, que são do domínio público.

Quanto à pergunta n.º 3, o Presidente do Conselho Europeu, juntamente com o Presidente da Comissão, é responsável pela representação externa da União ao nível mais elevado e ambos vão receber, o prémio em nome da União. Juntar-se-lhes-á o Presidente do Parlamento Europeu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009451/12
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: PCE/PEC — 2012 Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Committee has awarded the 2012 Peace Prize to the European Union for its role in promoting unity and reconciliation.

1. What does the President of the European Council think of this award? What comments does he have to make about it?

2. In his view, what are the European Union's main achievements and what challenges does it face as an advocate of peace within and outside the EU?

3. What role should the President of the European Council play in this regard?

Reply
(3 December 2012)

Concerning Questions 1 and 2, the President would refer the Honourable Member to his comments on this during the European Parliament's debate on 23 October and his joint press statement with President Barroso of 12 October, both of which are on the public record ([1]).

Concerning Question 3, the President of the European Council, along with the President of the Commission, is responsible for the external representation of the Union at the highest level and they will jointly receive the prize on the Union's behalf. They will be joined by the President of the European Parliament.

([1]) EUCO 186/12 (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/ en/ec/132807.pdf).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009452/12
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Prémio Nobel da Paz 2012

O Comité Nobel concedeu o Prémio da Paz 2012 à União Europeia pelo seu papel na promoção da unidade e da reconciliação.

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Que apreciação faz desta atribuição? Que comentário lhe merece?

2. Que principais conquistas destaca e que desafios assinala à União enquanto promotora da paz a nível interno e externo?

3. Que papel deve assumir o Conselho neste aspeto?

Resposta
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

No dia 15 de outubro, o Conselho congratulou-se com a histórica atribuição do Prémio Nobel da Paz à União Europeia, em reconhecimento pelo seu trabalho em prol da reconciliação, da democracia, da promoção dos direitos humanos e do alargamento da área de paz e estabilidade no continente. O Conselho sublinhou que o prémio representava também um reconhecimento de que a União Europeia é, historicamente e à escala mundial, um projeto único de integração regional e alargamento levado a cabo na Europa, onde antigos inimigos estão hoje reunidos como amigos à volta de um conjunto de valores fundamentais. O Conselho comprometeu-se a continuar a trabalhar incansavelmente em prol da paz e da promoção dos direitos e valores fundamentais e a desenvolver esforços para que a sua ação externa seja mais coerente, mais abrangente e mais eficaz.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009452/12
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: 2012 Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Committee has awarded the 2012 Peace Prize to the European Union for its role in promoting unity and reconciliation.

1. What does the Council think of this award? What comments does it have to make about it?

2. In its view, what are the European Union's main achievements and what challenges does it face as an advocate of peace within and outside the EU?

3. What role should the Council play in this regard?

Reply
(10 December 2012)

On 15 October, the Council welcomed the historic award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union in recognition of its work on reconciliation, democracy, promotion of human rights and in enlarging the area of peace and stability across the continent. The Council underlined that the prize also recognises the historically and globally unique project of regional integration and enlargement in Europe, where former enemies today are united as friends around a core set of values. The Council undertook to continue to work tirelessly for peace and in the promotion of fundamental rights and values and to strive to make its external action more coherent, comprehensive and effective.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009453/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Prémio Nobel da Paz 2012

O Comité Nobel concedeu o Prémio da Paz 2012 à União Europeia pelo seu papel na promoção da unidade e da reconciliação.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que apreciação faz desta atribuição? Que comentário lhe merece?

2. Que principais conquistas destaca e que desafios assinala à União enquanto promotora da paz a nível interno e externo?

3. Que papel deve assumir a Comissão neste aspeto?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009454/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Prémio Nobel da Paz 2012

O Comité Nobel concedeu o Prémio da Paz 2012 à União Europeia pelo seu papel na promoção da unidade e da reconciliação.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Que apreciação faz desta atribuição? Que comentário lhe merece?

2. Que principais conquistas destaca e que desafios assinala à União enquanto promotora da paz a nível interno e externo?

3. Que papel deve assumir o Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa neste aspeto?

Resposta conjunta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Ashton em nome da Comissão
(16 de janeiro de 2013)

A atribuição do Prémio Nobel da Paz 2012 à UE é uma enorme honra e constitui o máximo reconhecimento possível do papel da União na promoção de um continente de paz e prosperidade. Trata-se de um prémio não só para as instituições da UE mas também para os Estados-Membros e os seus 500 milhões de cidadãos.

As principais conquistas da UE nos últimos cinquenta anos podem resumir-se em duas palavras: paz e prosperidade.

Por intermédio das suas instituições e políticas, a UE conseguiu que a guerra se tornasse algo de impensável para os seus membros. A UE desempenhou um papel histórico, ao reconciliar o nosso continente, dividido após a queda do comunismo. Garantiu que todos os Estados-Membros aprovam e apoiam o Estado de direito e promovem os mais elevados padrões de governação democrática e os direitos humanos. Criou igualmente o mais vasto mercado interno de bens e serviços do mundo, que trouxe êxito económico a grande parte do continente. Promoveu também uma «Europa social», que ajuda os mais necessitados. Está na vanguarda dos esforços mundiais de luta contra as alterações climáticas. Além disso, a UE incentivou a resolução de conflitos em todo o mundo e é o maior prestador mundial de ajuda ao desenvolvimento e ajuda humanitária.

A Comissão dedica-se à sua tarefa fundamental, que consiste em agir como guardiã dos tratados, procurando o bem comum da Europa e promovendo uma união mais estreita dos seus povos. Na presente fase de grandes mudanças na UE, a Comissão representa a justiça e a igualdade de tratamento entre os Estados-Membros. Além disso, compreende a importância de reforçar o bem-estar dos cidadãos da UE e de garantir a supremacia da União na comunidade internacional, promovendo soluções de cooperação para desafios comuns, nomeadamente alterações climáticas, energia e segurança alimentar, ou criminalidade transnacional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009453/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: 2012 Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Committee has awarded the 2012 Peace Prize to the European Union for its role in promoting unity and reconciliation.

1. What does the Commission think of this award? What comments does it have to make about it?

2. In its view, what are the European Union's main achievements and what challenges does it face as an advocate of peace within and outside the EU?

3. What role should the Commission play in this regard?

Question for written answer E-009454/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — 2012 Nobel Peace Prize

The Nobel Committee has awarded the 2012 Peace Prize to the European Union for its role in promoting unity and reconciliation.

1. What does the Vice-President/High Representative think of this award? What comments does she have to make about it?

2. In her view, what are the European Union's main achievements and what challenges does it face as an advocate of peace within and outside the EU?

3. What role should the European External Action Service play in this regard?

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

The award of the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the EU is a tremendous honour. It is the strongest possible recognition of the role of the Union in promoting a continent of peace and prosperity. It is a Prize not just for the institutions of the EU, but also for its Member States and 500 million citizens.

The main achievements of the EU over the past fifty years or so can be summed up in two words — peace and prosperity.

The EU, through its institutions and policies, has made war unthinkable among its members. It has played an historic role in reuniting our divided continent following the collapse of communism. It has ensured that all Member States uphold and abide by the rule of law and promote the highest standards of democratic governance and human rights. It has also created the world's largest internal market for goods and services which has brought economic success to much of the continent. It has also underpinned a 'social Europe' helping those most in need. It is at the forefront of global efforts to fight climate change. In addition, the EU has encouraged conflict resolution across the world and is the world's largest provider of development assistance and humanitarian aid.

The Commission is dedicated to its fundamental task of acting as guardian of the treaties, seeking the European common good and fostering a closer union of the peoples of Europe. At this time of enormous change in the EU, the Commission stands for fairness and equality of treatment among the Member States. It also understands the importance of advancing the well-being of the EU citizens and ensuring the Union stands tall in the international community, by promoting cooperative solutions on common challenges such as climate change, energy and food security, or transnational crime.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009455/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Ajuda financeira a Cuba

A Comissão tem apoiado diversos projetos em Cuba:

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Pode indicar quais são os projetos desenvolvidos em Cuba com fundos provenientes de fontes comunitárias e o respetivo montante?

2. O governo cubano recebe dinheiro dos contribuintes da UE?

3. Está em condições de confirmar que estes fundos, caso existam, se destinam efetivamente à sociedade civil e às organizações não-governamentais?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

A ajuda e a cooperação com Cuba foram retomadas em 2008, com a disponibilização de 80 milhões de euros para os programas de cooperação para o período 2008-2013.

Do montante acima referido, foram atribuídos 56,5 milhões de euros para o período 2008-2010, sendo 12 milhões de euros reservados para a resposta a furacões e a preparação para emergências, 8,2 milhões de euros para a segurança alimentar, 6,9 milhões de euros para o ambiente e 9,4 milhões de euros para a cultura, a educação e os serviços sociais. Foi disponibilizado um montante adicional de 20 milhões de euros para o período 2011-2013, com 7 milhões de euros previstos para a adaptação às alterações climáticas, 9,5 milhões de euros para a segurança alimentar e 3,5 milhões de euros para o intercâmbio de experiências, a formação e os estudos.

Foram reservados fundos adicionais no âmbito do programa temático dos intervenientes não estatais e das autoridades locais para o período 2011-2013 (total de 5 milhões de euros, dos quais 3,9 milhões de euros para os primeiros e 1,1 milhões de euros para as segundas).

Em anexo, é apresentada uma panorâmica dos contratos em curso em Cuba. Na sua maioria, os projetos são executados por organizações internacionais ou intervenientes não estatais europeus (geralmente em parceria com os homólogos locais). Existem dois contratos com intervenientes não estatais cubanos (a Caritas e o Centro Cristiano de Reflexión y Diálogo) e um contrato com o Museu Nacional da Música. O governo cubano não beneficia de qualquer financiamento da UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009455/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Financial aid to Cuba

The Commission has supported various projects in Cuba.

1. Can the Vice-President/High Representative tell us which projects are being implemented in Cuba using funds from EU sources and the corresponding amount?

2. Does the Cuban Government receive money from EU taxpayers?

3. Can the Vice-President/High Representative confirm, where applicable, that, if these funds do exist, they are in fact directed to civil society and NGOs?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

EU assistance and cooperation with Cuba resumed in 2008, with EUR 80 million available for cooperation programmes in Cuba for the period 2008-2013.

EUR 56.5 million out of the above amount was allocated for the period 2008-2010, earmarked for hurricane response and disaster preparedness (EUR 12 million), food security (EUR 8.2 million), the environment (EUR 6.9 million) and the culture, education and social sector (EUR 9.4 million). A further EUR 20 million were made available for the period 2011-2013, with EUR 7 million earmarked for adaptation to climate change, EUR 9.5 million for food security and EUR 3.5 million for expertise exchange, training and studies.

Additional funds were set aside under the Non State Actors (NSAs) and Local Authorities (LA) thematic programme for the period 2011-2013 (total of EUR 5 million, of which EUR 3.9 million for NSAs and EUR 1.1 million for LA).

Attached is an overview of open contracts in Cuba. Most projects are either implemented by international organisations or by European NSAs (usually working with local counterparts). There are two contracts with Cuban NSAs (CARITAS and the 'Centro Cristiano de Reflexión y Diálogo'), and there is one contract with the National Music Museum. The Cuban Government as such does not receive EU funding.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009457/12
ao Conselho (Presidente do Conselho Europeu)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: PCE/PEC — Alterações institucionais à União Europeia: necessárias ou contraproducentes

O Presidente do Conselho declarou recentemente — em Copenhaga, no dia 11 de maio de 2012 — estar «ciente de que, numa tentativa de abordar algumas das questões de legitimidade desencadeadas pela crise, alguns círculos retomaram reflexões sobre a arquitetura institucional da União Europeia», mas que as considerava desajustadas («off the mark», no original), uma vez que a prioridade deveria consistir em pôr as nossas economias a crescer novamente.

Assim, pergunto ao Presidente do Conselho:

1. Considera que as presentes instituições europeias são adequadas à resolução da crise que afeta as economias da União?

2. O dispêndio de tempo e dinheiro com a discussão de uma nova arquitetura institucional, na presente e crítica fase em que nos encontramos, poderia pôr em questão a necessária prioridade a dar à retoma económica?

3. De que modo crê que mais facilmente se poderia aproximar os cidadãos das instituições e do projeto europeu sem que isso implicasse um rearranjo institucional?

Resposta
(26 de novembro de 2012)

O Presidente do Conselho Europeu considera que os tratados em vigor proporcionam uma margem de manobra substancial para reagir à crise económica e assegurar a legitimidade democrática das decisões; todavia, se no quadro das deliberações em curso sobre o aprofundamento da união económica e monetária, se concluir pela necessidade de novos instrumentos e procedimentos que só possam ser introduzidos através de uma alteração dos tratados, terá então de ser iniciado um processo de revisão dos tratados. Em todo a caso, é essencial assegurar a legitimidade democrática das decisões.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009457/12
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: PCE/PEC — Institutional changes to the European Union: necessary or counterproductive

The President of the Council recently stated — in Copenhagen on 11 May 2012 — that he was 'aware that, in an attempt to address some of the legitimacy questions triggered by the crisis, some circles have reopened reflections on the European Union's institutional set-up' but that he considered this 'off the mark' as the priority should be to get our economies going again.

I would therefore ask the President of the Council:

1. Does he consider that the present European institutions are suitable for solving the crisis affecting the Union's economies?

2. In the current critical period we are going through, could the time and money expended on discussing a new institutional set-up jeopardise the priority we should be giving to economic recovery?

3. What does he think would be the easiest way of making the public feel closer to the institutions and the EU venture, without altering the institutional set-up?

Reply
(26 November 2012)

The PEC considers that the current treaties offer significant scope to address the economic crisis and ensure the democratic legitimacy of decisions, but that if, in the course of the deliberations underway on deepening economic and monetary union, it is concluded that new instruments and procedures are needed that could only be introduced through treaty change, then a procedure to amend the treaties would have to be launched. In any case, ensuring the democratic legitimacy of decisions is essential.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009458/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Cuba — Reuniões com a oposição

Por diversas vezes foi declarado por responsáveis políticos da União que esta não pretendia interromper os contactos com a dissidência cubana e, antes pelo contrário, iria manter reuniões com a oposição democrática em Cuba.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. No presente ano, realizaram-se reuniões de representantes da UE ou de Estados-Membros com a oposição democrática cubana, nomeadamente na delegação da Comissão em Havana ou noutro local? Em concreto, quantas? E no ano anterior?

2. Foi possível obter perspetivas otimistas quanto à próxima libertação dos presos políticos e à evolução da situação em Cuba, numa perspetiva de transição democrática e de respeito pelos direitos humanos?

3. Já estão marcadas reuniões futuras? Quantas?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(29 de novembro de 2012)

1. O Grupo de trabalho local da UE para os direitos humanos inclui a delegação da UE e todos os mensalmente, podendo igualmente ser convocado para reuniões ad hoc. As reuniões realizam-se na delegação da UE. Até à chegada do chefe da delegação da UE, as reuniões foram presididas pelo Estado-Membro que ocupava nesse momento a Presidência rotativa da UE. A partir de novembro de 2012 as reuniões serão presididas pela delegação da UE.

Este grupo de trabalho convida regularmente representantes da oposição democrática cubana e defensores dos direitos humanos. Em 2011 e 2012, foram realizadas diversas reuniões com pessoas e organizações tais como o vencedor do prémio Sakharov, O. Paya e as *Damas de Blanco*.

Entre os convidados anteriores incluíram-se membros do corpo diplomático e das agências da ONU, analistas políticos e outros membros da sociedade civil cubana.

Os Estados-Membros da UE e a delegação da UE também se reúnem de forma bilateral com os membros da oposição.

2. A União Europeia congratulou-se com a libertação, juntamente com outros prisioneiros, de todos os presos políticos que foram condenados em 2003. A Amnistia Internacional denunciou a existência de um prisioneiro de consciência atualmente em Cuba. A UE reiterou em diversas ocasiões a importância que atribui aos progressos realizados pelas autoridades cubanas no sentido de respeitar plenamente os direitos políticos e civis do povo cubano, incluindo a liberdade de expressão e de reunião.

3. O Grupo de trabalho local da UE e a delegação da UE continuarão a reunir-se regularmente com representantes da oposição democrática e os defensores dos direitos humanos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009458/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Cuba — Meetings with the opposition

On several occasions, the political leaders of the EU have stated that the Union does not plan to break off contacts with the Cuban dissidents and that, on the contrary, it would maintain relations with the Cuban democratic opposition.

1. Have any meetings been held this year between representatives of the EU or the Member States and the Cuban democratic opposition, in particular at the Commission delegation in Havana or elsewhere? Can the Vice-President/High Representative provide details of these meetings? What about last year?

2. Was there scope for optimism regarding the release of political prisoners in the near future and the development of the situation in Cuba, with a view to democratic transition and respect for human rights?

3. Have any future meetings been scheduled yet? How many?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2012)

1. The EU Working Group on Human Rights includes the EU Delegation and all the Member States represented in Havana. It meets on a monthly basis and ad hoc meetings can also be called. The meetings take place at the EU Delegation. Until the arrival of the EU Head of Delegation, the meetings were chaired by the Member State holding the rotating EU Presidency. From November 2012 the meetings will be chaired by the EU Delegation.

This Working Group regularly invites representatives of the Cuban democratic opposition and Human Right Defenders. In 2011 and 2012, it held several meetings with individuals and organisations such as the Sakharov Prize winner O. Paya and the Damas de Blanco (Ladies in White).

Other guests have included members of the diplomatic corps and UN agencies, political analysts and other members of Cuban civil society.

EU Member States and the EU Delegation also meet bilaterally with members of the opposition.

2. The EU welcomed the release of all political prisoners sentenced in 2003, together with other prisoners. Amnesty International says there is at present one prisoner of conscience in Cuba. The EU has reiterated on several occasions the importance it attaches to progress by the Cuban authorities in fully respecting the political and civil rights of the Cuban people, including freedom of expression and assembly.

3. The EU Working Group and the EU Delegation will continue to meet on a regular basis with representatives of the democratic opposition and Human Rights Defenders.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009459/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Perseguição às minorias religiosas — Egito

Notícias preocupantes dão conta de perseguições às minorias religiosas no Egito, em particular aos cristãos.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Está a acompanhar a situação dos direitos humanos fundamentais das minorias religiosas no Egito?

2. Que apreciação faz da atuação do Estado e das forças de segurança, que deveriam zelar pela sua segurança?

3. Tem razões para crer que o Estado de direito e a proteção dos direitos humanos, tal como consagrados no direito egípcio e nas Convenções das Nações Unidas, serão assegurados equitativamente a todas as secções da sociedade e que os culpados pelos crimes serão rapidamente traduzidos em justiça?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(7 de dezembro de 2012)

A AR/VP condenou repetidamente os atos de violência cometidos contra as minorias religiosas e seus locais de culto no Egito, exortando as autoridades egípcias a assegurar que a liberdade de religião ou de convicção é respeitada no país. É crucial que o Presidente Morsi respeite os seus compromissos de representar todos os Egípcios, independentemente do seu credo. Nas suas conclusões de 27 de fevereiro de 2012 sobre o Egito, o Conselho dos Negócios Estrangeiros salientou a importância de garantir a proteção das liberdades fundamentais e de investigar os atos de violação dessas liberdades, incluindo os perpetrados contra as comunidades religiosas.

A UE está a recorrer a toda a panóplia de instrumentos diplomáticos e de cooperação de que dispõe a fim de promover a liberdade de religião e de convicção. Por conseguinte, o SEAE tem vindo a acompanhar com a máxima atenção a situação em matéria de liberdade de religião e de convicção no país através da sua delegação, que mantém contactos constantes com a sociedade civil, suscitando regularmente a questão junto dos interlocutores pertinentes. Desde a eleição do Presidente Morsi, há sinais de que as autoridades egípcias estão determinadas a abordar as questões da liberdade de religião e de convicção de uma forma mais credível. Por exemplo, na sequência dos recentes ataques violentos contra famílias cristãs no norte do Sinai, o Presidente Morsi deslocou-se rapidamente à região para apoiar o regresso das famílias coptas em fuga e assegurar que os direitos dos cristãos serão protegidos, que a sua segurança será garantida e que as investigações serão devidamente realizadas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009459/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Persecution of religious minorities in Egypt

There are worrying reports of religious minorities, particularly Christians, being persecuted in Egypt.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative monitoring the fundamental human rights of religious minorities in Egypt?

2. What is her opinion on the actions of the State and the security forces, which should ensure the safety of these religious minorities?

3. Does she have reason to believe that the rule of law and the protection of human rights, as enshrined in Egyptian law and United Nations conventions, will be fairly upheld for all sections of society and that those guilty of crimes will be quickly brought to justice?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(7 December 2012)

The HR/VP has condemned repeatedly the acts of violence committed against the religious minorities and their places of worship in Egypt, calling on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that Freedom of religion or belief is respected in the country. It is crucial that President Morsi fulfil his commitments to represent all Egyptians, independently of their faith. In its Conclusions of 27 February 2012 on Egypt, the Foreign Affairs Council emphasised the importance of ensuring the protection of fundamental freedoms and of investigating violation of such freedoms, including those perpetrated against religious communities.

The EU is using the full range of its diplomatic and cooperation instruments to promote Freedom of religion or belief. Accordingly, the EEAS monitors the situation of Freedom of religion and belief in the country with the closest attention through its Delegation which maintains constant contacts with civil society and raises the matter regularly with relevant interlocutors. Since the election of President Morsi, there are signs that the Egyptian authorities are determined to address Freedom of religion or belief issues in a more credible manner. For instance, following the recent violent attacks against Christian families in Northern Sinai, President Morsi travelled swiftly to the region to support the return of fleeing Coptic families and to assure that the rights of Christians will be protected, that their security will be ensured and that investigations will be carried out appropriately.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009460/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Perseguição às minorias religiosas — Iraque

Notícias preocupantes dão conta de perseguições às minorias religiosas no Iraque, em particular aos cristãos.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Está a acompanhar a situação dos direitos humanos fundamentais das minorias religiosas no Iraque?

2. Que apreciação faz da atuação do Estado e das forças de segurança, que deveriam zelar pela sua segurança?

3. Tem razões para crer que o Estado de direito e a proteção dos direitos humanos, tal como consagrados no direito iraquiano e nas Convenções das NU, serão assegurados equitativamente a todas as secções da sociedade e que os culpados pelos crimes serão rapidamente traduzidos em justiça?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(7 de dezembro de 2012)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente acompanha de perto a situação das minorias religiosas e dos direitos humanos no Iraque: a UE tem sublinhado repetidamente a necessidade de preservar um ambiente propício a uma participação inclusiva das minorias, necessária para a reconciliação nacional.

Neste contexto, sempre que possível, a UE exprime a sua preocupação junto das autoridades iraquianas a respeito da situação dos direitos humanos, incluindo a liberdade de religião ou de crença e a eliminação de todas as formas de discriminação e de intolerância. A UE continua a exortar o Iraque a cumprir os seus compromissos internacionais, incluindo os assumidos na sequência da revisão periódica universal pelo Conselho dos Direitos Humanos das Nações Unidas, em fevereiro de 2010.

A UE coopera na promoção do Estado de direito e da proteção dos direitos humanos no Iraque, através da assistência técnica prestada pela Missão Integrada da União Europeia para o Estado de Direito no Iraque (Eujust LEX-IRAQ), bem como de outros projetos em matéria de direitos humanos. Neste contexto, a criação da Alta Comissão Independente dos Direitos do Homem é muito positiva e contribuirá para garantir que os eventuais casos de violações dos direitos humanos sejam devidamente investigados. O Acordo de Parceria e Cooperação assinado recentemente prevê também uma nova plataforma para discussões bilaterais em matéria de direitos humanos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009460/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Persecution of religious minorities in Iraq

There are worrying reports of religious minorities, particularly Christians, being persecuted in Iraq.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative monitoring the fundamental human rights of religious minorities in Iraq?

2. What is her opinion on the actions of the State and the security forces, which should ensure the safety of these religious minorities?

3. Does she have reason to believe that the rule of law and the protection of human rights, as enshrined in Iraqi law and United Nations conventions, will be fairly upheld for all sections of society and that those guilty of crimes will be quickly brought to justice?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(7 December 2012)

The High Representative/Vice-President closely follows the situation of the religious minorities and human rights in Iraq: The EU has repeatedly stressed the need to safeguard an environment of inclusive participation of minorities as needed in the pursuit of national reconciliation.

In this context, the EU voices its concerns on human rights, including on freedom of religion or belief and elimination of all forms of discrimination and intolerance, with Iraqi authorities at every possible occasion. The EU continues to engage Iraq on its international commitments including those following the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review on Iraq in February 2010.

The EU cooperates in promoting the rule of law and protection of human rights in Iraq, through technical assistance provided by the EU integrated Rule of Law mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX-IRAQ) as well as some other projects on human rights. In this context, the establishment of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights is welcomed and will be helpful to ensure that any reports of human rights violations are properly investigated. The recently signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will also provide for a new avenue for bilateral discussions on human rights.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009461/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Cybersquatting — ponto da situação

O fenómeno do «cybersquatting» (ciberocupação : usurpação de identidades alheias através de sítios na internet mediante o registo e utilização fraudulenta de domínios) é um risco constante num mundo cada vez mais dependente da e confiante na informação disponibilizada pela internet.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como avalia a evolução do cybersquatting a nível global e, em particular, na União Europeia?

2. Nomeadamente, quanto ao domínio .eu, como avalia os resultados das medidas que tomou para evitar o seu abuso?

3. Considera adequadas e suficientes as medidas tomadas? Ou prevê adotar outras?

Resposta dada por Neelie Kroes em nome da Comissão
(4 de dezembro de 2012)

A Comissão encara a ciberespeculação («cybersquatting») no contexto do problema mais vasto da usurpação de identidade, frequentemente motivada por objetivos fraudulentos ou mal intencionados. A Comissão tem examinado esta questão e financiou um estudo que deverá ser publicado nos próximos meses.

O EURid, o registo que gere o domínio de topo .eu, adota uma série de medidas destinadas a garantir a segurança. Aplica importantes protocolos de securização como o Dnssec; combate os registos mal intencionados através do exame rigoroso dos nomes de domínio .eu recentemente registados e colabora com as autoridades no combate à cibercriminalidade. O número comunicado de nomes de domínio utilizados para fins de fraude eletrónica («phishing») é bastante baixo: 68 no segundo trimestre de 2012 e 115 no terceiro trimestre, de entre um total de mais de 3,7 milhões de domínios registados. O serviço jurídico do EURid retira, a título preventivo, os nomes de domínio alegadamente utilizados para atividades de «phishing». Esses nomes de domínio são anulados após verificação da elegibilidade do requerente (Regulamento (CE) n.° 874/2004, artigo 3.°) ou após notificação de uma decisão do tribunal. Em resultado da ação do EURid, aumentou o número de nomes de domínio detetados e comunicados como indevidamente utilizados, bem como o número de nomes de domínio retirados por utilização indevida.

A ação do EURid é desempenhada no âmbito das competências que lhe são conferidas por força do Regulamento (CE) n.° 733/2002 ([1]) do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho e do Regulamento (CE) n.° 874/2004 ([2]) da Comissão. Outras iniciativas incluem a colaboração com a equipa de resposta a emergências informáticas da UE (*Computer Emergency Response Team*, CERT-EU), que permitirá partilhar os dados provenientes de domínios .eu alegadamente utilizados de forma abusiva; serão desenvolvidas parcerias semelhantes com a Google e a Architelos.

A estratégia da UE em matéria de cibersegurança que a Comissão tenciona adotar, juntamente com a Alta Representante da União para os Negócios Estrangeiros e a Política de Segurança, apresentará uma visão e anunciará medidas políticas para garantir a cibersegurança, promovendo ao mesmo tempo os direitos fundamentais.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 733/2002 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 22 de abril de 2002, relativo à implementação do domínio de topo .eu
([2]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 874/2004 da Comissão, de 28 de abril de 2004, que estabelece as regras de política de interesse público relativas à implementação e às funções do domínio de topo .eu, e os princípios que regem o registo

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009461/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Cybersquatting — state of play

Cybersquatting (usurping the identity of others through Internet sites, fraudulently registering and using domain names) is an ever-present risk in a world that is increasingly dependent on information provided via the Internet.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission the following questions:

1. How does it assess the evolution of cybersquatting across the world and, in particular, within the European Union?

2. Specifically regarding the .eu domain, how does it assess the results of the measures it has taken to prevent improper use?

3. Does it consider the measures taken to be appropriate and sufficient? Or is it planning to take further measures?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The Commission considers cybersquatting under the more general issue of identity theft that is often motivated by fraudulent or malicious purposes. The Commission has examined this issue and funded a study which is expected to be published in the next months.

EURid, the Registry managing the .eu Top-Level Domain, adopts a number of measures to ensure security. It implements key security protocols such as DNSSEC; it combats malicious registrations by actively screening newly registered .eu domain names and works with law enforcement to fight cybercrime. The number of reported domain names used for phishing is quite low: 68 in the second quarter and 115 in the third quarter of 2012, out of over 3.7 million registered domains. EURid's legal department preventively withdraws domain names allegedly used for phishing activities. These domain names are revoked after the so-called registrant eligibility check (EC Regulation 874/2004, Article 3) or upon notification of a Court decision. EURid's action has resulted in an increase of detected and reported domain names used improperly, as well as of withdrawn domain names that were used improperly.

The actions of EURid are carried out within the capacities given to it through Regulation 733/2002 ([1]) and Commission Regulation 874/2004 ([2]). Further initiatives include collaboration with CERT-EU that will allow sharing data of .eu domains with alleged misuse issues; similar partnerships will be developed with Google and Architelos.

The EU Cybersecurity Strategy that the Commission plans to adopt together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will present a vision and announce policy actions to ensure cybersecurity while promoting fundamental rights.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 733/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 April 2002 on the implementation of the .eu Top Level Domain.

([2]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 874/2004 of 28 April 2004 laying down public policy rules concerning the implementation and functions of the .eu Top Level Domain and the principles governing registration.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009462/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Phishing — Ponto da situação

O fenómeno do *phishing* (fraude eletrónica caracterizada por tentativas de adquirir dados pessoais de diversos tipos) é um risco constante num mundo cada vez mais dependente da informação disponibilizada pela Internet e que confia na mesma.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como avalia a evolução do *phishing* a nível global e, em particular, na União Europeia?

2. E nomeadamente quanto à segurança das transações bancárias e das compras em linha?

3. Tomou ou prevê tomar novas medidas a este respeito?

Resposta dada por Neelie Kroes em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

Não estão geralmente disponíveis na UE informações fiáveis do setor privado sobre os investimentos em segurança, os incidentes ocorridos e os riscos reais, uma vez que as empresas não querem partilhar esta informação devido ao receio de danos à sua reputação e responsabilidade, bem como de perda de oportunidades comerciais. Quanto às tendências, os resultados do Eurobarómetro sobre Cibersegurança de 2012 ([1]) revelam que 56,8 % dos inquiridos tiveram, durante o último ano, incidentes com impacto grave nas suas atividades. Os dois problemas mais frequentes dos utilizadores da Internet na UE são o roubo o a utilização indevida de dados pessoais e a segurança dos pagamentos em linha (40 % e 38 % respetivamente). A Agência Europeia para a Segurança das Redes e da Informação tem chamado a atenção para o papel da ciberiscagem direcionada — (*spear phishing*) — nas operações bancárias em linha ([2]).

A Comissão, com a Alta Representante da União para os Negócios Estrangeiros e a Política de Segurança, apresentará em breve uma estratégia da UE em matéria de cibersegurança. Esta estratégia deveria incluir uma proposta legislativa que exija aos responsáveis pela gestão de infraestruturas de informação de importância crítica ou pela prestação de serviços essenciais para o funcionamento das nossas sociedades que adotem práticas de gestão dos riscos de segurança e comuniquem os incidentes significativos às autoridades nacionais competentes.

Além disso, a Comissão propôs uma reforma das regras da UE de 1995 em matéria de proteção de dados, a fim de reforçar a proteção da vida privada em linha e de dinamizar a economia digital da Europa. A proposta inclui a obrigação de notificar as autoridades competentes e os indivíduos afetados por violações de dados.

Ambas as iniciativas visam uma maior responsabilização de quem procede à recolha e ao tratamento de informações, incluindo dados pessoais, e deverão contribuir para reforçar a confiança dos consumidores nos serviços em linha.

([1]) Special Eurobarometer 390/2012 on cyber security http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_390_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.enisa.europa.eu/media/press-releases/eu-cyber-security-agency-enisa-201chigh-roller201d-online-bank-robberies-reveal-security-gaps.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009462/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Phishing — latest developments

Phishing (electronic fraud involving attempts to obtain various types of personal data) is a constant risk in a world that increasingly relies on, and trusts, information made available on the Internet.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission:

1. What is its assessment of the trends in phishing, both globally and, in particular, in the European Union?

2. More particularly, what is its assessment of the security of banking transactions and online purchases?

3. Has it taken, or does it plan to take, any new measures in this respect?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

Reliable information on security investments by the private sector, incidents occurred and actual risks is generally not available in the EU as companies are unwilling to share this information due to fear of reputational damages, liability and loss of business opportunities. Regarding trends, the results of the 2012 Eurobarometer on cybersecurity ([1]) shows that 56.8% of the respondents have experienced over the last year incidents with a serious impact on their activities. The two most common concerns of EU Internet users are theft or misuse of personal data and security of online payments (40% and 38% respectively). The European Agency for Network and Information Security has drawn attention to the role of (spear) phishing in online banking ([2]).

The Commission with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will soon present an EU Cyber Security Strategy. It should include a legislative proposal requiring players managing critical information infrastructure or providing services that are essential to the functioning of our societies to adopt security risk management practices and report significant incidents to the relevant national competent authorities.

In addition, the Commission has proposed a reform of the EU's 1995 data protection rules to strengthen online privacy rights and boost Europe's digital economy. The proposal includes an obligation to notify competent authorities and individuals concerned of data breaches.

Both initiatives should increase the responsibilities of those who collect and process information, including personal data, which should help to strengthen consumer confidence in online services.

([1]) Special Eurobarometer 390/2012 on cyber security http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_390_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.enisa.europa.eu/media/press-releases/eu-cyber-security-agency-enisa-201chigh-roller201d-online-bank-robberies-reveal-security-gaps.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009463/12
ao Conselho (Presidente do Conselho Europeu)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: PCE/PEC — XII Cimeira UE-Índia — resultados práticos

Na última cimeira UE-Índia os líderes respetivos, entre os quais o Presidente do Conselho Europeu, manifestaram o seu empenhamento em trabalhar em conjunto com base em valores comuns, visando reforçar a cooperação bilateral, de modo a coordenarem adequadamente respostas a questões regionais e enfrentarem os desafios internacionais, incluindo a atual crise financeira.

Assim, pergunto ao Presidente do Conselho Europeu:

1. Que apreciação faz da concretização deste propósito subscrito pela União e pela Índia?

2. Que papel deve assumir o Presidente do Conselho Europeu neste tocante?

Resposta
(19 de novembro de 2012)

O seguimento prático a dar a tais cimeiras compete, conforme o caso, ao Conselho, à Alta Representante assistida pelo SEAE, à Comissão ou aos Estados-Membros. O Presidente do Conselho Europeu é informado desse seguimento e, se necessário, atua em conformidade com as suas responsabilidades.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009463/12
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: PCE/PEC — 12th EU-India summit — practical results

At the last EU-India summit, the respective leaders, including the President of the European Council, expressed their intention to work together on the basis of shared values with the aim of strengthening bilateral cooperation so as to coordinate responses to regional issues and tackle international challenges, including the current financial crisis.

1. What is the President of the European Council's assessment of the action taken in order to carry out the intention expressed by the EU and by India?

2. What role should the President of the European Council play in this regard?

Reply
(19 November 2012)

The practical follow-up to such summit meetings is for the Council, the High Representative assisted by the EEAS, the Commission or the Member States, as appropriate. The President of the European Council is informed of the follow-up and, if necessary, will take action in accordance with his responsibilities.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009464/12
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: XII Cimeira UE-Índia — resultados práticos

Na última cimeira UE-Índia os líderes respetivos, entre os quais o Presidente do Conselho Europeu, manifestaram o seu empenhamento em trabalhar em conjunto com base em valores comuns, visando reforçar a cooperação bilateral, de modo a coordenarem adequadamente respostas a questões regionais e enfrentarem os desafios internacionais, incluindo a atual crise financeira.

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Que apreciação faz da concretização deste propósito subscrito pela União e pela Índia?

2. Que papel deve assumir o Conselho da União Europeia neste tocante?

Resposta
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

Enquanto parceiros estratégicos, a UE e a Índia partilham uma ampla gama de interesses e valores. A Índia é realmente importante para a UE, não apenas em termos políticos, económicos, tecnológicos e comerciais, mas também devido ao relevante papel que desempenha tanto no plano regional, na Ásia, como a nível global.

Espera--se que dos trabalhos empreendidos no contexto das Consultas de Política Externa UE-Índia — no âmbito dos quais são analisadas tanto as questões regionais como as globais — e do Diálogo UE-Índia sobre Segurança resultem iniciativas importantes que poderão ser anunciadas aos líderes na próxima Cimeira. Essas iniciativas estão diretamente relacionadas com as conclusões da Cimeira e incluem, por exemplo, o intercâmbio a nível de peritos em domínios tais como a luta contra o terrorismo, a cibersegurança, e a não--proliferação e o desarmamento. Representam o início de uma cooperação operacional e a formulação de posições comuns no debate global sobre essas questões.

No contexto da atual crise financeira, a negociação de um Acordo de Comércio Livre deverá contribuir para a dinamizar o emprego e a prosperidade na UE e na Índia, servindo assim de exemplo e incentivo para o resto de Mundo. Foi igualmente instituído um Diálogo bilateral Macroeconómico e Financeiro a fim de proporcionar a oportunidade de abordar questões de interesse comum atualmente em análise no âmbito do G20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009464/12
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: 12th EU-India summit — practical results

At the last EU-India summit, the respective leaders, including the President of the European Council, expressed their intention to work together on the basis of shared values with the aim of strengthening bilateral cooperation so as to coordinate responses to regional issues and tackle international challenges, including the current financial crisis.

1. What is the Council's assessment of the action taken in order to carry out the intention expressed by the EU and by India?

2. What role should the Council play in this regard?

Reply
(21 January 2013)

As strategic partners, the EU and India share a wide range of interests and values. India is indeed important for the EU, not only in political, economic, technological and commercial terms, but also because of the important role it plays both at regional level, in Asia, and at a global level.

The work being undertaken in the context of the EU-India Foreign Policy Consultations — in which both regional and global issues are discussed — and the EU-India Security Dialogue is expected to result in important initiatives that can be announced to leaders at the next Summit. These are directly related to the Summit conclusions and include, for example, expert-level exchanges in areas such as counter-terrorism, cyber-security, and non-proliferation and disarmament. Such initiatives represent the start of operational cooperation and the formulation of joint positions in the global debate on these issues.

Against the background of the present financial crisis, the negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement should help to boost employment and prosperity in the EU and India and thus serve as an example and incentive to the rest of the world. A bilateral Macroeconomic and Financial Dialogue has also been set up to provide an opportunity to address matters of common interest being discussed in the framework of the G20.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009465/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: XII Cimeira UE-Índia — resultados práticos

Na última cimeira UE-Índia os líderes respetivos, entre os quais o Presidente do Conselho Europeu, manifestaram o seu empenhamento em trabalhar em conjunto com base em valores comuns, visando reforçar a cooperação bilateral, de modo a coordenarem adequadamente respostas a questões regionais e enfrentarem os desafios internacionais, incluindo a atual crise financeira.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que apreciação faz da concretização deste propósito subscrito pela União e pela Índia?

2. Que papel deve assumir a Comissão neste tocante?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009466/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — XII Cimeira UE-Índia — resultados práticos

Na última cimeira UE-Índia os líderes respetivos, entre os quais o Presidente do Conselho Europeu, manifestaram o seu empenhamento em trabalhar em conjunto com base em valores comuns, visando reforçar a cooperação bilateral, de modo a coordenarem adequadamente respostas a questões regionais e enfrentarem os desafios internacionais, incluindo a atual crise financeira.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Que apreciação faz da concretização deste propósito subscrito pela União e pela Índia?

2. Que papel deve assumir a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante e o Serviço Europeu para a Ação Externa neste tocante?

Resposta conjunta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

As intenções expressas na última cimeira UE-Índia espelham o reconhecimento de que, enquanto parceiros estratégicos, a UE e a Índia partilham de um grande número de interesses e valores. A Índia é efetivamente importante para a UE, não apenas em termos políticos, económicos, tecnológicos e comerciais, mas também devido ao papel relevante que desempenha na Ásia tanto a nível regional como mundial.

A AR/VP está confiante que os trabalhos em curso entre a UE e a Índia no contexto das consultas de política externa — nas quais são debatidas questões regionais e globais — e do diálogo UE-Índia sobre segurança resultarão em iniciativas importantes que poderão ser comunicadas aos líderes na próxima cimeira. Estas iniciativas estão diretamente relacionadas com as conclusões da Cimeira e abrangem, por exemplo, o intercâmbio de peritos em domínios como o combate ao terrorismo, a cibersegurança, a não proliferação e o desarmamento, constituindo um ponto de partida para a cooperação operacional e a adoção de posições comuns sobre estas questões no debate a nível mundial.

No contexto da crise financeira atual, a Comissão está a negociar um acordo de comércio livre, com o objetivo de fomentar o emprego e a prosperidade na UE e na Índia, servindo assim de exemplo e de estímulo para o resto do mundo, e através do diálogo macroeconómico e financeiro bilateral procura criar oportunidades para dar resposta às questões de interesse comum que estão a ser debatidas no âmbito do G20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009465/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: 12th EU-India summit — practical results

At the last EU-India summit, the respective leaders, including the President of the European Council, expressed their intention to work together on the basis of shared values with the aim of strengthening bilateral cooperation so as to coordinate responses to regional issues and tackle international challenges, including the current financial crisis.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the action taken in order to carry out the intention expressed by the EU and by India?

2. What role should the Commission play in this regard?

Question for written answer E-009466/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — 12th EU-India summit — practical results

At the last EU-India summit, the respective leaders, including the President of the European Council, expressed their intention to work together on the basis of shared values with the aim of strengthening bilateral cooperation so as to coordinate responses to regional issues and tackle international challenges, including the current financial crisis.

1. What is Vice-President/High Representative's assessment of the action taken in order to carry out the intention expressed by the EU and by India?

2. What role should the Vice-President/High Representative and the European External Action Service play in this regard?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The intentions expressed at the last EU-India Summit were made in recognition of the fact that, as strategic partners, the EU and India share a wide range of interests and values. India is indeed important for the EU, not only in political, economic, technological and commercial terms, but also because of the important role it plays in Asia both at the regional and global level.

The HR/VP is confident that the work being carried in the context of the EU-India Foreign Policy Consultations — in which both regional and global issues are discussed — and of the EU-India Security Dialogue will result in important initiatives that can be reported to leaders at the next Summit. These are directly related to the Summit conclusions and cover, for example, expert-level exchanges in areas such as counter-terrorism, cyber-security, and non-proliferation and disarmament. Such initiatives represent a start to operational cooperation and the building of joint positions in the global debate on these issues.

Against the background of the present financial crisis, the Commission is negotiating a Free Trade Agreement in order to boost employment and prosperity in the EU and India and thus to serve as an example and a stimulus to the rest of the world, and in the bilateral Macroeconomic and Financial Dialogue, which provides an opportunity to address matters of common interest being discussed in the framework of the G20.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009467/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Parceria União Europeia — Unesco

A União Europeia, por intermédio de Catherine Ashton e Andris Piebalgs, e a Unesco assinaram recentemente um acordo de cooperação nos domínios da educação, da ciência e da cultura, bem como da liberdade de imprensa e dos direitos humanos.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Como qualifica o estado das relações entre a União e a Unesco?

2. Que apreciação faz do acordo assinado?

3. Quais as suas potencialidades e virtudes?

4. Que aspetos destaca?

5. Que resultados espera obter com a sua aplicação?

6. De que modo este acordo poderá potenciar a ação da União Europeia nas temáticas por ele cobertas?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009468/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Parceria União Europeia — Unesco

A União Europeia, por intermédio de Catherine Ashton e Andris Piebalgs, e a Unesco assinaram recentemente um acordo de cooperação em educação, ciência e cultura bem como quanto à liberdade de imprensa e aos direitos humanos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como qualifica o estado das relações entre a União e a Unesco

2. Que apreciação faz do acordo assinado?

3. Quais as suas potencialidades e virtudes?

4. Que aspetos destaca?

5. Que resultados espera obter com a sua aplicação?

6. De que modo este acordo poderá potenciar a ação da União Europeia nas temáticas por ele cobertas?

Resposta conjunta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

A União Europeia e a Unesco cooperam desde há muito e o referido memorando de entendimento tem por base anteriores trocas de cartas, bem como as Disposições aplicáveis à cooperação entre a Comissão e a Unesco (1995) e o Acordo-Quadro Financeiro e Administrativo entre a Comunidade Europeia e as Nações Unidas, assinado em 29 de abril de 2003, ao qual a Unesco aderiu em 23 de fevereiro de 2004.

A parceria renovada, ao promover um maior diálogo político, proporcionará maiores oportunidades para responder aos desafios locais, regionais e mundiais.

A parceria visa uma maior coerência, eficiência, qualidade e impacto das atividades da UE e da Unesco.

O memorando de entendimento tem as seguintes áreas prioritárias: educação e cultura, nomeadamente o respetivo potencial como veículos de desenvolvimento; meios de comunicação social, em especial, meios audiovisuais; ciência, tecnologia e inovação; política marítima integrada; direitos humanos, em particular, liberdade de expressão; bioética e ética das ciências e novas tecnologias.

Os objetivos serão atingidos mediante o incentivo da colaboração em matéria de estratégias de desenvolvimento de políticas e de recomendações; a melhoria do diálogo e da partilha de conhecimentos; a promoção de boas práticas; e a criação de sinergias, sempre que adequado.

O memorando de entendimento prevê que sejam empreendidos esforços especiais a nível nacional para melhorar a cooperação entre as delegações da UE e os gabinetes e institutos locais da Unesco.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009467/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — European Union-Unesco partnership

The European Union, represented by Catherine Ashton and Andris Piebalgs, and Unesco recently signed a cooperation agreement on education, science, culture, press freedom and human rights.

1. How would the Vice-President/High Representative describe the state of relations between the Union and Unesco?

2. What is her assessment of the above agreement?

3. What potential and advantages does the agreement offer?

4. What aspects would she particularly highlight?

5. What results does she expect to achieve from the agreement's application?

6. In what way will this agreement make it possible to boost European Union action in the areas covered by it?

Question for written answer E-009468/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: European Union-Unesco partnership

The European Union, represented by Catherine Ashton and Andris Piebalgs, and Unesco recently signed a cooperation agreement on education, science, culture, press freedom and human rights.

1. How would the Commission describe the state of relations between the Union and Unesco?

2. What is its assessment of the above agreement?

3. What potential and advantages does the agreement offer?

4. What aspects would it particularly highlight?

5. What results does it expect to achieve from the agreement's application?

6. In what way will this agreement make it possible to boost European Union action in the areas covered by it?

Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

There is longstanding cooperation between the European Union and Unesco, and this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) builds on previous exchanges of letters such as the Provisions applicable to Cooperation between the Commission and Unesco (1995) and the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement between the European Community and the United Nations signed on 29 April 2003, to which Unesco acceded on 23 February 2004.

The renewed partnership will offer — through encouraging increased policy dialogue — better opportunities to address local, regional and global challenges.

The partnership will aim at an increased coherence and efficiency, as well as at an enhanced quality and impact, of the activities of the EU and Unesco.

This MoU focuses on priority areas: education and culture, including their potential as vectors for development; media, in particular audiovisual media; science, technology and innovation; integrated maritime policy; human rights, in particular freedom of expression; bioethics and ethics of science and new technologies.

The objectives will be achieved through fostering collaboration on approaches to policy development and recommendations; improving dialogue and knowledge sharing; promoting best practices; and creating synergies where appropriate.

The MoU foresees a particular effort to enhance cooperation between EU Delegations and Unesco field offices and institutes at country level.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009471/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Adesão da Croácia à União Europeia — ponto da situação

Notícias recentes dão conta de que Norbert Lammert, presidente do Bundestag, declarou que a Croácia ainda não estava pronta para aderir à União Europeia e que o processo conducente à sua efetiva entrada deveria ser parado.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que apreciação faz das declarações de Norbert Lammert?

2. Concorda com elas ou mantém a posição favorável à adesão que ainda recentemente manifestou?

Resposta dada por Štefan Füle em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

A adesão da Croácia à UE em 1 de julho de 2013 constitui o resultado de mais de dez anos de trabalho intensivo, que exigiu o cumprimento de condições rigorosas em todas as fases do processo de adesão.

Este trabalho permitiu que todos os Estados-Membros concordassem com o encerramento das negociações de adesão em junho de 2011 e assinassem o Tratado de Adesão em 9 de dezembro de 2011.

Com base nos resultados de uma metodologia de negociação rigorosa, a Comissão considera que a Croácia está a avançar bem nos preparativos para a adesão. No seu recente relatório global de acompanhamento, a Comissão forneceu orientações relativamente aos domínios a que a Croácia deve prestar particular atenção nos próximos meses. A Comissão considera que a Croácia está a dar prioridade a estas questões e estará, por isso, pronta para assumir as obrigações decorrentes da adesão à UE em 1 de julho de 2013. A Comissão apresentará o relatório de avaliação final na primavera de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009471/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Croatia's accession to the European Union — state of play

Recent news items have reported statements made by Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag, who said that Croatia is not yet ready to join the European Union and that the accession process should be frozen.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of Norbert Lammert's statements?

2. Does it agree with these statements, or does it maintain its recently declared favourable position on Croatia's accession?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

Croatia's accession to the EU on 1 July 2013 is the result of more than 10 years of hard work, where strict conditions had to be met at all stages of the accession process.

This has allowed all Member States to agree to closing the accession negotiations in June 2011 and signing the Accession Treaty on 9 December 2011.

Based on the results of a rigorous negotiating methodology, the Commission considers that Croatia is well-advanced in the accession preparations. In its recent Comprehensive Monitoring Report, the Commission has provided guidance to Croatia on the areas to which it has to pay particular attention in the coming months. The Commission believes that Croatia is addressing these issues as a matter of priority and, therefore, will be ready to assume the obligations of EU membership on 1 July 2013. The Commission will present the final Monitoring Report in spring 2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009472/12
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Relançamento da indústria europeia

A Comissão apresentou recentemente a sua Comunicação «Reforçar a indústria europeia em prol do crescimento e da recuperação económica» [COM(2012)0582]. No referido documento reconhece-se que uma «forte base industrial é vital para uma Europa rica e bem sucedida do ponto de vista económico».

Não obstante, tem sido evidente a tendência de perda de capacidade industrial europeia e a consequente deslocalização das unidades produtivas deste continente para outros locais onde os fatores de produção são significativamente mais baratos, entre os quais avulta o trabalho.

Na comunicação refere-se ser «urgente a necessidade de novos investimentos para estimular a recuperação económica e trazer a inovação e as novas tecnologias de volta às fábricas.»

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Que elementos destaca como mais problemáticos para o relançamento da indústria europeia?

2. Considera que os caminhos apontados são adequados e suficientes para promover uma efetiva retoma da capacidade produtiva da União?

Resposta
(7 de janeiro de 2013)

A economia europeia debate--se atualmente com desafios difíceis. A crise económica teve um impacto severo na economia mundial e o papel da indústria na economia da UE tem declinado ao ponto de representar hoje em dia apenas 16 % do PIB. O Conselho reconhece que uma política industrial efetiva, que facilite o acesso ao conhecimento e aumente a eficiência no uso dos recursos, é essencial para estimular o crescimento económico e a criação de emprego e, assim, conduzir à consecução dos objetivos da Estratégia Europa 2020.

Diferentes fatores foram identificados como obstáculos potenciais à revitalização da indústria europeia, incluindo os preços relativamente altos da energia, tendo sido sublinhada a necessidade de tomar medidas em várias frentes. Destacam--se, entre elas, a promoção do investimento em inovação e em tecnologias ambientais e eficientes na utilização dos recursos, a conversão da investigação na UE em vantagem industrial cobrindo toda a cadeia de valor, o reforço do mercado único, a promoção de um acesso mais fácil aos mercados financeiros e de capitais, especialmente no caso das PME, e o desenvolvimento de uma adequada reserva de competências (capital humano). Medidas adequadas para setores específicos estão também a ser consideradas. Neste contexto, espera--se que o Conselho venha a adotar, em dezembro de 2012, conclusões sobre uma política industrial atualizada.

Nas suas conclusões de 18 e 19 de outubro de 2012, o Conselho Europeu reconheceu que foram efetuados progressos significativos na execução da Estratégia Europa 2020 para o crescimento e o emprego. Contudo, o Conselho reconheceu também que são necessários maiores esforços em certas áreas. Na área da investigação e da inovação, o Conselho Europeu chamou a atenção para a importância de assegurar que a investigação e a inovação se traduzam em ganhos de competitividade. Na área da competitividade da indústria, destacou a importância de desenvolver uma abordagem integrada a fim de reforçar a competitividade industrial para apoiar o crescimento e o emprego e, simultaneamente, aumentar a eficiência energética e dos recursos. Neste sentido, o Conselho Europeu sublinhou que é essencial que a União Europeia concentre todos os esforços na rápida execução das medidas acordadas ao longo dos últimos meses para relançar o crescimento, o investimento e o emprego, restabelecer a confiança e tornar a Europa mais competitiva enquanto espaço de produção e investimento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009472/12
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Revitalising European industry

The Commission recently published its communication 'A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery' (COM(2012)0582). That document recognises that 'a strong industrial base is essential for a wealthy and economically successful Europe'.

Nevertheless, there has been a clear trend for European industrial capacity to be lost, with production being relocated from Europe to other places where production factors, notably labour, are significantly cheaper.

The above communication stresses that 'new investment is now urgently needed to stimulate economic recovery and bring innovation and new technologies back onto factory floors'.

1. What elements does the Council see as being most problematic in relation to revitalising European industry?

2. Does it consider the approaches currently being following to be adequate and sufficient in order to promote a real recovery of production capacity in the EU?

Reply
(7 January 2013)

The European economy is facing difficult challenges. The economic crisis has had a severe impact on the global economy and the role of industry in the EU economy has been declining, until today it represents only 16% of GDP. The Council recognises that an effective industrial policy that facilitates access to knowledge and enhances resource efficiency is essential to stimulate growth and jobs and thereby lead to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Different issues have been identified as potential obstacles to revitalising European industry, including relatively highly energy prices, and the need for action in various areas has been underlined. Promotion of investment in innovation and in resource-efficient and environmental technologies, translation of EU research into industrial advantage to cover the entire value-chain, strengthening the single market, facilitating access to finance and capital markets, especially for SMEs, and development of an appropriate pool of skills (human capital) are among the main ones. Appropriate measures are also considered for specific sectors. In this context, the Council is expected to adopt conclusions on an updated industrial policy in December 2012.

The European Council acknowledged in its conclusions of 18/19 October 2012 that significant progress has been achieved so far towards the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. However, it also recognised that greater efforts were required in certain areas. In the area of research and innovation, the European Council called for it to be ensured that research and innovation were translated into competitive gains. In the field of industrial competitiveness, it stressed the importance of developing an integrated approach in order to strengthen industrial competitiveness to underpin growth and jobs, whilst improving energy and resource efficiency. The European Council underlined that it was therefore essential for the European Union to make every effort rapidly to implement the measures agreed over recent months to relaunch growth, investment and employment, restore confidence and make Europe more competitive as a location for production and investment.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009473/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Relançamento da indústria europeia

A Comissão apresentou recentemente a sua Comunicação «Reforçar a indústria europeia em prol do crescimento e da recuperação económica» [COM(2012)0582]. No referido documento reconhece-se que uma «forte base industrial é vital para uma Europa rica e bem sucedida do ponto de vista económico».

Não obstante, tem sido evidente a tendência de perda de capacidade industrial europeia e a consequente deslocalização das unidades produtivas deste continente para outros locais onde os fatores de produção são significativamente mais baratos, entre os quais avulta o trabalho.

Na comunicação refere-se ser «urgente a necessidade de novos investimentos para estimular a recuperação económica e trazer a inovação e as novas tecnologias de volta às fábricas.»

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que elementos destaca como mais problemáticos para o relançamento da indústria europeia?

2. Considera que os caminhos que aponta são adequados e suficientes para promover uma efetiva retoma da capacidade produtiva da União?

3. De que modo crê ser possível a captação e realização dos novos investimentos para estimular a recuperação económica? Tem já presentes alguns? Quais?

4. Crê que o «espírito de reciprocidade e benefício mútuo», que diz animá-la, será partilhado pelas economias emergentes e que estas não procurarão manter a tendência para concentrar nelas as indústrias que vêm abandonando a Europa?

5. Como inverterá esta tendência?

Resposta dada por Antonio Tajani em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

A Comissão identificou quatro desafios importantes: falta de investimento e reduzida inovação, melhoria das oportunidades nos mercados interno e global, acesso ao financiamento e disponibilidade de capital humano especializado. Numa comunicação recente ([1]) analisa-se igualmente um quinto elemento, os elevados custos energéticos.

O verdadeiro problema não é a capacidade mas a produção, o emprego e, sobretudo, a competitividade. A nova comunicação reforça a nossa estratégia de política industrial com ações a curto prazo. É consentânea com a grande importância dada pela Comissão ao crescimento e à criação de postos de trabalho e com o papel crucial da indústria em matéria de crescimento, segundo as conclusões do Conselho Europeu.

Propõem-se seis áreas prioritárias para o investimento na inovação em seis setores essenciais, sendo necessária a cooperação com a indústria e os Estados-Membros. Todavia, a atuação estatal pode facilitar, mas não substituir os investimentos privados necessários.

A comunicação torna claro que a Comissão está a trabalhar no sentido de abrir mercados e ligar a Europa às principais fontes e regiões de crescimento global. Este objetivo será alcançado num espírito de reciprocidade e benefício mútuo, com um calendário de aplicação abrangente. É ainda imperativo aumentar a atratividade dos investimentos na UE.

([1]) COM(2012)663.

No futuro, a competitividade da indústria transformadora dependerá menos das diferenças salariais e mais da utilização eficiente dos recursos, incluindo a energia. Deste modo, a indústria da UE tem boas hipóteses de restabelecer a atratividade da Europa como localização de atividades produtivas, desde que possa capitalizar as oportunidades proporcionadas pelas novas tecnologias e o mercado da UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009473/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Revitalising European industry

The Commission recently published its communication 'A Stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery' (COM(2012)0582). That document recognises that 'a strong industrial base is essential for a wealthy and economically successful Europe'.

Nevertheless, there has been a clear trend for European industrial capacity to be lost, with production being relocated from Europe to other places where production factors, notably labour, are significantly cheaper.

The above communication stresses that 'new investment is now urgently needed to stimulate economic recovery and bring innovation and new technologies back onto factory floors'.

1. What elements does the Commission see as being most problematic in relation to revitalising European industry?

2. Does it consider the approaches it is following to be adequate and sufficient in order to promote a real recovery of production capacity in the EU?

3. In what way will it be possible to secure and implement new investment to stimulate economic recovery? Is some such investment already available? If so, what investment is involved?

4. Does it believe that the 'spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit' that it identifies as its driving force will be shared by the emerging economies, and will they not seek to maintain the trend whereby industries that are abandoning Europe are being concentrated in those countries?

5. How will it reverse this trend?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The Commission has identified 4 key challenges: lack of investment and low innovation, better opportunities in the internal and global markets, access to finance and availability of skilled human capital. A fifth element, high energy costs, is also mentioned and dealt with in a recent Communication ([1]).

The real problem is not capacity but production, employment and most importantly, competitiveness. The new Communication reinforces our Industrial Policy strategy with short-term actions. It is in line with the enhanced emphasis by the Commission on growth and jobs and the important role of industry for growth by European Council conclusions.

Six priority areas for investment in innovation in key sectors are proposed to be taken in cooperation with industry and Member States. However, public action can only facilitate and not replace the necessary private investments.

The communication makes it clear that the Commission works to open markets and connect Europe to main sources and regions of global growth. This will be done in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual benefit as well as a comprehensive enforcement agenda. It is also essential to further increase the attractiveness of investing in the EU.

In the future, competitiveness in manufacturing will depend less on low wage differentials and more on more efficient use of resources, including energy. EU industry thus has a good chance to restore the attractiveness of Europe as a location for production, provided it can capitalise on opportunities offered by new technologies and the EU market.

([1]) COM(2012)663.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009474/12
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Bracconaggio diffuso e persistente e possibili nuove deroghe a Malta in violazione della direttiva 2009/147/CE «Uccelli»

L'abbattimento e la cattura di specie protette è una pratica venatoria diffusa sistematicamente a Malta, punto di passaggio strategico («stepstone») per numerosissime specie di uccelli migratori, che vi stazionano per riprendere le forze durante la migrazione autunnale e quella primaverile. In questo periodo sulle isole maltesi transitano uccelli da almeno 48 diversi paesi (36 in Europa e 12 in Africa) ([1]) . Stime di esperti parlano di circa 500 000 uccelli migratori, la maggior parte dei quali appartenenti a specie protette, abbattuti ogni anno fra Malta e Gozo ([2]). BirdLife Malta segnala di aver preso in carico 23 uccelli protetti abbattuti nell'arco di un mese circa ([3]) , mentre fra il 2009 e il 2010 sono state ritrovate le carcasse di 280 uccelli appartenenti a specie protette nel cosiddetto «cimitero degli uccelli» di Mizieb ([4]) . La caccia illegale così largamente praticata in un'area strategica per i flussi migratori contrasta gli sforzi compiuti da altri Stati membri dell'Unione europea nell'ambito della salvaguardia della fauna selvatica protetta. Per cercare di arginare il fenomeno, organizzazioni quali CABS ([5]) e BirdLife Malta conducono ad ogni stagione migratoria campi anti-bracconaggio con l'obiettivo di dissuadere il bracconaggio e realizzare video che documentino i continui abbattimenti di rapaci e altri uccelli protetti ([6]). In quindici giorni, i due gruppi hanno registrato ben 119 tentativi di uccidere specie protette e un totale di 469 episodi di caccia illegale, anche attraverso l'uso di richiami elettroacustici.

A fine settembre 2012 ho partecipato alle attività anti-bracconaggio del CABS, constatando personalmente la gravità della caccia illegale a Malta e incontrato anche il capo dell'unità di polizia Administrative Law Enforcement (ALE), il quale mi ha riferito di una sola denuncia per abbattimento di specie protette a fronte di migliaia di abbattimenti illegali, a dimostrazione dell'inefficacia dei controlli. Il governo maltese, da parte sua, starebbe valutando l'approvazione di una deroga per consentire, durante la stagione di caccia in corso, la cattura con reti — metodo proibito dalla direttiva 2009/147/CE — del Tordo bottaccio (Turdus philomelos) e del Piviere dorato (Pluvialis apricaria), che però sul campo consentirebbe in pratica di catturare anche i fringillidi.

Ritiene opportuno la Commissione intervenire urgentemente presso le autorità maltesi per garantire il rispetto della direttiva «Uccelli»? A questo proposito quali misure sta adottando al momento e quali intende intraprendere in avvenire?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(12 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-5511/2012 ([7]) presentata da Syed Kamall.

([1]) http://www.birdlifemalta.org/Content/hunting/illegalhunting/996/.
([2]) http://www.komitee.de/en/actions-and-projects/malta/hunting-and-poaching.
([3]) http://www.birdlifemalta.org/view.aspx?id=368.
([4]) http://www.komitee.de/it/antibracconaggio/malta/il-cimitero-di-mizieb.
([5]) Committee Against Bird Slaughter, ONG tedesca con sede a Bonn.
([6]) Video relativi a settembre 2012: http://goo.gl/9NcmX, http://goo.gl/gHo56 e http://goo.gl/J1Glv.
([7]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009474/12
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Widespread, ongoing poaching and potential new derogations in Malta which breach the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)

The shooting and catching of protected species is a type of hunting that is widespread and systematic in Malta, which is an important stepping stone for the countless species of migratory bird which stop over there to regain their strength during migration in autumn and spring. In this period, birds from at least 48 different countries (36 in Europe and 12 in Africa) ([1]) pass through the Maltese islands. Expert estimates talk of about 500 000 migratory birds, most of which are protected species, being shot each year in Malta and Gozo ([2]). BirdLife Malta says that it dealt with 23 protected birds that had been shot in the space of about a month ([3]), while in 2009 and 2010 the bodies of 280 birds were found from protected species in what are known as the 'bird cemeteries' in Mizieb ([4]). The illegal hunting that is so widespread in a key area for migration flows goes against the efforts of other European Union Member States to preserve protected wildlife. In order to try and curb the practice, organisations such as CABS ([5]) and BirdLife Malta run anti-poaching camps in each migration season with the aim of keeping poachers away and making videos documenting the ongoing shooting of birds of prey and other protected birds ([6]). Over 15 days the two groups recorded a good 119 attempts to kill protected species and a total of 469 episodes of illegal hunting, including the use of electronic tape lures.

In late September 2012 I took part in CABS anti-poaching activities, and observed in person the seriousness of illegal hunting in Malta. I also met the head of the Administrative Law Enforcement (ALE) police unit, who told me of only one report of killing of protected species, despite thousands of illegal cases, which shows how ineffective the controls are. For its part, the Maltese government is said to be evaluating whether to adopt a derogation in order to allow trapping — a method prohibited by Directive 2009/147/EC — of song thrushes (Turdus philomelos) and golden plovers (Pluvialis apricaria), which would in practice mean finches could be caught as well.

Does the Commission believe that an urgent approach needs to be made to the Maltese government to enforce the Birds Directive? In this regard, what measures is it currently taking and what measures does it intend to take in the future?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answer to Written Question E-5511/2012 ([7]) by Syed Kamall.

([1]) http://www.birdlifemalta.org/Content/hunting/illegalhunting/996/.
([2]) http://www.komitee.de/en/actions-and-projects/malta/hunting-and-poaching.
([3]) http://www.birdlifemalta.org/view.aspx?id=368.
([4]) http://www.komitee.de/it/antibracconaggio/malta/il-cimitero-di-mizieb.
([5]) Committee Against Bird Slaughter, German NGO with registered office in Bonn.
([6]) Videos on September 2012: http://goo.gl/9NcmX, http://goo.gl/gHo56 and http://goo.gl/J1Glv.
([7]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení P-009475/12
Komisi
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(17. října 2012)

Předmět: Používání indických nitroočních čoček Aurolab na vnitřním trhu

Od 1. října 2012 jsou pacientům v České republice dle nového úhradového katalogu standardní péče v rámci zdravotního pojištění při operaci očí zaváděny nitrooční čočky indické společnosti Aurolab. Jejich cena je třikrát nižší než u doposud používaného typu nitroočních čoček.

Dle internetových stránek společnosti jsou jejími odbytovými trhy Indie, státy Afriky, Latinské Ameriky, Střední Ameriky a jihovýchodní Asie.

Při systematickém vyhledávání v nejběžněji užívané medicínské databázi Medline, dále v databázi Americké oftalmologické akademie, ASCRS a ESCRS se objevují citace pouze indických autorů. Výsledky implantací čočky firmy Aurolab byly tedy publikovány, ale tyto čočky byly použity pouze v Indii. Nejsou známy žádné klinické studie evropských a amerických autorů o bezpečnosti a účinnosti těchto čoček.

Odborné kruhy (např. Česká společnost refrakční a kataraktové chirurgie či Česká oftalmologická společnost) se od používání těchto čoček distancují a nepovažují za stávajících podmínek tento typ standardní péče za kvalitní.

Má Komise povědomí o používání těchto čoček v jednotlivých členských státech?

Existují dostupné klinické studie, které umožňují bezpečné používání těchto čoček v rámci vnitřního trhu EU?

Byly splněny podmínky používání zdravotnického materiálu ze třetích zemí v rámci evropského vnitřního trhu s ohledem na zajištění bezpečnosti pacientů?

Odpověď Maroše Šefčoviče jménem Komise
(19. listopadu 2012)

Komise nemá žádné konkrétní informace o čočkách, které zmiňuje paní poslankyně, ani o jejich užití v jednotlivých členských státech.

Výrobci zdravotnických prostředků uváděných na trh Evropské unie musí nicméně prokázat, že jejich prostředky splňují požadavky směrnice 93/42/EHS ([1]) o zdravotnických prostředcích. V rámci tohoto procesu jsou dokazovány vlastnosti prostředku a jeho funkční způsobilost za běžných podmínek užívání, jsou vyhodnocovány vedlejší účinky a přijatelnost poměru mezi přínosy a riziky daného zdravotnického prostředku. Dokazování musí být podloženo klinickými údaji hodnocenými na základě jasně daného a metodologicky platného postupu. U implantabilních prostředků se klinické zkoušky provádějí vždy, s výjimkou řádně odůvodněných případů, kdy se lze spolehnout na existující klinické údaje. Směrnice 93/42/EHS dále stanoví postupy, kterými by se měly řídit vnitrostátní orgány, domnívají-li se, že daný zdravotnický prostředek není bezpečný a musí být stažen z trhu, nebo že neoprávněně užívá nebo naopak neužívá označení CE.

Návrh zabývající se zdravotnickými prostředky ([2]) přijatý dne 26. září 2012 předpokládá zřízení Evropské databanky zdravotnických prostředků (Eudamed), která veřejnosti poskytne lepší přístup k informacím o prostředcích uváděných na trh, včetně informací o provedených klinických zkouškách. Návrh rovněž předpokládá, že výrobci vysoce rizikových a implantabilních prostředků budou mít povinnost uveřejnit v databance Eudamed shrnutí informací o bezpečnosti a funkční způsobilosti jejich prostředků.

([1]) Úř. věst. L 169, 12.7.1993.
([2]) Návrh nařízení Evropského parlamentu a Rady o zdravotnických prostředcích a změně směrnice 2001/83/ES, nařízení (ES) č. 178/2002 a nařízení (ES) č. 1223/2009 (COM(2012) 542 final).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009475/12
to the Commission
Olga Sehnalová (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Use on the EU internal market of Indian-made Aurolab intraocular lenses

As of 1 October 2012, intraocular lenses made by the Indian manufacturer Aurolab have become available to patients in the Czech Republic undergoing eye operations under the new reimbursement catalogue for standard medical care in the framework of the health insurance fund. Their price is three times less than that of type of intraocular lens used hitherto.

According to the company's website, Aurolab's sales markets are, apart from India, countries in Africa, Latin America, Central America and South-East Asia.

A systematic search of the most widely used medical database Medline and of the database of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, ASCRS and ESCRS has, however, come up with citations only from Indian authors. The results of Aurolab lens implants have certainly been published there, but the lenses in question were used only in India. No clinical studies of the safety and effectiveness of these lenses by European or US authors are known.

Experts in the field (for example, the Czech Society of Refractive and Cataract Surgery or the Czech Society of Ophthalmology) are distancing themselves from the use of these lenses and do not consider this type of standard care to be of high quality in the current circumstances.

Does the Commission have information on the use of these lenses in individual Member States?

Are there any clinical studies which would allow these lenses to be used safely in the EU internal market?

Have the conditions for the use of medical products from third countries on the EU internal market been fulfilled in respect of ensuring patient safety?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2012)

The Commission does not have any specific information on the lenses referred to by the Honourable Member, nor on their use in individual Member States.

However, manufacturers of medical devices placed on the European Union market must demonstrate that their devices comply with the requirements of Directive 93/42/EEC ([1]) concerning medical devices. This includes the demonstration of the characteristics and performances of the device, under the normal conditions of use, the evaluation of the side-effects and of the acceptability of the benefit/risk ratio. Such demonstration shall be based on clinical data, the evaluation of which must follow a defined and methodologically sound procedure. In the case of implantable devices clinical investigations shall be performed unless it is duly justified to rely on existing clinical data. Directive 93/42/EEC also establishes the procedures which national authorities should follow when they consider that an unsafe medical device must be withdrawn from the market or when a CE marking is unjustifiably affixed to a device or missing.

The proposal on medical devices ([2]), adopted on 26 September 2012, foresees the development of the European databank on medical devices (Eudamed) to enable the public to be better informed on devices placed on the market, including on the clinical investigations conducted. It also contains an obligation for manufacturers of high-risk and implantable devices to make publicly available in Eudamed a summary of safety and performance of their devices.

([1]) OJ L 169, 12.7.1993.
([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medical devices, and amending Directive 2001/83/EC, Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 (COM(2012) 542 final).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009476/12
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Tax relief for microbreweries versus micro cider producers

A relief of 50% of the Alcohol Products Tax paid applies to beer produced in microbreweries located within the European Union. Micro-breweries in Europe are eligible for a relief in excise duty providing they produce under 20 000 hectolitres per year (http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/excise/leaflets/pn1888.html).

There seems to be no EU provision allowing for a lower rate of duty on micro-produced cider (while such a provision obviously exists for beer). If I understand correctly, this means that according to EU competition law this duty system is providing an unfair advantage to one group of producers over another. Consumers believe that artisan/micro cider producers are comparable with artisan/micro brewers.

What is the situation regarding the status and inclusion of cider producers within this legislation, to rebalance the disadvantage currently being experienced by artisan/micro cider producers?

Is any form of relief available exclusively to artisan/micro cider producers?

Has any committee or report addressed this anomaly?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(16 November 2012)

Under Council Directive 92/83/EEC ([1]) Member States may apply reduced rates to beer produced by independent small breweries (Article 4) and to ethyl alcohol (spirits) produced by small distilleries (Article 22). No corresponding provision is laid down for micro cider producers.

However, Member States may apply reduced rates to fermented beverage products with a low alcohol content not exceeding 8.5% ([2]), such as cider. Member States are however not obliged to apply such reduction. If they do so, they have to comply with the minimum rates of excise duty laid down in Directive 92/84/EEC ([3]). Provided that Member States comply with the provisions of the directives and their rules do not directly or indirectly discriminate in favour of domestic products, they may determine the rates of duty for each category of alcoholic beverage as they see fit.

The Commission is not aware of any committee or reports addressing the issue of micro cider producers.

([1]) Council Directive 92/83 of 19 October 1992 on the harmonisation of the structures of excise duties on alcohol and alcoholic beverages (OJ 1992 L 316, p.21).
([2]) Article 13(3) of Directive 92/83/EEC.
([3]) Council Directive 92/84/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the approximation of the rates of excise duty on alcohol and alcoholic beverages (OJ 1992 L 316, p. 29).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009477/12
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Negotiation of EU-Canada trade agreement and Canadian liquor boards

If negotiations are successful, the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will be the first free trade agreement concluded by the EU with a developed country. Such an agreement would grant ambitious concessions in areas beyond tariff elimination. However, Canadian liquor monopolies have developed unfair practices vis-à-vis European products.

Could the Commission provide details on how the CETA will secure:

1. A fair, transparent and non-discriminatory application of provincial mark-ups levied by some liquor boards?

2. Guarantees that the commercial activities of liquor boards will be legally and financially separated from their monopolistic actions, just as strictly and clearly as was stipulated for the retail monopolies of Sweden and Finland when they joined the EU in 1995?

This is an issue of reciprocity, as Canadian whisky sold in Europe does not compete with subsidised state-owned spirits as is the case for European wines and spirits sold in Canada.

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

The Commission is fully aware of the importance of the questions raised by the Honourable Member concerning EU exports of wines and spirits to Canada. It is for this reason that the Commission notably aims as an outcome of the CETA negotiations with Canada at a non-discriminatory, transparent and non-*ad valorem* application by the Canadian liquor boards of the mark-ups applied on imports of related EU products. More generally, the Commission is seeking commitments which provide a fair opportunity for European exporters to compete on an equal footing in this sector, and a robust dispute settlement mechanism. Achieving significant progress in this respect will be an important component in securing an ambitious and balanced agreement.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009478/12
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Gentechnik-Konzerne unterwandern US-Gesetzgebung — Gefahr für Konsumenten in der EU?

Hinter dem Kürzel 2,4-D (Dichlorphenoxyessigsäure) verbirgt sich eine hochgiftige Chemikalie, eine Komponente des im Vietnamkrieg zum Einsatz gelangten Entlaubungsmittels „Agent Orange". Da die in der gentechnischen Landwirtschaft bereits gebräuchlichen Gifte wie Glyphosat offenbar nicht mehr ausreichen, um Schädlingsbefall und Superunkräuter hintanzuhalten, liegen im Washingtoner Landwirtschaftsministerium Medienberichten zufolge bereits zwei Zulassungsanträge für 2,4-D-tolerante Pflanzen, eine Gentech-Soja-Sorte und eine Genmais-Sorte, vor. US-Behörden sind anscheinend sehr großzügig, was die Zulassungen angeht. Gentechnik-Konzerne wie Monsanto nehmen in den USA aktiv auf die Gesetzgebung Einfluss. So debattiert das Abgeordnetenhaus in Washington zurzeit ein neues Agrargesetz, in das Monsanto mutmaßlich Formulierungen nach seinen wirtschaftlichen Bedürfnissen hinein reklamiert, um künftige Zulassungen zu beschleunigen.

1. Birgt diese Entwicklung nicht auch Gefahren für europäische Konsumenten, da mit dem geplanten transatlantischen Binnenmarkt TAFTA auch gemeinsame Zulassungskriterien vorgesehen sind?

2. Wenn ein mutmaßlich die Gesundheit gefährdendes und Ökosysteme schädigendes Gentechnik-Produkt in den USA zugelassen wäre, welche Handhabe hat die EU dann überhaupt noch, dieses schädliche Mittel von unseren Äckern fernzuhalten?

3. Wie sollen nach Meinung der Kommission dementsprechende Risikobewertungen in Zukunft ablaufen, besonders wenn man bedenkt, dass sie nach der bereits heute geübten Praxis schon de facto abgeschafft wurden, zumal nach maximal 18 Monaten eine automatische Zulassung erfolgen soll?

4. Wie will die Kommission durch den mit den USA geplanten Binnenmarkt TAFTA objektive, dem Vorsorgeprinzip, also dem Konsumenten- und Naturschutz, entsprechende Zulassungskriterien sicherstellen?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(26. November 2012)

1., 2., 4. Die Europäische Union hat ihre eigenen strengen und von den Zulassungsverfahren in Drittländern völlig unabhängigen Sicherheitskriterien für die Risikobewertung und die Zulassung von GVO gesetzlich festgelegt [1]. In der EU darf kein GVO eingeführt und verwendet werden, der nicht zuvor nach Abschluss dieses strengen Risikobewertungsverfahrens zugelassen wurde. Ein bilaterales Handelsabkommen mit dem Drittland, das den betreffenden GVO ausführt, wirkt sich nicht auf dieses Zulassungsverfahren aus.

3. Die Kommission gibt grundsätzlich keine Stellungnahme zu internen Angelegenheiten von Drittstaaten ab.

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[1] Richtlinie 2001/18/EG über die absichtliche Freisetzung genetisch veränderter Organismen in die Umwelt (ABl. L 106, S. 17.); Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1829/2003 über genetisch veränderte Lebensmittel und Futtermittel (ABl. L 268 vom 18.10.2003).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009478/12
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Genetic technology companies are influencing US lawmaking — are consumers in the EU in danger?

The substance behind the innocent abbreviation 2,4-D (dichlorophenylhydrazine hydrochloride) is a highly toxic chemical which was one component of the defoliant Agent Orange used in the Vietnam War. Poisons such as glyphosate, which are already commonly used by farmers who grow genetically modified crops, are apparently no longer powerful enough to deal with pests and halt the spread of super weeds. As a result, according to media reports two applications have already been submitted to the US Agriculture Department seeking authorisation to cultivate 2,4-D-tolerant plants, a soya variety and a maize variety, both of which have been genetically modified. The US authorities are apparently very generous when it comes to granting approval, and genetic engineering firms such as Monsanto exert real influence on the lawmaking process in the US. For example, the House of Representatives is currently debating a new farm law in the face of an alleged campaign by Monsanto to secure the inclusion of clauses which would serve its economic needs by speeding up future approval procedures.

1. Does this development not also spell danger for European consumers, since one measure to be introduced as part of the proposed trans-Atlantic internal market (TAFTA) would be joint approval criteria?

2. If a genetically modified product which allegedly poses a danger to health and to ecosystems were to be approved in the USA, would the EU then be in any position to prevent it from being used by European farmers?

3. In the Commission's view, what form should the relevant risk assessments take in the future, given that they have essentially already been abolished in de facto terms and the standard practice is to grant automatic approval after a maximum of 18 months?

4. In the context of the planned internal market involving the USA, how does the Commission intend to ensure that objective approval criteria consistent with the precautionary principle, i.e. which take account of the need to protect consumers and the environment, are employed?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2012)

1, 2, 4. The European Union has set by law ([1]) its own strict safety criteria for risk assessment and authorisation of GMOs, which are fully independent of third countries' authorisation procedures. No GMO can be imported and used in the EU if not having been granted an authorisation first, after successful completion of this stringent risk assessment process. The existence of a bilateral trade agreement with the third country exporting the GMO at stake does not impact this authorisation procedure.

3. It is Commission policy not to comment on the internal affairs of third countries.

([1]) Directive 2001/18/EC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms (OJ L 106, 17.); Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 on genetically modified food and feed (OJ L 268, 18.10.2003).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009480/12
an den Rat
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE) und Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Einreiseverbot der litauischen Behörden gegen zwei belarussische Aktivisten der Zivilgesellschaft

Am 26. September 2012 wurde zwei belarussischen Staatsbürgern und Aktivisten der Zivilgesellschaft — Mikalaj Ulassewitsch, Koordinator der Öffentlichkeitskampagne „Das Atomkraftwerk Astrawez ist ein Verbrechen!", und Tazzjana Nowikawa, Koordinatorin der belarussischen Anti-Atomkraft-Bewegung, die Einreise in das Staatsgebiet der Republik Litauen verweigert. Sie wurden mit der Begründung zu unerwünschten Personen erklärt, sie könnten die öffentliche Ordnung und die innere Sicherheit Litauens und anderer EU-Mitgliedstaaten gefährden.

Die beiden angesehenen Umweltaktivisten waren als Organisatoren mehrerer Konferenzen in EU-Mitgliedstaaten und als Berater für politische Stiftungen in der EU tätig.

1. Ist dem Rat bekannt, dass diese beiden Aktivisten in Belarus ständig Unterdrückungs- und Schikanierungsmaßnahmen ausgesetzt sind?

2. Haben die litauischen Behörden Angaben hierzu gemacht oder sich mit dem Rat oder anderen EU-Mitgliedstaaten beraten, bevor oder nachdem sie die eingangs genannten Maßnahmen gegen Ulassewitsch und Nowikawa ergriffen haben?

3. Wie bewertet und betrachtet der Rat die Entscheidung der litauischen Behörden? Hinzuweisen ist in diesem Zusammenhang auf die enge Zusammenarbeit mit der belarussischen Zivilgesellschaft, die im Rahmen der Östlichen Partnerschaft auch entsprechende Unterstützung erfährt, und auf die Bemühungen der Kommission und des EAD im Rahmen des Dialogs über Modernisierung mit Belarus.

4. Welche Maßnahmen oder Verbesserungen der internen Zusammenarbeit in der EU zieht der Rat in Betracht, damit Aktivisten der belarussischen Zivilgesellschaft nicht erneut infolge von Maßnahmen von EU-Mitgliedstaaten Gefahren ausgesetzt werden? Immerhin hat es vor kurzem mehrere Zwischenfälle bei der Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Staatsorganen von Belarus und Einrichtungen der EU (vgl. den Fall Ales Bjaljazki) gegeben.

Antwort
(17. Dezember 2012)

Der Rat hat diese spezielle Frage, die die beiden Abgeordneten ansprechen, nicht erörtert. Ferner ist es nicht Sache des Rates, sich zu Entscheidungen der Mitgliedstaaten zu äußern, die die Aufrechterhaltung der öffentlichen Ordnung und den Schutz der inneren Sicherheit betreffen, da diese Aufgaben in die einzelstaatliche Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten fallen.

Generell bekräftigt der Rat seine feste Entschlossenheit, das Engagement der EU gegenüber der Bevölkerung und der Zivilgesellschaft von Belarus zu verstärken, wie er in mehreren Schlussfolgerungen — zuletzt in seinen Schlussfolgerungen zu Belarus vom 15. Oktober 2012 — wiederholt erklärt hat.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009480/12
to the Council
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE) and Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Entry ban on two Belarusian civil society activists by Lithuanian authorities

On 26 September 2012, Belarusian citizens and civil society activists Mikalai Ulasevich, coordinator of the public campaign 'Astraviec Nuclear Power Plant is a Crime!', and Tatsiana Novikava, coordinator of the Belarusian anti-nuclear campaign, were prevented from entering the territory of the Republic of Lithuania and declared personae non-gratae on the grounds that they could threaten the public order and internal security of Lithuania and other EU countries.

The two environmental activists have a good reputation and have worked as organisers of several conferences in EU Member States and as advisers to political foundations in the EU.

1. Is the Council aware of the fact that these two activists face ongoing repression and harassment in Belarus?

2. Did the Lithuanian authorities provide any information or consult with the Council or EU Member States before or after these measures were taken?

3. Given the close cooperation with and support for Belarusian civil society within the Eastern Partnership and the efforts undertaken by the European Commission/EEAS as part of the Dialogue on Modernisation with Belarus, how does the Council evaluate and view the decision of the Lithuanian authorities?

4. In the light of a number of recent incidents relating to cooperation between Belarusian and EU authorities (e.g. the case of Ales Bialiatski), what measures or improvements in internal EU cooperation is the Council considering in order to prevent any further endangerment of Belarusian civil society activists by EU Member States?

Reply
(17 December 2012)

The Council has not discussed the specific matter to which the Honourable Members refer. Furthermore, it is not for the Council to comment on Member States' decisions regarding the maintenance of law and order and the safeguarding of internal security, which fall within Member States' national competence.

More generally, the Council recalls its firm commitment to strengthening the EU's engagement with the Belarusian people and civil society, as set out in successive Council conclusions and most recently in its conclusions on Belarus of 15 October 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009481/12
to the Commission
Struan Stevenson (ECR)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Timeshare selling in perpetuity

Timeshare contracts entitle owners to a unit of holiday accommodation, which they can use during certain periods of the year. In addition, owners under these contracts must share the cost of upkeep and maintenance.

Nevertheless, timeshare contracts usually include a 'perpetuity clause'. This means that other family members become burdened with liability for payment when the original owner dies, unlike when a person dies in debt.

Directive 2008/122/EC extends consumer protection in respect of certain aspects of timeshare, long-term holiday product, resale and exchange contracts. However, it deals primarily with the stage at which an original contract is made, including rights of withdrawal, yet not with how a contract may be terminated.

Could the Commission review this directive in order to protect sellers and resellers by including an article allowing fair arbitration in endeavours to cancel ownership contracts?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2012)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-9028/12 ([1]) dealing with the same issues.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009482/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Stagisti minorenni presso aziende cinesi produttrici di tecnologia

Il 17 ottobre 2012, varie fonti di notizie, hanno riferito che il più grande produttore al mondo di elettronica, Foxconn, che è fornitore di Apple, Samsung e Microsoft, aveva ammesso che stagisti di appena quattordici anni lavorano in alcuni dei suoi stabilimenti cinesi. Secondo un'indagine interna svolta dalla società, «alcuni dei partecipanti al programma di stage a breve termine per studenti che si svolge nel nostro campus di Yantai, provincia di Shandong, hanno meno dell'età lavorativa legale di 16 anni». La società ha detto che ciò è in contrasto sia con le norme del diritto del lavoro cinese sia con le norme lavorative applicate dalla società stessa. Gli stagisti rappresentano il 2,7 % degli 1,2 milioni di dipendenti della Foxconn in Cina. Tuttavia, la società ha giustificato il programma di stage dicendo che è svolto in collaborazione con scuole professionali e altre istituzioni educative.

La Foxconn era nei media nel 2010, a seguito di una ondata di suicidi di lavoratori. Nel 2011, c'è stata un'esplosione nella fabbrica Foxconn che produce gli iPad2 di Apple. All'inizio di questo mese, presso lo stabilimento di Zhenghzhou, i media di stato cinesi hanno riferito di un'interruzione del lavoro dovuta a «richieste eccessivamente severe» per la produzione degli iPhone di Apple. La società dichiara di aver aumentato i salari dei lavoratori, e di aver introdotto consiglieri e servizi per i lavoratori per allentare la pressione.

1. Alla luce delle nuove segnalazioni di lavoratori minorenni presso gli impianti Foxconn in Cina, quali passi è disposta ad effettuare la Commissione per sollevare queste preoccupazioni con il governo cinese?

2. Nel corso degli ultimi due anni, quali progressi ha fatto la Commissione nel trattare con il governo cinese i problemi relativi alle condizioni di lavoro alla Foxconn?

3. La Commissione si ritiene rassicurata che Foxconn stia effettuando dei passi per affrontare adeguatamente le questioni di salute e di sicurezza nei suoi stabilimenti?

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

L'Unione europea è a conoscenza delle accuse riguardanti le dure condizioni di lavoro nello stabilimento della Foxconn di Taiyuan (provincia di Shanxi), nonché delle proteste e dei suicidi che ciò ha provocato negli ultimi tempi e a seguito dei quali la Foxconn ha recentemente accettato di ridurre le ore di lavoro, tutelare le retribuzioni e migliorare la rappresentanza del personale.

La Commissione si adopera per eliminare le forme proibite di lavoro minorile, basandosi sulle conclusioni del Consiglio sul lavoro minorile del 2010, sulla comunicazione sul programma dell'UE per i diritti dei minori del 2011 e sul programma internazionale dell'OIL relativo all'eliminazione del lavoro minorile. L'UE ne affronta le cause fondamentali, quali la povertà e le carenze dell'istruzione, grazie a un quadro normativo generale, e promuove la ratifica dei due protocolli opzionali alla Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e delle convenzioni dell'OIL n. 182 e 138. Il quadro strategico dell'UE sui diritti umani del 2012 e il relativo piano di azione prevedono la partecipazione dell'UE alla conferenza mondiale sul lavoro minorile del 2013, nonché la promozione dell'aggiornamento degli elenchi di lavori pericolosi figuranti nella convenzione dell'OIL n. 182.

L'UE dispone inoltre di una politica in materia di responsabilità sociale delle imprese (RSI), formalizzata in una comunicazione della Commissione del 2011 ([1]), che esorta al rispetto assoluto degli orientamenti internazionali in materia di RSI. Uno di questi orientamenti, i Principi guida su impresa e diritti umani delle Nazioni Unite, è particolarmente rilevante ed è già attuato dall'Unione europea.

([1]) COM(2011)681 definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009482/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Under-age interns in Chinese technology manufacturing companies

On 17 October 2012, various news sources reported that the world's largest manufacturer of electronics, Foxconn, which is a supplier to Apple, Samsung and Microsoft, had admitted that interns as young as 14 years old were working at some of its Chinese plants. According to an internal investigation carried out by the company, 'some participants in the short-term student internship programme that is administered at our campus in Yantai, Shandong Province, are under the legal working age of 16 years'. The company has said that this is against both Chinese labour law and the company's own labour laws. Interns account for 2.7% of Foxconn's 1.2 million employees in China. Yet the company has justified the internship programme by saying that it is carried out in cooperation with vocational schools and other educational institutions.

Foxconn was in the media in 2010 following a spate of worker suicides. In 2011, there was an explosion at the Foxconn plant which manufactures Apple's iPad2. Earlier this month, at the Zhenghzhou plant, Chinese state media reported a work stoppage due to 'overly strict demands' for production of Apple's iPhone. The company claims that it has increased workers' pay and introduced counsellors and facilities for workers to let off steam.

1. In light of the new reports of under-age workers at Foxconn plants in China, what steps is the Commission prepared to take towards raising these concerns with the Chinese Government?

2. Over the past two years, what progress has the Commission made with the Chinese Government in relation to its handling of problems attributed to the working conditions at Foxconn?

3. Is the Commission reassured that Foxconn is taking steps to adequately tackle health and safety issues at its plants?

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

The European Union is aware of accusations of the harsh working conditions in the Foxconn Factory in Taiyuan (Shanxi province), and recent protests and suicides in response, in reaction to which, Foxconn has recently agreed to reduce hours, protect pay and improve staff representation.

The Commission works towards elimination of prohibited forms of child labour, based on the 2010 Council conclusions on Child Labour, the 2011 Communication on an EU Agenda for the Rights of the Child and the ILO International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour. EU addresses root causes such as poverty and education through a comprehensive framework and promotes ratification of two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Conventions Nos. 182 and 138. The 2012 EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights foresee EU participation in the 2013 Global Conference on Child Labour and promotion of updated hazardous work lists under ILO Convention No 182.

The European Union also has a policy on corporate social responsibility (CSR) which the Commission formalised in a communication in 2011 ([1]). This urges the utmost respect for international CSR guidelines. One of these guidelines is particularly relevant — the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on business and human rights — which the European Union has begun to implement.

([1]) COM(2011) 681 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009483/12
à la Commission
Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(17 octobre 2012)

Objet: Déploiement des autoroutes de la mer entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée

Les autoroutes de la mer sont à ce jour simplement envisagées en lien avec leur effet sur la réduction du trafic terrestre et l'alternative qu'elles offrent au fret routier. Au-delà de l'absence gênante de toute autre définition et de tout critère objectif les caractérisant, il est regrettable que cette vision exclue de facto les liaisons maritimes entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée, car elles ne se substitueraient en l'espèce à aucune liaison terrestre.

Or, les autoroutes de la mer doivent pouvoir s'inscrire dans une dimension euro-méditerranéenne, pour être un vecteur d'intégration régionale et d'aménagement harmonieux du territoire dans cette zone stratégique.

L'Union a lancé le programme Meda-MoS, puis Meda-MoS II, pour apporter une expertise en la matière et soutenir les porteurs de projets d'autoroute de la mer grâce à une évaluation des besoins et des conseils de mise en œuvre.

Le Forum Euromed Transport agit en parallèle pour approfondir l'intégration de la région euro-méditerranéenne par les transports, afin de prolonger les RTE-T vers le Sud de la Méditerranée.

L'Union pour la Méditerranée poursuit par ailleurs l'objectif de déployer des autoroutes de la mer, par le biais de projets qu'elle labelliserait.

Malheureusement, en dépit de ces initiatives, force est de regretter que les autoroutes de la mer, telles qu'elles sont envisagées aujourd'hui, ne peuvent concerner les échanges Nord-Sud en Méditerranée, car elles sont limitées à de simples liaisons maritimes intra-communautaires de courte distance.

À la lumière de ces éléments:

1. La Commission soutient-elle le déploiement d'autoroutes de la mer entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée? Si oui, dans quelle mesure?

2. Comment la Commission entend-elle adapter le concept d'autoroute de la mer au contexte euro-méditerranéen?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(12 décembre 2012)

En ce qui concerne le développement des autoroutes de la mer, la Commission souhaite aider le commerce intérieur de l'Union européenne ainsi que le commerce international. Dans ce contexte, la Commission soutient le développement des autoroutes de la mer entre les deux rives de la Méditerranée et reconnaît le rôle essentiel qu'elles jouent dans tout système de transport développé dans le cadre de l'Union pour la Méditerranée.

En ce qui concerne le financement des activités liées aux autoroutes de la mer, la Commission estime qu'il devrait être poursuivi dans le cadre d'un programme approprié et spécifique, à savoir le programme Meda-SoS, qui est conçu pour répondre aux besoins de développement spécifiques des rives de la Méditerranée qui ne font pas partie de l'Union européenne. Ce programme devrait être financé dans le cadre de l'initiative «Union pour la Méditerranée» et, au moyen de fonds de l'Union spécifiques tels que le RTE-T, obtenir un niveau de financement égal à celui destiné au développement des autoroutes de la mer en Europe. Il est toutefois nécessaire de coordonner ces deux fonds afin de développer une zone de transport euroméditerranéenne.

Comme l'Honorable Parlementaire le sait certainement, les nouvelles orientations RTE-T porteront sur les éléments suivants:

1) La coopération internationale, en particulier avec les «pays limitrophes», qui faciliterait le développement d'actions complémentaires mutuellement bénéfiques dans le domaine des autoroutes de la mer et

2) Un nouveau concept d'autoroutes de la mer, qui ne se fonde pas uniquement sur le transfert modal de la route vers la voie maritime, mais servirait plutôt à favoriser le transport maritime en tant moteur de développement des échanges, grâce à l'utilisation d'une logistique des transports efficace. Cette approche comprend la mise en place de corridors de transport intégrés soutenus par les autoroutes de la mer.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009483/12
to the Commission
Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Development of motorways of the sea between the two shores of the Mediterranean

Motorways of the sea are currently viewed simply as a way of reducing the volume of traffic on land and as an alternative to road freight haulage. Besides the unhelpful lack of any other objective criteria which could be used to define what motorways of the sea actually are, it is unfortunate that in practice this concept serves to exclude maritime links between the two shores of the Mediterranean, for the simple reason that these would not replace land transport links.

If they are to be a force for regional integration and harmonious regional development in this strategically important area, motorways of the sea must be part of a broader Euro-Mediterranean approach to transport.

The EU launched the Meda-MoS programme, and subsequently the Meda-MoS II programme, in order to draw on expertise in this area and to support motorway-of-the-sea projects by carrying out needs assessments and giving advice on implementation.

The Euromed Transport Forum is working alongside the EU to further integration in the Euro-Mediterranean area by means of improved transport links, and with the aim of extending the trans-European transport network towards the Southern Mediterranean.

The Union for the Mediterranean is pursuing the goal of developing motorways of the sea through projects which it endorses.

Despite these initiatives, it is unfortunate that the current plans for motorways of the sea take no account of North-South Mediterranean trade, confining the role of the motorways to providing short-sea links within the EU.

1. Does the Commission support the development of motorways of the sea between the two shores of the Mediterranean? If so, to what extent?

2. How does the Commission propose to adapt the concept of the motorway of the sea to take account of needs in the Euro-Mediterranean area?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

Regarding the development of Motorways of the Sea (MoS), the Commission aims to support the EU's internal trade as well as international trade. In this context the Commission supports the development of the MoS between both shores of the Mediterranean and recognises their key role on any transportation system developed under the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Concerning the funding of MoS activities, the Commission considers that it should be continued under the framework of an adequate and dedicated program i.e. Meda-MoS, geared to meet the specific development requirements of the non-EU shores of the Mediterranean. This program should get its budget under the framework of the initiative — Union for the Mediterranean, and match MoS development in Europe, under dedicated EU funds such as the TEN-T. However those two funds need to be coordinated in order to develop a Euro-Mediterranean transport area.

The Honourable Member of the Parliament is certainly aware that the new TEN-T Guidelines will cover:

1) International cooperation, in particular with 'neighbouring countries' which would facilitate the development of mutually beneficial complementary MoS actions and

2) a new concept of MoS which is not based solely on modal shift 'from road to sea', but on supporting maritime transport as a tool to foster the development of trade through the use of efficient transport logistics. This approach includes the development of integrated transport corridors supported by MoS.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009484/12
à la Commission
Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(17 octobre 2012)

Objet: Définition et critères objectifs d'une autoroute de la mer

Promues pour la première fois dans le Livre Blanc sur la politique des transports de 2001, les autoroutes de la mer tardent à être véritablement déployées, quand bien même leur intérêt est manifeste. L'objectif est connu: le report modal de la route vers la mer, afin de décongestionner les réseaux terrestres et de réduire les émissions du transport routier.

Malheureusement, depuis leur lancement en 2001, et malgré leur inclusion dans les orientations du RTE-T en 2004, un constat d'échec est évident, la faute à l'absence de toute définition ou de critères objectifs pour les caractériser.

Aucune définition précise des autoroutes de la mer n'existe, si ce n'est à travers les objectifs qu'elles sont censées atteindre en termes de report modal ou de cohésion territoriale (Livre Blanc 2001, Orientations RTE-T 2004), ou de fluidité de la chaîne logistique en liaison avec la partie maritime de cette chaîne (coordinateur européen pour les autoroutes de la mer, M. Valente de Oliviera).

Le flou juridique qui entoure les autoroutes de la mer induit un flou opérationnel et cela est de nature à décourager les acteurs du transport maritime, ou les autorités nationales et locales, de soutenir leur déploiement.

Quelques exemples existent ou ont existé, mais, à chaque fois, parce que ces liaisons maritimes sont ou étaient subventionnées, la fin du financement européen a conduit à la fin de l'autoroute de la mer.

L'enjeu est d'importance pour que les autoroutes de la mer répondent au besoin de prolonger la route vers la mer, pour qu'elles s'inscrivent dans une politique ambitieuse d'aménagement du territoire et ne bénéficient pas d'une simple aide au démarrage.

Au regard de ces éléments:

1. Pour quelles raisons la Commission n'a-t-elle jamais donné à ce jour de définition précise ni proposé des critères objectifs pour caractériser ce qu'est une autoroute de la mer?

2. Au-delà de l'effet sur le report modal et de la haute qualité des services maritimes, quels sont les critères objectifs et opérationnels retenus par la Commission pour qualifier une liaison maritime d'autoroute de la mer?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(5 décembre 2012)

L'article 13 de la décision sur les orientations pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport (RTE-T) ([1]) fournit un cadre juridique pour le financement des projets relatifs aux autoroutes de la mer, qui visent à concentrer les flux de fret sur des itinéraires maritimes à vocation logistique, à améliorer les liaisons maritimes existantes et à établir de nouvelles liaisons viables, régulières et fréquentes. Les principaux objectifs sont de réduire la congestion routière et d'améliorer la desserte des régions périphériques ou insulaires. Des critères supplémentaires ont été définis dans le règlement établissant le programme «Marco Polo II» ([2]).

En 2007, la Commission a lancé une consultation auprès d'opérateurs du transport maritime et d'administrations nationales en vue d'améliorer le concept d'autoroute de la mer. Les questions posées concernaient notamment l'établissement d'indicateurs clés de performance et d'un label fixant des critères minimaux en matière d'ouverture, de fréquence et de fiabilité des services de transport maritime, de performance des chaînes logistiques, de qualité des services portuaires et de rapidité des procédures administratives. La consultation a révélé de grandes différences sur les plans de la fréquence des services, du volume des marchandises transportées, de la longueur des tronçons maritimes et des types d'activité économique dans les différentes zones reliées par des autoroutes de la mer. Aucun élément n'a démontré que la définition de critères qualitatifs généraux apporterait une valeur ajoutée au concept.

([1]) Décision n° 661/2010/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 7 juillet 2010.
([2]) Règlement (CE) n° 1692/2006 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 24 octobre 2006 établissant le deuxième programme *Marco Polo* pour l'octroi d'un concours financier communautaire visant à améliorer les performances environnementales du système de transport de marchandises.

La Commission ne pense pas que l'absence de critères précis pour caractériser les autoroutes de la mer ait freiné l'évolution du concept. De tels critères n'auraient pas été perçus comme un encouragement à la création de services de transport maritime à courte distance.

En octobre 2011, la Commission européenne a présenté une nouvelle proposition relative au réseau RTE-T ([3]). Celle-ci donne une définition détaillée des autoroutes de la mer, selon laquelle ces derniers représentent la dimension maritime du réseau transeuropéen de transport ([4]). À ce stade, la Commission ne juge pas nécessaire de mettre en place des critères opérationnels supplémentaires pour définir les autoroutes de la mer.

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011PC0650R(01):FR:NOT .

([4]) COM(2011)0650 final, proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil sur les orientations de l'Union pour le développement du réseau transeuropéen de transport.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009484/12
to the Commission
Dominique Vlasto (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Objective criteria to define motorways of the sea

Although the idea of motorways of the sea was first mooted in the 2001 White Paper on transport policy, and despite their obvious importance, it is taking some time to put the idea into practice. The objective is well known: to bring about a shift from road to maritime transport, in order to reduce congestion on road networks and emissions from road transport.

Unfortunately, since the idea was launched in 2001, and despite motorways of the sea being identified as a TEN-T priority project in 2004, real progress has been thwarted by the lack of objective criteria which can be used to define what a motorway of the sea actually is.

No exact definition of motorways of the sea exists, although one can perhaps be inferred from the goals set of bringing about a shift in the dominant mode of transport, enhancing regional cohesion (White Paper 1001, Priority Projects TEN-T 2004), and creating a seamless logistics chain which fully integrates the maritime component (European coordinator for motorways of the sea, Luis Valente de Oliviera).

The legal uncertainty surrounding the motorways of the sea is giving rise to operational imponderables, which are discouraging maritime transport operators, or local and national authorities, from supporting their development.

Some examples exist or used to exist; however, since maritime transport links are or were subsidised, each time European funding has ended, it has led to the demise of the motorway in question.

Effective support for motorways of the sea is essential if they are to perform their proper role of providing a seamless link between land and maritime transport, if they are to form part of an ambitious regional development policy, and if funding for them is not to be confined to start-up assistance.

1. Why has the Commission never given an exact definition of or proposed objective criteria which could be used to define motorways of the sea?

2. Setting aside the fact that they should promote a modal shift and guarantee the provision of high-quality maritime transport services, what are the Commission's objective and operational criteria for defining a motorway of the sea?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

Article 13 of the TEN-T guidelines ([1]) provides a legal framework for funding Motorways of the Sea projects with a view to concentrate freight flows on sea based logistical routes, improve existing maritime links and establish viable, regular and frequent maritime links. Main objectives are to reduce road congestion and improve access to peripheral and island regions. Additional criteria have also been set in the regulation establishing the Marco Polo II programme ([2]).

In 2007, the Commission consulted shipping operators and national administrations to improve the concept. This included establishing 'key performance indicators' and a 'label' including minimum criteria on openess, frequency and reliability of shipping services, efficient logistic chains, high quality port services and rapid administrative procedures. The consultation showed that the frequency of services and the volume of goods carried, the length of the maritime leg and the types of economic activity of the areas connected by Motorways of the Sea vary greatly. There was no evidence that establishing general qualitative criteria would bring added value to the concept.

The Commision does not believe that not establishing precise criteria for Motorways of the Sea has slowed down the progress of the concept. Such criteria would not have been perceived as an incentive to stimulate the creation of additional short sea services.

([1]) Decision No 661/2010/EC of the European Parliament and of the council of 7 July 2010.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing the second Marco Polo programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system.

In October 2011 the European Commission presented a new proposal for the TEN-T network ([3]) where Motorways of the Sea have a comprehensive definition and represent the maritime dimension of the Trans-European Transport Network ([4]). The Commission does not see the need to establish additional operational criteria to define motorways of the sea at this stage.

([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011PC0650R(01):EN:NOT

([4]) COM/2011/0650 final Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-009485/12
alla Commissione
Tiziano Motti (PPE)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Revisione della direttiva 2006/24/CE sulla conservazione dei dati

Alla luce della sua relazione di valutazione sulla direttiva 2006/24/CE riguardante la conservazione dei dati, il 18 aprile 2011 la Commissione ha dichiarato che avrebbe proposto una revisione dell'attuale quadro giuridico in materia di conservazione dei dati. Nel suo piano d'azione per l'attuazione del programma di Stoccolma, la Commissione ha annunciato una proposta di revisione per il 2012.

La direttiva 2006/24/CE fu proposta sulla scia emotiva e sulle esigenze tecniche di lotta al terrorismo manifestatesi in forma eclatante nel 2001 con la strage delle Torri gemelle a New York e, negli anni a seguire, in Spagna e a Londra.

Da allora il Parlamento europeo ha approvato, il 23 giugno 2010, una risoluzione basata sulla dichiarazione scritta n. 29 «volta a creare un sistema di allarme rapido contro pedofili e molestatori sessuali» chiedendo alla Commissione, fra le altre misure, l'estensione dell'applicazione della direttiva 2006/24/CE anche ai motori di ricerca, mentre il 23 ottobre 2011 ha approvato la risoluzione legislativa contro l'abuso e lo sfruttamento sessuale dei minori e la pornografia minorile n. P7_TA (2011)0468 con cui si introduce il reato di grooming ovvero l'adescamento di minori tramite la rete.

1. Intende la Commissione tenere fede al suo impegno di proporre una revisione della direttiva in oggetto entro il 2012?

2. Alla luce delle potenziali minacce per i minori in particolare, ma non solo, rappresentate dalla violazione della legge grazie all'utilizzo anonimo di Internet, provvederà la Commissione a basare la propria proposta riveduta su una valutazione approfondita e fattuale delle ripercussioni sul diritto alla riservatezza?

3. In che modo intende migliorare la direttiva rendendo possibile l'identificazione di autori di reati attraverso il web, alla luce delle insufficienze tecniche evidenziate dal Parlamento?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(26 novembre 2012)

Come già precisato nelle sue risposte alle interrogazioni orali O-124/12, O-125/12, O-126/12, O-128/12 e O-154/12 ([1]), la Commissione sta elaborando una proposta di revisione del quadro giuridico in materia di conservazione dei dati, anche se, date la complessità tecnica e giuridica e la sensibilità politica della materia, è probabile che non sarà presentata a breve. Secondo la Commissione, la revisione della direttiva sulla conservazione dei dati deve garantire che i dati conservati siano utilizzati esclusivamente per i fini previsti dalla direttiva stessa e non per altri scopi, come attualmente permesso dalla direttiva relativa alla vita privata e alle comunicazioni elettroniche ([2]). La Commissione mira pertanto a proporre una revisione della direttiva sulla conservazione dei dati, da presentare contestualmente a una futura revisione della direttiva relativa alla vita privata e alle comunicazioni elettroniche. Qualsiasi proposta di riforma di quest'ultima prenderà in considerazione l'esito delle discussioni sulla riforma del regime dell'UE in materia di protezione dei dati, di competenza della commissaria per la giustizia, i diritti fondamentali e la cittadinanza. La valutazione d'impatto che accompagnerà la proposta includerà un'analisi esaustiva degli effetti sulla vita privata e su altri diritti fondamentali pertinenti e presenterà le opzioni disponibili per fare in modo che le autorità responsabili abbiano un accesso tempestivo ai dati ritenuti necessari e proporzionati ai fini di prevenzione, indagine, accertamento e perseguimento di reati gravi.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+OQ+O-2012-000154+0+DOC+XML+V0//IT.
([2]) Direttiva 2002/58/CE del 12 luglio 2002 (GU L 201 del 31.7.2002).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009485/12
to the Commission
Tiziano Motti (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Review of Directive 2006/24/EC on the retention of data

In the light of its evaluation report on Directive 2006/24/EC on the retention of data, the Commission stated on 18 April 2011 that it would review the current legal framework on data retention. In its action plan implementing the Stockholm programme, the Commission announced that there would be a proposal for revision in 2012.

Directive 2006/24/EC was tabled in the emotional aftermath of the 2001 attack on the New York twin towers and the attacks in the following years in Spain and London, and was geared to the technical needs of the fight against terrorism.

Since then, on 23 June 2010 the European Parliament adopted a resolution based on written declaration 29 'setting up a European early warning system for paedophiles and sex offenders', in which it asked the Commission inter alia to extend the application of Directive 2006/24/EC to search engines; and on 23 October 2011 it adopted a legislative resolution on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (No P7_TA (2011)0468), introducing the crime of grooming minors over the Internet.

1. Does the Commission intend to fulfil its commitment to propose a revision of the directive in question during 2012?

2. In the light of the potential threats for minors in particular — but not only minors — represented by breaches of the law through anonymous use of the Internet, will the Commission be sure to base its proposed revision on a thorough, factual assessment of the repercussions on the right to privacy?

3. In what way does it intend to improve the directive by making it possible to identify the perpetrators of crime over the Internet, in the light of the technical shortcomings highlighted by Parliament?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2012)

As stated in its response to oral questions O-124/12, O-125/12, O-126/12 , O-128/12 and O-154/12 ([1]), the Commission is preparing a proposal to reform the data retention framework, although, given the technical and legal complexity and political sensitivity of this matter, it is likely to take some time before the Commission is in a position to present its proposal. The Commission considers that any revision of the Data Retention Directive should ensure that retained data will be used exclusively for the purposes foreseen in this directive, and not for other purposes as currently allowed by the E-Privacy Directive ([2]). The Commission therefore aims to propose a revision of the Data Retention Directive, to be presented at the same time as a future revision of the E-Privacy Directive. Any proposal reforming the E-Privacy Directive will take into account the result of the negotiations on the reform of the EU data protection regime, which is under the responsibility of the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. The impact assessment accompanying that proposal will include a full discussion of the impact on privacy and other relevant fundamental rights, and consider options for ensuring that competent authorities have swift access to the communications data which are necessary and proportionate for the prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bOQ%2bO-2012-000154%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN.
([2]) Directive 2002/58/EC of 12 July 2002. OJ L 201 of 31.7.2002.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009486/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Negociações Colômbia — FARC

No passado dia 28 de agosto de 2012, a Alta Representante manifestou publicamente o seu contentamento pelo início do processo negocial do Estado colombiano com as FARC e a sua convicção de que apenas uma solução negociada trará a tão desejada paz duradoura à Colômbia.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Que apreciação faz da evolução do processo negocial?

2. Que aspetos destaca?

3. A União participará nestas negociações? Com que estatuto?

4. A União Europeia estará disponível para auxiliar e mediar as partes envolvidas caso lhe seja solicitado?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(13 de dezembro de 2012)

A União Europeia está a acompanhar com especial atenção as negociações de paz. Como a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente manifestou nas declarações de 28 de agosto e 4 de setembro de 2012, esta é uma oportunidade única para pôr fim a várias décadas de confrontos que têm atrasado o desenvolvimento e infligido um grande sofrimento ao povo da Colômbia.

Tendo em conta a delicadeza e confidencialidade deste processo, que envolve apenas as duas partes, bem como os países que atuam na qualidade de garantes ou aqueles que acompanham a situação, a UE não deve ainda pronunciar-se sobre a evolução das conversações.

A União Europeia está pronta a ajudar o governo colombiano, as suas instituições e a sociedade civil, prestando apoio a ações que promovam a paz, a verdade, a justiça, a reparação e a reconciliação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009486/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Negotiations between Columbia and the FARC

On 28 August 2012, the High Representative publicly welcomed the launch of negotiations between the Colombian State and the FARC and stated her conviction that only a negotiated solution could provide the basis for the long sought-after lasting peace in Colombia.

1. What is the Vice-President/High Representative's assessment of the progress of the negotiation process?

2. What does she consider to be the salient points?

3. Will the EU take part in these negotiations? In what capacity?

4. Is the European Union prepared to assist and mediate for the parties concerned should they so wish?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The EU is following the peace negotiations with close attention. As the HR/VP has expressed in her statements of 28 August and 4 September 2012, there is now a unique window of opportunity to put an end to this decades-old confrontation which has held back development and inflicted unspeakable suffering on the Colombian people.

In view of the delicate and confidential nature of the process, which involves only the two parties, as well as the countries acting as guarantors or in an accompanying role, the EU should not comment on the progress of the talks at the present point in time.

The EU stands ready to assist the Colombian government, state institutions and civil society in providing support for activities that promote peace, truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009487/12
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Cuba — Eliminação da autorização de saída — Prémios Sakharov

Em 4 de setembro de 2003, durante a sessão plenária em Estrasburgo, o Parlamento Europeu aprovou, por vastíssima maioria, uma Resolução relativamente a Cuba, em cujo § 12 se lê:

«Solicita que Oswaldo Payá, laureado em 2002 com o prémio Sakharov para a liberdade de pensamento, seja oficialmente convidado a encontrar-se com a Presidência da UE, o Alto Representante para a PESC, o Presidente da Comissão e os Comissários competentes; apoia a decisão tomada pela sua Comissão dos Assuntos Externos, dos Direitos do Homem, da Segurança Comum e da Política de Defesa de convidar Oswaldo Payá e solicita às autoridades cubanas que não coloquem obstáculos a esta visita».

O Presidente da Comissão, o Secretário-Geral do Conselho e o Alto-Comissário para a PESC e a então Presidência italiana manifestaram igualmente na altura por escrito idêntico desejo e disponibilidade.

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-006904/2012, a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante declarou que «O Parlamento convidou as Damas de Branco e Guillermo Fariñas para se deslocarem a Bruxelas. Uma vez que a sua deslocação não foi autorizada, um convite para vir a Bruxelas está atualmente fora de questão.» Cuba anunciou, a 16 de outubro de 2012, a eliminação das autorizações de saída dos seus cidadãos para o estrangeiro.

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Está disposto a convidar as «Damas de Blanco» e Guillermo Fariñas a deslocarem-se às instituições europeias para que possam testemunhar, de viva voz, acerca do estado de coisas em Cuba?

2. Que grau de energia está disposto a empregar nesse sentido, nomeadamente em coordenação com a Comissão e com os Estados-Membros?

3. Encara o Conselho poder associar-se expressamente ao «convite aberto» anteriormente expresso pelo Parlamento Europeu para que se desloquem à União Europeia se isso lhes for efetivamente permitido?

Resposta
(25 de fevereiro de 2013)

O Conselho não debateu esta questão.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009487/12
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Cuba — Abolition of exit permits — Sakharov Prize winners

On 4 September 2003, at the plenary session in Strasbourg, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on Cuba by a vast majority. Paragraph 12 reads as follows:

'Asks that Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002, be officially invited to Europe […] in order to meet in person with the EU Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP, the President of the Commission and the relevant Commissioners; supports the decision taken by its Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy to invite Mr Sardiñas, and asks the Cuban authorities not to prevent his presence'.

The President of the Commission, the Secretary-General of the Council and the High Commissioner for the CFSP and the entire Italian Presidency also expressed the same wish and availability in writing at the time.

In response to my Question E-006904/2012, the Vice-President/High Representative said that 'The Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas were invited by the Parliament to Brussels. Given that their travel was not permitted, an invitation to Brussels is currently not under consideration.' Cuba announced on 16 October 2012 that its citizens would no longer require exit permits to travel abroad.

1. Is the Council willing to invite the Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas to travel to the EU institutions to personally testify on the state of affairs in Cuba?

2. How much effort is the Council willing to devote to this, in cooperation with the Commission and the Member States?

3. Does the Council plan to associate itself specifically with the 'open invitation' previously extended by the European Parliament to travel to the European Union if they were allowed to do so?

Reply
(25 February 2013)

The Council has not discussed this issue.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009488/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Cuba — Eliminação da autorização de saída — Prémios Sakharov

Em 4 de setembro de 2003, durante a sessão plenária em Estrasburgo, o Parlamento Europeu aprovou, por vastíssima maioria, uma Resolução relativamente a Cuba, em cujo § 12 se lê:

«Solicita que Oswaldo Payá, laureado em 2002 com o prémio Sakharov para a liberdade de pensamento, seja oficialmente convidado a encontrar-se com a Presidência da UE, o Alto Representante para a PESC, o Presidente da Comissão e os Comissários competentes; apoia a decisão tomada pela sua Comissão dos Assuntos Externos, dos Direitos do Homem, da Segurança Comum e da Política de Defesa de convidar Oswaldo Payá e solicita às autoridades cubanas que não coloquem obstáculos a esta visita».

O Presidente da Comissão, o Secretário-Geral do Conselho e o Alto-Comissário para a PESC e a então Presidência italiana manifestaram igualmente na altura por escrito idêntico desejo e disponibilidade.

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-006904/2012, a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante declarou que «O Parlamento convidou as Damas de Branco e Guillermo Fariñas para se deslocarem a Bruxelas. Uma vez que a sua deslocação não foi autorizada, um convite para vir a Bruxelas está atualmente fora de questão.» Cuba anunciou, a 16 de outubro de 2012, a eliminação das autorizações de saída dos seus cidadãos para o estrangeiro.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Está disposta a convidar as «Damas de Blanco» e Guillermo Fariñas a deslocarem-se às instituições europeias para que possam testemunhar, de viva voz, acerca do estado de coisas em Cuba?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(7 de fevereiro de 2013)

Segundo a prática habitual, são as delegações da UE em países terceiros que conduzem os contactos com a oposição pacífica. Não foram enviados convites a representantes cubanos para participar em reuniões em Bruxelas. Se o Parlamento Europeu, que atribui o Prémio Sakharov, endereçar um convite aos laureados cubanos para discursarem no Parlamento, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente, à semelhança do que fez no passado, irá levantar esta questão junto das autoridades cubanas. Aquando da adoção da nova lei em matéria de migração, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente expressou o seu desejo de que a lei fosse amplamente aplicada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009488/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Cuba's abolition of the exit permit — Sakharov Prizes

On 4 September 2003, at its plenary session in Strasburg, the European Parliament adopted, by a broad majority, a resolution on Cuba, paragraph 12 of which reads:

'[The European Parliament] asks that Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002, be officially invited to Europe at the earliest opportunity in order to meet in person with the EU Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP, the President of the Commission and the relevant Commissioners; supports the decision taken by its Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy to invite Mr Sardiñas, and asks the Cuban authorities not to prevent his presence'.

The President of the Commission, the Secretary-General of the Council, the High Representative for the CFSP and the Italian Presidency of the time also expressed the same wish and willingness in writing.

In answer to my Question E-006904/2012, the Vice-President/High Representative stated that 'The Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas were invited by the Parliament to Brussels. Given that their travel was not permitted, an invitation to Brussels is currently not under consideration'. On 16 October 2012, Cuba announced that it was abolishing exit permits for its citizens to travel abroad.

Is the Commission willing to invite the Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas to travel to the EU institutions to personally testify on the state of affairs in Cuba?

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

Following established practise, contacts with the peaceful opposition in third countries are led by EU Delegations. No invitations have been issued for Cuban representatives to attend meetings in Brussels. If the European Parliament, which awards the Sakharov Prizes, issues an invitation to the Cuban awardees to speak at the Parliament, the HR/VP will, as it did in the past, raise the question with the Cuban authorities. On the occasion of the adoption of the new migration law, the HR/VP expressed the wish that this law is broadly implemented.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009489/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Cuba — Eliminação da autorização de saída — Prémios Sakharov

Em 4 de setembro de 2003, durante a sessão plenária em Estrasburgo, o Parlamento Europeu aprovou, por vastíssima maioria, uma Resolução relativamente a Cuba, em cujo § 12 se lê:

«Solicita que Oswaldo Payá, laureado em 2002 com o prémio Sakharov para a liberdade de pensamento, seja oficialmente convidado a encontrar-se com a Presidência da UE, o Alto Representante para a PESC, o Presidente da Comissão e os Comissários competentes; apoia a decisão tomada pela sua Comissão dos Assuntos Externos, dos Direitos do Homem, da Segurança Comum e da Política de Defesa de convidar Oswaldo Payá e solicita às autoridades cubanas que não coloquem obstáculos a esta visita».

O Presidente da Comissão, o Secretário-Geral do Conselho e o Alto-Comissário para a PESC e a então Presidência italiana manifestaram igualmente na altura por escrito idêntico desejo e disponibilidade.

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-006904/2012, a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante declarou que «O Parlamento convidou as Damas de Branco e Guillermo Fariñas para se deslocarem a Bruxelas. Uma vez que a sua deslocação não foi autorizada, um convite para vir a Bruxelas está atualmente fora de questão.» Cuba anunciou, a 16 de outubro de 2012, a eliminação das autorizações de saída dos seus cidadãos para o estrangeiro.

Assim, pergunto novamente à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

Está disposta a convidar as «Damas de Blanco» e Guillermo Fariñas a deslocarem-se às instituições europeias para que possam testemunhar, de viva voz, acerca do estado de coisas em Cuba?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(26 de novembro de 2012)

Segundo a prática habitual, são as delegações da UE em países terceiros que conduzem os contactos com a oposição pacífica e a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente não formula quaisquer convites para que tais reuniões se realizem em Bruxelas. Se o Parlamento Europeu, que atribui o Prémio Sakharov, endereçar um convite aos laureados cubanos para discursarem no Parlamento, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente, à semelhança do que fez no passado, irá levantar esta questão junto das autoridades cubanas. Aquando da adoção da nova lei em matéria de migração, a Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente expressou o seu desejo de que a lei fosse amplamente aplicada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009489/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Cuba's abolition of the exit permit — Sakharov Prizes

On 4 September 2003, at its plenary session in Strasburg, the European Parliament adopted, by a broad majority, a resolution on Cuba, paragraph 12 of which reads:

'[The European Parliament] asks that Mr Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 2002, be officially invited to Europe at the earliest opportunity in order to meet in person with the EU Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP, the President of the Commission and the relevant Commissioners; supports the decision taken by its Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy to invite Mr Sardiñas, and asks the Cuban authorities not to prevent his presence.'

The President of the Commission, the Secretary-General of the Council, the High Representative for the CFSP and the Italian Presidency of the time also expressed the same wish and willingness in writing.

In answer to my Question E-006904/2012, the Vice-President/High Representative stated that 'The Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas were invited by the Parliament to Brussels. Given that their travel was not permitted, an invitation to Brussels is currently not under consideration.' On 16 October 2012, Cuba announced that it was abolishing exit permits for its citizens to travel abroad.

I would therefore ask the Vice-President/High Representative once again:

Is she willing to invite the Ladies in White and Guillermo Fariñas to travel to the EU institutions to personally testify on the state of affairs in Cuba?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

Following regular practise, contacts with peaceful opposition are lead by the EU Delegations in Third countries and there are no invitations sent out by the HR/VP for such meetings to take place in Brussels. If the European Parliament which awards the Sakharov Prizes issues an invitation to the Cuban awardees to speak at the Parliament, the HR/VP will, as it did in the past, raise the question with the Cuban authorities. On the occasion of the adoption of the new migration law, the HR/VP expressed the wish that this law is broadly implemented.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009490/12
alla Commissione
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Vaccinazione contro il tetano materno e neonatale nei Paesi in via di sviluppo

Nelle aree più disagiate del mondo circa 130 milioni di donne e i loro bambini rischiano di contrarre il tetano materno e neonatale.

Nonostante sia sufficiente una semplice vaccinazione durante la gravidanza per salvare la vita sia della mamma che del bambino, attualmente sono 58 000 i bambini che ogni anno, nei Paesi in via di sviluppo, muoiono a causa di tale malattia.

L'Unicef ha lanciato nel 2006, insieme ad alcuni sponsor privati, una campagna con l'obiettivo di eliminare questa malattia in 59 Paesi entro la fine del 2015: allo stato attuale Myanmar, Uganda, Liberia, Timor Est, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea e Ghana sono gli otto Paesi in via di sviluppo nei quali la malattia è stata già eliminata, mentre in altri Paesi, come il Camerun, si è riusciti a ridurre le percentuali dei neonati colpiti ad un caso su mille bambini nati vivi.

Quali iniziative intende dunque adottare la Commissione per sostenere la campagna di vaccinazione promossa dall'Unicef per debellare in modo definitivo il tetano materno e neonatale nei Paesi in via di sviluppo?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(11 dicembre 2012)

È impossibile prevenire ed eliminare completamente l'esposizione al tetano poiché le spore tetaniche sono presenti in tutto il mondo nel terreno e nelle feci umane e animali.

In molti paesi vengono attuati programmi di routine per immunizzare le donne in stato di gravidanza contro il tetano, solitamente nell'ambito dell'assistenza prenatale, mentre si ritiene che nelle regioni ove ciò non avviene il problema sia imputabile a carenze dei sistemi sanitari.

L'UE riconosce che l'immunizzazione può contribuire a ridurre la mortalità infantile e a prevenire malattie come il tetano. L'impostazione generale dell'UE in campo sanitario consiste nel concentrare investimenti e sostegno su programmi e sistemi sanitari globali (in particolare sulle loro spese correnti) nei paesi che presentano maggiori necessità. Si tratta del modo migliore per garantire che, a lungo termine, tutti possano accedere all'assistenza sanitaria e a servizi di qualità anche nelle zone rurali e in quelle più isolate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009490/12
to the Commission
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Vaccination against maternal and neonatal tetanus in developing countries

Some 130 million women and their children in the poorest regions of the world are at risk of contracting maternal and neonatal tetanus.

Although a single vaccination during pregnancy is enough to save the lives of both mother and child, 58 000 children currently die of tetanus each year in developing countries.

In 2006 Unicef, together with a number of private sponsors, launched a campaign with the aim of completely eradicating the disease from 59 countries before the end of 2015: it has already been eradicated from eight developing countries — Myanmar, Uganda, Liberia, East Timor, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea and Ghana. In others, such as Cameroon, the percentage of newborns contracting tetanus has been brought down to one in a thousand live births.

What initiatives does the Commission therefore intend to take in support of the Unicef-promoted vaccination campaign to finally overcome maternal and neonatal tetanus in developing countries?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

Tetanus exposure cannot be entirely prevented and eradicated because tetanus spores are found throughout the world in soil and the stool of people and animals.

In many countries, immunization against tetanus is routinely given to pregnant women, usually during antenatal care contacts while in areas where immunization fails to reach pregnant women it is considered that it is due to weak health systems.

The EU acknowledges the impact immunisation has in reducing child mortality and preventing diseases such as tetanus. The EU global health approach is to invest in and support comprehensive health plans and systems, especially recurrent costs, in countries in greatest need. This is the main way to have a long term impact on access to healthcare and quality services for all, even in rural and remote areas.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009491/12
alla Commissione
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(17 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Presunte irregolarità nell'assunzione dei dipendenti Ryanair

Risulta che la compagnia aerea low cost Ryanair abbia omesso il versamento dei contributi in Italia per 220 dipendenti assunti a Dublino e perciò soggetti al regime fiscale irlandese, che di fatto però lavoravano presso l'aeroporto Orio al Serio.

È noto infatti che in Irlanda la tassazione sugli stipendi è mediamente intorno al 12 % mentre in Italia è al 37 %.

Inoltre, i dipendenti Ryanair, pur essendo lavoratori di diritto irlandese, lavorando in Italia, dove vivono, usufruiscono anche delle prestazioni sanitarie per sé e per le loro famiglie, e dispongono anche della certificazione del diritto all'assistenza sanitaria che consente di ottenere assistenza sanitaria in tutti i Paesi dell'UE a spese dell'Italia, che ha rilasciato la certificazione assicurativa.

Si chiede alla Commissione se è a conoscenza di quanto sopra e se ritiene che siano state violate le norme in materia di diritto al lavoro cosi come stabilito dal Regolamento (CEE) n. 1612/68 del 15 ottobre 1968, modificato dai regolamenti (CEE) n. 312/76 e (CEE) n. 2434/92, e direttiva 2004/38/CE?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(12 dicembre 2012)

Il regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004 determina l'unica legislazione sulla sicurezza sociale applicabile al personale di volo e stabilisce in via di principio il nesso tra tale legislazione e la «base di servizio» della persona in questione, con effetto dal 28 giugno 2012 ([1]). La nozione di «base di servizio» per quanto riguarda gli equipaggi che operano nel settore dell'aviazione civile ([2]) ha una portata generale a livello dell'Unione europea ed è definita come il luogo (aeroporto) in cui il membro d'equipaggio solitamente inizia e conclude un periodo di servizio. È possibile che la normativa sulla sicurezza sociale applicabile al personale di volo assunto prima di tale data coincida con la legislazione dello Stato membro in cui l'operatore ha la sede sociale in quanto va applicato il periodo transitorio di 10 anni di cui all'articolo 87 *bis*.

Qualora una persona sia soggetta alla legislazione sulla sicurezza sociale di uno Stato membro diverso da quello di residenza, l'assistenza sanitaria è erogata alle stesse condizioni previste per le persone assicurate residenti in tale Stato membro. Tuttavia, a norma degli articoli 17 e 35 del regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004 le spese effettivamente sostenute per tale assistenza vanno integralmente rimborsate alle istituzioni italiane dallo Stato membro competente (nella fattispecie l'Irlanda).

Se per il personale della Ryanair in servizio presso l'aeroporto di Orio al Serio l'Italia è lo Stato competente, ma la Ryanair non versa i contributi per detto personale, spetta alle autorità italiane competenti recuperare i contributi o le imposte dovute a titolo della legislazione italiana.

Le informazioni fornite nell'interrogazione scritta non indicano alcuna erronea applicazione del diritto di ogni cittadino UE di lavorare in un altro Stato membro e di svolgervi un'attività di lavoro liberamente scelta ed accettata come sancito dall'articolo 45 del TFUE e dal regolamento (UE) n. 492/2011 ([3]). Per quanto concerne le aliquote fiscali sul lavoro citate nell'interrogazione, si rimanda alla pubblicazione sull'evoluzione della fiscalità nell'UE ([4]).

([1]) Entrata in vigore del regolamento (UE) n. 465/2012 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 22 maggio 2012 , che modifica il regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004 relativo al coordinamento dei sistemi di sicurezza sociale e del regolamento (CE) n. 987/2009 che stabilisce le modalità di applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004, GU L 149 dell'8.6.2012, pag. 4.

([2]) Regolamento (CEE) n. 3922/91 del Consiglio, concernente l'armonizzazione di regole tecniche e di procedure amministrative nel settore dell'aviazione civile.

([3]) Il regolamento (UE) n. 492/2011 sostituisce il regolamento (CEE) n. 1612/68 con effetto dal 16.6.2011.

([4]) Cfr. comunicato stampa all'indirizzo seguente: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-12-77_en.htm?locale=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009491/12
to the Commission
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Presumed irregularities in the hiring of Ryanair staff

It appears that the low-cost airline Ryanair has failed to pay contributions in Italy for 220 members of staff who were hired in Dublin and therefore come under the Irish tax system but who in fact work at Orio al Serio airport in Italy.

It is well known that average taxation of wages in Ireland is around 12%, compared to 37% in Italy.

Furthermore, although these Ryanair staff are treated as workers under Irish law, the fact that they live and work in Italy means that they receive healthcare for themselves and their families, and are also entitled to receive healthcare throughout the EU, with Italy footing the bill, as it is Italy that issues the health-insurance certificate.

Is the Commission aware of this state of affairs and does it consider that there has been infringement of the provisions on the right to work as laid down in Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 of 15 October 1968, as amended by Regulations (EEC) No 312/76 and (EEC) No 2434/92, and Directive 2004/38/EC?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 determines the single applicable social security legislation for air crew and links it in principle to the home-base of the person concerned as from 28 June 2012 ([1]). The home-base for air crew is an EU wide concept for the civil aviation industry ([2]) and is defined as the place (airport) from where the crew member normally starts and ends duty period. It is possible that the applicable social security legislation for air crew engaged before this date is the legislation of the Member State where the employer's registered office is located because the transitional period of 10 years according to Article 87a applies.

In case a person falls under the social security legislation of another State than the State of residence, this person receives the healthcare under the same conditions as all other residents insured in this State. However, the actual costs for provided healthcare are fully reimbursed to the Italian institutions according to Articles 17 and 35 of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 by the competent Member State (in the present case by Ireland).

If Italy is the competent State for Ryanair's staff working at Orio al Serio airport but Ryanair does not pay contributions for these staff, it is for the competent Italian authorities to recover the contributions or taxes due according to Italian legislation.

The information submitted in the written question does not point to any misapplication of the right every EU citizen has to engage in work in another Member State and to pursue a freely chosen or accepted occupation in accordance with Article 45 TFEU and Regulation (EEC) No 492/2011 ([3]). As to the tax rates on labour mentioned in the question, please see the publication on taxation trends in the EU ([4]).

([1]) Entry into force of Regulation (EU) No 465/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004, OJ L 149, 8.6.2012, p. 4.

([2]) Regulation (EEC) No 3922/91 on the harmonisation of technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation.

([3]) Regulation (EU) No 492/2011 replaced Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 as from 16.6.2011.

([4]) See press release at the following link: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-12-77_en.htm?locale=en.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009492/12
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Ebook availability in Member States

With the progress of modern technology, ebooks have become a valuable resource for sharing information and literature across borders quickly and with ease. However, at the moment not all recently released ebooks are available in all Member States in that format. Currently, it is up to the publisher's discretion as to where ebooks are available for download. For example, a book published in France might only be available for download to customers residing in France. This is a double standard when compared to a print edition, as the latter could be purchased in France and then shipped to another Member State.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. Is the Commission undertaking any actions to facilitate access to new ebooks in Member States other than that of publication?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(16 January 2013)

Authors of books and rightholders, such as publishers that hold rights in books, have certain rights which have been harmonised under the EU copyright acquis ([1]). Authors and rightholders such as publishers are in principle entitled to limit the territorial scope of the licences for the exploitation of their works (within the limit imposed by competition law) but are not required to do so.

Most publishers have in principle no interest in restricting sales to a single territory and often license their rights on multi-territorial basis. Thus, where a sales restriction of e-books is in place, for instance when a distributor such as an e-retailer declines to sell e-books to customers abroad, there may be commercial reasons different from copyright related reasons. These reasons need to be compliant with competition rules and also with the application of internal market principles such as the principle of non-discrimination of service recipients based on their nationality or place of residence, which is enshrined in Article 20 (2) of the Services Directive ([2]). It is for the relevant national authorities to ensure that service providers comply with national provisions implementing this principle. The Commission has published guidance which is intended to help national authorities in their assessment ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2001/29/EC on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society.
([2]) Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/implementation/report/SWD_2012_146_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009493/12
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: State of implementation of the directive on the welfare of laying hens

Since 1 January 2012, Directive 1999/74/EC on the protection of laying hens requires that welfare-friendly (enriched) cages are used for hens. If the EU wishes to ensure the welfare of these birds, it is essential that this directive is implemented in all 27 EU Member States. Implementation is also important to guarantee fair competition between egg producers in different Member States.

1. Can the Commission provide information on the current state of implementation of the directive in all 27 EU Member States?

2. What action will the Commission take against Member States who have not yet complied?

3. Will the Commission be taking any action against individual producers who do not comply?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

In response to the question as to how many Member States comply with the ban on unenriched cages as laid down in Council Directive 1999/74/EC on the protection of laying hens ([1]), the Commission wishes to point out that the information provided by several Member States on their state of compliance is being assessed within the frame of ongoing infringement procedures. The Commission is therefore not in a position to provide a precise figure on the number of Member States that may be considered to comply.

The Member States are responsible for taking appropriate action against individual producers who do not keep laying hens in compliance with the applicable legislation.

([1]) OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009494/12
an die Kommission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(17. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Reduzierung des Bahnlärms — Umgebungslärm-Richtlinie und LL-Bremssohle

Grundsätzlich ist der Ausbau des Schienengüterverkehrs in Europa notwendig, gleichzeitig aber muss eine europaweite Lösung zur Reduzierung des Bahnlärms erreicht werden.

Bisher gibt es an bestehenden Bahnstrecken keine konkreten Grenzwerte. Die Einführung lärmabhängiger Trassenpreise kann nur ein Baustein sein, damit der Lärm im Eisenbahnsektor reduziert wird. Eine gute Möglichkeit zur Reduzierung des Bahnlärms wäre die möglichst schnelle europaweite Zulassung der sogenannten „LL-Bremssohle". Durch die LL-Bremssohle könnte eine erhebliche Lärmreduzierung erreicht werden. Die Zulassung durch die zuständige Stelle müsste seitens der Kommission mit Nachdruck forciert werden. Insgesamt sollten alle in Europa fahrenden Güterwagen bis zum Jahr 2020 mit der LL-Bremssohle oder der K-Bremssohle umgerüstet sein.

1. Im Rahmen des Durchführungsberichts zur Umgebungslärm-Richtlinie hat die Kommission u. a. die Festlegung möglicher Ziel- oder Grenzwerte für den Schienenlärm vorgeschlagen. Wie ist hier der aktuelle Sachstand?

2. Wann ist mit der europaweiten Zulassung der LL-Bremssohle zu rechnen? Setzt sich die Kommission für die baldige Zulassung ein? Was hat die Kommission diesbezüglich unternommen?

3. Befürwortet die Kommission eine europaweite Förderung des Umbaus der Güterwagen mit der LL-Bremssohle? Wäre die Förderung machbar und ständen entsprechende Gelder zur Verfügung bzw. werden Finanzmittel entsprechend eingeplant?

4. Unterstützt die Kommission das Ziel, bis 2020 alle Güterwagen mit der LL-Bremssohle oder der K-Bremssohle umgerüstet zu haben? Unterstützt die Kommission das Verbot der alten, Lärm verursachenden Grauguss-Bremssohlen bis zum Beispiel 2020?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(30. November 2012)

1. Im Hinblick auf eine mögliche Änderung der Umgebungslärm-Richtlinie ([1]) hat die Kommission eine Online-Konsultation zu Lärmfragen eingeleitet, um die Meinungen von Bürgern, Behörden und Interessenvertretern einzuholen. Im Zuge dieser Änderung könnten auch Auslöse- oder Zielwerte eingeführt werden. Zur Bestimmung der Auswirkungen einer solchen Option wird im kommenden Jahr möglicherweise auch eine Folgenabschätzung durchgeführt. Kurzfristig ist jedoch keine Änderung dieser Richtlinie geplant.

2. LL-Bremssohlen sollen Mitte 2013 die EU-weite Zulassung erhalten, sofern der technische Bericht, den der Internationale Eisenbahnverband nach seinen Praxistests vorlegt, positiv ausfällt. Die Kommission hat den UIC nachdrücklich ersucht, die technischen Tests zu beschleunigen und seine auf wirtschaftlichen Erwägungen beruhenden Vorbehalte aufzugeben. Zudem hat die Kommission alle beteiligten Akteure aufgefordert, die EU-weite Zulassung von LL-Bremssohlen zu unterstützen.

3. In ihrem Vorschlag für eine Verordnung zur Schaffung der Fazilität „Connecting Europe" ([2]) sieht die Kommission die Möglichkeit vor, dass die Union die Umrüstung vorhandener Güterwagen mit geräuscharmen Bremssohlen finanziell unterstützt ([3]). Ebenso wie der Vorschlag für den Unionshaushalt 2014-2020 muss aber auch dieser Vorschlag noch vom Parlament und dem Rat verabschiedet werden.

4. Das Ziel einer Umrüstung aller Güterwagen mit geräuscharmen Bremssohlen bis 2020 ohne Beeinträchtigung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Eisenbahnsektors wird von der Kommission unterstützt. Außerdem will sie 2013 in einer Studie Möglichkeiten zur „wirksamen Verringerung des durch Güterwagen verursachten Schienenlärms in der Europäischen Union" untersuchen. Eine der Möglichkeiten wird darin bestehen, für vorhandene Güterwagen Lärmgrenzwerte gemäß der technischen Spezifikation für die Interoperabilität (TSI) „Lärm" ([4]) vorzuschreiben.

([1]) Richtlinie 2002/49/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 25. Juni 2002 über die Bewertung und Bekämpfung von Umgebungslärm, ABl. L 189 vom 18.7.2002, S. 12.
([2]) KOM(2011)665/3.
([3]) Maximal 20 % der förderfähigen Kosten.
([4]) Entscheidung 2006/66/EG der Kommission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009494/12
to the Commission
Norbert Neuser (S&D)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Reducing rail noise — Environmental Noise Directive and the use of LL brake-shoe inserts

The expansion of rail freight transport in Europe is a matter of fundamental importance, but, at the same time, an EU-wide solution needs to be found to the problem of rail noise.

There are no specific noise limit values for the existing network, and the introduction of noise-differentiated track access charges can be only part of the solution. One effective way of reducing rail noise significantly would be to grant EU-wide type-approval as quickly as possible for LL brake-shoe inserts. The Commission should be making every effort to urge the competent authority to grant that type-approval, so that by 2020 all goods wagons in use in Europe can be refitted with LL or K brake-shoe inserts.

1. In the report on the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive the Commission proposed measures which included the establishment of target or limit values for rail noise. What is the current state of play on this issue?

2. When is the LL brake-shoe insert likely to be granted EU-wide type-approval? What steps has the Commission taken in an effort to ensure that type-approval is granted in the near future?

3. Is the Commission in favour of EU-wide funding for the refitting of goods wagons with LL brake-shoe inserts? Could such funding be provided and is the money required available? If not, can the money required be set aside in future budgets?

4. Does the Commission support the objective of refitting all goods wagons with LL or K brake-shoe inserts by 2020? Does the Commission support the introduction of a ban, for example by 2020, on the use of the old, noisy iron brake-shoe inserts?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

1. The Commission launched an on line consultation on noise to collect views of the citizens, public authorities and interested stakeholders, in view of the potential revision of the Environmental Noise Directive ([1]). This revision may include the introduction of trigger or target values. An impact assessment will also be possibly launched next year to establish the potential impact of such a policy option. There is no plan to revise this directive in the short term.

2. The EU-wide approval of LL-bake blocks is planned to be granted by mid-2013, provided that the technical report of the International Union of Railways, following its field tests, is positive. The Commission has urged the UIC to speed-up the technical tests and abandon its reservations based on economic arguments. The Commission has also been requesting all relevant stakeholders to support the EU-wide approval of LL-bake blocks.

3. The Commission, in its proposal for a regulation establishing the Connecting Europe Facility ([2]), provided for the possibility for the Union to co-fund retrofitting of existing freight wagons with silent brake blocks ([3]). This proposal, together with the proposal for the Union budget for the period of 2014-2020, still have to be adopted by the Parliament and the Council.

4. The Commission supports the objective of refitting all freight wagons with silent brake-blocks by 2020, without hindering the competitive position of the railway sector. The Commission will in 2013 launch a study to analyse 'Effective reduction of noise generated by railway freight wagons in use in the European Union'. The possibility of application of maximum noise levels according to the technical specifications for interoperability Noise ([4]) to existing wagons will be one of the options.

([1]) Directive 2002/49/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise, OJ L 189, 18.7.2002, p. 12.
([2]) COM(2011)0665/3.
([3]) at max 20% of eligible costs.
([4]) Commission Decision 2006/66/EC.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009495/12
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Herinvoering Balkanvisa

In de EU Observer is een artikel geplaatst over het bepleiten van de herintroductie van Balkanvisa door Duitsland, Frankrijk, Oostenrijk en de Benelux-landen ([1]). De strekking van het artikel is dat een grote stroom mensen uit voormalig Joegoslavië in de genoemde lidstaten van de EU asiel aanvraagt met valse paspoorten. Een woordvoerder van commissaris Malmström blijkt hierover te hebben opgemerkt dat hierdoor het asielsysteem wordt bedreigd. Als tegenwicht voor de explosie aan asielaanvragen verlangen de acht lidstaten visa van mensen afkomstig van de westelijke Balkan.

Het probleem van het gebruik van valse paspoorten is wijdverbreid. Zo heb ik de Commissie onlangs vragen gesteld over het algemene probleem van het gebruik van valse paspoorten binnen het Schengen-gebied door onder anderen Moldaviërs en immigranten in Griekenland.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het artikel in de EU Observer?

2. Onderkent de Commissie de algemene problematiek rond de valse paspoorten?

3. Onderkent de Commissie de specifieke problematiek rond valse asielaanvragen?

4. Onderschrijft de Commissie de opvatting dat daarmee het asielsysteem wordt bedreigd?

5. Onderkent de Commissie het recht van lidstaten die met massale valse asielaanvragen worden geconfronteerd om daartegen maatregelen te nemen?

6. Vindt de Commissie dat het herinvoeren van visa door lidstaten een legitiem middel is om het aantal valse asielaanvragen te verminderen?

7. Zo neen, welk middel is volgens de Commissie dan wel legitiem?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(30 november 2012)

De Commissie is zich er ten volle van bewust dat het asielstelsel van sommige EU-lidstaten de laatste maanden onder druk staat als gevolg van een nieuwe toename van het aantal asielaanvragen van burgers van die landen van de westelijke Balkan die zijn vrijgesteld van de visumplicht en zij heeft een aantal stappen ondernomen om dit probleem aan te pakken.

In de visumdialoog met de landen van de westelijke Balkan heeft de Commissie de integriteit van de persoonsgegevens in biometrische reisdocumenten beoordeeld en via haar monitoringmechanisme na visumliberalisering beoordeelt zij deze nog steeds.

De Commissie heeft op 28 augustus 2012 ook haar derde monitoringverslag na visumliberalisering gepubliceerd. In dit verslag drong zij er bij de vijf landen van de westelijke Balkan die zijn vrijgesteld van de visumplicht op aan om dringend nadere maatregelen te treffen op vijf vlakken:

1. De operationele samenwerking met de autoriteiten van de lidstaten versterken, door meer informatie te delen;

2. Efficiënte onderzoeken starten naar mensen die meewerken aan onregelmatige migratie;

3. Grenscontroles verscherpen, met inachtneming van de grondrechten van de burgers;

4. Informatiecampagnes organiseren om burgers te wijzen op hun rechten en plichten in het kader van de visumvrijstelling;

5. Minderheden meer bijstand bieden.

([1]) http://euobserver.com/justice/117869.

De Commissie heeft deze zaak ook besproken op het Ministerieel Forum EU-Westelijke Balkan van 5 en 6 november in Tirana, waar de ministers een gezamenlijke verklaring inzake visumvrij verkeer hebben aangenomen. Vervolgens heeft zij een bijeenkomst belegd met de hoge ambtenaren van de visumvrije landen van de westelijke Balkan om de politieke verbintenissen van de top om te zetten in operationele actie. Hieruit blijkt dat de Commissie voldoende aandacht besteedt aan de zaak van ongegronde asielaanvragen in EU-lidstaten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009495/12
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Reintroduction of a visa requirement for nationals of the countries of the western Balkans

The *EU Observer* recently ran an article about the calls being made by Germany, France, Austria and the Benelux countries for the reintroduction of a visa requirement for nationals of the countries of the western Balkans ([1]). The article states that large numbers of people from those countries are using false passports to claim asylum in the aforementioned EU Member States. What is more, a spokesperson for Commissioner Malmström has reportedly suggested that this influx of people poses a threat to the asylum system. In response to the massive increase in the number of asylum applications, the six Member States are calling for the reintroduction of a visa requirement for people from the countries of the western Balkans.

The problem of the use of false passports is a widespread one. I recently put to the Commission questions concerning the general problem of their use in the Schengen area by, for example, Moldovans and immigrants in Greece.

1. Is the Commission aware of the article which appeared in the *EU Observer*?

2. Does the Commission acknowledge the existence of a general problem involving the use of false passports?

3. Does the Commission acknowledge the existence of a specific problem concerning asylum applications from people using false passports?

4. Does the Commission endorse the view that this poses a threat to the asylum system?

5. Does the Commission acknowledge the right of Member States to take steps to counter the massive increase in the number of asylum applications from people using false passports?

6. Does the Commission regard the reintroduction of a visa requirement by Member States as a legitimate means of reducing the number of asylum applications from people using false passports?

7. If not, what means would the Commission regard as legitimate?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The Commission is fully aware of the pressure that the asylum systems of several EU Member States have faced in recent months as a result of a new surge in asylum applications lodged by the citizens of visa-free Western Balkans countries and has taken a number of steps to address this issue.

In the visa dialogues with each Western Balkan country, the Commission assessed the integrity of personal data in biometric travel documents and continues to assess this issue via its post-visa liberalisation monitoring mechanism.

The Commission also published its third post-visa liberalisation monitoring report on 28 August 2012, which called on the five visa-free Western Balkans states to urgently implement further measures in five areas:

1. Enhance operational cooperation with Member State authorities, facilitated by closer information sharing;

2. Launch effective investigations of the facilitators of irregular migration;

3. In line with citizens' fundamental rights, strengthen border controls;

4. Organise information campaigns to inform citizens of their rights and obligations under the visa-free regime;

5. Increase assistance to minority populations.

([1]) http://euobserver.com/justice/117869.

The Commission also raised this issue at the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum in Tirana on 5-6 November, where Ministers adopted a Joint Declaration on visa-free travel. It then convened a meeting with the senior officials of the visa-free Western Balkans states to translate the summit's political commitments into operational action. These steps demonstrate that the Commission pays sufficient attention to addressing the issue of unfounded asylum applications in EU Member States.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009496/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Dramático incremento del número de personas bajo el umbral de la pobreza en España

La Estrategia 2020 desarrollada por la Comisión especifica los indicadores sobre los que se deben basar los objetivos para supuestamente alcanzar una sociedad «inteligente», «sustentable» e «inclusiva» para dicha fecha. Uno de los indicadores establecidos para monitorear el cumplimiento de esta estrategia es el número de personas en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social, con el objetivo establecido (con datos de 2010) para el caso de España de reducción de esta población en cerca de 1 500 000 de personas.

Tal y como señaló recientemente la Plataforma «Alianza Española Contra la Pobreza», actualmente más de 13 millones de españoles viven bajo el umbral de la pobreza, lo que supone que el 26,7 % del total de la población española se enfrenta a esta dramática realidad.

Estos preocupantes datos confirman todas las predicciones sobre los efectos que los recortes en el gasto público están provocando en la sociedad española: lejos de reducir la pobreza, la política económica neoliberal del Gobierno español, basada estrictamente en las recomendaciones elaboradas por la Comisión Europea, está condenando a la pobreza a las personas trabajadoras.

De esta manera, el número de personas bajo el umbral de la pobreza se ha incrementado en España alarmantemente, dejando ridículos los ya de por si insuficientes objetivos de lucha contra la pobreza establecidos por la Comisión Europea en su Estrategia 2020 para la Unión Europea.

Teniendo en cuenta este preocupante incremento y el aumento de la personas en situación de exclusión social que conlleva,

¿Piensa la Comisión adoptar medidas de urgencia que luchen para poner fin a esta dramática situación?

¿No considera la Comisión que sus recomendaciones a las autoridades españoles para cumplir el déficit público (privatizaciones, recortes en los servicios públicos, retroceso en los derechos laborales…) están provocando el citado incremento del número de personas en riesgo de pobreza?

Con las recomendaciones de la Comisión citadas, ¿está la Comisión priorizando el cumplimiento de unos objetivos de la Estrategia 2020 por encima de otros? En caso afirmativo ¿qué criterios sigue la Comisión para determinar que objetivos son prioritarios?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2012)

La crisis económica y financiera solo puede superarse mediante la combinación de actuaciones cuyo objeto sea lograr la estabilidad financiera y la consolidación fiscal con medidas destinadas a generar crecimiento y empleo.

La Comisión comparte la preocupación de los Estados miembros por proteger a los ciudadanos de la Unión Europea y velar por que se cubran sus necesidades básicas. La Recomendación del Consejo sobre el Programa Nacional de Reforma de 2012 de España ([1]) aconseja a este país que tome medidas para mejorar la empleabilidad de los grupos vulnerables, junto con servicios eficaces de apoyo a los niños y a las familias, con el fin de mejorar la situación de las personas en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social. Esta Recomendación se formuló a raíz de las consecuencias sociales de la crisis y del reciente aumento del número de personas en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social, situación que dificulta que pueda alcanzarse el objetivo de reducir el número de personas en riesgo de pobreza o exclusión social entre 1,4 y 1,5 millones de personas de aquí a 2020.

([1]) Recomendación del Consejo, de 10 de julio de 2012, sobre el Programa Nacional de Reforma de 2012 de España y por la que se emite un dictamen del Consejo sobre el Programa de Estabilidad de España para 2012-2015 (DO C 219 de 24.7.2012, p. 81).

La financiación de la UE constituye una fuente de financiación útil para poner en marcha el crecimiento, crear empleo y mitigar con rapidez el impacto social de la crisis. En la propuesta de la Comisión de Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo relativo al Fondo Social Europeo ([2]) se hace ostensible la voluntad de la institución de poner en un primer plano la política social al plantear que al menos el 20 % de los recursos totales del FSE asignados a los Estados miembros se destinen a la promoción de la inclusión social y a la lucha contra la pobreza.

La Comisión tiene previsto adoptar a principios de 2013 un paquete de inversión social para el crecimiento y la cohesión que abordará los problemas de la vivienda y orientará sobre maneras de mejorar la eficiencia, la eficacia y la adecuación de los sistemas de protección social y de optimizar las políticas de activación y capacitación para el empleo, así como se ocupará de la inclusión social y de que los ciudadanos dispongan de unos medios de subsistencia dignos.

En la Estrategia Europa 2020 se recoge un número restringido de objetivos, que no tienen establecido un orden de prioridad. Es la crisis la que hace que algunos sean más prioritarios que otros.

([2]) COM(2011) 607 final/2, de 14 de marzo de 2012, que puede consultarse en la dirección siguiente: http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=231&langId=es.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009496/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: Sharp increase in the number of people living below the poverty line in Spain

The Commission's Europe 2020 strategy sets the measurable targets on which national goals should be based, with the aim of supposedly achieving a 'smart', 'sustainable' and 'inclusive' society by 2020. One of the indicators for monitoring progress on complying with the strategy is the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion; the target set for Spain (according to data from 2010) is a reduction of close to 1 500 000 people.

As the Spanish Alliance Against Poverty recently highlighted, more than 13 million people are currently living below the poverty line in Spain, which means that 26.7% of the total Spanish population is facing such a stark reality.

These worrying figures confirm all the predictions that were made about the effects that the cuts in public spending would have on Spanish society: far from reducing poverty, the Spanish government's neo-liberal economic policy, based strictly on the Commission's recommendations, is condemning hard-working people to poverty.

The number of people living below the poverty threshold in Spain has increased alarmingly, making the already insufficient targets for combating poverty in the EU set by the Commission in the 2020 strategy seem absurd.

Considering this worrying increase and the rise in the number of socially excluded people which this implies,

Does the Commission intend to adopt urgent measures to put an end to this alarming situation?

Does the Commission not think that the recommendations which it has given Spain for meeting public deficit targets (privatisations, cuts in public services, reductions to labour rights…) are causing this increase in the number of people at risk of poverty?

With regard to the Commission's recommendations, is the Commission prioritising some of the 2020 strategy's targets above others? If so, what criteria does the Commission apply to determine which objectives should have priority?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The financial and economic crisis can only be overcome by combining action to achieve financial stability and fiscal consolidation with measures that generate growth and jobs.

The Commission shares the Member States' concern to protect people in the EU and their basic needs. The Council Recommendation ([1]) on Spain's 2012 National Reform Programme invites Spain to improve the employability of vulnerable groups, combined with effective child and family support services in order to improve the situation of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. It was motivated by the social consequences of the crisis and the recent increases in the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion, which make it harder to meet the target for reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion by between 1.4 and 1.5 million by 2020.

EU funding offers a useful source of financing for unshackling growth, creating jobs and mitigating the social impact of the crisis quickly. The Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund ([2]) illustrates the institution's desire to put social policy to the fore by proposing that at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State be allocated to promoting social inclusion and combating poverty.

In early 2013 the Commission plans to adopt a social investment package for growth and cohesion that will address housing, provide guidance on increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and adequacy of social protection systems; improving activating and enabling policies; social inclusion and adequate livelihoods.

([1]) Council Recommendation of 10 July 2012 on the National Reform Programme 2012 of Spain and delivering a Council opinion on the Stability Programme for Spain, 2012-2015, OJ C 219, 24.7.2012, p. 81.
([2]) COM(2011) 607 final /2 of 14 March 2012, at http://ec.europa.eu/esf/BlobServlet?docId=231&langId=en.

The targets of the EU2020 strategy are limited in number and are not prioritised. If anything the crisis makes them more relevant.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009497/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(17 October 2012)

Subject: List of Commission Chief Accounting Officers, with dates

Can the Commission produce a list of its Chief Accounting Officers over the last twenty years, including theír exact dates of service?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The Honourable Member will find in the annex sent to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat the list of Accounting Officers appointed by the Commission and their dates of service since 1986.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009498/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(18 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Empleo de la fractura hidráulica en la extracción del gas de esquisto en España

El fuerte impulso a la diversificación de las fuentes energéticas bajo el empuje de los elevados precios del petróleo está transformando la demanda de las grandes industrias energéticas. Estos cambios no están siendo orientados hacia el desarrollo de un modelo energético sostenible que amplíe y desarrolle las fuentes renovables, sino más bien está convirtiendo a estas grandes empresas energéticas en unas voraces depredadoras de todo tipo de combustible para permitir mantener la creciente demanda.

Uno de estos ejemplos es la extracción del gas de esquisto, abundante en diferentes yacimientos esparcidos por todo el mundo, pero nunca ha sido abundantemente explotado debido a la disponibilidad de gas y petróleo más eficiente y fácil de extraer. La dificultad en la provisión de gas en los últimos años ha llevado a que el gas de esquisto resulte rentable y comience a ser explotado en grandes proporciones, llegando a suministrar el 10 % de la demanda energética en los Estados Unidos.

La extracción del gas de esquisto requiere del procedimiento de fractura hidráulica. Se trata de un procedimiento basado en la inyección de agua con arena y diferentes productos químicos corrosivos para fracturar las rocas que encierran a dicho gas. Esta técnica extractiva produce importantes efectos perjudiciales al medio ambiente: contaminación de aguas subterráneas, emisión de gases tóxicos o, incluso, la producción de terremotos.

Sin embargo, este método ha sido propuesto como una solución a los problemas energéticos de España, al resultar un proceso económico que permitiría el autoabastecimiento energético del país. En España han sido detectados diversos yacimientos de gas de esquisto, localizados en varias Comunidades Autónomas como Andalucía, Aragón, Cantabria o el País Vasco.

Ante la evidencia de sus desastrosos efectos medioambientales, ¿ha valorado la Comisión los efectos ambientales que la explotación masiva de las reservas del gas de esquisto podría acarrear?

¿Aprueba la Comisión las primeras prospecciones realizadas en España?

¿Ha verificado la Comisión si estas primeras prospecciones realizadas en España cuentan con la pertinente Evaluación de Impacto Ambiental previa, como establece la normativa comunitaria?

Ante el peligro de contaminación de aguas, ¿considera la Comisión pertinente el empleo de este tipo de técnicas de extracción en zonas con escasos recursos hídricos?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión ha publicado un estudio sobre los riesgos medioambientales de la explotación del gas de esquisto en Europa ([1]). Dicho estudio no cuantifica los efectos, sino que señala riesgos específicos en relación con la contaminación y el agotamiento de los recursos hídricos, las emisiones atmosféricas y sonoras, la ocupación del suelo, la perturbación de la biodiversidad y las consecuencias derivadas del tráfico. También hace hincapié en la importancia de que la explotación vaya precedida de una cuidadosa gestión hídrica y una adecuada identificación de los emplazamientos, con vistas a la prevención de riesgos, en particular en el caso de zonas sensibles, como aquellas que deben hacer frente a la escasez de agua. Estas cuestiones serán debidamente tenidas en cuenta cuando se evalúen las alternativas en materia de gestión de riesgos, dentro de la iniciativa prevista en el Programa de Trabajo de la Comisión para 2013, denominada «Marco de evaluación medioambiental, climática y energética con vistas a la extracción en condiciones de seguridad y protección de los hidrocarburos no convencionales (p. ej., gas de esquisto) en Europa».

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/unconventional_en.htm

Dentro del marco actual, corresponde a los Estados miembros garantizar —mediante la realización de evaluaciones adecuadas, los regímenes de autorización y las actividades de supervisión— que las actuaciones en materia de exploración o explotación de fuentes de energía, incluidas las que hacen uso de la fractura hidráulica, se ajusten a los requisitos establecidos en el marco jurídico vigente en la EU. Dicho marco incluye, entre otros elementos, disposiciones en materia de evaluaciones de impacto ambiental ([2]), protección de las aguas superficiales y subterráneas ([3]), gestión de residuos ([4]) y conservación de los hábitats naturales ([5]).

Según la información facilitada por las autoridades españolas, en la región española de Gran Enara están previstos nueve pozos para la exploración del gas de esquisto, que están sujetos a las disposiciones nacionales en materia de evaluaciones de impacto ambiental. Tres de estos proyectos ya han sido objeto de examen, llegándose a la conclusión de que, en el caso de dos de ellos, es necesario llevar a cabo una evaluación de impacto ambiental (EIA). Los restantes proyectos están siendo analizados actualmente.

([2]) Directiva 2011/92/UE 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).

([3]) Directiva 2000/60/EC 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) y la Directiva 2006/118/CE relativa a la protección de las aguas subterráneas contra la contaminación y el deterioro (DO L 372 de 27.12.2006, p. 19).

([4]) Directiva 2006/21/CE sobre la gestión de los residuos de industrias extractivas y por la que se modifica la Directiva 2004/35/CE (DO L 102 de 11.4.2006).

([5]) Directiva 92/43/CE 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-009498/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Use of hydraulic fracturing for extracting shale gas in Spain

The definite shift towards using different energy sources, prompted by high oil prices, is transforming the demands of major energy industries. These changes are not being aimed at developing a sustainable energy model which would expand and develop renewable energy sources. Instead, they are turning large energy companies into greedy predators who are prepared to exploit any type of fuel that can be used to keep pace with growing demand.

An example of this is the extraction of shale gas, which, although it is found in great quantities in different deposits all over the world, has never been extensively exploited because of the availability of more efficient and easily extracted gas and oil. The problems involved in supplying gas in recent years have meant that shale gas has become a cost-effective option, and it has begun to be exploited on a large scale, to the extent that it now meets 10% of the energy demand in the United States.

Shale gas is extracted through hydraulic fracturing. This process involves pumping water mixed with sand and other corrosive chemicals underground to break apart the rock and release the gas contained within. This extraction method has significant adverse effects on the environment, including pollution of groundwater and toxic gas emissions, and it can even cause earthquakes.

Despite this, the method has been proposed as a solution to Spain's energy problems, as it is an economic process which would make it possible for the country to be energy self-sufficient. Some shale gas deposits have been found in several of Spain's Autonomous Communities, such as Andalusia, Aragon, Cantabria and the Basque Country.

Given the evidence of disastrous consequences, has the Commission assessed the effects that the extensive exploitation of shale gas deposits could have on the environment?

Does the Commission approve of the initial gas explorations which have taken place in Spain?

Has the Commission ascertained whether a prior environmental impact assessment of these initial gas explorations in Spain was carried out, as required by community regulations?

Given the risk of groundwater pollution, does the Commission think that employing this type of extraction method is appropriate in areas with scarce water resources?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission has released a study on environmental risks of shale gas operations in Europe. ([1]) This study does not quantify effects but points to specific risks of water resource contamination and depletion, air and noise emissions, land take, disturbance to biodiversity and impacts related to traffic. It also emphasises the importance of careful water management and proper site identification prior to operations, so as to prevent risks, notably to sensitive areas, including those faced with water scarcity. These risks will be duly taken into account when risk management options are assessed, as part of the initiative foreseen in the 2013 Commission Work Programme: 'Environmental, climate and energy assessment framework to enable safe and secure unconventional hydrocarbons (e.g. shale gas) extraction in Europe'.

Under the current framework, it is up to Member States to ensure — via appropriate assessments, permitting regimes and monitoring activities — that any exploration or exploitation of energy sources, including those using hydraulic fracturing, complies with the requirements of the existing legal framework in the EU. This includes, *inter alia*, provisions on environmental impact assessments ([2]), the protection of surface and groundwater ([3]), on waste management ([4]) and on the conservation of natural habitats ([5]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/energy/unconventional_en.htm
([2]) Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on environment (OJ L 26/1, 28.1.2012).
([3]) Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000) and Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration (OJ L372/19, 27.12.2006).
([4]) Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries and amending Directive 2004/35/EC (OJ L 102, 11.4.2006).
([5]) Directive 92/43/EC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

According to the information provided by the Spanish authorities, nine wells are foreseen in the Gran Enara region in Spain for shale gas exploration, subject to national provisions on environmental impact assessments. Three of these projects have already been screened with the conclusion that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for two of them. The other projects are currently under screening.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009499/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Martin Callanan (ECR)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Persecution of journalists in Eritrea

I am deeply concerned by reports of the death of the Eritrean journalist Dawit Habtemichael and by the continued persecution of journalists by the Eritrean state.

Dawit Habtemichael was a 30-year-old physics teacher and the deputy editor and co-founder of the biweekly 'Meqaleh' when he was arrested on 21 September 2001. He was held at the prison camp of Eiraeiro, a prison described as a death camp by the respected NGO Reporters Without Borders. Dawit was held for six years without trial until he began to develop schizophrenia in 2007. He was refused access to medical treatment and died at some point in the second half of 2010. Reporters Without Borders believes that the failure to treat Dawit's steadily worsening mental condition was the cause of his death.

Dawit was one of a group of eleven journalists rounded up in September and October 2001. Six other members of this group — Mattewos Habteab, Sahle Tsegazab (also known as Wedi Itay), Medhanie Haile, Yusuf Mohamed Ali, Said Abdulkader and Fessehaye 'Joshua' Yohannes — have died in detention. Four of the group — Temesgen Gebreyesus, Dawit Isaac, Seyoum Tsehaye and Amanuel Asrat — remain alive.

In February 2009 other journalists working at Radio Bana and other state media were arrested. Most of these are reportedly being held at Adi Abeito military prison. A former Adi Abeito prison guard fled the country and is seeking asylum in Israel. The guard claims that the Eritrean information minister Ali Abdu and one of his employees, identified only as Asmelash, went to Adi Abeito recently to talk to the prison's governor, Wedi Welela. He also reported that the journalists held at Adi Abeito are subjected to various forms of torture and mistreatment including electric shocks, beatings and solitary confinement. Food is sometimes withheld and they are denied medical care. A journalist identified only by the given name of Bereket has reportedly died as a result of these appalling conditions. It is believed that this journalist is Bereket Misghina.

Will the High Representative demand that that the Eritrean Government make its case against these prisoners of conscience in open court or, if no case is to be made, release them immediately? Will the High Representative support a travel ban on the Eritrean politicians and officials responsible for the persecution of prisoners of conscience in Eritrea? Will the High Representative state whether she believes Eritrea should enjoy the significant economic benefits arising from preferential trade with the EU or should in fact see such benefits immediately withdrawn? Will the High Representative outline what measures the EEAS will take to bring pressure to bear to save the lost who are not yet lost for ever?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The plight of political prisoners in Eritrea is being raised in the framework of both formal and informal political dialogue between the EU, its Member States' Heads of Mission in Asmara and with Eritrean representatives, including the President of the State of Eritrea.

The EU systematically calls on the Eritrean Government to unconditionally release prisoners of conscience. The EU has also called on the Government of the State of Eritrea to make public all information on the prisoners' whereabouts and to allow them access to healthcare as well as to their families and lawyers.

The EU continues to urge the Eritrean interlocutor to take steps to improve its rule of law, human rights and democracy records in a comprehensive way and belives that the sanctions and pressure applied by the international community to Eritrean authorities do have an impact on the course of their action.

The EU remains convinced that a constructive engagement, including an open and frank dialogue where all sensitive issues are addressed, is the most effective tool to achieve progress on human rights in Eritrea. The EU will continue to raise on all occasions the issues relating to the human rights situation in Eritrea, including the individual cases of prisoners of conscience.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009500/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Centralised publication of grants per programme

For each of the years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, can the Commission indicate how many grants were issued under the Erasmus programme, as well as the average size of those grants?

Does the Commission agree that there is a need to publish this data in a transparent way for the public at large?

If it can be done for the Erasmus programme, will the Commission then also publish similar data for other programmes, centrally?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2012)

The Erasmus programme supported the mobility of 182 697 students (both for studying abroad and for traineeships in a company) in the academic year 2007/08; 198 523 students in 2008/09; 213 266 in 2009/10; and 231 410 in 2010/11. The average monthly EU grant was EUR 254 in 2007/08; EUR 272 in 2008/09; EUR 254 in 2009/10; and EUR 250 in 2010/11.

As for staff, 32 040 staff mobility periods (both for teaching assignments and for training abroad) were supported in the academic year 2007/08; 36 389 staff in 2008/09; 37 776 in 2009/10; and 42 813 in 2010/11. The average EU grant was EUR 661 in the academic year 2007/08; EUR 684 in 2008/09; EUR 673 in 2009/10; and EUR 662 in 2010/11.

Data related to the implementation of the Erasmus programme, including aggregates, time series and specific country sheets, are published annually by the European Commission and are available to the public:
http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/statistics_en.htm

Similar data are published for the other sub-programmes of the Lifelong Learning Programme:
for Leonardo da Vinci: http://ec.europa.eu/education/leonardo-da-vinci/statistics_en.htm
for Comenius: http://ec.europa.eu/education/comenius/doc/figures_en.pdf and
for Gruntdvig: http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc/10th/facts.pdf

In the future, having a single integrated programme for education, youth and sport, as proposed by the Commission under Erasmus for All (2014-2020), will make it easier to collect and publish these data centrally.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009501/12
alla Commissione
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Acquisto treni Regione Toscana

Nei giorni scorsi la Regione Toscana ha deliberato lo stanziamento di 48 milioni di euro per l'acquisto di dieci nuovi treni diesel destinati ad operare su linee ferroviarie non elettrificate.

L'acquisto di materiale rotabile diesel richiede procedure diverse e più complesse rispetto ai più comuni treni elettrici e, per poter procedere, la Regione Toscana ha quindi chiesto a Trenitalia, concessionaria del servizio regionale di trasporti ferroviari, di effettuare una indagine di mercato internazionale per individuare possibili fornitori interessati alla commessa, senza indire alcuna gara d'appalto europea.

Alla sollecitazione avrebbero risposto due aziende, e soltanto una di queste, la ditta polacca Pesa, che ha poi vinto la commessa, avrebbe avuto i requisiti idonei alla richiesta.

La garanzia di un servizio di trasporto ferroviario efficiente è necessaria anche, e forse soprattutto, sulle cosiddette linee minori non elettrificate, ma questo non dovrebbe certo avvenire a scapito del rispetto delle regole e magari utilizzando impropriamente risorse pubbliche.

La Commissione era stata adeguatamente informata della scelta della Regione Toscana dell'utilizzo di questa specifica modalità, differente dalla ordinaria procedura per indire bandi di gara europei?

In caso affermativo, quali sono stati gli elementi rilevanti per cui la Commissione avrebbe ritenuto di concedere il via libera all'utilizzo di tale procedura?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(7 dicembre 2012)

L'onorevole parlamentare riferisce che la Regione Toscana ha acquistato o sta per acquistare, per un importo di 48 milioni di EUR, dieci nuovi treni diesel da utilizzare su linee ferroviarie non elettrificate. In base alle informazioni fornite dall'onorevole parlamentare, non è stata bandita alcuna gara d'appalto a livello europeo e il fornitore è stato scelto in base ad un'analisi di mercato internazionale realizzata da Trenitalia.

La Commissione non era a conoscenza di tali fatti.

Le informazioni fornite dall'onorevole parlamentare non sono sufficienti per consentire alla Commissione di valutare se sia stata commessa una violazione della normativa UE in materia di appalti pubblici. Pertanto, la Commissione si metterà in contatto con le autorità italiane e chiederà loro di fornire chiarimenti e informazioni supplementari.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009501/12
to the Commission
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Purchase of trains — Region of Tuscany

The Region of Tuscany has recently discussed allocating EUR 48 million for the purchase of ten new diesel-powered trains for use on non-electrified railway lines.

Purchasing diesel-powered rolling stock entails different and more complicated procedures than for the more common electric trains and, to be able to proceed, the Region of Tuscany asked Trenitalia, the regional train operator, to carry out an international market study to identify possible suppliers who might be interested in the order, without launching a European call for tenders.

Two companies apparently replied to this request and only one of those, the Polish company Pesa, which was then awarded the order, satisfied the requirements.

Guaranteeing an efficient rail transport service is essential, including, and possibly primarily, on the smaller, non-electrified lines — but this should certainly not be done at the cost of complying with the rules and even through the improper use of public resources.

Was the Commission properly informed about the Region of Tuscany's decision to use this specific method rather than the ordinary procedure for launching invitations to tender?

If so, will the Commission say why it decided to allow the use of this procedure?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(7 December 2012)

The Honourable Member reports that the Region of Tuscany purchased or is in the process of purchasing, for EUR 48 million, ten new diesel-powered trains for use on non-electrified railway lines. According to the information provided by the Honourable Member, an EU-wide call for tenders has not be organised, and the supplier has been identified following an international market study carried out by Trenitalia.

The Commission was not aware of these facts.

The information provided by the Honourable Member is not sufficient for the Commission to assess whether an infringement of EU public procurement law has been committed. Hence, the Commission will contact the Italian authorities and will ask them to provide some clarifications and additional information.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009502/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(18 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Cumplimiento de Chile del derecho internacional en el caso mapuche

En el año 2007 se conforma la comunidad «Wente Winkul Mapu», compuesta de más de cuarenta familias que comienzan a exigir sus derechos al uso del territorio ancestral del pueblo mapuche. Esta comunidad reclama el uso de unas 2 500 hectáreas que durante años el estado chileno ha ido expropiando en favor de grandes latifundistas de origen europeo.

La comunidad citada está llevando a cabo protestas pacíficas para reclamar los derechos ancestrales al uso de las tierras que han habitado tradicionalmente. Frente a las legítimas protestas de esta comunidad el Gobierno de Chile ha respondido con una fuerte represión, así como con la aplicación de la ley antiterrorista a los comuneros mapuches que reclamaban su legítimo derecho a las tierras que han ocupado ancestralmente.

El convenio 169 de la OIT sobre los derechos de los pueblos indígenas y tribales en estados independientes, recoge varios artículos sobre el derecho a la tierra que los estados deben garantizar para estas comunidades. En el caso de la comunidad mapuche de Chile, este convenio no está siendo puesto en práctica por el Gobierno de Chile. El artículo 14.3 promulga «Deberán instituirse procedimientos adecuados en el marco del sistema jurídico nacional para solucionar las reivindicaciones de tierras formuladas por los pueblos interesados» y esto no se cumple a luz de los hechos presentados. Chile, como país firmante del Convenio 169 está incumpliendo su compromiso con el derecho internacional.

Ante esta injusta situación, dos «presos políticos» mapuches de la citada comunidad, localizados en la cárcel de El Manzano en la ciudad de Concepción, a los que se les ha condenado a 11 años de prisión, se encuentran realizando una huelga de hambre que dura ya más de 50 días.

¿Considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta representante que, en el caso de las comunidades mapuches, Chile está cumpliendo con el mentado convenio 169 de la OIT?

¿Está la Vicepresidenta/Alta representante supervisando el citado caso, de cara a observar el cumplimiento de la cláusula segunda del Acuerdo de Asociación de la UE con Chile?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2012)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta está al corriente de que cuatro detenidos mapuches de la comunidad Wente Winkul Mapu hicieron huelga de hambre durante aproximadamente dos meses hasta el 25 de octubre de 2012. En esa fecha, los cuatro decidieron poner fin a su huelga después de que el Tribunal Supremo anulara las condenas de dos de ellos, Paulino Levipan y Daniel Levinao, por el intento de asesinato de un policía, lo que supuso una reducción considerable de las penas de cada uno de ellos (a la espera de un nuevo juicio en el caso de Daniel Levinao). Paulino Levipan ha sido puesto en libertad posteriormente, al igual que los otros dos detenidos, Erik Montoya y Rodrigo Montoya, que actualmente se encuentran en espera de juicio bajo arresto domiciliario, y no detenidos.

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta seguirá manteniéndose informada sobre este y otros casos similares y continuará dialogando con las autoridades chilenas sobre una serie de cuestiones espinosas, incluidos los derechos humanos y, en particular, los de los mapuches y otros grupos indígenas chilenos, en el marco y en el espíritu del artículo 12 del Acuerdo de Asociación. Aunque la cuestión del cumplimiento del Convenio 169 de la OIT es competencia de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta informa a Su Señoría de que diversos aspectos de los derechos de los pueblos indígenas, incluida la aplicación de el Convenio 169 de la OIT, fueron debatidos por la UE y Chile muy recientemente durante y después del 10° Comité de Asociación celebrado el 3 de octubre en Santiago. En aquel momento también se trataron estos asuntos, así como en varias ocasiones posteriores, con organizaciones de la sociedad civil y otros organismos pertinentes, tales como el Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos de Chile.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009502/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Chile's respect for international law in the case of the Mapuches

In 2007, the Wente Winkul Mapu community, made up of more than forty families, came together as they began to demand their right to use the Mapuche people's ancestral territory. This community claims its right to use some 2 500 hectares of land, which the Chilean government has been expropriating, subsequently allowing it to be taken over by powerful European landowners.

This community is holding peaceful protests to assert their ancestral rights to use the lands which they have traditionally inhabited. The Chilean government has responded to the community's legitimate protests with heavy repression. It has also been applying the anti-terrorism law to the Mapuches, who were asserting their legitimate right to the lands that they have occupied since the time of their ancestors.

ILO Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries includes several articles on these communities' right to land, which the countries must guarantee. In the case of the Mapuche community in Chile, this convention is not being implemented by the Chilean government. Article 14 (3) lays down that 'adequate procedures shall be established within the national legal system to resolve land claims by the peoples concerned.' In light of the facts, Chile is not complying with this article. As a signatory to Convention 169, Chile is not fulfilling its commitment to international law.

In protest against this unjust situation two Mapuche 'political prisoners' from the Wente Winkul Mapu community have been on hunger strike for more than 50 days in El Manzano prison in Concepción, where they are serving an 11-year sentence.

In the case of the Mapuche communities, does the Vice-President/High Representative think that Chile is complying with ILO Convention 169?

Is the Vice-President/High Representative following this case, in order to monitor whether Article Two of the EC-Chile Association Agreement is being respected?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The HR/VP is aware that four Mapuche detainees from the Wente Winkul Mapu community were on hunger strike for approximately two months until 25 October 2012. On that date, the four decided to end their strike after the Supreme Court overturned the convictions of two of them, Paulino Levipan and Daniel Levinao, of the attempted murder of a police officer, leading to substantially reduced sentences for each (pending a retrial in the case of Mr Levinao). Mr Levipan has subsequently been released from prison, as have the other two former detainees, Erik Montoya and Rodrigo Montoya, who are now awaiting trial under house arrest rather than in custody.

The HR/VP will continue to follow this and other similar cases, and will continue to engage in dialogue with the Chilean authorities on a range of issues including human rights and in particular the human rights of the Mapuche and other indigenous Chileans, in the framework and spirit of Article 12 of the Association Agreement. While the question of compliance with ILO Convention 169 is a matter for the International Labour Organisation, the HR/VP wishes to inform the Honourable Member that various aspects of indigenous rights, including the implementation of ILO Convention 169, were discussed by the EU and Chile most recently during and after the 10th Association Committee held on 3 October in Santiago. Discussions on these matters were also held at that time, and on several subsequent occasions, with civil society organisations and other relevant bodies such as Chile's National Institute for Human Rights.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009503/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Schwarze Liste für Unternehmen

Medienberichten zufolge enthält ein Bericht des Geheimdienstausschusses des US-Kongresses den warnenden Hinweis, dass den chinesischen Unternehmen Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd (Huawei) und Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Limited (ZTE) „nicht getraut werden" kann, da sie unter Einfluss der chinesischen Regierung stünden und Wirtschaftsspionage betreiben könnten. Im Bericht werden die US-Behörden aufgefordert, Unternehmenskäufe, Übernahmen und Fusionen der Unternehmen zu blockieren und keine Aufträge an die Unternehmen zu vergeben.

1. Sind der Kommission ähnliche Vorwürfe betreffend Huawei und ZTE bekannt?

2. Sieht die Kommission in den Vorwürfen aus den USA eine Grundlage dafür, den genannten Unternehmen die Übernahme von Firmenbeteiligungen in der EU zu verbieten oder die Unternehmen von öffentlichen Ausschreibungen auszuschließen?

3. Sind der Kommission ähnliche Fälle bekannt, in denen Firmen Spionageaktivitäten vorgeworfen werden?

4. Verfügt die Kommission derzeit über eine „schwarze Liste" von Unternehmen aus Drittländern, an die zumindest EU-Behörden oder Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten keine Aufträge vergeben dürfen oder bei denen von einer Auftragsvergabe stark abgeraten wird?

5. Verfügt die Kommission derzeit über eine „schwarze Liste" von Unternehmen aus Drittländern, denen in der EU grundsätzlich die Beteiligung an Unternehmen und insbesondere die Übernahme oder Fusion mit Unternehmen aufgrund von Spionagetätigkeiten oder Einflussnahme durch eine Regierung unterbunden wird?

6. Überwacht die Kommission Unternehmen aus Drittländern aus Sorge vor Spionageaktivitäten?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(14. Dezember 2012)

Der Kommission ist der Bericht des Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence des US-Repräsentantenhauses vom 8. Oktober 2012 bekannt.

In Fragen der nationalen Sicherheit, wie Spionage, hat die Kommission nur begrenzte Befugnisse und Zuständigkeiten. Die Kommission führt deshalb keine Aufzeichnungen über ausländische Unternehmen, die in irgendeiner Form der Spionage verdächtigt werden. In diesem Zusammenhang möchte die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten auch auf die Antworten auf zwei frühere parlamentarische Anfragen (E-005476/2012 und E-009222/2012 ([1])) hinweisen.

Was ausländische Investitionen angeht, bekennt sich die EU im Vertrag über die Europäische Union eindeutig zur Offenheit gegenüber ausländischen Direktinvestitionen. Ein Unternehmen aus einem Drittland, das ein EU-Unternehmen oder eine Beteiligung daran erwirbt, ist zur Einhaltung der in der EU und in dem betreffenden Mitgliedstaat geltenden Wettbewerbs- und Transparenzbestimmungen verpflichtet. Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt erfolgen Sicherheitsprüfungen ausländischer Direktinvestitionen auf Ebene der Mitgliedstaaten.

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

Im öffentlichen Beschaffungswesen ist nach den Richtlinien 2004/18/EG ([2]) und 2004/17/EG ([3]) der Ausschluss von Unternehmen vom Vergabeverfahren in folgenden Fällen zwingend vorgeschrieben: Beteiligung an kriminellen Vereinigungen, Bestechung, Betrug zulasten der finanziellen Interessen der EU, Geldwäsche. Die Mitgliedstaaten können rechtlich weitere Ausschlussgründe festlegen, insbesondere wenn eine rechtskräftige Verurteilung oder Beweise für ein berufliches Fehlverhalten, wie die Preisgabe von Geschäftsgeheimnissen oder Wirtschaftsspionage, vorliegen. In Richtlinie 2009/81/EG ([4]) sind ferner spezielle Ausschlussgründe für die Bereiche Verteidigung und Sicherheit vorgesehen, beispielsweise die Verletzung von Pflichten in Bezug auf die Informationssicherheit.

([2]) Richtlinie 2004/18/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 31. März 2004 über die Koordinierung der Verfahren zur Vergabe öffentlicher Bauaufträge, Lieferaufträge und Dienstleistungsaufträge, ABl. L 134 vom 30.4.2004.

([3]) Richtlinie 2004/17/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 31. März 2004 zur Koordinierung der Zuschlagserteilung durch Auftraggeber im Bereich der Wasser-, Energie- und Verkehrsversorgung sowie der Postdienste, ABl. L 134 vom 30.4.2004.

([4]) Richtlinie 2009/81/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 13. Juli 2009 über die Koordinierung der Verfahren zur Vergabe bestimmter Bau-, Liefer- und Dienstleistungsaufträge in den Bereichen Verteidigung und Sicherheit und zur Änderung der Richtlinien 2004/17/EG und 2004/18/EG, ABl. L 216, 20.8.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009503/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Blacklist for companies

According to the media, a report by the US Congress' House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence warns that Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd (Huawei) and Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Limited (ZTE) cannot be trusted, because they are under the influence of the Chinese government and could engage in industrial espionage. The report calls on the US authorities to block any acquisitions, takeovers or mergers by these companies, and to avoid awarding them contracts.

1. Is the Commission aware of such claims concerning Huawei and ZTE?

2. Does the Commission see the claims made in the United States as a reason to prohibit these companies from acquiring a stake in EU businesses or to exclude the companies from public tenders?

3. Is the Commission aware of similar cases in which businesses have been accused of spying?

4. Does the Commission currently keep a blacklist of companies from third countries to which at least EU and Member State authorities are either prohibited or strongly discouraged from awarding contracts?

5. Does the Commission currently keep a blacklist of companies from third countries that are generally prohibited from acquiring a stake in EU businesses and especially from launching a takeover or merger with EU businesses, because of espionage activity or influence by a government?

6. Does the Commission monitor companies from third countries out of concern about espionage activity?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The Commission has taken note of the report that was published by the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States House of Representatives on 8 October 2012.

In areas where national security is involved, such as espionage, the remit and responsibilities of the Commission are limited. The Commission does not, therefore, keep a record of foreign companies that are allegedly involved in some kind of espionage activity. The Commission would also like to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to replies given to previous questions E-005476/2012 and E-009222/2012 ([1]).

As far as foreign investment is concerned, the Treaty on the European Union sets out clearly the EU's commitment to openness towards foreign direct investment. Any foreign company that acquires a European company or a stake in it has to act in accordance with the rules on competition and transparency applicable in the EU and the Member State in question. At present, national security reviews of foreign direct investment are carried out at national level.

Regarding public procurement, Directives 2004/18/EC ([2]) and 2004/17/EC ([3]) provide for a mandatory exclusion from the participation in tendering procedures for public contracts in the following cases: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud against financial interest of the EU, and money laundering. Member States have the legal possibility to add other cases of exclusion, notably conviction by a final court ruling, or evidences of professional misconduct, for instance in the case of a breach of trade secrets or economic espionage. Directive 2009/81/EC ([4]) also provides for grounds of exclusion specific to the areas of defence and security, such as breach of obligations related to security of information.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm
([2]) Directive 2004/18/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts, OJ L 134, 30.4.2004.
([3]) Directive 2004/17/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors, OJ L 134, 30.4.2004.
([4]) Directive 2009/81/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on the coordination of procedures for the award of certain works contracts, supply contracts and service contracts by contracting authorities or entities in the fields of defence and security, and amending Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 216, 20.8.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009505/12
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Interventi per tutelare Sepino e il santuario italico di Pietrabbondante

Il comune di Sepino, in provincia di Campobasso, sorge nell'area archeologica di Altilia, dove è possibile ammirare resti dell'abitato romano, come il foro, la basilica, Porta Bojano, le terme, il teatro, il Cardo e il Decumano, le mura e le maestose porte d'accesso. La zona archeologica ospita annualmente numerosi turisti ed è ormai costantemente inserita nel calendario di manifestazioni estive itineranti, che propongono spettacoli di teatro e danza di livello internazionale.

Il teatro-tempio di Pietrabbondante rappresenta la più grandiosa testimonianza della civiltà sannitica. Costruito tra la fine del V e la prima metà del IV sec. a.C., per essere ricostruito nel III sec. a.C. dopo essere stato distrutto nel 217 a.C. da Annibale (secondo quanto sostenuto da alcuni storici), il complesso monumentale si pone senz'altro quale primo esempio di tempio coperto che andò a sostituire i boschi o le zone cintate all'aperto come luogo di culto per i Sanniti.

Purtroppo il carattere storico di tali paesaggi rischia di essere snaturato dalla costruzione di giganteschi impianti eolici previsti proprio a ridosso di queste due località. Il pericolo è ormai inevitabile per Sepino, dove stanno per essere installate 16 torri alte 130 metri da impiantare sulla cresta delle colline che dominano la valle, nonostante la ferma opposizione della locale direzione del Ministero dei beni culturali, del Comune e di un vasto schieramento di opinione pubblica.

I due complessi monumentali ora minacciati costituiscono importanti risorse culturali per l'Italia e le principali per il Molise.

Considerato che la responsabilità morale della protezione del patrimonio archeologico europeo, prima fonte della storia d'Europa, pur rientrando in primo luogo fra i doveri dello Stato interessato, incombe comunque sull'insieme degli Stati europei, intende la Commissione intraprendere azioni volte a salvaguardare e promuovere il patrimonio storico e culturale degli Stati membri?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(14 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione condivide le considerazioni dell'onorevole deputato quanto all'estrema importanza della tutela del patrimonio culturale. La Commissione incoraggia e sostiene attivamente le attività culturali, anche nel campo del patrimonio, nel contesto dei suoi diversi programmi e politiche. Conformemente all'articolo 167 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea la Commissione fa fronte all'obbligo dell'Unione di tener conto degli aspetti culturali in tutte le sue politiche e azioni. In ciò rientra, se del caso, la protezione del patrimonio culturale ([1]).

Tuttavia, come l'onorevole deputato nota, l'Unione europea non ha competenza per intervenire nella manutenzione, protezione, conservazione o nel rinnovo del patrimonio culturale, che rientrano essenzialmente nelle responsabilità nazionali. Conformemente all'articolo 167 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea l'azione dell'Unione europea si limita a incoraggiare la cooperazione tra gli Stati membri e a sostenere e integrare la loro azione, tra l'altro, al fine di conservare e salvaguardare il retaggio culturale avente un'importanza europea.

([1]) Cfr. in particolare COM(2012)628 final — Proposta di DIRETTIVA DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E DEL CONSIGLIO che modifica la direttiva 2011/92/UE concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009505/12
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Interventions to safeguard Sepino and the Italic sanctuary of Pietrabbondante

The town of Sepino, in the province of Campobasso, is located in the archaeological area of Altilia, which contains the remains of the Roman town, including the forum, the basilica, Porta Bojano, the baths, the theatre, the Cardus and Decumanus, the walls and the majestic gateways. The archaeological area annually hosts many tourists and is now regularly included in the calendar of itinerant summer events, which include plays and dance shows of an international standard.

The theatre-temple of Pietrabbondante is the most magnificent testimony of the Samnite civilization. It was first built between the end of the fifth and the first half of the fourth century BC and rebuilt in the third century BC after being destroyed in 217 BC by Hannibal (as some historians claim) and is undoubtedly the first example of a covered temple, replacing the forests or enclosed outdoor areas used as places of worship by the Samnites.

Unfortunately, the historical character of these landscapes is likely to be spoiled by the construction of giant wind farms, which are planned just behind these two locations. This danger is now inevitable for Sepino, where sixteen 130 metre high towers are due to be installed on the crest of the hills overlooking the valley, despite strong opposition from the local department of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage, the municipal authorities and a vast swathe of public opinion.

The two archaeological sites that are now threatened are an important cultural resource for Italy and the main ones for the Molise region.

Whereas, although the moral responsibility for protecting the European archaeological heritage, the prime source of European history, rests in the first instance with the State concerned, it is also the concern of all European countries, does the Commission intend to take action to protect and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the Member States?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's view that the preservation of cultural heritage is of the utmost importance. The Commission actively encourages and supports cultural activities, including in the field of heritage, within the framework of its different programmes and policies. In accordance with Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the Commission upholds the duty of the Union to take cultural aspects into account in all its policies and actions. This includes, when relevant, the protection of cultural heritage ([1]).

However, as the Honourable Member acknowledges, the European Union has no competence to intervene in the upkeep, protection, conservation or renovation of cultural heritage, which are primarily national responsibilities. In accordance with Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, action by the European Union is limited to encouraging cooperation between Member States and supporting and supplementing their action, *inter alia*, with a view to conserving and safeguarding cultural heritage of European significance.

([1]) See in particular COM(2012) 628 final — Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009506/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Crisi del settore edile in Puglia

Negli ultimi cinque anni in Puglia — secondo i dati raccolti dai sindacati — sono andati persi circa 13mila posti di lavoro e 3.500 imprese. I sindacati del settore delle costruzioni (che comprende anche il comparto del legno-arredo) hanno lanciato l'allarme sulla grave crisi economica e occupazionale che investe il settore.

In cinque anni è stato perso più di un quarto degli investimenti, ovvero 4,3 miliardi in meno, riportando la produzione ai livelli del 1992, mentre i lavori pubblici si sono contratti attestandosi a 37,5 % con una flessione di circa sette punti percentuali rispetto alla situazione pre-crisi.

Sull'occupazione i dati delle casse edili aggiornati al primo semestre 2012 confermano il trend fortemente negativo che ha caratterizzato il passato quinquennio evidenziando un ulteriore calo del 25 % degli addetti e del 15 % per le imprese rispetto allo stesso periodo del 2011. Dall'inizio della crisi al 2012 il settore ha perso circa 13mila occupati.

Alla luce dei fatti sopraesposti, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza di questi dati e se può fornire informazioni e statistiche sul settore dell'edilizia negli altri paesi europei,

2. con quali politiche intende sostenere le imprese del settore edile e favorire l'occupazione?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(16 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza della situazione esposta dall'onorevole deputato per quanto concerne la grave flessione economica che ha colpito i settori della costruzione, del mobilio e degli arredi in legno nell'UE-27 a partire dal 2008.

L'ufficio statistico dell'Unione europea ([1]) produce stime armonizzate delle tendenze a breve per quanto concerne la produzione industriale, l'occupazione e le licenze edilizie a livello nazionale. Tuttavia, le informazioni statistiche disponibili non consentono alla Commissione di formulare attualmente commenti su sottosettori come il mobilio o gli arredi in legno, a livello regionale.

La neoadottata comunicazione della Commissione «Strategia per la competitività sostenibile del settore delle costruzioni e delle sue imprese» ([2]) propone interventi per aiutare il settore delle costruzioni, in particolare nelle regioni colpite dalla crisi. Il piano d'azione che accompagna la comunicazione pone un accento particolare su programmi appropriati, incentivi fiscali, meccanismi di credito e strumenti di ingegneria finanziaria per il rinnovo del patrimonio edilizio esistente.

Il Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione fornisce inoltre ogni anno fino a 500 milioni di euro per aiutare i lavoratori a trovare nuovi posti di lavoro e sviluppare nuove competenze allorché hanno perso il loro posto di lavoro a seguito dei cambiamenti che hanno interessato i flussi commerciali mondiali o della crisi economica finanziaria mondiale.

Le industrie forestali e correlate dell'UE, comprese quelle della lavorazione del legno e del mobile, sono rappresentate in un gruppo di lavoro del comitato consultivo UE che sta esplorando l'eventuale seguito da dare alla comunicazione del 2008 «Industrie forestali innovative e sostenibili nell'UE».

([1]) EUROSTAT.
([2]) COM(2012)433 def. del 31 luglio 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009506/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Crisis in the construction industry in Puglia

According to data collected by the trade unions, around 13 000 jobs have been lost and 3 500 businesses have folded in the last five years in Puglia. Trade unions in the construction industry (which includes the wood-furnishings sector) have sounded the alarm about the serious economic and employment crisis hitting this industry.

In five years, over a quarter of investment has been lost (i.e. a loss of 4.3 billion), dragging production back to 1992 levels, while public works have shrunk to 37.5% with a downswing of around 7 percentage points compared to pre-crisis levels.

As regards employment, the data of the construction workers' social security funds, updated to the first half of 2012, confirm the strongly negative trend of the last five years, pointing to a further 25% drop in workers and a 15% drop in businesses compared to the same period in 2011. Between the beginning of the crisis and 2012, the sector has lost around 13 000 workers.

In light of the above facts, will the Commission say:

1. whether it is aware of these data and whether it is able to provide information and statistics on the construction sector in the other European countries,

2. what policies it intends to use to support businesses in the construction sector and bolster employment?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(16 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the situation presented by the Honourable Member regarding the significant economic downturn of the construction, furniture and wood furnishings industry in the EU-27 since 2008.

The Statistical Office of the European Union ([1]) produces harmonised estimates on short term trends in industry output, employment and building permits at national level. However, the statistical information available is such that the Commission cannot presently comment on sub-sectors, like wooden furnishings or furniture, at regional level.

The recently adopted Commission Communication 'Strategy for the sustainable competitiveness of the construction sector and its enterprises' ([2]) proposes action to help the construction sector, specifically where it has been affected by the crisis. The accompanying Action Plan puts particular emphasis on appropriate programmes, fiscal incentives, credit mechanisms and financial engineering instruments for the renovation of existing buildings.

Moreover, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund provides each year up to EUR 500 million to help workers find new jobs and develop new skills when they have lost their jobs as a result of either changing global trade patterns or as a consequence of the global financial and economic crisis.

The EU forest-based and related industries including woodworking and furniture are represented in a working group of the EU Advisory Committee, which is exploring the possible follow-up to the 2008 Communication 'Innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU'.

([1]) Eurostat.
([2]) COM(2012)433 final of 31 July 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009507/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Nuovo regolamento europeo sui pneumatici

A partire da novembre 2012 entrerà in vigore un nuovo regolamento del Parlamento europeo relativo ai pneumatici venduti nell'UE.

Il nuovo testo prevede un sistema di classificazione dei pneumatici in base al consumo di carburante, al rumore esterno di rotolamento e all'aderenza sul bagnato.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere al seguente quesito:

— quali esigenze hanno condotto all'adozione di questa nuova normativa?

Risposta di Günther Oettinger a nome della Commissione
(22 novembre 2012)

Il regolamento (CE) n. 1222/2009 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio sull'etichettatura dei pneumatici in relazione al consumo di carburante e ad altri parametri fondamentali ([1]) è entrato in vigore l'11 gennaio 2010. Il regolamento si applica a decorrere dal 1° novembre 2012.

La necessità di introdurre la suddetta normativa è stata discussa in modo approfondito con il Parlamento europeo nel 2008 e 2009 nel quadro della procedura di codecisione per l'adozione del regolamento in oggetto. La ragione principale alla base del principio dell'etichettatura dei pneumatici risiede nella volontà di ottenere risparmi di energia e ridurre la nostra dipendenza dal petrolio importato, assicurando nel contempo un elevato livello di sicurezza e la riduzione del rumore prodotto dai pneumatici.

([1]) GU L 342 del 22.12.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009507/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: New European regulation on tyres

A new European Parliament regulation on the tyres sold in the EU will enter into force as of November 2012.

The new text provides for a classification system for tyres based on fuel consumption, external rolling noise and wet grip.

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

— What were the requirements that led to the adoption of this new legislation?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(22 November 2012)

Regulation No 1222/2009 of the Parliament and of the Council on the labelling of tyres with respect to fuel efficiency and other essential parameters ([1]) entered into force on 11 January 2010. This regulation is applicable from 1 November 2012.

The requirements for developing this legislation were discussed extensively with the Parliament in 2008 and 2009 in the framework of the co-decision procedure for adoption of the regulation. The main reason for developing the tyre label was to achieve energy savings and reduce our dependency on imported oil, while ensuring a high level of safety and lower noise produced by tyres.

([1]) OJ L 342, 22.12.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009508/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: I pericoli del fumo passivo in auto

Un nuovo allarme sul fumo passivo è stato lanciato da un team di ricercatori scozzesi, autori di uno studio pubblicato su una rivista specializzata.

Le recenti ricerche dimostrano che fumare in auto conduce ad un aumento esponenziale di smog all'interno dell'abitacolo. Nonostante il finestrino aperto o l'aria condizionata, le concentrazioni di particolato possono addirittura centuplicare.

I ricercatori hanno sottolineato soprattutto gli elevati rischi cui vengono sottoposti i bambini in ambienti in cui i livelli di polveri sottili sono molto al di sopra dei limiti raccomandati.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere al seguente quesito:

— quali effetti ha sortito l'iniziativa contro l'esposizione al fumo di tabacco presente negli ambienti, contenuta nel Libro Verde del 2007, in particolare con riguardo all'azione congiunta tra Stati?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(6 dicembre 2012)

In seguito alla pubblicazione nel 2007 del Libro verde dal titolo «Verso un'Europa senza fumo: opzioni per un'iniziativa dell'Unione europea», il Consiglio approvava, nel 2009, una raccomandazione relativa agli ambienti senza fumo ([1]). La raccomandazione invitava gli Stati membri a garantire ai loro cittadini, entro il 2012, una protezione contro l'esposizione al fumo del tabacco e sottolineava particolarmente i pericoli derivanti dal fumo passivo per i bambini. La raccomandazione si fondava sulla Convenzione quadro dell'OMS sul controllo del tabacco e su una serie di suoi orientamenti, in base ai quali la protezione doveva riguardare tutti i luoghi pubblici chiusi ed, eventualmente, altri luoghi pubblici. Essa non riguardava invece luoghi privati, come le autovetture.

L'attuazione di questa raccomandazione spetta agli Stati membri. Essi possono anche prendere provvedimenti che vadano al di là della raccomandazione. La raccomandazione invita la Commissione a riferire in che modo essa sia attuata, funzioni e sulle conseguenze delle misure in essa proposte. A tal fine la Commissione sta raccogliendo presso gli Stati membri una serie di dati per presentare una relazione sull'attuazione della raccomandazione nel primo semestre del 2013.

([1]) Raccomandazione del Consiglio del 30 novembre 2009 relativa agli ambienti senza fumo (GU C 296 del 5.12.2009, pag. 4.).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009508/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: The dangers of passive smoking in cars

A new alarm about passive smoking has been raised by a team of Scottish researchers whose study has been published in a specialist journal.

Recent research shows that smoking in cars produces an exponential increase in 'smog' inside the vehicle. Even with an open window or air conditioning, the concentration of particulates can increase up to a hundredfold.

The researchers lay particular stress on the high risks to which children are exposed in environments where the level of fine particulate matter is significantly above recommended limits.

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

— What has been the impact of the initiative to limit exposure to environmental tobacco smoke set out in the 2007 Green Paper, in particular as regards joint action between countries?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

Following the Green Paper of 2007 'Towards a Europe free from tobacco smoke: Policy options at EU level', the Council adopted a recommendation on smoke-free environments in 2009 ([1]) . The recommendation calls on Member States to protect their citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke by 2012, with a particular emphasis on the dangers of second-hand tobacco smoke for children. The recommendation is based on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its guidelines which state that protection should cover all indoor public places, and, as appropriate, other public places. Private places — including private cars — are not covered.

The implementation of this recommendation falls under the responsibility of Member States. They can also take measures going beyond the recommendation. The recommendation invites the Commission to report on the implementation, functioning and impacts of the policy measures proposed by the recommendation. To this end the Commission is in the process of gathering data from Member States, with a view to presenting a report on the implementation of the recommendation in the first half of 2013.

([1]) Council Recommendation of 30 November 2009 on smoke-free enviroments (OJ C296, 5.12.2009, p. 4.).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009509/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Riduzione potere d'acquisto

Secondo gli ultimi dati forniti dall'Istat, nel secondo trimestre 2012 il potere d'acquisto delle famiglie consumatrici, tenuto conto dell'inflazione, si è ridotto dell'1,6 % rispetto al trimestre precedente e del 4,1 % rispetto al secondo trimestre 2011. Lo comunica l'Istat, precisando che il calo tendenziale è il più marcato dal 2000.

La propensione al risparmio delle famiglie, misurata al netto della stagionalità, è stata pari all'8,1 %, con una diminuzione di 0,6 punti percentuali rispetto al trimestre precedente e di 0,5 punti rispetto allo stesso periodo 2011. È il dato più basso dal 1999.

Alla luce dei fatti più sopra esposti, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se è a conoscenza degli ultimi dati Istat?

2. se può fornire informazioni e statistiche sul potere d'acquisto delle famiglie negli altri Stati membri?

3. con quali politiche intende far recuperare potere d'acquisto alle famiglie?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(5 dicembre 2012)

1. La Commissione (Eurostat) raccoglie dati trimestrali sui nuclei familiari (che includono i nuclei familiari e le istituzioni non profit al servizio delle famiglie), sul reddito disponibile e sul risparmio conformemente al regolamento (CE) n. 1161/2005 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio del 6 luglio 2005 ([1]). In forza di tale regolamento l'Istat ha trasmesso il 30 settembre 2012 alla Commissione i suoi ultimi dati relativi ai conti trimestrali per settore.

2. Per quanto concerne il reddito disponibile lordo e i risparmi lordi trimestrali delle famiglie, i dati per Stato membro sono pubblicati sul sito web di Eurostat ([2]).

Si noti che i dati trimestrali pubblicati da Istat sono aggiustati stagionalmente, ciò che non avviene invece per i dati (per paese) pubblicati da Eurostat.

3. Il 6 luglio 2012 il Consiglio ha raccomandato all'Italia a intraprendere un'azione politica volta ad accrescere la sostenibilità fiscale, la competitività, l'ambiente imprenditoriale, l'occupazione e l'accumulo di capitale umano dell'Italia. I risultante miglioramento del potenziale di crescita del paese e della sua stabilità macroeconomica sarà essenziale per ripristinare il potere d'acquisto delle famiglie. La Commissione sorveglia inoltre la spesa dei fondi di coesione, parte dei quali è incanalata verso le regioni meno sviluppate al fine di accrescerne il capitale strutturale e umano e migliorare quindi l'occupabilità dei loro cittadini e, in ultima analisi, le loro prospettive di crescita.

Le raccomandazioni del Consiglio del luglio 2012 nel contesto del Semestre europeo possono essere visionate all'indirizzo:

http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/it/12/st11/st11259.it12.pdf.

([1]) Regolamento (CE) n. 1161/2005 del Parlamento e del Consiglio del 6 luglio 2005 relativo alla compilazione dei conti trimestrali non finanziari per settore istituzionale, GU L 191 del 22.7.2005.

([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/sector_accounts/data/database (conti trimestrali per settore, transazioni non finanziarie).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009509/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Fall in purchasing power

According to the latest data provided by Istat, in the second quarter of 2012 the purchasing power of households, after adjustment for inflation, fell by 1.6% from the previous quarter and by 4.1% compared to the second quarter of 2011. This has been communicated by Istat, which also noted that the downward trend is the steepest since 2000.

Household savings, adjusted to take into account seasonal variations, were 8.1%, a fall of 0.6% from the previous quarter and 0.5 compared with the same period in 2011. This is the lowest figure since 1999.

In the light of the above, will the Commission say:

1. whether it is aware of the latest Istat data?

2. whether it is able to provide information and statistics on household purchasing power in the other Member States?

3. what policies it intends to apply to restore household purchasing power?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

1. The Commission (Eurostat) collects quarterly data on the household sector (which includes households and non-profit institutions serving households), disposable income and saving according to Regulation (EC) No 1161/2005 of the Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2005 ([1]). In accordance with this regulation, Istat transmitted on 30 September 2012 its latest quarterly sector accounts data to the Commission.

2. Concerning quarterly households' gross disposable income and saving, the data by Member State are published on Eurostat website ([2]).

Please note that the quarterly data published by Istat are seasonally adjusted which is not the case for the (country) data released by Eurostat.

3. On 6 July 2012, the Council recommended Italy to take policy action that would contribute to enhancing Italy's fiscal sustainability, competitiveness, the business environment, employment and human capital accumulation. The resulting improvement in the country's growth potential and macroeconomic stability would be key to restoring households' purchasing power. The Commission also oversees spending of cohesion funds, part of which are channelled towards the less developed regions to increase their structural and human capital and hence improve the employability of their citizens and ultimately their growth prospects.

The July 2012 Council recommendations in the context of the European Semester can be consulted under: http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st11/st11259.en12.pdf

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1161/2005 of the Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2005 on the compilation of quarterly non-financial accounts by institutional sector, OJ L 191, 22.7.2005.

([2]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/sector_accounts/data/database (Quarterly sector accounts, non-financial transactions).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009510/12
to the Council
Claude Moraes (S&D) and Glenis Willmott (S&D)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: The UK's ability to opt back into pre-Lisbon measures once formal notification of the block opt-out has been given

On 15 October 2012, UK Home Secretary Theresa May announced that the UK Government plans to trigger the block opt-out on more than 130 pre-Lisbon framework agreements concerning police and justice cooperation, in accordance with Protocol 36 to the Treaty of Lisbon. The Home Secretary also stated the government's intention to seek advice as to which of the pre-Lisbon framework agreements the UK should opt back into, and then to initiate negotiations with the Council and the Commission.

Article 10(4) of this Protocol states that: 'The Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall determine the necessary consequential and transitional arrangements.'

The majority of the 130 pre-Lisbon framework agreements relate to the Schengen *acquis* and therefore any decision to allow the UK to opt back into them will be subject to a unanimous Council decision.

1. Given the importance of the UK's ability to opt back into certain framework decisions, and of the final decision on whether the UK should exercise its block opt-out, could the Council provide an update on its current position on the likelihood of the UK being able to pick and choose any of the police and justice agreements?

2. Has the Council held any discussions on this issue as of yet and, if so, could it provide details of any outcomes reached? If the Council has not commenced discussions, could it provide an indication as to when such discussions are likely to begin?

Reply
(17 December 2012)

The Council is aware of the announcements made by the UK Government to its Parliament on making use of the possibility given to the UK in paragraphs 4 and 5 of Article 10 of Protocol No 36 on transitional provisions and of the transmission by the Government to the Parliament of the list of more than 130 acts which would be concerned, 24 of which are part of the Schengen *acquis*.

The Council has not been officially informed about the UK's intentions.

It has not yet discussed the issue.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-009511/12
till kommissionen
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(18 oktober 2012)

Angående: Cabotage

Den av kommissionen tillsatta expertgruppen har kommit med sin rapport ”Report of the high level group on the development of the European road haulage market”. I den skriver man att den inre marknaden inte är redo för ett helt fritt cabotage till 2014 och rekommenderar att två typer av cabotage införs som ett mellansteg innan marknaden liberaliseras helt.

Det växande problemet med olagligt cabotage och social dumping i EU riskerar att slå ut nationell åkerinäring med resultatet att tusentals jobb försvinner. Det är uppenbart att den inre marknaden inte är redo för en total liberalisering ännu. I rapporten föreslår man att det ska upprättas ett register för att kontrollera det frikopplande cabotaget, där den som ska bedriva verksamhet måste registrera sig.

Kommer kommissionen att arbeta för att detta register blir verklighet och att det blir helt transparent och lätt att kontrollera och innefattar strikta regler såsom registrering av förare, löner, körningar och påföljder ifall reglerna inte följs?

Svar från Siim Kallas på kommissionens vägnar
(26 november 2012)

Kommissionen analyserar för närvarande de möjliga alternativen för en översyn av förordning 1072/2009/EG ([1]). Slutsatserna från högnivågruppen om situationen på EU-marknaden för godstransporter på väg har gett värdefull information om detta preliminära arbete men föregriper inte de beslut som ska fattas av kommissionen.

De första slutsatserna visar att det finns skäl för att underlätta tillträdet till de inhemska marknaderna för att tillåta att åkerinäringen bidrar till EU:s agenda för tillväxt och konkurrenskraft. Översynen kan därför ha som målsättning att underlätta etablering för att tillåta permanent tillträde till inhemska marknader för utländska åkare och öppna de nuvarande cabotagesystemen, samtidigt som man säkerställer att den lokala arbetsrätten tillämpas på ett korrekt sätt vid längre vistelser.

Ett cabotageregister kan underlätta övervakningen av cabotagerörelser och målinriktningen av kontrollerna, inklusive tillämpningen av den lokala arbetsrätten. Det kommer därför att vara en del av de alternativ som kommissionen ska utvärdera som en del av översynen. Ett lagstiftningsförslag kan förväntas i mitten av 2013.

([1]) Europaparlamentets och rådets förordning (EG) nr 1072/2009 av den 21 oktober 2009 om gemensamma regler för tillträde till den internationella marknaden för godstransporter på väg (EUT L 300, 14.11.2009, s. 72).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009511/12
to the Commission
Marita Ulvskog (S&D)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Cabotage

The group of experts set up by the Commission has now issued its 'Report of the High Level Group on the Development of the European Road Haulage Market' ([1]), which states that the internal market will not be ready for fully free cabotage until 2014 and recommends the introduction of two types of cabotage as an intermediate stage before the market is fully liberalised.

The growing problem of illegal cabotage and social dumping in the EU risks driving out the national haulage industry, with the loss of thousands of jobs. It is clear that the internal market is not yet ready for full liberalisation. The report proposes that a register should be set up to control non-linked cabotage, on which anyone wishing to pursue an activity must register.

Will the Commission endeavour to ensure that this register becomes a reality and that it will be fully transparent and easy to control and will include strict rules, registration of drivers, pay and journeys, and consequences in the event of failure to comply with the rules?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2012)

The Commission is currently analysing the possible options for a review of Regulation 1072/2009/EC ([2]). The conclusions of the High Level Group on the situation of the EU road haulage market have usefully informed this preliminary work but do not prejudge the decisions to be taken by the Commission.

First conclusions show that there is a case to facilitate access to domestic markets so as to allow the road haulage sector to contribute to the growth and competitiveness agenda of the EU. The review may therefore aim on the one hand to facilitate establishment to allow permanent access to domestic markets for foreign hauliers, and on the other hand to open up the current cabotage regimes while ensuring that local labour rules are correctly applied in case of longer stays.

A cabotage register may help to monitor cabotage movements and target checks, including regarding the application of local labour rules. It will therefore be part of the options which the Commission will assess as part of the review process. A legislative proposal can be expected for mid-2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/doc/2012-06-high-level-group-report-final-report.pdf
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 on common rules for access to the international road haulage market OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, p. 72-87.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-009512/12
à Comissão
Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Surto de dengue na Madeira

Em 2005, identificou-se a presença do mosquito *Aedes aegypti* na Madeira sem que tenham ocorrido casos de dengue. Contudo, no dia 3 de outubro de 2012, foram notificados dois casos de dengue nesta região autónoma.

De acordo com o Comunicado do Diretor-Geral da Saúde português n.° C46.03.v1, de 10 de outubro de 2012, «confirma-se a existência da atividade epidémica do vírus da dengue do serotipo DEN-1» na ilha da Madeira, sendo que estão já confirmados 18 casos de dengue, foram registados 191 casos prováveis, 26 pessoas foram hospitalizadas desde o início do surto e 11 encontram-se hospitalizadas. Ontem, o Instituto de Administração da Saúde e Assuntos Sociais da Madeira anunciou que o número de casos prováveis é já de 404 e de casos confirmados é de 52.

A febre de dengue encontra-se sobre vigilância europeia e, uma vez que se trata de uma febre hemorrágica viral, todos os casos notificados têm que ser comunicados na União Europeia. De acordo com o ECDC, a presença do mosquito *Aedes aegypti* na Madeira é «uma preocupação central».

Tendo o ECDC como missão a supervisão e a garantia de sistemas de alerta precoce, deve fornecer atempadamente informação à Comissão Europeia, aos Estados-Membros, às agências comunitárias, bem como às organizações internacionais com atividade no domínio da saúde pública, e comunicar à Comissão Europeia e ao Conselho estas situações.

1. O que fez a Comissão após ter sido comunicada a existência do mosquito na Madeira em 2005?

2. Que medidas concretas pretende a Comissão tomar, agora que já há atividade epidémica?

3. Que tipo de articulação existe entre a Comissão e os Estados-Membros em situação de surto, como o que atualmente ocorre na Madeira?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-009513/12
à Comissão
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

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Resposta conjunta dada por Maroš Šefčovič em nome da Comissão
(19 de novembro de 2012)

A Comissão está a acompanhar atentamente o surto de dengue na Madeira. Foram notificados alguns casos de dengue também em viajantes regressados da Madeira, que foram provavelmente infetados durante a estadia na ilha. A infeção com o vírus da dengue ocorre através da picada de mosquitos. A doença não é transmitida diretamente de uma pessoa para outra, salvo por via de transfusões de sangue ou do transplante de órgãos ou tecidos.

Quanto às medidas tomadas, a Comissão solicitou ao Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças (ECDC) uma avaliação dos riscos e comunicou essa avaliação aos Estados-Membros através do sistema de alerta rápido e de resposta da UE. A pedido das autoridades portuguesas, o ECDC enviou uma equipa técnica encarregada de ajudar a controlar a situação e fornecer regularmente informações atualizadas.

A Comissão ativou o mecanismo de coordenação para o controlo de ocorrências de relevância transfronteiriça através da rede de vigilância e de controlo das doenças transmissíveis na Comunidade, com o objetivo de aumentar o nível de vigilância dos casos de dengue, prestar informações aos Estados-Membros sobre o risco de se contrair a doença na zona em questão e partilhar informações tendo em vista minimizar o risco de transmissão da dengue através de transfusões de sangue.

A coordenação entre a Comissão e os Estados-Membros é estabelecida ao abrigo da legislação da UE em matéria de doenças transmissíveis ([1]), que impõe aos Estados-Membros a obrigação de comunicarem ocorrências que possam ser relevantes ao nível da UE. De acordo com as referidas disposições, a Comissão deve coordenar com os Estados-Membros as medidas sanitárias necessárias para o controlo de ocorrências específicas, a fim de assegurar uma resposta coerente da UE a surtos de dimensão transfronteiriça. As medidas sanitárias são acordadas com base em provas científicas fornecidas pelo ECDC e em peritagens *ad hoc* da UE, em estreita colaboração com a organização Mundial de Saúde.

([1]) Decisão n.° 2119/98/CE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 24 de setembro de 1998, que institui uma rede de vigilância epidemiológica e de controlo das doenças transmissíveis na Comunidade (JO L 268 de 3.10.1998).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009512/12
to the Commission
Alda Sousa (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Outbreak of dengue fever in Madeira

The presence of the Aedes aegypti mosquito in Madeira was confirmed in 2005, although no cases of dengue had occurred. However, on 3 October 2012 two cases of dengue were notified in this autonomous region.

According to communiqué No C46.03.v1 of 10 October 2012 from the Portuguese Director-General for Health, epidemic activity of the DEN-1 serotype of the dengue virus had been confirmed on the island of Madeira. There were 18 confirmed cases and 191 probable cases had been reported; 26 people had been hospitalised since the start of the outbreak and 11 were still in hospital. Yesterday, the Madeira Institute of Health Administration and Social Affairs announced that the number of probable cases had now reached 404, while the number of confirmed cases stood at 52.

Dengue is under European surveillance, and as it is a viral hemorrhagic fever, the European Union must be informed of all cases notified. According to the ECDC, the presence of the Aedes aegypti mosquito in Madeira is a central concern.

The ECDC's mission is to supervise and safeguard early-warning systems, and it must therefore provide prompt information to the Commission, the Member States and Community agencies, as well as international organisations working in the field of public health. Accordingly, it must report such situations to the Commission and Council.

1. What action has the Commission taken since the presence of the mosquito in Madeira was reported in 2005?

2. What practical measures will the Commission take now that epidemic activity is occurring?

3. What type of coordination is in place between the Commission and the Member States in the event of an outbreak such as the current one in Madeira?

Question for written answer P-009513/12
to the Commission
Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

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The presence of the Aedes aegypti mosquito in Madeira was confirmed in 2005, although no cases of dengue had occurred. However, on 3 October 2012 two cases of dengue were notified in this autonomous region.

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The ECDC's mission is to supervise and safeguard early-warning systems, and it must therefore provide prompt information to the Commission, the Member States and Community agencies, as well as international organisations working in the field of public health. Accordingly, it must report such situations to the Commission.

1. What action has the Commission taken since it was notified of the presence of the mosquito in Madeira in 2005?

2. What practical measures will the Commission take now that epidemic activity has been confirmed?

3. What type of coordination is in place between the Commission and the Member States in the event of an outbreak such as the current one in Madeira?

Joint answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(19 November 2012)

The Commission is following closely the outbreak of Dengue in Madeira. A few cases of dengue were also reported among travellers returning from Madeira who are likely to have been infected during their stay on the island. Infection with dengue virus occurs through bites of mosquitoes. Except via blood transfusion or transplantation of organs or tissues, dengue is not transmitted directly from one person to another.

As regards action undertaken, the Commission asked the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) for a risk assessment of the situation, and shared it with Member States through the EU Early Warning and Response System. Upon request of the Portuguese authorities, the ECDC dispatched a technical mission to help control the situation and provide regular updates.

The Commission activated the coordination mechanism to control events of cross-border relevance through the Community Network for surveillance and Control of Communicable Diseases, to raise vigilance on dengue cases, to inform Member States about the risk of acquiring dengue in the area concerned, and to share information to minimise the risk of transmission of dengue via blood transfusions.

The coordination between the Commission and Member States is set up under the EU legislation on communicable diseases ([1]) that includes the obligation for Member States to report events which can be of EU relevance. Under these provisions, the Commission coordinates with Member States the health measures needed to control specific events to guarantee an EU-consistent response to cross-border outbreaks. Health measures are agreed on the basis of scientific evidence provided by ECDC and ad hoc EU expertise, and in close collaboration with the World Health Organisation.

([1]) Decision No 2119/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 1998 setting up a network for the epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases in the Community (OJ L 268, 03.10.1998).

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande P-009514/12
till kommissionen
Olle Schmidt (ALDE)
(18 oktober 2012)

Angående: Antibedrägeriutredning och det nya direktivet om tobaksprodukter

Enligt en färsk rapport som Europeiska byrån för bedrägeribekämpning (Olaf) har lämnat till kommissionen har företaget Swedish Match framfört klagomål mot att det erbjudits inflytande över resultatet av kommissionens pågående översyn av direktivet om tobaksprodukter, i utbyte mot finansiell ersättning. Det EU-täckande förbudet mot svenskt snus, från vilket Sverige har ett undantag, regleras av detta direktiv. Olaf:s utredning kom fram till att en maltesisk företagare hade närmat sig företaget med hjälp av sin relation med kommissionsledamot Dalli, och hade försökt vinna finansiella fördelar i utbyte mot inflytande över ett eventuellt framtida lagförslag om snus.

Vad kommer kommissionen att göra för att effektivisera bedrägeribekämpningspolitiken och den interna uppförandekoden för personalen, i syfte att återupprätta förtroendet för EU:s institutioner? Vilken roll ger kommissionen i detta sammanhang tipsare för att bekämpa vänskapstjänster?

Hur kommer kommissionen att gå tillväga för att hädanefter säkerställa att förfarandet kring förslaget till nytt direktiv om tobaksprodukter, som förväntas komma under hösten, är öppet och rättvist i juridiskt hänseende?

Svar från Tonio Borg på kommissionens vägnar
(3 december 2012)

1. Enligt artikel 22 a i tjänsteföreskrifterna är tjänstemän skyldiga att informera sin närmaste överordnade eller Europeiska byrån för bedrägeribekämpning (Olaf) om uppgifter som har kommit till deras kännedom som rör bedrägeri, korruption eller annan olaglig verksamhet. Olaf accepterar dessutom alla sorters information och klagomål, även anonyma, och kan öppna interna och externa utredningar när det föreligger tillräcklig misstanke.

Utifrån de uppgifter som står till kommissionens förfogande ska inget bedrägeri ha riktats mot EU:s ekonomiska intressen i det fall som avses i frågan, eftersom ingen transaktion med Swedish Match har ägt rum. Olafs utredning utfördes fullständigt oberoende och principen om oskuldspresumtion är tillämplig.

2. Kommissionen ber att få hänvisa till punkt två i sitt svar på den skriftliga frågan E-009726/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009514/12
to the Commission
Olle Schmidt (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Anti-fraud inquiry and the new tobacco products directive

According to a recent report submitted to the Commission by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the company Swedish Match has filed a complaint to the effect that it received a proposal to influence the outcome of the Commission's current review of the tobacco products directive, in exchange for financial compensation. The EU-wide sales ban on Swedish snuff, from which Sweden has an exemption, is regulated by this directive. OLAF's final report found that a Maltese entrepreneur had approached the company using his contacts with Commissioner Dalli and had sought to gain financial advantages in exchange for influence over a possible future legislative proposal on snuff.

In order to restore trust in the European institutions, what action will the Commission take to make the anti-fraud policies and internal code of conduct for staff more effective. In this regard, what role does the Commission allow to whistleblowers in fighting cronyism?

How will the Commission ensure from now on a transparent and legally fair process for the proposal for a new tobacco products directive which is expected this autumn?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

1. Article 22 a of the Staff regulations foresees that officials have the obligation to inform their superior or the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) of facts they become aware of, concerning possible illegal activity including fraud or corruption. In addition, OLAF accepts all information and complaints, even if anonymous, and may open internal and external investigations when there are sufficient grounds for suspicion.

In any event, on the basis of the information at the disposal of the Commission, it appears that there was no fraud to the detriment of the financial interest of the EU in the case referred to in the question, since no transaction with Swedish Match took place. OLAF's investigation was conducted in full independence and the principle of the presumption of innocence applies.

2. The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to point two of its reply to Written Question E-009726/2012.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009515/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(18 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Necesidad y consecuencias de la retirada de cultivos transgénicos en la Unión Europea

El estudio científico realizado por el profesor Sérafini y publicado recientemente en la revista *Food and Chemical Toxicology* bajo el título *«Long-term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize»* («Toxicidad a largo plazo del herbicida *Roundup* y de un maíz transgénico resistente al *Roundup*») ha puesto en evidencia la insuficiencia de las pruebas exigidas por parte de la Unión Europea a la industria para autorizar el cultivo y consumo de productos transgénicos y los evidentes efectos negativos que pueden tener para la salud de personas y animales.

España produce el 80 % del maíz transgénico de la UE, siendo Aragón la primera zona productora del Estado. En concreto, en Aragón se cultivaban en 2002 4 350 hectáreas de maíz transgénico que en la actualidad son 41 368 Ha. En ese periodo, por contraste, Aragón ha pasado de contar con más de un 10 % de su superficie cultivada dedicada a la agricultura ecológica a tener actualmente tan solo un 4,27 %, evidenciando una clara tendencia a primar la cantidad sobre la calidad en la producción agraria, y acusándose los efectos que sobre la producción ecológica tiene la contaminación genética producida allí donde se introducen cultivos transgénicos. Finalmente, la experiencia aragonesa muestra que los transgénicos tampoco han mejorado la renta de los agricultores que los cultivan, quienes siguen acuciados por unos precios que apenas les dejan márgenes para capitalizar adecuadamente sus explotaciones, al tiempo que ha aumentado su dependencia de los proveedores de semillas y tecnología.

Es deseable que, en aplicación del principio de precaución, ante los riesgos ahora conocidos, se anulen las autorizaciones dadas hasta la fecha para el cultivo y distribución de estos productos para consumo animal y humano, sin que ello empeore todavía más la situación de los agricultores.

1. ¿Va la Comisión a revisar y, en su caso, anular las autorizaciones existentes para el cultivo, importación y uso de productos transgénicos destinados a la alimentación animal y humana, así como los requisitos de prueba de su inocuidad que hasta ahora se venían exigiendo?

2. ¿Se tomarían en tal caso las medidas de apoyo a los agricultores afectados y de descontaminación medioambiental necesarias en tal caso?

3. ¿Considera la Comisión satisfactorio el retroceso que sufre la producción agraria ecológica ante el avance de la producción transgénica, en una tendencia que parece demostrar la incompatibilidad entre ambos modelos de producción agraria?

4. ¿A cuál de las dos cree la Comisión que debería dársele prioridad en Aragón y en el resto de la Unión Europea?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de diciembre de 2012)

1. y 2. De conformidad con los requisitos estrictos de la legislación sobre OMG de la UE ([1]), los organismos modificados genéticamente (OMG) tienen que ser objeto de una evaluación muy exigente de su seguridad antes de que se autorice su comercialización para su cultivo o su consumo animal o humano. Tal como afirmaba la Comisión en su respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-005919/2012 ([2]), actualmente se están introduciendo criterios más severos para evaluar el riesgo de los OMG. Por lo que se refiere a las conclusiones del estudio publicado por el profesor Séralini *et al.* y a las medidas de seguimiento adoptadas al respecto por la Comisión, remitimos a Su Señoría a la respuesta de la Comisión a la pregunta escrita P-008278/2012 y P-008334/2012.

([1]) Directiva 2001/18/CE (DO L 106 de 18.4.2001) y Reglamento (CE) n° 1829/2003 (DO L 268 de 18.10.2003).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.

3. Uno de los objetivos de la normativa de la UE en materia de OMG ([3]) es evitar, en aquellas zonas en las que se cultivan dichos organismos, la presencia accidental de estos en otros productos con el fin de prevenir las posibles pérdidas económicas y las consecuencias de la mezcla de los cultivos modificados genéticamente con los no modificados genéticamente, incluidos los ecológicos. Es competencia de los Estados miembros aplicar las medidas relativas a la coexistencia de ambos tipos de cultivo. La Oficina Europea de Coexistencia (ECoB) ([4]), gestionada por la Comisión, recopila y difunde en colaboración con los Estados miembros las mejores prácticas en materia de coexistencia; en julio de 2010 la Comisión publicó una recomendación en la que proponía una serie de directrices para el desarrollo de medidas nacionales de coexistencia destinadas a evitar la presencia accidental de OMG en los cultivos convencionales y ecológicos.

4. La Comisión es de la opinión de que en la Unión no se debería excluir ningún tipo de cultivo. El objetivo de la legislación sobre los OMG y de la citada recomendación de 2010 es ofrecer a los productores y a los consumidores de la UE la oportunidad de elegir entre los productos convencionales, los ecológicos y los modificados genéticamente. Las propuestas para reformar la PAC ([5]) después de 2013 se centran en gran medida en la «ecologización» de la agricultura. En este orden de cosas, se ha planteado la propuesta de que la agricultura ecológica tenga derecho por defecto a recibir las ayudas por «ecologización» del primer pilar de la PAC.

([3]) Artículo 26 bis de la Directiva 2001/18/CE sobre la liberación intencional en el medio ambiente de organismos modificados genéticamente (DO L 106 de 17.4.2001).

([4]) http://ecob.jrc.ec.europa.eu/.

([5]) Política Agrícola Común.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009515/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Necessity and consequences of withdrawing GM crops from the EU

The scientific study carried out by Professor Séralini and published recently in the Food and Chemical Toxicology journal under the title 'Long-term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize' revealed that the tests the EU had required the biotech industry to carry out before allowing GM crops to be grown and used in foodstuffs were not sufficient. Furthermore, the study found that GM products can have a definite negative impact on the health of both humans and animals.

80% of the EU's GM maize is grown in Spain. Aragon is the Spanish region that produces the most. Indeed, in 2002, there were 4 350 hectares of GM maize in Aragon; today, that figure stands at 41 368 hectares. By contrast, over the same period, the amount of dedicated organic farmland as a percentage of total agricultural land in Aragon fell from over 10% to just 4.27%, which is clear evidence of the trend to value quantity over quality when it comes to farming. These statistics also reveal the effect that genetic contamination resulting from the introduction of GM crops has had on organic farming. Nor, as the situation in Aragon reveals, do farmers who grow GM crops earn more: they have to contend with prices that barely leave them enough of a margin to make a profit from their farms while at the same time, they are increasingly dependent on seed and technology suppliers.

In line with the precautionary principle, and in view of the risks we now know GM products pose, the previous authorisation given for GM products for human and animal consumption to be grown and distributed should be withdrawn, before the situation of farmers becomes even worse.

1. Will the Commission amend and, if necessary, repeal existing legislation authorising the cultivation, growth and use in human and animal foodstuffs of GM products? Will the Commission also review the current standards for proving whether a GM product is safe or not?

2. If so, will the Commission take the necessary steps to support farmers affected by these changes and carry out environmental decontamination procedures?

3. Does the Commission find it acceptable that organic agriculture is suffering because of the advance of GM farming, in a trend that appears to show that the two methods of farming are incompatible?

4. Of these two methods of farming, which does the Commission believe should be prioritised, both in Aragon and the rest of the EU?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

1-2. In accordance with the strict requirements of EU GMO legislation ([1]), any GMO has to undergo a safety assessment of high standards before being authorised for placing on the market for cultivation, food or feed use. Criteria for GMO risk assessment are currently being reinforced, as described in the Commission's answer to Written Question E-005919/2012 ([2]). As regards the findings of the study published by Séralini et al. and follow-up measures by the Commission, the Honourable Member is referred to the Commission's answer to Written Questions P-008278/2012 and P-008334/2012.

3. One of the objectives of EU legislation on GMOs ([3]) is to avoid the unintended presence of GMOs in other products in areas where GMOs are cultivated, preventing the potential economic loss and impacts of the admixture of GM and non-GM crops, including organic crops. These co-existence measures have to be implemented by Member States. The European Coexistence Bureau (ECoB) ([4]), which is hosted by the Commission, develops, together with Member States, best practices for co-existence, and the Commission published in July 2010 a recommendation on guidelines for the development of national co-existence measures to avoid the unintended presence of GMOs in conventional and organic crops.

([1]) Directive 2001/18/EC (OJ L 106, 18.4.2001) and Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 (OJ L 268, 18.10.2003).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB.
([3]) Article 26a of Directive 2001/18/EC on the deliberate release of GMOs into the environment (OJ L 106, 17.4.2001).
([4]) http://ecob.jrc.ec.europa.eu/.

4. The Commission is of the opinion that no form of farming should be excluded in the Union. Co-existence measures as set in the GMO legislation and the abovementioned 2010 recommendation aim to give EU consumers and producers a choice between conventional, organic and GM production. The proposals for the CAP ([3]) post-2013 have a strong focus on the greening of agriculture. In this context it is proposed that organic farming should qualify by default for eligibility to 'greening' payments under Pillar I of the CAP.

([3]) Common Agricultural Policy.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009516/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(18 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Incremento de la desigualdad en España

Según datos de Eurostat, España podría situarse entre los primeros países con mayor desigualdad en el reparto de ingresos en la Unión Europea. Este proceso de incremento de la desigualdad es registrado por Eurostat a través de los datos de las «Statistics on Income and Living Conditions» y presentado a través del Índice de Gini, elaborado por el organismo con dichos datos.

Los resultados presentados para el caso de España confirman el acusado incremento de la desigualdad en el país, de forma que entre 2009 y 2011 el índice de Gini de la renta disponible de los españoles se incrementó en 1,7 puntos. Este valor supone, para un país de más de 47 millones de habitantes, un importante salto en un indicador que carece de fuertes oscilaciones, dando la voz de alarma sobre el proceso de transferencia de rentas que se está operando en el país.

Las medidas de austeridad en España, que transforman el problema del déficit público en el problema del gasto público, están provocando el hundimiento de las clases medias y bajas, mientras las clases altas continúan incrementando sus rentas. El principal problema del déficit público en España resulta de la caída de los ingresos del Estado desde el estallido de la crisis. Estos ingresos deben imponerse de una manera progresiva para intervenir sobre el incremento de la desigualdad. Instrumentos como las SICAV, una política impositiva regresiva y el escaso control de la evasión fiscal permiten que las clases altas del país se estén enriqueciendo mientras destruyen un estado del bienestar que ha garantizado cierta redistribución de la riqueza. No siendo esto suficiente, el Estado ha asumido la deuda privada del sector financiero, que está siendo pagada a través de este «adelgazamiento» del Estado.

Ante este agresivo incremento de la desigualdad, las recomendaciones realizadas por la Comisión a España disponen como única reforma fiscal posible el incremento de impuestos indirectos.

Teniendo España uno de los ratios «Ingresos Tributarios/PIB» más bajos de la Unión, ¿por qué no plantea la Comisión en sus recomendaciones un incremento de la imposición progresiva para generar ingresos reduciendo la desigualdad? La reducción de la desigualdad ¿no resulta un objetivo para la Comisión?

¿Considera la Comisión que el incremento en la desigualdad en España facilitará su salida de la crisis económica?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(14 de diciembre de 2012)

Incumbe a los Estados miembros mismos decidir la mejor manera de alcanzar sus objetivos presupuestarios, incluido el equilibrio entre los ingresos y los gastos.

En lo que se refiere a España, la Comisión comparte la preocupación por las desigualdades en la renta y la riqueza y por las consecuencias sociales de la crisis. El análisis de la Comisión sobre los desafíos y recomendaciones fundamentales para salir de la crisis se resume en las recomendaciones específicas por país correspondientes a España:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:219:0081:0084:ES:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009516/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Growing inequality in Spain

According to figures published by Eurostat, the income gap in Spain is one of the widest in the EU. Eurostat records increasing inequality using data collected by the 'Statistics on Income and Living Conditions' instrument and presents its findings with the Gini coefficient.

The findings for Spain confirm that inequality in the country has risen sharply. Indeed, from 2009 to 2011, the Gini coefficient on the disposable income of Spanish citizens rose by 1.7 points. In a country with a population of over 47 million, this figure represents a significant increase, particularly as the Gini coefficient is not an indicator that fluctuates very frequently. This rings alarms bells about the process of income transfer currently taking place in the country.

Spain's austerity measures, which are turning the public deficit crisis into a public spending crisis, are hitting the lower and middle classes hard; meanwhile, the richest have continued to see their incomes rise. The main reason for Spain's public deficit crisis is the fall in government revenue since the outbreak of the crisis. Government revenue needs to rise gradually in order to tackle the growing inequality in Spain. Instruments like SICAV, a regressive taxation policy and ineffective control over tax evasion are making Spain's upper classes even richer while at the same time destroying the welfare state that has ensured up to now that wealth is partly redistributed. As if that was not enough, the Spanish Government has also taken on the private debt of the financial sector, which it is paying for by 'shrinking' public spending.

In the light of sharply rising inequality, the Commission's recommendations to Spain suggest that the only possible means of fiscal reform is to increase indirect taxation.

Given that Spain has one of the lowest tax revenue-to-GDP ratios in the EU, why did the Commission not suggest in its recommendations that taxes should be increased gradually in order to generate additional income and reduce inequality? Is reducing inequality not one of the Commission's objectives?

Does the Commission think that the increase in inequality in Spain will help the country to emerge from the economic crisis?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

It is for the Member States themselves to decide on the most appropriate way to achieve their budgetary objectives, including the balance between expenditure and revenue measures.

As far as Spain is concerned, the Commission shares the concern about income and wealth inequality and the social consequences of the crisis. The Commission's analysis regarding the basic challenges and recommendations to emerge from the crisis have been summarised in the Council' country-specific recommendation addressed to Spain:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/04_council/es_2012-07-10_council_recommendation_en.pdf

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009517/12
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(18. oktober 2012)

Om: Allergifremkaldende duftstoffer

Den Videnskabelige Komité for Forbrugersikkerhed (Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS)) udgav i juni 2012 en rapport, hvoraf det fremgår, at en række duftstoffer, der anvendes i parfume, er allergifremkaldende.

Komitéen fastslår, at 82 duftstoffer med sikkerhed kan klassificeres som værende allergifremkaldende. Herudover retter rapporten mistanke mod en lang række andre duftstoffer, som dog ikke på nuværende tidspunkt endeligt kan siges at være allergifremkaldende. De af rapporten udpegede allergifremkaldende duftstoffer er ikke blandt de 26 duftstoffer, som i dag er deklarationspligtige.

Vil Kommissionen på baggrund af ovenstående oplyse, om den har konkrete planer om at gøre flere duftstoffer deklarationspligtige, især med afsæt i SCCS's rapport?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Maroš Šefčovič
(29. november 2012)

Udtalelsen om allergifremkaldende duftstoffer i kosmetiske midler ([1]), som blev offentliggjort i juni 2012 af Den Videnskabelige Komité for Forbrugersikkerhed (VKF), ajourfører listen over allergifremkaldende duftstoffer, som er relevante for forbrugerne, samtidig med at det bekræftes, at de 26 allergifremkaldende duftstoffer, som allerede er reguleret under kosmetikdirektivet ([2]), stadig giver anledning til bekymring.

Kommissionen overvejer for øjeblikket, hvordan denne udtalelse skal gennemføres, således at den bidrager til forbrugeroplysning og forbrugersikkerhed på den mest hensigtsmæssige og forholdsmæssige måde. I den henseende vurderer Kommissionen nøje de sociale og økonomiske virkninger af de forskellige muligheder for så vidt angår sikkerhed, adgang til produkter og beskæftigelse under hensyntagen til data om overvågning og flere forhold vedrørende eksponering af forbrugerne.

([1]) SCCS/1459/11.
([2]) Rådets direktiv 76/768/EØF af 27. juli 1976 om indbyrdes tilnærmelse af medlemsstaternes lovgivning om kosmetiske midler, EFT L 262 af 27.9.1976, s. 169.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009517/12
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Allergenic fragrances

In June 2012, the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) published a report stating that a number of fragrances used in perfumes are allergenic.

The Committee establishes that 82 fragrances can be classified beyond doubt as allergenic. In addition, the report raises suspicions about many other fragrances that cannot at this point in time be branded definitively as allergenic. The allergenic fragrances identified by the report are not among the 26 fragrances that must currently be declared.

In the light of the foregoing, will the Commission state if it has specific plans to make more fragrances subject to mandatory declaration, especially on the basis of the SCCS report?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2012)

The opinion on fragrance allergens in cosmetic products ([1]), issued in June 2012 by the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS), updates the list of fragrance allergens relevant to consumers, while confirming that the 26 fragrance allergens already regulated in the Cosmetics Directive ([2]) are still of concern.

The Commission is currently reflecting how to implement this opinion so that it contributes to consumer information and safety in the most adequate and proportionate way. To this end, it is thoroughly assessing the social and economic impacts of possible options on safety, availability of products and employment, taking into accounts also vigilance data and additional elements of consumer exposure.

([1]) SCCS/1459/11.
([2]) Council Directive 76/768/EEC of 27 July 1976 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to cosmetic products, OJ L 262, 27.9.1976, p. 169.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009518/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Risikoeinstufung von Corporate Bonds

Allein im Sommer 2012 war in Österreich das Volumen der emittierten „Corporate Bonds", also von Unternehmensanleihen, größer als im gesamten Vorjahr. Dabei zielten die Emittenten durch Stückelungen von 500 und 1 000 EUR unmissverständlich auf Privatanleger ab. Dies ist wahrscheinlich eine Folge der stark eingeschränkten Kreditvergabe seitens der Banken. Auf dem Kapitalmarkt sind Anleihen unter anderem auch deshalb eine zunehmend an Beliebtheit gewinnende Variante der Kapitalbeschaffung, da mit ihnen — im Gegensatz zu Aktien — die Anleger keine Miteigentümerschaft erwerben, also keine Mitwirkungsrechte haben.

Im momentanen Boom dürfte bei vielen der kleinen Privatanleger übersehen werden, dass Unternehmensanleihen mit einem hohen Risiko behaftet sind, da ein Ausstieg während der Laufzeit nur mit großen Verlusten möglich ist und eine Insolvenz des emittierenden Unternehmens zum Totalverlust des eingesetzten Kapitals führen kann.

1. In der Vergangenheit haben Finanzberater den Privaten immer wieder Risiken von Wertanlagen verschwiegen oder riskante Papiere als „so sicher wie ein Sparbuch" verkauft. Inwieweit sind die diesbezüglich geplanten EU-Regulierungsmaßnahmen vorangeschritten?

2. Welche der im Rahmen eines besseren Anlegerschutzes geplanten Maßnahmen wurden auf EU-Ebene bis dato umgesetzt, und welche stehen noch aus?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(21. Dezember 2012)

Traditionell wenden sich Unternehmen in den meisten Ländern der EU vor allem an Banken, um ihren Finanzierungsbedarf zu decken. Die Finanzierung über Unternehmensanleihen gewinnt in Europa jedoch zunehmend an Bedeutung. Der Umfang der Direktkäufe von Unternehmensanleihen durch Privatanleger ist jedoch nach wie vor begrenzt, da Letztere eher dazu neigen, in Instrumente für gemeinsame Anlagen als in einzelne Anleihen zu investieren.

Erfolgreiche und sinnvolle Anlagen in Unternehmensanleihen setzen voraus, dass die Anleger die Risiken und die Bonität der Emittenten einschätzen können. Da viele Anleger dazu tendieren, sich bei ihren Anlageentscheidungen auf Ratingagenturen zu verlassen, ist ein gut funktionierender Ratingsektor für eine ausgewogene Entwicklung des Unternehmensanleihenmarktes in Europa von entscheidender Bedeutung.

Die EU-Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1060/2009 über Ratingagenturen legt strenge Verhaltensregeln für Ratingagenturen fest. Ziel ist es, eine hohe Qualität und ausreichende Transparenz der Ratings und des Ratingverfahrens zu gewährleisten und potenzielle Interessenkonflikte zu vermeiden. Im Jahr 2010 wurden die einschlägigen EU-Vorschriften geändert, indem auf EU-Ebene ein zentralisiertes System zur Beaufsichtigung von Ratingagenturen eingeführt wurde. Mit dem jüngsten Legislativvorschlag zu Ratingagenturen ([1]) sollen bestimmte, nach wie vor vorhandene Probleme im Zusammenhang mit den Tätigkeiten von Ratingagenturen angegangen werden. Dabei geht es um Ratingmethoden, die Haftung von Ratingagenturen, Interessenkonflikte und den übermäßigen Rückgriff auf Ratings. Der Vorschlag wird derzeit im Europäischen Parlament und im Rat erörtert.

([1]) Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates zur Änderung der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1060/2009 über Ratingagenturen, Brüssel, 15.11.2011, KOM(2011)747 endg.

Mit dem Kommissionsvorschlag zur Überarbeitung der MiFID ([2]) wird eine weitere Stärkung der Anlegerschutzvorschriften ([3]) angestrebt. Im Übrigen schreiben die Prospektrichtlinie ([4]) und die Prospektverordnung ([5]) die Veröffentlichung eines Prospekts vor, wenn Wertpapiere öffentlich angeboten oder zum Handel an einem geregelten Markt zugelassen werden. Auf diese Weise soll es dem Anleger ermöglicht werden, die mit den betreffenden Wertpapieren verbundenen Marktrisiken zu beurteilen.

([2]) Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente zur Aufhebung der Richtlinie 2004/39/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates, Brüssel, 20.10.2011, KOM(2011)656 endg.

([3]) Was die EU-Regulierungsmaßnahmen zum Anlegerschutz betrifft, verlangt die MiFID, dass Wertpapierfirmen ehrlich, redlich und professionell handeln und Eignung und Angemessenheit der den Kunden angebotenen Finanzinstrumente beurteilen.

([4]) Richtlinie 2003/71/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 4. November 2003 betreffend den Prospekt, der beim öffentlichen Angebot von Wertpapieren oder bei deren Zulassung zum Handel zu veröffentlichen ist, und zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2001/34/EG (ABl. L 345 vom 31.12.2003, S. 64), geändert durch die Richtlinie 2010/73/EU (ABl. L 327 vom 11.12.2010, S. 1).

([5]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 809/2004 der Kommission vom 29. April 2004 zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2003/71/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates betreffend die in Prospekten enthaltenen Informationen sowie das Format, die Aufnahme von Informationen mittels Verweis und die Veröffentlichung solcher Prospekte und die Verbreitung von Werbung (ABl. L 149 vom 30.4.2004, S. 3) in der zuletzt geänderten Fassung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009518/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Risk rating for corporate bonds

In the summer of 2012 alone, the volume of corporate bonds issued in Austria was greater than in the whole of 2011. With units of EUR 500 and EUR 1 000, the issuers were obviously targeting private investors, probably because the banks have greatly reduced lending. On the capital market, the growing popularity of bonds as a way of procuring capital is partly due to the fact that, unlike stock, the investors do not acquire co-ownership and therefore have no participation rights.

In the present boom, many small private investors may overlook the fact that corporate bonds carry a high risk; withdrawal during the term is only possible with severe losses and the insolvency of the issuing company can lead to the loss of the entire investment.

1. In the past, financial advisers have repeatedly concealed the risks from private investors or sold them high-risk products as being 'as secure as a savings account'. In this respect, how far have the planned regulatory measures at EU level progressed?

2. Which of the planned investor protection measures have already been implemented at EU level, and which measures are still pending?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

Traditionally, companies in most parts of the EU have very strongly relied on banks to meet their funding needs. However, enterprise financing via corporate bonds is gaining in importance in Europe. Still, direct purchases of corporate bonds by retail investors remain limited as those tend to invest in collective investment vehicles rather than in particular bonds.

Successful and appropriate investment in corporate bonds requires investors to understand the risks and credit quality of corporate bond issuers. As many investors tend to rely on rating agencies in their investment decisions, a well-functioning credit rating sector is crucial for a balanced development of the corporate bond market in Europe.

EU Regulation 1060/2009 on Credit Rating Agencies (CRAs) imposes rigorous rules of conduct for CRAs, ensuring high quality and sufficient transparency of ratings and the rating process and mitigating possible conflicts of interest. In 2010, the EU rules were amended by introducing a centralised system for supervision of CRAs at EU level. The latest proposal on CRAs ([1]) addresses remaining concerns related to credit rating activities as regards methodologies for ratings, the liability of CRAs, conflicts of interest and excessive reliance on ratings; which is currently under negotiation in the EP and the Council.

The Commission proposal ([2]) to review MiFID intends to further enhance investor protection requirements ([3]). In addition, the Prospectus Directive ([4]) and Regulation ([5]) require the publication of prospectus when securities are offered to the public or admitted to trading on a regulated market to allow the investor to assess the market risk associated with these securities.

([1]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1060/2009 on credit rating agencies. Brussels, 15.11.2011, COM(2011) 747 final.

([2]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on markets in financial instruments repealing Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. Brussels, 20.10.2011, COM(2011) 656 final.

([3]) Concerning EU regulatory measures on investor protection, the MiFID Directive requires investment firms to act honestly, fairly and professionally and to perform an assessment of suitability and appropriateness of the financial instruments proposed to the clients.

([4]) Directive 2003/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 on the prospectus to be published when securities are offered to the public or admitted to trading and amending Directive 2001/34/EC (OJ L 345, 31.12.3003, p. 64) as amended by Directive 2010/73/EU (OJ L 327, 11.12.2010, p. 1).

([5]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 809/2004 of 29 April 2004 implementing Directive 2003/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards information contained in prospectuses as well as the format, incorporation by reference and publication of such prospectuses and dissemination of advertisements (OJ L 149, 30.4.2004, p. 3) as amended.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009519/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Europäischer Haftbefehl

Großbritanniens Innenministerin Theresa May kündigte am 15.10.2012 an, das Vereinigte Königreich werde sich — gestützt auf eine Klausel aus dem Lissabonner Vertrag — weitgehend aus der Zusammenarbeit in der Kriminalitätsbekämpfung zurückziehen. Dem Vernehmen nach ist eine Zusammenarbeit nur mehr hinsichtlich des Zugriffs auf die europaweite Datenbank gewünscht. Grund für den Ausstieg sollen die durch die häufige Anwendung des europäischen Haftbefehls auch bei Bagatelldelikten entstehenden Kosten (für Großbritannien kolportierte 33,4 Millionen jährlich) sein.

1. Wie hoch sind die durch europäische Haftbefehle in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten anfallenden Kosten?

2. Wird der europäische Haftbefehl tatsächlich unverhältnismäßig oft für Bagatelldelikte verwendet?

3. Falls ja, welche diesbezüglichen Änderungen sind auf EU-Ebene geplant, um die Kosten zu senken?

4. Welche Auswirkungen hätte ein Ausstieg Großbritanniens?

5. Ist ein Ausstieg auch in anderen EU-Staaten ein Thema?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(30. November 2012)

Die Europäische Kommission verfügt über keine Zahlen zu den Kosten des Europäischen Haftbefehls (EuHB) in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten in einem bestimmten Jahr. Diese Angaben werden gegebenenfalls von den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten selbst zusammengestellt.

Eine ausführliche allgemeine Bewertung des EuHB ist im dritten Umsetzungsbericht der Kommission vom April 2011 ([1]) enthalten. Wie im Bericht ausgeführt, möchte die Kommission das System des Europäischen Haftbefehls durch andere Maßnahmen, wie zum Beispiel Rechtsvorschriften zu Verfahrensrechten und Leitlinien für Anwender verbessern. Um einen übermäßigen Gebrauch des EuHB bei Bagatelldelikten bei dessen Ausstellung zu vermeiden, sollte nach Ansicht der Kommission ein Verhältnismäßigkeitstest durchgeführt werden, wobei festzuhalten ist, dass der EuHB nicht hauptsächlich bei Bagatelldelikten angewendet wird. Die Kommission hat die Mitgliedstaaten dazu angehalten, darauf hinzuwirken, dass die Anwender das geänderte EuHB-Handbuch ([2]) als Anleitung für die Durchführung eines Verhältnismäßigkeitstests verwenden.

Die Möglichkeit eines Ausstiegs des Vereinigten Königreichs ist gemäß Artikel 10 des Protokolls 36 des Lissabon-Vertrags und der darin festgelegten Bedingungen gegeben.

([1]) KOM(2011)175 endg. und SEK(2011)430.
([2]) Rat 17195/10 COPEN 275.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009519/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: European Arrest Warrant

UK Home Secretary Theresa May announced on 15 October 2010 that the UK would largely be pulling out of EU crime fighting cooperation, under the terms of the Lisbon Treaty. Allegedly, the UK's only remaining interest in cooperation lies in access to the Europe-wide data base. The reason behind the pull-out seems to be the costs incurred by frequent use of the European Arrest Warrant, even for minor offences (allegedly EUR 33.4 million per year for the UK).

1. What is the cost of the European Arrest Warrant to the individual Member States?

2. Is it true that the European Arrest Warrant is used excessively for minor offences?

3. If so, what changes are planned at EU level in order to reduce the costs?

4. What consequences would a UK opt-out have?

5. Are other EU States planning to opt out?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The Commission does not have figures on the cost of the European arrest warrant (EAW) to individual Member States in a particular year. This is information that may be collated by individual Member States.

A detailed general assessment of the EAW is available in the Commission's third implementation report issued in April 2011 ([1]). As set out in the report the Commission is committed to improving the EAW system through other measures such as procedural rights legislation and guidelines to practitioners. To this end, while noting that the EAW is not used mainly for minor offences, the Commission has stressed that, to ensure it is not overused for minor offences, a proportionality test should be applied when an EAW is issued. The Commission has urged Member States to take steps to ensure that practitioners use the amended EAW handbook ([2]) as the guideline for the manner in which a proportionality test should be applied.

The possibility to opt-out is available to the UK pursuant to Article 10 of Protocol 36 of the Lisbon Treaty and subject to the terms therein.

([1]) COM(2011) 175 final and SEC(2011) 430.
([2]) Council 17195/10 COPEN 275.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009520/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Hilfe für Kinder psychisch Erkrankter

Die Kinder auch nur eines psychisch erkrankten Elternteiles sind einem doppelt bis vierfachem erhöhtem Risiko ausgesetzt, selbst psychisch zu erkranken.

In Österreich gibt es weit über 10 000 solcher gefährdeter Kinder.

Auf der jüngsten internationalen Psychopharmakologentagung in Wien wurde allgemein festgehalten, dass die Suizidrate in der Altersgruppe der 15- bis 24-Jährigen weltweit gestiegen sei.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser Umstand bekannt? Und welchen Prozentsatz weisen die Mitgliedstaaten im Einzelnen aus beziehungsweise wie ist der EU-Durchschnitt?

2. Welche Initiativen gedenkt die Kommission gegebenenfalls europaweit hier zu ergreifen?

3. In welchem finanziellen Rahmen werden sich diese möglichen Initiativen bewegen?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(17. Dezember 2012)

Laut Eurostatangaben sind die Suizidraten von 15- bis 24-Jährigen von 7,4 Fällen pro 100 000 Einwohner im Jahr 2001 (4697 Suizide) auf 6,6 Fälle im Jahr 2010 (3 969 Suizide) zurückgegangen. Eine Tabelle mit nach Ländern aufgeschlüsselten Daten ist dieser Antwort beigefügt.

Viele dieser tragischen Todesfälle hängen mit psychischen Gesundheitsproblemen zusammen. Aus diesem Grund plant die Kommission, aus dem EU-Gesundheitsprogramm eine gemeinsame Maßnahme mit den Mitgliedstaaten für psychische Gesundheit und Wohlbefinden zu kofinanzieren, zu deren Schwerpunkten die Förderung der psychischen Gesundheit junger Menschen einschließlich der Depressionsprävention zählt. Die gemeinsame Aktion soll Anfang 2013 mit einer EU-Kofinanzierung von 1,5 Mio. EUR anlaufen. Darüber hinaus hat die Kommission eine Ausschreibung für eine vorbereitende Maßnahme zur Einrichtung eines EU-Netzes von Sachverständigen im Bereich der individuellen Betreuung von Jugendlichen mit psychischen Problemen veröffentlicht (EU-Budget: 1 Mio. EUR).

Die Kommission hat Projekte in diesem Bereich kofinanziert: Das Projekt „Suicide Prevention by Internet and Media Based Mental Health Promotion“ (Suizidprävention über das Internet und Förderung der psychischen Gesundheit mittels Medien) 2008-2013, das insbesondere auf die Altersgruppe der 14- bis 24-Jährigen abzielt und aus dem EU-Gesundheitsprogramm kofinanziert wird (EU-Budget: ca. 780 000 EUR), sowie das Projekt „Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe“ 2009-2011 (Das Leben junger Menschen retten und sie lebensfähig machen), das aus dem 7. Forschungsrahmenprogramm gefördert wurde (ca. 3 Mio. EUR).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009520/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Support for the children of people with mental illnesses

Children with even just one parent with a mental illness are two to four times more likely to develop a mental illness themselves.

In Austria, there are well over 10 000 children in this situation.

At the recent international psychopharmacology congress in Vienna, it was noted in general that the suicide rate among 15- to 24-year-olds had risen worldwide.

1. Was the Commission aware of this fact? What is the percentage in each Member State, and averaged across the EU?

2. What, if any, initiatives does the Commission propose to take at European level in this connection?

3. Roughly what budget will these possible initiatives have?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

According to Eurostat data, suicide rates among young people aged 15 to 24 has decreased from 7.4 cases per 100 000 people in 2001 (4 697 suicides) to 6.6 cases in 2010 (3 969 suicides). A table with country-specific data is attached to this reply.

Many such tragic cases of suicide are linked to mental health problems. This is why the Commission is planning to co-finance from the EU-Health Programme a Joint Action with Member States on Mental Health and Well-being, which will pursue as a priority the promotion of mental health of young people including the prevention of depression. The Joint Action is expected to be operational in early 2013 with EU co-funding of EUR 1.5 million. In addition, the Commission has launched a call for tenders for a preparatory action related to the creation of an EU network of experts in the field of adapted care for adolescents with mental health problems (EU budget: EUR 1 million).

The Commission has co-financed projects in this field: the project 'Suicide Prevention by Internet and Media Based Mental Health Promotion' 2008-2013 which targets particularly the age group 14-24 years and is co-funded from the EU-Health Programme (EU budget: ca. EUR 780 000); and also the project 'Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe' 2009-2011 was funded from the 7th Framework Programme for Research (ca. EUR 3 million).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009521/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Gletscher nehmen zunehmend ab

Weltweit nehmen die Gletscher, „unsere“ Wasserspeicher, zunehmend und teilweise in Eiltempo ab und dadurch entsteht ein akuter Wassermangel.

Der Verlust der Süßwasserspeicher hat nicht nur für den Menschen (für unsere Nachkommen) fatale Folgen, sondern auch für die Vegetation — manche Täler werden wohl zur Steppe werden.

1. Kennt die Kommission diesen Umstand? Wenn nein, gedenkt die Kommission diesbezüglich eine umfassende Erhebung in Europa zu veranlassen und daraus resultierend konkrete und nachhaltige Schritte zu setzen?

2. Der größte Gletscher Europas — der Aletschgletscher — ist in den letzten 100 Jahren um 50 Prozent zurückgegangen. Die österreichischen Alpengletscher haben um ein Drittel abgenommen. Wie gedenkt die Kommission das fortschreitende Abnehmen der Gletscher erfolgreich zu senken beziehungsweise wünschenswerter Weise zu verhindern?

Antwort von Frau Hedegaard im Namen der Kommission
(5. Dezember 2012)

Veränderungen an Gletschern gelten als sehr zuverlässige Klimaindikatoren. Es gibt Anhaltspunkte dafür, dass in Berggebieten die Temperatur infolge des Klimawandels besonders stark ansteigt und deshalb europäische Gletscher besonders beeinträchtigt werden.

Der Kommission ist dieses allgemeine Abschmelzen der Gletschermasse in Europa bekannt. Neuesten Daten der Europäischen Umweltagentur und des World Glacier Monitoring Service (des Welt-Gletscher-Beobachtungsdienstes) zufolge ist die diesbezügliche kumulative Netto-Massenbilanz bei den meisten beobachteten europäischen Gletschern im Zeitraum 1946-2010 ([1]) negativ.

Durch Erreichung des globalen Ziels der Begrenzung des globalen Temperaturanstiegs auf 2 °C über den vorindustriellen Werten, das 2010 in Kopenhagen von führenden Politikern und als Teil der Vereinbarungen von Cancùn von allen Vertragsparteien der Klimarahmenkonvention (UNFCCC) vereinbart wurde, würden die größten Gefahren des Klimawandels eingedämmt und ein weiteres Abschmelzen der europäischen Gletscher aufgehalten. Die laufenden Bemühungen zur Senkung der Treibhausgasemissionen auf europäischer und internationaler Ebene werden als das wirksamste Mittel zur Erreichung dieser Ziele angesehen.

([1]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/cumulative-specific-net-mass-balance-1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009521/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Glaciers are increasingly melting

Worldwide, the glaciers, our water stores, are melting, some at a furious pace, leading to a severe water shortage.

The loss of the freshwater stores has disastrous consequences, both for mankind (future generations) and for vegetation — some valleys may well turn into steppe landscapes.

1. Is the Commission aware of this fact? If not, does the Commission intend to carry out a comprehensive survey in Europe and, based on the results, adopt tangible and sustainable measures?

2. The largest glacier in Europe, the Aletsch Glacier, has lost 50% of its area in the last 100 years. The Alpine glaciers in Austria have been diminished by a third. How does the Commission intend to successfully reduce or (preferably) prevent the continuous retreat of the glaciers?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

Glacier changes are recognised as a high-confident climate indicator. Evidence suggests that climate change-related temperature increases are particularly high in mountainous areas and therefore strongly influence the state of Europe's glaciers.

The Commission is aware of this overall decrease of glacier mass in Europe. Recent information from the European Environment Agency and the World Glacier Monitoring Service show that the cumulative specific net mass balance of most monitored European glaciers is negative for the period 1946-2010 ([1]).

Achieving the global goal of limiting the rise of global mean temperature below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, which was agreed by leaders in Copenhagen and by all Parties to the United Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010 as part of the Cancun Agreements, would reduce the most serious risks of climate change and help preventing further retreat of European glaciers. Ongoing efforts at European and international level to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are considered to be the most effective way forward.

([1]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/figures/cumulative-specific-net-mass-balance-1.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009522/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Generationenübergreifende und leistbare Wohnmodelle?

In Österreich wird das Thema Wohnen für immer mehr Menschen zum großen Sorgenkind, denn in den letzten fünf Jahren sind die Wohnkosten stark angestiegen, so zum Beispiel in Salzburg um mehr als 45 %.

Gerade angesichts der starken Zunahme der alternden Bevölkerung und der damit einhergehenden Explosion der notwendigen Pflegekosten wird es immer wichtiger, generationenübergreifende Wohnmodelle zu schaffen.

1. Kennt die Kommission dieses Problem auch in anderen Mitgliedstaaten?

2. Gedenkt die Kommission allfällige Empfehlungen an die Mitgliedstaaten zu geben, so dass sich diese, wie eben zum Beispiel Österreich, des Problems der kaum mehr leistbaren Wohnkosten als auch der fehlenden generationenübergreifenden Wohnbauten annehmen werden?

3. Wie sieht die Planung/Strategie der Kommission aus, die europaweit wohl ansteigenden Probleme der zunehmend älter werdenden Bevölkerung zu lösen? Dies insbesondere angesichts der europaweit ansteigenden Pflegekosten und der vor allem dringend notwendig werdenden Alters- als auch Pflegeheime.

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(13. Dezember 2012)

Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass das Thema Wohnen in vielen Mitgliedstaaten zunehmend Sorge bereitet. Da das Wohnungswesen in die Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten fällt, hat die Kommission nicht vor, Empfehlungen zum generationenübergreifenden Wohnen zu unterbreiten.

Im Rahmen der Strategie Europa 2020 hat sich die Europäische Union jedoch das Ziel gesetzt, 20 Millionen Europäerinnen und Europäer bis zum Jahr 2020 aus der Armut herauszuführen. 2012 richtete die Kommission diesbezüglich an mehrere Mitgliedstaaten länderspezifische Empfehlungen ([1]).

Im Rahmen der offenen Methode der Koordinierung im Bereich Sozialschutz und soziale Inklusion fördert die Kommission die Zusammenarbeit bei Sozialschutzfragen, auch in den Bereichen Gesundheit und Pflege. Im Hinblick auf den Zugang zu Gesundheitsversorgung und Pflege sowie auf die Qualität und Nachhaltigkeit der einschlägigen Angebote wurden spezifische Ziele vereinbart ([2]).

Die Europäische Innovationspartnerschaft im Bereich „Aktivität und Gesundheit im Alter“ zielt darauf ab, die EU-weite Einführung innovativer und kostenwirksamer (z. B. IKT-basierter) Lösungen für eine bessere Lebensqualität zu erleichtern. Eine ihrer drei Säulen ist die Vorbeugung. Eine weitere Maßnahme stellt die Vereinbarung über altersfreundliche Städte dar, in der das Thema Wohnen eine zentrale Rolle spielt. Das Programm „Umgebungsunterstütztes Leben“ (ein Folgevorschlag für 2014-2020 ist in Vorbereitung) finanziert Forschung und Innovation im Bereich IKT-gestützter Produkte und Dienstleistungen für mehr Lebensqualität älterer Menschen.

Die Kommission plant zudem die Annahme eines Maßnahmenpakets zu sozialen Investitionen für Wachstum und Zusammenhalt; darin sind aktivierende sozialpolitische Maßnahmen sowie Maßnahmen zur Gewährleistung eines angemessenen Lebensunterhalts vorgesehen. Im Hinblick auf die Umsetzung soll es darüber hinaus Leitlinien für die Verwendung europäischer Finanzierungsinstrumente, insbesondere des Europäischen Sozialfonds, enthalten.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_de.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=de&catId=750.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009522/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Affordable mixed generation housing models?

With the sharp rise in living costs over the last five years (more than 45% in Salzburg, for example), housing is becoming a big worry for a growing number of Austrians.

Particularly in view of the substantial increase in the aging population and the accompanying explosion in the costs of caring for the elderly, there is a growing need to create mixed generation housing models.

1. Is the Commission aware of this problem in other Member States?

2. Does the Commission intend to make any recommendations to the Member States in order to ensure that they (Austria, for example) tackle the problem of barely affordable living costs and the lack of mixed generation housing?

3. What are the Commission's plans and/or strategies to solve the growing EU-wide problem of a rapidly aging population, particularly in view of the EU-wide increase in the costs of caring for the elderly and the urgent need for retirement and nursing homes?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the fact that housing has become an issue of growing concern in many Member States. Since it is a Member State responsibility, the Commission does not intend to issue any recommendations relating to the lack of mixed generation housing.

Under the Europe 2020 strategy, however, the European Union has set itself the goal of lifting 20 million Europeans out of poverty by 2020. In 2012 the Commission issued country-specific recommendations on this issue to several Member States ([1]).

Under the Open Method of Coordination in the area of social protection and social inclusion, the Commission promotes cooperation on social protection issues, including health and long-term care. Specific objectives have been agreed on access to and the quality and sustainability of health and long-term care ([2]).

The pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing aims to facilitate the EU-wide deployment of innovative and cost-efficient (e.g. ICT-based) solutions for a better quality of life. One of its three pillars is prevention. Another action is a covenant on Age Friendly Cities, where housing is one of the focus points. The Ambient Assisted Joint Programme (a follow up proposal for 2014-2020 is under preparation).funds research and innovation on ICT enabled products and services for ageing well.

The Commission also plans to adopt a social investment package for growth and cohesion that will tackle the issues of activating social policies and adequate livelihood. It will also provide guidance for the use of European financial instruments, and in particular the European Social fund, to support its implementation.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=750.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009523/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Attentat auf die 14-jährige Malala

Das Attentat auf die 14-jährige Malala, die sich in ihrem Blog für Schulbildung für Mädchen in Pakistan eingesetzt hat, hat die Welt erschüttert.

1. Was unternimmt die Hohe Vertreterin aktuell und ganz konkret, um solchem menschen- und frauenverachtendem Vorgehen Einhalt zu gebieten?

2. Welche Maßnahmen unternehmen die Hohe Vertreterin und ihre Dienste, um junge Mädchen, die mit Engagement und Mut für ihre Rechte eintreten, zu schützen?

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

Zu Frage 1: Die zur Unterstützung von Mädchen und Frauen im Swat-Tal ergriffenen Maßnahmen werden in der Antwort der HV/VP auf die Anfrage E-009132/2012 erläutert.

Die EU verurteilt regelmäßig Menschenrechtsverletzungen in Pakistan, einschließlich Gewalt gegen Frauen und Kinder, und unterstützt die Regierung und Behörden Pakistans bei der Durchsetzung von Sofortmaßnahmen zum Schutz der Rechte dieser Gruppen und zur Gewährleistung der körperlichen Unversehrtheit sowie zum Schutz der Rechte aller pakistanischen Bürger. Als die HV/VP im Juni 2012 Außenministerin Khar in Islamabad traf, ging sie insbesondere darauf ein, dass Fortschritte im Bereich der Frauenrechte erforderlich sind. Nach der Verabschiedung des Maßnahmenplans EU-Pakistan wird der bestehende Dialog durch regelmäßige Sektordialoge über Sicherheit, einschließlich Rechtsstaatlichkeit und des Zugangs zur Justiz, und Menschenrechte verstärkt. Die Bekämpfung des gewaltbereiten Extremismus soll ebenfalls im Rahmen des Dialogs behandelt werden.

Zu Frage 2: Die EU verfügt über eine Reihe von Instrumenten für den politischen Dialog mit den Regierungen der Partnerländer und kann diese hierbei auffordern, ihre internationalen Verpflichtungen in den Bereichen Kinderrechte und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter zu erfüllen. Dazu zählen beispielsweise die Leitlinien der EU für die Förderung und den Schutz der Rechte des Kindes und die Leitlinien der EU betreffend Gewalt gegen Frauen und Mädchen und die Bekämpfung aller Formen der Diskriminierung von Frauen und Mädchen. Der Aktionsplan der Europäischen Union für die Gleichstellung der Geschlechter und die Teilhabe von Frauen in der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit sieht einen Ausbau der EU-Unterstützung für Partnerländer bei der Bekämpfung von geschlechtsbezogener Gewalt und allen Formen der Diskriminierung von Frauen und Mädchen vor. Projekte zur Förderung der Rechte des Kindes wurden im Rahmen von EU-Instrumenten wie dem Programm „In die Menschen investieren“ auf der Grundlage des DCI ([1]) und dem Europäischen Instrument für Demokratie und Menschenrechte durchgeführt.

([1]) DCI = Finanzierungsinstrument für die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009523/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — The attack on 14-year-old Malala

The attack on 14-year-old Malala, who blogged in support of the education of girls in Pakistan, has shocked the world.

1. What specific measures is the High Representative currently undertaking to put a stop to such inhuman and misogynist actions?

2. What measures is the High Representative and her service taking to protect young girls who show commitment and courage in standing up for their rights?

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

1. The measures being taken to assist girls and women in the Swat valley are described in the HR/VP's reply to Question E-009132/2012.

The EU has regularly condemned human rights abuses in Pakistan, including violence against women and children, encouraged the Government of Pakistan and authorities to take urgent measures to ensure protection for the rights of both groups and to the ensure the physical security and protect the rights of all Pakistani citizens. In the HR/VP's meeting with Foreign Minister Khar in Islamabad in June 2012, she specifically referred to the need to make progress on women's rights. Following adoption of the EU-Pakistan Engagement Plan, the existing dialogue will be enhanced by regular sector dialogues on security, including rule of law and access to justice, as well as human rights. Countering violent extremism is expected to be part of the dialogue.

2. The EU disposes of a number of instruments to conduct political dialogue with partner governments and ask them to abide to their international obligations in the areas of child rights and gender equality. These include for instance the EU Guidelines for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, and the EU Guidelines to combat violence against women and girls and all forms of discrimination against them. The EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development foresees strengthening EU support to partner countries in combating gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Projects which promote the rights of children have been implemented under the EU instruments, such as the programme 'Investing in People' in the DCI ([1]) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

([1]) DCI = Development Cooperation Instrument.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009524/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Baumgartners Sprung aus der Stratosphäre

Der Salzburger Felix Baumgartner hat den Sprung aus der Stratosphäre geschafft.

Abgesehen vom medialen Erfolg — zum Beispiel 8 Millionen Zuseher auf einem Internetkanal, auf einem österreichischen Fernsehkanal mehr als 2 Millionen, auf einem deutschen Kanal mehr als 5 Millionen, auf „n-tv" mehr als 6 Millionen und so fort — wird erwartet, dass es auch zahlreiche wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse, zum Beispiel für die Flugmedizin, geben wird.

Gedenkt die Kommission, sich an allfälligen daraus resultierenden Projekten zu beteiligen? Wenn ja: in welchen Bereichen?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(27. November 2012)

Die Kommission unterstützt derzeit aktiv die Forschung auf verschiedenen Gebieten der Weltraumforschung, vor allem im Rahmen des Themenbereichs Weltraum des 7. Rahmenprogramms (7. RP) und künftig durch Horizont 2020. Im Kontext des 7. RP wird das Thema stratosphärischer Faltschirmsprung, wie er von Felix Baumgartner erfolgreich durchgeführt wurde, derzeit zwar nicht speziell untersucht, doch werden gegenwärtig viele Forschungsgebiete in Bereichen finanziert, die sich auf die Erforschung des Weltraums durch den Menschen beziehen, wie die menschliche Gesundheit in der Mikroschwerkraft, Antriebstechniken, Technologien für den Wiedereintritt in die Erdatmosphäre, die Effekte der Sonneneinstrahlung und die Nutzung wissenschaftlicher Daten von Raumfahrtmissionen. Weitere Informationen über das Weltraumforschungsprogramm des 7. RP findet die Frau Abgeordnete in der aktuellen Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen auf dem Teilnehmerportal des 7. RP ([1]), Informationen über laufende Forschungsprojekte sind auf der Website der GD Unternehmen und Industrie ([2]) zu finden.

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/cooperation?callIdentifier=FP7-SPACE-2013-1.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/space/research/fp7-projects/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009524/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Baumgartner's jump from the stratosphere

Felix Baumgartner from Salzburg has successfully completed a jump from the stratosphere.

Aside from his media success — for example, 8 million viewers on an Internet channel, more than 2 million viewers on an Austrian television channel, more than 5 million on a German channel, more than 6 million on n-tv and so on — it is expected that there will be many scientific findings that will be useful, for example, to aviation medicine.

Is the Commission considering participating in any projects that might ensue? If so, in which areas?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

The Commission is actively engaged in supporting research in various areas of space research, principally through the Space theme of the EU's Research Programme (FP7), and in the future through Horizon 2020. Whilst FP7 is not currently addressing specifically the issue of stratospheric parachute jumps of the type successfully completed by Mr Baumgartner, many research projects are currently being funded in areas relevant to human space exploration such as human health in microgravity, propulsion techniques, planetary re-entry techniques, the effects of solar radiation and the exploitation of scientific data from space missions. The Honourable Member may gain further insight into the FP7 Space research programme by consulting the current call for proposals on the FP7 Participant Portal ([1]) and may also obtain further information on ongoing research projects on the DG Enterprise & Industry website ([2]).

([1]) https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/page/cooperation?callIdentifier=FP7-SPACE-2013-1.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/space/research/fp7-projects/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009525/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Mehr Frauen in die Berufswelt

Jüngsten Berichten zufolge ist es eine Frage der Flexibilität der Arbeitgeber, ob Frauen verstärkt in die Erwerbswelt kommen: So fehlen zum Beispiel in Österreich gerade Kinderbetreuungsplätze, mögliche Teilzeit- und Heimarbeitsmöglichkeiten, um jeder Frau, die es möchte, auch die Erwerbsmöglichkeit zu geben.

Ebenso wird die fehlende Möglichkeit für Frauen, in die Führungsetage zu kommen, vermisst.

Wie gedenkt die Kommission angesichts der Dringlichkeit, dass mehr Frauen zu Erwerbsmöglichkeiten kommen — immerhin würde eine Zunahme der erwerbstätigen Frauen zu einer Steigerung von 5 % des BIP bis zum Jahre 2020 führen —, es den Mitgliedstaaten klarzumachen, dass die geforderte Frauenquote so lange als nötig (bis es selbstverständlich ist, dass eine Frau ebenso eine Führungsposition innehat) ein unabdingbares Muss ist? Gibt es hierzu schon neueste Erkenntnisse?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(30. November 2012)

Der Vorschlag der Kommission zur Gewährleistung einer ausgewogeneren Vertretung von Frauen und Männern unter den nicht geschäftsführenden Direktoren/Aufsichtsratsmitgliedern börsennotierter Gesellschaften vom 14. November 2012 zielt darauf ab, den Frauenanteil in Vorständen beziehungsweise Aufsichtsräten beträchtlich zu erhöhen.

Im Fortschrittsbericht der Kommission zum Thema „Frauen in wirtschaftlichen Entscheidungspositionen in der EU“ ([1]) wird die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung einer ausgewogeneren Vertretung von Frauen und Männern in den Leitungsorganen von Unternehmen hervorgehoben und nachdrücklich darauf hingewiesen, dass die entsprechenden Fortschritte dringend beschleunigt werden müssen.

Wie der jüngsten einschlägigen Studie ([2]) zu entnehmen ist, haben sich in den vergangenen sechs Jahren die Aktienkurse bei Unternehmen mit mindestens einer Frau im Leitungsorgan wesentlich besser entwickelt als bei Unternehmen ohne Frauen in der Chefetage. Seit Ausbruch der weltweiten Finanzkrisen im zweiten Halbjahr 2008 zeigt sich dies besonders deutlich.

Nähere Informationen zu diesem Thema enthält die Folgenabschätzung zu dem Kommissionsvorschlag.

Alle Dokumente im Zusammenhang mit dem Kommissionsvorschlag sind auf folgender Webseite zu finden:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/121114_de.htm

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/women-on-boards_de.pdf
([2]) Credit Suisse Research Institute (August 2012), „Gender diversity and corporate performance“.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009525/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: More women in the world of work

According to recent reports, whether more women enter employment is down to flexibility on the part of employers. In Austria, for example, there are not enough childcare places or opportunities to work part time or at home for every woman who wants to work to be able to do so.

Similarly, opportunities for women to get into the boardroom are lacking.

Given the urgency of ensuring that more women have more employment opportunities — an increase in women in employment would bring about a 5% rise in GDP by 2020 — how does the Commission plan to make clear to Member States that the quotas for women that are being advocated will remain an absolute must for as long as necessary (until it is considered quite normal for a woman to hold a senior management position)? Are there any recent findings on this matter?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The Commission proposal on improving gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies adopted on 14 November 2012 intends to substantially increase the share of female directors on boards.

The Commission's Progress Report on Women in economic decision-making in the EU ([1]) stresses the economic importance of gender diversity in corporate boards and highlights the pressing need to accelerate progress towards a better gender balance among top managers.

The most recent study in this area ([2]) shows that, over the past six years, companies with at least one female board member significantly outperformed those with no women on the board in terms of share price performance. This performance pattern is particularly noticeable since the onset of the global financial crises in the second half of 2008.

The Impact Assessment Report accompanying the Commission proposal presents further evidence as to this issue.

All documents related to the Commission proposal can be found on the following webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/gender-equality/news/121114_en.htm

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/women-on-boards_en.pdf
([2]) Credit Suisse Research Institute (August 2012), 'Gender diversity and corporate performance'.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009526/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Mehr berufstätige Frauen erhöhen das BIP

Einer aktuellen Studie von „Booz & Company" zufolge würde eine Angleichung der Anzahl der berufstätigen Frauen und Männer das BIP in Österreich um 5 % bis zum Jahre 2020 erhöhen. (Die Quote der Erwerbstätigen lag bei den österreichischen Frauen 2011 bei 69,6 Prozent und bei den erwerbstätigen Männern bei 80,8 Prozent).

Ist der Kommission diese Einschätzung bekannt? Wenn ja, welche Empfehlungen/Schritte gedenkt die Kommission gerade im Hinblick auf eine Steigerung des BIP in der Folge gesamteuropäisch zu initiieren? (Dies besonders auch im Hinblick auf die allgegenwärtige schwere und anhaltende Krisensituation in Europa).

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(13. Dezember 2012)

Die Kommission kennt die Bedeutung der Teilnahme von Frauen am Arbeitsmarkt für das Wachstum von Beschäftigung und BIP.

In Österreich haben sich die geschlechterspezifischen Unterschiede bei der Erwerbstätigenquote in der Altersgruppe der 20-64-Jährigen im Jahr 2011 auf 11,2 Prozentpunkte (PP) erhöht ([1]). Während sich das Beschäftigungswachstum in den meisten Mitgliedstaaten verschlechterte, wurde es in Österreich hauptsächlich von der Beschäftigung von Frauen getragen. Da die Anzahl der erwerbstätigen Frauen im Jahr 2011 ([2]) nur langsam stieg, haben jedoch jüngst auch die geschlechterspezifischen Unterschiede zugenommen.

Mit einem durchschnittlichen Beschäftigungswachstum von fast 1 % pro Jahr zwischen 2012 und 2014 ([3]), dürfte die Erwerbstätigenquote in Österreich allmählich steigen, wahrscheinlich über das nationale Gesamtziel von 77-78 % für das Jahr 2020 ([4]).

Im Beschäftigungspaket vom April 2012 hat die Kommission eine erweiterte Agenda für einen arbeitsplatzintensiven Aufschwung vorgestellt.

Die Bekämpfung der Arbeitslosigkeit und der sozialen Folgen der Wirtschafts- und Finanzkrise ist eine der fünf Prioritäten, die im letzten Jahreswachstumsbericht ([5]) genannt werden, der im November 2012 im Hinblick auf das nächste Europäische Semester 2013 veröffentlicht wurde.

In Österreich wird die Beschäftigung von Frauen auch weiterhin die Hauptkomponente der Entwicklung des Arbeitskräfteangebots darstellen, so dass die geschlechterspezifische Unterschiede allmählich abgebaut werden können. In den länderspezifischen Empfehlungen 2012 für Österreich wurde daran erinnert, dass das österreichische Arbeitskräftepotenzial ab 2020 voraussichtlich zurückgehen wird. Österreich wird daher versuchen müssen, das Potenzial der Bevölkerung im erwerbsfähigen Alter voll auszuschöpfen, und zwar durch Maßnahmen bei der relativ hohen Konzentration von Frauen in Niedriglohn- und Teilzeitbeschäftigungen und der Lösung des Problems der niedrigen Erwerbstätigenquote bei älteren Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmern. Die Verknüpfung des Renteneintrittsalters mit der Lebenserwartung ist in diesem Zusammenhang ein wichtiges Element.

([1]) Von 10,6 PP im Jahr 2010; leicht unter dem EU-Durchschnitt von 12,7 PP.
([2]) Weniger als 1 %, die Zahl der berufstätigen Männer stieg hingegen um mehr als 1,3 %.
([3]) Allerdings könnte es auf EU-Ebene ein Nullwachstum geben, siehe Herbstprognose: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2012_autumn_forecast_en.htm
([4]) Siehe: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_de.pdf
([5]) Siehe: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009526/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: More women in employment increase GDP

According to a recent study by Booz & Company, bringing the number of women in employment into line with that of men would boost Austria's GDP by 5% by 2020. (Employment among women in Austria was at 69.6%; among Austrian men, it was at 80.8%.)

Is the Commission aware of this assessment of the situation? If so, what recommendations or measures does it intend to put in place particularly aimed at increasing GDP across Europe? (Especially given the omnipresent severe and persistent crisis in Europe.)

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the importance of female participation in the labour market for both employment's and GDP's growth.

In Austria, the gender gap in terms of employment rate in the 20-64 age group widened to 11.2 percentage points (pps) in 2011 ([1]). While the majority of Member States saw deteriorations in their employment growth, in Austria it was mainly driven by female employment. However, the number of women employed grew slowly in 2011 ([2]) that led to the recent increase in the gender gap.

With average employment growth of nearly 1% per year between 2012 and 2014 ([3]), there is prospect for gradually increasing employment rates in Austria, probably above the overall national target of 77-78% for 2020 ([4]).

In the Employment Package of April 2012, the Commission set out a reinforced agenda for a job-rich recovery.

Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis is one of the five priorities identified in the latest Annual Growth Survey ([5]), published in November 2012 in the framework of the upcoming European Semester 2013.

In Austria, female employment will remain the essential component of labour supply's evolution, allowing a gradual narrowing of the gender gap. As reminded in the Country Specific Recommendation 2012 for Austria, Austria's labour force potential is projected to shrink from 2020 onwards. Therefore, Austria will have to strive to fully tap the potential of working age population by addressing the relatively high concentration of women in low-wage and part-time employment and the problem of the low employment rate of older workers groups. Linking the statutory retirement age to life expectancy is a key element in that respect.

([1]) From 10.6 pps in 2010 and it slightly below the gender gap at EU level (12.7 pps).
([2]) Less than 1% while the number of men employed then rose by more than 1.3%.
([3]) However, there may be no growth at all at EU level, see Autumn forecast: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/2012_autumn_forecast_en.htm
([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf
([5]) See http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009527/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Weitere Sonderstellung der Briten

Der Europäischen Union droht wohl immer mehr die Gefahr, sich mit einer Renationalisierung auseinandersetzen zu müssen. Denn auch der jüngst geäußerte geplante Teilaustritt Großbritanniens scheint deutlich zu machen, dass es in Sachen Justiz und Inneres in Europa größte Differenzen gibt.

1. Wie sieht die Kommission die Entwicklung in Bezug auf Großbritannien und eine damit einhergehende Gefahr (Nationalismen/Zerstückelung) für die Europäische Union?

2. Macht dies nun Schule, werden sicher auch andere Mitgliedstaaten ihre „Bedürfnisse" geltend machen. Mit welcher Strategie will die Kommission solche „Sondereinlagen" unterbinden?

3. Wie allerdings sieht die Kommission die Auswirkungen auf Bürger anderer Mitgliedstaaten, wenn es darum geht, geltendes Recht der Europäischen Union gegenüber Großbritannien konkret durchzusetzen?

Antwort von Herrn Barroso im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2012)

Die wenigen Fälle, in denen Mitgliedstaaten beschließen oder vorschlagen können, von Vertragsbestimmungen ausgenommen zu werden, wurden im Rahmen der Vertragsrevision ausgehandelt und vereinbart. Sie sind in den Verträgen eindeutig festgelegt und eingegrenzt. Außerhalb der Bestimmungen der Verträge gibt es keine Sonderregelungen.

Gemäß Artikel 10 Absatz 4 des Protokolls Nr. 36 des Vertrags von Lissabon kann das Vereinigte Königreich mitteilen, dass es von der Anwendung aller Rechtsakte der Union im Bereich der polizeilichen Zusammenarbeit und der justiziellen Zusammenarbeit in Strafsachen, die vor dem Inkrafttreten des Vertrags von Lissabon angenommen und nicht vor dem 1. Dezember 2014 geändert wurden, ausgenommen werden will.

Bislang ist noch keine entsprechende Mitteilung des Vereinigten Königreichs erfolgt.

Daher lassen sich die etwaigen operativen, rechtlichen oder finanziellen Auswirkungen einer solchen Mitteilung des Vereinigten Königreichs nach Maßgabe des Protokolls Nr. 36 zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt noch nicht abschätzen.

Gemäß Artikel 10 Absatz 5 des Protokolls Nr. 36, wonach das Vereinigte Königreich mitteilen kann, dass es sich an Rechtsakten beteiligen möchte, die für das Vereinigte Königreich nicht mehr gelten, bemühen sich die Organe der Union und das Vereinigte Königreich, „das größtmögliche Maß an Beteiligung des Vereinigten Königreichs am Besitzstand der Union bezüglich des Raums der Freiheit, der Sicherheit und des Rechts wiederherzustellen, ohne dass die praktische Funktionsfähigkeit seiner verschiedenen Bestandteile ernsthaft beeinträchtigt wird, und unter Wahrung von deren Kohärenz".

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009527/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Another special arrangement for the UK

The European Union increasingly risks being faced with a process of renationalisation: plans recently announced by the UK to repatriate some EU competences once again illustrate the major differences in Europe when it comes to justice and home affairs.

1. How does the Commission view developments concerning Britain and the resulting threat (nationalism, fragmentation) to the European Union?

2. Should this catch on, other Member States are bound to assert their own 'needs'. With what strategy does the Commission plan to head off such 'special arrangements'?

3. Moreover, how does the Commission view the impact on citizens of other Member States in terms of enforcing EC law against the UK?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

The limited cases where Member States can decide or propose to be exempted from provisions of the Treaty have been negotiated and agreed as part of the process of Treaty revision. They clearly defined and circumscribed by the Treaties. There are no 'special arrangements' outside of the provisions of the Treaties.

Article 10(4) of Protocol 36 to the Treaty of Lisbon enables the United Kingdom to notify that it opts out of all acts of the Union in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters which have been adopted before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and have not been amended before 1 December 2014.

The United Kingdom has at this point not made such notification.

It is therefore not possible to assess at this stage any potential operational, legal or financial consequences of a possible UK notification made in accordance with Protocol 36.

According to Article 10(5) of Protocol 36, which grants the United Kingdom the right to notify its wish to participate in acts which would have ceased to apply to it, the Union institutions and the United Kingdom shall seek to re-establish 'the widest possible measure of participation in the acquis of the Union in the area of freedom, security and justice without seriously affecting [their] practical operability …, while respecting their coherence'.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009528/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Ziele im Bereich biologische Vielfalt nicht erreicht

Die Organisation BirdLife Europe ist in ihrem neuesten Bericht „Auf dem Weg der Besserung?“ zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass schädliche EU-Subventionen in der Landwirtschaft, der Fischerei, dem Transportwesen und dem Energiesektor eingestellt werden müssen, damit die für 2020 gesetzten Ziele im Bereich biologische Vielfalt nicht gefährdet werden.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser Umstand bekannt?

2. Wie beabsichtigt die Kommission das Bewusstsein der Mitgliedstaaten für den Stand der Dinge in dieser Angelegenheit zu schärfen?

3. Wie im Bericht festgestellt wird, scheint der Bereich biologische Vielfalt im EU-Haushalt 2014-2020 massiv unterfinanziert zu sein. Was unternimmt die Kommission, um die Mittel für den Naturschutz zu erhöhen?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(14. Dezember 2012)

Der Kommission ist die im Bericht „Auf dem Weg der Besserung?“ beschriebene Situation bekannt.

Die Streichung, schrittweise Abschaffung oder Reform der für die Biodiversität schädlichen Subventionen sind Maßnahmen im Rahmen der EU-Biodiversitätsstrategie bis 2020 und setzen eines der Biodiversitätsziele von Aichi gemäß dem Übereinkommen über die biologische Vielfalt um. Die Kommission erörtert die Umsetzung der EU-Strategie regelmäßig mit allen Mitgliedstaaten im Kontext eines gemeinsamen Umsetzungsrahmens und anderer relevanter Foren. Die Arbeit zu den schädlichen Subventionen wird außerdem mit der Arbeit zur Reform umweltschädlicher Subventionen im Rahmen des Fahrplans für ein ressourcenschonendes Europa bis 2020 koordiniert.

Für die Finanzierung der Biodiversitätsstrategie und ihrer sechs Ziele hat die Kommission die Biodiversitätsziele in ihre Vorschläge für die Hauptinstrumente im Rahmen des mehrjährigen Finanzrahmens 2014-2020 miteinbezogen mit spezifischen Prioritäten in den Bereichen der ländlichen Entwicklung, des Europäischen Meeres- und Fischereifonds und als Neuentwicklung auch der Kohäsionspolitik. Die Einbeziehung der Biodiversität in außenpolitische Instrumente ist zudem wichtig für die Einhaltung von internationalen Verpflichtungen. Die Mitgliedstaaten sollen sicherstellen, dass die Biodiversität ausreichend in ihre operationellen Programme integriert ist. Im Bezug auf Ziel 1 der Biodiversitätsstrategie wurden die Gesamtkosten für die Verwaltung des Natura-2000-Netzes zur Erreichung eines günstigen Erhaltungszustands auf 5,8 Mrd. EUR pro Jahr geschätzt. Prioritäre Aktionsrahmen werden von den Mitgliedstaaten erarbeitet und mit der Kommission abgestimmt, um eine bessere Prioritätensetzung der Investitionen in das Natura-2000-Netz und einen gezielteren Einsatz der verfügbaren EU-Mittel zu ermöglichen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009528/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Biodiversity targets not met

In its latest report 'On the road to recovery', BirdLife Europe came to the conclusion that harmful EU subsidies in the agriculture, fisheries, transport and energy sectors must end in order to avoid endangering the 2020 biodiversity targets.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. What does the Commission intend to do in order to raise the Member States' awareness of this state of affairs?

3. As the report states, biodiversity appears to be massively underfunded in the 2014-2020 EU budget. What will the Commission do to increase funding for nature conservation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the situation described in the report 'On the road to recovery'.

Eliminating, phasing out or reforming subsidies that are harmful to biodiversity is an action under the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, which is translating one of the Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Biodiversity. The Commission is discussing regularly with all Member States implementation of the strategy in the context of the Common Implementation Framework and other relevant fora. The work on harmful subsidies will also be coordinated with work on the reform of environmentally harmful subsidies under the 2020 Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe.

Regarding financing of the Biodiversity Strategy and its six targets, the Commission has mainstreamed biodiversity objectives in its proposals for the main instruments under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, including specific priorities in Rural Development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds, and as a new development, in Cohesion Policy. Mainstreaming biodiversity in external instruments is also important for reaching our international commitments. Member States should ensure that biodiversity is adequately integrated in their operational programmes. Concerning Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy, the overall costs of managing the Natura 2000 network for the achievement of favourable conservation status have been estimated at EUR 5.8 billion per year. Prioritised Action Frameworks will be prepared by the Member States and agreed with the Commission to allow for better prioritisation of investments in the Natura 2000 network and more targeted use of available EU funds.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009529/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Biodiversitätsziele verfehlt — die Situation in Zypern

In seinem jüngsten Bericht „On the road to recovery" kam BirdLife Europe zu dem Schluss, dass schädliche EU-Subventionen in den Bereichen Landwirtschaft, Fischerei, Verkehr und Energie eingestellt werden müssen, um eine Gefährdung der Ziele der Strategie Europa 2020 hinsichtlich der biologischen Vielfalt zu vermeiden.

Bezüglich Zyperns wird in dem Bericht klargestellt, dass vor dem Land noch ein weiter Weg bis zur Verwirklichung der Biodiversitätsziele liegt.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser Sachverhalt bekannt? (bitte Einzelheiten angeben)

2. Welche Schritte gedenkt die Kommission zu unternehmen, um Zypern mittels Beratungen zur Einhaltung der 2020-Ziele zu verhelfen?

3. Welche Hilfestellung, Unterstützung und Anleitung kann die Kommission für die sog. Türkische Republik Nordzypern (TRNZ) bereitstellen, damit die Artenvielfalt auch in dem besetzten Gebiet erhalten bleibt?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2012)

Der Kommission ist die Situation in Zypern bekannt und sie steht in regelmäßigem Dialog mit den zyprischen Behörden. In Fällen der Nichteinhaltung der Vorschriften des EU-Rechts hat die Kommission rechtliche Schritte gegen Zypern eingeleitet. Bezüglich der Problematik des illegalen Fangs von Vögeln wird die Frau Abgeordnete auf die Antwort der Kommission zu den schriftlichen Anfragen E-6059/2012 und E-7562/2012 ([1]) verwiesen.

Die Kommission erörtert die Umsetzung der EU-Strategie für Biodiversität für das Jahr 2020 regelmäßig mit allen Mitgliedstaaten im Kontext eines gemeinsamen Umsetzungsrahmens und anderer relevanter Foren. Sie arbeitet daher mit den Mitgliedstaaten zusammen, um die vollständige Umsetzung der EU-Naturschutzvorschriften zum Schutz der biologischen Vielfalt (Ziel 1 der Biodiversitätsstrategie) zu gewährleisten. Dazu zählt auch die Festlegung von prioritären Aktionsrahmen, die eine bessere Prioritätensetzung und einen gezielteren Einsatz der verfügbaren EU-Mittel ermöglichen. Zudem wird dadurch auch der Austausch von Informationen sowie von Erfahrungen und Know-how auf biogeografischer Ebene bezüglich der Bewirtschaftung von Arten und Lebensräumen von Erhaltungswert für die EU und insbesondere der Natura-2000-Gebiete zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten und den Interessenträgern gefördert. Im Hinblick auf die Finanzierung aller Ziele der Biodiversitätsstrategie hat die Kommission die Biodiversitätsziele in ihre Vorschläge für Hauptinstrumente im Rahmen des mehrjährigen Finanzrahmens 2014-2020 miteinbezogen. Zypern muss, wie die anderen Mitgliedstaaten auch, sicherstellen, dass die Erhaltung der Biodiversität ausreichend in seine operationellen Programme integriert wird.

Bezüglich des nördlichen Teils Zyperns verweist die Kommission die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort zur schriftlichen Anfrage E-8001/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009529/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Biodiversity targets not met — situation in Cyprus

In its latest report 'On the road to recovery', BirdLife Europe came to the conclusion that harmful EU subsidies in the agriculture, fisheries, transport and energy sectors must end in order to avoid endangering the 2020 biodiversity targets.

Concerning Cyprus, the report clearly states that the country still has a long way to go before the biodiversity goals are met.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation (please provide details)?

2. What steps does the Commission intend to take in terms of advising Cyprus on how to get on track towards the 2020 targets?

3. What help, support and guidance can the Commission provide when it comes to the so-called Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), to ensure that biodiversity is also respected in the occupied area?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the situation in Cyprus and is in regular dialogue with the Cypriot authorities. In cases of non-compliance with provisions of EC law the Commission has undertaken legal steps against Cyprus. With regards to the issue of illegal bird trapping, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-6059/2012 and E-7562/2012 ([1]).

The Commission is discussing regularly with all Member States the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 in the context of the Common Implementation Framework and other relevant fora. In this context, it is working with Member States to ensure the full implementation of the EU nature legislation to protect biodiversity (Target 1 of the Biodiversity Strategy). This includes developing Prioritised Action Frameworks which will allow for better prioritisation and more targeted use of available EU funds, as well as sharing of experience and expertise at biogeographical level between Member States and stakeholders on the management of species and habitats of EU conservation concern, especially within Natura 2000 sites. Regarding financing of all Targets of the Biodiversity Strategy, the Commission has mainstreamed biodiversity objectives in its proposals for the main instruments under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020. Cyprus, as other Member States, will need to ensure that biodiversity is adequately integrated in its operational programmes.

Concerning the northern part of the island, the Commission would refer the Honourable member to its answer to Written Question E-8001/2012 ([1]).

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009530/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(18 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Turkse pianist aangeklaagd wegens „beledigen" islam

De internationaal bekende Turkse concertpianist Fazil Say is in Turkije aangeklaagd wegens het beledigen van de islam.

In een van de door hem op Twitter geplaatste berichten schreef pianist Say: „Wat als er raki in de hemel is en niet in de hel, maar Chivas Regal in de hel en niet in het paradijs? Wat gebeurt er dan? Dat is de belangrijkste vraag!" In een ander bericht vroeg pianist Say zich af of het paradijs een bordeel is.

Het proces tegen pianist Say begint 18 oktober. Als hij schuldig wordt bevonden, kan hij maximaal anderhalf jaar cel krijgen.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Turkse pianist aangeklaagd wegens beledigen islam" ([1])?

2. Wat vindt de Commissie ervan dat pianist Say in Turkije is aangeklaagd wegens de door hem op Twitter geplaatste berichten? Verwerpt de Commissie deze aanklacht? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat het plaatsen van berichten op Twitter valt onder de vrijheid van meningsuiting? Is de Commissie het dan ook met de PVV eens dat de aanklacht tegen pianist Say hiermee in strijd is?

4. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat de aanklacht tegen pianist Say de zoveelste bevestiging is dat de vrijheid van meningsuiting in Turkije zwaar onder druk staat? Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat Turkije hiermee wederom aantoont dat het land nooit tot de EU moet toetreden? Is de Commissie er dan ook toe bereid alle toetredingsonderhandelingen met Turkije direct te beëindigen? Zo neen, hoe kan de Commissie een eventueel toekomstig Turks EU-lidmaatschap nog verdedigen, wetende dat in Turkije de vrijheid van meningsuiting met voeten getreden wordt?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(5 december 2012)

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar haar antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-005624/2012 van de heer Madlener ([2]).

([1]) http://buitenland.nieuws.nl/699915.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/nl/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009530/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Turkish pianist charged with 'insulting' Islam

The internationally renowned Turkish concern pianist Fazil Say has been charged in Turkey with insulting Islam.

Say made the following comments on Twitter: 'What if there is raki in paradise but not in hell, while there is Chivas Regal in hell and not in paradise? What will happen then? This is the most important question!' In another tweet Say wondered if paradise might be a brothel.

Fazil Say's trial began on 18 October 2012. If he is found guilty, he faces a maximum of 18 months in prison.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report entitled 'Turkish pianist charged with insulting Islam' ([1])?

2. What is the Commission's response to the fact that the pianist Fazil Say has been indicted in Turkey for making the comments quoted above on Twitter? Does the Commission condemn the decision to bring him to trial? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that making comments on Twitter is covered by freedom of expression? Does the Commission then also agree with the PVV that the decision to indict Fazil Say is at odds with freedom of expression?

4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that the indictment of Fazil Say provides yet more proof that freedom of expression is under serious threat in Turkey? Does the Commission agree with the PVV that by taking this step Turkey has once again demonstrated that it must never be allowed to join the EU? Is the Commission therefore prepared to halt all accession negotiations with Turkey immediately? If not, how can the Commission defend the idea of Turkey joining the EU in the knowledge that the Turkish authorities ride roughshod over freedom of expression?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Question E-005624/2012 by Mr Madlener ([2]).

([1]) http://buitenland.nieuws.nl/699915.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009531/12
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(18 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Promotie van „milieuvriendelijke brandstoffen" tegen scherpe prijzen door Lukoil

Het olie- en gasbedrijf Lukoil pronkt met zijn goede reputatie bij de Belgische consumenten: „de scherpst mogelijke prijzen, hoogkwalitatieve producten („milieuvriendelijke brandstoffen") en goede service".

Dit staat in scherp contrast met de berichten over de vele olielekken, voo.a. te wijten aan scheuren in de pijpleidingen, die in Rusland opgetekend werden. In 2011 werd Lukoil door de Russische milieu autoriteiten veroordeeld tot een kleine boete van 27 500 euro vanwege 14 gerapporteerde olielekken (dit terwijl het een jaarlijkse omzet heeft van 80 miljard euro).

Acht de Commissie het in overeenstemming met de wetgeving betreffende misleidende reclame dat Lukoil zijn brandstoffen op zijn website aanprijst als milieuvriendelijk?

Wat is het oordeel van de Commissie over de commerciële acties van een bedrijf dat zich op de Europese markt opwerpt als een prijzenkraker, terwijl de globale milieubalans van dat bedrijf niet bepaald positief is?

Welke maatregelen kan en wil de EU inzetten om voor een gelijk speelveld te zorgen en te voorkomen dat olieproducten tegen lage prijzen op de EU markt kunnen verkocht worden doordat de milieuwetgeving wordt veronachtzaamd?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(30 januari 2013)

De Commissie verbindt zich ertoe te garanderen dat producten die in de EU op de markt worden gebracht aan de hoogste kwaliteitsnormen voldoen overeenkomstig de richtlijn brandstofkwaliteit ([1]). De beweringen over de milieuvriendelijkheid van brandstoffen die bepaalde oliemaatschappijen soms gebruiken bij hun marketingstrategieën, verwijzen feitelijk naar normen voor brandstofkwaliteit en wettelijke vereisten in verband met specificaties waaraan deze brandstoffen op grond van de richtlijn brandstofkwaliteit moeten voldoen om op de EU-markt te worden toegelaten, onder meer ten aanzien van hun milieu-effecten en de broeikasgassen die zij tijdens hun levenscyclus uitstoten.

De lidstaten zijn op grond van de richtlijn brandstofkwaliteit verplicht aan leveranciers die niet aan de voorschriften voldoen, doeltreffende, evenredige en afschrikkende sancties op te leggen die zorgen voor internalisering van de kosten van vervuiling in de productprijzen om onwettig gedrag te ontmoedigen, en zo voor de handhaving van een gelijk speelveld.

Bovendien mogen handelaren op grond van de richtlijn oneerlijke handelspraktijken ([2]) de consument geen onjuiste, onwaarachtige of anderszins misleidende informatie verstrekken over de voornaamste kenmerken van een product, als dergelijke praktijken de gemiddelde consument er waarschijnlijk toe aanzetten een product te kopen dat hij anders niet zou hebben gekocht. Het is in de eerste plaats de bevoegdheid van de nationale autoriteiten en rechtbanken om potentieel misleidende praktijken van bedrijven die op hun grondgebied actief zijn, te onderzoeken.

Verder dringt de Commissie in het kader van haar bilaterale betrekkingen met Rusland er steeds op aan dat strenge milieunormen voor de exploratie, de productie en het vervoer van koolwaterstoffen worden gehanteerd. Ook is er bij de Russische Federatie op aangedrongen uiteindelijk het Verdrag van Espoo ([3]) van de Verenigde Naties te ratificeren, waarin de partijen worden verplicht om het milieueffect van bepaalde activiteiten in een vroeg stadium van de planning te beoordelen.

([1]) Richtlijn 98/70/EG, zoals gewijzigd bij Richtlijn 2009/30/EG, PB L 140 van 5.6.2009.
([2]) Richtlijn 2005/29/EG, PB L 149 van 11.6.2005.
([3]) Verdrag inzake milieueffectrapportage in grensoverschrijdend verband.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009531/12
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Promotion by Lukoil of cheap and 'environmentally friendly' fuels

The oil and gas concern Lukoil makes much of its good reputation in promotional statements aimed at Belgian consumers on its website: 'The lowest possible prices, high-quality products ("environmentally friendly fuels") and good service'.

This stands in sharp contrast to the reports appearing in Russia about frequent oil leaks for which Lukoil is responsible, primarily as a result of cracks in the pipelines it uses. In 2011 the Russian environmental protection authorities imposed a paltry fine of EUR 27 500 on Lukoil as a penalty for 14 reported oil leaks (a figure which must be set against the company's annual turnover of EUR 800 billion).

Does the Commission regard it as consistent with the law on misleading advertising that on its website Lukoil should boast about the 'environmentally friendly' nature of its fuels?

What view does the Commission take of the commercial practices of a company which portrays itself on the European market as a price buster, but makes no mention of the fact that its global environmental record is anything but positive?

What measures can and will the EU take to guarantee a level playing field and ensure that oil products cannot be sold cheaply on the EU market simply because the company which markets them consistently flouts environmental law?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission is committed to ensuring that products marketed in the EU meet the highest quality standards in accordance with the Fuel Quality Directive ([1]). The references to the environmental friendliness of fuels that certain oil companies may employ in their marketing strategies are understood to refer to fuel quality standards and specification-related legal requirements, regulated under that directive, which these fuels must meet in order to be allowed on the EU market, including with regard to their environmental impacts and lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.

The directive requires Member States to impose penalties on non-compliant suppliers that are effective, proportionate and dissuasive and that internalize costs of polluting in product prices in order to dissuade unlawful behaviour and thus ensure a level playing field.

Moreover, under the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ([2]) traders must not provide consumers with false, untruthful or otherwise misleading information, including on the main characteristics of a product, if such practices are likely to cause the average consumer to buy a product that he would not have bought otherwise. It is the primary competence of the national authorities and courts to investigate any potentially misleading practices of companies operating on their territory.

Furthermore, in its bilateral relations with Russia, the Commission consistently insists on high environmental standards in the exploration, production and transportation of hydrocarbons. It has also been urging the Russian Federation to finally ratify the United Nations' Espoo Convention ([3]), which sets out the obligation of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early state of planning.

([1]) Directive 98/70/EC as amended by Directive 2009/30/EC, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.
([2]) Directive 2005/29EC, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005.
([3]) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009532/12
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(18 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Solidariteitsmechanisme bij voetbaltransfers

In 2007 stelde het Europees Parlement in een rapport dat door een grote meerderheid werd goedgekeurd, dat „de voetbalsector voor de onderlinge afhankelijkheid tussen concurrenten moet zorgen en de onzekerheid van wedstrijduitslagen moet waarborgen". Tegelijkertijd erkende het Parlement „dat een dergelijk specifiek kader geen automatische vrijstelling van de communautaire mededingingsvoorschriften rechtvaardigt voor economische activiteiten die door het profvoetbal worden gegenereerd, gezien het toenemende economische gewicht van dergelijke activiteiten;"

Vanwege zijn sociale en maatschappelijke rol, moet het voetbal echter wel kunnen rekenen op een zekere speciale behandeling, wat door de jurisprudentie in het verleden ook erkend werd.

Intussen zijn door de UEFA nieuwe regels ingevoerd die de financiële fair play ten goede moeten komen. Op 21 maart 2012 sprak commissaris Almunia zijn steun uit voor de principes en onderschreef het nieuwe financiële fair play kader als een model voor andere sporttakken.

Toch zijn er tijdens de laatste transferperiode weer astronomisch hoge transfersommen betaald, die de financiële ongelijkheid van de Europese clubs nog maar eens duidelijk maakt.

Een herverdeling en/of aftopping van transfersommen zou deze financiële wedloop op zijn minst kunnen afzwakken; zij kan de basis vormen voor een effectief solidariteitsmechanisme binnen het transfersysteem, zoals dat voor de verdeling van de TV-inkomsten bestaat.

Kan de Commissie meedelen of een dergelijk systeem de toetsing aan het EU verdrag en de communautaire mededingingsregels kan doorstaan?

Kan de Commissie daarbij aangeven welke elementen daartoe cruciaal zijn of aan welke voorwaarden dergelijk systeem zou moeten voldoen?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(6 december 2012)

Sportregels moeten van geval tot geval worden onderzocht, zodat deze op hun verenigbaarheid met de EU-mededingingsregels kunnen worden getoetst. Daarbij moet rekening worden gehouden met de algemene context en de doelstellingen die met een bepaalde regel worden nagestreefd. Gekeken moet worden of de regel een legitieme doelstelling nastreeft en of de beperkende effecten van die regel voortvloeien uit het nastreven van die doelstelling en evenredig zijn aan het behalen van die doelstelling.

Wat betreft de aftopping van transfersommen waarover het geachte Parlementslid het heeft, merkt de Commissie op dat dit soort aftopping weliswaar de economische vrijheid van clubs beperkt, maar dat daarmee misschien wel een legitieme doelstelling (het bevorderen van gelijkheid in sportcompetities) wordt nagestreefd. Zoals echter aangegeven, dienen sportregels te worden beoordeeld binnen het kader van de concrete omstandigheden. Op basis van de beperkte informatie valt niet uit te maken of dit soort regels verenigbaar zijn met het EU-mededingingsrecht.

Wat betreft de herverdeling van transfersommen merkt de Commissie op dat in de transferregels van de FIFA een solidariteitselement is opgenomen met betrekking tot het transfersysteem. Voorts wil de Commissie de aandacht van het geachte Parlementslid vestigen op haar werkzaamheden rond het thema transfers. In december 2011 is de Commissie een studie begonnen van de economische en juridische aspecten van spelertransfers. In die studie moet ook een analyse worden gemaakt van de kwesties die financiële transacties met betrekking tot de transfers van spelers aan de orde stellen. Daarnaast moet zij aanbevelingen formuleren over de vraag of EU-initiatieven nodig zijn om iets te doen aan de problemen die er op dit gebied zouden blijken te bestaan.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009532/12
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Solidarity system for football transfers

In 2007, the European Parliament stated in a report which was adopted by a large majority that 'football must ensure the interdependence of competitors and the need to guarantee the uncertainty of results of competitions'. At the same time, Parliament acknowledged 'that such specific features do not warrant an automatic exemption from the Community competition rules for any economic activities generated by professional football, owing to the increasing economic weight of such activities'.

However, because of the social and societal role of football, it must be able to count on a certain measure of special treatment, a fact which has indeed been recognised by case-law in the past.

More recently, UEFA has introduced new rules intended to promote financial fair play. On 21 March 2012, Commissioner Almunia expressed his support for the principles and endorsed the new financial fair play framework as a model for other sports.

Nonetheless, during the most recent transfer period astronomical transfer payments were again made, once again underlining the financial inequalities among European clubs.

A redistribution of transfer payments and/or a cap on them could at least attenuate the financial competition; it could serve as a basis for an effective solidarity system within the transfer system, such as exists to distribute TV revenue.

Can the Commission indicate whether such a system would be permissible under the Treaty on European Union and Community competition rules?

Can the Commission also say what elements would be crucial for this, or with what conditions such a system would have to comply?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

Sports rules should be investigated on a case-by-case basis in order to assess their compatibility with EU competition rules, taking into account the overall context and the rule's objectives. It has to be assessed whether the rule pursues a legitimate objective, and whether the restrictive effects resulting from such rule are inherent to the pursuit of that objective and are proportionate to its achievement.

Regarding the transfer caps mentioned by the Honourable Member, the Commission notes that, while such caps limit the economic freedom of clubs, they might pursue a legitimate objective (the promotion of equality in sporting competitions). However, as mentioned above, sports rules have to be assessed in the context of the concrete circumstances. On the basis of the limited information, it is not possible to determine such rules' compatibility with EU competition law.

As to the question of the transfer payments' redistribution, the Commission notes that the transfer regulations of FIFA contain a solidarity component linked to the transfer system. Additionally, the Commission wishes to draw the Honourable Member's attention to its work in the area of transfers. In December 2011 the Commission launched a study about the economic and legal aspects of the transfers of players. The study should include an analysis of the issues raised by financial transactions linked to transfers of players and should provide recommendations as to whether EU action is needed to address any identified problems in this field.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009533/12
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(18 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Kallas: „Boete voor EU-landen wegens traag verloop hervormingen luchtruimbeleid"

De creatie van een Europees luchtruim is nog ver weg. Dat stelde de Europese Commissaris voor Transport Siim Kallas op 11 oktober jl. Hij dreigt met boetes voor EU-landen wegens het trage verloop van de hervormingen van hun luchtruimbeleid. De EU streeft naar één internationaal luchtruim met een uniform beleid. Daartoe moeten de 27 lidstaten hun eigen luchtruimen als tussenoplossing verenigen tot 9 grotere gebieden. Dat gaat volgens Kallas nu nog te traag.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Hervorming Europees luchtruim veel te traag" ([1])?

2. Verwacht de Commissie dat de deadline m.b.t. de herstructurering van het Europees luchtruim wordt gehaald? Zo neen, hoe interpreteert zij dit? Impliceert dit dat de lidstaten niet zitten te wachten op een dergelijke herstructurering? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat het opleggen van boetes in dat geval misplaatst zou zijn?

3. Is de Commissie het eens met de constatering dat deze herstructurering is gedoemd te mislukken als er in dit stadium slechts 5 van de 27 landen, waaronder Nederland, op schema liggen? Zo neen, waarom niet? Zo ja, is de Commissie dan voornemens van deze herstructurering af te zien?

4. Kan de Commissie aangeven waarom de EU nog steeds dezelfde kernproblemen ondervindt als 10 jaar geleden? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(4 januari 2013)

1. De Commissie is volledig op de hoogte van het door het geachte Parlementslid vermelde bericht.

2. De Commissie verwacht dat de deadline m.b.t. de herstructurering van het Europese luchtruim niet zal worden gehaald. Als de niet-naleving van verordeningen na 4 december 2012 wordt bevestigd, zullen inbreukprocedures vereist zijn. De functionele luchtruimblokken zijn inderdaad nog niet werkelijk „functioneel", aangezien zij nog steeds de nationale grenzen volgen of omdat hun luchtvaartnavigatiediensten nog niet geoptimaliseerd zijn, of beide. Dit komt voornamelijk door de aanhoudende aandacht voor het afronden van de institutionele problemen in plaats van voor de vaststelling en de uitvoering van operationele verbeteringen.

3. De huidige bevindingen tonen aan dat op dit ogenblik nog geen enkele lidstaat deel uitmaakt van een luchtruimblok dat volledig in overeenstemming met de wetgeving zal zijn. Dit geldt ook voor Nederland, zonder afbreuk te doen aan de werkelijke redenen waarom dit luchtruimblok niet aan de wetgeving voldoet, met inbegrip van de factoren die mee worden veroorzaakt door andere lidstaten. Als de lidstaten kunnen worden gedwongen om hun wettelijke verplichtingen inzake luchtruimblokken na te leven, kan de herstructurering van het luchtruim alsnog een succes zijn, maar met vertraging. De Commissie zal dit initiatief, dat nauwkeurig is gedefinieerd in verordeningen die door het Europees Parlement en de Raad van de EU zijn goedgekeurd, niet laten vallen.

4. Er zijn verschillende redenen voor het moeizame verloop van de oprichting van de luchtruimblokken. Deze zijn voornamelijk te wijten aan het gebrek aan inzet van de lidstaten en de luchtvaartnavigatiediensten en worden verergerd door de beperkingen van de bestaande wetgeving die voortkomt uit een bottom-upaanpak.

([1]) http://www.nu.nl/economie/2931024/hervorming-europees-luchtruim-traag.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009533/12
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Kallas: 'Member States should be fined for reforming their aviation policies too slowly'

The creation of a single European sky is still a distant prospect: so European Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas said on 11 October 2012. He is threatening to impose fines on EU Member States for reforming their aviation policies too slowly. The EU aims to create a single international airspace with a uniform policy. As an intermediate solution, this requires the 27 Member States to merge their own airspace into 9 larger units. Kallas considers that this is still happening too slowly.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report 'Hervorming Europees luchtruim veel te traag' [Reform of European airspace far too slow]? ([1])

2. Does the Commission expect the deadline for restructuring European airspace to be met? If not, how does he interpret this? Does it imply that Member States are not keen on such a restructuring? Does the Commission agree that imposing fines would be inappropriate in that case?

3. Does the Commission agree that this restructuring is doomed to failure if at this stage only 5 of the 27 countries, including the Netherlands, is on schedule? If not, why not? If so, will the Commission abandon this restructuring?

4. Can the Commission indicate why the EU is still experiencing the same key problems as 10 years ago? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(4 January 2013)

1. The Commission is fully aware of the report mentioned by the Honourable Member of the European Parliament.

2. The Commission does not expect the deadline for restructuring European airspace to be met. If current indications of non-compliance with Regulations are confirmed after 4 December 2012, then infringement procedures will be called for. Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) are yet indeed not genuinely 'functional' as they still follow national borders or have not yet optimised their air navigation services, or both. The main cause of this shortcoming has been a protracted focus on finalising institutional issues rather than on identifying and actioning operational improvements.

3. Current findings indicate that today no Member State is in a FAB which is going to be fully compliant. This includes the Netherlands, without prejudice to the actual reasons for the non-compliance of this FAB, including contributing factors generated by other Member States. As long as Member States can be made or forced to comply with their legal obligations on FABs, the airspace restructuring can still succeed, but with a delay. The Commission will not abandon this initiative which is precisely defined in Regulations approved by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU.

4. Several causes explain the unsatisfactory progress in the establishment of FABs. These causes primarily relate to the lack of commitment of Member States and air navigtion service providers and are compounded by the limitations of existing legislation which relies on a bottom-up approach.

([1]) http://www.nu.nl/economie/2931024/hervorming-europees-luchtruim-traag.html

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009534/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(18 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Περικοπές μισθών των ελλήνων δικαστών

Η Τρόικα στην Ελλάδα απαιτεί και επιβάλλει στην ελληνική κυβέρνηση την λήψη σκληρών οικονομικών μέτρων σε βάρος των εργαζομένων τόσο στον δημόσιο όσο και στον ιδιωτικό τομέα.

Τελευταία η Τρόικα ζήτησε την λήψη μέτρων περιορισμού των αποδοχών των ελλήνων δικαστών, οι οποίοι αποτελούν ολιγάριθμο κλάδο (ο αριθμός τους δεν υπερβαίνει τις 4 000) και χαίρουν της εκτιμήσεως και αποδοχής της ελληνικής κοινωνίας απολαμβάνοντας στέρεη αναγνώριση.

Από την αρχή της κρίσης η περικοπή των μισθών των δικαστών υπερβαίνει το 38% των αποδοχών τους, ενώ ζητείται νέα μείωση των αποδοχών τους, ποσοστού 22%, γεγονός που οδηγεί σε μια συνολική μείωση της τάξης του 60%. Εύλογα δημιουργείται η εντύπωση ότι γίνεται προσπάθεια να καταστούν οι δικαστές οικονομικά ενδεείς, ώστε να είναι ευάλωτοι σε τυχόν πιέσεις, να περιορισθεί η ανεξαρτησία και η αμεροληψία τους και, ως εκ τούτου, να πληγεί καίρια η Δικαιοσύνη που αποτελεί βασικό πυλώνα της Δημοκρατίας. Επιπλέον, η ομαλή και απρόσκοπτη λειτουργία της Δικαιοσύνης συμβάλλει και στην οικονομική ανάπτυξη.

Σημειώνεται ότι η «συνταγή» της Τρόικας για εξυγίανση της Ελλάδος επί τριετία είναι πλήρως αποτυχημένη, έχει οδηγήσει την χώρα σε ύφεση και δεν προνοεί για την μείωση των τιμών των αγαθών πρώτης ανάγκης, ιδίως των εισαγομένων και ούτε έχει προτείνει κανένα μέτρο για την ανάπτυξη της χώρας.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Προτίθεται να καταστήσει σαφές στην Τρόικα ότι οι εμμονές αυτές για τον περιορισμό των αποδοχών των δικαστών (περιορισμός που δεν θα αποφέρει κανένα ουσιαστικό έσοδο για το ελληνικό δημόσιο, λόγω του πολύ μικρού αριθμού των δικαστών) βλάπτουν το θεσμό και την λειτουργία της δικαιοσύνης και επιδρούν ακόμη και στην ταχύτητα εισπράξεως πολλαπλασίων δημόσιων εσόδων;

2. Προτίθεται να ζητήσει από την Τρόικα να αποσύρει τις αξιώσεις της αυτές;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Οι μειώσεις στις αμοιβές και στο μέγεθος του δημόσιου τομέα, βάσει του ελληνικού Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής (ΠΟΠ) ([1]), αποτελούν εν μέρει διόρθωση της εξαιρετικά υψηλής αύξησης των μισθολογικών δαπανών στον δημόσιο τομέα πριν από το 2009. Οι δαπάνες για μισθούς του δημόσιου τομέα στην Ελλάδα αυξήθηκαν εξαιρετικά γρήγορα μεταξύ 2000 και 2009 ([2]). Η ετήσια αύξηση 2,1% στην Ελλάδα ήταν σημαντικά υψηλότερη της μέσης ετήσιας αύξησης στην ΕΕ, η οποία ανήλθε μόλις σε 1,4%.

Βάσει του ΠΟΠ, η ισχυρή μείωση του μισθολογικού κόστους στον δημόσιο τομέα την περίοδο 2010-2014, θα ευθυγραμμίσει εκ νέου τη μέση αύξησή του με τον αντίστοιχο μέσο όρο της ΕΕ κατά την ίδια περίοδο ([3]). Η μεγάλη πλειοψηφία των μισθών του δημόσιου τομέα προσαρμόστηκε στην εκτεταμένη μεταρρύθμιση του μισθολογίου τον Νοέμβριο 2011, με την οποία ενισχύθηκε η διαρθρωτική συνοχή των μισθών και μειώθηκαν συνολικά οι μισθοί του δημόσιου τομέα κατά 20% περίπου. Η νέα δέσμη μισθολογικών μέτρων που παρουσίασε η κυβέρνηση στο Μεσοπρόθεσμο Πλαίσιο Δημοσιονομικής Στρατηγικής 2013-2016 ([4]) ολοκληρώνει τη διαδικασία αυτή με τροποποιήσεις στα ειδικά μισθολόγια ορισμένων εργαζομένων στον δημόσιο τομέα, ιδίως των υψηλότερα αμειβόμενων, επεκτείνοντας την προσαρμογή σε όλες τις κατηγορίες των εργαζόμενων στον δημόσιο τομέα.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/index_en.htm
([2]) Πηγή: AMECO.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/index_en.htm
([4]) http://www.minfin.gr/content-api/f/binaryChannel/minfin/datastore/a7/91/b0/a791b0bf4bc73a9679bac65792933157d4cf7b27/application/pdf/%CE%9C%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%9F%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%98%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%9C%CE%9F_2013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009534/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Cuts in the salaries of Greek judges

In Greece the Troika has demanded that the Greek Government take tough economic measures against workers in both the public and private sectors, imposing this policy on the government.

Recently the Troika called for measures to reduce the salaries of Greek judges, who are few in number (there are no more than 4 000): they are widely respected and accepted by Greek society, enjoying robust recognition.

Since the onset of the crisis, judges' salaries have been cut by over 38% , while a further 22% in their salaries is now being sought, leading to an overall decrease of approximately 60%. Understandably this has created the impression that an effort is being made to make judges financially dependent, vulnerable to any pressure, to limit their independence and impartiality and thereby deliver a mortal blow to justice which is the main pillar on which democracy stands. In addition, the smooth operation of justice also contributes to economic growth.

It should be noted that the Troika's recipe for the financial consolidation of Greece over the last three years has completely failed and led the country into a recession and does not provide for a reduction in the price of staples, particularly of imported products; neither has the Troika proposed any measures to promote growth in Greece.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it intend to make clear to the Troika that its insistence on reducing judges' salaries (a cut which will not generate any significant income for the Greek Government, given the very small number of judges) will damage the institution and administration of justice and even affect the speed at which many sources of public revenue are gathered?

2. Will it ask the Troika to withdraw these claims?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The reduction in the size of the public sector wages and employment under the Greek Economic Adjustment Programme (EAP) ([1]) is in part a correction of the exceptionally strong pre-2009 growth in the public sector wage bill. The public sector wage bill in Greece grew exceptionally fast between 2000 and 2009 ([2]). The expansion in Greece at 2.1% p.a. was considerably higher than the EU average growth of just 1.4% p.a.

Under the EAP, the strong reduction in the public sector wage bill in the period 2010-14 will bring its average growth back into line with the EU average growth over the whole period 2010-14 ([3]). The great majority of public sector wages were adapted in the comprehensive reform of the public sector wage grid in November 2011 that increased the coherence of the wage structure and reduced overall public sector wages by almost 20%. The new wage package presented by the government in the Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy 2013-16 ([4]) completes this process through modifying the special wage regimes of some public sector workers, notably the higher paid ones, thus spreading the adjustment across the entire range of public employees.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/index_en.htm
([2]) *Source:* AMECO.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/index_en.htm
([4]) http://www.minfin.gr/content-api/f/binaryChannel/minfin/datastore/a7/91/b0/a791b0bf4bc73a9679bac65792933157d4cf7b27/application/pdf/%CE%9C%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%9F%CE%A0%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%98%CE%95%CE%A3%CE%9C%CE%9F_2013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009535/12
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Third follow-up question on Structural Fund assistance to Liverpool City Council

I refer to the answers to my Written Questions P-008791/2011 dated 23 September 2011, P-001376/2012 dated 6 February 2012 and P-005377/2012 dated 29 May 2012 on Structural Fund assistance for the City of Liverpool Cruise Terminal.

In its answer to the latest of these questions, the Commission said that it 'is in contact with the United Kingdom authorities and has reminded them of their obligation to comply with EU state aid rules. As far as the ERDF funding is concerned, the Commission has written to the United Kingdom authorities requesting information to assess the change in use of the terminal in terms of its compliance with Article 30.4 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999. Should the conditions of the ERDF initial grant offer letter no longer be complied with, a recovery of the ERDF grant might be necessary.'

I understand that of the GBP 9.2 million of UK state aid received for the project, GBP 8.8 million has now been repaid by Liverpool City Council. The UK Government has lifted the restriction on the cruise terminal being used for turnaround purposes, and it is now expected to handle approximately 30 such visits per year.

1. Is the Commission aware of these latest developments?

2. Can the Commission update me on where matters now stand on the ERDF grant received by this project, and on its discussions with the UK authorities?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(26 November 2012)

The Commission has been informed by the United Kingdom authorities that Liverpool City Council had repaid GBP 8.8 million of the GBP 9.2 million domestic grant provided for the investment in the City of Liverpool Cruise Terminal ('the Terminal'). The Commission is aware that the Terminal has been used for turnaround purposes since 29 May 2012 but it does not know the expected number of turnaround visits per year. The United Kingdom authorities informed only that the estimated capacity of the Terminal is 30 turnaround visits per year. The Commission is not aware whether the turnaround restriction has been officially lifted by the United Kingdom Government.

Concerning the ERDF grant, the United Kingdom authorities have informed the Commission that there was no turnaround restriction in the original ERDF grant letter and subsequent amendments. The Commission also observes that Council Regulation 1260/1999 ([1]) does not foresee such specific conditions for the co-financing of projects. With regard to the possible application of Article 30.4 of Council Regulation 1260/1999, it appears on the basis of the information currently at the disposal of the Commission that the change in nature of the facility has occurred more than five years after the approval of the ERDF contribution by the competent national authority. This does not preclude recovery of the ERDF grant on other grounds, if these were to surface in the course of the investigation.

As regards the current state of play of the state aid investigation, the United Kingdom authorities informed that they will submit a state aid notification soon.

([1]) OJ L161, 26.06.1999, p. 1.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009536/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Preços das viagens aéreas

Algumas companhias aéreas cobram aos seus passageiros valores adicionais caso estes optem por despachar bagagem de porão e por fazer check-in presencial nos aeroportos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento destas práticas?

2. Considera que os consumidores são devidamente informados das diferenças de valores quando contratam os serviços das referidas transportadoras aéreas?

3. Que exigências de transparência e de publicidade lhes faz?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(5 de dezembro de 2012)

A Comissão tem conhecimento da prática adotada por várias companhias aéreas, que consiste em cobrar e anunciar as taxas de bagagem como um suplemento de preço opcional, tendo também consciência de que essas formas de cobrança podem variar, conforme se trate de compras na Internet ou nos aeroportos.

O Regulamento (CE) n.° 1008/2008 ([1]) inclui disposições sobre transparência de preços, indicando claramente, no seu artigo 23.°, n.° 1, que as companhias aéreas têm o direito de cobrar essas taxas. Os suplementos de preços opcionais e os respetivos montantes devem, contudo, ser comunicados de forma clara, transparente e sem ambiguidades no início do processo de reserva, devendo ser dado ao consumidor a possibilidade de optar.

Atendendo a que a aplicação destas disposições é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros — sob a supervisão da Comissão na sua qualidade de guardiã dos Tratados — cabe aos Estados-Membros decidir se esses suplementos de preços são apresentados de acordo com o Regulamento (CE) n.° 1008/2008. Por conseguinte, se essas práticas forem consideradas ilegais, os organismos de execução nos Estados-Membros podem tomar as medidas adequadas.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1008/2008 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 24 de setembro de 2008, relativo a regras comuns de exploração dos serviços aéreos na Comunidade, JO L 293 de 31.10.2008, p. 3-20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009536/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Air travel costs

Some airlines charge their customers a supplement for checking in baggage and for checking in at the airport in person.

1. Is the Commission aware of this practice?

2. Does it consider that consumers are given sufficient information about price differences when purchasing services from such airlines?

3. What are its requirements in terms of transparency and advertising for such airlines?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the practice of baggage fee applied and advertised as an optional price supplement by several airlines and is also aware that ways of collection can vary depending if it is a purchase online or at the airport.

Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 ([1]) contains price transparency provisions which clearly indicates in its Article 23(1) that airlines have a right to collect such fees. These optional price supplements and their amounts shall however be communicated in a clear, transparent and unambiguous way at the start of of any booking process and their acceptance by the consumer shall be on an 'opt-in' basis.

Since the Member States are in charge of the enforcement of these provisions, under the control of the Commission as guardian of the Treaty, it is therefore up to the Member States to determine whether such price supplements are displayed according to the Reg (EC) 1008/2008. Thus, Member States enforcement bodies are in position to take appropriate action may it be found unlawful.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community, OJ L 293, 31.10.2008, p. 3-20.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009537/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Equilíbrio demográfico na União Europeia

O respeito pelo equilíbrio demográfico no seio da Comissão Europeia é um princípio que deveria nortear as nomeações em todos os níveis hierárquicos da Comissão.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. De que modo procura assegurar o respeito pelo princípio do equilíbrio demográfico?

2. Considera que este se encontra suficientemente acautelado no seu seio?

3. De que dados dispõe quanto a esta questão?

Resposta dada por Maroš Šefčovič em nome da Comissão
(18 de dezembro de 2012)

1. A Comissão entende que esta questão se refere ao equilíbrio geográfico entre os funcionários. Embora todas as instituições tenham a obrigação de recrutar numa base geográfica tão ampla quanto possível entre os nacionais dos vários Estados-Membros, o recrutamento deverá ser prioritariamente baseado no mérito ([1]). Se forem observados desequilíbrios, a Comissão e o Serviço Europeu de Seleção de Pessoal (EPSO), em cooperação com os Estados-Membros, procuram promover, no Estado-Membro em questão, a realização de carreiras nas instituições da UE. Também na sequência da adesão de novos Estados-Membros, a UE introduz medidas especiais (por exemplo, concursos com base na nacionalidade) durante um «período de transição» ([2]).

2. A Comissão acompanha a composição geográfica do seu pessoal e pode tomar medidas como as descritas no ponto 1. Os motivos dos desequilíbrios demográficos são complexos e podem ser de caráter económico (competitividade dos vencimentos nacionais em alguns Estados-Membros) ou de natureza sociocultural (a questão da segunda língua). As diferenças na estrutura etária entre as diferentes nacionalidades, pode também conduzir ao aparecimento de desequilíbrios. Para resolver este problema, a Comissão propôs um parágrafo adicional ao Artigo 27.° do Estatuto dos funcionários da UE, que prevê medidas corretivas em caso de desequilíbrio grave entre as diferentes nacionalidades ([3]).

3. A repartição dos funcionários da CE por nacionalidade e grau: Projeto de orçamento para 2013 ([4]).

([1]) O Artigo 27.° do Estatuto prevê que: «O recrutamento deve ter em vista assegurar à instituição o serviço de funcionários que possuam as mais elevadas qualidades de competência, rendimento e integridade, recrutados numa base geográfica tão alargada quanto possível dentre os nacionais dos Estados-Membros da União.» O princípio do recrutamento numa base geográfica tão ampla quanto possível é limitado pelo segundo parágrafo do Artigo 27.°: «Nenhum lugar pode ser reservado para os nacionais de um Estado-Membro determinado.».

([2]) Sete anos para os países UE-10, cinco anos para os UE-2 e a Croácia.

([3]) «O princípio da igualdade entre os cidadãos da União permite a cada instituição adotar medidas corretivas caso seja observado um desequilíbrio prolongado e significativo entre as nacionalidades dos funcionários que não seja justificado por critérios objetivos. Essas medidas corretivas não podem, em caso algum, dar origem a outros critérios de recrutamento que não os baseados no mérito. Antes da adoção das referidas medidas corretivas, a entidade competente para proceder a nomeações da instituição em causa aprova disposições gerais para a execução do presente parágrafo nos termos do artigo 110.°. Após um período de cinco anos com início em 1 de janeiro de 2013, a Comissão apresenta um relatório ao Parlamento Europeu e ao Conselho sobre a execução do parágrafo anterior.».

([4]) COM(2012) 300 final — Projeto de orçamento geral das Comunidades Europeias para o exercício de 2013 — documento de trabalho, Parte II — Recursos humanos da Comissão, pp. 15, 22-27.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009537/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Demographic balance in the EU

Appointments at all levels of the Commission's hierarchy should be guided by the principle of demographic balance.

1. How does the Commission seek to ensure that the principle of demographic balance is observed?

2. Does it consider that this principle is observed sufficiently at the Commission?

3. What data does it have with regard to this issue?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

1. The Commission understands the question to refer to geographical balance among staff. While all institutions have the obligation to recruit on the broadest geographical basis from among the nationals of the Member States (MS), recruitment should primarily be based on merit ([1]). If imbalances are observed, the Commission and the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) cooperate with Member States to promote EU careers in the Member State concerned. The EU introduces special measures (e.g. competitions on the basis of nationality) for the duration of a 'transition period' following the accession of new Member States ([2]).

2. The Commission follows the geographical composition of its staff and can take measures as the one described under 1. Reasons for demographic imbalances are complex and can be of economic (competitiveness of national salaries in some MS) or socio-cultural (the second language issue) nature. The difference in age structure of the various nationalities may lead to the emergence of imbalances as well. To address this issue, the Commission has proposed an additional paragraph to Article 27 of the EU Staff Regulations providing for corrective measures in case of serious imbalance between nationalities ([3]).

3. The distribution of EC officials by nationality and grade: draft Budget 2013 ([4]).

([1]) Article 27 of the Staff Regulation provides: 'Recruitment shall be directed to securing for the institution the services of officials of the highest standard of ability, efficiency and integrity, recruited on the broadest possible geographical basis from among nationals of Member States of the Communities'. The principle of recruitment on the broadest geographical basis is limited by the second paragraph of Article 27: 'No posts shall be reserved for nationals of any specific Member State'.

([2]) 7 years for EU-10, 5 years for EU-2 and Croatia.

([3]) 'The principle of the equality of Union's citizens shall allow each institution to adopt corrective measures following the observation of a long lasting and significant imbalance between nationalities among officials which is not justified by objective criteria. These corrective measures shall never result in recruitment criteria other than those based on merit. Before such corrective measures are adopted, the appointing authority of the institution concerned shall adopt general provisions for giving effect to this paragraph in accordance with Article 110. After a five-year period starting on 1 January 2013, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of the preceding paragraph'.

([4]) COM(2012) 300 final — Draft General Budget of the European Commission for the Financial Year 2013 — Working document Part II — Commission Human Resources, pages 15, 22-27.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009538/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: POSEI — Açores — ajudas à exportação

No âmbito do programa POSEI para os Açores, é concedida ajuda para a comercialização de frutas, produtos hortícolas e outros produtos agrícolas fora do arquipélago. Esta ajuda ascendia, em junho de 2009, a 10 % do valor da produção comercializada no caso dos produtores individuais ou a 13 % no caso das organizações de produtores.

O programa POSEI não previa qualquer apoio adicional para o transporte da produção para exportação, mas a Comissão mostrou-se disposta a receber propostas de alteração ao POSEI por parte das autoridades regionais e nacionais, caso o considerassem necessário.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Recebeu propostas de alteração nesse sentido?

2. Compreende que, num contexto de crise económica com a consequente retração do mercado nacional, os produtores açorianos têm cada vez mais necessidade de procurar vender as suas produções noutros países e que esta venda se torna particularmente difícil devido às circunstâncias próprias da ultraperifericidade?

3. Estaria disponível para conceder maiores ajudas à exportação e escoamento destes e outros produtos açorianos?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(27 de novembro de 2012)

A Comissão tem conhecimento dos problemas que os produtores açorianos enfrentam.

Porém, o nível atual da ajuda concedida no âmbito do Programa POSEI para os Açores com o objetivo de apoiar a comercialização de produtos agrícolas locais fora da região já corresponde ao máximo que pode ser concedido em conformidade com o Regulamento (CE) n.° 793/2006 da Comissão ([1]). Mais concretamente, o artigo 22.° deste regulamento estabelece que o montante da ajuda concedida para a comercialização de produtos das regiões ultraperiféricas no resto da União Europeia não pode exceder 10 % do valor da produção comercializada. Este limite pode ser elevado para 13 % do valor da produção se esta for comercializada por uma associação, união ou organização de produtores.

Os programas POSEI preveem igualmente diversas outras medidas de apoio à produção e transformação de produtos locais, as quais, juntamente com as medidas de apoio à comercialização desses produtos, visam conservar e desenvolver as produções locais.

Relativamente à pergunta do Senhor Deputado acerca da última alteração do Programa POSEI, Portugal, pelas razões acima expostas, não solicitou nenhum aumento da ajuda à comercialização já concedida no âmbito do Programa POSEI para os Açores. Todavia, as alterações solicitadas para 2013 incluem uma proposta de aumento da ajuda já prevista para a expedição de bovinos jovens dos Açores para a Madeira e as Canárias. A Comissão está a examinar o pedido das autoridades portuguesas.

Dada a diversidade das medidas disponíveis para apoiar a produção agrícola local, incluindo a comercialização desta fora da região produtora, a Comissão não considera por ora necessário aumentar o limite máximo da ajuda à comercialização atualmente fixado no Regulamento (CE) n.° 793/2006 da Comissão.

([1]) JO L 145 de 31.5.2006, pp. 1-55.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009538/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: POSEI — Azores — aid for exports

Aid has been granted under the POSEI programme for the Azores for exporting fruit, vegetables and other agricultural products. In June 2009, this aid amounted to 10% of the value of exports in the case of individual producers and 13% in the case of producer organisations.

The POSEI programme does not lay down any additional aid for transporting products for export, but the Commission has expressed its willingness to receive proposals for amendments to the POSEI programme from the regional and national authorities, if deemed necessary.

1. Has the Commission received any proposals for amendments in this regard?

2. Is it aware that, in a situation of economic crisis with the consequent shrinking of the national market, producers in the Azores are increasingly reliant on exporting their products, which is especially difficult due to the particular conditions of the outermost regions?

3. Would it be prepared to increase aid for exports and extend aid to other products from the Azores?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

The Commission is aware of the challenges that producers in the Azores are faced with.

However, the amount of aid granted under the POSEI programme for the Azores for marketing local agricultural products outside of the region is already set at the maximum rate that can be granted according to Commission Regulation (EC) No 793/2006 ([1]). More precisely, Article 22 of this regulation provides that the amount of aid granted for marketing of products of the outermost regions elsewhere in the EU shall not exceed 10% of the value of the production marketed. This limit may be raised to 13% of the value of the production in case it is marketed by a producer association, union or organisation.

POSEI programmes in fact also provide for a variety of other measures assuring support for producing and processing local products. These measures, together with those to support the marketing of local products, are all aimed at maintaining and developing local production.

With respect to your request on the latest amendment of the POSEI programme, Portugal did not request the increase of the marketing aid already granted under the POSEI programme for the Azores for the reasons set above. However, the amendments submitted for 2013 included a proposal for increasing the aid already foreseen for the dispatching of young bovine animals from the Azores to Madeira and the Canary Islands. The Commission is examining the request of the Portuguese Authorities.

In view of the variety of measures available to support local agricultural production, including its marketing outside of the production region, the Commission does not consider it necessary at this stage to increase the ceiling for marketing aid currently set in Commission Regulation (EC) No 793/2006.

([1]) OJ L 145, 31.5.2006, P. 1-55.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009539/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Cortiça — ponto da situação

A União Europeia é a maior exportadora mundial de cortiça e os montados de sobro do sul da Europa constituem a primeira barreira contra o avanço da desertificação.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como vê atualmente a situação do setor da cortiça na UE, nos países do Sul e em Portugal? Que grau de prioridade lhe atribui?

2. Está disponível para reforçar os apoios à renovação e desenvolvimento dos montados de sobro, bem como ao maior dinamismo do setor?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(6 de dezembro de 2012)

1) A Comissão esclareceu já, na sua resposta às perguntas E-1154/09 e E-2248/10 ([1]), que está perfeitamente consciente dos problemas, tanto económicos como ambientais, que afetam o setor corticeiro na UE.

A Comissão reitera que, a nível da UE, não existe qualquer regime setorial de apoio à indústria de transformação da cortiça. Contudo, a montante, os montados de sobro podem beneficiar de medidas de desenvolvimento rural. Concretamente, o Regulamento (CE) n.° 1698/2005 do Conselho ([2]), relativo ao apoio ao desenvolvimento rural pelo Fundo Europeu Agrícola de Desenvolvimento Rural (Feader), prevê apoio a medidas relacionadas com a proteção e a gestão sustentável dos montados de sobro e com a inovação no setor. A concessão de apoio financeiro para estes objetivos depende da prioridade que lhes conferem os Estados-Membros nos seus programas de desenvolvimento rural.

2) Em 12 de outubro de 2011, a Comissão propôs legislação no sentido de tornar a PAC numa política mais eficaz, na perspetiva de uma agricultura mais competitiva e sustentável e de dinamização das zonas rurais. A proposta de reforma do regulamento relativo ao desenvolvimento rural inclui uma medida florestal (artigo 22.°) que poderá apoiar igualmente a expansão das zonas de montado de sobro. Além disso, através desta nova medida agroflorestal, os montados de sobro — novos ou já existentes — poderão ser convertidos em sistemas agroflorestais suscetíveis de também contribuírem para a correta manutenção do montado. Relativamente à transformação da cortiça, são várias as medidas que poderão apoiar o desenvolvimento do setor; citem-se, a título de exemplo, o desenvolvimento empresarial, a transformação e a comercialização, a criação de agrupamentos de produtores e a cooperação. A aplicação efetiva destas medidas continuará a depender principalmente dos Estados-Membros.

([1]) Disponível em http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/pt/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) JO L 277 de 21.10.2005, pp. 1-40.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009539/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Cork — current situation

The European Union is the world's largest exporter of cork and the cork oak forests in southern Europe constitute our primary defence against encroaching desertification.

1. What is the Commission's view of the current situation of the cork sector in the EU, the southern countries and Portugal? What level of priority does it give the situation?

2. Is it prepared to increase support for the renewal and development of the cork oak forests and for fostering growth in the sector?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

1. The Commission has already clarified in its response to Question E-1154/09 and E-2248/10 ([1]) that it is well aware of the problems affecting the EU's cork sector, whether it is of an economic or environmental nature.

The Commission reiterates that at the EU level, there are no sector specific support schemes for the cork-processing industry. However, the up-stream cork forest resources may benefit under rural development schemes. Specifically, Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([2]) on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) provides support for measures related to the protection, sustainable management of cork oak forests and innovation in the sector. Actual spending on these objectives depends on how Member States prioritise them in their rural development programmes.

2. On 12 October 2011 the Commission presented legal proposals designed to make the CAP a more effective policy for a more competitive and sustainable agriculture and vibrant rural areas. The proposal for rural development regulation includes a reformed forestry measure (Article 22) which could also support the increase of cork oak forest areas. Through the new agroforestry measure, new or existing cork oak forests could also be converted to agroforestry systems which could further help the proper maintenance of these forests. Concerning processing of cork, several measures e.g.: business development, processing and marketing, setting up of producer groups and cooperation, could support the sector's development. The actual uptake of these measures will continue to depend primarily on Member States.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1-40.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009540/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: REACH — ponto da situação

O Regulamento REACH entrou em vigor em 1 de junho de 2007. Este regulamento criou a Agência Europeia dos Produtos Químicos (ECHA), que está incumbida da gestão corrente dos processos de registo, avaliação, autorização e restrição de produtos químicos. O Regulamento REACH determina igualmente que os Estados-Membros criem serviços nacionais de assistência.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Como vê atualmente a situação do setor?

2. Que avaliação faz da aplicação do regulamento REACH?

3. Como avalia o funcionamento dos serviços nacionais de assistência?

4. Considera que os operadores do setor têm sido devidamente esclarecidos sobre questões relacionadas com as obrigações que lhes incumbem no quadro desse regulamento?

Resposta dada por Antonio Tajani em nome da Comissão
(11 de dezembro de 2012)

1. O REACH aplica-se a vários setores industriais, entre os quais a principal destinatária é a indústria dos produtos químicos. A indústria química europeia desempenha um papel importante a nível mundial, apesar de ter perdido recentemente a sua posição de maior produtora de produtos químicos do mundo ([1]), sobretudo devido ao forte crescimento da indústria chinesa ([2]). Contudo, o valor absoluto das vendas ([3]) desta indústria continua forte e apresentou uma boa recuperação após a crise de 2008. Apesar da quebra de 2 % nas vendas de produtos químicos da UE em abril de 2012, em comparação com abril de 2011, as vendas de produtos químicos da UE são superiores ao nível registado antes da crise ([4]).

2. A Comissão encontra-se neste momento a finalizar o seu trabalho de revisão do Regulamento REACH ([5]) a fim de publicar as suas conclusões nas próximas semanas. Esta revisão constitui uma avaliação ampla dos primeiros anos de vigência do regulamento e está a ser preparada com base nos relatórios fornecidos pelos Estados-Membros e pela ECHA, assim como num número significativo de estudos lançados pela Comissão.

Após a sua publicação, a Comissão espera um amplo debate que envolva outras instituições da UE, Estados-Membros e partes interessadas.

3. Todos os Estados-Membros possuem serviços de assistência em funcionamento. Um panorama de todos os serviços de assistência nacional está disponível no sítio Web da ECHA ([6]). Além disso, a ECHA criou e coordena as atividades da *HelpNet*, um organismo cujos objetivos incluem a troca de conhecimentos, a coordenação de ações, a formação e a informação dos correspondentes serviços de assistência acerca dos novos desenvolvimentos ([7]).

4. A experiência adquirida com a fase de pré-registo e com o prazo de registo de 2010 indica que as empresas dispunham dos conhecimentos necessários para cumprir os requisitos do Regulamento REACH. Tendo em vista o próximo prazo de registo em 2013, a Comissão tem colocado a tónica em ações de sensibilização associadas às PME e aos utilizadores a jusante.

([1]) 2001: 29,8 % das vendas a nível global, em 2011: 19,6 %http://www.cefic.org/Documents/FactsAndFigures/FF_2012/Facts%20and%20Figures%20Leaflet%20Sept2012.pdf
([2]) 2001: 8,1 % das vendas a nível global, em 2010: 26,8 % http://www.cefic.org/Documents/FactsAndFigures/FF_2012/Facts%20and%20Figures%20Leaflet%20Sept2012.pdf
([3]) 539 mil milhões de euros em 2011, http://www.cefic.org/Documents/FactsAndFigures/FF_2012/Facts%20and%20Figures%20Leaflet%20Sept2012.pdf
([4]) 537 mil milhões de euros em 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/final_report/hlg_final_report_july09.pdf
([5]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 1907/2006.
([6]) http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/support/helpdesks/national-helpdesks/list-of-national-helpdesks.
([7]) Por exemplo: ferramentas TIC, orientações legais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009540/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: REACH — current situation

The REACH regulation entered into force on 1 June 2007. This regulation established the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), which is responsible for managing the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals. The REACH regulation also requires the Member States to set up national helpdesks.

1. What is the Commission's view of the current situation in this sector?

2. What is its assessment of the implementation of the REACH regulation?

3. What is its assessment of the functioning of the national helpdesks?

4. Does it consider that operators in the sector have received sufficient information regarding matters relating to the obligations incumbent upon them within the framework of this regulation?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

1. REACH applies to many industrial sectors, of which the primary addressee is the chemicals industry.

The European chemicals industry is a major global player even though it recently lost its position as the world's biggest chemicals producer ([1]), mainly due to strong growth in China ([2]). Nevertheless, it remains strong in absolute sales figures ([3]) and has recovered strongly after the 2008 crisis. Despite a drop of 2% of EU chemical sales in April 2012 compared to April 2011, EU chemical sales remain higher than the pre-crisis level ([4]).

2. The Commission is currently finalising its work on the review of REACH ([5]) with a view to publishing its conclusions in the coming weeks. This review is a broad assessment of the first years of operation of the regulation and is being prepared on the basis of the reports submitted by Members States and ECHA, as well as a significant number of studies launched by the Commission.

After its publication, the Commission expects a wide-ranging debate involving other EU institutions, Member States and interested parties.

3. All Members States have functioning helpdesks. An overview of all national helpdesks is available on the ECHA webpage ([6]). In addition, ECHA established and coordinates the activities of the HelpNet, a body whose aims include exchanging knowledge, coordinating actions and educating, respectively informing helpdesk corespondents on new developments ([7]).

4. Experience from the pre-registration phase and of the 2010 registration deadline indicate that companies had the necessary knowledge to comply with the requirements of the REACH Regulation. In view of the upcoming registration deadline in 2013 the Commission has focused on awareness raising work related to SMEs and downstream users.

([1]) 2001: 29.8% of global sales, 2011: 19.6% http://www.cefic.org/Documents/FactsAndFigures/FF_2012/Facts%20and%20Figures%20Leaflet%20Sept2012.pdf
([2]) 2001: 8.1% of global sales, 2010: 26.8% http://www.cefic.org/Documents/FactsAndFigures/FF_2012/Facts%20and%20Figures%20Leaflet%20Sept2012.pdf
([3]) EUR 539 billion in 2011, http://www.cefic.org/Documents/FactsAndFigures/FF_2012/Facts%20and%20Figures%20Leaflet%20Sept2012.pdf
([4]) EUR 537 billion in 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/final_report/hlg_final_report_july09.pdf
([5]) Regulation 1907/2006.
([6]) http://echa.europa.eu/web/guest/support/helpdesks/national-helpdesks/list-of-national-helpdesks.
([7]) e.g. IT-tools, guidance, legal aspects.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009541/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: União — saúde pública

Nos termos do artigo 168.° do TFUE, a «ação da União, que será complementar das políticas nacionais, incidirá na melhoria da saúde pública e na prevenção das doenças e afeções humanas e na redução das causas de perigo para a saúde física e mental. Esta ação abrangerá a luta contra os grandes flagelos, fomentando a investigação sobre as respetivas causas, formas de transmissão e prevenção, bem como a informação e a educação sanitária e a vigilância das ameaças graves para a saúde com dimensão transfronteiriça, o alerta em caso de tais ameaças e o combate contra as mesmas.»

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que principais ações e medidas da ação da União destaca neste aspeto?

2. Quais considera serem os principais perigos que atualmente se colocam à saúde pública europeia?

Resposta dada por Maroš Šefčovič em nome da Comissão
(27 de novembro de 2012)

Alguns dos maiores desafios incluem a crescente incidência e os custos das doenças crónicas, algo que provoca uma pressão acrescida nos sistemas de saúde e nas economias dos Estados-Membros. O envelhecimento da população vai reforçar ainda mais esta tendência e aumentar a procura de cuidados de saúde.

Esta situação exige uma ação determinada para procurar resolver os principais fatores determinantes das doenças crónicas, incluindo o tabagismo, uma dieta desequilibrada, o abuso de álcool e a falta de exercício de forma a ajudar a prevenir doenças crónicas. São igualmente necessárias reformas profundas dos sistemas nacionais de saúde no sentido de identificar e resolver as ineficiências a fim de tornar os sistemas de saúde mais eficazes, sustentáveis e capazes de continuar a providenciar cuidados de saúde de alta qualidade e universais às futuras gerações. A Comissão Europeia tem um papel de apoio e complementar na promoção da troca de boas práticas, assim como na criação de valor acrescentado e de economias de escala.

Além disso, a UE desempenha um papel fundamental ao contribuir para a segurança dos cidadãos no âmbito da saúde. A União tem poder legislativo no domínio dos produtos farmacêuticos e dos dispositivos médicos, assim como no que diz respeito à segurança do uso de substâncias de origem humana na medicina. A segurança dos cidadãos pode ser posta em risco devido a novas ameaças transfronteiriças à saúde e é por isso que a UE também cria leis destinadas a vigiar e coordenar as medidas de combate a essas ameaças.

Para mais informações sobre as várias iniciativas ligadas à saúde, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para o sítio Web da Direção-Geral da Saúde e dos Consumidores ([1]) que oferece uma panorâmica completa das suas atividades no âmbito da saúde pública.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_pt.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009541/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: EU — Public health

Pursuant to Article 168 TFEU, 'Union action, which shall complement national policies, shall be directed towards improving public health, preventing physical and mental illness and diseases, and obviating sources of danger to physical and mental health. Such action shall cover the fight against the major health scourges, by promoting research into their causes, their transmission and their prevention, as well as health information and education, and monitoring, early warning of and combating serious cross-border threats to health.'

1. What are the main EU actions and measures in this area?

2. What does the Commission consider to be the main dangers to European public health at the moment?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

Some of the major challenges include the increasing incidence and burden of chronic diseases resulting in increased pressure on Member States' health systems and economies. Population ageing will further enhance this trend and drive up demand for healthcare.

This makes the case for determined action to tackle the key determinants of chronic diseases, including tobacco smoking, unbalanced nutrition, alcohol abuse and lack of exercise so as to help prevent chronic diseases. This situation also calls for in-depth reforms in national health systems to identify and address inefficiencies so as to make health systems more efficient, sustainable and able to continue providing universal high quality healthcare for generations to come. The European Commission has a supportive and complementary role in fostering exchange of good practice and providing added value and economies of scale.

The EU in addition plays a key role in contributing to citizens' health related safety. It legislates in the area of pharmaceuticals and medical devices, as well as on the safety of substances of human origin used in medicine. Citizens' safety can be put at risk by new cross-border health threats and this is why the EU also legislates to monitor and coordinate measures to address such threats.

For additional information on the various health related initiatives activities the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the website of DG Health and Consumers ([1]) which provides a comprehensive overview on its activities on public health.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009542/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Carta Europeia do Investigador e Código de Conduta para a Contratação de Investigadores

A Recomendação da Comissão sobre a Carta Europeia do Investigador e sobre o Código de Conduta para a Contratação de Investigadores é um instrumento não vinculativo que estabelece um conjunto de princípios que países e organismos de investigação podem adotar, numa base voluntária, a fim de proporcionar aos investigadores sistemas atrativos de evolução de carreira.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que iniciativas foram já adotadas para pôr em prática a referida recomendação?

2. Considera que a recomendação contribuiu efetivamente para melhorar as condições de trabalho dos investigadores em início de carreira?

3. Como avalia a «Estratégia de Recursos Humanos para os Investigadores»?

4. Considera que hoje a carreira de investigador é mais atrativa na União Europeia?

5. Que sucessos regista, que problemas reconhece e que desafios identifica neste tocante?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(17 de dezembro de 2012)

1) A Comissão lançou um exercício de avaliação interpares através do qual as universidades, os institutos e os financiadores procuram melhorar as suas estratégias de recursos humanos. Mais de 200 entidades disponibilizaram-se para participar. Até à data, foram atribuídos 113 logótipos «*HR Excellence in Research*», em reconhecimento dos esforços empreendidos pelas entidades galardoadas. As entidades em causa serão objeto de uma avaliação externa no prazo máximo de quatro anos. A Carta Europeia e o Código de Conduta foram subscritos por outras 1 000 entidades.

Em 17 de julho de 2012, a Comissão adotou a Comunicação «Uma Parceria Europeia de Investigação Reforçada em prol da Excelência e do Crescimento» ([1]), que insta os Estados-Membros e as entidades interessadas a aplicarem a Carta e o Código.

Os critérios de avaliação das ações «Marie Curie» do Programa «Pessoas» do 7.° Programa-Quadro ([2]) remetem sempre para a Carta e para o Código. Estas ações fomentam o equilíbrio entre homens e mulheres e servem para definir tendências, oferecendo aos investigadores condições atraentes de emprego e salários concorrenciais, nomeadamente através de um sistema de subvenções familiares e subsídios de mobilidade adequados. Servem ainda para divulgar boas práticas conformes com a Carta e com o Código, através da Ação Cofund.

2) A importância crescente atribuída às estratégias de recursos humanos terá, indiscutivelmente, efeitos positivos.

3) Trata-se de um método útil para ajudar as entidades patronais dos investigadores a melhorarem a sua gestão dos recursos humanos.

4) O efeito combinado dos diversos instrumentos disponíveis ao nível da UE tornou a carreira de investigador mais atraente.

5) As entidades patronais dos investigadores mostram-se muito interessadas em melhorar as suas estratégias de recursos humanos. Comprovou-se que as bolsas concedidas no âmbito das ações «Marie Curie» têm levado essas entidades a adotar as disposições da Carta e do Código. Porém, nem todos os investigadores têm uma situação contratual definida, com os correspondentes direitos. Além disso, nem todas as entidades patronais fizeram as reformas necessárias.

([1]) COM(2012) 392 de 17.7.2012.
([2]) 7.° Programa-Quadro de Investigação e Desenvolvimento Tecnológico (2007-2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009542/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers

The Commission's Recommendation on the European Charter for Researchers and on the Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers is a non-binding instrument laying down a set of principles for adoption on a voluntary basis by countries and research bodies, with the aim of providing researchers with attractive career development systems.

1. What initiatives have already been adopted to implement this recommendation?

2. Does the Commission consider that the recommendation effectively contributes towards improving the working conditions of researchers at the beginning of their career?

3. How does it rate the 'Human Resources Strategy for Researchers'?

4. Does it consider that a career in research in the European Union is now more attractive?

5. What successes has it noted, what problems has it pinpointed and what challenges has it identified in this regard?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

1. The Commission has launched a peer review exercise through which universities, institutes and funders improve their human resources strategies. More than 200 organisations volunteered. So far 113 'HR Excellence in Research' logos have been awarded to acknowledge their efforts. Within four years, these organisations will undergo external review. Another 1,000 organisations also endorsed the Charter and Code in writing.

On 17 July 2012, the Commission has adopted the communication 'A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth ([1])', which calls on Member States and stakeholder organisations to implement the Charter and Code.

The Marie Curie Actions of the FP7 ([2]) People Programme make systematic reference to the Charter and Code in the evaluation criteria. They promote gender balance and act as trendsetters by offering attractive employment conditions as well as competitive salaries to researchers, in particular through a system of adequate family and mobility allowances. They also spread good practices of alignment with the Charter and Code through the COFUND Action.

2. The increased attention for HR strategies will no doubt have a positive impact.

3. This is a useful method to help employers of researchers improve their HR management.

4. The combination of different instruments at EU level has improved attractiveness.

5. There is high interest among employers of researchers to improve human resources strategies. It has been shown that Marie Curie Actions grants have led to employers adopting the Charter and Code provisions. Not all researchers have employment status with accompanying rights. Not all employers have made the necessary reforms.

([1]) COM(2012) 392, 17.7.2012.
([2]) Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7, 2007-2013).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009543/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Acervo legislativo da União — avaliação quantitativa

Por diversas vezes, variados deputados ao Parlamento Europeu e instituições universitárias têm procurado apurar junto da Comissão Europeia qual a efetiva extensão do acervo legislativo vigente na União, bem como qual a percentagem da produção legislativa dos Estados-Membros que dele deriva. A Comissão tem respondido por diversas vezes que essa avaliação sistemática não está feita, que é difícil de realizar, porquanto nem sempre todos os instrumentos legislativos se aplicam da mesma maneira em todos os Estados-Membros e que, de resto, esta seria de escasso valor devido aos diferentes tipos de legislação analisada.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Não considera que, sendo este um tema que é sempre invocado por quem procura demonstrar o quanto a União Europeia legisla em excesso, é altamente relevante a avaliação sistemática ainda por fazer?

2. Não julga que seria mais pedagógico que fosse desenvolvido um esforço visando descortinar o efetivo número e o tipo de instrumentos legislativos vigentes e se promovesse a apresentação de resultados concretos quanto a essa mesma avaliação e que esta apresentação serviria para terminar as especulações e os exageros a esse respeito?

3. Não crê que a segurança jurídica é um fator essencial em qualquer sistema jurídico e que o desconhecimento do acervo legislativo vigente da União pode promover a insegurança, tão contrária ao regular funcionamento das sociedades e dos mercados livres?

4. Considera importante explicar melhor aos cidadãos qual o papel da União Europeia nas suas vidas e pretende dar prioridade ao fortalecimento da comunicação com aqueles? Não julga que estes propósitos terão maior sucesso se lhes transmitisse dados acerca de um assunto sobre o qual tantos querem saber?

Resposta dada por José Manuel Barroso em nome da Comissão
(6 de dezembro de 2012)

1. No âmbito do seu programa de regulamentação inteligente, a Comissão pretende produzir legislação da UE com a mais elevada qualidade possível. Isto inclui a identificação sistemática dos custos desnecessários e dos domínios em que é necessário melhorar o desempenho. A legislação da UE torna-se mais acessível mediante a codificação, a reformulação e a consolidação dos diplomas legais e a revogação dos atos obsoletos.

2. O volume do acervo — números reais e tipo de instrumentos legislativos em vigor — encontra-se acessível ao público na base EUR-Lex ([1]).

A percentagem de legislação dos Estados-Membros que deriva da legislação da UE varia consoante o setor e o Estado-Membro. Não foi ainda realizado qualquer exercício de quantificação, que deve ser ponderado em função das prioridades concorrentes e dos recursos disponíveis, sobretudo da prioridade que é dada à orientação para os resultados, garantindo que a legislação da UE é corretamente aplicada nos Estados-Membros.

3. A Comissão considera que a exigência de segurança jurídica é preenchida através da publicação no Jornal Oficial e das informações inseridas na base EUR-Lex. A fim de melhorar o acesso eletrónico, a Comissão propôs ([2]), em 2011, que a publicação eletrónica do Jornal Oficial passasse a produzir efeitos jurídicos e apoia iniciativas como um novo portal EUR-Lex, que contribuirá para aumentar ainda mais a acessibilidade.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm
([2]) 2011/0070 (APP).

4. A Comissão dá grande prioridade à comunicação com os cidadãos sobre a UE. Os sítios do Portal Europa, como o «Europe Direct» ([3]), o «Viver na União Europeia» ([4]), o Portal Europeu da Justiça ([5]) e o «A Sua Europa» ([6]), incluem conselhos e informações destinados aos cidadãos e às empresas.

([3]) http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm
([4]) http://europa.eu/eu-life/index_en.htm
([5]) https://e-justice.europa.eu/home.do.
([6]) http://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009543/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: EU legislative *acquis* — quantitative assessment

On several occasions, various Members of the European Parliament and university representatives have tried to find out from the European Commission the actual extent of the legislative *acquis* in force in the EU, and the percentage of the legislation produced by the Member States deriving from it. The Commission has replied on several occasions that no systematic assessment has been carried out, and that it is difficult to do so, because the legislative instruments are not always applied in the same way in all the Member States, and, in any case, such an evaluation would be of little value due to the different types of legislation analysed.

1. Does the Commission not think that, since this topic is always raised by those who wish to show that the EU legislates to excess, the systematic assessment that remains to be carried out is highly relevant?

2. Does it not consider that it would be more educational to carry out work to establish the actual numbers and types of legislative instrument in force and present concrete results regarding this assessment, and that such a presentation would put an end to speculation and exaggeration in this regard?

3. Does it not believe that legal certainty is a fundamental part of any legal system and that a lack of knowledge of the current EU legislative *acquis* could lead to uncertainty, which is contrary to the proper functioning of free markets and societies?

4. Does it consider that it is important to explain more clearly to the public the role played by the EU in their lives and to try to prioritise improved communication with the public? Does it not believe that these ends would be achieved more successfully if information were to be provided on this matter, with regard to which so many would like to be informed?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

1. As part of its smart regulation agenda the Commission aims to deliver EU legislation that is of the highest regulatory quality possible. This includes a systematic identification of unnecessary costs and areas for performance improvement. EU legislation is made more accessible by codification, recast, consolidation of legal texts and repeal of obsolete acts.

2. The volume of the *acquis* — actual numbers and types of legislative instruments in force — is publicly available in EUR-Lex ([1]).

The share of Member State law deriving from EU legislation varies from sector to sector and from Member State to Member State. A measurement exercise has not been conducted and needs to be seen in the perspective of competing priorities and resources available, not least the priority given to a results orientation in ensuring that EC law is correctly applied in the Member States.

3. The Commission considers that the requirements of legal certainty are fulfilled by publication in the Official Journal and information in EUR-Lex. To improve electronic access, the Commission proposed ([2]) to give legal effect to the electronic publication of the Official Journal in 2011 and is supportive of initiatives such as a new EUR-Lex portal which should further enhance accessibility.

4. The Commission assigns high priority to communication with citizens about the EU. Sites on Europa such as 'Europe Direct' ([3]), 'Your life in the EU' ([4]), the European e-Justice Portal ([5]) and 'Your Europe' ([6]) all provide advice and information to citizens and business.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm
([2]) 2011/0070 (APP).
([3]) http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm
([4]) http://europa.eu/eu-life/index_en.htm
([5]) https://e-justice.europa.eu/home.do.
([6]) http://europa.eu/youreurope/index.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009544/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Sarampo e rubéola na UE

Notícias dão conta do aumento de casos de sarampo e rubéola na União Europeia.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Dispõe de dados acerca deste eventual recrudescimento das doenças?

2. Que avaliação faz da situação?

3. Que medidas tomou ou prevê tomar a este respeito?

Resposta dada por Joe Borg em nome da Comissão
(17 de dezembro de 2012)

Verificou-se um crescimento acentuado dos casos de sarampo na UE durante 2010 (30 264 casos) e 2011 (30 567 casos), o que representa um aumento de quatro a seis vezes em comparação com os anos anteriores. Em 2012, foram registados 5 037 casos de sarampo até ao final de julho.

Registou-se um aumento acentuado de casos de rubéola em 2012 até ao final de julho: 18 296 casos, em comparação com os 4 618 casos em 2010 e os 3 440 casos em 2011.

O aumento de casos de sarampo e rubéola é provocado pela diminuição da cobertura vacinal contra estas doenças. A vacinação é da responsabilidade dos Estados-Membros.

Os Estados-Membros devem, nos termos da Decisão n.° 2119/98/CE ([1]), notificar os casos de sarampo e rubéola no sentido de alertar outros Estados-Membros para a ameaça e assim permitir que estes tomem medidas de saúde pública.

A Comissão, em estreita colaboração com o Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças, intensificou os seus esforços para a erradicação do sarampo e da rubéola através da elaboração de material de comunicação para o público que defende a vacinação para os profissionais da saúde, o apoio à troca de boas práticas e a melhoria da recolha de dados sobre a cobertura vacinal. Na sequência das conclusões do Conselho sobre a imunização das crianças ([2]), a Comissão organizou, em outubro de 2012, uma conferência sobre o tema ([3]), com uma grande variedade de partes interessadas, para fazer um ponto de situação das ações que foram empreendidas até agora e para identificar as áreas prioritárias para ações futuras.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1998D2119:20090807:PT:PDF.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:202:0004:0006:PT:PDF.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/events/ev_20121016_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009544/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Measles and rubella in the EU

A rise in the number of cases of measles and rubella in the European Union has been reported.

1. Does the Commission have any data regarding this alleged increase in outbreaks?

2. What is its assessment of the situation?

3. What measures has it taken or does it plan to take in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

A steep rise of measles cases was reported in the EU during 2010 (30 264 cases) and 2011 (30 567 cases), a four to six fold increase as compared to previous years. In 2012, 5 037 measles cases were reported up to end July.

A steep rise of rubella cases was reported in 2012 up to end July: 18 296 cases, as compared to 4 618 cases in 2010 and 3 440 cases in 2011.

The rise of measles and rubella cases is caused by a decline of vaccination coverage against these diseases. Vaccination is the responsibility of the Member States.

Member States must, under Decision 2119/98/EC ([1]), notify measles and rubella cases, in order to alert other Member States to the threat and to allow them to take public health actions.

The Commission, in close collaboration with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, has stepped up efforts on measles and rubella elimination by developing communication material for the public, advocating vaccination to healthcare workers, supporting the exchange of best practices, and improving data collection on vaccination coverage. Further to the Council conclusions on childhood immunisation ([2]), the Commission organised in October 2012 a conference on childhood immunisation ([3]) with a wide range of stakeholders, to take stock of actions taken so far and to identify priority areas for future action.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1998D2119:20090807:EN:PDF.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:202:0004:0006:EN:PDF.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/events/ev_20121016_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009545/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Combate à obsolescência de computadores e outros aparelhos

O constante aparecimento de aparelhos e sistemas contendo tecnologias de informação e comunicação tornam patente a rapidez com que novas versões substituem as antigas e como aquelas rapidamente se tornam igualmente obsoletas. Impedir ou travar esta constante inovação ameaçaria pôr em causa o processo criativo, implicaria custos desrazoáveis para as empresas que investem no melhoramento e constituiria uma entorse à concorrência num mercado que se deseja sobretudo livre. Não obstante, é evidente que a obsolescência recorrente de aparelhos e sistema tem um impacto ambiental tremendo e que urgirá promover a reutilização de equipamentos mais antigos ou estimular que estes, em vez de serem deitados fora, possam ser atualizados.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Que avaliação faz do grau de desperdícios neste setor?

2. Qual o impacto ambiental da obsolescência permanente de computadores e outros aparelhos?

3. Considera que deve intervir de modo a incutir nos consumidores o propósito de reduzir o número de vezes que se desfazem dos seus equipamentos ou de que estes possam ser reaproveitados?

4. Que medidas tomou ou prevê tomar neste tocante?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

A quantidade de resíduos de equipamentos elétricos e eletrónicos produzida anualmente na UE é estimada em cerca de 10 milhões de toneladas. Prevê-se que, até 2020, essa quantidade aumente para 12 milhões de toneladas. Os novos objetivos em matéria de recolha incluídos na Diretiva 2012/19/UE assegurarão a recolha separada de cerca de 10 milhões de toneladas de resíduos do tipo em causa a partir de 2019.

O impacto ambiental das tecnologias da informação e das comunicações (TIC) traduz-se principalmente no consumo de energia na fase de utilização, bem como na poluição causada pela produção dos equipamentos. Esta última pode ser reduzida de forma considerável se os dispositivos eletrónicos forem utilizados por períodos mais longos, reutilizados ou reciclados.

A Comissão incentiva a utilização por períodos mais longos e a reciclagem de equipamentos TIC através da política de contratos públicos ecológicos e da rotulagem ecológica. No que respeita à aquisição de computadores pelas entidades públicas, a Comissão recomenda às entidades adjudicantes que incluam nos cadernos de encargos exigências em matéria de adaptação/atualização, de disponibilidade de peças sobressalentes e, no caso dos PC, a possibilidade de substituir o disco rígido e a unidade de CD ([1]). O regime de rótulo ecológico da UE inclui critérios sobre a possibilidade de reparação pelo utilizador, a desmontabilidade e o prolongamento da vida útil ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/criteria/office_it_equipment.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:151:0005:0014:PT:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009545/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Combating the obsolescence of computers and other devices

The constant appearance of information and communication technology devices and systems clearly shows the speed with which new versions replace the old ones and then they also soon become obsolete. Any attempt to impede or halt this constant innovation would risk undermining the creative process, involve disproportionate costs for companies investing in improvements and hinder competition in a market which is supposed to be free. However, it is clear that the recurrent obsolescence of devices and systems has a huge environmental impact and that steps will have to be taken to promote the recycling of older equipment or to encourage updating instead of discarding.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the level of waste in this sector?

2. What is the environmental impact of the constant obsolescence of computers and other devices?

3. Does the Commission consider that it should intervene in order to instil in consumers the idea of replacing their equipment less frequently or recycling it?

4. What measures have been taken or will be taken in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The level of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) generated is estimated to be around 10 million tonnes per year in the EU. By 2020, it is estimated that the volume of WEEE will increase to 12 million tons. The new collection targets agreed with Directive 2012/19/EU will ensure that around 10 million tons will be separately collected from 2019 onwards.

The environmental impact of information and communication technology (ICT) is mainly related to energy consumption in the use phase and pollution caused by the production of hardware. The latter can be reduced considerably if electronic devices are used for a longer period, reused or recycled.

The Commission encourages longer use and recycling of ICT through the policy on green public procurement and environmental labelling. As regards computers purchased by public authorities, the Commission recommends to contracting authorities that they include in their tenders requirements for upgradability, the availability of spare parts and (for PCs) the possibility to exchange the hard disk and the CD drive ([1]). The EU Ecolabel scheme includes criteria on user reparability, design for disassembly and lifetime extension ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/criteria/office_it_equipment.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:151:0005:0014:EN:PDF.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009546/12
ao Conselho
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Índia — Austrália — União Europeia

A Primeira-Ministra australiana Julia Gillard terminou recentemente uma visita oficial à União Indiana, na qual, para além do início das negociações para permitir a venda de urânio australiano a este país, se decidiu o reforço da cooperação militar entre ambos, a partilha de informações e o combate ao terrorismo e à pirataria.

Assim, pergunto ao Conselho:

1. Que apreciação faz da evolução do relacionamento entre a Índia e a Austrália?

2. Não considera que devemos estreitar as nossas relações com aqueles que não apenas partilham nominalmente os nossos valores, como os aplicam de modo consistente e empenhado, como é o caso da Índia e da Austrália?

3. A União Europeia estará disponível para contribuir para um estreitamento das relações entre a Índia e a Austrália e ela própria aproximar-se ainda mais de ambas?

4. Admitiria a promoção da realização de uma cimeira a três que procurasse potenciar aquilo que os une no contexto internacional?

Resposta
(21 de janeiro de 2013)

A UE tem acompanhado de perto o desenvolvimento da Parceria Estratégica entre a Austrália e a Índia desde que a mesma foi criada, em 2009.

A UE e a Austrália têm reforçado as suas relações nos dois últimos anos, e as visitas do Presidente Barroso e da Alta Representante à Austrália no outono de 2011 foram provas da importância que a UE atribui a esse relacionamento. As relações entre a UE e a Austrália baseiam-se atualmente numa declaração política, mas está a ser negociado um acordo-quadro juridicamente vinculativo que visa refletir a ampla gama de interesses partilhados pela UE e a Austrália. São organizados periodicamente debates sobre a evolução da situação na região da Ásia-Pacífico, incluindo o papel desempenhado pelos principais atores regionais, no quadro do diálogo político UE-Austrália.

A Índia tem sido desde 2005 um parceiro estratégico importante da UE, e as relações entre ambas as partes têm sido constantemente reforçadas. Este reforço tem sido conseguido através de cimeiras anuais e de reuniões ministeriais, com particular enfoque na cooperação regional e em matéria de segurança, através de uma ampla gama de diálogos e intercâmbio em matéria de cooperação técnica e económica, assim como de negociações sobre um Acordo de Comércio Livre.

Embora a organização de uma cimeira tripartida não esteja atualmente prevista, é ponto assente que uma futura cooperação mais estreita entre a UE, a Austrália e a Índia poderia ser valiosa, especialmente no contexto regional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009546/12
to the Council
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: India, Australia and the European Union

The Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, recently concluded an official visit to India during which, in addition to opening negotiations to enable the sale of Australian uranium to India, it was decided to reinforce military cooperation between the two countries, to share information and to combat terrorism and piracy.

1. What is the Council's view of the development of the relationship between India and Australia?

2. Does it not believe that we should strengthen our relations with those countries that not only nominally share our values but also apply them in a consistent and committed way, such as India and Australia?

3. Will the European Union be willing to help strengthen relations between itself and India and Australia, becoming closer to both?

4. Will it consider encouraging a three-way summit to be held with the aim of capitalising on what unites the EU, India and Australia internationally?

Reply
(21 January 2013)

The EU has been following the development of the Strategic Partnership between Australia and India closely since it was established in 2009.

The EU and Australia have been strengthening their relations over the last two years, and the visits by President Barroso and the High Representative to Australia in autumn 2011 were evidence of the importance the EU attaches to this relationship. EU-Australia relations are currently based on a political declaration, but a legally binding Framework Agreement is being negotiated which is intended to reflect the broad range of shared interests between the EU and Australia. Discussions on developments in the Asia/Pacific region, including the role of major regional players, take place regularly in the framework of the EU-Australia political dialogue.

India has been an important EU strategic partner since 2005, and relations between the EU and India have been steadily strengthened. This is being achieved through annual summits and ministerial meetings, with a particular focus on regional and security cooperation, through a broad range of technical and economic cooperation dialogues and exchanges, and through negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement.

While the organisation of a three-way summit is not currently envisaged, it is recognised that closer future cooperation between the EU, Australia, and India could be of value, particularly in the regional context.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009547/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Índia — Austrália — União Europeia

A Primeira-Ministra australiana Julia Gillard terminou recentemente uma visita oficial à União Indiana, na qual, para além do início das negociações para permitir a venda de urânio australiano a este país, se decidiu o reforço da cooperação militar entre ambos, a partilha de informações e o combate ao terrorismo e à pirataria.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Que apreciação faz da evolução do relacionamento entre a Índia e a Austrália?

2. Não considera que devemos estreitar as nossas relações com aqueles que não apenas partilham nominalmente os nossos valores, como os aplicam de modo consistente e empenhado, como é o caso da Índia e da Austrália?

3. A União Europeia estará disponível para contribuir para um estreitamento das relações entre a Índia e a Austrália e ela própria aproximar-se ainda mais de ambas?

4. Admitiria a promoção da realização de uma cimeira a três que procurasse potenciar aquilo que os une no contexto internacional?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(12 de dezembro de 2012)

A UE tem vindo a acompanhar de perto o desenvolvimento da parceria estratégica entre a Austrália e a Índia desde que esta foi instituída em 2009.

Nos dois últimos anos a UE tem reforçado as suas relações com a Austrália. As visitas do Presidente e da Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente da Comissão à Austrália, no outono de 2011, confirmaram o interesse que a UE tem neste importante país com quem partilha muitas ideias. Embora as relações entre a UE e a Austrália tenham atualmente por base uma declaração política, está a ser negociado um acordo para criar um quadro jurídico vinculativo que reflita as suas intensas relações de cooperação. No âmbito do diálogo político entre a UE e a Austrália são discutidos regularmente os desenvolvimentos na Ásia/Pacífico, incluindo o papel dos principais intervenientes na região.

A Índia tem sido um importante parceiro estratégico da UE desde 2005, é um dos países com os quais tem aprofundado relações de várias formas: realizando cimeiras e reuniões ministeriais anuais em que é dada especial ênfase à cooperação regional e em matéria de segurança; através de uma ampla gama de diálogos e intercâmbios de cooperação técnica e económica; e ainda por meio de negociações para um acordo de comércio livre. A Índia foi também referida recentemente pelo Governo australiano no seu Livro Branco «Austrália no Século da Ásia», como um dos cinco países em relação aos quais pretende desenvolver uma estratégia diplomática específica.

Embora a organização de uma cimeira tripartida não esteja de momento a ser considerada, reconhece-se que, no futuro, uma maior cooperação entre a UE, a Austrália e a Índia poderá ser uma mais-valia, em particular no que se refere ao contexto regional.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009547/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — India, Australia and the European Union

The Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, recently concluded an official visit to India during which, in addition to opening negotiations to enable the sale of Australian uranium to India, it was decided to reinforce military cooperation between the two countries, to share information and to combat terrorism and piracy.

1. What is the Vice-President's view of the development of the relationship between India and Australia?

2. Does she not believe that we should strengthen our relations with those countries that not only nominally share our values but also apply them in a consistent and committed way, such as India and Australia?

3. Will the European Union be willing to help strengthen relations between itself and India and Australia, becoming closer to both?

4. Will she consider encouraging a three-way summit to be held with the aim of capitalising on what unites the EU, India and Australia internationally?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The EU has been following the development of the Strategic Partnership between Australia and India closely since it was established in 2009.

The EU and Australia have been strengthening their relations during the last two years, and President Barroso's and HR/VP's visits to Australia in autumn 2011 confirmed the EU's interest in this important like-minded country. While EU-Australia relations are presently based on a political declaration, a legally binding Framework Agreement is being negotiated to reflect the broad cooperation agenda. Discussions on developments in Asia/Pacific, including the role of major regional actors, regularly take place in EU-Australia political dilaogue.

India has been an important EU strategic partner since 2005, and one with which the EU's relations have been steadily deepening in several ways: through annual Summits and Ministerial meetings, with a particular focus on regional and security cooperation; through a broad range of technical and economic cooperation dialogues and exchanges; and through the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement. India has also been named in the Australian Government's recent 'Australia in the Asian Century' White Paper as one of five countries with whom it will develop a specific diplomatic strategy.

While the organisation of a three-way Summit is not for the time being envisaged, it is recognised that closer future cooperation between the EU, Australia, and India could be of value, particularly in the regional context.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009548/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Estatuto da vítima

A Decisão-Quadro europeia relativa ao estatuto da vítima (2001/220/JAI) ([1]), adotada em 15 de Março de 2001, entende-se por «vítima, a pessoa singular que sofreu um dano, nomeadamente um atentado à sua integridade física ou mental, um dano moral, ou uma perda material, diretamente causadas por ações ou omissões que infrinjam a legislação penal de um Estado-Membro».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. De que modo pretende promover a proteção das vítimas e defender o seu estatuto?

2. Considera que a legislação europeia vigente é adequada a essa função?

3. Que medidas vem tomando de modo a aumentar a consciência pública quanto à necessidade de proteger e cuidar das vítimas e evitar situações semelhantes?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(4 de dezembro de 2012)

A Diretiva 2012/29/UE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 25 de outubro de 2012 ([2]), que estabelece normas mínimas relativas aos direitos, ao apoio e à proteção das vítimas da criminalidade e que substitui a Decisão-Quadro 2001/220/JAI do Conselho, aborda a qualidade do tratamento que as vítimas recebem após o crime e durante o processo penal que se segue. Esta diretiva garantirá que o tratamento reservado às vítimas de crimes cumpra as mesmas normas mínimas em todos os Estados-Membros da UE. A referida diretiva vem reforçar consideravelmente os direitos das vítimas em matéria de informação, apoio, proteção e direitos processuais durante os processos penais comparativamente ao quadro jurídico existente ao abrigo da Decisão-Quadro de 2001. A Comissão considera que a Decisão-Quadro 2001/220/JAI não foi suficientemente aplicada pelos Estados-Membros [ver relatórios da Comissão sobre a aplicação, COM(2004) 54 e COM(2009) 166].

A nova diretiva prevê algumas disposições que irão fazer com que as vítimas conheçam melhor os seus direitos, assegurar que os profissionais recebam formação sobre as necessidades das vítimas, incentivar a cooperação entre os Estados-Membros e aumentar a sensibilização para os direitos das vítimas. Os Estados-Membros terão de transpor esta diretiva para o direito nacional até 16 de novembro de 2015.

([1]) JO L 82 de 22.3.2001, p. 1.
([2]) JO 315 de 14.11.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009548/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Standing of victims

The European Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings (2001/220/JAI) ([1]), adopted on 15 March 2001, defines as a 'victim […] a natural person who has suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering or economic loss, directly caused by acts or omissions that are in violation of the criminal law of a Member State'.

1. How does the Commission intend to foster the protection of victims and safeguard their standing?

2. Does it consider that current European legislation adequately fulfils this function?

3. What measures are being taken to increase public awareness of the need to protect and take care of victims and prevent similar recurrences?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The recently adopted Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 ([2]) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, addresses the quality of treatment that victims receive in the aftermath of crime and during the criminal proceedings that follow. The directive will ensure that crime victims receive the same minimum standard of treatment in all EU Member States. The directive considerably strengthens victims' rights to information, support, protection and their procedural rights when participating in criminal proceedings compared to the current legal framework under the 2001 Framework Decision. The Commission considers that the framework Decision has not been sufficiently implemented by the Member States (see Commission implementation reports COM(2004)54 and COM(2009)166).

The new Directive includes a number of provisions that will increase victims' awareness of their rights, ensure that professionals are trained on victims' needs, encourage cooperation between Member States and the public and target awareness raising on victims' rights. The Member States will have to transpose the directive into national law by 16 of November 2015.

([1]) OJ L 82 of 22.3.2001, p.1.
([2]) OJ 315 of 14.11.2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009549/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Máquinas ATM — cartões e dinheiro

Existem múltiplas situações em que os consumidores se esquecem dos seus cartões quando procedem a levantamentos de dinheiro nas máquinas ATM, porque este é-lhes distribuído antes de aqueles serem ejetados e retirados da ranhura onde foram previamente inseridos. Algumas máquinas que têm este sistema avisam os consumidores por meio de sons e luzes de que se esqueceram do cartão no seu interior, mas os casos persistem.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento destas situações?

2. Não considera que diminuiriam substancialmente, se as máquinas ATM fossem programadas para apenas entregarem o dinheiro requerido após a ejeção do cartões e sua subsequente retirada da ranhura como já sucede em diversos países?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(18 de dezembro de 2012)

A Comissão sabe que há várias práticas na União Europeia relativamente aos levantamentos de dinheiro nas máquinas ATM: quando se pretende levantar dinheiro em algumas delas, este sai da máquina antes da devolução, pouco depois, do cartão de pagamento; noutras, porém, só depois de o cartão ser retirado é que sai o dinheiro que se pretende levantar.

Todavia, a Comissão não proporá a harmonização destas práticas, dado que as disparidades neste domínio dificilmente se podem considerar um obstáculo ao funcionamento do Mercado Único.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009549/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: ATM machines — cards and cash

Consumers frequently leave their cards behind when withdrawing cash from ATM machines where the cash is issued before the cards are ejected and removed from the slot. Some machines with this system use lights and sounds to alert consumers to the fact that they have left their card in the machine, but it still happens.

1. Is the Commission aware of this?

2. Does it not consider that, if the ATM machines were programmed to only issue the cash requested once the card had been ejected and removed from the slot, as is already the case in various countries, these occurrences would be substantially reduced?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The European Commission is aware of the differing practices throughout the Union as regards cash withdrawal at ATM machines: when cash is withdrawn, some ATM machines issue the cash before ejecting the payment card little time after; at other ATM machines, however, the payment card needs to be withdrawn before the requested cash is made available.

However, the Commission will not propose to harmonise such practises as the disparities in this regard can hardly be considered an obstacle to the functioning of the single market.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009550/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: „Seltene Krankheiten“

Gegen die bisher vorherrschende Ansicht, die Erforschung der sogenannten „Orphan diseases“ sei unwirtschaftlich, haben sich offenbar jüngst neue Argumente ergeben.

Da prozentual nur so wenige Menschen zum Beispiel an Chorea Huntington, Hämophilie, Mukoviszidose und ähnlichen Krankheiten leiden, haben weder Regierungen noch große Firmen die Erforschung wesentlich finanziert.

Man hat nun herausgefunden, dass diese Erbkrankheiten mit anderen, weit verbreiteten Krankheiten insofern in Verbindung stehen, als dass die Erforschung der „Orphan diseases“ durchaus zu neuen Erkenntnissen und Therapieformen auch für verbreitete Krankheiten führen kann.

1. Inwiefern gäbe es hier so zu sagen eine gesamte europäische Beteiligung und ein gemeinsames Interesse an der Erforschung dieser seltenen Krankheiten (Orphan diseases)?

2. Gibt es Programme oder Fonds, auf die Betroffene in der EU zurückgreifen können (die betroffenen Familien stehen oft vor enormen finanziellen Problemen)?

3. Es gibt zwischen 6000 und 8000 solcher seltenen Krankheiten, wobei Mukoviszidose noch zu den bekannteren zählt. Hat die Kommission einen konkreten Vorschlag, wie die Forschung und Unterstützung der betroffenen Familien auf europäischer Ebene vorangebracht werden könnten?

4. Kann sich die Kommission vorstellen, auf europäischer Ebene ein Netzwerk oder eine Plattform für Betroffene und deren Familien einzurichten?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(3. Dezember 2012)

Die EU unterstützt die Erforschung seltener Krankheiten im Rahmen der aufeinanderfolgenden Forschungsrahmenprogramme RP5, RP6 und RP7 schon seit geraumer Zeit. Außerdem wurde im April 2011 auf Initiative der Kommission und der „National Institutes of Health“ (USA) das „International Rare Diseases Research Consortium“ (IRDiRC) (Internationales Konsortium für Forschung zu seltenen Krankheiten) mit dem Ziel eingerichtet, bis Ende 2020 diagnostische Maßnahmen für die meisten seltenen Krankheiten sowie mindestens 200 neue Therapien für seltene Krankheiten bereitzustellen.

Darüber hinaus fördert die EU seit 2003 Projekte zu seltenen Krankheiten im Rahmen des EU-Gesundheitsprogramms, u. a. auch die Datenbank ORPHANET ([1]). Diese Datenbank ist eine weltweite Referenz für seltene Krankheiten und stellt die umfassendste Informationsquelle für Angehörige der Gesundheitsberufe und Patienten dar.

Über das EU-Gesundheitsprogramm und das RP7 wurden verschiedene Initiativen zu Mukoviszidose finanziell unterstützt, darunter das Netz der europäischen Referenzzentren für Muskoviszidose ([2]) und sein Nachfolger ([3]), das Netz der europäischen Fachzentren für Mukoviszidose, Lymphangioleiomyomatose und Lungentransplantation, sowie das Projekt IMPACTT ([4]) „Immunoglobulin IgY pseudomonas, a clinical trial for cystic fibrosis treatment“ (klinische Prüfung für die Behandlung von Mukoviszidose).

([1]) http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/index.php.
([2]) http://ecorn-cf.eu/index.php?id=21.
([3]) http://www.ence-plan.eu/.
([4]) http://impactt.eu/.

In der europäischen Organisation für seltene Krankheiten sind die nationalen Verbände für seltene Krankheiten vertreten. Ihr gehören 502 Mitglieder in 46 Ländern und 25 nationale Verbände für seltene Krankheiten an. Mit der Unterstützung der Kommission hat diese Organisation die Plattform RARE CONNECT (Menschen mit seltenen Krankheiten verbinden) ([5]) eingerichtet, um den weltweiten Austausch zwischen Familien, die von seltenen Krankheiten betroffen sind, zu fördern.

([5]) http://www.rareconnect.org/de.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009550/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Rare diseases

Contrary to the prevailing opinion that research into orphan diseases is uneconomical, new arguments appear to have emerged.

Since such a small percentage of people suffer from Chorea Huntington, haemophilia, cystic fibrosis and similar diseases, neither governments nor large companies have substantially funded research into them.

It has now been discovered that these genetic disorders are related to other, more common diseases by virtue of the fact that research into orphan diseases could well also lead to new findings and treatment methods for more widespread diseases.

1. To what extent could pan-European participation and a common interest in the research of these rare (orphan) diseases be envisaged?

2. Are there any programmes or funds available to sufferers in the EU (the affected families often face immense financial problems)?

3. There are between 6 000 and 8 000 of these rare diseases — cystic fibrosis is one of the better known ones. Does the Commission have a specific proposal as to how research and support for the affected families could be taken forward at EU level?

4. Will the Commission consider setting up a network or platform at EU level for sufferers and their families?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

The EU has been supporting research on rare diseases for a long time, via its successive Research Framework Programmes FP5, FP6 and FP7. In addition, in April 2011, at the initiative of the Commission and the US National Institutes of Health, the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium, was launched with the aim to deliver diagnostic means for most rare diseases, and no less than 200 new therapies for rare diseases by the end of 2020.

The EU has further supported projects on rare diseases under the EU Health Programmes since 2003. This includes support to the ORPHANET database ([1]), which is the world reference database on rare diseases and constitutes the major repository of information for health professionals and patients.

Several initiatives on cystic fibrosis have been funded by the EU Health Programme and FP7, including the European Centres of Reference Network for Cystic Fibrosis project ([2]) and its follow-up ([3]) 'European networks of centres of expertise for Cystic Fibrosis, Lymphangioleiomyomatosis, and Lung Transplantation', as well as the IMPACTT project ([4]) 'Immunoglobulin IgY pseudomonas, a clinical trial for cystic fibrosis treatment'.

The European Organisation on Rare Diseases is the European federation of national alliances on rare diseases with 502 members in 46 countries and 25 national rare disease alliances. With the support of the Commission, this organisation has launched the platform RARE CONNECT (Connecting rare diseases patients globally) ([5]) to help contacts between rare disease families around the world.

([1]) http://www.orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/index.php.
([2]) http://ecorn-cf.eu/index.php?id=21.
([3]) http://www.ence-plan.eu/.
([4]) http://impactt.eu/.
([5]) http://www.rareconnect.org/en.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009551/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Online-Sucht und etwaige neue Therapiemöglichkeiten

Australischen Forschern zufolge gilt die besonders unter Kindern sich rasch verbreitende Online-Sucht als geistige Störung.

Unter die Diagnose fällt die Abhängigkeit sowohl von PCs, Tablets und Smartphones als auch von Computerspielen. Mittlerweile sollen bereits 9 % der Kinder in den westlichen Industriestaaten betroffen sein.

Die Forscher fordern allgemein verstärkte Untersuchengen, um neue und effizientere Therapieformen entwickeln zu können.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser Umstand bekannt, und gedenkt die Kommission sich daran mit einer ausführlichen europaweiten Studie zu beteiligen?

2. Auf welchen Betrag werden sich die Kosten einer solchen Studie nach Einschätzung der Kommission belaufen?

3. Würde die Kommission auch die Altersgruppe der Jugendlichen und jungen Erwachsenen (20-30 Jährigen), die — wie aus gelegentlichen regionalen Untersuchungen zu erkennen ist — ebenso diese Probleme haben, in ihre Studie einbeziehen?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(28. November 2012)

Die Kommission ist sich des Problems einer übermäßigen Internetnutzung unter Kindern und Jugendlichen bewusst. Um das Problem der übermäßigen Internetnutzung durch Minderjährige realistisch einschätzen zu können, fördert die Kommission im Rahmen des Programms „Sicheres Internet“ eine umfangreiche Studie über die Internetnutzung und ein entsprechendes suchtartiges Verhalten von Minderjährigen.

Ziel der Studie „EU NET ADB“ ist die Ermittlung und Analyse der bestimmenden Faktoren und der Entwicklung der Internetsucht bei Kindern und Jugendlichen in Europa. Im quantitativen Teil wurden 14 000 Jugendliche im Alter von 14 bis 17 Jahren aus sieben europäischen Ländern (darunter auch aus Deutschland) befragt. Zusätzlich wurden in jedem teilnehmenden Land 20 ausführliche qualitative Befragungen durchgeführt.

Ziele sind einerseits die Gewinnung von Erkenntnissen darüber, unter welchen persönlichen Bedingungen Minderjährige zu einer übermäßigen oder intensiven Internetnutzung neigen, und andererseits die Entwicklung vorbeugender Methoden, um die Internetnutzung allgemein sicherer zu machen.

Eine erste Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse liegt bereits vor. Der Abschlussbericht wird im Februar 2013 vorgestellt.

Die Gesamtkosten der zwei Jahre dauernden Studie belaufen sich auf 893 776 EUR.

Die im Rahmen des Programms „Sicheres Internet“ geförderten Studien dienen dem Aufbau einer Wissensbasis über potenzielle Online-Risiken für Kinder und Jugendliche.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009551/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Online addiction and possible new treatments

According to Australian researchers, online addiction, which is rapidly becoming more widespread, particularly amongst children, is considered to be a mental disorder.

The diagnosis covers the addiction to PCs, tablets, smartphones and computer games. Nine per cent of children in Western industrialised countries are allegedly already affected.

The researchers call for a general increase in investigations, to enable the development of new, more efficient treatment methods.

1. Is the Commission aware of this fact and does the Commission intend to participate with the launch of a comprehensive, Europe wide study?

2. What does the Commission consider to be the cost of such a study?

3. Would the Commission include the age bracket of young adults (20 to 30 year olds) in their study, who, as shown in occasional regional surveys, also suffer these problems?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2012)

The Commission is aware of the problem of excessive Internet use among minors. In order to realistically assess the problem of excessive Internet use among minors in Europe, the Commission is funding in the framework of the Safer Internet Programme an extensive study on the Internet use and Internet addictive behaviour of minors.

Goal of the EU NET ADB study is to identify and analyse the determinants and development of Internet addictive behaviour of minors in Europe. The quantitative part was surveyed with 14000 adolescents aged 14-17, from 7 European countries, including Germany. Additionally, in each participating country 20 qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted.

This was to determine under what personal conditions minors tend to excessive or intensive Internet use, and to develop preventive methods to make Internet use safer for everyone.

A first summary of the results is available. The final report will be presented in February 2013.

The total costs of the 2-year study are EUR 893,776.

The studies funded through the Safer Internet Programme aim to build a knowledge base on the potential online risks for children and young people.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009552/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Οδικό έργο «Άξονας Κεντρικής Ελλάδας Ε65»

Σύμφωνα με δηλώσεις εκπροσώπου της ανάδοχου εταιρίας του έργου «Άξονας Κεντρικής Ελλάδας Ε65», που έχει ενταχθεί στο Διευρωπαϊκό Δίκτυο ΤΕΝ, η Ελληνική Κυβέρνηση, σχεδιάζει να καταργήσει την επιδοτούμενη σύμβαση παραχώρησης του εν λόγω αυτοκινητόδρομου. Ο εκπρόσωπος της εταιρίας δήλωσε ότι «το υπουργείο σκέφτεται να αποζημιώσει τον ανάδοχο με 1 δις ευρώ και το έργο να μην γίνει» και πρόσθεσε ότι «με τα ίδια χρήματα θα μπορούσε το έργο να ολοκληρωθεί».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιος είναι ο συνολικός προϋπολογισμός του έργου; Ποια είναι η πρόοδος του φυσικού αντικειμένου μέχρι σήμερα; Τι ποσοστό έχει ήδη χρηματοδοτηθεί; Τί ποσό αντιπροσωπεύουν οι απαλλοτριώσεις που έχουν ήδη πληρωθεί από το ελληνικό δημόσιο, πέραν των όσων έχουν ενταχθεί στον προϋπολογισμό;

2. Μπορεί η Επιτροπή να επιβεβαιώσει αν υπάρχει απόφαση της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης να ακυρώσει την σύμβαση για τον Ε65; Αν ναι, γνωρίζει γιατί το δημόσιο αποφάσισε να υπαναχωρήσει από την σύμβαση; Δεδομένου ότι το έργο συγχρηματοδοτείται, τι συνέπειες θα είχε μια τέτοια απόφαση ως προς τα κονδύλια που ενδεχομένως έχουν δοθεί από την ΕΕ και την ΕΤΕπ; Πόσα έχουν δοθεί;

3. Ποιο ήταν το χρηματοδοτικό σχήμα του έργου; ποιες οι δανείστριες τράπεζες; Οι τράπεζες προβάλουν λόγους για τη μη συνέχιση της χρηματοδότησης και, αν ναι, ποιους; Ποιος είναι ο εγγυητής μέρους ή του συνόλου των τραπεζικών δανείων και με ποια νομική πράξη ορίστηκε;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Ο αυτοκινητόδρομος Ε-65 της κεντρικής Ελλάδας αποτελεί μια παραχώρηση αυτοκινητόδρομου που είχε αρχικό προϋπολογισμό για συνολικό κόστος 1,5 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ για τις περιόδους 2000-2006 και 2007-2013. Για την περίοδο 2000-2006 έλαβε συγχρηματοδότηση 54 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ από τα 97 εκατομμύρια ευρώ της επιλέξιμης δημόσιας δαπάνης. Για την περίοδο 2007-2013 δεν έχει ακόμη υποβληθεί αίτημα για συγχρηματοδότηση. Το μέχρι τούδε ποσοστό ολοκλήρωσης του έργου, με βάση την αξία των εργασιών, υπολογίζεται σε 16%.

Ο αυτοκινητόδρομος Ε-65 βρίσκεται τη στιγμή αυτή υπό συζήτηση μεταξύ των ελληνικών αρχών και των κατόχων της παραχώρησης κατόπιν της οικονομικής κρίσης και των επακόλουθων προβλημάτων για τέσσερις από τις πέντε παραχωρήσεις αυτοκινητόδρομων. Η έλλειψη ρευστότητας από πλευράς τραπεζών δημιουργεί προβλήματα για τη συνέχιση του δανεισμού. Η Επιτροπή δεν αποτελεί συμβαλλόμενο μέρος της συμφωνίας παραχώρησης και δεν είναι ενήμερη αναφορικά με τη συμφωνία μεταξύ των ελληνικών αρχών και των κατόχων της παραχώρησης σχετικά με τον Ε-65. Σύμφωνα με τους όρους της συμφωνίας συγχρηματοδότησης, σε περίπτωση μη επιτυχούς ολοκλήρωσης ενός έργου, εφαρμόζεται η νομοθεσία σχετικά με την ανάκτηση των κονδυλίων. Η Επιτροπή ενθαρρύνει τις συμβαλλόμενες πλευρές να εξεύρουν λύση που θα επιτρέψει τη συνέχιση και την επιτυχή ολοκλήρωση των εργασιών.

Για επικαιροποιημένη ενημέρωση και κόστος, που θα μπορούσαν ενδεχομένως να αποτελούν ή όχι προνομιακή πληροφόρηση κατά τη διάρκεια των διαπραγματεύσεων, η Επιτροπή προτείνει στον κ. βουλευτή να επικοινωνήσει απευθείας με τις ελληνικές αρχές: Υπουργείο Υποδομών, Χαριλάου Τρικούπη 182, 10178 Αθήνα· skaramaliki@yahoo.gr

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009552/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: The 'E65 Central Greece Axis' road project

According to statements made by the representative of the company awarded the 'E65 Central Greece Axis' project included in the Trans-European Network (TEN), the Greek Government is planning to rescind the subsidised concession contract for the motorway concerned. The company representative said that 'the Ministry is thinking of paying the contractor compensation of one billion euro and the project not going ahead', adding that 'the project could be completed with that same money'.

Will the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What is the overall budget for the project? What is the stage of physical progress reached to date? What proportion has already been financed? How much has the Greek State already paid for expropriations beyond those included in the budget?

2. Can the Commission confirm whether the Greek Government has taken a decision to cancel the E65 contract? If so, does it know why the State has decided to withdraw from the contract? Given that the project is being co-financed, what would the implications of such a decision be as regards any funds granted by the EU and the EIB? What is the amount of those funds?

3. What was the financing plan for the project? Which lending banks are involved? Have the banks indicated any reasons for suspending funding and, if so, what are they? Who is the guarantor for all or part of the bank loans and under which legal act was that appointment made?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

The E-65 Motorway of Central Greece is a motorway concession that was initially budgeted at a total cost of EUR 1.5 billion for the 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 periods. For the 2000-2006 period, it received co-financing of EUR 54 million out of EUR 97 million of eligible public expenditure. For the 2007-2013 period, a request for co-financing has not yet been submitted. The project completion, based on the value of works, is calculated at 16%.

The E-65 motorway is currently under discussion between the Greek authorities and the concession holders following the financial crisis and the subsequent problems for four out of the five motorway concessions. The lack of liquidity from the side of the banks creates problems in the continuation of lending. The Commission is not a signatory to the concession agreement and is not aware of an agreement between the Greek authorities and the concession holders concerning E-65. Under the terms of the co-financing agreement, in case of a non-successful completion of a project, the relevant legislation concerning recovery of funds applies. The Commission encourages the parties to find a solution that allows for the continuation and successful completion of the works.

For updated information and costs that might or might not be privileged information during the course of the negotiations, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the Greek authorities: Ministry of Infrastructures, Charilaou Trikoupi 182, 10178 Athens; skaramaliki@yahoo.gr

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009553/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αύξηση της ανεργίας με ταυτόχρονη μείωση των επιδοτουμένων ανέργων

Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία που δημοσίευσε ο Οργανισμός Απασχόλησης Εργατικού Δυναμικού (ΟΑΕΔ), τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2012 στην Ελλάδα, επί συνόλου περίπου 1 260 000 ανέργων, έλαβαν επίδομα ανεργίας 185 870 άτομα. Τον αντίστοιχο μήνα του 2011, επί συνόλου 857 656 ανέργων, έλαβαν επίδομα ανεργίας 213 335 άτομα. Το γεγονός αυτό προκαλεί εντύπωση, γιατί είναι πολύ χαμηλό το ποσοστό των ανέργων που λαμβάνουν το επίδομα συγκριτικά με τον συνολικό τους αριθμό, και γιατί ενώ η ανεργία αυξήθηκε κατά 403 948 άτομα σε ένα χρόνο, οι επιδοτούμενοι άνεργοι μειώθηκαν κατά 27 465 άτομα, στο ίδιο διάστημα.

Κατόπιν των ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Μπορεί να προσδιορίσει που οφείλεται η πτώση στον αριθμό των επιδοτούμενων ατόμων, ενώ παρατηρείται ραγδαία αύξηση της ανεργίας στην Ελλάδα;

Μπορεί να μου παράσχει στοιχεία για το ποια είναι η αναλογία των επιδοτούμενων ανέργων προς το σύνολο των ανέργων, σε άλλες χώρες της ΕΕ; Πιο συγκεκριμένα, μπορεί η Επιτροπή να μου παράσχει τα παραπάνω στοιχεία για Ισπανία και Γερμανία και να με ενημερώσει για τη διάρκεια και το εύρος (μισθωτοί, αυτοαπασχολούμενοι, κτλ) του επιδόματος ανεργίας σε αυτές τις χώρες;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(4 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Το επίδομα ανεργίας στην Ελλάδα είναι επίδομα που βασίζεται στην ασφάλιση και εξαρτάται από προηγούμενες εισφορές και, έτσι, αποκλείονται οι αυτοαπασχολούμενοι, οι νεοεισερχόμενοι στην αγορά εργασίας, καθώς και τα άτομα με βραχεία προηγούμενη προϋπηρεσία. Το γεγονός αυτό, σε συνδυασμό με τη βραχεία διάρκεια της παροχής (έως 12 μήνες), μπορεί να εξηγήσει γιατί ο αριθμός των ατόμων που λαμβάνουν επίδομα ανεργίας μειώνεται σε μια περίοδο κατά την οποία η ανεργία αυξάνεται.

Στην Ισπανία, η κάλυψη του συστήματος προστασίας σε περίπτωση ανεργίας ανερχόταν σε 63,50% τον Οκτώβριο του 2012, με τον αριθμό των καταγεγραμμένων ανέργων να ανέρχεται σε 4 833 521 και τον αριθμό των δικαιούχων επιδόματος ανεργίας σε 2 836 592. Για να λάβει την ανταποδοτική αυτή παροχή, κάποιος μισθωτός πρέπει να έχει καταβάλει εισφορές τουλάχιστον 360 ημέρες τα τελευταία έξι χρόνια. Το επίδομα ανεργίας καταβάλλεται για 4 έως και 24 μήνες και υπολογίζεται με βάση τις τελευταίες 180 ημέρες μισθού και την οικογενειακή κατάσταση του ανέργου. Έως τα μέσα του Ιουλίου του 2012, οι άνεργοι λάμβαναν το 70% του μισθού αναφοράς τους κατά τη διάρκεια των πρώτων έξι μηνών, το οποίο στη συνέχεια μειωνόταν στο 60%. Σήμερα, η μεικτή παροχή, μετά τους πρώτους έξι μήνες, μειώθηκε σε 50% του μισθού αναφοράς.

Στη Γερμανία, το σύνολο των καταγεγραμμένων ανέργων ανερχόταν σε 2 753 000 τον Οκτώβριο του 2012 από τους οποίους 783 000 άτομα λάμβαναν επίδομα ανεργίας, δηλ. 28,4%. Το επίδομα ανεργίας ανέρχεται σε 60% του τελευταίου εισοδήματος αναφοράς (67% για άτομα με παιδιά) και η μέγιστη διάρκεια είναι, γενικά, 12 μήνες. Μετά την περίοδο αυτή, αν η ανεργία συνεχιστεί (ή ανακύψει κάποια άλλη κατάσταση ανάγκης), χορηγείται βασικό εισόδημα για τα άτομα που αναζητούν εργασία το οποίο χρηματοδοτείται από φόρους και υπόκειται σε έλεγχο πόρων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009553/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Increase in unemployment with a simultaneous decrease in the number of unemployed persons receiving unemployment allowances

According to information published by the Greek Labour Employment Organisation (OAED) in September 2012, out of an approximate total of 1 260 000 unemployed persons in Greece, 185 870 were in receipt of an unemployment allowance. In the same month in 2011, 213 335 unemployed people out of a total of 857 656 received an unemployment allowance. This is surprising because the percentage of unemployed persons receiving the allowance in relation to the total unemployment figure is very low and, while the number of unemployed persons increased by 403 948 in a year, those receiving the allowance decreased by 27 465 over the same period.

In light of the above, will the Commission answer the following questions:

Can it specify the reason for this decrease in the number of persons receiving allowances when unemployment in Greece is increasing rapidly?

Can it provide me with information concerning the percentage of persons in receipt of allowances in relation to the total unemployment figure in other EU Member States? More specifically, can the Commission provide me with the above information for Spain and Germany and inform me of the duration and extent of the unemployment allowance in those countries (for employees, self-employed persons, etc.)?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The nature of Unemployment Benefits (UB) in Greece is an insurance-based allowance dependent on previous contributions and thus excluding self-employed, new entrants to the labour market and those with short-term previous experience. This, combined with the short duration of the benefit (up to 12 months), can explain why the number of persons receiving UBs falls in a period where unemployment is increasing.

In Spain, the coverage of the unemployment protection system was 63.50% in October 2012, with the number of the registered unemployed at 4 833 521 and the number of beneficiaries of UB at 2 836 592. For the contributory benefit to be granted, an employee must have contributed at least 360 days in the last six years. The UB is paid for 4 months up to 24 months and it is calculated on the basis of the last 180 days of salary and the family situation of the unemployed. Until mid-July 2012, the unemployed received 70% of its reference salary during the initial six months, falling to 60% thereafter. Now, the gross unemployment benefit, after the initial six months, is reduced to 50% of the reference wage.

In Germany, the total registered unemployed stood at 2 753 000 in October 2012 out of which 783 000 people received UB, i.e. 28.4%. The UB amounts to 60% of the latest reference income (67% for individuals with children) and the maximum duration is, in general, 12 months. After this period, if unemployment continues (or if any other situation of need arises), a tax financed and means-tested basic income for jobseekers in need is granted.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009554/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Μεγάλα οδικά έργα στην Ελλάδα

Σε ερώτησή μου προς τον Πρόεδρο της ΕΤΕπ κ. Hoyer, κατά την παρουσία του στη συζήτηση της Επιτροπής Οικονομικών Υποθέσεων της 20.9.2012, σχετικά με τα μεγάλα οδικά έργα που έχουν σταματήσει στην Ελλάδα, έλαβα την απάντηση ότι «τα έργα υποδομών έχουν δύο βασικά προβλήματα, το πρώτο είναι ότι εκκρεμούν μερικά σχέδια οδικών δικτύων στην Ελλάδα που θα πρέπει να επανεξεταστούν από την άποψη της οικονομικής βιωσιμότητας, υπάρχουν κάποια ερωτηματικά, υπάρχουν κάποιες αμφιβολίες που θα πρέπει να διασκεδαστούν, έχουμε και μια περίπλοκη σχέση, δομή σχέσεων μεταξύ των εργολάβων, της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και ημών. Και για να είμαι ειλικρινής αυτή η κατάσταση είναι πραγματικά εφιαλτική … θέλουμε η ελληνική κυβέρνηση να μας βοηθήσει αν θέλουμε να χρηματοδοτήσουμε αυτά τα σχέδια, θέλουμε άμεση σχέση και εγγύηση από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ποια είναι η πραγματική αιτία των προβλημάτων στην πρόοδο της κατασκευής των 4 οδικών αξόνων (Αυτοκινητόδρομος Αιγαίου, Ιονία Οδός, Ολυμπία Οδός και Ε65);

Τι γνωρίζει σχετικά με τα δύο προβλήματα που αναφέρει ο κ. Hoyer και, συγκεκριμένα, ποια είναι τα σχέδια οδικών δικτύων που εκκρεμούν και «θα πρέπει να επανεξεταστούν από την άποψη της οικονομικής βιωσιμότητας»;

Γιατί χαρακτηρίζεται «εφιαλτική» η σχέση μεταξύ ελληνικής κυβέρνησης, εργολάβων και ΕΤΕπ;

Πώς εννοεί τη βοήθεια και τι εγγύηση θέλει η ΕΤΕπ από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση προκειμένου να χρηματοδοτηθούν τα σχέδια αυτά;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Τα προβλήματα που προκύπτουν σε σχέση με τις παραχωρήσεις των τεσσάρων αυτοκινητοδρόμων στην Ελλάδα οφείλονται κυρίως στην επιδείνωση της οικονομικής και χρηματοπιστωτικής κατάστασης, καθώς και στις συνέπειές της: έλλειψη ρευστότητας από τις τράπεζες, η οποία δημιουργεί προβλήματα στη συνέχιση του δανεισμού των παραχωρησιούχων, μείωση της κυκλοφορίας των οχημάτων και των εσόδων από τα διόδια για τους παραχωρησιούχους και για το ελληνικό κράτος κάτω από τις χαμηλότερες προβλέψεις.

Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι συμβαλλόμενο μέρος της συμφωνίας μεταξύ της Ελλάδας και των παραχωρησιούχων των αυτοκινητοδρόμων. Επομένως, δεν μπορεί να διατυπώσει παρατηρήσεις για οποιαδήποτε πτυχή της εν λόγω συμφωνίας όσον αφορά τις εμπιστευτικές διαπραγματεύσεις που πραγματοποιούνται μεταξύ των άλλων μερών και δεν έχουν ολοκληρωθεί, ούτε και να σχολιάσει ή να ερμηνεύσει τις δηλώσεις που έχουν γίνει από άλλους οργανισμούς.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009554/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Large road construction projects in Greece

In response to the question concerning the large road construction projects that have ceased in Greece, which I put to the President of the EIB, Mr Hoyer, at the meeting of the Committee on Economic Affairs held on 20 September 2012, I received the reply that 'there are two fundamental problems with the infrastructure projects, the first being that some road network projects are pending in Greece that will have to be re-examined from the point of view of economic viability, some questions remain, there are certain doubts that will have to be resolved, and there is also a complex relationship and structure of relations between contractors, the Greek Government and us [the EIB]. And to be honest, the situation is truly nightmarish … We want the Greek Government to help us if we are to be inclined to finance those projects; we want a direct relationship with and guarantee from the Greek Government'.

Will the Commission answer the following questions:

What is the real cause of the problems as regards progress of the construction of the four road axes (the Aegean, Ionia Odos, Olympia Odos and E65 motorways)?

What does it know about the two problems stated by Mr Hoyer and, in particular, which are the road network projects that are pending and 'will have to be re-examined from the point of view of economic viability'?

Why is the relationship between the Greek Government, contractors and the EIB described as 'nightmarish'?

What does the EIB mean by help and what guarantee does it require from the Greek Government in order for those projects to be financed?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The problems faced by the four motorway concessions in Greece are mainly a result of the worsening of the economic and financial situation and the side-effects that it entails: a lack of liquidity from banks which creates problems in continuing lending to concession holders, the drop in traffic and toll-related income for the concession holders and the Greek state below the lowest forecasts.

The Commission is not party to the contractual agreement between Greece and the motorway concessions and can neither comment on non-concluded confidential negotiations of other parties on any of its aspects, nor comment and interpret the declarations made by other institutions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009555/12
to the Commission
Marian Harkin (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Inheritance laws

The Commission is asked for its legal opinion on the following situation in regard to inheritance laws.

An Irish citizen habitually lives in Ireland, but owns a property in another Member State where he temporarily resides.

Is the property in question subject to the inheritance laws of the Member State in which it is situated, or those of the Member State in which the property-owner habitually lives, i.e. Ireland?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

Today, the private international law of each Member State determines the law which governs the succession of a deceased person. According to the rules of Irish private international law, the succession in real estate property is governed by the law of the State in which the respective property is situated. A choice of law is actually not possible under Irish law.

As of 17 August 2015, Regulation (EU) No 650/2012 will apply. This regulation harmonises the rules on the law applicable to successions within the European Union. According to the regulation, as a general rule, the succession of all property of a deceased shall be governed by the law of the State where the deceased is habitually resident at the time of death. It will be possible for a deceased to choose to submit his/her succession to a different law, in particular that of the State of his/her nationality.

Unfortunately, Ireland is not taking part in the Succession Regulation. As a result, the Irish rules on private international law will continue to apply whenever the succession of an Irish citizen in opened in Ireland. Nevertheless, the regulation could be relevant to Irish citizens. This will be the case if the succession of an Irish citizen is opened in a Member State to which the regulation will apply. In such a situation, the authorities of that Member State will recognise a choice made by the Irish citizen in favour of Irish law if such choice is made in accordance with the rules of the Succession Regulation and this even if such a choice would not be recognised in Ireland itself.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009556/12
to the Commission
Rebecca Taylor (ALDE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Implementation of the Habitats Directive in the United Kingdom

Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive requires the Member States to take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and habitats of species in Natura 2000 sites. In my own constituency of Yorkshire and the Humber Region in the UK, blanket bog habitats on Walshaw Moor in the South Pennines that are protected under the Habitats and Birds Directives have been severely degraded as a result of inappropriate management measures. These measures include repeated burning of areas of blanket bog in order to provide habitat for red grouse, and the construction of tracks to enable access for commercial grouse-shooting. The relevant competent authority, Natural England, has failed to take the steps needed to avoid ongoing damage and to restore the degraded areas of blanket bog on Walshaw Moor.

Can the Commission confirm whether or not the competent authorities in the UK are fulfilling their obligations to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and habitats of species under Article 6(2) of the Habitats Directive?

If these obligations are not met, can the Commission give an indication of the action it intends to take?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

The Commission has very recently received a complaint regarding the management and protection of a part of the South Pennine Moors managed by the Walshaw Moor Estate Limited. The Commission is currently analysing this complaint and will ask the UK authorities to provide information in response to the alleged issues. Should it become apparent that the national authorities have not fulfilled their obligations in this respect, the Commission will take the necessary steps to ensure full compliance with the Birds' ([1]) and Habitats ([2]) Directives.

Given that the Commission has not yet had an opportunity to assess the complaint and the allegations made with regard to the situation at Walshaw Moor it is not at this stage possible to answer the first question.

([1]) Council Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010.
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009557/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per il progetto «Sistema Integrato di Mechapa»

Il Sistema Integrato di Mechapa (SIM) è un'idea progettuale da realizzare in un territorio ancora vergine del Nicaragua nel quale coesistono diversi ecosistemi di alto valore naturalistico lungo la costa del Pacifico.

L'obiettivo è quello di definire un modello innovativo d'infrastruttura turistica e residenziale, esportabile in altri contesti e che si proponga lo sviluppo e la promozione dell'intera area, mantenendo inalterato l'ecosistema del Nicaragua e valorizzando nel contempo la cultura locale.

SIM rappresenta, dunque, un progetto d'area «di frontiera» e un modello alternativo d'insediamento misto che ha come obiettivo:

— una crescita economica con la progettazione di un sistema turistico e residenziale e di fonti energetiche ecosostenibili che sfrutti ed esalti le professionalità e la cultura locali e si proponga di dar vita a un insediamento umano a impatto zero, pensato in un contesto di economia chiusa che utilizza le risorse autoctone e non contamina l'ambiente;

— uno sviluppo culturale e imprenditoriale locale con l'implementazione di un programma didattico permanente e la promozione di iniziative di sostegno per tutto l'indotto dell'area e serventi l'intero sistema;

— una valorizzazione dei patrimoni del Nicaragua con l'ideazione di una nuova generazione di «Museo delle Biodiversità» per la promozione dei diversi ecosistemi;

— una proficua collaborazione tra la progettualità e le tecnologie europee e le professionalità e la cultura dell'America Latina.

Alla luce di quanto esposto, e considerando che la Repubblica del Nicaragua è uno dei principali beneficiari degli aiuti dell'Unione europea a favore dell'America Latina, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se esistono finanziamenti a favore del progetto più sopra esposto e del relativo studio di fattibilità?

2. se sono stati finanziati progetti analoghi in altre zone del Nicaragua o in altri paesi target dell'America Latina?

3. il quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(14 dicembre 2012)

1. I fondi UE della cooperazione bilaterale in Nicaragua sono assegnati su base pluriennale (2007-2013) e sono ripartiti tra tre settori: «istruzione», «azioni di governo e sostegno istituzionale» e «questioni economiche e commerciali». Il programma dell'UE è definito in stretta cooperazione con altri donatori e con il governo: il finanziamento del progetto proposto non rientra dunque nella programmazione convenuta. Una fonte potenziale di finanziamento per questo progetto potrebbero essere i programmi regionali per l'America latina ([1]) e/o i programmi tematici ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/thematic_en.htm

2. Uno dei principali obiettivi della cooperazione UE-Nicaragua è migliorare le condizioni socioeconomiche del paese promuovendo, tra l'altro, uno sviluppo economico locale sostenibile. Ad aprile 2012 l'UE ha varato in Nicaragua il programma «Support to local economic development via the tourism sector: the Route of the colonial cities and the volcanoes project» (Sostegno allo sviluppo economico locale attraverso il settore del turismo: il progetto tour delle città coloniali e dei vulcani") mentre un altro progetto dal titolo «Support to sustainable local economic development in the Caribbean Coast via the tourism sector» (Sostegno a uno sviluppo economico locale sostenibile lungo la costa caraibica attraverso il settore del turismo) è attualmente in fase d'elaborazione. I due progetti mirano a promuovere in modo sostenibile (ossia riducendo al minimo l'impatto ambientale negativo del turismo nonché promuovendo iniziative imprenditoriali locali di sviluppo e di istruzione) lo sviluppo economico locale avvalendosi del potenziale turistico di beni naturali e culturali; si esaminerà altresì la possibilità di sinergie con altre azioni collegate nei settori interessati.

3. La Commissione sta attualmente elaborando una proposta per il futuro periodo di programmazione (2014-2020) della cooperazione con il Nicaragua. In questo ambito si definiranno con il governo del paese le priorità per la cooperazione bilaterale; gli interventi saranno volti ad assistere le autorità nazionali nell'attuazione delle riforme strutturali in settori chiave.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009557/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Possible funding for the 'Mechapa Integrated System' project

The Mechapa Integrated System is a project idea that is to be implemented in a still unspoiled area of Nicaragua, where different ecosystems of high conservation value coexist along the Pacific coast.

The goal is to establish an innovative model of tourist and residential infrastructure which could be exportable to other contexts and which aims to develop and promote the entire area, whilst preserving the Nicaraguan ecosystem and, at the same time, enhancing local culture.

The Mechapa Integrated System is therefore a 'border area' project and an alternative model of mixed settlement whose objective is:

— economic growth with the design of a tourist and residential system with sustainable energy sources that exploits and enhances local skills and culture with a view to creating a zero impact human settlement, designed in the context of a closed economy that uses local resources and does not contaminate the environment;

— local cultural and entrepreneurial development with the implementation of an ongoing educational programme and the promotion of support initiatives for all related economic activities in the area, serving the whole system;

— the enhancement of Nicaragua's assets with the conception of a new generation of 'Biodiversity Museum' for the promotion of the various ecosystems;

— a fruitful cooperation between European project development and technological capabilities and the skills and culture of Latin America.

In the light of the above, and considering that the Republic of Nicaragua is a major beneficiary of EU aid for Latin America, will the Commission:

1. say whether funding is available for this project and its feasibility study?

2. say whether similar projects have been funded in other parts of Nicaragua or other Latin American target countries?

3. provide a general picture of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

1. EU bilateral cooperation funds in Nicaragua are allocated on a multiannual basis (2007-2013), and are split between three sectors: 'Education', 'Governance and institutional support' and 'Economic and trade issues'. The EU programme is defined in close cooperation with other donors and with the Government, and the financing of the proposed project does not form part of the agreed programming. A potential source of funding for this project could be the regional programmes for Latin America ([1]) and/or the thematic programmes ([2]).

2. Improving socioeconomic conditions in Nicaragua, including promoting sustainable local economic development, is among the main objectives of EU cooperation with Nicaragua. In April 2012, the EU launched the 'Support to local economic development via the tourism sector: the Route of the colonial cities and the volcanoes project' in Nicaragua. Another project entitled 'Support to sustainable local economic development in the Caribbean Coast via the tourism sector' is currently being prepared. They both aim at promoting local economic development by making use of the tourist potential of natural and cultural assets in a sustainable way (i.e. minimising the negative environmental impact of tourism, fostering local entrepreneurial development and educational initiatives) and will explore synergies with other related actions in the relevant areas.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/thematic_en.htm

3. The Commission is currently preparing a proposal for the future programming period (2014-2020) for cooperation with Nicaragua. The priorities for bilateral cooperation will be defined with the Government of Nicaragua and the actions to be carried out will aim at assisting the authorities in the implementation of structural reforms in key sectors.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009558/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Terapie integrate per il trattamento di disturbi mentali infantili e adolescenziali: nuove linee guida?

Negli ultimi due decenni l'uso degli psicofarmaci ha raggiunto livelli estremamente elevati e la prescrizione è stata estesa anche a bambini in tenera età. La scarsa conoscenza dei possibili effetti negativi di tali sostanze sull'organismo durante il suo sviluppo ha posto e continua a porre argomenti di discussione all'interno della comunità scientifica.

I farmaci antipsicotici possono essere utili nel controllo dei sintomi psicotici o dei pensieri disorganizzati; questi farmaci vengono impiegati anche nel trattamento dei tic o degli scoppi d'ira verbali e occasionalmente per curare l'ansia, e possono aiutare a ridurre il comportamento aggressivo. Secondo la «Food and Drug Administration», gli antipsicotici sono farmaci «off label» per ADHD e altri problemi di comportamento durante l'infanzia. Questi farmaci, infatti, nel controllo del comportamento agiscono sui lobi frontali del cervello e gli effetti collaterali sono gravi e incidono soprattutto con aumento del peso, diabete e problemi cardiaci, mentre sono in fase di studio i danni a livello cerebrale. Dagli studi effettuati dal «Columbia University Medical Center» di New York è emerso che i farmaci antipsicotici vengono prescritti maggiormente per bambini e adolescenti: il tasso di prescrizione è aumentato sette volte per i bambini di un'età inferiore ai 13 anni (0,24-1,83 per 100 persone), mentre per i ragazzi tra i 14 e i 20 anni il tasso è di 0,78-3,76 per 100 persone. Inoltre, la maggior parte dei bambini e degli adolescenti trattati con antipsicotici non riceve psicoterapia, ovvero essi non seguono una terapia integrata che possa aiutarli e supportarli nell'affrontare le cause che sottostanno ai loro sintomi manifesti.

Posto che:

— l'Unione europea ha approvato nel 2006 il regolamento europeo relativo ai medicinali ad uso pediatrico al fine di migliorare la salute dei bambini in Europa e che per l'immissione in commercio di un nuovo farmaco si deve seguire un iter preciso e regolamentato;

— la diagnosi e l'anamnesi dei sintomi manifesti dovrebbero essere effettuate da professionisti della salute mentale che abbiano esperienza nel settore dei minori con disturbi mentali;

— i minori e i loro familiari dovrebbero essere seguiti durante l'iter anamnestico e di cura anche da una figura specializzata nella terapia psicologica di tali disturbi,

può dire la Commissione se intende predisporre nuove misure che prevedano terapie integrate tra somministrazione farmacologica e psicoterapia per i minori con presunti disturbi mentali e se intende finanziare progetti per la formazione di medici e psicologi specializzati nel trattamento dei disturbi mentali infantili e adolescenziali?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(3 dicembre 2012)

Le informazioni sui prodotti medicinali, approvate dalle autorità competenti nel contesto dell'autorizzazione all'immissione in commercio ([1]), contengono informazioni sull'uso dei medicinali tra la popolazione pediatrica, indicano se la sicurezza e l'efficacia dei medicamenti siano state accertate nei bambini o se si siano individuate reazioni avverse, e trattano anche dell'uso integrato con altre terapie, ove ritenuto opportuno.

Ad esempio l'informazione sul prodotto relativa a un antipsicotico, il Risperdal ([2]), che è indicato anche per il trattamento sintomatico a breve termine (fino a 6 settimane) di un comportamento aggressivo persistente nell'ambito delle turbe del comportamento nei bambini a partire dai 5 anni e negli adolescenti, segnala che il trattamento farmacologico dovrebbe essere parte integrante di un più ampio programma di trattamento con interventi d'ordine anche psicosociale e educativo.

([1]) Direttiva 2001/83/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 6 novembre 2001, recante un codice comunitario relativo ai medicinali per uso umano e successive modifiche.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/html/refh_others.htm, EU referrals, Human medicinal products.

Per estendere la conoscenza delle migliori pratiche al fine di fornire infrastrutture di sostegno multidisciplinari agli adolescenti con problemi di salute mentale la Commissione ha indetto di recente una gara d'appalto per attuare un'azione preparatoria legata alla creazione di una rete di esperti UE nel campo delle cure adattate agli adolescenti con problemi di salute mentale. Al di là di questo la Commissione non prevede misure addizionali in tema di terapie per i bambini con problemi di salute mentale né di finanziare progetti per la formazione dei medici e degli psicologi in tema di trattamento dei disordini mentali dei bambini e degli adolescenti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009558/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Integrated therapies for the treatment of child and adolescent mental disorders: new guidelines?

In the last two decades the use of psychopharmaceutical drugs has reached extremely high levels and their prescription has also been extended to young children. The lack of knowledge of the possible adverse effects of these substances on the organism during development has been and continues to be a topic for discussion among the scientific community.

Antipsychotic drugs can be useful for controlling psychotic symptoms or disordered thought, but these drugs are also used in the treatment of tics or verbal outbursts and occasionally to treat anxiety and can help reduce aggressive behaviour. According to the 'Food and Drug Administration', antipsychotics are 'off label' drugs for ADHD and other behavioural problems in childhood. These drugs control behaviour by acting on the frontal lobes of the brain and have serious side-effects, in particular weight gain, diabetes and heart problems, while the possibility of brain damage is still being studied. Studies carried out at the 'Columbia University Medical Center' in New York found that antipsychotic drugs are prescribed more for children and adolescents: the prescription rate has increased seven times for children under the age of 13 years (0.24 to 1.83 per 100 people), while for children between 14 and 20 years, the rate is 0.78 to 3.76 per 100 people. Furthermore, the majority of children and adolescents treated with antipsychotics do not receive psychotherapy, or they do not follow an integrated therapy that can help them and support them in tackling the underlying causes of their symptoms.

Whereas:

— in 2006, the European Union approved the European Regulation on medicinal products for paediatric use in order to improve the health of children in Europe and new drugs must follow a specific regulated procedure in order to be marketed;

— the diagnosis of symptoms and medical histories should be the responsibility of mental health professionals who have experience in the field of children with mental disorders;

— children and their families should be supervised for their medical histories and treatment by specialists in the psychological treatment of such disorders.

Will the Commission say whether it intends to provide new measures for therapies integrating drugs and psychotherapy for children with suspected mental illness and whether it intends to finance projects for the training of doctors and psychologists specialised in the treatment of child and adolescent mental disorders?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

Medicinal product information, approved by competent authorities as part of the marketing authorisation ([1]), contains information on use in the paediatric population, on whether safety and efficacy in children has been established, on adverse reactions, and on integrated use with other therapies, where considered appropriate.

For example the product information of an antipsychotic, Risperdal ([2]), which is indicated also for the short-term symptomatic treatment (up to 6 weeks) of persistent aggression in conduct disorder in children from the age of 5 years and adolescents, states 'Pharmacological treatment should be an integral part of a more comprehensive treatment programme, including psychosocial and educational intervention'.

([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 as amended.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/html/refh_others.htm, EU referrals, Human medicinal products.

In order to extend the knowledge on best practices in providing multidisciplinary support infrastructures for adolescents with mental health problems, the Commission has recently launched a call for tenders to implement a preparatory action related to the creation of an EU network of experts in the field of adapted care for adolescents with mental health problems. Beyond this, the Commission does not envisage additional measures for therapies for children with mental health problems or to finance projects for the training of doctors and psychologists on the treatment of child and adolescent mental disorders.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009559/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Agenda Digitale: rilancio di iniziative e nuove prospettive per i diritti degli utenti digitali

Una delle priorità dell'Agenda Digitale Europea presentata dalla Commissione è di sfruttare al meglio il potenziale delle tecnologie dell'informazione e della comunicazione (TIC) per favorire l'innovazione, la crescita economica e il progresso. Di fatto, l'uso del web semplifica la vita delle famiglie e delle imprese, riducendo i costi connessi con la burocrazia. Un rapporto pubblicato dalla World Wide Web Foundation fornisce indicazioni sulla rilevanza del web nell'economia di un paese e offre spunti interessanti per valutare l'impatto di Internet sulla vita sociale dei cittadini. Nell'indagine sono presenti diversi indici che esprimono il grado di sviluppo dell'e-government e dell'e-participation su un campione di 60 paesi sviluppati e in via di sviluppo. In Europa, l'Italia si attesta al ventitreesimo posto, contro la quattordicesima posizione della Francia, la sedicesima della Germania e la diciottesima della Spagna. Su base internazionale è il penultimo tra i paesi del continente europeo considerati, mentre paesi come il Cile, il Qatar e il Messico ci precedono in questa graduatoria. Considerato che l'Italia potrebbe basare buona parte della sua modesta crescita sulle esportazioni, agganciare le altre principali economie nell'utilizzo di un fondamentale canale di vendita quale è il web non è più prorogabile. Il ritardo è imputabile sia a fattori legati agli scarsi investimenti pubblici e privati nelle infrastrutture tecnologiche, sia al problema culturale di far comprendere ai piccoli imprenditori italiani quanto sia importante avere una vetrina virtuale sulla scena internazionale. In Italia le aziende che devono investire nell'e-commerce ipotizzano contributi davvero esigui; mentre nel resto dell'Europa ci si riferisce da tempo al «mobile commerce», o m-commerce. La strada per la digitalizzazione in Italia è ancora più impervia nella pubblica amministrazione: le linee guida per i siti web della pubblica amministrazione, presentate nel 2011, forniscono indicazioni operative per la realizzazione e il mantenimento dei siti, stabilendo i canoni di usabilità e accessibilità e determinando anche le motivazioni per le quali dismettere un sito internet della pubblica amministrazione (ad esempio per la mancanza di aggiornamento dei contenuti), ma allo stato attuale tali indicazioni non hanno trovato piena applicazione. È altresì paradossale che il sito web dell'Osservatorio per l'accessibilità dei servizi della pubblica amministrazione abbia sospeso la possibilità per gli utenti di effettuare segnalazioni inerenti alla qualità dei siti web pubblici.

Alla luce delle carenze e delle criticità rilevate nel sistema di digitalizzazione in Italia, rispetto agli altri Paesi in Europa, dovute a una mancanza di fiducia per quanto riguarda la sicurezza dei pagamenti e la protezione della riservatezza, intende la Commissione predisporre ulteriori campagne di promozione e misure complementari di finanziamento per lo sviluppo digitale? Inoltre, quali misure intende adottare a protezione dei diritti degli utenti digitali?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(3 dicembre 2012)

Il quadro di valutazione dell'Agenda digitale indica che l'Italia, pur essendo ancora in ritardo rispetto alla media dell'UE, sta facendo progressi per quanto riguarda alcuni aspetti dell'Agenda digitale, come ad esempio il tasso di penetrazione della banda larga fissa e i servizi digitali. La recente pubblicazione dell'Agenda digitale per l'Italia e la creazione della nuova agenzia agevoleranno l'attuazione dell'Agenda digitale e sono accolte con favore dalla Commissione.

Per quanto riguarda la prima domanda posta dall'onorevole parlamentare relativa agli investimenti nel settore dello sviluppo digitale, la Commissione intende assegnare 9,2 miliardi di EUR attraverso il nuovo Meccanismo per collegare l'Europa (CEF) nell'ambito del quadro finanziario pluriennale 2014-2020 per investimenti nella banda larga e nei servizi digitali. Tra i servizi digitali paneuropei che verranno finanziati attraverso il CEF si annoverano l'amministrazione in linea (e-government), la sanità on-line (e-health) e gli appalti elettronici (e-procurement).

Per quanto riguarda la seconda domanda relativa ai diritti degli utenti digitali, la Commissione è impegnata in una serie di iniziative. Le proposte relative alla risoluzione alternativa delle controversie e alla risoluzione delle controversie on-line consentiranno di migliorare l'accesso ai mezzi di ricorso da parte dei consumatori. La Commissione sta affrontando gli aspetti legati alla sicurezza dei pagamenti e alla tutela della privacy on-line. Nel primo trimestre del 2012, la Commissione ha organizzato una consultazione pubblica sui pagamenti tramite carta, in formato elettronico e tramite telefono mobile, i cui risultati sono attualmente all'esame dei servizi. Nel gennaio 2012 la Commissione ha presentato proposte di riforma della normativa che disciplina la protezione dei dati all'interno dell'UE; l'iter di questo fascicolo è in corso. La Commissione e l'Alto Rappresentante per la politica estera e di sicurezza stanno preparando una strategia europea per la sicurezza informatica, al fine di creare solidi sistemi di difesa contro i ciberattacchi e le ciberperturbazioni, che dovrebbe essere adottata nei prossimi mesi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009559/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Digital Agenda: revitalisation initiatives and new perspectives for the rights of digital users

One of the priorities of the Digital Agenda presented by the European Commission is to exploit the potential for information and communication technologies (ICT) to promote innovation, economic growth and progress. In fact, the use of the web makes life easier for families and businesses, reducing the costs associated with bureaucracy. A report published by the World Wide Web Foundation provides information about the relevance of the web in the economy of a country and offers interesting ideas for assessing the impact of the Internet on the social lives of citizens. The survey includes several indicators that express the degree of development of e-government and e-participation in a sample of 60 developed and developing countries. In Europe, Italy is in twenty-third place, in comparison with fourteenth place for France, sixteenth for Germany and eighteenth for Spain. On an international level, it is second to last among the countries of the European continent considered, while countries like Chile, Qatar and Mexico are ahead of us in this list. Considering that Italy could base much of its modest growth on exports, we can no longer put off catching up with the other major economies in the use of the web, which is a key channel for sales. This delay is due both to factors related to poor public and private investments in technology infrastructure and the cultural problem of convincing small Italian entrepreneurs how important it is to have a virtual storefront on the international scene. In Italy, companies that should invest in e commerce think in terms of really small contributions, whereas, in the rest of the Europe, there has, for some time, been talk of 'mobile commerce', or m commerce. The road towards computerisation in Italy is even more arduous in the public administration: guidelines for public administration websites, presented in 2011, provide operational instructions for the implementation and maintenance of sites, setting the standards for user friendliness and accessibility and setting out the possible reasons for closing down a government website (for example due to the lack of updated content), but, at present, these instructions have not been fully implemented. It is also paradoxical that the website of the Observatory for the accessibility of government services has suspended the possibility for users to lodge reports regarding the quality of public websites.

In the light of the shortcomings and problems found in the computerisation system in Italy, compared to other countries in Europe, due to a lack of confidence regarding the security of payments and the protection of privacy, will the Commission provide additional promotion and complementary funding measures for digital development? Also, what measures will be taken to safeguard the rights of digital users?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

The Digital Agenda Scoreboard indicates that Italy makes progress on certain aspects of the Digital Agenda such as fixed broadband penetration and digital services while still lagging behind the EU average. The recent publication of the Digital Agenda for Italy and the establishment of the new Agency will facilitate implementation of Digital Agenda and is welcomed by the Commission.

On the first question raised by the Honourable Member of the European Parliament concerning the investments in digital development, the Commission envisages allocating EUR 9.2 billion via the new Connecting Europe Facility in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 for investments in broadband and digital services. Pan European digital services to be financed through CEF will include e-government, e-health, and e-procurement among others.

On the second question regarding the rights of digital users, the Commission is engaged in a number of initiatives. Proposals on *Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Online Dispute Resolution (ODR)* will improve access to redress for consumers. The Commission is addressing aspects related to security of payments and protection of privacy online. In the first quarter of 2012 the Commission organised a public consultation on card, electronic and mobile payments, the results of which are being examined by the services. In January 2012 the Commission presented legislation to reform EU data protection; the process on the dossier is ongoing. The Commission and the HRFS policy are preparing a European Strategy for Cyber-security, to create robust defence systems against cyber-attacks and disruptions, which should be adopted in the coming months.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009560/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: CRAB in Italia tra promozione della ricerca «bio» e dissesto finanziario: nuovi canali di finanziamento?

Promuovere e incentivare la sovranità alimentare attraverso produzioni biologiche tradizionali, biodiversità locale e filiere corte o dirette, dai produttori ai consumatori. Dove se non in Italia? E chi meglio del Centro di Riferimento per l'Agricoltura Biologica? Il CRAB è un ente autonomo che ha lo scopo di diffondere filiere bio, convertendo al biologico l'agricoltura italiana. I CRAB sono sorti per aggregare sia i produttori agricoli che adottano il metodo di Agricoltura Biologica (certificata secondo il regolamento (CEE) n. 2092/91) sia altri operatori del settore, al fine di contribuire all'equilibrio dell'ambiente naturale e alla tutela dei consumatori attraverso l'assistenza tecnica interaziendale, la ricerca/sperimentazione/dimostrazione e l'aggiornamento tecnico dei soci, e attività aziendali varie riguardanti l'agricoltura biologica. Ad esempio, solo in Piemonte, sono centinaia gli agricoltori-ecologi-custodi di biodiversità che beneficiano dei servizi del CRAB: informazione, corsi di formazione, assistenza e tutoring per lavorare la terra secondo canoni bio, distribuzione di sementi bio e promozione delle filiere territoriali. Per tutelare la biodiversità sono state recuperate oltre 40 antiche varietà di cereali e ortaggi tipici del territorio piemontese che oggi sono coltivate per tornare a produrre prodotti di qualità biologici. Un lavoro di ricerca applicata che si sviluppa per mezzo di progetti congiunti tra ricercatori del CRAB e università italiane ed europee. Il CRAB, attraverso la sua attività di ricerca e assistenza alle aziende, genera oltre mezzo milione di EUR l'anno a fronte di un costo di 280 000 EUR, eppure diverse sono le Regioni che non intendono rinnovare il proprio impegno finanziario e i centri rischiano di essere messi in liquidazione.

Posto che:

— il settore del biologico, in Italia, non risente della crisi mondiale e si stima che il giro d'affari sia di circa 3 miliardi di EUR l'anno e che dia impiego a 50 mila operatori;

— attraverso il network del CRAB è possibile accrescere la sovranità alimentare dei territori, migliorare l'offerta per i consumatori e sostenere l'economia rurale;

— il network dei produttori locali è strategico per limitare l'erosione genetica delle biodiversità;

— conoscenze scientifiche e locali devono essere integrate tra loro al fine di tutelare le biodiversità locali,

può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È al corrente di tale situazione e quali raccomandazioni e linee guida intende elaborare al fine di garantire un maggiore accesso dei CRAB ai fondi di sviluppo regionali?

2. In applicazione del principio di sussidiarietà, intende attivare ulteriori canali di finanziamento per la ricerca in materia di agricoltura biologica?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(11 dicembre 2012)

1. Nel quadro delle proposte della Commissione per la politica di sviluppo rurale dopo il 2013, una misura di ampia portata denominata «cooperazione» offrirebbe varie tipologie di sostegno in grado di incidere su alcune di quelle che paiono essere le problematiche affrontate dal Centro di Riferimento per l'Agricoltura Biologica.

Rientrerebbero ad esempio nell'ambito di tali tipologie il sostegno allo sviluppo di nuovi prodotti, pratiche, processi e tecnologie, il sostegno a «progetti pilota» che adeguano tecniche esistenti a nuovi contesti e il sostegno allo sviluppo delle filiere corte e dei mercati locali.

Potrebbero essere utili in tale contesto anche diverse altre misure proposte, ad esempio i pagamenti compensativi per superficie volti a controbilanciare i costi aggiuntivi e la perdita di reddito determinati dall'agricoltura biologica e un sostegno per la formazione e la consulenza.

2. La Commissione ha già finanziato numerosi progetti di ricerca in materia di agricoltura biologica, sia miranti a sostenere la politica nel settore biologico sia finalizzati allo sviluppo del settore. La recente pubblicazione della Commissione dal titolo *A decade of EU-funded, low-input and organic agriculture research (2002-2012)* illustra circa 50 progetti di ricerca che hanno ricevuto un contributo unionale complessivo di oltre 150 milioni di EUR. Alcuni di questi progetti sono stati presentati durante la conferenza «Organic days — Research Conference» organizzata dalla presidenza cipriota del Consiglio dell'Unione europea (http://organicdays.eu/material/presentations/). Con Orizzonte 2020, il prossimo programma quadro per il periodo 2014-2020, proseguiranno le attività di ricerca a sostegno del settore biologico.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009560/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Reference Centres for Organic Farming in Italy — between the promotion of organic research and financial disaster: new funding channels?

Promoting and encouraging food sovereignty through traditional organic farming, local biodiversity and short or direct chains from producers to consumers — where else but in Italy? And who better than the Reference Centres for Organic Agriculture? These are independent bodies which have the purpose of spreading organic production chains and converting Italian agriculture to organic farming. They were set up to bring together producers that use organic farming methods (certified according to Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91) and other participants in the sector, with a view to contributing towards the balance of the natural environment and consumer protection through technical assistance among farms, research/ testing/demonstration and the technical training of members, and various farm activities involving organic agriculture. For example, in Piedmont alone, there are hundreds of farmers ecologists-custodians of biodiversity who benefit from the services of these centres: information, training, assistance and tutoring in farming according to organic rules, organic seed distribution and the promotion of local chains. In order to protect biodiversity over 40 old varieties of cereals and vegetables typical of the Piedmont region have been recovered and are cultivated today as a way of going back to producing quality organic food. This represents a task of applied research that is being developed through joint projects between researchers from these centres and Italian and European universities. Through their research, and the assistance they provide to farms, these centres generate over half a million euro per year as compared to a cost of 280 000 euro; however, a number of regions do not intend to renew their financial commitments and the centres risk being wound up.

Whereas

— the organic sector in Italy is not affected by the global crisis and it is estimated that its turnover is about 3 billion euro a year, and that it gives work to 50,000 people;

— through the network of organic farming reference centres, it is possible to increase the sovereignty of the territories in terms of food, improve supply to consumers and support the rural economy;

— the network of local producers is of strategic importance for limiting the genetic erosion of biodiversity;

— scientific and local knowledge must be integrated in order to protect local biodiversity,

will the Commission answer the following questions?

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation and what recommendations and guidelines does it intend to put forward to ensure that these centres have greater access to regional development funds?

2. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, does the Commission intend to activate additional funding channels for research into organic farming?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

1. Under the Commission's proposals for rural development policy for after 2013, a broad measure bearing the title 'cooperation' would offer various categories of support which would have an impact with regard to some of the issues apparently addressed by the Reference Centres for Organic Agriculture under discussion.

These categories of support would include, for example: support for developing new products, practices, processes and technologies; support for 'pilot projects' which adapt existing techniques to new contexts; and support for developing short supply chains and local markets.

Various other proposed measures could also be relevant — for example, area-based compensation payments to offset the additional costs and income loss involved in organic farming, and support for training and advice.

2. The Commission has already supported a large number of research projects on the organic sector, whether this concerned projects for organic policy support or projects for the development of the organic sector. The recent Commission publication 'A decade of EU-funded, low-input and organic agriculture research (2002 — 2012)' outlines around 50 research projects with a total EU contribution of more than EUR150 million. Some of these projects were presented during the Cyprus Presidency 'Organic days — research conference' (http://organicdays.eu/material/presentations/). With Horizon 2020, the next framework programme for the period 2014-2020, the research effort to support the organic sector will be continued.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009561/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Eventi traumatici collettivi e ripetuti nel tempo: quali conseguenze psichiche e misure per affrontarle

Il largo impiego dell'amianto in tutta Europa ha creato seri problemi in ambito internazionale sul piano della salute fisica e psicologica. È impressionante il numero di vittime che l'esposizione a questo minerale ha sortito. Infatti, l'incidenza della patologia cancerogena nei paesi europei varia da 15 a 33 casi per milione di abitanti e si stima che più di 250.000 cittadini europei moriranno di mesotelioma entro il 2030.

Ancora oggi diversi luoghi di lavoro sono fucina di malattie. Spesso il tutto trae origine dall'avvelenamento in fabbrica, che si estende al territorio circostante, con un crescendo di vittime nella popolazione, senza risparmiare i bambini. Una realtà sociale, dunque, impossibile da ignorare. Molteplici sono le dimensioni che si sviluppano, sul piano psicologico, in seguito all'impatto devastante dell'esposizione a sostanze tossiche: questo genera nelle persone la consapevolezza di essere esposti a una malattia mortale, vedere e assistere i propri cari colpiti da essa o, ancora, sapere di esserne affetti in prima persona. In un contesto così connotato il gruppo sociale necessita di uno spazio di espressione ed elaborazione del disagio al fine di mentalizzarlo per non percepirsi impotente di fronte a esso e non incrementare stati psicopatologici.

Posto che:

— laddove si verifica un disastro industriale muta la realtà dei soggetti che vivono quell'esperienza, mutano cioè i comportamenti e le condotte a fronte dell'impatto del grave trauma psichico;

— la condizione di sofferenza psichica (Sindrome Post-Traumatica da Stress) in cui versano le popolazioni interessate dall'impatto con l'amianto o con qualsivoglia disastro industriale ha impedito e continua a impedire nei diversi siti interessati lo sviluppo di una sana progettualità lavorativa e sanitaria per il proprio futuro;

— è imprescindibile sviluppare a livello europeo un nuovo pensiero di lavoro che ponga l'essere umano come parte di un gruppo che produce crescita lavorativa, sociale e psichica;

— i lavoratori non dovrebbero mai negare il pericolo nel nome di un lavoro che può uccidere;

può la Commissione far sapere se intende fissare linee guida che consentano di sviluppare progetti europei di ricerca — intervento quantitativa e qualitativa sugli aspetti psicologici riscontrabili a livello clinico nelle diverse comunità geografiche europee colpite da cause esclusivamente imputabili all'esposizione all'amianto?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(13 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione ha pubblicato di recente un bando di gara aperto per l'esecuzione di uno studio di ampia portata sulla salute mentale sul posto di lavoro in tutta l'UE. I servizi interessati stanno selezionando il contraente che effettuerà lo studio il quale dovrebbe essere concluso entro il primo semestre del 2014. Assieme al contraente selezionato essi esamineranno se tale studio possa trattare i punti menzionati dall'onorevole deputato.

La Commissione, per il tramite di Orizzonte 2020, il neoproposto programma (2014-2020) per la ricerca e l'innovazione, dà atto del fatto che occorre una migliore comprensione dei determinanti ambientali della salute e intende finanziare progetti di ricerca per studiare la correlazione salute-ambiente, compresi studi sulle modalità d'azione dei prodotti chimici, delle esposizioni combinate agli inquinanti e di altri fattori di stress ambientali e climatici. Orizzonte 2020 sosterrà inoltre strategie innovative per la valutazione dell'esposizione (usando biomarcatori di nuova generazione basati su «omici» e epigenetica, sul biomonitoraggio umano, sulla valutazione e modellizzazione dell'esposizione individuale) per acquisire una comprensione delle esposizioni combinate, cumulative ed emergenti, tenendo conto anche dei fattori socioeconomici e comportamentali. Analogamente, è previsto un sostegno per migliorare le tecnologie di valutazione del rischio, testare gli approcci e le strategie in tema di ambiente e salute.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009561/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Collective traumatic events repeated over time: what are the psychological consequences and what measures can be applied to cope with them?

The widespread use of asbestos in Europe has created serious problems in the international arena in terms of physical and psychological health. This mineral has claimed an extraordinary number of victims. Indeed, the cancer rate for European countries varies from 15 to 33 cases per million inhabitants and it is estimated that more than 250 000 Europeans will have died from mesothelioma by 2030.

Even today, many workplaces are breeding grounds for disease. Often it all originates from poisoning in a factory, which extends to the surrounding area, with a steady increase in the number of victims in the population, children included. It is a social situation that cannot be ignored. The devastating impact of exposure to toxic substances has multiple effects on a psychological level: people's awareness that they have been exposed to a deadly disease, seeing and taking care of their own loved ones affected by it, or being affected by it themselves. In a situation like this, social groups need somewhere to express and process their distress in order to be able to mentalise it and thus avoid seeing themselves as helpless, thereby increasing psychopathological conditions.

Whereas:

— where there is an industrial disaster, this changes the reality of the people who live through that experience; behaviour and conduct change in the face of the impact of severe psychological trauma;

— the condition of mental suffering (Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome) faced by the populations affected by the impact of asbestos or any industrial disaster, at the various sites affected, has prevented and continues to prevent the development of sound work and health planning for the future;

— it is essential to develop, at the European level, a new idea of work that places the human being in a group that produces growth in terms of work, society and psychological well-being;

— workers should never deny danger in the name of a job that can kill;

can the Commission say whether it intends to issue guidelines to allow European research projects to be carried out — quantitative and qualitative intervention on the psychological aspects encountered at a clinical level in the various European geographical communities affected by problems exclusively attributable to exposure to asbestos?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission recently issued an open call for tenders to carry out an extensive study on mental health in the workplace across the EU. The departments concerned are in the process of selecting a contractor to carry out the study, which is expected to be concluded by mid-2014. In conjunction with the contractor selected, they will consider whether the study could cover the points referred to by the Honourable Member.

The Commission through Horizon 2020, the proposed new programme (2014-2020) for research and innovation, acknowledges that a better understanding of the environment as a determinant of health is required and aims to fund research projects to investigate health-environment relationships, including studies of modes of action of chemicals, combined exposures to pollution and other environmental and climate related stressors. In addition, Horizon 2020 will support innovative approaches to exposure assessment (using new-generation biomarkers based on 'omics' and epigenetics, human bio monitoring, personal exposure assessments and modelling) to understand combined, cumulative and emerging exposures, integrating socioeconomic and behavioural factors. Similarly, support for improved risk assessment methodologies, testing approaches and strategies relating to environment and health are foreseen.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009562/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Salute riproduttiva e pianificazione familiare: Earth Summit Rio+20 — un passo indietro per la battaglia a favore dell'educazione sessuale dei giovani?

La conferenza mondiale sullo sviluppo sostenibile promossa dall'Onu, «Earth Summit Rio+2», svoltasi a giugno, ha evidenziato tra i temi in discussione la salute riproduttiva e la pianificazione familiare. Infatti, i diritti a una salute riproduttiva e sessuale si collocano al pari dell'ordinamento dei diritti umani accettato a livello internazionale, poiché connessi a diritti cristallizzati e consolidati nel tempo, come il diritto alla vita, all'istruzione, allo sviluppo ed il diritto a ottenere lo standard di salute più alto possibile. Tuttavia, il documento finale votato include ad oggi un solo riferimento marginale alla salute sessuale e riproduttiva di cui all'articolo 241. Non vi sono riferimenti espliciti alla contraccezione e ad adeguate politiche d'informazione sulla salute riproduttiva nel testo finale di «The future we want».

Considerato che:

— gli unici strumenti a disposizione degli Stati per prevenire la trasmissione delle infezioni e tutelare la salute riproduttiva, sono la contraccezione e le politiche sul territorio mirate a informare soprattutto i giovani e giovanissimi su comportamenti sessuali corretti;

— in tema di malattie sessuali e gravidanze indesiderate, la fascia di popolazione dei giovani è la più vulnerabile, a causa della propria fragilità culturale, sociale ed emotiva;

— tutti i sistemi sanitari nazionali europei, in linea con il secondo Programma europeo di azione comune salute 2008-2013, promuovono attivamente la salute sessuale attraverso l'utilizzo della contraccezione e lo sviluppo di stili di vita sicuri nei comportamenti sessuali;

richiamati gli articoli 2-6-11 del TUE, al fine di migliorare ed integrare il controllo dell'attuazione degli obiettivi fissati nelle recenti conferenze internazionali,

può la Commissione far sapere se intende fornire linee guida più chiare a tutela della salute riproduttiva e della pianificazione familiare, che includano programmi di cooperazione in materia con i paesi terzi.

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(14 dicembre 2012)

Il documento finale della conferenza Rio+20 invita ad accelerare il conseguimento degli obiettivi di sviluppo concordati a livello internazionale e a rinnovare gli impegni assunti in occasione di tutte le principali conferenze e i principali vertici delle Nazioni Unite, compresa la Conferenza internazionale sulla popolazione e lo sviluppo (ICPD), nonché a favore degli obiettivi di sviluppo del millennio (OSM). I nuovi obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile saranno definiti in coordinamento e in modo coerente con l'attuale processo di revisione degli OSM e saranno complementari agli accordi internazionali.

Per quanto riguarda la cooperazione con i paesi in via di sviluppo (articolo 21, lettera d) del TFUE), la Commissione ritiene che il programma d'azione dell'ICPD continui a rappresentare l'accordo pertinente per orientare l'attuazione dei programmi in materia di salute sessuale e riproduttiva e di pianificazione familiare nei paesi partner e non intende pertanto fornire orientamenti alternativi al riguardo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009562/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Reproductive health and family planning: Rio +20 Earth Summit — a step backwards in the battle for sex education for young people?

The World Conference on Sustainable Development sponsored by the UN 'Rio +20 Earth Summit', which was held in June, included reproductive health and family planning among the topics for discussion. The right to sexual and reproductive health is placed at the same level as the rules on human rights, which are internationally accepted as they relate to rights that have been formed and consolidated over time, such as the right to life, education, development and the right to obtain the highest possible standard of health. However, the final document still only contains one passing reference to sexual and reproductive health, in Article 241. There are no specific references to contraception and appropriate information policies on reproductive health in the final text of 'The future we want.'

Given that:

— the only tools available for countries to prevent the transmission of infection and protect reproductive health are contraception and territorial policies designed to inform above all young people and children on correct sexual behaviour;

— with regard to sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies, young people are the most vulnerable sector of the population because of their cultural, social and emotional fragility;

— all national health systems in Europe, in line with the second programme of Community action in the field of health 2008-2013, actively promote sexual health through the use of contraception and the development of safe lifestyles in terms of sexual behaviour;

and with reference to Articles 2, 6 and 11 TEU, with a view to improving and integrating the monitoring of the implementation of the targets set in recent international conferences, will the Commission say whether it intends to provide clearer guidelines to protect reproductive health and family planning, which should include cooperation measures with third countries regarding this issue?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The RIO +20 outcome document calls for accelerating the achievement of the international agreed development goals and renewing commitments in the outcomes of all the major United Nations conferences and summits, including International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The new Sustainable Development Goals will be defined in coordination and coherence with the current MDG review process, and be complementary with the international agreements.

With regard to cooperation with developing countries (Art. 21(d) of the TEU) the Commission considers that the Programme of Action of the ICPD continues to be the relevant agreement providing guidance for implementation of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and family planning programmes in partner countries and the Commission is therefore not intending to issue alternative guidelines in this field.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009563/12
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(18. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Finanzierungsproblem — Kosten für das Abwracken von AKW

Nach den europaweiten Stresstests bei Atomkraftwerken hat sich eindeutig herausgestellt, dass viele dieser 123 Atomkraftwerke grobe Mängel aufweisen und unmittelbar abgeschaltet werden müssten. Aber obwohl die Stilllegung von sogenannten „Schrottreaktoren" eine Grundbedingung für den EU-Beitritt war, wollen sich nun Medienberichten zufolge Staaten wie Litauen die teure Abwrackung von der EU bezahlen lassen. Statt der vereinbarten 1,4 Milliarden EUR für den Rückbau von Ignalina fordert Litauen mittlerweile einen Betrag von fast 3 EUR.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Die Abschaltung und das damit verbundene Abwracken aller zum Abschalten vorgesehenen Atomkraftwerke droht zu einem unkontrollierten Finanzierungsproblem für die EU zu werden. Was hält die Kommission von den Forderungen Litauens im Zusammenhang mit dem Schrottreaktor Ignalina?

2. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Finanzierungsprobleme im Allgemeinen, die zwangsläufig aus der Stilllegung von mangelhaften Reaktoren resultieren werden?

3. Wird Österreich als atomfreies Land diese Abwrackungskosten mittragen müssen? Wie sieht die Kommission dies?

4. Wäre es nicht angebracht, die notwendige Stilllegung von europäischen Atomkraftwerken nur durch die jeweiligen Betreiberstaaten und die Eigentümer finanzieren zu lassen? Welche Meinung vertritt die Kommission dazu?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(5. Dezember 2012)

1. Aufgrund der Regelungen für den Beitritt Litauens zur Europäischen Union leistet die EU finanzielle Unterstützung für verschiedene Stilllegungsprojekte im Zusammenhang mit der frühzeitigen Abschaltung des Kernkraftwerks Ignalina, auch zur Entsorgung radioaktiver Abfälle und abgebrannter Brennelemente. Die EU leistete bisher einen Beitrag von 1367 Mio. EUR und hat Unterstützung in Höhe von weiteren 210 Mio. EUR angeboten, womit sich die Hilfe auf über 50 % der insgesamt für die Stilllegung erforderlichen Mittel beliefe.

2 bis 4. Für die Stilllegung von Kernkraftwerken — einschließlich der Entsorgung radioaktiver Abfälle aus der Stilllegung — sind die Mitgliedstaaten zuständig. Gemäß der Richtlinie 2011/70/Euratom des Rates ([1]), die für radioaktive Abfälle aus dem Betrieb und der Stilllegung von Kernkraftwerken und sonstigen Anlagen des Kernbrennstoffkreislaufs sowie aus Anwendungen in Medizin, Industrie, Landwirtschaft und Forschung gilt, müssen die Mitgliedstaaten sicherstellen, dass angemessene Finanzmittel für die Entsorgung abgebrannter Brennelemente und radioaktiver Abfälle zu dem Zeitpunkt zur Verfügung stehen, zu dem sie benötigt werden, wobei die Verantwortung der Erzeuger abgebrannter Brennstoffe und radioaktiver Abfälle angemessen zu berücksichtigen ist.

Nach dem Euratom-Rechtsrahmen müssen die Mitgliedstaaten keine Kosten künftiger Stilllegungen von Kernkraftwerken in anderen EU-Mitgliedstaaten mittragen.

([1]) Richtlinie 2011/70/Euratom des Rates über einen Gemeinschaftsrahmen für die verantwortungsvolle und sichere Entsorgung abgebrannter Brennelemente und radioaktiver Abfälle, ABl. L 199 vom 2.8.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009563/12
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Financing problem — cost of dismantling nuclear power plants

Stress tests on nuclear power plants across Europe have clearly shown that many of the 123 plants have severe defects and need to be shut down immediately. Even though one of the preconditions for EU accession was that ageing reactors would be decommissioned, there are reports that countries like Lithuania want to have the EU pay the high cost of dismantling plants. In place of the EUR 1.4 billion agreed for dismantling Ignalina, Lithuania is now requesting almost EUR 3 billion.

With this in mind, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Closing all the nuclear power plants that are scheduled for closure, and the process of dismantling this entails, threaten to become a major problem for EU finances. What does the Commission think about Lithuania's requests in relation to the ageing reactor in Ignalina?

2. What is the Commission's general view of the financial problems that will inevitably result from decommissioning faulty reactors?

3. Will Austria, as a nuclear-free country, be required to contribute to these costs? What does the Commission think of this?

4. Would it not be appropriate to have the cost of decommissioning European nuclear power plants that need to be shut down covered solely by the countries operating them and the owners of the plants? What is the Commission's stance on this?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

1. Under the terms of accession of Lithuania to the EU, the EU provides financial support to various decommissioning projects related to the early shutdown of the Ignalina nuclear plant, including management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. The EU has contributed so far EUR 1 367 million and has proposed a further EUR 210 million, which is over 50% of the overall decommissioning funding needs.

2 to 4. The decommissioning of nuclear power plants, including managing radioactive waste from decommissioning, is a national responsibility. Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom ([1]), the scope of which covers radioactive waste arising from the operation and decommissioning of nuclear power plants and all other nuclear fuel cycle facilities and from medicine, industry, agriculture and research, requires Member States to ensure that adequate financial resources for the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste are available when needed, taking due account of the responsibility of spent fuel and radioactive waste generators.

The Community framework does not require a Member State to bear the cost of future decommissioning of nuclear power plants elsewhere in the EU.

([1]) Council Directives 2011/70/Euratom establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, OJ L 199, 2.8.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009564/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(18 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Indebito ricorso alle procedure d'asilo dai Balcani

Alcuni Stati membri (Austria, Francia, Germania, Belgio, Lussemburgo e Paesi Bassi) hanno lanciato un grido d'allarme circa il crescente flusso di richiedenti asilo provenienti dai Balcani (Serbia, Albania, Bosnia Erzegovina, Montenegro ed ex Repubblica jugoslava di Macedonia) e hanno chiesto all'Unione europea di esaminare l'ipotesi di sospendere il regime di libera circolazione per i cittadini di questi Paesi.

Infatti, è stato appurato che, le richieste di asilo di un gran numero di richiedenti, sono risultate infondate; inoltre si sta assistendo all'esodo non di richiedenti asilo, ma di persone che emigrano per ragioni economiche e che entrano nel territorio dell'UE grazie all'accordo dell'Unione europea con i governi dei paesi interessati che stabilisce la possibilità di ingresso senza obbligo di visto per i paesi balcanici non membri dell'UE.

1. La Commissione, come intende affrontare questa emergenza nei confronti di questi Paesi, con i quali peraltro sono in corso negoziati di adesione all'UE?

2. La Commissione ha intenzione di introdurre, almeno provvisoriamente, la cosiddetta clausola di salvaguardia nei loro confronti, ovvero la possibilità di reintrodurre i visti in condizioni eccezionali?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(10 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione è pienamente consapevole delle pressioni subite negli ultimi mesi dai sistemi di asilo di vari Stati membri dell'Unione europea a causa della nuova ondata di domande di asilo provenienti dai paesi dei Balcani occidentali i cui cittadini sono esenti dall'obbligo del visto, e ha preso una serie di iniziative per affrontare la questione.

Nella sua terza relazione sul controllo successivo alla liberalizzazione dei visti, pubblicata il 28 agosto, la Commissione ha invitato i cinque paesi dei Balcani occidentali esenti dall'obbligo del visto a intervenire urgentemente in cinque settori:

1. potenziare la cooperazione operativa con le autorità degli Stati membri, anche intensificando lo scambio di informazioni;

2. avviare indagini efficaci sui facilitatori della migrazione irregolare;

3. nel rispetto dei diritti fondamentali dei cittadini, rafforzare i controlli di frontiera;

4. organizzare campagne d'informazione per rendere noti ai cittadini i loro diritti e i loro obblighi nel regime di esenzione dal visto;

5. incrementare l'assistenza alle minoranze.

La questione è stata sollevata dalla Commissione anche nell'ambito del Forum ministeriale UE-Balcani occidentali svoltosi a Tirana il 5-6 novembre, in occasione del quale i ministri hanno adottato una dichiarazione comune sul regime di esenzione dal visto. Per tradurre gli impegni politici assunti al vertice in azioni pratiche, la Commissione ha inoltre convocato una riunione con gli alti funzionari degli Stati dei Balcani che beneficiano dell'esenzione dal visto.

La cosiddetta clausola di salvaguardia costituisce uno degli elementi della proposta di modifica del regolamento 539/2001 (regolamento sui visti) presentata dalla Commissione, il cui progetto è attualmente sul tavolo dei colegislatori. Una volta adottata la proposta legislativa, la Commissione valuterà la possibilità di attivare la clausola di salvaguardia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009564/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Undue use of asylum procedures in the Balkans

Some Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) have sounded the alarm over the increasing flow of asylum-seekers from the Balkans (Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and have asked the European Union to examine the possibility of suspending the rules on free movement for nationals of these countries.

Indeed, it has been established that asylum requests from a large number of applicants have proved to be unfounded; furthermore, we are witnessing an exodus of non-asylum-seekers who are migrating for economic reasons and enter the EU thanks to an agreement between the European Union and the governments of the countries concerned, which establishes the possibility of visa-free entry for non-member Balkan countries.

1. How does the Commission intend to cope with this emergency with regard to these countries, which, moreover, are currently negotiating to join the EU?

2. Does the Commission intend to enact, at least temporarily, the 'safeguard clause' for them, or the possibility of reintroducing visas in exceptional circumstances?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The Commission is fully aware that the asylum systems of several EU Member States have faced pressure in recent months as a result of a new surge in asylum applications from the western Balkans visa-free countries and has taken a number of steps to address this issue.

The Commission published its third post-visa liberalisation monitoring report on 28 August 2012, which called on the five visa-free Western Balkans states to urgently implement further measures in five areas:

1. Enhance operational cooperation with Member State authorities, facilitated by closer information sharing;

2. Launch effective investigations of the facilitators of irregular migration;

3. In line with citizens' fundamental rights, strengthen border controls;

4. Organise information campaigns to inform citizens of their rights and obligations under the visa-free regime;

5. Increase assistance to minority populations.

The Commission also raised this issue at the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum in Tirana on 5-6 November, where Ministers adopted a Joint Declaration on visa-free travel. It then convened a meeting with the senior officials of the visa-free Western Balkans states to translate the summit's political commitments into operational action.

The 'safeguard clause' constitutes an element of the Commission's proposal to amend Regulation 539/2001 (Visa regulation). This draft proposal is currently before the co-legislators. The Commission will assess the situation regarding the triggering of the safeguard clause once the legislative proposal is adopted.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009565/12
a la Comisión
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE) y François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(18 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Proceso de extradición a Firat Demirkiran

El Consejo de Ministros del Gobierno de España aprobó el 5 de octubre la continuación del procedimiento de extradición a Turquía del ciudadano kurdo, con estatus de refugiado concedido por Alemania, Firat Demirkiran. Sin embargo, hay que tener en cuenta que la sentencia del Tribunal alemán que otorgó el estatus de refugiado al Sr. Demirkiran previó una gran probabilidad de malos tratos, en la misma línea que hicieron los informes del Consejo de Europa, Amnistía Internacional y otras organizaciones de Derechos Humanos.

Asimismo, el Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (ACNUR), en el marco general de sus responsabilidades de protección a los refugiados, tal como establece el artículo 8.a) de su Estatuto, se ha pronunciado públicamente en contra de la extradición de Firat Demirkiran. Y es que la extradición de un refugiado es contraria al principio de «no devolución» o «*non refoulement*», consagrado en el artículo 33.1 de la Convención de Ginebra de 1951 sobre el Estatuto de los Refugiados y su Protocolo de 1967, de la que es firmante España desde 1978.

En ese sentido, la Audiencia Nacional española denegó en 2009 la extradición de dos refugiados kurdos, reconocidos como tales por Suiza y Bélgica, habiendo declarado terminantemente que tenía «la determinación de refugiado en este caso un efecto extraterritorial con respecto a otros Estados parte de la Convención de 1951 a tenor de la Nota del Alto Comisionado de NN.UU. sobre los Refugiados (ACNUR) de abril de 2008» (auto de 14.7.2009, Sección 2a, Extradición 7/09).

1. ¿Está la Comisión informada sobre el proceso de extradición de Firat Demirkiran?

2. ¿Tiene previsto la Comisión tomar medidas para evitar que países de la Unión Europea extraditen refugiados ilegalmente, en particular en el caso de Firat Demirkiran?

Respuesta de la Sra. Malmström en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de enero de 2013)

La Comisión está al corriente del proceso de extradición de Firat Demirkiran.

Sin embargo, queda fuera de su competencia expresar una posición acerca de un proceso de extradición en curso entre un Estado miembro de la Unión Europea y un tercer país, proceso que se rige por el acuerdo bilateral correspondiente entre ambos.

No obstante, con arreglo al Derecho de la UE, los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea están vinculados por las disposiciones correspondientes de la Directiva 2004/83/CE del Consejo, de 29 de abril de 2004, por la que se establecen normas mínimas relativas a los requisitos para el reconocimiento y el estatuto de nacionales de terceros países o apátridas como refugiados o personas que necesitan otro tipo de protección internacional y al contenido de la protección concedida, y de la Carta de Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea. Ello significa que, al someter a un nacional de un tercer país a un proceso de extradición, los Estados miembros deben respetar en toda circunstancia el principio de no devolución, en virtud del cual ninguna persona puede ser enviada a un país donde pueda ser objeto de tortura, penas o un trato inhumano o degradante. La Comisión sigue de cerca el cumplimiento de estas obligaciones por parte de los Estados miembros y, en caso de infracción del Derecho de la UE, puede decidir hacer uso de las facultades que le confieren los Tratados.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009565/12
à la Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE) et François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(18 octobre 2012)

Objet: Procédure d'extradition de Firat Demirkiran

Le conseil des ministres du gouvernement espagnol a approuvé le 5 octobre la poursuite de la procédure d'extradition vers la Turquie du citoyen kurde Firat Demirkiran bien que l'Allemagne lui ait octroyé le statut de réfugié. Cependant, il faut garder à l'esprit que le tribunal allemand qui lui a octroyé le statut de réfugié considère le risque de mauvais traitements comme important, dans la droite ligne des rapports du Conseil de l'Europe, d'Amnesty International et d'autres organisations de défense des Droits de l'homme.

En outre, le Haut-Commissariat des Nations unies pour les réfugiés (UNHCR), dans le cadre général de ses responsabilités de protection des réfugiés, conformément au paragraphe 8, point a), de son statut, s'est prononcé publiquement contre l'extradition de Firat Demirkiran. L'extradition est, par ailleurs, contraire au principe de non-refoulement consacré dans l'article 33, paragraphe 1, de la Convention de Genève de 1951 sur le statut des réfugiés, et de son protocole de 1967, que l'Espagne a signée en 1978.

Ainsi, l'«Audencia nacional» espagnole s'était opposée en 2009 à l'extradition de deux réfugiés kurdes, reconnus comme tels par la Suisse et la Belgique, ayant formellement déclaré que «l'octroi du statut de réfugié avait, dans ce cas, un effet extraterritorial dans d'autres États signataires de la Convention de 1951 en vertu d'une note du UNHCR d'avril 2008» (arrêt du 14 juillet 2009, section 2, extradition 7/09).

1. La Commission a-t-elle connaissance de la procédure d'extradition de Firat Demirkiran?

2. La Commission a-t-elle prévu de prendre des mesures pour éviter que des pays de l'Union européenne n'extradent des réfugiés illégalement, en particulier Firat Demirkiran?

Réponse donnée par Mme Malmström au nom de la Commission
(18 janvier 2013)

La Commission a connaissance de la procédure d'extradition visant Firat Demirkiran.

Il ne relève cependant pas de la compétence de la Commission d'exprimer une position sur une procédure d'extradition en cours entre un État membre de l'Union européenne et un pays tiers, qui est régie par l'accord bilatéral approprié entre cet État membre et le pays tiers concerné.

En vertu du droit de l'UE, les États membres de l'Union européenne sont cependant liés par les dispositions pertinentes de la directive 2004/83/CE du Conseil du 29 avril 2004 concernant les normes minimales relatives aux conditions que doivent remplir les ressortissants des pays tiers ou les apatrides pour pouvoir prétendre au statut de réfugié ou les personnes qui, pour d'autres raisons, ont besoin d'une protection internationale, et relatives au contenu de ces statuts, ainsi que par la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne. C'est pourquoi, lorsqu'ils soumettent un ressortissant d'un pays tiers à une procédure d'extradition, les États membres doivent respecter le principe de non-refoulement exigeant que personne ne soit renvoyé dans un pays dans lequel il risque d'être soumis à la persécution, à la torture ou à d'autres peines ou traitements inhumains ou dégradants. La Commission contrôle le respect par les États membres de ces obligations et, en cas de violation de la législation de l'UE, elle peut décider d'utiliser les pouvoirs qui lui sont conférés par les traités.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009565/12
to the Commission
Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE) and François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Extradition procedure against Firat Demirkiran

On 5 October 2012, Spain's Council of Ministers approved the continuation of the procedure relating to the extradition to Turkey of Kurdish citizen Firat Demirkiran, who had been granted refugee status by Germany. However, the ruling by the German court which conferred refugee status on Mr Demirkiran anticipated that he would be maltreated, as did the reports by the Council of Europe, Amnesty International and other human rights organisations.

As part of the responsibility for providing for the protection of refugees, established in Article 8(a) of the Statute governing the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the High Commissioner has publicly opposed Firat Demirkiran's extradition. Extraditing a refugee breaches the principle of 'non-expulsion' or 'non-refoulement', enshrined in Article 33(1) of the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Spain has been a signatory since 1978.

Accordingly, in 2009, the Spanish National High Court did not grant the extradition of two Kurdish refugees, who were recognised as such by Switzerland and Belgium, declaring resolutely that, 'in this case, in accordance with the note from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of April 2008, the status of refugee has extraterritorial effect in those States which are parties to the 1951 Convention' (order of 14 July 2009, Section 2, Extradition 7/09).

1. Is the Commission aware of the approval of the extradition procedure against Firat Demirkiran?

2. Does the Commission intend to take measures to avoid EU countries extraditing refugees illegally, and in particular in the case of Firat Demirkiran?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the extradition procedure against Firat Demirkiran.

It is however not within the remit of the Commission to express a position on an ongoing extradition procedure between a Member State of the European Union and a third country, which is governed by the relevant bilateral agreement between that Member State and the third country concerned.

As a matter of EC law, the Member States of the European Union are however bound by the relevant provisions of Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Therefore, when subjecting a third-country national to an extradition procedure, Member States must always respect the principle of *non-refoulement* requiring that no person is sent to a country where they may be subjected to persecution, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Commission is monitoring Member States' compliance with these obligations and in cases of violations of EC law, it can decide to use the powers conferred to it by the Treaties.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009566/12
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: EU-Guinea-Bissau Fisheries Partnership Agreement

The original fishing agreement between the EU and Guinea-Bissau was due to expire on 15 June 2012. However, in April 2012 there was a military coup in Guinea-Bissau and the EU suspended fishing there. Now the Commission has come up with a new protocol to allow the EU to continue fishing.

1. For this new protocol, did the Commission negotiate with the new rulers of Guinea-Bissau, or did it come up with the figures on its own? (And, in either case, was a mandate from the Council sought?)

2. The current EU fishing effort has been suspended until the new protocol is agreed — does this mean the EU will restart the fishing effort and transfer the relevant financial contributions to Guinea-Bissau immediately, irrespective of whether the country has a legitimate government or not?

3. What is the justification for the increase in EU contributions to Guinea-Bissau (from EUR 7.5 million to EUR 9.2 million — an increase of 22.7%)?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2012)

1. The new protocol has been initialled in February 2012, before the military coup. It has been negotiated with the previous government, which was internationally recognised. Since the military coup, the Commission has had no contacts with the new rulers.

2. Fishing in Guinea Bissau can resume only on the basis of a Council decision on the provisional application of the protocol. The Council made it clear that such a decision would be conditioned to return to constitutional order and appointment of a legitimate government.

3. The protocol initialled in February 2012 takes into account the increase of first sale prices (prices had not been revaluated since 2001).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009567/12
to the Commission
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(18 October 2012)

Subject: Ability of the UK to opt back into pre-Lisbon measures once formal notification of the block opt-out has been given

On 15 October 2012, the UK Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced that the British Conservative Party plans to trigger the block opt-out applying to more than 130 pre-Lisbon framework agreements concerning police and justice cooperation, in accordance with Protocol 36 to the Treaty of Lisbon. The Home Secretary also included in her speech the intention to seek advice on which of the pre-Lisbon framework agreements the UK should opt back into, including initiating negotiations with the Council and Commission.

1. Should the UK wish to opt back into any of the 130 framework agreements that do not relate to the Schengen *acquis*, is it up to the Commission to confirm the UK's participation and ensure that the UK has complied with the conditions?

2. Given the importance of the UK's ability to opt back into certain framework decisions for the final decision on whether the UK should exercise its block opt-out, could the Commission provide an update on its current position as regards the likelihood of the UK being able to opt back into certain police and justice agreements?

3. Could the Commission clarify if it has held any discussions on this issue as of yet and, if so, can it provide details of any outcomes reached? If the Commission has not commenced discussions, could it provide an indication as to when they are likely to begin?

4. According to Protocol 36 to the Treaty of Lisbon, there is an obligation on both sides to 'seek to re-establish the widest possible measure of participation of the United Kingdom in the acquis'. Could the Commission clarify the matter by offering an accurate interpretation of this provision?

5. Could the Commission confirm that European Court of Justice jurisdiction will apply to any framework agreements the UK may choose to opt back into should it use its option of a block opt-out?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

Article 10(4) of Protocol 36 enables the United Kingdom to notify that it opts out of all acts of the Union in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters which have been adopted before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and have not been amended before 1 December 2014. Article 10(5) of the same Protocol encourages the Union institutions and the United Kingdom to seek to re-establish the widest possible measure of participation, without seriously affecting the practical operability of the various parts thereof, while respecting their coherence.

The United Kingdom has not at this point made use of these provisions.

The Commission is in contact with the UK Government at a technical level.

After 1 December 2014, the Court of Justice will have full jurisdiction over the implementation of judicial cooperation in criminal matters and police cooperation, including with regard to acts for which the United Kingdom would opt in pursuant to Article 10(5) after a possible block opt-out pursuant to Article 10(4).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009568/12
an die Kommission
Matthias Groote (S&D) und Peter Liese (PPE)
(19. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Zukünftiger Fahrplan der EU-Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie

Am 15. Mai 2001 veröffentlichte die Kommission die Mitteilung „Nachhaltige Entwicklung in Europa für eine bessere Welt: Strategie der Europäischen Union für die nachhaltige Entwicklung". In der Strategie werden politische Rahmenbedingungen für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung festgelegt. In der Mitteilung wird bestimmt, dass die Kommission die Umsetzung der Strategie alle zwei Jahre bewertet.

Nachdem 2009 der letzte Bericht über die Bewertung der Strategie erstellt worden ist und 2011 keine Überprüfung der Strategie stattgefunden hat, stellt sich die Frage, wie die Situation derzeit aussieht.

In welchen Bereichen sind bereits Fortschritte zu verzeichnen, und in welchen Bereichen gedenkt die Kommission weitere Maßnahmen zu ergreifen?

Wann erfolgt die nächste Bewertung der Strategie, und wie sieht der weitere Fahrplan aus?

Antwort von Präsident Barroso im Namen der Kommission
(17. Dezember 2012)

Die Kommission misst der nachhaltigen Entwicklung große Bedeutung bei. Sie hat sichergestellt, dass sie Teil der Strategie Europa 2020 und des Europäischen Semesters ist, die den wirksamsten Rahmen zur Verwirklichung dieser Ziele darstellen. Daher beabsichtigt die Kommission nicht, eine eigene Bewertung der gegenwärtigen Strategie der EU für nachhaltige Entwicklung vorzulegen.

2011 hat die Kommission vier Fahrpläne für die nachhaltige Entwicklung von Energie, Verkehr, Klimapolitik und Ressourceneffizienz bis 2050 vorgelegt. Auch hat sie im November 2012 den 7. Umweltaktionsplan und im November 2012 den „Blueprint für den Schutz der europäischen Wasserressourcen" angenommen. Weitere Maßnahmen für intelligentes, nachhaltiges und integratives Wachstum werden gemäß den jährlichen Arbeitsprogrammen der Kommission getroffen.

Zu den Maßnahmen für 2013 zählen unter anderem die Weiterverfolgung des Rio+20-Gipfels, eine Agenda für die Entwicklung nach 2015 und ein neuer Rahmen für Klima- und Energiepolitik. Die Kommission hat sich verpflichtet, diese Maßnahmen gemäß dem Grundsatz der intelligenten Regulierung und gegebenenfalls mithilfe von Folgenabschätzungen voranzubringen, um sicherzustellen, dass die Auswirkungen auf Umwelt, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft angemessen berücksichtigt werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009568/12
to the Commission
Matthias Groote (S&D) and Peter Liese (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Future timetable for the EU sustainability strategy

On 15 May 2001 the Commission published a communication entitled 'A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: a European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development'. The strategy lays down a policy framework for sustainable development, and the communication states that the Commission will assess its implementation every two years.

The last assessment report was drawn up in 2009, and no review was carried out in 2011, raising the question as to the current state of play.

In what areas has progress already been made, and in what areas does the Commission plan to take further measures?

When will the next assessment report be drawn up, and what is the timetable for the ongoing implementation of the strategy?

Answer given by Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

The Commission attaches great importance to sustainable development and has ensured that it is an integral part of the Europe 2020 strategy and the European Semester which provide the most effective framework to deliver on its objectives. As such, the Commission does not intend to present a separate assessment of the current EU Sustainable Development Strategy.

In 2011 the Commission produced four roadmaps for the sustainable development of energy, transport, climate policy and resource efficiency up to 2050. The Commission also adopted a 7th Environmental Action Plan and a Blueprint for Safeguarding the EU's water resources in November 2012. Further actions to deliver the objective of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth will be pursued as outlined in the Commission's annual work programmes.

The actions for 2013 include the follow-up to the Rio+20 summit, a post-2015 development agenda and a new framework for climate and energy policies amongst others. The Commission is committed to take these forward in accordance with the principles of smarter regulation and, where appropriate, impact assessment in order to ensure that the environmental, social and economic impacts are addressed appropriately.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009569/12
a la Comisión
Pablo Zalba Bidegain (PPE)
(19 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Apoyo del BEI a las PYME

El BEI puede jugar un papel central en la nueva agenda europea para el crecimiento. En este sentido, su reciente aumento de capital de 10 000 millones de euros permitirá aumentar su capacidad de préstamo en 65 000 millones de euros en los próximos años.

Los recursos del BEI deben reorientarse estratégicamente para tener en cuenta las necesidades específicas de cada Estado miembro. Debe evitarse la aplicación de una receta única de crecimiento para todos los países de la UE.

En España, en el año 2011, se dedicaron aproximadamente 2/3 de los recursos del BEI a proyectos de infraestructuras y el resto a medidas de apoyo a las PYME, proporción que ha sido similar en el resto de Estados de la UE.

En estos momentos en los que España está en pleno proceso de consolidación fiscal y cuyo principal problema es la falta de financiación, resulta prioritario reorientar las actuaciones del BEI en apoyo de la financiación de las PYME y la exportación, claves para la recuperación económica.

¿Considera la Comisión que reorientar los recursos del BEI en cada Estado miembro en función de sus necesidades específicas sería una estrategia acertada?

¿Apoyaría un reequilibrio significativo de la proporción de los recursos del BEI destinados en España en favor de las acciones en apoyo a las PYME y a los emprendedores (p.ej.: 2/3 PYMEs, 1/3 Infraestructuras)?

Además, ¿cómo valora la posibilidad de que el BEI colabore de forma más eficaz con los bancos públicos nacionales para maximizar el impacto en las PYME como parte de su actuación anticíclica?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de noviembre de 2012)

El BEI ha apoyado a las PYME en España desde el inicio de la crisis en 2008 (las asignaciones a las PYME aumentaron de 1 300 millones de euros en 2008 a casi 2 000 millones de euros en 2011), en particular mediante la concesión de préstamos con la intermediación de bancos españoles.

A este respecto, el BEI y el Fondo Europeo de Inversiones, que forma parte del grupo del BEI, han cooperado con las instituciones públicas y nacionales de España para la financiación de las PYME. La Comisión espera que sigan haciéndolo en el futuro.

La Comisión ha apoyado una ampliación de capital de 10 000 millones de euros que se prevé apruebe el Consejo de Gobernadores del BEI en las próximas semanas. El BEI ampliará los préstamos específicos dentro de la UE de acuerdo con las necesidades propias de los Estados miembros. El BEI seguirá centrándose en sus ámbitos centrales de especialización, al tiempo que apoyará la Estrategia Europa 2020 y desplegará una nueva iniciativa para el crecimiento y el empleo basada en la innovación y las cualificaciones, el acceso de las PYME a la financiación, la eficiencia en el uso de los recursos y las infraestructuras estratégicas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009569/12
to the Commission
Pablo Zalba Bidegain (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: EIB support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

The EIB could play a key role in the EU's new economic growth agenda. The recent EUR 10 billion rise in the capital of the EIB will enable the bank to increase its lending capacity to EUR 65 billion in the next few years.

The resources of the EIB should be strategically redirected so that the individual needs of each Member State are taken into account. We should not try to apply a single, one-size-fits-all recipe for growth to all EU Member States.

In 2011 in Spain, approximately two thirds of EIB funding was spent on infrastructure projects and the rest went towards supporting SMEs. Funding was allocated in a similar way in other EU Member States.

At a time when Spain is in the middle of a programme of fiscal consolidation, and its main problem is a lack of funding, it is essential that the efforts of the EIB are redirected towards helping finance SMEs and exports, which are vital for economic recovery.

Does the Commission think that redirecting the resources of the EIB according to the specific needs of each Member State would be an effective strategy?

Would the Commission be in favour of reweighting EIB funding in Spain in favour of increased support for SMEs and entrepreneurs (for instance, two thirds for SMEs and one third for infrastructure)?

In addition, what does the Commission think about the possibility that the EIB might cooperate more efficiently with national public banks in order to maximise the impact on SMEs as part of its counter-cyclical action?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(28 November 2012)

The EIB has been deploying support to SMEs in Spain since the beginning of the crisis in 2008 (SME allocations increased from EUR 1.3 bn in 2008 to almost EUR 2 bn in 2011) through in particular intermediated lending with Spanish banks.

In this context, the EIB and the European Investment Fund, which is part of the EIB Group, have been cooperating with national and public institutions in Spain for SME finance and the Commission expects them to continue to do so in the future.

The Commission has supported the EUR 10 billion capital increase expected to be approved by the EIB Board of Governors in the coming weeks, the EIB will extend targeted lending inside the EU according to the specific needs of Member States. The EIB will maintain its traditional focus on core areas of expertise while supporting the Europe 2020 strategy as well as rolling out a new Growth and Employment initiative focused on innovation and skills, SME access to finance, resource efficiency and strategic infrastructure.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009570/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Definición de las zonas de protección para la alimentación de especies necrófagas

La normativa europea en materia de subproductos animales no destinados al consumo humano fue establecida posteriormente al escándalo de las «vacas locas» a través del Reglamento (CE) n° 1774/2002 del Parlamento Europeo y el Consejo. Dicho reglamento ha impuesto a todos los ganaderos europeos la obligación de la incineración de las reses muertas a cargo del propietario de las mismas.

Este reglamento ha tenido un fuerte impacto en los fondos de los agricultores que han tenido que afrontar el gasto que supone la correcta incineración de los animales, pero en el caso de España ha producido ciertos efectos ambientales que no habían sido tenidos en cuenta. En España residen más del 50 % de todas las especies carroñeras de Europa, esta abundante población de aves ha mantenido un continuado equilibrio con las prácticas de ganadería extensiva y el pastoreo que se han desarrollado en el país. Con la obligación de la incineración de las reses, la interacción entre la ganadería extensiva y la población de aves carroñeras se ha detenido; las aves rapaces que se alimentaban de reses muertas han dejado de poder alimentarse de las mismas y, como consecuencia, han tenido que buscar otras fuentes de alimento.

La modificación de la normativa europea ha desencadenado en España numerosos ataques de estas aves rapaces sobre el ganado vivo, especialmente crías. Los ganaderos españoles han tenido que sufrir los efectos de una normativa impuesta sin la más mínima flexibilidad a los condicionantes ambientales de cada región. Debido a esto, la normativa ha sido modificada para permitir la flexibilización de la misma, pero es competencia de las Comunidades Autónomas establecer las «zonas de protección para la alimentación de especies necrófagas» donde los ganaderos en régimen extensivo podrán dejar las reses muertas, cumpliendo ciertos requisitos. Actualmente, en algunas regiones, que aún no han definido sus zonas, solo es posible dejar las reses muertas en los muladares autorizados, claramente insuficientes, mientras que en otras se ha permitido en los espacios de la Red Natura 2000 y otros espacios especiales para estas aves.

¿Está la Comisión llevando a cabo algún tipo de seguimiento para una delimitación homogénea de este tipo de nuevas zonas de alimentación de aves necrófagas?

¿Ha estudiado la Comisión la posibilidad de indemnizar los daños provocados por la rígida aplicación del Reglamento (CE) n° 1774/2002 en España?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(17 de diciembre de 2012)

El Reglamento (CE) nº 1069/2009 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo en materia de subproductos animales ([1]) y el Reglamento (UE) nº 142/2011 de la Comisión ([2]) establecen posibles exenciones a la obligación de recoger el ganado muerto. Se autoriza la alimentación con ganado muerto de las especies en peligro o protegidas de aves necrófagas y otras especies que viven en su hábitat natural. Por consiguiente, la Comisión considera que estas normas tienen debidamente en cuenta las preocupaciones a que se refiere Su Señoría.

Corresponde a las autoridades españolas autorizar y controlar los comederos en los que se alimenta a las aves necrófagas con determinados materiales de la categoría 1, como ganado muerto. No obstante, en su visita de inspección 2007-7251, los servicios responsables de la Comisión inspeccionaron el sistema de alimentación de las aves necrófagas. El correspondiente informe se ha publicado en la web ([3]) e incluye una serie de recomendaciones a las autoridades españolas competentes destinadas a rectificar las deficiencias observadas y a mejorar más las medidas de aplicación y control existentes.

La UE no dispone de un instrumento financiero para indemnizar a los propietarios de los Estados miembros por los costes asociados a la aplicación de la legislación relativa a los subproductos animales.

([1]) DO L 300 de 14.11.2009.
([2]) DO L 54 de 26.2.2011, p. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_id=1824.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009570/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Establishment of protected feeding zones for necrophagous species

Following the 'mad cow' scandal, EU legislation concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption was introduced under Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council. Under this regulation, all EU livestock farmers are obliged to incinerate the bodies of dead animals. They have to bear the cost of this themselves.

Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 has had a significant impact on farmers' incomes because of the cost of incinerating animal carcasses correctly. However, in Spain, the regulation has also had a number of environmental consequences that were not properly taken into account. More than half of all European carrion bird species live in Spain. Thanks to the mix of extensive livestock farming and pasture land that Spain has developed, the country's large population of carrion birds has remained stable. Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 obliging farmers to incinerate dead livestock has disrupted the interaction between extensive livestock farming and the population of carrion birds; birds of prey that eat dead animals can no longer feed on the carcasses of livestock and consequently have had to find other sources of food.

In Spain, these changes to EU legislation have resulted in numerous attacks by birds of prey on live animals, particularly young ones. Spanish livestock farmers have felt the effects of this regulation, which was imposed rigidly with no thought for the environmental constraints of each region. For this reason, the legislation has been amended to make it more flexible; however, the power to establish 'protected feeding zones for necrophagous species' — areas where, after satisfying certain requirements, extensive livestock farmers are allowed to leave dead animals — rests with the Autonomous Communities. Currently, in certain regions that still have not established feeding zones, the bodies of dead animals can only be taken to authorised plants, of which there are clearly not enough; meanwhile, other regions have designated parts of the Natura 2000 network and other areas of special significance as feeding zones.

Is the Commission monitoring this domain to ensure that the demarcation of new feeding zones for necrophagous birds is done in a uniform way?

Has the Commission considered offering compensation for damages resulting from the rigid application of Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 in Spain?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

The Animal By-products Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council ([1]) and Commission Regulation (EU) No 142/2011 ([2]) provides for possible derogations to the compulsory collection of fallen stock. Fallen stock may be fed to endangered or protected species of necrophagous birds and other species living in their natural habitat. Therefore, the Commission considers that these rules take due account of the considerations mentioned by the Honourable Member.

It is a responsibility of the Spanish authorities to authorise and control the feeding stations where certain Category c materials such as fallen stock are presented for feeding of necrophagous birds. However, the Commission inspection service audited the system for feeding of necrophagous birds in particular during inspection mission 2007-7251. The inspection report is available on the web ([3]). The report makes a number of recommendations addressed to the Spanish competent authorities, aimed at rectifying the shortcomings identified and further enhancing the implementing and control measures in place.

There is no EU financial instrument to compensate owners in Member States for the costs associated with the application of the animal by-products legislation.

([1]) OJ L 300, 14.11.2009.
([2]) OJ L 54, 26.2.2011, p.1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_id=1824.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009571/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Electoral law in Kosovo

Is the Commission satisfied that Kosovo's electoral law will allow free and fair polls at the local elections in 2013 and at the national elections which are likely to take place in 2014? If not, what representations is the Commission making to the Government of Kosovo?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The Commission considers free and fair elections to be fundamental to a well-functioning democratic political system. Therefore, the Commission has been actively supporting electoral reform across the western Balkans region, including Kosovo ([1]). Following the municipal elections in 2009 and general elections in 2010, election experts recommended that Kosovo simplify the system, enhance transparency and curtail impunity in cases of possible electoral fraud. The Commission funded an EU electoral reform expert from May 2011-July 2012. The objective of his work was to provide legal advice and drafting expertise to the reform process led by the Electoral Reform Committee of Kosovo's Assembly.

In view of the end of the supervised independence of Kosovo and disagreements among political parties on the mandate of the President, the electoral reform has not been concluded by the Assembly. In this year's Feasibility Study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo, the Commission concludes that for Kosovo to meet its obligations under such an agreement, it needs to ensure that the legal framework for elections better reflects best practice in the EU and that implementation is also in line with international standards. Currently, there are indications from Pristina that the electoral reform process could move forward in the next several months. The Commission is ready to support this reform by providing additional expertise as necessary.

([1]) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1244/1999 and The International Court of Justice (ICJ) Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009572/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(19 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: «Smartshops» — perigo para a saúde pública

A revista do jornal semanário português Expresso noticiou recentemente que quatro pessoas morreram na região Autónoma da Madeira devido ao consumo de drogas legais adquiridas nas chamadas «smartshops». Em Portugal existem cerca de trinta lojas deste tipo que vendem aquilo que designam por «drogas recreativas». Alegadamente, os produtos que comerciam entram no mercado como chás, incenso ou fertilizantes e só posteriormente são empacotados de modo apelativo e vendidos aos consumidores finais. Muitas vezes estes pacotes contêm inscrições desresponsabilizando quem as processa e comercia pelo seu «uso indevido» ainda que seja evidente que é esse uso o efetivamente pretendido. Estas drogas, produzidas em laboratório, reproduzem o mesmo princípio psicoativo de substâncias ilegais. Os danos já causados aos utilizadores por produtos desta natureza, alguns deles irreversíveis, são preocupantes e justificam uma ação concertada por parte das autoridades de saúde dos Estados-Membros e da União.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento destas situações?

2. Reconhece a existência de um vazio legal em diversos Estados-Membros quanto a este tipo de estabelecimentos comerciais e o perigo inerente à sua atividade pouco regulada?

3. Recomendaria o estudo urgente e a adoção de melhores práticas por parte dos Estados-Membros de modo a que melhor possam fazer face ao problema?

4. Nomeadamente, julga que a «quarentena preventiva» de um ano para novas substâncias aplicada no Reino Unido poderia ser uma solução a estudar?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(4 de dezembro de 2012)

A rápida emergência de novas substâncias psicoativas constitui um desafio cada vez mais sério para as autoridades de saúde pública dos Estados-Membros. O nível de toxicidade e os riscos para a saúde a longo prazo dessas substâncias são muitas vezes desconhecidos, sendo algumas delas são inclusivamente mal rotuladas de forma a contornar a legislação sobre produtos alimentares ou de controlo da droga. Tais substâncias são vendidas em muitos Estados-Membros em lojas especializadas denominadas «*smart shops*» ou «*head shops*». Estas lojas têm de respeitar o disposto na legislação da UE e na legislação nacional, nomeadamente em matéria de proteção do consumidor e de rotulagem de produtos. As autoridades locais de alguns Estados-Membros já estabeleceram regras adicionais para este tipo de lojas, realizando inspeções frequentes.

São cada vez mais os Estados-Membros que tiveram de rever recentemente a sua legislação relativa as novas substâncias psicoativas. Alguns introduziram medidas restritivas de emergência, de forma a poderem retirar do mercado temporariamente novas substâncias psicoativas potencialmente nocivas para a saúde.

A Comissão está atualmente a desenvolver novas propostas legislativas neste domínio, procedendo à revisão da Decisão 2005/387/JAI ([1]). As novas propostas, que serão apresentadas no decurso de 2013, deverão permitir uma ação mais rápida e eficaz quanto às novas substâncias psicoativas a nível da UE. O objetivo dessas propostas é melhorar o intercâmbio de informações sobre as novas substâncias psicoativas e a avaliação dos seus riscos, permitindo que as substâncias que apresentem riscos para a saúde, riscos sociais e riscos de segurança possam ser retiradas do mercado de forma célere.

Para além disso, a Comissão financia, através do programa de informação e prevenção em matéria de droga, alguns projetos inovadores destinados a desenvolver melhores práticas para abordar as novas substâncias psicoativas.

([1]) Decisão 2005/387/JAI do Conselho, de 10 de maio de 2005, relativa ao intercâmbio de informações, avaliação de riscos e controlo de novas substâncias psicoativas, JO L 127 de 20.5.2005, pp.32-37.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009572/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: 'Smartshops' — a danger to public health

It was recently reported in the colour supplement of the Portuguese weekly newspaper *Expresso* that four people in the Autonomous Region of Madeira had died after consuming legal drugs purchased from what are known as 'smartshops'. In Portugal there are about thirty shops of this sort selling what are termed 'recreational drugs'. The products that they deal in apparently enter the market in the form of teas, incense, or fertilisers and only later are wrapped in attractive packaging and sold to the final consumers. Packs often bear disclaimers resolving the processor and the dealer of responsibility for 'improper use' of the products, even though use in that manner — clearly — is exactly what is intended. These laboratory-made drugs are psychoactive in the same way as illegal substances. The sometimes irreversible damage done to users by such products has risen to alarming proportions and thus warrants concerted action by the Member States' and Union health authorities.

1. Is the Commission aware of cases of this kind?

2. Does it accept that there is a legal vacuum in some Member States regarding the shops concerned and the danger arising from their business, which is not regulated to any great extent?

3. Does it think that Member States should, as a matter of urgency, study and adopt best practice with a view to tackling the problem more effectively?

4. Specifically, does it think that a year's 'quarantine' for new substances, along the lines of the British arrangement, might be a solution worth exploring?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances poses a growing challenge to public health authorities in the Member States. The acute and longer term health risks of these substances are often unknown and certain substances are mislabelled to circumvent food or drug control legislation. Such substances are sold in specialised shops, called 'smart shops' or 'head shops', in a considerable number of Member States. Such shops should comply with existing EU and national legislation on consumer protection and labelling, for instance. In certain Member States, but not in all, local authorities have established additional rules for such shops and carry out inspections frequently.

An increasing number of Member States have revised their legislation on new psychoactive substances recently. Certain Member States have introduced emergency restriction measures to take out of the market potentially harmful new psychoactive substances temporarily.

The Commission is currently developing new legislative proposals in this area, revising Council Decision 2005/387/JHA ([1]). The new proposals, which will be presented in the course of 2013, should enable swifter and more effective action on new psychoactive substances at the EU level. The aim of the proposals will be to improve the exchange of information on new psychoactive substances, the assessment of their risks, and to enable those substances that pose health, social and safety risks to be withdrawn from the market swiftly.

Furthermore, the Commission is financing, through the Drug Prevention and Information Programme, innovative projects to develop best-practices to address new psychoactive substances.

([1]) Council Decision 2005/387/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances, OJ L 127, 20.5.2005, pp 32-37.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009573/12
an die Kommission
Matthias Groote (S&D)
(19. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Öldampf in Flugzeugkabinen

Der WDR berichtete in seiner Sendung „Monitor" Nr. 626 vom 6.10.2011 über das Auftreten des Nervengifts TCP in der Kabinenluft von Flugzeugen.

Es melden sich immer wieder Piloten, Flugbegleiter oder auch Passagiere, die überzeugt sind, von giftigen Öldämpfen krank geworden zu sein. Dabei dringt der Öldampf aus den Turbinen in die Kabinenluft. In dem Bericht beschreiben unter anderem Dr. Michel Mulder, Flugmediziner der Universität Amsterdam, und Prof. Mohamed Abou-Donia, Duke University USA, wie gefährlich das Einatmen dieser Kabinenluft ist und dass es Hinweise auf Zelltod und Hirnschäden gibt. Auch ehemalige Piloten kommen zu Wort, die während eines Fluges den Geruch bemerkten und gezwungen waren, eine Sauerstoffmaske aufzusetzen, um das Flugzeug sicher zu landen. Sie protokollierten dieses Problem, allerdings blieb es ohne Folgen. Es gab keinerlei Reaktion der Airlines auf die Nachfrage, was in solchen Fällen getan werde.

Es ist verständlich, dass Passagiere wissen möchten, was für eine Luft sie einatmen, und niemand auf Flügen einem Nervengift ausgesetzt werden darf. Wird dieses Problem von der Kommission erkannt, und gibt es Überlegungen, wie Airlines gezwungen werden können, die Zusammensetzung in der Luft zu messen und die Ergebnisse zu veröffentlichen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(30. November 2012)

Der Kommission ist die weltweite Debatte zur Kabinenluftqualität in Flugzeugen bekannt. Was die Gefahr einer Kontaminierung der Kabinenluft betrifft, so ist die Kommission selbstverständlich bestrebt, die Sicherheit und Gesundheit der Fluggäste und des fliegenden Personals zu schützen.

Wie die Kommission bereits in ihrer Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-009668/2011 ([1]) erläutert hat, wurde bislang kein kausaler Zusammenhang zwischen dem Einatmen von Kabinenluft (im Normalbetrieb oder nach Störungen) und Gesundheitsproblemen bei Besatzungen und Passagieren von Verkehrsflugzeugen nachgewiesen. Daher beabsichtigt die Kommission nicht, den Luftverkehrsbetreibern zusätzliche Verfahren aufzuerlegen. Die Kommission und die EASA verfolgen jedoch weiterhin aufmerksam die laufenden Untersuchungen und Bewertungen verschiedener Stellen in diesem Bereich, um für den Fall, dass Maßnahmen in ihrer Zuständigkeit notwendig werden, ein rechtzeitiges und zielführendes Handeln gewährleisten zu können.

Um dieses Thema stärker ins Bewusstsein zu rücken, wurden die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Ratstagung „Verkehr" vom 29. Oktober 2012 erneut darauf hingewiesen, dass Ereignisse in Zusammenhang mit einer Kontaminierung der Kabinenluft über Systeme zur Meldung von Ereignissen gemeldet werden sollten.

Außerdem wird die Kommission in den kommenden Wochen eine Überarbeitung der Rechtsvorschriften für die Systeme zur Meldung von Ereignissen vorlegen, durch die der geltende Rechtsrahmen gestärkt und somit zu einem proaktiven Sicherheitssystem auf EU-Ebene beigetragen werden soll.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009573/12
to the Commission
Matthias Groote (S&D)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Oil fumes in aircraft cabins

The *Monitor* programme broadcast by the German television station WDR on 6 October 2011 included a report on incidents linked to the presence of the nerve gas TCP in aircraft cabin air.

There have been repeated claims by pilots, flight attendants and passengers that they have fallen ill after inhaling poisonous oil fumes which have found their way from an aircraft's engines into the cabin air. In the report, experts including Dr Michel Mulder, a medical flight examiner from the University of Amsterdam, and Professor Mohamed Abou-Donia, from Duke University in the USA, described the serious risks involved in inhaling contaminated cabin air and cited evidence of cell death and brain damage. Former pilots also related how, during a flight, they noticed the smell of oil and were forced to put on oxygen mask in order to land their plane safely. They reported the problem, but their reports went unheeded. The airlines contacted in connection with the programme refused to say what action is taken in such cases.

It is understandable that passengers should want to know what kind of air they are breathing, and it goes without saying that nobody taking a plane should be exposed to a nerve gas. Is the Commission aware of this problem and is it considering taking steps to force airlines to analyse the composition of cabin air and publish the results?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The Commission is aware of the worldwide debate around the aircraft cabin air quality and with regard to the risk of contamination of cabin air, the Commission's concern is of course to protect the safety and health of passengers and flight and cabin crew members.

As explained in the answer given by the Commission to Written Question E-009668/2011 ([1]) there is no evidence, at this stage, of a causal association between cabin air exposures (either general or following incidents) and ill-health of crews and passengers in commercial aircraft. As a consequence, the Commission does not intend to impose additional procedures to air operators. The Commission and EASA continue however to follow carefully ongoing research and assessment done by different bodies in this area in order to ensure timely and appropriate actions under its remit which could be necessary.

With a view to allowing a better awareness of this issue, Member States were reminded during the Transport Council of 29 October 2012 that events of cabin air contamination should be reported through occurrence reporting systems.

In addition, the Commission will present in the following weeks a revision of the legislation on occurrence reporting systems which aims at strengthening the framework in place and by that, contribute to a proactive systeme on safety at European level.

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009574/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κατάλληλες ενέργειες από την Επιτροπή για τη διερεύνηση και την απόδοση ευθυνών για το σκάνδαλο DePuy

Οι αμερικανικές αρχές μετά από καταγγελία της αμερικανικής επιτροπής κεφαλαιαγοράς διεξήγαγαν έρευνα σε βάρος της εταιρίας DePuy σε ότι αφορά παράνομο χρηματισμό δημοσίων υπαλλήλων σε διάφορα κράτη (μεταξύ αυτών και στην Ελλάδα) προκειμένου να αγοραστούν προϊόντα της από δημόσιες υπηρεσίες. Από την προηγούμενη ερώτησή μου για ίδιο θέμα στην οποία είχε απαντήσει η Επιτροπή (E-000928/2011) μεσολάβησε το γεγονός ότι οι αμερικανικές αρχές επέβαλαν πρόστιμο 21,4 εκατομμύρια δολάρια για ποινικές ευθύνες και 48,65 εκατομμύρια δολάρια για αστικές ευθύνες στην εταιρία Johnson and Johnson (μητρική της εταιρίας DePuy).

Με δεδομένο το παραπάνω ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Μετά και την τελεσίδικη καταδικαστική απόφαση των αμερικανικών αρχών κατά της εν λόγω εταιρίας σε ποιές ενέργειες έχει προβεί η Επιτροπή ώστε να διερευνηθούν οι υποθέσεις και να αποδοθούν οι ευθύνες που αναλογούν; Έχει ζητήσει από τις αμερικανικές δικαστικές αρχές σχετικές πληροφορίες; Αν όχι, γιατί;

2. Πως περιμένει η Επιτροπή να μάθει αν οι καταδικαστικές αποφάσεις αφορούν περιπτώσεις δωροδοκιών για δημόσιες συμβάσεις εντός της ΕΕ κάτι που παραβιάζει την ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(9 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Δυνάμει της Συνθήκης της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και της Συνθήκης για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή δεν έχει αρμοδιότητα να παρεμβαίνει σε μεμονωμένες περιπτώσεις διαφθοράς στα κράτη μέλη.

Η OLAF διερευνά τις περιπτώσεις όπου υπάρχουν υπόνοιες απάτης, διαφθοράς ή παρατυπιών που πλήττουν τα οικονομικά συμφέροντα της ΕΕ. Η περίπτωση στην οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος, όπως περιγράφεται στην ερώτηση, δεν εμπίπτει στο πεδίο αρμοδιότητας της OLAF.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί την εφαρμογή των πολιτικών για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη στο πλαίσιο του μηχανισμού ([1]) υποβολής εκθέσεων σχετικά με την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς, ο οποίος δημιουργήθηκε τον Ιούνιο του 2011. Η πρώτη έκθεση για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς στην ΕΕ θα δημοσιευτεί το 2013.

([1]) Απόφαση της Επιτροπής, της 6ης Ιουνίου 2011, για τη θέσπιση μηχανισμού υποβολής εκθέσεων της ΕΕ για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς με σκοπό την περιοδική αξιολόγηση («Έκθεση για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς στην ΕΕ») — C(2011)3673 τελικό.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009574/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Appropriate action by the Commission to investigate the DePuy scandal and establish responsibility

Following a complaint lodged by the US Securities and Exchange Commission, the American authorities conducted an investigation into the DePuy company in connection with public officials in various countries (including Greece) being bribed so that public departments would purchase the company's products. Since my previous question on this matter, to which the Commission has replied (E-000928/2011), the American authorities have imposed a criminal penalty of USD 21.4 million and a civil penalty of USD 48.65 million on the company Johnson & Johnson (DePuy's parent company).

In light of the above, will the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What action has the Commission taken to have the events concerned investigated and individual responsibility established since the American authoritiesdelivered the definitive judgment against the company concerned? Has the Commission asked the American judicial authorities for relevant information? If not, why not?

2. How does the Commission expect to find out whether the judgments relate to cases of bribery of public departments in the EU and thus breaches of European legislation?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2013)

Under the Treaty of the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Commission has no competence to intervene in individual cases of corruption in the Member States.

OLAF investigates cases of suspicions of fraud, corruption or irregularities detrimental to the EU's financial interests. The case referred to by the Honourable Member, as described in the question, does not to fall within the scope of OLAF's competence.

The Commission follows the implementation of anti-corruption policies in all Member States in the framework of the EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism ([1]) set up in June 2011. The first EU Anti-Corruption Report will be published in 2013.

([1]) Commission decision of 6 June 2011 establishing an EU Anti-corruption reporting mechanism for periodic assessment ('EU Anti-corruption Report') — C(2011) 3673 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009575/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(19. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — EAD-Beamter macht Karriere im Schnellverfahren: Beförderung über fünf Besoldungsgruppen innerhalb eines Jahres

Ein Beamter, der im Parlament der Besoldungsgruppe AD7 zugeordnet war, wurde als Bediensteter der Kommission in die Besoldungsgruppe AD8 befördert. Schon kurz darauf wurde dieser Beamte erneut befördert und ist nun Abteilungsleiter (AD12) beim Europäischen Auswärtigen Dienst (EAD).

1. Warum kam dieser Beamte angesichts seiner vorherigen Besoldungsgruppe für eine AD12-Stelle in Betracht?

2. Warum wurde dieses Verfahren angewendet?

3. Welches Auswahlverfahren hat dieser Beamte ursprünglich erfolgreich abgeschlossen?

4. Auf welcher gesetzlichen Grundlage beruhen diese blitzartige Beförderung des Beamten und dieses Ausnahmeverfahren, bei dem gegen den Grundsatz der Gleichbehandlung von EU-Beamten verstoßen worden ist?

5. Kann ausgeschlossen werden, dass es sich hier um eine Begünstigung handelt? Ist OLAF über diesen Fall informiert worden?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(12. Dezember 2012)

Die Ernennung des neuen Referatsleiters für die Beziehungen zum Europäischen Parlament und zu den nationalen Parlamenten erfolgte nach einem Auswahlverfahren, das vollständig im Einklang mit dem Personalstatut steht: Die Stelle wurde am 15. Juni 2012 auf der Grundlage von Artikel 29 Absatz 2 und Artikel 98 Absatz 1 des Statuts der Beamten der Europäischen Union veröffentlicht. Es gingen insgesamt 22 Bewerbungen (5 von Frauen und 17 von Männern) ein, wobei 12 Bewerbungen aus den diplomatischen Diensten der Mitgliedstaaten kamen. 3 Bewerbungen wurden von Kommissionsbeamten und 7 von Beamten des EAD eingereicht.

Nach einer von einem Gremium vorgenommenen Vorauswahl wurden 7 als die die Stellenanforderungen am besten erfüllenden Kandidaten in die engere Wahl gezogen. Diese Bewerber/innen wurden von dem Gremium zu einem Vorstellungsgespräch am 20. Juli eingeladen. Drei von ihnen kamen aus den diplomatischen Diensten der Mitgliedstaaten, zwei waren Kommissionsbeamte und zwei waren Beamte des EAD.

Nach den Vorstellungsgesprächen, die gemäß den für eine Stelle eines Referatsleiters üblichen Verfahren erfolgten, wurden zwei Bewerber/innen auf eine endgültige Shortlist gesetzt. Nach einem weiteren Vorstellungsgespräch mit den beiden Bewerber/innen wurde der jetzige Referatsleiter für die Stelle ernannt und in die Besoldungsgruppe AD 12 eingestuft. Die Stelle war mit dieser Besoldungsgruppe ausgeschrieben worden und jeder, der sich um diese Stelle beworben hätte — ob nun ein Beamter des EAD, des Generalsekretariats des Rates oder der Kommission oder ein Diplomat aus einem der Mitgliedstaaten —, wäre bei der Einstellung in diese Besoldungsgruppe eingestuft worden.

Die Anstellungsbehörde ist überzeugt, dass das Auswahlverfahren zur Einstellung des für diese Stelle am besten geeigneten Bewerbers geführt hat.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009575/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Fast-track career of an EEAS official: five grades in one year

An official was promoted from AD7 in Parliament to AD8 in the Commission. After a short period of time this official was again promoted, becoming a Head of Division (AD12) in the European External Action Service (EEAS).

1. Why was this official eligible for an AD12 post, given his previous grade?

2. Why was this procedure chosen?

3. Which competition did this official pass?

4. What is the legal basis for fast-tracking this official and for this exceptional procedure, which disregards the principle of equal treatment for EU officials?

5. Can preferential treatment be ruled out? Has OLAF been informed?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The appointment of the new Head of Division for the European Parliament and National Parliaments was made following a selection procedure fully in line with the Staff Regulations: the post was published on 15 June 2012 on the basis of Articles 29(2) and 98(1) of the Staff Regulations; 22 applications were received, 5 from women and 17 from men. There were 12 applicants from the diplomatic services of the Member States, 3 from Commission officials and 7 from EEAS officials.

After a pre-selection exercise carried out by a panel, 7 candidates were judged eligible and shortlisted as best meeting the requirements of the post. These candidates were invited for interview before the panel on 20 July. 3 of the candidates interviewed were from the diplomatic services of the Member States, 2 were Commission officials, and 2 were EEAS officials.

After the interviews, in line with standard practice for a Head of Division post, 2 candidates were placed on a final shortlist. Following a further interview of both of these candidates, the current job-holder was appointed to the post. The grade at which he was appointed was AD 12: this was the level at which the post was published, and any of the individuals who applied for the post — whether an official of the EEAS, General Secretariat of the Council or the Commission, or a diplomat from one of the Member States — would have been appointed at that level, if they had been successful.

The AIPN is satisfied that the selection procedure resulted in the appointment of the best candidate for the job requirements.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009577/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(19. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Kommissionsstrategie zu 3D-Druck

Die Preise für „3D-Drucker", Geräte, die das dreidimensionale „Drucken" von Gegenständen ermöglichen, sind in den letzten Jahren stark gefallen. Dadurch werden diese Geräte zunehmend auch von privaten Anwendern genutzt. 3D-Ducker ermöglichen es, aus Computermodellen physische Gegenstände zu erstellen. Dabei können die digitalen Modelle, in der Regel „CAD"-Dateien („computer-assisted design"-Dateien), entweder komplett digital erstellt werden oder durch das „Scannen" von bestehenden Objekten generiert werden. Somit können durch 3D-Druck sowohl komplett neue Objekte kreiert als auch natürlich entstandene oder künstlich erschaffene Objekte kopiert werden. In den Vereinigten Staaten gab es bereits mehrfach Gerichtsverfahren zu Copyright-Fragen in Zusammenhang mit 3D-Drucken.

1. Welche Formen des Urheberrechts betreffen nach heutiger Rechtslage auch den 3D-Druck, gescannte wie digital kreierte 3D-Modelle und durch 3D-Druck erstellte Objekte?

2. Plant die Kommission, eine spezielle Regulierung für 3D-Druck vorzuschlagen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(12. Dezember 2012)

Der Kommission ist sich des neu entstehenden Marktes für den 3D-Druck, auf den der Herr Abgeordnete Bezug nimmt, bewusst und verfolgt seine Entwicklung in Europa und in der Welt mit Interesse. Beim 3D-Druck handelt es sich um eine viel versprechende neue Technologie. Grundsätzlich ermöglicht der 3D-Druck die Anfertigung einer Kopie der Gestalt eines beliebigen materiellen Gegenstands.

Urheberrechte, wie auch die anderen Rechte am geistigen Eigentum, sind ein Schlüsselinstrument, um die richtigen Anreize für Kreativität und Innovation im digitalen Umfeld zu setzen.

Materielle Gegenstände, wie z. B. Möbel, können urheberrechtlich geschützt sein, wenn sie die erforderliche Originalität in dem Sinne aufweisen, dass sie eine eigene geistige Schöpfung ihres Autors darstellen. Wie bei einem herkömmlichen Drucker ist beim Einsatz computergestützter Designwerkzeuge (CAD) zur Schaffung eines materiellen Gegenstands Inhaber der Rechte an diesem Gegenstand nicht die Person, die den 3D-Drucker bedient — der Nutzer —, sondern derjenige, der den zugrunde liegenden Plan in der CAD-Datei erstellt hat.

Die Kommission beabsichtigt derzeit nicht, besondere Regelungen für den 3D-Druck vorzuschlagen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009577/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Commission strategy on 3D printing

Prices for '3D printers', devices which make it possible to produce three-dimensional 'prints' of objects, have fallen substantially in recent years, with the result that they are increasingly being used by private individuals. 3D printers make it possible to produce physical objects on the basis of computer models. The digital models, which are generally CAD (computer-assisted design) files, are either produced entirely digitally or generated by 'scanning' existing objects. In this way, 3D printing can be used both to create completely new objects and to copy natural or manufactured objects. A number of court cases involving copyright issues in connection with 3D prints have already been brought in the United States.

1. On the basis of the law as it stands, what forms of copyright also cover 3D prints, scanned and digitally created 3D models and objects produced using 3D prints?

2. Does the Commission plan to propose specific rules to govern 3D printing?

Answer given by M. Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the nascent market of 3D printing mentioned by the Honourable Member and follows with interest its evolution in Europe and in the world. 3D printing is a promising new technology. In principle, 3D printing allows the making of a copy of the shape of any physical object.

Copyright, as the other intellectual property rights (IPRs), is a key tool for providing the right incentives for creation and innovation in the digital environment.

Physical objects like e.g. furniture may be protected by copyright if they meet the requirement of originality in the sense that they are their authors' own intellectual creation. As is also the case for a traditional printer, if computer-assisted design (CAD) is used to create a physical object, the rigthholder of this object is not the person operating the 3D printer -the user- but the person who created the underlying plan in the CAD file.

The Commission does not plan to propose specific rules to govern 3D printing at this stage.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009578/12
al Consejo
Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(19 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Sueldos de los parlamentarios

¿Considera el Consejo la propuesta de eliminar los salarios de los parlamentarios como medida de austeridad ante la crisis?

Respuesta
(3 de diciembre de 2012)

El Consejo no ha debatido este asunto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009578/12
to the Council
Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: MEPs' salaries

Is the Council considering the suggestion that the salaries of Members of Parliaments should be abolished as a crisis austerity measure?

Reply
(3 December 2012)

The Council has not discussed the issue.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009579/12
a la Comisión
Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(19 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Sueldos de los parlamentarios

¿Considera la Comisión la propuesta de eliminar los salarios de los parlamentarios como medida de austeridad ante la crisis?

Respuesta del Sr. Barroso en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión desea recordar a Su Señoría que, según el artículo 223, apartado 2, del TFUE, en estas cuestiones la iniciativa recae en el propio Parlamento Europeo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009579/12
to the Commission
Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: MEPs' salaries

Is the Commission considering the suggestion that the salaries of Members of Parliaments should be abolished as a crisis austerity measure?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The Commission wishes to remind the Honourable Member that according to Art 223 § 2 of the TFEU the initiative in such matters lies with the European Parliament itself.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009580/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(19 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Επιβάρυνση πολιτών και ασφαλιστικών ταμείων από ενδεχόμενη ανάθεση υπηρεσιών πιστοποίησης και ηλεκτρονικής καταχώρησης δεδομένων σε συμβολαιογράφους

Στο πλαίσιο της εφαρμογής του Προγράμματος «Αριάδνη» για την απαραίτητη αναδιοργάνωση του Συστήματος Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης στην Ελλάδα μέσα από την αντιμετώπιση παραβατικών συμπεριφορών και καταχρηστικών λήψεων συντάξεων ή άλλων παροχών από μη δικαιούχους, προκρίνεται η ανάθεση στους συμβολαιογράφους της χώρας των υπηρεσιών πιστοποίησης και ηλεκτρονικής καταχώρησης δεδομένων — πραγματικών και νομικών γεγονότων της προσωπικής κατάστασης των πολιτών — που αφορούν θανάτους, γάμους, σύμφωνα συμβίωσης και διαζύγια. Σύμφωνα με την εν λόγω προωθούμενη ρύθμιση, οι πολίτες θα υποχρεούνται να προσφύγουν στους συμβολαιογράφους για να δηλώσουν την αλλαγή στη δημογραφική ή οικογενειακή τους κατάσταση καταβάλλοντας το αντίτιμο των 42 ευρώ, μια δαπάνη που είτε θα επιβαρύνει τους ίδιους (περιπτώσεις γάμου ή διαζυγίου), είτε θα καλύπτεται από τα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία στην περίπτωση της γνωστοποίησης θανάτου. Αξίζει να σημειωθεί ότι ένα μεγάλο μέρος της παραπάνω διαδικασίας πραγματοποιείται βάσει νόμου από τους ληξιάρχους του κράτους, που οφείλουν να αποστέλλουν αντίγραφα των ληξιαρχικών πράξεων θανάτου στους ασφαλιστικούς φορείς και τις υπηρεσίες των αρμόδιων υπουργείων και τα αποστέλλουν κάθε μήνα.

Σε αυτήν την κατεύθυνση ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς κρίνει το γεγονός της οικονομικής επιβάρυνσης των πολιτών και των ασφαλιστικών ταμείων, χωρίς μάλιστα την παροχή δυνατότητας και επιλογής στους πολίτες να προβούν οι ίδιοι, αυτόνομα, στην έγκαιρη διεκπεραίωση της σχετικής διαδικασίας;

2. Με δεδομένη την ύπαρξη κρατικών υπηρεσιών διαμεσολάβησης μεταξύ πολιτών και δημόσιας διοίκησης, των Κέντρων Εξυπηρέτησης Πολιτών (ΚΕΠ), πώς θα αξιολογούσε την ενεργοποίησή τους — μάλιστα δωρεάν — και ως προς τη συγκεκριμένη δραστηριότητα, μέχρι να ολοκληρωθεί πλήρως η ηλεκτρονική διασύνδεση όλων των δημόσιων υπηρεσιών σε ένα ενιαίο πληροφοριακό σύστημα;

3. Διαθέτει στοιχεία για τις αντίστοιχες διαδικασίες που ακολουθούνται στα άλλα κράτη μέλη; Αν ναι, σε ποιες χώρες υποχρεώνονται οι πολίτες ή τα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία σε αντίστοιχες επιβαρύνσεις;

4. Προτίθεται να προωθήσει την ανταλλαγή βέλτιστων πρακτικών μεταξύ των κρατών μελών προκειμένου να αναδειχθούν οι πλέον επωφελείς, για τα ασφαλιστικά ταμεία και τους πολίτες, τρόποι διαχείρισης των συγκεκριμένων ζητημάτων;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(17 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Το εν λόγω πρόγραμμα «Αριάδνη» αποτελεί πρωτοβουλία των ελληνικών αρχών προκειμένου να περιοριστεί η καταβολή παροχών και συντάξεων σε μη δικαιούχους, παρέχοντας στα ταμεία κοινωνικής ασφάλισης τη δυνατότητα να διαθέτουν ακριβείς και επικαιροποιημένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με κάθε αλλαγή στην οικογενειακή ή τη δημογραφική κατάσταση του ασφαλιζόμενου.

Αν και οι δεσμεύσεις του προγράμματος ωθούν την Ελλάδα να εξορθολογίσει τις δαπάνες για συντάξεις και κοινωνικές μεταβιβάσεις κατά τρόπο που θα διασφαλίζει τη βασική κοινωνική προστασία, ο τρόπος που θα επιλέξουν οι ελληνικές αρχές ώστε να βελτιώσουν τον έλεγχο των συντάξεων και των παροχών αποτελεί δική τους ευθύνη. Εναπόκειται επίσης στις ελληνικές αρχές η λήψη αποφάσεων σχετικά με τη γενικότερη στρατηγική ηλεκτρονικής διακυβέρνησης, τη δυνατότητα ένταξης της καταπολέμησης της απάτης στον τομέα της κοινωνικής ασφάλισης στην εν λόγω στρατηγική, καθώς και σχετικά με τον ρόλο των Κέντρων Εξυπηρέτησης Πολιτών (ΚΕΠ) προς αυτήν την κατεύθυνση.

Σε περίπτωση υποβολής συγκεκριμένου αιτήματος από την αρμόδια ελληνική αρχή, η Επιτροπή, μέσω της Ομάδας Δράσης για την Ελλάδα ([1]), είναι έτοιμη να παράσχει τεχνική βοήθεια στον συγκεκριμένο τομέα και, μεταξύ άλλων θα ζητήσει από επιλεγμένα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ να παρουσιάσουν στην Ελλάδα τις βέλτιστες πρακτικές τους για την καταπολέμηση της καταχρηστικής λήψης συντάξεων και άλλων παροχών που χορηγεί το Σύστημα Κοινωνικής Ασφάλισης.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/taskforce-greece/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009580/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Cost to citizens and insurance funds of plans to entrust notaries with certification and computerised data registration

As part of the 'Ariadne' project for the necessary overhaul of Greek social security arrangements seeking to combat abuse of the system and pensions and benefits fraud, it is recommended that Greek notaries be entrusted with the certification and computerised registration of factual and legal data relating to deaths, marriages, partnerships and divorces, for example, affecting the personal situation of individual citizens. Under the new arrangements being envisaged, any changes in personal or family circumstances would have to be registered with a notary for a fee of EUR 42, payable either by the individual concerned (in the case of marriage or divorce) or by the relevant insurance funds (for the issuing of death certificates). Many of the above procedures are currently dealt with by State registrars, who are required by law to send copies of death certificates to the relevant insurance funds and ministry departments, this being done on a monthly basis.

In view of this:

1. What view does the Commission take of the additional costs to individuals and insurance funds resulting from the envisaged arrangements, which fail to give individuals the option of completing the necessary formalities themselves within the requisite period?

2. Given the existence of citizens' contact points for mediation between the public and the authorities, could they not also provide the above service free of charge, pending completion of a single data network linking all public services?

3. Does it have any information regarding the situation in other Member States? If so, in which Member States are fees payable for this service by individuals or insurance funds?

4. Will it encourage an exchange of best practices between Member States with a view to identifying the solutions most advantageous to individuals and insurance funds?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

The aforementioned 'Ariadne' project is an initiative of the Greek authorities in order to limit payment of benefits and pensions to non-beneficiaries, by allowing Social Security Funds to have accurate and up-to-date information on any change in marital status or other demographic data of the insured person.

Whereas program commitments urge Greece to rationalize spending on pensions and social transfers in a manner that will preserve basic social protection, the way the Greek authorities choose to improve control of pensions and benefits is of their own responsibility. It is also up to the Greek authorities to decide on their overall e-governance strategy and on how the fight against Social Security fraud might fit in this overall strategy, and on the role of citizens' contact points in this regard.

Should there be a specific demand from the Greek authority, the Commission, through the Task Force for Greece ([1]), stands ready to provide technical assistance in this specific area, including by asking selected Member States to present to Greece their best practices in the fight against fraud on Social Security pensions and benefits.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/taskforce-greece/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009581/12
to the Commission
Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Offensive EU poster

In the Berlaymont building, an offensive poster is on display reading: 'We can all share the same star. EUROPE4ALL'. Not only does it equate the Communist hammer and sickle with the symbols of many religions, but it elevates the Communist symbol above all the others.

Was this poster officially commissioned by the Commission? What did it cost? Given the millions of Poles, Czechs and others who suffered for decades under Communism, at what audience was it aimed?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(3 December 2012)

Subject: Offensive EU poster

The poster 'We can share the same star. EUROPE4ALL' has nothing to do with the Commission. It was neither commissioned by, nor printed by, nor funded by the Commission.

The poster was not displayed on one of the official notice boards that are foreseen for the purpose. The display of this poster had not been authorised by the competent service. Indeed, the Commission policy is to deny authorisation to posters when the information concerned is political, ideological or denominational.

As soon as the controversial symbol was pointed out, the poster was immediately removed. The service in charge carried out a verification and found no other such posters in the building.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009582/12
to the Commission
Geoffrey Van Orden (ECR)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Banking union

In his 'State of the Union' address to the Parliament on 12 September 2012, Mr Barroso foresaw the need for a new Treaty in order to take forward a banking union and move towards a European federation. Based on past experience of Treaty negotiations, how do you foresee a possible timetable for action over the coming months? Would matters need to be completed by either the end of this parliamentary term or the end of the present Commission's term of office, or could deliberations be continued further into the future?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

As announced in the State of the Union address, the Commission will come forward with a blueprint for deepening the economic and monetary union (EMU) this autumn. The blueprint will identify the tools and instruments required for deepening the EMU, distinguishing between those changes that can be made through secondary legislation and those areas where changes to the Treaties would be necessary. It will be presented to Parliament and will contribute to the debate at the December European Council that will discuss further steps.

The State of the Union address also launched a debate on the path to a federation of Nation States. The Commission will present its outline for the future EU ahead of the European Parliament elections in 2014. This outline will present ideas for shaping the future of the Union, some of which will require Treaties changes. The Commission hopes that these ideas will feed into a genuine European debate in the run up to the next elections for the European Parliament.

In the light of the above, it is currently not possible to establish the timetable that the hounourable Member refers to.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009584/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(19 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Decisione di mantenere in vigore l'esenzione dal visto per i cittadini dei paesi dei Balcani

All'inizio di questa settimana, Austria, Belgio, Francia, Germania, Lussemburgo e Paesi Bassi hanno scritto alla Commissione per chiedere la sospensione dell'esenzione dal visto d'ingresso all'UE per i cittadini dei paesi dei Balcani in modo da contribuire a ridurre il numero delle richieste di asilo dalla regione. Un portavoce del Commissario degli affari europei ha osservato che la «situazione è preoccupante» e sta creando «gravi problemi per il funzionamento del sistema di asilo». Nondimeno Stefano Sannino, Direttore generale della Commissione europea per l'ampliamento, ha dichiarato che il regime UE di esenzione dai visti rimarrà in vigore per i paesi dei Balcani, fintanto che non crea grossi problemi e disturbi.

Secondo Eurostat, nei primi tre mesi del 2012, 3 390 persone provenienti dalla Serbia hanno chiesto asilo nell'UE, altrettanto hanno fatto 1 100 richiedenti asilo dalla Repubblica iugoslava di Macedonia, 865 dall'Albania, 600 dalla Bosnia-Erzegovina e 1 970 dal Kosovo, che a tutt'oggi non ha nessun accordo di esenzione dai visti con l'UE.

Alla luce di quanto sopra:

1. Può la Commissione illustrare i problemi citati dagli Stati membri interessati in materia di esenzione dal visto per i cittadini dei paesi dei Balcani?

2. Può inoltre la Commissione illustrare i problemi che il sistema d'asilo si trova ad affrontare e spiegare come e in che misura ne compromettono la funzionalità?

3. Perché, secondo il parere della Commissione, le richieste di asilo della regione sono tanto numerose? Ci sono preoccupazioni che le condizioni di vita nei paesi balcanici, siano la ragione di questo afflusso?

4. Quali azioni, se del caso, sta programmando la Commissione per porre rimedio a questa situazione?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(19 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione è pienamente consapevole delle pressioni subite negli ultimi mesi dai sistemi di asilo di vari Stati membri dell'Unione europea a causa della nuova ondata di domande di asilo provenienti dai paesi dei Balcani occidentali i cui cittadini sono esenti dall'obbligo del visto, e ha preso una serie di iniziative per affrontare la questione.

Il 28 agosto 2012 la Commissione ha pubblicato la terza relazione di monitoraggio sul controllo successivo alla liberalizzazione dei visti, nel quale sono evidenziati i principali fattori che generano l'immigrazione irregolare in provenienza da quella regione, segnatamente un limitato accesso all'istruzione, all'occupazione e all'assistenza sanitaria. La relazione ha inoltre evidenziato possibili soluzioni invitando i cinque paesi dei Balcani occidentali esenti dall'obbligo del visto a intervenire urgentemente in cinque settori:

1. potenziare la cooperazione operativa con le autorità degli Stati membri, anche intensificando lo scambio di informazioni;

2. avviare indagini efficaci sui facilitatori della migrazione irregolare;

3. nel rispetto dei diritti fondamentali dei cittadini, rafforzare i controlli di frontiera;

4. organizzare campagne d'informazione per rendere noti ai cittadini i loro diritti e i loro obblighi nel regime di esenzione dal visto;

5. incrementare l'assistenza alle minoranze.

Tali misure rimangono necessarie per ridurre il numero di domande di asilo infondate presentate negli Stati membri dell'UE.

La questione è stata sollevata dalla Commissione anche nell'ambito del Forum ministeriale UE-Balcani occidentali svoltosi a Tirana il 5-6 novembre, in occasione del quale i ministri hanno adottato una dichiarazione comune sul regime di esenzione dal visto. Per tradurre gli impegni politici assunti al vertice in azioni pratiche, la Commissione ha successivamente convocato una riunione con gli alti funzionari degli Stati dei Balcani che beneficiano dell'esenzione dal visto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009584/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Decision to retain visa-free travel for nationals of the Balkan countries

Earlier this week, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands wrote to the Commission asking for visa-free travel to the EU for nationals of the Balkan countries to be suspended in order to help reduce the number of asylum claims from the region. A spokesperson for the Commissioner for Home Affairs noted that the 'worrying situation' was creating 'serious problems for the functioning of the asylum system'. However, Stefano Sannino, the Commission's Director-General for Enlargement, has said that the EU's visa-free regime will remain in place for nationals of the Balkan countries as long as it does not create major problems and disturbances.

According to Eurostat, in the first three months of 2012 3 390 people from Serbia sought asylum in the EU, as did 1 100 from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 865 from Albania, 600 from Bosnia and Herzegovina and 1 970 from Kosovo, which to date has no visa-free agreement with the EU.

In the light of the above:

1. Can the Commission outline the problems cited by the Member States concerned with regard to visa-free travel for nationals of the Balkan countries?

2. Can the Commission also outline the problems facing the asylum system, and state how and to what extent these are affecting its functionality?

3. Why, in the Commission's opinion, is the number of asylum claims from this region so high? Are there concerns that the standard of living in the Balkan countries is the reason for such an influx?

4. What action, if any, is the Commission planning to take to remedy this situation?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

The Commission is fully aware that the asylum systems of several EU Member States have faced pressure in recent months as a result of a new surge in asylum applications from the western Balkans visa-free countries and has taken a number of steps to address this issue.

The Commission published its third post-visa liberalisation monitoring report on 28 August 2012, which highlighted the main 'push factors' of irregular migration from this region, namely poor access to education, employment and healthcare. This report also highlighted potential remedies for this situation and called on the five visa-free Western Balkans states to urgently implement further measures in five areas:

1. Enhance operational cooperation with Member State authorities, facilitated by closer information sharing;

2. Launch effective investigations of the facilitators of irregular migration;

3. In line with citizens' fundamental rights, strengthen border controls;

4. Organise information campaigns to inform citizens of their rights and obligations under the visa-free regime;

5. Increase assistance to minority populations.

These measures remain necessary to reduce the number of unfounded asylum applications in EU Member States.

The Commission also raised the issue of unfounded asylum applications at the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum in Tirana on 5-6 November, where Ministers adopted a Joint Declaration on visa-free travel. It subsequently convened a meeting with the senior officials of the visa-free Western Balkans states to translate the summit's political commitments into operational action.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009585/12
an die Kommission
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) und Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(19. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Transparenz bei Rohstoffhändlern

Sowohl auf dem weltweiten Rohstoffmarkt als auch auf den Finanzmärkten nehmen globale Handelshäuser eine zunehmend bedeutende Rolle ein, beispielsweise durch Bereitstellung von Krediten für Unternehmen. Zudem nehmen sie an Größe zu und sind immer stärker integriert. Große Handelshäuser können im Rohstoffhandel und im Finanzsystem derart systemrelevant sein, dass sie als zu groß für einen Konkurs gelten („too big to fail").

In diesem Zusammenhang ist es wichtig, dass Regulierungsstellen über genügend Informationen zu Tätigkeiten der globalen Handelshäuser verfügen. Die Transparenz auf diesem Gebiet sollte erhöht werden.

1. Ist sich die Kommission der Arbeit des Basel-gestützten Rates für Finanzstabilität bewusst, in der neben der möglichen Aufnahme von Handelshäusern in das Verzeichnis systemrelevanter, nicht dem Bankwesen angehörender Finanzinstitute ihre Rolle im Schattenbankwesen und im Rohstoffhandel untersucht wird?

2. Hat die Kommission Handelshäuser in das Verzeichnis systemrelevanter, nicht dem Bankwesen angehörender Finanzinstitute aufgenommen, wie es in den Vereinigten Staaten auf der Grundlage des „Dodd-Frank Act" geschehen ist? Wenn nicht: aus welchen Gründen nicht?

3. Welche Rechtsvorschriften gedenkt die Kommission, abhängig von den Ergebnissen der Arbeit des Rates für Finanzstabilität, anzugleichen?

4. Durch welche Rechtsvorschriften fördert die Kommission bereits eine erhöhte Transparenz im Bereich der Handelshäuser?

5. Weshalb hat die Kommission nicht im Zusammenhang mit der Offenlegung von Zahlungen an staatliche Stellen im Bereich der Rohstoffe Rohstoffhändler in ihre überarbeiteten Richtlinien über Transparenz und Rechnungslegung einbezogen? Ist der Kommission der dem Schweizerischen Parlament unterbreitete Vorschlag bekannt, der insbesondere im Bereich des Rohstoffhandels einen Offenlegungsstandard einführen würde?

6. Wie steht die Kommission zur Offenlegung von Daten über Handelstätigkeiten, wie monatliche Angaben über Verkäufe und Preisbildung, die beispielsweise in Irak nunmehr offengelegt werden?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(18. Dezember 2012)

1. Die Kommission verfolgt mit größter Aufmerksamkeit sämtliche Arbeiten, die der Rat für Finanzstabilität (FSB) zur Bewältigung der vom Schattenbankensektor ausgehenden Risiken unternimmt. Derzeit laufen Gespräche über die Einrichtungen und Tätigkeiten, die unter die Definition der Schattenbank fallen (der FSB hat eine öffentliche Konsultation eingeleitet und beabsichtigt die Veröffentlichung abschließender Empfehlungen im Jahr 2013).

2. Auch wenn der FSB zunächst zu dem Schluss gekommen ist, dass Warenterminhändler niedrigeren Risiken ausgesetzt sind als andere Finanzakteure, wird nicht ausgeschlossen, dass bestimmte Handelshäuser in das Verzeichnis systemrelevanter, nicht dem Bankwesen angehörender Finanzinstitute aufgenommen werden könnten.

3. Die Kommission plant, im Jahr 2013 eine Mitteilung vorzulegen, in der sie angemessene Folgemaßnahmen zu ihrem Grünbuch über das Schattenbankwesen ankündigen wird. Dabei werden insbesondere Fragen wie Geldmarktfonds und die Transparenz von Wertpapierleihen und Repo-Geschäften angesprochen. Ferner ist zu prüfen, inwiefern weitere Anpassungen sektoraler Rechtsvorschriften, z. B. zur Abwicklung von Nichtbanken, erforderlich sind.

4. Gemäß der EMIR-Verordnung müssen Standard-Derivate, einschließlich Rohstoffderivaten, zentral gecleart und sämtliche Derivate an Transaktionsregister gemeldet werden. Die Kommission legte im Oktober 2011 Überarbeitungen der MiFID und der Marktmissbrauchsrichtlinie vor, die spezifische Maßnahmen für die Rohstoffderivatemärkte enthalten und derzeit noch verhandelt werden.

5. Im Vorschlag der Kommission für eine nach Ländern aufgeschlüsselte Berichterstattung liegt der Schwerpunkt auf Bergbau und Forstwirtschaft. Der Kommission sind die Argumente für eine Ausweitung des Anwendungsbereichs bekannt. Die Verhandlungen darüber dauern noch an.

6. Eine der Empfehlungen des FSB betrifft die Stärkung der Transparenz und der Überwachung bestimmter systemrelevanter Tätigkeiten. Andere diesbezügliche Initiativen sind die IOSCO-Empfehlungen zur Verbesserung der Arbeitsweise und der Kontrolle der Ölpreisberichtsagenturen.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009585/12
aan de Commissie
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) en Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(19 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Transparantie met betrekking tot handelaren in grondstoffen

Mondiaal opererende handelshuizen spelen een steeds belangrijker rol bij zowel de wereldwijde handel in grondstoffen, als op de financiële markten doordat ze (bijvoorbeeld) kredieten aan ondernemingen verstrekken. Bovendien worden deze handelshuizen steeds groter en steeds meer geïntegreerd. Grote handelshuizen zouden wel eens systeemrelevant kunnen worden voor de handel in grondstoffen en binnen het financieel systeem, met het risico dat we op een dag moeten constateren dat ze „too big to fail" zijn geworden.

In dit verband is het voor de regelgevende instanties belangrijk over voldoende informatie over de activiteiten van deze mondiaal opererende handelshuizen te beschikken. De transparantie op dit gebied moet worden vergroot. Wij de Commissie tegen deze achtergrond om concrete antwoorden op de onderstaande vragen:

1. Is de Commissie ervan op de hoogte dat de in Bazel gevestigde Financial Stability Board een onderzoek is gestart naar de rol van handelshuizen bij „schaduwbankieren" en bij de handel in grondstoffen, en ook bekijkt of deze handelshuizen opgenomen zouden moeten worden op de lijst van systeemrelevante niet-bancaire financiële instellingen?

2. Is het al voorgekomen dat de Commissie handelshuizen op haar lijst van systeemrelevante niet-bancaire financiële instellingen heeft opgenomen, zoals in de Verenigde Staten is gebeurd op basis van de wet Dodd-Frank? Zo niet, waarom niet?

3. Welke wetgevingsinstrumenten op dit gebied mogen we van de Commissie verwachten (afhankelijk uiteraard van de uitkomst van het werk van de Financial Stability Board)?

4. Via welke wetgevingsinstrumenten bevordert de Commissie nu reeds de transparantie met betrekking tot handelshuizen?

5. Waarom heeft de Commissie verzuimd handelaren in grondstoffen op te nemen in de herziene transparantie- en accountancyrichtlijnen, in het bijzonder in verband met de openbaarmaking van betalingen aan regeringen met betrekking tot grondstoffen? Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het voorstel houdende een openbaarmakingsnorm voor de handel in grondstoffen dat momenteel in het Zwitserse parlement wordt behandeld?

6. Wat is het standpunt van de Commissie met betrekking tot de openbaarmaking van gegevens over handelsactiviteiten, zoals maandelijkse verkoopcijfers en gegevens over prijzen, zoals bijvoorbeeld sinds kort in Irak gebeurt?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(18 december 2012)

1. Alle werkstromen van de Raad voor financiële stabiliteit (Financial Stability Board, FSB) om de aan het schaduwbankieren verbonden risico's aan te pakken, worden van zeer nabij gevolgd door de Commissie. Momenteel zijn besprekingen aan de gang over de vraag welke entiteiten en activiteiten onder de definitie van schaduwbankieren vallen (de FSB heeft de aanzet gegeven tot een openbare raadpleging en is voornemens in 2013 met definitieve aanbevelingen te komen).

2. Hoewel de FSB in eerste instantie heeft geconcludeerd dat grondstoffenhandelaars aan minder risico's zijn blootgesteld dan andere financiële actoren, heeft hij de mogelijkheid niet uitgesloten dat sommige handelshuizen in de lijst van systeemrelevante niet-bancaire financiële instellingen worden opgenomen.

3. De Commissie is voornemens in de loop van 2013 een mededeling te publiceren waarin zij de passende follow-up van haar groenboek over schaduwbankieren zal schetsen. In de mededeling zal onder meer nader worden ingegaan op de problematiek van de geldmarktfondsen en de kwestie van de transparantie van effectenleningen en repo-activiteiten. Daarnaast kan het ook noodzakelijk blijken wijzigingen in de sectorale wetgeving (bv. met betrekking tot de afwikkeling van niet-banken) te overwegen.

4. De verordening betreffende de Europese marktinfrastructuur (European Market Infrastructure Regulation, EMIR) zal voorschrijven dat gestandaardiseerde derivaten, met inbegrip van grondstoffenderivaten, centraal moeten worden gecleard en dat alle derivaten aan transactieregisters moeten worden gemeld. In oktober 2011 heeft de Commissie een gewijzigde richtlijn inzake markten voor financiële instrumenten (Markets in Financial Instruments Directive, MiFID) en richtlijn marktmisbruik (Market Abuse Directive, MAD) gepresenteerd. Beide richtlijnvoorstellen bevatten specifieke maatregelen ten aanzien van markten voor grondstoffenderivaten en zijn momenteel in behandeling.

5. Het Commissievoorstel betreffende de rapportage per land heeft in het bijzonder betrekking op de winnings- en de houtindustrie. De Commissie is op de hoogte van de argumenten ten gunste van de uitbreiding van de reikwijdte ervan. De onderhandelingen ter zake zijn aan de gang.

6. Een van de beleidsaanbevelingen van de FSB zal zijn: zorgen voor een grotere transparantie en een betere controle van bepaalde systeemrelevante activiteiten. Andere initiatieven zijn de IOSCO-aanbevelingen ter verbetering van de werking van en het toezicht op bureaus voor olieprijsnoteringen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009585/12
to the Commission
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE), Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE), Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE) and Judith Sargentini (Verts/ALE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Transparency regarding commodity traders

Global trading houses are coming to play an increasingly important role in both the global commodities trade and the financial markets by, for example, providing credit to companies. They are also increasing in size and becoming more integrated. Large trading houses could be systemically important in the trade in raw materials and the financial system, to such an extent that they may be 'too big to fail'.

In this context, it is important for regulators to have enough information available regarding the activities of global trading houses. Transparency in this area should be increased. Therefore, we ask the Commission to provide concrete answers to the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the work of the Basel-based Financial Stability Board in looking into the role of trading houses in shadow banking and the commodities trade, along with their possible inclusion in the list of systemically important non-bank financial institutions?

2. Has the Commission included trading houses in its list of systemically important non-bank financial institutions, as is the case in the United States under the Dodd-Frank Act? If not, why not?

3. Which pieces of legislation will the Commission consider adapting, depending on the outcome of the work of the Financial Stability Board?

4. Through which pieces of legislation is the Commission already promoting increased transparency with regard to trading houses?

5. Why has the Commission not included commodity traders in its revised Transparency and Accounting Directives, in connection with the disclosure of payments to governments in the field of raw materials? Is the Commission aware of the proposal before the Swiss parliament which would establish a disclosure standard specifically for commodity trading?

6. What is the Commission's opinion on the disclosure of data for trading activities, such as monthly data on sales and prices, which, for example, Iraq has started to publish?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

1. The Commission is following very closely all work streams of the FSB to address risks posed by the shadow banking sector. Discussions regarding different entities and activities covered by the shadow banking definition are ongoing (the FSB has launched a public consultation and intends to issue final recommendations in 2013).

2. Although the FSB has initially concluded that commodity traders are exposed to low risks compared to other financial actors, it has not ruled out that some trading houses could be included in the list of systemically important non-bank financial institutions.

3. The Commission intends to issue a communication in 2013 to announce the appropriate follow up to its Green Paper on Shadow Banking. It will address in particular issues such as Money Market Funds and transparency for securities lending and repos activities. Additional adjustments to sectoral legislation, eg. resolution of non-banks may also need to be considered.

4. EMIR will require standardised derivatives, including commodity derivatives, to be centrally cleared and all derivatives to be reported to trade repositories. The Commission presented in October 2011 a revised MiFID and MAD, which include specific measures for the commodity derivatives markets and are currently under negotiation.

5. The Commission proposal on country-by-country reporting focuses on the extractive and logging industry. The Commission is aware of arguments regarding extending the scope. Negotiations are ongoing.

6. One of the policy recommendations of the FSB will be to enhance transparency and monitoring of certain systemically relevant activities. Other initiatives are the IOSCO recommendations to improve the functioning and oversight of oil Price Reporting Agencies.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009586/12
to the Commission
Liam Aylward (ALDE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Humanitarian situation in Sudan and South Sudan

Will the Commission outline the measures that are in place to address the refugee crisis and provide urgent humanitarian aid in South Sudan? Will the Commission comment on the current status of the coordination of international support in developing a state-building strategy for South Sudan?

Will the Commission outline the progress that has been made in relation to moving forward the joint programming of development assistance in health, education, justice and the rule of law?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The amount allocated to the Commission's Humanitarian Implementation Plan for Sudan and South Sudan totals EUR 127 million so far in 2012. Of this, EUR 83 million is allocated to South Sudan for interventions in health and nutrition, food assistance, water and sanitation, emergency preparedness and response, protection, coordination and logistics.

The EU has, since the beginning of the crisis, been providing substantial funding for a number of humanitarian organisations who are assisting the refugees in South Sudan. Funding has been increased to address a sharp upsurge in refugee numbers since April this year. So far in 2012 the EU's humanitarian assistance, managed by the Commission, for this population alone amounts to over EUR 40 million.

South Sudan is a founding member of the G7+, a network of 19 fragile and conflict-affected countries, and a pilot country for New Deal implementation ([1]). Coordination in this framework is going well, and a fragility assessment has been made and validated by all stakeholders. A Compact between the Government and donor partners focused on five goals: legitimate politics, security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and services is being developed and will be presented in South Africa in the next few months.

Within the EU, joint programming has made significant progress. An EU-Member States Single Response Strategy to South Sudan Development Plans for the period 2011-2013 was endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Council in January 2012. This Strategy is under implementation, with the EU designing projects worth EUR 200 million in the areas of agriculture, health, education and good governance. Joint programming will also be followed for the 11th EDF once South Sudan ratifies the Cotonou Agreement.

([1]) The New Deal is an initiative adopted by a group of fragile states in Busan, in 2011, where they acknowledge that to undertake state and nation building they need the help of the international community. The end product of the New Deal is an agreement called a 'Compact' between a fragile state and the international community that sets forth a number of priorities and a framework of mutual obligations and responsibilities to accomplish them.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009587/12
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(19 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Conferma con una sentenza della Corte di Cassazione italiana della possibile insorgenza di gravi patologie tumorali a causa dell'uso prolungato di telefoni cellulari e/o cordless

La Corte di Cassazione italiana, sezione Lavoro, con la sentenza 3-12 ottobre 2012 n. 17438, ha recentemente riconosciuto la tesi secondo la quale l'utilizzo prolungato dei telefoni cellulari aumenta il rischio di tumori.

Pronunciandosi sul caso di un manager che per circa 12 anni aveva utilizzato telefono cellulare e cordless per una media di 5/6 ore al giorno, sviluppando in seguito una grave patologia tumorale all'orecchio sul quale appoggiava il telefono portatile, la Corte italiana ha affermato che troppe ore al cellulare possono avere «un ruolo almeno concausale» nell'insorgere di alcuni tipi di tumore dei nervi cranici.

La Cassazione ha dato torto all'INAIL, Istituto Nazionale Infortuni sul Lavoro, che non voleva riconoscere al manager ammalatosi di tumore il diritto alla pensione per «malattia professionale». La sentenza ha riconosciuto inoltre la «maggiore attendibilità» degli studi epidemiologici indipendenti rispetto a quelli «cofinanziati (…) dalle stesse ditte produttrici di cellulari».

Si richiamano all'attenzione anche l'interrogazione scritta E-011877/2011 presentata dall'interrogante il 6 dicembre 2011 e la relativa risposta del 1° febbraio 2012, in cui la Commissione comunicava che un nuovo parere indipendente del Comitato scientifico per i rischi sanitari emergenti e recentemente identificati avrebbe dovuto essere presentato per la fine del 2012.

Può la Commissione riferire se gli esiti di tale nuovo studio siano già stati resi noti?

In relazione alla recente sentenza italiana sopra citata, non ritiene la Commissione necessario prendere provvedimenti urgenti per tutelare la salute dei cittadini europei?

Risposta di Maroš Šefčovič a nome della Commissione
(29 novembre 2012)

Il comitato scientifico dei rischi sanitari emergenti e recentemente identificati sta elaborando il proprio nuovo parere sugli effetti dei campi elettromagnetici per la salute, parere che aggiornerà il precedente parere del comitato che risale al 2009. Il parere dovrebbe essere sottoposto a una consultazione pubblica entro la fine di marzo 2013 per essere poi perfezionato a fine maggio.

Per quanto concerne la necessità di adottare misure a tutela della salute dei cittadini contro i campi elettromagnetici la Commissione rinvia l'onorevole deputato alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-007128/2012 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009587/12
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Ruling by the Italian Court of Cassation confirms onset of serious cancers may be due to prolonged use of mobile and/or cordless telephones

The Labour Division of the Italian Court of Cassation, in its ruling No 17438 of 3-12 October 2012, accepted recently the argument that prolonged use of mobile phones increases the risk of tumours developing.

Giving its ruling in the case of a manager who, after using mobile and cordless phones for on average five to six hours per day for 12 years, developed a serious tumour in the ear on which he rested his mobile phone, the Italian Court stated that too many hours on a mobile phone may play 'a contributory role at least' in the onset of some kinds of cranial nerve tumours.

The Court ruled against INAIL, the Italian National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work, which was unwilling to recognise said manager's right to a pension for an 'occupational disease'. The ruling also recognised that independent epidemiology studies are 'more trustworthy' than those that are 'cofunded … by mobile phone producers themselves'.

I would also draw attention to my Written Question E-011877/2011, tabled on 6 December 2011, and the Commission's answer of 1°February 2012 in which it said that a new independent opinion from the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks ought to be available by the end of 2012.

Can the Commission confirm whether the findings from this new study have already been made known?

With reference to the aforementioned recent Italian ruling, does the Commission not feel that urgent measures need to be taken to protect the health of EU citizens?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2012)

The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks is currently working on its new opinion on the health effects of electromagnetic fields (EMF), which will update the Committee's previous opinion from 2009. The opinion is due for public consultation by the end of March 2013, for finalisation at end May.

With respect to the need to take measures to protect the health of citizens against electromagnetic fields, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007128/2012 ([1]).

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

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009588/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Imposición de precios agrícolas por parte de las grandes distribuidoras: apuesta por los canales cortos de comercialización

Ante el proceso de negociación de la reforma de la PAC, se han puesto de relieve numerosos aspectos relativos a la legitimidad del gasto realizado por la Unión Europea. Pese a la importante cantidad de fondos empleados en los últimos periodos de la PAC, la política agrícola ha fracasado, tal como demuestra la sistemática desaparición de pequeñas y medianas explotaciones agrícolas europeas.

El decrecimiento de los márgenes de la actividad agrícola, pese a ser un fenómeno bien documentado, tiene un gran número de factores que lo provocan. Entre estos factores, atendiendo a las demandas y quejas de diversas organizaciones agrícolas, uno de los más importantes es el escaso poder de negociación que los actuales canales de comercialización mayoristas permiten desplegar a los productores frente a los grandes grupos distribuidores que son capaces de imponer precios.

Muchos agricultores europeos han sido capaces de desarrollar vías alternativas de comercialización local de sus productos para poder eludir la imposición de los grupos distribuidores y recibir unos ingresos justos que restituyan los costes que tienen los productos de calidad.

Tal y como quedó reflejado en la conferencia «Local Agriculture and Short Food Supply Chains», celebrada en Bruselas el 20 de abril de 2012, la Comisión es consciente tanto del problema como de las alternativas y debería realizar una apuesta por los canales cortos de comercialización.

¿Dispone la Comisión de información detallada sobre el ámbito y alcance de los canales cortos de comercialización y las redes alimentarias alternativas o está desarrollando alguna operación estadística para conocer esta información?

¿Ha propuesto la Comisión objetivos específicos para la cobertura, el apoyo y el desarrollo de los canales cortos de comercialización?

¿Piensa la Comisión imponer restricciones a las grandes empresas distribuidoras e intervenir para corregir su capacidad de imponer precios?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(9 de enero de 2013)

La Comisión encargó en 2011 un estudio externo ([1]) con la finalidad de presentar una panorámica de la importancia económica que tienen en la actualidad los sistemas de alimentos locales y las cadenas cortas de suministro de alimentos dentro de la UE, así como de las principales consecuencias de ello para el sector agrario y la economía rural. Se espera que los resultados de este estudio estén disponibles a fines del 2012, y su publicación se producirá a continuación de ello.

La Comisión ha propuesto que la mejora de la organización de la cadena alimentaria —a través, en parte, del apoyo al desarrollo de las cadenas cortas de suministro y de los mercados locales— constituya una prioridad explícita de la política de desarrollo rural después de 2013. La medida de «cooperación» propuesta ofrece ayuda que es claramente relevante para estos objetivos.

Además, los servicios de la Comisión están considerando la posibilidad de establecer un nuevo sistema de etiquetado para la producción agrícola local y las ventas directas, cuyo propósito es ayudar a los productores a comercializar su producción a nivel local. Los aspectos relacionados con la subsidiariedad se analizarán cuidadosamente cuando se estudie si está justificado actuar a nivel de la UE. Los resultados de estas actividades se presentarán en 2013 en un informe dirigido al Parlamento y al Consejo, tal como exige el futuro Reglamento sobre calidad.

([1]) Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the EU — a state of play of their socio-economic characteristics.

La Comisión está analizando las posibles ineficiencias en la cadena de suministro de alimentos, en particular dentro del Foro de Alto Nivel sobre la Mejora del Funcionamiento de la Cadena Alimentaria (en lo sucesivo denominado «el Foro»). Los grupos de interés participantes en el Foro han propuesto unos principios de buenas prácticas en la cadena alimentaria y han trabajado en una alternativa para su aplicación. El 5 de diciembre, el Foro respaldó la pronta aplicación de este régimen voluntario por parte de los grupos de interés signatarios. Además, confirmó la realización de una evaluación de impacto, en la que se examinarán todas las alternativas, incluida la posibilidad de legislar al respecto, que se llevará a cabo después del Libro Verde de la Comisión sobre las prácticas comerciales desleales en las relaciones entre empresas, de próxima aparición.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009588/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Imposition of farm prices by major retailers: commitment to short supply chains

Many aspects of the legitimacy of the European Union's expenditure have been highlighted in negotiations on CAP reform. Despite the large sums of money disbursed on the CAP in recent budgetary periods the agricultural policy has failed, as can be seen from the systematic disappearance of small and medium-sized farms in the EU.

There are a large number of factors causing the well documented fall in farm margins. It is clear from the demands and complaints of many farming organisations that one major factor is farmers' weak bargaining power in retail supply chains vis-à-vis the major distributors, which can impose their own prices.

Many EU farmers have managed to develop alternative local marketing channels for their products to avoid the prices imposed by major distributors and obtain a fair income that covers the cost of producing quality products.

As was clear from the 'Local Agriculture and Short Food Supply Chains' conference held in Brussels on 20 April 2012, the Commission is aware of both the problem and the alternatives and should step up its commitment to short supply chains.

Does the Commission have detailed information on the scope and range of short supply chains and alternative food networks, or is it undertaking a statistical study to obtain this information?

Has the Commission proposed specific goals for the coverage, support and development of short supply chains?

Is the Commission considering imposing restrictions on major distributors and taking action to counteract their ability to impose prices?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2013)

The Commission has launched in 2011 an external study ([1]) with the aim to present an overview of the current economic importance of local food systems and short food supply chains within the EU as well as the main impacts on the agricultural sector and the rural economies. The results of this study are expected by the end of the year 2012, followed by its publication.

The Commission has proposed that improving food chain organisation — partly through support for the development of short supply chains and local markets — should be an explicit priority of rural development policy after 2013. The proposed 'cooperation' measure offers support which is explicitly relevant to these aims.

Moreover, the Commission services are investigating on the case for a possible new local farming and direct sales labelling scheme to assist producers in marketing their produce locally. Subsidiarity aspects will be carefully analysed when examining whether action at EU level is justified. The results of these activities will be presented in a report to the Parliament and to the Council in the year 2013 as requested by the future Quality Regulation.

The Commission is looking into possible food supply chain inefficiencies in particular in the framework of the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain (Forum). Stakeholders under the Forum proposed principles of good practice in the food chain and worked on an option for their implementation. On December 5th, the Forum supported the quick implementation of this voluntary scheme by signatory stakeholders. It also confirmed that an impact assessment, looking at all options including the possibility of legislation, will follow the upcoming Green Paper on unfair trading practices in business to business relations.

([1]) 'Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the EU — a state of play of their socioeconomic characteristics'.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009589/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(19 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Θαλάσσιος χωροταξικός σχεδιασμός

Στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ημέρα για τη Θάλασσα (European Maritime Day) που πραγματοποιήθηκε τον Μάιο του 2012, στο Γκέτεμποργκ της Σουηδίας, δόθηκε ιδιαίτερη βαρύτητα στη σημασία και στην ανάγκη στήριξης του θαλάσσιου χωροταξικού σχεδιασμού, ο οποίος εγγυάται την ορθή χρήση των θαλασσών από τον άνθρωπο, σε συνδυασμό με την προστασία των θαλάσσιων οικοσυστημάτων. Χάρις στον θαλάσσιο χωροταξικό σχεδιασμό, επιτυγχάνεται η ειρηνική συνύπαρξη αιολικών πάρκων με άλλες θαλάσσιες δραστηριότητες, όπως π.χ. οι υδατοκαλλιέργειες. Κατά τη διάρκεια της συζήτησης, η Σουηδή Υπουργός Περιβάλλοντος ανέφερε ότι η Σουηδία θα αναπτύξει χωροταξικό σχεδιασμό για όλα τα ύδατα που υπάγονται στη δικαιοδοσία της, βασιζόμενη σε μια οικοσυστημική διαχείριση και σε συνεργασία με τις γειτονικές χώρες.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια κράτη μέλη έχουν αναλάβει ανάλογες δράσεις εφαρμογής του θαλάσσιου χωροταξικού σχεδιασμού; Και τι είδους μέτρα έχουν ληφθεί; Ποιες βέλτιστες πρακτικές μπορεί να αναφερθούν;

2. Στις χώρες όπου έχει εφαρμοστεί, έχει σημειωθεί αύξηση των επενδύσεων και οικονομική ανάπτυξη;

3. Σε τι φάση βρίσκεται η υπόσχεση της Επιτροπής να παρουσιάσει νομοθετική πρόταση για τον θαλάσσιο χωροταξικό σχεδιασμό και την ολοκληρωμένη διαχείριση των παράκτιων ζωνών (ICZM) έως το τέλος του 2012;

4. Στη μελλοντική νομοθετική πρόταση, θα υπάρχει πρόβλεψη και χρηματοδότηση σχετικών δράσεων ή ανάλογες δράσεις θα χρηματοδοτούνται μόνο στο πλαίσιο του νέου Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Θάλασσας και Θάλασσας και Θάλασσας και Αλιείας;

Απάντηση της κας Δαμανάκη εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

1. Ορισμένα κράτη μέλη έχουν καθιερώσει κάποιας μορφής θαλάσσιο χωροταξικό σχεδιασμό (ΘΧΣ) ή έχουν ήδη κινήσει την προς τούτο απαραίτητη διαδικασία. Αυτό συμβαίνει ιδίως στις περιοχές της Βαλτικής και της Βόρειας Θάλασσας καθώς και του Ατλαντικού ωκεανού. Πρόκειται για φαινόμενο που συνδέεται με την επέκταση ορισμένων οικονομικών δραστηριοτήτων όπως η υπεράκτια παραγωγή αιολικής ενέργειας.

2. Η πλέον διαδεδομένη προσέγγιση στις χώρες με ανάλογα συστήματα είναι η θέσπιση εθνικής νομοθεσίας με την οποία επιβάλλεται ολοκληρωμένη διαδικασία προγραμματισμού των θαλάσσιων και ναυτιλιακών χρήσεων (οικονομικών, οικολογικών και κοινωνικών) στα χωρικά τους ύδατα.

3. Δεν έχουν ακόμη αναπτυχθεί βέλτιστες πρακτικές εντός της ΕΕ, αλλά το εν λόγω θέμα τελεί ήδη υπό συζήτηση, τόσο μεταξύ των κρατών μελών, στο επίπεδο των συμβάσεων για τις περιφερειακές θάλασσες, όσο και μέσω πρωτοβουλιών της Επιτροπής. Έχουν αναληφθεί ορισμένες διεθνείς πρωτοβουλίες, όπως ο αναλυτικός οδηγός που εκπόνησε η Διακυβερνητική Ωκεανογραφική Επιτροπή της ΟΥΝΕΣΚΟ (UNESCO/IOC).

4. Επιχειρείται ήδη από την Επιτροπή και από τα κράτη μέλη αρχική ανάλυση των πιθανών οφελών του ΘΧΣ στις επενδύσεις και στην ανάπτυξη. Από τις αντίστοιχες μελέτες προκύπτει ότι ενδέχεται, πράγματι, να υπάρξουν σημαντικά οφέλη, συμπεριλαμβανόμενης της μείωσης του κόστους αναζήτησης και συναλλαγών καθώς και της περιστολής των διοικητικών, νομικών και λειτουργικών δαπανών, ιδίως για τις ΜΜΕ ([1]). Σύμφωνα με τα τρία εξετασθέντα σενάρια, προβλέπεται ότι η μείωση κατά 1% του κόστους συναλλαγής συνεπάγεται θετική επίδραση στην οικονομία που θα κυμανθεί μέχρι το 2020 από 170 εκατ. ευρώ έως 1,3 δισ. ευρώ.

([1]) Βλέπε για περαιτέρω λεπτομέρειες: Μελέτη σχετικά με τα οικονομικά οφέλη του ΘΧΣ στην ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies

5. Η Επιτροπή προτίθεται να υποβάλει νομοθετική πρόταση στις αρχές του 2013.

6. Η πρωτοβουλία δεν προβλέπει χρηματοδοτική στήριξη. Ωστόσο, υφίστανται διατάξεις σχετικά με τη χρηματοδοτική στήριξη για την ανάπτυξη διαδικασιών ΘΧΣ στον ισχύοντα δημοσιονομικό κανονισμό με στόχο την άσκηση ολοκληρωμένης θαλάσσιας πολιτικής, καθώς και στην πρόταση της Επιτροπής για τη χρηματοδοτική στήριξη από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Θάλασσας και Αλιείας (ΕΤΘΑ).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009589/12
to the Commission
Ioannis A. Tsoukalas (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Maritime spatial planning

At the European Maritime Day held in Gothenburg, Sweden, in May 2012 particular emphasis was given to the importance of and need for support for maritime spatial planning, which guarantees proper use of the sea by man, alongside protection for marine ecosystems. Maritime spatial planning achieves peaceful coexistence between wind parks and other marine activities, such as aquaculture. During the discussion, the Swedish Minister for the Environment stated that Sweden will be developing spatial planning for all waters under its jurisdiction, based on ecosystem-oriented management in cooperation with neighbouring countries.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Which Member States have taken similar action to introduce maritime spatial planning? What sort of measures have been taken? What best practices have been established?

2. Whether an increase in investment and growth been observed in countries where it is applied?

3. What stage will its promised legislative proposal for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) have reached by the end of 2012?

4. Whether that legislative proposal includes provision and financing for such actions or will such actions be funded solely within the framework of the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

1. A number of Member States have introduced some form of Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), or are in the process of doing so. This is notably the case in the Baltic, Atlantic and the North Sea areas, and is linked to the expansion of certain types of economic activities such as offshore wind.

2. The most common approach in those countries that have introduced systems is to introduce national legislation which foresees an integrated planning process of marine and maritime uses (economic, ecologic and social) within their waters.

3. Best practices have not yet been developed within the EU but this is currently under discussion, both amongst Member States, at the level of Regional Seas Conventions, and through initiatives of the Commission. There are some international initiatives, such the step-by-step guide developed by Unesco/IOC.

4. Initial analysis of potential benefits of MSP for investment and growth has been undertaken by the Commission, as well as by Member States. These analyses suggest that there may indeed be significant benefits, including lower search, transaction, administrative, legal, opportunity and operating costs particularly for SMEs ([1]). For three scenarios examined, a reduction of 1% in transaction costs led to positive economic effects ranging from EUR 170 million to EUR 1.3 billion in 2020.

5. The Commission intends to present a legislative proposal early in 2013.

6. The initiative itself does not envisage financial support. However, there are provisions for financial support for the development of MSP processes under the current financial regulation supporting Integrated Maritime Policy, as well as in the Commission's proposal for financial support under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

([1]) See further: Study on economic benefits of MSP at http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/documentation/studies

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009591/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(19 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αύξηση της χρηματοδότησης του Ευρωπαϊκού Προγράμματος Διανομής Γάλακτος στα σχολεία και μείωση της εθνικής συμμετοχής

Το Πρόγραμμα Διανομής Γάλακτος στα σχολεία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης που αφορά την διανομή γαλακτοκομιών προϊόντων σε μαθητές προκειμένου να λαμβάνουν βασικές διατροφικές ουσίες για την υγιή ανάπτυξη τους, έχει αποδειχθεί ιδιαίτερα επιτυχές. Μάλιστα, η σημασία του, δεδομένης της οικονομικής κρίσης που πλήττει πολλά κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, καθίσταται ακόμα πιο σημαντική αυτή την περίοδο. Σημειώνεται εξάλλου ότι η ΕΕ, προκειμένου να συνδράμει στην καταπολέμηση της φτώχειας αλλά και στο να δώσει ώθηση στην ανάπτυξη υιοθετεί σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις πολιτικές αύξησης της κοινοτικής συμμετοχής έως και 95% από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία, όπως για παράδειγμα συμβαίνει στα μεγάλα έργα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Στο πλαίσιο των παραπάνω πολιτικών, συνηγορεί στην αύξηση των κοινοτικών πόρων που διατίθενται στο συγκεκριμένο πρόγραμμα τα επόμενα έτη και, κυρίως, προτίθεται να μειώσει το ύψος της εθνικής συμμετοχής σε αυτό, όπως συμβαίνει σε άλλα προγράμματα, προκειμένου κράτη μέλη όπως η Ελλάδα, που αντιμετωπίζουν προβλήματα εξεύρεσης πόρων για συμμετοχή σε αυτό, να καταφέρουν να αξιοποιήσουν το πρόγραμμα;

Απάντηση του κ. Cioloş εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Οι χρηματοδοτικοί πόροι που διατίθενται για το πρόγραμμα διανομής γάλακτος στα σχολεία αποτελούν τμήμα του γενικού προϋπολογισμού που αποφασίζεται από το Συμβούλιο και το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο.

Η εφαρμογή του προγράμματος διανομής γάλακτος στα σχολεία δεν προϋποθέτει χρηματοδοτική συνδρομή από τα κράτη μέλη. Σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, χορηγείται ενίσχυση 18,15 ευρώ/100 kg επί μέγιστης ποσότητας 0,25 λίτρων ισοδυνάμου γάλακτος ανά μαθητή και ανά ημέρα για τη διανομή γάλακτος και γαλακτοκομικών προϊόντων σε μαθητές στα σχολικά ιδρύματα. Υπάρχει δυνατότητα — αλλά όχι υποχρέωση — για τα κράτη μέλη να χορηγήσουν εθνική ενίσχυση επιπλέον της ενωσιακής. Ως εκ τούτου, η Ελλάδα μπορεί να επωφεληθεί από το πρόγραμμα χωρίς να είναι υποχρεωμένη να συγχρηματοδοτήσει το μέτρο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009591/12
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Increased financing for the European School Milk Scheme and reduction in national contribution

The School Milk Scheme to distribute dairy products to EU school pupils to ensure that they receive the basic nutrients needed for healthy growth has proven to be extremely successful. In fact, given the economic crisis currently affecting many EU Member States, it is even more important. In order to help combat poverty and kick-start growth, the EU has been applying a policy of increasing the Community contribution from the structural funds to as much as 95% in many cases. This is the case, for example, with major projects.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

In the light of the above policy, whether it advocates an increase in Community funds for this particular scheme over the next few years? More importantly, does it intend to reduce the national contribution, as it has done for other schemes, so that Member States such as Greece, which are finding it difficult to raise the necessary funds, can take advantage of the scheme?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2012)

Financial resources available for the school milk scheme are part of the general budget that is decided by the Council and the European Parliament.

The operation of the school milk scheme does not impose a financial contribution from the Member States. At EU level, an aid of EUR 18.15/100 kg on a maximum quantity of 0.25 litres of milk equivalent per pupil and per day is granted for milk or for milk products distributed to pupils in educational establishments. There is a possibility — but no obligation — for Member States to grant national aid in addition to the Union aid. Greece can therefore take advantage of the scheme without being obliged to co-finance the measure.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009592/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(19 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Tutela dell'UE per le donne mussulmane dall'imposizione del velo in Turchia

La Turchia si dirige sempre più verso una strisciante islamizzazione e un abbandono della sua laicità, pur garantita dalla sua Costituzione.

Questa affermazione è corroborata dalla notizia che, a seguito dalla recente riforma della Scuola, le ragazze turche che frequenteranno le scuole religiose (le cosiddette «imam-hatip») potranno indossare il velo all'interno dell'istituto scolastico durante le ore di religione.

Il Primo ministro, T. Erdogan, sostiene che il problema della laicità è che spinge i giovani al relativismo religioso e morale, male da cui egli intende preservare i giovani turchi «spingendoli» verso i valori religiosi islamici e la tradizione ottomana.

Tenuto conto che anche per moltissime donne mussulmane il velo non è solo un simbolo religioso, bensì un simbolo di sottomissione, intende la Commissione europea monitorare l'introduzione del velo per fare in modo che essa non diventi un'imposizione anche e soprattutto a tutela dei diritti delle donne?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(13 dicembre 2012)

Indossare il velo è facoltativo sia nelle scuole religiose (imam-hatip, scuole vocazionali) che nelle altre scuole.

Le ragazze che frequentano scuole religiose sono autorizzate ad indossare il velo; le ragazze che frequentano le scuole ordinarie possono altresì indossare il velo durante il corso facoltativo sul Corano e sulla vita del profeta Maometto.

Il velo è stato vietato nelle scuole religiose al tempo dei colpi di Stato e dopo il «colpo di Stato post-moderno» del 28 febbraio 1997.

La Turchia, che sta negoziando l'adesione all'UE, deve garantire i diritti umani, compresi i diritti delle donne, conformemente alla CEDU e alla giurisprudenza della Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo. La Commissione europea segue attentamente tali questioni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009592/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: EU action to safeguard Muslim women from being forced to wear the veil in Turkey

Turkey is increasingly creeping towards Islamisation and the abandonment of the secularism guaranteed in its constitution.

This is further demonstrated by the news that, following recent education reforms, girls attending the country's religious schools ('imam-hatip') will be able to wear the veil at school during religious education classes.

Prime Minister Erdogan argues that the problem with secularism is that it pushes young people towards religious and moral relativism, an evil from which he intends to save them by 'nudging' them towards Islamic religious values and the Ottoman tradition.

Given that for very many Muslim women the veil is not only a religious symbol, but also a symbol of submission, will the Commission monitor introduction of the wearing of the veil in order to ensure that this does not become compulsory, above all in order to safeguard women's rights?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

Wearing of headscarves is optional in both religious vocational (imam-hatip) schools and in ordinary schools.

Girls attending religious vocational schools are allowed to wear headscarves. Girls attending ordinary schools are also allowed to wear headscarves during the optional course on the 'Quran and the life of Prophet Mohammed'.

Headscarves were banned in the religious vocational schools during the coup d'état periods and after the 28 February 1997 'post-modern' coup.

Turkey, as a country negotiating its accession to the EU, needs to guarantee human rights, including women's rights, according to the ECHR and the case-law of the ECtHR. The European Commission follows these issues closely.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009593/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(19 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Il riciclaggio di denaro nel mondo dello sport

Il Financial Action Task Force (FATF) è un'organizzazione intergovernativa nata nel 1989 con l'obiettivo di promuovere e sviluppare pratiche finanziarie trasparenti e legali. Il FATF opera contro il terrorismo finanziario e le operazioni di riciclaggio di denaro e collabora con il Fondo Monetario Internazionale e la Banca Mondiale

Il FATF ha condotto degli studi anche nel settore dello sport, in particolare in quello del calcio. Secondo i dati pubblicati dalla FIFA, nel 2011 sono state effettuate 11.500 compravendite di prestazioni sportive fra 5000 club, per un giro di affari di 3 miliardi di franchi svizzeri.

Del problema del riciclaggio di denaro sporco nel calcio si è occupato anche il quotidiano svizzero «Le Matin» con un articolo dell'agosto 2012 che ha evidenziato una situazione decisamente grave ([1]) .

Tenuto conto che:

— in alcuni paesi terzi, i club sportivi non sono soggetti a rigide norme in materia di contabilità;

— la compravendita delle prestazioni dei giocatori costituisce, per gli operatori del settore, un giro di affari impressionante la cui valutazione è spesso segreta o comunque di difficile determinazione;

— operazioni con paradisi fiscali, società offshore e fondazioni sono spesso compiute per frodare il fisco e violare le norme degli Stati membri dell'Unione;

sembra evidente che, anche nel mondo dello sport, attività come frode, riciclaggio e sovrafatturazioni, sono presenti e spesso legate al mondo della criminalità organizzata.

È a conoscenza la Commissione dello studio del FATF dal titolo: «Money laundering trough the football sector», redatto nel luglio 2009?

Quali misure intende prendere per monitorare meglio e contrastare la frode e il riciclaggio di denaro sporco nello sport?

Alla luce di questi fenomeni, non ritiene la Commissione che possa essere utile rivedere le norme esistenti, favorire l'implementazione di regole uniformi e concludere accordi con paesi terzi?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(18 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza della relazione del Gruppo di azione finanziaria internazionale (GAFI) menzionata dall'onorevole parlamentare e del fatto che anche nel settore dello sport esistono possibilità di riciclare i proventi di attività illecite.

Sebbene le società sportive non siano direttamente soggette ad obblighi in materia di lotta contro il riciclaggio, la direttiva antiriciclaggio ([2]) stabilisce alcune misure preventive per far fronte agli elementi di vulnerabilità del settore, quali gli obblighi di adeguata verifica della clientela, che gli istituti finanziari e le professioni non finanziarie sono tenuti ad applicare. Tali soggetti sono tenuti a individuare e segnalare le operazioni di natura sospetta all'unità di informazione finanziaria del proprio Stato membro, anche in ordine al trattamento dei pagamenti per trasferimenti di giocatori o per investimenti nelle società sportive. Inoltre, la direttiva obbliga le banche dell'Unione europea ad applicare misure analoghe nelle proprie succursali e controllate nei paesi terzi. Per tutti i suddetti soggetti interessati esistono altresì obblighi rafforzati di adeguata verifica nei confronti delle persone politicamente esposte di origine straniera. Tali obblighi sono particolarmente importanti in un settore caratterizzato da soggetti che presentano complesse reti di parti interessate, una forte varietà di strutture giuridiche e una notevole presenza di persone politicamente esposte.

([1]) http://www.lematin.ch/sports/football/Les-transferts-servent-aussi-a-blanchir-de-l-argent/story/27807950.
([2]) Direttiva 2005/60/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 26 ottobre 2005, relativa alla prevenzione dell'uso del sistema finanziario a scopo di riciclaggio dei proventi di attività criminose e di finanziamento del terrorismo (GU L 309 del 21.11.2005, pag. 15).

La Commissione è impegnata nel processo di revisione della direttiva antiriciclaggio per migliorare l'efficacia del regime unionale antiriciclaggio, aumentare il livello di coordinamento, migliorare la sorveglianza e la trasparenza e attuare un approccio basato sul rischio per disciplinare in maniera adeguata ed efficace le attività ad alto rischio, comprese quelle presenti anche nel settore dello sport.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009593/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(19 October 2012)

Subject: Money laundering in sport

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental body set up in 1989 in order to promote and develop transparent and legal financial practices. The FATF seeks to combat the funding of terrorism and money laundering and works in partnership with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The FATF has also carried out studies in the field of sport, with particular regard to football. According to data published by FIFA, in 2011 the results of 11 500 sporting events involving 5 000 sports clubs were fixed, generating a turnover of CHF 3 billion.

The problem of money laundering in football has also been addressed in the Swiss newspaper *Le Matin*, in an article appearing in August 2012, which highlighted an extremely serious situation ([1]).

Given that:

— in some non-EU countries, sports clubs are not subject to strict accounting rules;

— for operators in the sector, the fixing of players' performances generates impressive sums, the real value of which is often hidden or difficult to establish;

— transactions are frequently carried out through tax havens, offshore companies and foundations in order to defraud the treasury and breach EU Member States' laws;

it would appear obvious that activities such as fraud, money laundering and overbilling also take place in the world of sports, and often have links to organised crime.

Is the Commission aware of the FATF study entitled: 'Money laundering through the football sector', produced in July 2009?

What steps does the Commission intend to take to monitor and combat fraud and money laundering in sport more effectively?

In the light of these phenomena, does the Commission not consider that it might be useful to review existing legislation, support the application of uniform rules and conclude agreements with non-EU countries?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of the mentioned FATF report and the fact that also in the sports sector possibilities exist to launder the proceeds of criminal activities.

Despite the fact that sport clubs are not directly subject to AML obligations, there are several preventive measures foreseen in the Anti-Money Laundering Directive (AMLD) ([2]) to face the vulnerabilities of the sector such as the customer due diligence that financial institutions and non-financial professions must carry out. These entities are required to identify and report transactions of a suspicious nature to the financial intelligence unit in the respective Member State including when processing payments for player transfers or invesments in clubs. The directive also obliges EU banks to apply similar measures to their branches and subsidiaries in third countries. In addition there is an obligation of enhanced due diligence regarding foreign Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) for all of the mentioned covered entities. These are especially important obligations in a sector with entities who present complicated networks of stakeholders and a diversity of legal structures and a notable presence of PEPs.

([1]) http://www.lematin.ch/sports/football/Les-transferts-servent-aussi-a-blanchir-de-l-argent/story/27807950.
([2]) OJ L 309, 21.11.2005. p.15. Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing. OJ L 309, 21.11.2005. P.15.

The Commission is currently in the process of revising the AMLD which is intended to improve the effectiveness of the EU AML regime, increase the level of coordination, enhance supervision and transparency and implement a risk-based approach in order to properly and effectively address high-risk activities, including those which are also present in the sports sector.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009594/12
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Former Commissioner McCreevy and Spanish banks

Former Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Charlie McCreevy was responsible for EU financial rules from November 2004 to February 2010. In 2009, he admitted at a meeting of the International Accounting Standards Board that he knew Spanish banks were not following EU accounting rules and had not taken steps to stop them.

Spanish banks used an accounting practice called 'dynamic provisioning', which many believe helped them mask the true extent of their losses. This practice is not in line with the International Financial Reporting Standards, which under EC law should have been adopted by all publicly listed companies as from 1 January 2005.

The seriousness of the bad debts problem in Spanish banks was not fully detected until earlier this year.

Does the Commission recognise that it has lessons to learn from this case as regards enforcing EC law in the banking sector? Will the Commission take these lessons into account when preparing future banking legislation?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

Countercyclical or dynamic provisioning requires banks to increase provisions during periods of economic growth while they are depleted when impaired assets increase. This diminishes the impact on the profit and loss account during a downturn. In addition, the forthcoming CRR/CRD IV will introduce the so-called countercyclical capital buffer which will require banks to set aside additional capital requirements during periods of extreme credit growth.

Nevertheless, the recognition of impairment provisions by banks in Spain but also, more generally, by banks across Europe has been characterised as 'too little, too late'. Accordingly, the Commission, in line with the G20, supports the work of the International Accounting Standards Board to develop a new accounting standard based on an expected loss model. This standard is currently being developed and is expected to be more robust and to lead to higher levels of provisions than the current standard.

Under the CRR/CRD IV and exisiting Directives, prudential supervisory authorities are required to monitor the solvency and liquidity positions of banks including the adequacy of the level of loan loss provisions. The CRD IV further enhances the sanctioning regime on breaches of the obligations foreseen in it.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009595/12
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(22 octobre 2012)

Objet: Initiatives industrielles dans le cadre du plan SET

Le Plan SET (Plan Stratégique européen pour les technologies énergétiques) a pour but d'accélérer le développement et le déploiement au meilleur coût des technologies à faible intensité carbonique. Ce plan prévoit le lancement progressif de six initiatives industrielles européennes dans les secteurs de l'énergie éolienne, de l'énergie solaire, du réseau électrique, de la bioénergie, du piégeage, du transport et du stockage de CO^2, et de la fission nucléaire, sous la forme de partenariats public-privé ou de programmes communs entre États membres. À cela s'ajoute l'initiative technologique conjointe concernant les piles à combustible et hydrogène.

Dans sa résolution du 11 mars 2010 sur le plan SET (P7_TA(2010)0064), le Parlement européen s'est félicité du choix de ces six initiatives industrielles européennes et de l'établissement des feuilles de route sur les technologies pour 2010-2020, et a invité la Commission européenne à lancer les initiatives industrielles européennes arrivées à maturité. La Parlement a également salué la proposition visant à adosser la nouvelle initiative «villes intelligentes», centrée sur l'efficacité énergétique dans les villes européennes, aux six initiatives industrielles européennes existantes. Pour sa part, le Conseil a, dans ses conclusions du 28 février 2012 sur la stratégie énergie pour 2020, indiqué que, compte tenu de l'importance des technologies énergétiques pour réaliser les objectifs de l'UE en matière de climat et d'énergie à l'horizon 2020 et 2050, et pour améliorer la compétitivité, la priorité devrait être accordée, dans tous les cas appropriés, à la mise en œuvre des initiatives industrielles européennes prévues dans le cadre du plan SET, déjà lancées avant la fin de 2010, ainsi qu'à la mise en place de l'Espace européen de la recherche. Le Conseil a précisé que, dans le prolongement des actions prévues dans le cadre du plan SET, et sous réserve d'un examen approfondi des projets envisagés et des disponibilités financières, les initiatives concernant des technologies nouvelles ou de pointe liées aux quatre projets européens de grande envergure répertoriés dans la communication de la Commission «Énergie 2020» (stockage de l'électricité, biocarburants durables, villes intelligentes et réseaux intelligents) ainsi qu'aux véhicules propres et aux énergies marines, devraient être lancées.

Quelles sont désormais les intentions de la Commission s'agissant de la mise en œuvre des initiatives industrielles prévues dans le plan SET? Quelle position envisage-telle d'adopter dans sa communication sur les technologies énergétiques qui sera probablement adoptée au 1er trimestre 2013? Continuera-t-elle à utiliser l'approche par filière du plan SET? Les filières déjà identifiées seront-elles pérennisées, voire renforcées? De nouvelles filières seront-elles créées? Si oui, lesquelles, et selon quels critères?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(12 décembre 2012)

Les initiatives industrielles européennes (IIE) sont mises en œuvre conformément aux feuilles de route technologiques et aux plans de mise en œuvre. La Commission a soutenu le plan SET et ses initiatives industrielles européennes, dans le cadre notamment du 7e PC et du plan européen de relance économique (plus de 2,5 milliards d'euros alloués depuis 2010). L'initiative «Villes et communautés intelligentes» a été lancée en 2011 en tant que volet «Efficacité énergétique» du plan SET (75 millions d'euros alloués en 2011). En juillet 2012, elle est devenue un partenariat européen pour l'innovation visant à mettre en œuvre des projets proches du marché à l'intersection des secteurs de l'énergie, des transports et des TIC (209 millions d'euros alloués).

Les feuilles de route technologiques des IIE du plan SET représentaient la base de la proposition de la Commission pour relever le «défi énergétique» dans le cadre du programme Horizon 2020, qui propose de doubler les crédits actuels à la recherche et à l'innovation dans le domaine de l'énergie pour atteindre environ 6,5 milliards d'euros.

La communication prévue entend proposer une stratégie intégrée à long terme (y compris au-delà de 2020) intégrant les aspects technologiques et non technologiques, indispensable pour réaliser la transformation du marché et les objectifs de politique énergétique de l'Union (compétitivité, durabilité et sécurité d'approvisionnement). Elle cernera les conditions générales propres à assurer que des technologies énergétiques rentables seront développées plus rapidement et intégrées dans le marché. Cette communication se fondera sur le plan SET et le mettra à jour en tenant compte des éléments et événements nouveaux qui se sont produits depuis son adoption en 2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009595/12
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Industrial initiatives as past of the SET Plan

The aim of the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET Plan) is to speed up the development and deployment of cost-effective low-carbon technologies. The plan provides for the launch over time of six European industrial initiatives (EIIs) in the areas of wind energy, solar energy, the electricity network, bioenergy, CO_2 capture, transport and storage and nuclear fission, in the form of public-private partnerships or joint programmes between Member States. The plan also incorporates the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Joint Technology Initiative.

In its resolution of 11 March 2010 on the SET Plan (P7_TA(2010)0064) Parliament welcomed the selection of the six EIIs and the drawing-up of the 2010-2020 technology roadmaps and called on the Commission to launch mature EIIs. Parliament also welcomed the proposal that the new Smart Cities Initiative focusing on energy efficiency in European cities should be added to the existing six EIIs. For its part, in its conclusions of 28 February 2011 on the Energy 2020 strategy the Council stated that, given the importance of energy technology for fulfilling EU 2020 and 2050 climate and energy targets and for enhancing competitiveness, the implementation, as appropriate, of the SET Plan EIIs already launched by the end of 2010 should be carried out as a matter of priority and the development of the European Energy Research Area (EERA) should be encouraged. The Council added that, building on the SET Plan activities, and subject to careful scrutiny of envisaged projects and to resource availability, initiatives concerning new or cutting-edge technologies in relation to the four large-scale European projects referred to in the Commission communication entitled 'Energy 2020' (electricity storage, sustainable biofuels, smart grids and smart cities) as well as clean vehicles and ocean and marine energy should be launched.

What are the Commission's plans now as regards the implementation of the EIIs which are part of the SET Plan? What stance does it plan to adopt in its communication on energy technology which is likely to be adopted in the first quarter of 2013? Will it retain the approach employed under the SET Plan of focusing on selected sectors? Will the priority sectors which have already been identified be retained, and will the focus on them perhaps even be increased? Will new priority sectors be identified? If so, which ones, and on the basis of what criteria?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The European Industrial Initiatives (EIIs) are implemented according to the Technology Roadmaps and Implementation Plans. The Commission has supported the SET Plan and its EIIs notably through FP7 and the European Economic Recovery Package (since 2010 more than EUR 2.5 billion have been awarded). The Smart Cities and Communities Initiative was launched in 2011 as the energy efficiency component of the SET Plan (EUR 75 million were allocated in 2011). In July 2012 it became a European Innovation Partnership aimed at projects close to the market at the intersection of the energy, transport and ICT sectors (EUR 209 million were allocated).

The SET Plan EIIs Technology Roadmaps represented the basis for the Commission's proposal for the 'Energy Challenge' under Horizon 2020, which proposes to double the current allocations for energy research and innovation to about EUR 6.5 billion.

The planned Communication is intended propose an integrated long-term strategy (including post 2020) incorporating technology and non-technology aspects, necessary to achieve market transformation and EU energy policy objectives (competitiveness, sustainability and security of supply). It will identify the framework conditions to ensure that cost-effective energy technologies are developed faster and integrated into the market. The communication will build on the SET Plan and will update it taking account of new elements and events that have occurred since its adoption in 2007.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009596/12
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(22 octobre 2012)

Objet: Protection des épicéas et des sapins contre les bostryches

La forêt du Parc national du Mercantour constituée d'épicéas et de sapins est dévorée par de petits coléoptères ravageurs appelés bostryches, ces mêmes insectes qui ont détruit la forêt de Bohême en Allemagne.

Ces nettoyeurs naturels de la forêt sont habituellement attirés par les phéromones des arbres mourants. Mais en raison du changement climatique, les épicéas et les sapins émettent en permanence ces phéromones et attisent l'appétit de ces prédateurs, qui ne jouent plus leur rôle de régulateurs, mais dévorent sans distinction tous les sapins et épicéas qu'ils rencontrent. La contamination se propage très rapidement, en tâches d'huile, au point que l'ensemble de la forêt du Mercantour aura séché d'ici dix ans, si le phénomène n'est pas interrompu.

En Suisse, les forêts d'épicéas ont subi de plein fouet les attaques des bostryches, après avoir été affaiblies par l'ouragan «Lothar», survenu au début de l'hiver 1999, et par la canicule de l'été 2003. Les gestionnaires des forêts suisses sont parvenus à limiter et à contrôler l'infestation, par l'abattage et l'évacuation des arbres morts, mais aussi par l'installation de «pièges à bostryches», sous la forme de boîtes contenant des ampoules de phéromones, où les insectes s'immiscent par de fines ouvertures et restent piégés.

1. La Commission dispose-t-elle de données globales sur l'invasion de ces scolytes dans les forêts européennes et sur son impact économique?

2. Quel crédit accorde-t-elle à la méthode de lutte par les pièges à phéromones utilisée en Suisse?

3. Pourrait-elle indiquer si une parade chimique existe?

4. A-t-elle l'intention de promouvoir certaines pratiques de gestion forestière (comme l'écorçage des troncs, l'incinération des arbres morts, le traitement insecticide des bois non colonisés) et de soutenir des mesures de reboisement basées sur le renouvellement naturel en encourageant le mélange avec des espèces d'arbres plus résistantes?

5. Si oui, dans quel cadre: future stratégie forestière ou nouveau régime phytosanitaire?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(18 décembre 2012)

1. Le bostryche typographe *(Ips typographus)* est un scolyte très répandu d'Europe continentale. Comme le prescrit la législation phytosanitaire ([1]), l'Irlande et le Royaume-Uni sont considérés comme des zones indemnes de cet organisme nuisible. La Commission ne dispose pas de statistiques globales, mais des enquêtes annuelles confirment l'absence d'*Ips typographus* dans ces pays.

2. La Commission ne peut formuler d'observations sur ce point, dans la mesure où elle ne possède pas d'informations détaillées sur la méthode mentionnée par l'auteur de la question.

3. Le règlement (CE) nº 1107/2009 concernant la mise sur le marché des produits phytopharmaceutiques prévoit l'évaluation de ces produits et leur autorisation au niveau national.

4. La politique de développement rural proposée par la Commission pour après 2013 combine plusieurs mesures et sous-mesures qui, selon les cas, pourraient être, directement ou indirectement, adaptées au problème décrit. Ces mesures comprennent des dispositions en faveur du reboisement, de la prévention et de la réparation des dommages causés par des sinistres naturels, des investissements améliorant la résilience et la valeur environnementale des écosystèmes forestiers, de même que des services forestiers environnementaux.

5. La nouvelle stratégie forestière de l'Union est en cours d'élaboration; l'une de ses priorités sera la «protection des forêts», y compris contre les menaces biotiques.

([1]) Directive 2000/29/CE du Conseil.

Ips typographus étant très répandu en Europe continentale, les critères nécessaires pour sa réglementation dans cette région ne sont pas réunis. L'Irlande et le Royaume-Uni conserveront toutefois leur statut de zone protégée dans la future réglementation phytosanitaire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009596/12
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Protection of spruce and fir trees from bostrichid beetles

The spruce and fir forest of Mercantour National Park is being devoured by small, destructive beetles called bostrichids, the same kind that have devastated the Bohemian Forest in Germany.

These creatures, which are the natural cleaners of the forest, are normally attracted by the pheromones of dying trees. However, owing to climate change, spruce and fir trees give off these pheromones all the time, thus stimulating the appetite of these voracious insects, which stop acting as regulators and indiscriminately devour every fir and spruce tree in their path. The infestation is spreading rapidly, and the whole of the Mercantour forest will be dead wood in six years time if nothing is done to halt its progress.

In Switzerland, spruce forests have felt the full force of the bostrichid attacks, after being weakened by Hurricane Lothar in early winter 1999 and by the heatwave of summer 2003. Swiss foresters have succeeded in limiting and controlling the infestation by felling and removing dead trees, but also by setting up 'bostrichid traps', boxes containing phials of pheromones, which the insects enter by narrow openings and are then trapped.

1. Does the Commission have overall figures on this bark beetle invasion in European forests and on its economic impact?

2. What credence does it give to the method used in Switzerland of combating these pests by means of pheromone traps?

3. Could it state whether a chemical approach exists to tackling this problem?

4. Does it intend to promote certain forest management practices (such as debarking trunks, burning dead trees, treating uninfested wood with insecticide, etc.) and to support reafforestation measures based on natural renewal by encouraging a mixture of trees including more resistant species?

5. If so, does it propose to do so as part of a future forestry strategy or as part of a new plant health scheme?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

1. The bark beetle *Bostryches typographe* (a synonym of *Ips typographus)* is widespread and native to continental Europe. Under plant health legislation ([1]) Ireland and the UK are protected zones for this bark beetle as this pest does not occur in these territories. Therefore, although the Commission does not have any overall figures, annual surveys for *Ips typographus* carried out in Ireland and UK confirm this pest as absent in these territories.

2. The Commission cannot comment on this point not having detailed knowledge on the method cited by the Honourable Member.

3. Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 on placing on the market of plant protection products provides for plant protection products to be evaluated and authorised at national level.

4. The Commission's proposal for rural development policy for after 2013 sets out several measures / sub-measures which could be directly or indirectly relevant to the problem described, depending on the precise circumstances of a given case. These include support for afforestation, for prevention and restoration of damage from disasters, for investments improving resilience and environmental value, and for forest environmental services.

5. The new EU Forest Strategy is under preparation, and one of its priorities will be 'forest protection', including biotic damages.

([1]) Council Directive 2000/29/EC.

As *Ips typographus* is widespread in continental Europe it does not fulfil the criteria to be regulated in this area. However the protected zone status of Ireland and UK will continue under the future Plant Health Law.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009597/12
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(22 octobre 2012)

Objet: Respect des obligations fixées par la directive «Habitats», notamment en ce qui concerne le réseau Natura 2000 en Méditerranée

Un retard inquiétant est constaté en matière de développement du réseau Natura 2000 en mer et, plus généralement, des aires marines protégées (AMP) en Europe. Ce problème est particulièrement sensible en Méditerranée, un écosystème riche mais plus fragile que jamais, où le réseau Natura 2000 ne couvre que 0,3 % de la surface de la mer, alors que l'objectif de la Convention sur la diversité biologique est de 10 % à l'horizon 2020.

La législation européenne en matière de protection de l'environnement prévoit un régime solide pour la création et la gestion de ces sites, qui a pour but d'enrayer la perte de biodiversité mais également de limiter les impacts du changement climatique. La récente note d'orientation sur la désignation des zones spéciales de conservation (ZSC), adoptée par le comité Habitat, clarifie et confirme même les obligations et responsabilités des États membres en vertu des directives «Habitats» et «Oiseaux». À cet égard, et conformément aux articles 4 et 6 de la directive «Habitats», les États membres ont l'obligation de classer leurs sites d'intérêt communautaire (SIC) comme ZSC dans un délai maximal de 6 ans.

Or, dans plusieurs États membres du Sud de l'Europe, des centaines de sites Natura 2000 n'ont toujours pas été désignés comme ZSC en droit national, malgré l'expiration récente du délai imparti et, bien souvent, sans que les plans de gestion et les mesures de conservation nécessaires sur ces sites n'aient été mis en place.

1. Quelles mesures la Commission compte-t-elle prendre pour s'attaquer à ces manquements qui empêchent l'établissement d'un réseau d'aires marines protégées et efficacement gérées en Europe?

2. Quelle priorité la Commission entend-elle accorder aux aires marines protégées dans la nouvelle programmation 2014-2020, et notamment dans le nouveau programme LIFE?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(13 décembre 2012)

La Commission est soucieuse de veiller à ce que les sites d'importance communautaire soient désignés, le plus rapidement possible et de manière adéquate, en tant que zones spéciales de conservation (ZSC), conformément aux exigences définies à l'article 4, paragraphe 4, et à l'article 6, paragraphe 1, de la directive 92/43/CEE (directive «Habitats» ([1])). Sur la base de sa note d'orientation sur ce sujet, elle a demandé aux États membres de lui communiquer des informations relatives aux mesures qu'ils ont prises afin de respecter les échéances fixées à cet égard et de se conformer aux obligations juridiques susmentionnées, notamment en ce qui concerne les sites marins Natura 2000 en Méditerranée. La Commission analysera les réponses des États membres et envisagera les mesures à prendre, y compris, le cas échéant, des actions en justice.

Il est très important pour la Commission de garantir un financement suffisant pour les sites marins Natura 2000 au titre des fonds disponibles de l'Union et elle a prévu des mesures relatives la protection et à la bonne gestion de ces sites dans ses propositions pour la période de programmation 2014-2020. En particulier, la proposition relative au futur programme LIFE prévoit la poursuite des investissements dans les zones marines protégées (ZMP). En outre, les projets intégrés LIFE, prévus dans le cadre du nouveau règlement proposé, devraient permettre de couvrir une plus grande partie du réseau Natura 2000, ce qui devrait avoir une incidence positive considérable sur l'ensemble des zones marines protégées qu'ils cibleront.

([1]) JO L 206 du 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009597/12
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Compliance with obligations under the Habitats Directive, particularly as regards the Natura 2000 network in the Mediterranean

There are worrying delays in the development of the Natura 2000 network at sea, and more generally in the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Europe. This problem is particularly keenly felt in the Mediterranean, a rich ecosystem but one which is more fragile than it has ever been, where the Natura 2000 network covers only 0.3% of the sea area, while the objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity is for 10% coverage by 2020.

European environmental legislation provides a solid regulatory basis for the creation and management of these sites, which seeks to halt the loss of diversity while also limiting the impact of climate change. The recent guidance note on the designation of Special Areas of Conservation, adopted by the Habitat committee, clarifies and indeed confirms the obligations and responsibilities of the Member States under the Habitats and Wild Birds directives. In this connection, in accordance with Article 4 and 6 of the Habitats Directive, the Member States are required to classify their sites of Community importance (SCI) as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within no more than six years.

However, in several Member States in Southern Europe, hundreds of Natura 2000 sites have still not yet been designated as SACs in national law, in spite of the recent expiry of the deadline, and very often there are no management plans in place and the necessary conservation measures on these sites have not been taken.

1. What action does the Commission propose to take to tackle these instances of non-compliance which are preventing the establishment of a properly managed network of MPAs in Europe?

2. What priority does the Commission propose to give to MPAs in the 2014-2020 programming period, particularly in the new Life programme?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Commission is keen to ensure the timely and adequate designation of Sites of Community Importance as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in accordance with the requirements set out in Articles 4(4) and 6(1) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([1]). On the basis of its guidance note on the matter it has requested information from the Member States on the steps taken to meet respective deadlines and fulfil the aforementioned legal obligations, including for marine Natura 2000 sites in the Mediterranean. The Commission will analyse the Member State responses and will consider further action, including legal action, if needed.

The Commission attaches great importance to securing sufficient funding for marine Natura 2000 sites under available EU funds and has included measures aimed at their protection and sound management in its proposals for the 2014-2020 programming period. In particular, the proposed future Life programme provides for continued investment in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Furthermore, Life Integrated Projects, foreseen under the proposed new Regulation, should allow for a larger proportion of the Natura 2000 network to be covered and this should have a significant positive impact on all MPAs that they will target.

([1]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009598/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Accordo internazionale antiblasfemia

Il 19 settembre 2012 il segretario generale della Lega Araba ha dichiarato che l'Organizzazione della Cooperazione Islamica, l'Unione africana e l'Unione europea stanno per redigere un accordo internazionale che sanzioni penalmente la blasfemia e gli oltraggi alle figure religiose.

È la Commissione a conoscenza di queste dichiarazioni?

Conferma la preparazione di un tale accordo?

Può spiegare se e come verranno tutelati, all'interno di esso, la libertà di espressione e, contestualmente, la libertà di fare satira, innegabile forma d'arte?

Accredita la tesi sostenuta da esponenti delle frange estremiste islamiche secondo le quali film o vignette irriverenti verso la religione sarebbero assimilabili all'odio religioso e, quindi, istigatori di eventuali ostilità e ritorsioni?

Considerata la Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, in particolare l'articolo 10 che prevede la libertà di pensiero, coscienza e religione, il diritto di manifestare tali libertà sia in privato sia in pubblico, mediante il culto, l'insegnamento, la pratica e l'osservanza dei riti; considerati anche gli accordi già in essere con molti dei paesi aderenti alle Organizzazioni sopra citate, che prevedono nell'articolato la necessità del rispetto dei diritti umani e religiosi, può essa dire quali misure pratiche ancora non attuate saranno messe in campo in seguito a questo nuovo accordo per garantire una tutela effettiva anche alle comunità religiose cristiane ivi presenti, verso le quali la «critica religiosa» non è espressa a mezzo stampa, ma con atti di violenza e terrorismo in cui sempre più spesso perdono la vita decine di fedeli?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(21 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione è a conoscenza delle recenti spinte per l'istituzione di un quadro giuridico internazionale a tutela della religione ed esclude qualunque sostegno da parte dell'UE a un tale «accordo».

Negli ultimi anni l'UE si è battuta, in particolare in seno al Consiglio per i diritti umani e all'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite, contro il concetto di «diffamazione delle religioni», particolarmente lesivo per la libertà di espressione. Poiché il diritto internazionale in materia di diritti umani protegge gli individui e i gruppi di individui, l'UE non ritiene che la diffamazione della religione rientri in questo stesso ambito. Inoltre, come affermato nelle conclusioni del Consiglio Affari esteri del febbraio 2011, la diffamazione della religione è spesso stata utilizzata per vilipendere le minoranze religiose e limitare la libertà di espressione e la libertà di religione o di credo. Un importante passo avanti è stato fatto nel 2011, quando l'Organizzazione della conferenza islamica (OCI) ha abbandonato tale concetto con l'adozione consensuale, in seno alla Commissione per i diritti umani, della risoluzione n. 16/18 condotta dall'OCI e di successive risoluzioni dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite, un approccio che sinora è stato confermato.

La libertà di espressione è un requisito essenziale per una società pluralista, tollerante, aperta e democratica; è unicamente limitata dagli articoli 19 e 20 della Convenzione internazionale sui diritti civili e politici, che nello specifico vietano ogni forma di incitazione all'odio religioso e dunque alla discriminazione, all'ostilità o alla violenza. Spetta alla magistratura definire e, più in generale, applicare tali norme giuridiche a casi specifici.

L'UE continuerà a impegnarsi nella lotta contro la violenza e l'intolleranza religiosa e ad affermare, come fatto dall'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente a novembre dinanzi alla Lega degli Stati arabi al Cairo e all'OCI a Gibuti, che la promozione del dialogo e della tolleranza è una responsabilità comune.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009598/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: International anti-blasphemy agreement

On 19 September 2012, the Secretary-General of the Arab League announced that the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the African Union and the European Union were about to draft an international agreement to make blasphemy and insulting religious figures a criminal offence.

Is the Commission aware of these statements?

Can it confirm that such an agreement is being prepared?

Can it explain how, in this context, freedom of expression and, in particular, the freedom to satirise, which is undeniably an art form, will be protected?

Does it support the belief held by the extreme Islamic fringe that films or cartoons that are irreverent towards religion are equivalent to religious hatred and may thus incite hostilities or acts of retaliation?

Having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 10, which provides for freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to manifest those freedoms in public or in private, in worship, teaching, practice and observance; and having regard to the agreements that are already in place with many member countries of the abovementioned organisations, which include provisions on the need to respect human and religious rights, could it say what practical measures that have yet to be implemented will be put in place following this new agreement so as to ensure effective protection for Christian communities present in those countries, towards whom 'religious criticism' is not directed through the press, but through acts of violence and terrorism that increasingly often lead to dozens of believers losing their lives?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of recent calls for an international legal framework to protect religion, and denies that the EU supports any such international 'agreement'.

Over the last years, the EU has been fighting the concept of 'defamation of religions', so detrimental to freedom of expression, notably in the UN Human Rights Council and General Assembly. Since international human rights law protects individuals and groups of individuals, the EU does not consider that defamation of religion is a human rights concept. Furthermore, as affirmed in February 2011 Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions, defamation of religions 'has often been used to mistreat religious minorities and to limit freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.' In 2011, a breakthrough was achieved when the Organisation of the Islamic Conference moved away from that concept through the consensual adoption of OIC-led resolution 16/18 in the HRC, and subsequent UNGA resolutions. Such an approach has been upheld until now.

Freedom of expression is necessary to create pluralist, tolerant, broad-minded and democratic societies. Its only limitations lie within Articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which notably prohibit any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. That determination, and more generally the application of these legal standards to particular cases, falls within the remit of the judiciary.

The EU will remain engaged in fighting religious intolerance and violence, and will recall, like the HR/VP did in November before the League of Arab States in Cairo and the OIC in Djibouti, that promoting dialogue and tolerance is a shared responsibility.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009599/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: «Autostrade del Mare»: stato degli incentivi negli altri Stati membri

A seguito di approfondimenti portati avanti dalla DG Concorrenza sull'Ecobonus stanziato dal Governo Italiano per il biennio 2010/2011, la Commissione ha modificato la sua posizione iniziale di avvallo dello stesso e ora è più propensa ad inquadrarlo quale aiuto di stato, bloccando l'erogazione dei fondi messi a disposizione dall'Italia per le imprese che hanno deciso di investire risorse e modulare piani aziendali, credendo fortemente nel progetto «Autostrade del Mare».

A motivo di questa possibile decisione, moltissime imprese italiane di autotrasporti sarebbero in forte difficoltà economica e a rischio chiusura.

Può la Commissione comunicare se negli altri Stati membri, in particolare in Francia e in Spagna, esistono incentivi simili all'Ecobonus italiano, per altro più volte richiamato dalla stessa quale modello di best practice a livello comunitario e sempre finora sostenuto?

Come valuta essa tali stanziamenti, soprattutto dopo le considerazioni della DG Concorrenza su quelli italiani?

Dato che «Autostrade del Mare» è un progetto prioritario all'interno del programma della Rete Transeuropea di Trasporto e che in Italia, nel periodo di estrema crisi economica, solo grazie alla presenza dell'Ecobonus i vettori di «Autostrade del Mare» hanno visto un utilizzo del 50 % della loro capacità di trasporto, quale reputa sarà il futuro di questa modalità di trasporto nel nostro paese e in Europa?

In alternativa all'Ecobonus in Italia e agli omologhi incentivi negli altri Stati membri, ha la Commissione valutato altre modalità di sostegno per le imprese di trasporto che intendono avvalersi di «Autostrade del Mare»?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009601/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Valutazione dell'Ecobonus 2010/2011 all'interno del progetto Autostrade del mare

Autostrade del mare è un servizio alternativo al trasporto merci su gomma in viabilità ordinaria, che si basa sul trasporto intermodale di merci negli Stati che si affacciano sul Mediterraneo. Fra gli obiettivi primari figurano la riduzione dei mezzi pesanti in circolazione sulla rete stradale e autostradale e un minore impatto ambientale nel trasporto merci. Per sostenere le imprese di autotrasporti che hanno deciso di servirsi del trasporto marittimo in alternativa all'itinerario interamente stradale, l'Italia ha istituito l'Ecobonus quale contributo diretto. Caratteristica di questo strumento è il fatto che non distorce il meccanismo concorrenziale in quanto incentiva la domanda di intermodalità senza finanziare direttamente gli operatori, misura questa che ha più volte ricevuto il plauso del Coordinatore europeo di Autostrade del mare, Luis Valente de Oliveira. Il governo italiano ha chiesto una proroga degli incentivi per il biennio 2010/2011 ottenendo in una fase iniziale l'avallo della Commissione, che però attualmente propende a considerare come aiuto di Stato l'Ecobonus stanziato per il biennio 2010/2011.

Considerato che:

— Autostrade del mare è un progetto prioritario all'interno del più vasto TEN-T attualmente sfruttato in Italia al 50 % rispetto alle sue potenzialità,

— la richiesta di proroga per il biennio 2010/2011 era basata sulla necessità di consolidare questa modalità intermodale di trasporto, nella particolare congiuntura di crisi economica,

— di fatto la concorrenza rispetto ad altre modalità di trasporto non viene falsata in Italia, dato che per esempio le ferrovie hanno di molto ridotto l'impegno nel trasporto merci intermodale,

— dalla sua introduzione nessun rilievo è stato sollevato da altri soggetti che operano nelle diverse modalità di trasporto,

— se questo biennio fosse inquadrato come aiuto di Stato e conseguentemente venisse bloccata l'erogazione dei fondi molte imprese di autotrasporto rischierebbero il fallimento poiché non otterrebbero le sovvenzioni delle quali avevano certezza nel momento in cui hanno continuato ad investire in Autostrade del mare;

ritiene la Commissione di autorizzare la procedura di sblocco dei fondi stanziati per l'Ecobonus 2010/2011?

Risposta congiunta di Joaquín Almunia a nome della Commissione
(6 dicembre 2012)

Il progetto «Autostrade del mare» è una delle priorità del programma di reti transeuropee di trasporto. Obiettivo del progetto è contribuire allo sviluppo di nuove catene logistiche marittime intermodali che dovrebbero portare a un cambiamento strutturale nell'organizzazione dei trasporti in Europa. In tale contesto, la Commissione promuove lo spostamento del trasporto merci dalla strada a modalità più sostenibili e a tal fine ha già approvato regimi che favoriscono il trasferimento modale del trasporto marittimo a corto raggio, in particolare per la Francia e la Spagna ([1]).

Per quanto concerne la proroga del regime italiano Ecobonus, la Commissione ha comunicato all'Italia, con lettera del 25 luglio 2012 ([2]), la propria decisione di avviare un procedimento d'indagine formale per valutare la compatibilità della proroga con il mercato interno.

La Commissione sta attualmente valutando la proroga del regime sulla base delle osservazioni presentate dall'Italia e da terzi e intende adottare una decisione definitiva nei prossimi mesi.

([1]) N 573/09 e N 647/09.
([2]) GU C 301 del 5.10.2012, pag. 49.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009599/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Motorways of the Sea: state of incentives in the other Member States

Following the clarifications put forward by DG Competition concerning the Ecobonus provided by the Italian Government for the period 2010-2011, the Commission has altered its original position endorsing the scheme and is now more minded to consider it as state aid, thus blocking the disbursement of funds made available by Italy for businesses that have decided to invest resources and adjust their business plans by putting their faith in the Motorways of the Sea project.

Such a decision would put a great many Italian haulage firms in severe economic difficulty and at risk of closure.

Can the Commission state whether in the other Member States, in particular France and Spain, incentives similar to the Italian Ecobonus exist? It is worth bearing in mind that the Commission has repeatedly praised this scheme as a model of best practice at EU level and has, until now, always supported it.

How does it view such arrangements, particularly in the light of DG Competition's comments on the Italian ones?

Given that Motorways of the Sea is a priority project within the Trans-European Transport Networks programme, and that in Italy, in this period of extreme economic crisis, it is only thanks to the Ecobonus that the Motorways of the Sea routes have seen 50% of their capacity used, what does it think the future will hold for this means of transport in our country and in Europe?

As an alternative to the Ecobonus in Italy and to the similar incentives in other Member States, has the Commission evaluated other means of support for hauliers that intend to use the Motorways of the Sea?

Question for written answer E-009601/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Evaluation of the 2010/2011 Ecobonus within the Motorways of the Sea project

Motorways of the Sea is an alternative service to freight transport by the ordinary road network. It is based on intermodal freight transport between states on the Mediterranean shore. Its key aims include reducing the number of heavy vehicles on the road and motorway network and the environmental impact of freight transport. To support haulage firms that have decided to use sea transport as an alternative to journeys entirely by road, Italy has introduced the Ecobonus as a direct contribution. A feature of this instrument is that it does not distort competition in that it incentivises demand for intermodality without directly funding operators. This measure has repeatedly been praised by the European Motorways of the Sea Coordinator, Luis Valente de Oliveira. The Italian Government asked for an extension of the incentives for the period 2010-2011; initially, it got the approval of the Commission, but the latter is now minded to consider the Ecobonus provided for the period 2010-2011 as state aid.

Given that:

— Motorways of the Sea is a priority project within the wider TEN-T that is currently realising 50% of its potential in Italy;

— the request for an extension for the period 2010-2011 was based on the need to consolidate this intermodal means of transport in the particular circumstances of the economic crisis;

— in reality, competition with other means of transport is not being distorted in Italy, since, for example, the railways have significantly reduced their commitment to intermodal freight transport;

— since its introduction, no comments have been made by other operators working in the various means of transport;

— if that two-year period were to be considered as state aid and the disbursement of funds were thus blocked, many hauliers would risk going out of business, as they would not receive the grants that they were sure of getting at the time they continued to invest in the Motorways of the Sea;

will the Commission authorise the procedure for releasing funds allocated for the 2010-2011 Ecobonus?

Joint answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

'Motorways of the Sea' is one of the priorities of the trans-European transport network programme. It is aimed at providing support to the development of new intermodal maritime-based logistics chains which should bring about a structural change in transport organisation in Europe. In this context, the Commission supports the transfer of freight from road to more sustainable modes of transport and has thus already approved schemes favouring modal shift to short-sea shipping, notably for France and Spain ([1]).

As regards the prolongation of the Italian Ecobonus scheme, the Commission notified Italy by letter of 25 July 2012 ([2]) of its decision to open the formal investigation procedure to assess the compatibility of that prolongation with the internal market.

The Commission is currently assessing the prolongation of the scheme on the basis of the observations submitted by Italy and third parties and is planning to adopt a final decision in the coming months.

([1]) N 573/09 and N 647/09.
([2]) OJ 2012 C 301 of 5.10.2012 p. 49.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009600/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Deficit di recepimento delle direttive in materia di mercato interno

Dall'ultima analisi del Quadro di valutazione del mercato interno, diffusa dalla Commissione l'8 Ottobre, risulta che il deficit medio di recepimento delle direttive in materia di mercato interno entro i limiti di tempo stabiliti dagli Stati membri è passato dall'1.2 % (novembre 2011) allo 0.9 % attuale, mentre ben 16 paesi hanno raggiunto l'obiettivo dell'1 % convenuto dai capi di Sato e di Governo nel 2007.

L'Italia risulta essere all'ultimo posto della classifica dei 27 Stati membri, con un deficit di recepimento pari al 2.4 %, seguita da Polonia (2.1 %), Belgio e Cipro (1.9 %), Slovacchia (1.5 %), Portogallo (1.4 %), Austria (1.3 %), Finlandia e Regno Unito (1.2 %), Romania e Lussemburgo (1.1 %).

Può indicare la Commissione, anche sulla base delle esperienze negli altri paesi, quali ritiene siano le motivazioni che impediscono agli Stati membri di recepire con tempestività le direttive? In tal caso, sulla base di tali motivazioni, intende essa redigere delle raccomandazioni che possano supportare gli Stati sopra citati in un percorso più rapido di abbattimento del loro attuale deficit di recepimento in materia di mercato interno?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(12 dicembre 2012)

In quanto custode dei trattati la Commissione deve assicurare che gli atti adottati dalle istituzioni dell'Unione europea siano tempestivamente e correttamente applicati dagli Stati membri.

Sulla base dell'esperienza di vari Stati membri la Commissione ha osservato che diversi strumenti hanno aiutato gli Stati membri a recepire tempestivamente le direttive, tra di essi figurano anche la creazione di un sistema di allarme preventivo che consente l'adozione di provvedimenti prima della pubblicazione di una direttiva, l'elaborazione di piani di attuazione e di documenti esplicativi, l'istituzione di un organo amministrativo o di coordinamento per coinvolgere i parlamenti nazionali in fase preliminare.

La Raccomandazione della Commissione del 2009 ([1]), individua diverse misure per migliorare il recepimento delle direttive, quali la preparazione anticipata del recepimento o l'impiego di tabelle di concordanza.

Inoltre, nella sua comunicazione dell'8 giugno 2012 per una migliore *governance* del mercato unico ([2]), la Commissione propone di concentrare gli sforzi su settori aventi il maggior potenziale di crescita (nel 2012-2013 servizi e industrie di rete). In questi settori la Commissione invita gli Stati membri a sottoscrivere una tolleranza zero per il recepimento tardivo e non corretto delle direttive e rafforzerà l'assistenza al recepimento in modo da appianare gli eventuali problemi. La Commissione si impegna anche a migliorare la sua assistenza al recepimento nei confronti degli Stati membri mediante contatti informali, gruppi di esperti o forum in linea per discutere e scambiare le buone pratiche, nonché tramite lo svolgimento di sistematici controlli di conformità.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009H0524:IT:NOT.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/strategy/docs/governance/com_2012_259_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009600/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Internal market transposition deficit

The most recent Internal Market Scoreboard, published by the Commission on 8 October, shows that the average deficit for transposing internal market directives within the deadlines established by the Member States has fallen from 1.2% (November 2011) to the current 0.9%, while at least 16 countries have achieved the 1% target agreed by the Heads of State or Government in 2007.

Italy is at the bottom of the list of 27 Member States, with a transposition deficit of 2.4%, behind Poland (2.1%), Belgium and Cyprus (1.9%), Slovakia (1.5%), Portugal (1.4%), Austria (1.3%), Finland and the United Kingdom (1.2%), and Romania and Luxembourg (1.1%).

Can the Commission, say, taking into account experience in the other countries as well, what it believes to be the reasons preventing Member States from transposing the directives in a timely manner? If so, on the basis of these reasons, does it intend to draft recommendations to help the aforementioned Member States work more quickly towards eradicating their current internal market transposition deficits?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

As guardian of the Treaties, the Commission must ensure that acts adopted by the institutions of the European Union are timely and correctly implemented by the Member States.

Taking account of the experience of different Member States, the Commission has noted that several instruments have helped Member States to transpose directives in a timely manner: the set-up of an early warning system allowing to take measures before the publication of a directive, development of transposition plans and explanatory documents, to establish a coordination administrative body or to involve national parliaments at an early stage, among others.

The 2009 Commission Recommendation ([1]), identifies different measures improving the transposition of directives, as preparing in advance for transposition or using correlation tables.

In addition, in its communication of 8 June 2012 on Better Governance for the single market ([2]), the Commission proposes to focus efforts on sectors with the largest growth potential (in 2012-2013 services and network industries). In these areas, the Commission calls on Member States to commit to zero tolerance for late and incorrect transposition of Directives. The Commission will provide enhanced transposition assistance in order to smooth out potential problems. Also, the Commission commits itself to enhance its transposition assistance to Member States through informal contacts, expert groups or providing online fora to discuss and exchange best practices, as well as conducting systematic conformity checks.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32009H0524:EN:NOT.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/strategy/docs/governance/com_2012_259_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009602/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Reconhecimento do Estado Palestiniano

Na Cimeira do Movimento dos Países Não Alinhados (organização que inclui 120 países) que se realizou em Teerão (Irão) em agosto passado, os países participantes reiteraram que, no centro da prolongada crise no Médio Oriente, está a manutenção da ocupação da Palestina. Qualquer solução para esta crise exige que se coloque fim à ocupação, aos crimes e às violações cometidos por Israel, a potência ocupante, e que se respeite o direito inalienável do povo palestino à sua autodeterminação e ao estabelecimento do seu Estado independente e viável na Palestina, com Al-Quds al-Sharif como capital.

Desta forma, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

— Não considera necessário alterar a sua posição e juntar a sua voz a todos estes países na defesa do fim da ocupação de Israel na Palestina e apoiar o estabelecimento do Estado da Palestina, assim como o seu reconhecimento como Estado membro de pleno direito da ONU?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(17 de janeiro de 2013)

A União Europeia tem manifestado reiteradamente o seu apoio e desejo de que a Palestina se torne um membro de pleno direito da Organização das Nações Unidas, enquanto parte de uma solução para o conflito israelo-palestiniano. A UE também tem trabalhado de forma constante para promover os esforços da Autoridade Palestiniana no sentido do estabelecimento de um Estado, sob a égide do Primeiro-Ministro Salam Fayyad, e continuará a fazê-lo.

É essencial encontrar uma solução negociada para o conflito, que conduza à coexistência de dois Estados em paz e segurança. A UE declarou ainda que as disposições em matéria de segurança no âmbito de tal solução devem respeitar a soberania da população palestiniana e demonstrar que a ocupação terminou.

Em 29 de novembro de 2012, a Assembleia-Geral das Nações Unidas votou uma resolução que conferiu à Palestina o estatuto de Estado observador na ONU. Uma vez que são membros de p*leno direito da Organização das Nações Unidas, os Estados-Membros da UE decidem em última análise sobre os pedidos de adesão de potenciais novos membros ou sobre a concessão de tal estatuto nas Nações Unidas. Catorze Estados-Membros votaram a favor da resolução de 29 de novembro de 2012, um votou contra e 12 abstiveram-se.*

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009602/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Recognition of the State of Palestine

At the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (an organisation that brings together 120 countries) which took place in Tehran (Iran) in August 2012 the participating countries reiterated that the ongoing occupation of Palestine lies at the heart of the prolonged crisis in the Middle East. Any solution to that crisis must involve putting an end to the occupation, and to the crimes and violations committed by Israel, the occupying power, and respecting the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and to establish their independent and viable state in Palestine, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

Does the VP/HR not believe that it should change its stance, adding its voice to those of all the countries calling on Israel to end its occupation of Palestine, and support the establishment of the State of Palestine and its recognition as a full UN member country?

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

The EU has repeatedly expressed its support and wish for Palestine to become a full member of the United Nations as part of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The EU has also consistently worked to advance the Palestinian Authority's state-building efforts under Prime Minister Fayyad and will continue to do so.

A negotiated solution to the conflict, leading to two states living side by side in peace and security is essential. The EU has also stated that security arrangements as part of such a resolution must, for Palestinians, respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over.

On 29 November 2012 the UN General Assembly voted on a resolution according Palestine Observer State status in the UN. EU Member States, being full members of the United Nations, ultimately decide on the applications of potential new members or according such a status within the United Nations. Fourteen Member States voted in favour of the 29 November 2012 resolution, one voted against and twelve abstained.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009603/12
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Renegociação da dívida pública portuguesa

A consolidação das contas públicas e a redução da dívida pública tem de ser obtida com o crescimento económico e não se atingirá com uma política altamente recessiva como a que está inscrita no «memorando de entendimento» («pacto de agressão») aplicado aos trabalhadores e ao povo português. Num quadro de forte recessão económica, quebra acentuada do consumo, aumento do desemprego e empobrecimento acentuado da população portuguesa, a dívida pública ultrapassa já 120 % do PIB e nem a cega orientação da redução do défice é cumprida. Uma das alternativas passa por levar a cabo uma renegociação da dívida pública portuguesa nos seus prazos, juros e montantes.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Está disponível para, conjuntamente com o BCE e o FMI, iniciar um processo de renegociação da dívida pública portuguesa com base nos seguintes princípios:

1. Determinação completa e rigorosa da dimensão da dívida, identificando a sua origem, natureza e tipo de credores, bem como a avaliação da sua previsível evolução, com e sem renegociação, a levar a efeito pelo Ministério das Finanças e pelo Banco de Portugal, e apresentação obrigatória dos resultados à Assembleia da República Portuguesa?

2. Fixação de um serviço de dívida que, após a renegociação dos seus montantes e valores legítimos, do alargamento dos respetivos prazos de pagamento e da adequação e eventual diminuição das taxas de juro, seja compatível com um crescimento económico, pelo menos, da ordem dos 3 %, atribuindo um período de carência e indexando o valor dos encargos anuais com esse serviço da dívida a uma percentagem previamente fixada das exportações anuais do País?

3. A salvaguarda plena da parte da dívida correspondente aos pequenos aforradores — certificados de aforro e certificados do Tesouro (dívida dita não transacionável) — e daquela que está na posse do setor público administrativo e empresarial do Estado, que não serão assim objeto da renegociação, assegurando-lhes o cumprimento das condições contratadas?

4. A reconsideração dos prazos, das taxas e dos objetivos a prever no âmbito do empréstimo, recusando qualquer tipo de ingerências ou imposições políticas condicionantes da soberania do Estado português?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(1 de fevereiro de 2013)

A Comissão efetua uma análise aprofundada da sustentabilidade da dívida no âmbito de cada avaliação trimestral do programa de ajustamento económico para Portugal. Esta análise mostra que, embora o rácio da dívida de Portugal seja muito elevado ([1]), a dívida pública permanece sustentável no quadro das políticas previstas no programa. Este facto resulta da aplicação rigorosa do programa pelo Governo Português, cujo êxito é cada vez mais reconhecido pelos mercados financeiros, como demonstra a quebra acentuada da probabilidade de riscos associada à dívida portuguesa.

O Governo Português tem de ponderar cuidadosamente as possíveis opções para o regresso de Portugal aos mercados em 2013, como previsto pelo programa. Nas condições atuais, o prosseguimento da aplicação rigorosa do programa afigura-se a melhor opção; o pedido de renegociação da dívida acarreta o risco de comprometer os esforços já realizados. Por este motivo, o governo português não apresentou à Comissão nem aos restantes membros da *troika* qualquer pedido de renegociação da dívida.

Por seu turno, os eventuais benefícios de uma renegociação das condições associadas aos empréstimos de credores europeus seriam muito limitados, dado que Portugal beneficia já de condições muito favoráveis, com prazos de vencimento médios compreendidos entre 12,5 anos (FEEF) e 14,5 anos (MEEF), bem como taxas de juro médias da ordem de 3 %. Importa salientar que vários Estados-Membros participantes na assistência financeira a Portugal enfrentam condições de empréstimo muito mais estritas no que respeita à sua própria dívida.

([1]) Principalmente devido ao legado da política orçamental deficiente nos anos anteriores ao pedido de assistência financeira de Portugal.

Convida-se a Senhora Deputada a consultar o último relatório trimestral da Comissão sobre a avaliação do programa de ajustamento económico para Portugal, nomeadamente as caixas 2 e 3 ([2]).

([2]) Este relatório contém informações mais pormenorizadas sobre o problema da sustentabilidade da dívida e das condições de empréstimo: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/op124_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009603/12
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Renegotiation of Portuguese public debt

Consolidating the public accounts and reducing public debt should be achieved by means of economic growth, and will not be achieved by implementing a highly recessionary policy as set out in the 'memorandum of understanding' ('pact of aggression') imposed on the workers and people of Portugal. Against a backdrop of deep economic recession, a sharp downturn in consumption, increased unemployment and the marked impoverishment of the Portuguese people, Portuguese public debt now exceeds 120% of GDP and the senseless deficit reduction target has not been met. One alternative would be to renegotiate the payment deadlines for, the interest payable on and the size of Portuguese public debt.

Is the Commission prepared, together with the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to begin renegotiation of Portuguese public debt, on the basis of the following principles:

1. Full and rigorous calculation, by the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Portugal, of the size of the debt, identifying its origin and the nature and type of creditors, combined with an assessment of the way it is likely to develop, with and without renegotiation, and mandatory presentation of the results to the Portuguese Parliament?

2. Servicing the debt in such a way that, after renegotiating the legitimate amount and value of the debt, extending the payment deadlines and adjusting and possibly reducing the interest rates, it is compatible with economic growth of at least 3%, granting a grace period and linking the amount of the annual debt servicing fee to a pre-determined percentage of Portugal's annual exports?

3. Fully safeguarding the portion of the debt held by small savers — savings certificates and Treasury bonds (so-called non-marketable debt) — and that which is held by the public sector and state-owned enterprises, which will thus not be subject to renegotiation, guaranteeing that the agreed terms will be respected?

4. Reviewing the deadlines, interest rates and objectives under the terms of the loan, rejecting any kind of political interference or conditions which jeopardise the sovereignty of the Portuguese State?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission carries out a rigorous debt sustainability analysis at every quarterly review of the Economic Adjustment Programme for Portugal. This analysis shows that, while the debt ratio in Portugal is very high ([1]) under the policies envisaged in the Programme public debt in Portugal remains sustainable. This is the result of a rigourous programme implementation by the Portuguese Government, the success of which is increasingly ackowledeged by financial markets as evidenced by sharply falling risk spreads for Portuguese debt.

The Portuguese Government has to carefully weigh the available options as to how Portugal can return to market financing in 2013 as planned under the Programme. At the current stage a continued rigorous implementation of the Programme seems to be the best option while a request for a renegotiation of the debt entails the risk of undermining the efforts that have already been undertaken. For this reason, the Portuguese has not approached the Commission and other Troika members with a request for a renegotiation of the debt.

As regards the conditions for the loans from European lenders, the potential gains of any renegotiation of these conditions would be limlited since Portugal already enjoys very favourable conditions, with average maturities between 12½ years (EFSF) and 14½ years (EFSM) and average interest rates of around 3%. It needs to be recalled that several MS ([2]) that participate in the financial assistance for Portugal face much stiffer loan conditions on their own debt.

([1]) Mainly because of the legacy of an ill-devised budgetary policy in the years up to Portugal's request for financial assistance.
([2]) Member States.

The Honourable Member is referred to the latest Review Report by the Commision on the Economic Adjustment Programme for Portugal and in particular Boxes 2 and 3 ([3]).

([3]) Thereof which provides more detailed information on the issue of debt sustainability and loan conditions: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/op124_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009604/12
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Papel da ONU e da sua AG

Na Cimeira do Movimento dos Países Não Alinhados (organização que inclui 120 países) que se realizou em Teerão (Irão) em agosto passado, os países participantes concluíram que a Organização das Nações Unidas pode e deve desempenhar um papel importante nos esforços para encontrar soluções comuns para problemas comuns, incluindo a função de coordenação entre todos os organismos internacionais e regionais, para o qual o seu fortalecimento, modernização, bem como a revitalização da Assembleia Geral da ONU serão determinantes.

Desta forma, pergunto à Comissão:

Não considera necessário apoiar esta conclusão?

Não considera que uma reforma da ONU deve, em primeiro lugar, passar pela valorização do papel da sua Assembleia Geral?

Se sim, que esforços ou medidas irá desenvolver nesse sentido?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Ashton em nome da Comissão
(28 de janeiro de 2013)

Reforçar a ONU é uma prioridade de longa data para a UE. A Estratégia Europeia de Segurança, aprovada pelo Conselho Europeu em 2003, referia que «Reforçar as Nações Unidas e dotá-la dos meios necessários para que possa cumprir as suas missões e atuar de forma eficaz é uma das prioridades da Europa», e este objetivo tem constituído, com efeito, um fio condutor de toda a ação externa da UE. A Comissão também reafirmou o seu empenhamento na Comunicação de 2003 «A escolha do multilateralismo». O próprio TUE estabelece que a União «promove soluções multilaterais para os problemas comuns, particularmente no âmbito das Nações Unidas» (artigo 21.°, n.° 1).

As prioridades da UE a médio prazo na ONU, elaboradas pelo Grupo de trabalho do Conselho sobre as Nações Unidas (CONUN) e apoiadas pelo Comité Político e de Segurança (CPS), em 4 de maio de 2012, afirmam que «colaboraremos estreitamente com a generalidade dos membros da ONU, os grupos regionais e sub-regionais, bem como bilateralmente com os nossos parceiros estratégicos, a fim de encontrar essas soluções e fortalecer a ONU de modo construtivo, pragmático e centrado nas políticas».

A UE partilha o objetivo de reforçar e modernizar as Nações Unidas. Em 11 de outubro de 2012, numa sessão plenária da Assembleia Geral, a UE fez uma declaração com este objetivo, sublinhando que «Estamos empenhados em revitalizar e apoiar os esforços destinados a reforçar o papel e a autoridade da Assembleia Geral, em conformidade com a Carta das Nações Unidas e as resoluções pertinentes. Esperamos que a Assembleia Geral, o único organismo intergovernamental com membros de todo o mundo, seja capaz de enfrentar o desafio de conciliar a legitimidade e a eficiência num contexto de desafios mundiais emergentes».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009604/12
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Role of the United Nations and its General Assembly

At the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (an organisation that brings together 120 countries) which took place in Tehran (Iran) in August 2012 the participating countries concluded that the United Nations can and must play a significant role in the efforts to find common solutions to common problems, including by acting as coordinator between all international and regional bodies. This will require it to be strengthened and modernised, and the UN General Assembly to be revitalised.

Does the Commission not believe that this conclusion should be supported?

Does it not believe that any UN reform process should give the highest priority to promoting the role of the General Assembly?

If so, what actions or measures will the Commission take to achieve this goal?

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

Strengthening the UN is a longstanding priority for the EU. The European Security Strategy, endorsed by the European Council in 2003, stated that 'Strengthening the UN, equipping it to fulfil its responsibilities and to act effectively, is a European priority', and this objective has indeed been a red thread throughout the EU's external action. The Commission also reaffirmed its commitment in the 2003 communication to 'the choice of multilateralism'. The TEU itself provides that the Union shall promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations." (Article 21-1 TEU).

EU medium term priorities for the EU at the UN, drafted by the Council Working Party on the UN (CONUN) and endorsed by the Political and Security Committee (PSC) on 4 May 2012, state that 'we will work closely with the wider UN membership, regional and sub-regional groups and bilaterally with our strategic partners to find such solutions and to strengthen the UN in a constructive, pragmatic and policy-centred way'.

The EU shares the aim of strengthening and modernising the UN. On 11 October 2012 in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the EU made a statement to this effect, underlining that 'we are committed to revitalization and to supporting efforts aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the GA, in line with the UN Charter and relevant resolutions. We wish that the GA, as the only intergovernmental body with universal membership, is able to take up the challenge of conciliating legitimacy and efficiency in a context of emerging global challenges'.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009605/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Negociações para processo de paz na Colômbia

Iniciam-se agora, em Oslo, na Noruega, as negociações entre o Governo colombiano e as Forças Armadas Revolucionárias da Colômbia — Exército do Povo (FARC-EP).

O início das negociações far-se-á sobre um pano de fundo de ameaças de morte do Presidente da Colômbia, Juan Manuel Santos, e das altas chefias militares deste país a três membros do secretariado das FARC-EP.

O Presidente colombiano terá mesmo dito que, se o processo de paz não for bem-sucedido, «o país não perde nada» e que serão mantidas as operações militares, contrariando os apelos para o estabelecimento de um cessar-fogo no decurso de um período negocial sério e franco.

Assim, questiono a Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

Que iniciativas e medidas pretende tomar para apoiar o processo de paz colombiano?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

A União Europeia está a acompanhar com especial atenção as negociações de paz. Atualmente, as duas partes decidiram envolver apenas os quatro países que atuaram como garantes ou acompanharam diretamente o processo negocial.

Posto isto, a UE está a apoiar o processo copatrocinando as consultas feitas à sociedade colombiana sobre os temas que constam da agenda do diálogo, que estão a ser organizadas sob a forma de dezasseis seminários nas diferentes regiões do país.

A UE está disposta a participar neste processo se e quando o Governo da Colômbia o solicitar, ajudando o governo, as instituições do estado e a sociedade civil a desenvolver ações para promover a paz, a verdade, a justiça, a reparação e a reconciliação. Com efeito, a cooperação da UE já apoia atualmente ações altamente relevantes para as negociações, tais como a implementação da lei sobre as vítimas e a restituição de terras.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009605/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Negotiations as part of the Colombian peace process

In Oslo, Norway, negotiations are currently under way between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army (FARC-EP).

The negotiations are beginning against a backdrop of death threats by the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, and senior Colombian military chiefs against three members of the FARC-EP Secretariat.

The Colombian President has even been quoted as saying that if the peace process is unsuccessful 'the country loses nothing' and that military operations will continue, despite calls to establish a ceasefire during a period of serious and open negotiation.

What initiatives and measures will the VP/HR take to support the Colombian peace process?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The EU is following the peace negotiations with close attention. At present, the two parties have agreed to involve only the four countries which act as guarantors or in an accompanying role in the process directly.

This said, the EU is supporting the peace process by co-sponsoring the consultations of Colombian society on the themes on the agenda of the dialogue, which are being organised in the form of sixteen workshops in the different regions of the country.

Moreover, the EU stands ready to participate in the process if and when the Government of Colombia requires it, assisting the Colombian government, state institutions and civil society in providing support for activities that promote peace, truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation. Indeed, EU cooperation is already today supporting actions that are highly relevant to the negotiations, i.a. assisting with the implementation of the Law on Victims and Land Restitution.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009606/12
an die Kommission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Gianni Pittella (S&D), Amalia Sartori (PPE), Mario Mauro (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Giuseppe Gargani (PPE), Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD), David-Maria Sassoli (S&D), Lara Comi (PPE), Licia Ronzulli (PPE), Debora Serracchiani (S&D), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Antonello Antinoro (PPE), Andrea Zanoni (ALDE), Marco Scurria (PPE), Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), Vincenzo Iovine (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Gino Trematerra (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Vittorio Prodi (S&D), Pino Arlacchi (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D), Potito Salatto (PPE), Paolo De Castro (S&D), Claudio Morganti (EFD), Barbara Matera (PPE), Mario Pirillo (S&D), Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), Carlo Casini (PPE), Oreste Rossi (EFD), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Andrea Cozzolino (S&D), Iva Zanicchi (PPE), Aldo Patriciello (PPE), Lorenzo Fontana (EFD), Matteo Salvini (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Tiziano Motti (PPE), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Gabriele Albertini (PPE), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Gianluca Susta (S&D), Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D), Elisabetta Gardini (PPE), Antonio Cancian (PPE), Salvatore Iacolino (PPE), Leonardo Domenici (S&D), Roberto Gualtieri (S&D), Silvia Costa (S&D), Gianni Vattimo (ALDE), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Luigi Berlinguer (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Raffaele Baldassarre (PPE), Vito Bonsignore (PPE), Luigi Ciriaco De Mita (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD) und Francesca Balzani (S&D)
(22. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Stahlwerk in Terni: Erhalt des Industriestandorts und der Arbeitsplätze

Die geplante Fusion zweier europäischer Edelstahlproduzenten (das finnische Unternehmen Outokumpu und das deutsche Unternehmen Inoxum) soll der europäischen Industrie Vorteile verschaffen und mit einem Strukturwandel einhergehen, der notwendig ist, um die Arbeitsplätze in den drei Hauptproduktionsstandorten der beiden Unternehmen (Terni in Italia, Tornio in Finnland und Krefeld in Deutschland) zu sichern.

Die Fusion wird von der Kommission geprüft, die dabei Wettbewerbsprobleme in Zusammenhang mit einem Gemeinsamen Marktanteil von über 50 % festgestellt hat. Damit diese Probleme ausgeräumt und die Fusion genehmigt werden kann, hat die Kommission die betroffenen Unternehmen aufgefordert, Aktiva zu veräußern. Ursprünglich schien der Verkauf der schwedischen Produktionsstandorte auszureichen, aber am 9. Oktober gab die finnische Gesellschaft Outokumpu bekannt, auch den italienischen Standort in Terni zum Verkauf freigeben zu wollen. Es droht möglicherweise auch eine Zerstückelung dieses Standorts, da das Unternehmen erklärt hat, dass eine Glühstraße (wegen Verlegung an einen Standort der Outokumpu-Unternehmensgruppe) und die Gesellschaft Tubificio di Terni nicht zu diesem Vorhaben gehören.

Dadurch würde die europäische Stahlindustrie einen Verbundstandort von großem Wert verlieren, was eindeutig im Widerspruch zu den Zielen einer starken europäischen Industriepolitik steht. Die Zerstückelung könnte sich zudem auch bei der Suche nach einem potenziellen Käufer nachteilig auswirken.

Daher wird die Kommission um die Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen gebeten:

1. Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission zu ergreifen und welche Garantien gedenkt sie abzugeben, unter anderem im Zusammenhang mit dem Wettbewerbsrecht, damit der Industriestandort in Terni erhalten bleibt und auf jeden Fall verhindert wird, dass der Betrieb dort an Interessenten im Rahmen branchenfremder Spekulationsgeschäfte verkauft wird?

2. Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission zu ergreifen, um Tausende von Arbeitsplätzen zu erhalten, die nun in der EU in Gefahr sind, wenn man berücksichtigt, dass es nach Auslaufen des EGKS-Vertrags nunmehr zu den Aufgaben der Kommission gehört, sich der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Konsequenzen der Entwicklungen in der Stahlindustrie anzunehmen?

3. Welcher ist der allgemeine Rahmen, der sich mit den Umwandlungs- und Umstrukturierungsprozessen befasst, die bei den Unternehmen in der Stahlbranche der Europäischen Union zu beobachten sind?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(18. Dezember 2012)

1. Die Kommission ist nach eingehender Marktuntersuchung zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass durch die vorgeschlagene Übernahme der alleinigen Kontrolle über Inoxum (Edelstahlsparte von ThyssenKrupp) durch Outokumpu der Wettbewerb auf dem Binnenmarkt empfindlich gestört worden wäre. Die Kommission hat die Übernahme jedoch am 7. November 2012 mit Auflagen genehmigt. Diese Abhilfemaßnahmen umfassen auch AST Terni (ohne seine nachgelagerte Rohrproduktion Tubificio).

AST Terni wird als vollständige und voll integrierte Produktionseinheit veräußert. Dadurch bleiben die derzeitige Lebens- und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Standorts erhalten. Außerdem wird die Kommission bei der Genehmigung des Verkaufs darauf achten, dass die Lebens- und Wettbewerbsfähigkeit von Terni erhalten bleiben.

2. Es wurde ein hochrangiges Rundtischforum zur europäischen Stahlindustrie eingerichtet, das sich insbesondere damit befasst, der Kommission konkrete politische Empfehlungen zu unterbreiten. Die Kommission ist mit der Ausarbeitung eines Aktionsplans für die europäische Stahlindustrie beschäftigt, der im Juni 2013 vorliegen soll.

3. Die Stahlindustrie ist von der gegenwärtigen wirtschaftlichen Stagnation in der EU mitbetroffen. Die Nachfrage nach Stahl in der EU ist 2012 voraussichtlich zurückgegangen und liegt derzeit um 25 % unter der des Jahres 2007. Deshalb bleiben Kapazitäten derzeit ungenutzt. Mehrere Stahlproduzenten in der EU haben in den letzten zwei Jahren Maßnahmen ergriffen, um den Markt wieder ins Gleichgewicht zu bringen, u. a. durch die vorübergehende oder ständige Stilllegung von Hochöfen. Auch in der Edelstahlproduktion bestehen Überkapazitäten, es wird jedoch damit gerechnet, dass sich die Nachfrage nach Erzeugnissen aus Edelstahl wieder erholt und langfristig wieder steigen wird.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009606/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Gianni Pittella (S&D), Amalia Sartori (PPE), Mario Mauro (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Giuseppe Gargani (PPE), Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD), David-Maria Sassoli (S&D), Lara Comi (PPE), Licia Ronzulli (PPE), Debora Serracchiani (S&D), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Antonello Antinoro (PPE), Andrea Zanoni (ALDE), Marco Scurria (PPE), Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), Vincenzo Iovine (ALDE), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Gino Trematerra (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Vittorio Prodi (S&D), Pino Arlacchi (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D), Potito Salatto (PPE), Paolo De Castro (S&D), Claudio Morganti (EFD), Barbara Matera (PPE), Mario Pirillo (S&D), Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), Carlo Casini (PPE), Oreste Rossi (EFD), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Andrea Cozzolino (S&D), Iva Zanicchi (PPE), Aldo Patriciello (PPE), Lorenzo Fontana (EFD), Matteo Salvini (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Tiziano Motti (PPE), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Gabriele Albertini (PPE), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Gianluca Susta (S&D), Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D), Elisabetta Gardini (PPE), Antonio Cancian (PPE), Salvatore Iacolino (PPE), Leonardo Domenici (S&D), Roberto Gualtieri (S&D), Silvia Costa (S&D), Gianni Vattimo (ALDE), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Luigi Berlinguer (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Raffaele Baldassarre (PPE), Vito Bonsignore (PPE), Luigi Ciriaco De Mita (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD) e Francesca Balzani (S&D)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Acciaierie di Terni: salvaguardia del sito industriale e dell'occupazione

Il progetto di fusione di due produttori europei d'acciaio inossidabile (l'azienda finlandese Outokumpu e l'azienda tedesca Inoxum) mirava a portare benefici all'industria europea con un cambiamento strutturale necessario per mantenere l'occupazione nei siti principali di produzione delle due aziende, ovvero Terni in Italia, Tornio in Finlandia e Krefeld in Germania.

La fusione è all'esame della Commissione europea, che ha individuato problemi di concorrenza legati a un'elevata quota congiunta di mercato superiore al 50 %. Per ovviare a questi problemi e approvare la fusione, la Commissione ha richiesto alle parti di cedere degli attivi. Inizialmente, la cessione dei siti di produzione svedesi sembrava sufficiente, ma il 9 ottobre la società Outokumpu ha dichiarato di voler mettere in vendita il sito di Terni in Italia. Oltre alla cessione, l'azienda ha paventato un possibile smembramento del sito, in quanto l'azienda ha dichiarato che nell'operazione non sarebbero ricomprese una linea di produzione di ricottura brillante (che sarà trasferita a un sito del gruppo Outokumpu) e la società Tubificio di Terni.

Con una simile operazione, la siderurgia europea subirebbe la perdita di un sito integrato e di grande valore, in netta contraddizione con gli obiettivi di una politica industriale europea forte. Inoltre, lo smembramento del sito rischierebbe di avere delle ripercussioni negative anche nell'ottica della ricerca di un possibile acquirente.

A tale riguardo, si prega la Commissione di rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Quali misure e quali garanzie intende adottare, anche nell'ambito del diritto alla concorrenza, per la salvaguardia del sito industriale di Terni e per evitare ogni possibilità di cessione a favore di soggetti interessati ad operazioni speculative estranee alla filiera industriale di riferimento?

2. Quale misure intende adottare per salvaguardare migliaia di posti di lavoro oggi in pericolo nella UE, visto che dopo l'estinzione del trattato Ceca rientra tra i compiti della Commissione anche il trattamento delle conseguenze economiche e sociali dell'evoluzione dell'industria siderurgica?

3. Qual è il quadro generale relativo alle trasformazioni e ristrutturazioni aziendali in corso nell'Unione europea nel settore siderurgico?

Risposta di A. Tajani a nome della Commissione
(18 dicembre 2012)

1. Per quanto riguarda la proposta di acquisizione, da parte di Outokumpu, del controllo totale della divisione acciaio inossidabile di ThyssenKrupp, Inoxum, dopo un'analisi di mercato approfondita la Commissione ha concluso che l'operazione avrebbe ostacolato in modo significativo l'efficace concorrenza sul mercato interno. Il 7 novembre 2012 la Commissione ha autorizzato il caso, fatti salvi correttivi. Il pacchetto di misure correttive comprende l'AST Terni (escluso il Tubificio).

L'AST Terni sarà dismessa come sito di produzione completo e totalmente integrato. In tal modo saranno garantite l'attuale sostenibilità e la competitività del sito. Inoltre, approvando l'acquisto, la Commissione intende garantire il mantenimento della sostenibilità e della competitività di Terni.

2. Sta per aver luogo un incontro della Tavola rotonda ad alto livello sull'industria siderurgica europea, con l'obiettivo principale di fornire raccomandazioni strategiche concrete alla Commissione. Entro il giugno 2013 la Commissione dovrà aver terminato i lavori di preparazione di un piano d'azione per l'industria siderurgica europea.

3. L'industria siderurgica dell'UE è colpita dall'attuale crisi economica. Per il 2012 si prevede una diminuzione della domanda di acciaio nell'UE; attualmente equivale al 25 % circa di quanto totalizzava nel 2007. Ne consegue una situazione di capacità inutilizzate e, negli ultimi due anni, numerosi produttori siderurgici dell'UE hanno adottato misure volte a ripristinare l'equilibrio sui mercati, anche attraverso la messa fuori servizio definitiva o temporanea di altiforni. Capacità inutilizzate si registrano attualmente anche nel sottosettore dell'acciaio inossidabile, anche se si prevede una ripresa della domanda di prodotti d'acciaio inossidabile ed una crescita continua nel lungo periodo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009606/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Gianni Pittella (S&D), Amalia Sartori (PPE), Mario Mauro (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE), Giuseppe Gargani (PPE), Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD), David-Maria Sassoli (S&D), Lara Comi (PPE), Licia Ronzulli (PPE), Debora Serracchiani (S&D), Clemente Mastella (PPE), Francesco De Angelis (S&D), Antonello Antinoro (PPE), Andrea Zanoni (ALDE), Marco Scurria (PPE), Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), Vincenzo Iovine (S&D), Carlo Fidanza (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Gino Trematerra (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE), Giovanni La Via (PPE), Vittorio Prodi (S&D), Pino Arlacchi (S&D), Guido Milana (S&D), Potito Salatto (PPE), Paolo De Castro (S&D), Claudio Morganti (EFD), Barbara Matera (PPE), Mario Pirillo (S&D), Crescenzio Rivellini (PPE), Carlo Casini (PPE), Oreste Rossi (EFD), Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE), Andrea Cozzolino (S&D), Iva Zanicchi (PPE), Aldo Patriciello (PPE), Lorenzo Fontana (EFD), Matteo Salvini (EFD), Herbert Dorfmann (PPE), Tiziano Motti (PPE), Alfredo Pallone (PPE), Gabriele Albertini (PPE), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Gianluca Susta (S&D), Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D), Rita Borsellino (S&D), Elisabetta Gardini (PPE), Antonio Cancian (PPE), Salvatore Iacolino (PPE), Leonardo Domenici (S&D), Roberto Gualtieri (S&D), Silvia Costa (S&D), Gianni Vattimo (ALDE), Patrizia Toia (S&D), Luigi Berlinguer (S&D), Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), Raffaele Baldassarre (PPE), Vito Bonsignore (PPE), Luigi Ciriaco De Mita (PPE), Mara Bizzotto (EFD) and Francesca Balzani (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Terni steelworks: saving the industrial site and jobs

The merger plan between two European stainless steel producers (the Finnish Outokumpu company and the German Inoxum) was intended to deliver benefits to the European industry with the structural change needed to preserve jobs on the two companies' main production sites: Terni in Italy, Tornio in Finland and Krefeld in Germany.

The merger is being investigated by the European Commission, which has identified possible competition problems relating to the joint market share, which would exceed 50%. In order to resolve these problems and approve the merger, the Commission has asked the parties to dispose of some assets. The sale of the Swedish production sites initially seemed to be enough, but on 9 October Outokumpu announced that it wanted to the put the Terni site in Italy up for sale. In addition to the sale, the company has mentioned the possibility of splitting up the site, as it has said that the bright annealing production line (which would be transferred to an Outokumpu group site) and the Tubificio tubular unit at Terni would not be included in the transaction.

An operation of this kind would mean the loss to the European steel industry of a high-value integrated site, completely counter to the objectives of a strong European industrial policy. What is more, splitting up the site could also have a negative impact in terms of finding a potential purchaser.

The Commission is therefore asked to reply to the following questions:

1. What measures and safeguards does it intend to adopt, including under competition law, to protect the Terni industrial site and to avoid any risk of its sale to parties interested in speculative operations unrelated to the industrial sector in question?

2. Given that following the expiry of the ECSC Treaty, dealing with the economic and social consequences of developments in the steel industry is one of the Commission's tasks, what measures does it intend to take to protect the thousands of jobs now under threat in the EU?

3. What is the overall situation concerning the company changes and restructurings underway in the steel sector in the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

1. Concerning the proposed acquisition by Outokumpu of sole control over ThyssenKrupp's stainless steel division, Inoxum, the Commission concluded, after an in-depth market investigation, that the transaction would have led to a significant impediment of effective competition in the internal market. The case was cleared by the Commission subject to remedies on 7 November 2012. The remedy package includes AST Terni (without its downstream tube-making business Tubificio).

AST Terni will be divested as a complete and fully integrated production unit. As such, the current viability and competitiveness of the site will be preserved. Moreover, when approving the purchase, the Commission will aim at ensuring that the viability and competitiveness of Terni are preserved.

2. A High Level Roundtable on the European steel sector is meeting whose main objective is to provide concrete policy recommendations to the Commission. The Commission is working on the preparation of an Action plan for the European steel industry by June 2013.

3. The steel industry is affected by the current economic stagnation in the EU. Steel demand in the EU is expected to fall in 2012 and it is currently around 25% compared to 2007. The result is a situation of unused capacities and several steel producers across the EU have taken measures over the past two years to rebalance the market, including via permanent or temporary mothballing of blast furnaces. The situation of unused capacities currently exists also in the subsector of stainless steel, however, demand for stainless steel products is expected to revamp and continue growing in the long run.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009607/12
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Condizioni detentive nell'Unione europea

La Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea (Carta dell'UE) contiene una serie di norme alle quali tutti gli Stati membri sono tenuti a conformarsi quando attuano il diritto dell'Unione. La Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo ha stabilito che condizioni detentive inaccettabili possono costituire una violazione dell'articolo 3 della Convenzione per la salvaguardia dei diritti dell'uomo e delle libertà fondamentali. L'articolo 19, paragrafo 2, della Carta dell'UE stabilisce inoltre che nessuno può essere allontanato, espulso o estradato verso uno Stato in cui esiste un rischio serio di essere sottoposto, tra l'altro, a trattamenti inumani o degradanti.

Malgrado queste normative le condizioni in cui versano le carceri europee e, in particolare, quelle italiane, sono allarmanti: le carceri sono sovraffollate, la popolazione carceraria aumenta e così anche il numero di cittadini stranieri detenuti, vi sono numerosi detenuti in attesa di giudizio, detenuti con disturbi mentali e casi di suicidio.

Secondo i dati del Ministero della giustizia italiano (al 15 ottobre 2012), tra gli oltre 66 mila ospiti delle strutture penitenziarie italiane vi sono anche 78 persone con disabilità e la disponibilità di celle attrezzate copre fino a 98 persone (comprese le persone non autosufficienti), suddivise in 19 istituti di detenzione.

Questo problema è stato già affrontato in una proposta di risoluzione del Parlamento europeo del 15 dicembre 2011, il cui testo prevedeva la creazione di una linea specifica nel bilancio UE al fine di incoraggiare le autorità nazionali a migliorare le condizioni detentive.

Alla luce di quanto precede, si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se intende intraprendere azioni volte a incoraggiare gli Stati membri a migliorare le condizioni di detenzione?

2. Considerando l'importanza e la gravità del problema, se provvederà a elaborare una strategia che porti a una reale armonizzazione dei sistemi di giustizia dell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(10 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione invita l'onorevole deputato a consultare le risposte alle interrogazioni scritte E-2438/2012 dell'onorevole Stoyanov, E-6882/2012 dell'onorevole Childers, E-7035/2012 dell'onorevole Romero López e E-007488/2012 dell'onorevole Griesbeck ([1]).

Le condizioni detentive sono di competenza degli Stati membri, i quali sono a loro volta vincolati alle norme internazionali definite in materia dal Consiglio d'Europa. Nel maggio 2011 la Commissione ha pubblicato il Libro verde sull'applicazione della normativa dell'UE sulla giustizia penale nel settore della detenzione ([2]). Una sintesi delle risposte al Libro verde è consultabile sul sito della Commissione ([3]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/it/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Libro verde: Rafforzare la fiducia reciproca nello spazio giudiziario europeo — Libro verde sull'applicazione della normativa dell'UE sulla giustizia penale nel settore della detenzione, COM/2011/0327 def.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm

Sulla base dei risultati del Libro verde, la Commissione intende concentrarsi sull'adeguata attuazione della legislazione esistente dell'UE nel settore della detenzione ([4]) prima di mettere a punto nuove proposte legislative e, nella prima parte del 2013, intende pubblicare delle relazioni in merito all'attuazione delle tre decisioni quadro. La Commissione ritiene che la corretta attuazione della legislazione esistente dell'UE avrà un effetto positivo in termini di sovraffollamento delle carceri e di carcerazione preventiva poiché gli strumenti legislativi in questione prevedono soluzioni alternative alla detenzione cautelare.

([4]) Decisione quadro 2008/909/GAI del Consiglio, del 27 novembre 2008, relativa all'applicazione del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle sentenze penali che irrogano pene detentive o misure privative della libertà personale, ai fini della loro esecuzione nell'Unione europea, GU L 327 del 5.12.2008, pag. 27; decisione quadro 2008/947/GAI del Consiglio, del 27 novembre 2008, relativa all'applicazione del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle sentenze e alle decisioni di sospensione condizionale in vista della sorveglianza delle misure di sospensione condizionale e delle sanzioni sostitutive,GU L 337 del 16.12.2008, pag. 102; decisione quadro 2009/829/GAI del Consiglio, del 23 ottobre 2009, sull'applicazione tra gli Stati membri dell'Unione europea del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle decisioni sulle misure alternative alla detenzione cautelare, GU L 294 dell'11.11.2009, pag. 20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009607/12
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Detention conditions in the European Union

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU Charter) contains a series of standards with which all EU Member States must comply when implementing EC law. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that unacceptable conditions of detention may constitute a violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Article 19(2) of the EU Charter also states that no one may be removed, expelled or extradited to a State where there is a serious risk that he or she would be subjected to, among other things, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Despite this legislation, the conditions in Europe's — and especially Italy's — prisons are alarming: prisons are overpopulated, the prison population is rising, the number of foreign detainees is increasing, many of those detained are awaiting trial or are mentally disturbed and there are many suicides.

According to data (as at 15 October) from the Italian ministry of justice, of the more than 66 000 people held in the country's prison system, 78 are disabled and there are suitably equipped cells for up to 98 people (including those who cannot take care of themselves) spread among 19 institutions.

This issue has already been raised in a motion for a European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2011, which envisages the creation of a specific heading in the EU budget to encourage national authorities to improve detention conditions.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission intend to take action to encourage Member States to improve detention conditions?

2. Will the Commission, given the size and seriousness of the problem, proceed to draft a strategy for a true harmonisation of European Union justice systems?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the answers to the Written Questions E-2438/2012 by Mr Stoyanov, E-6882/2012 by Ms Childers, E-7035/2012 by Ms Romero López and E-007488/2012 by Ms Griesbeck ([1]).

Detention conditions come under the competence of Member States who are bound by the existing international Council of Europe standards on the matter. In May 2011, the Commission published a Green Paper on the application of EU criminal Justice legislation in the field of detention ([2]). A summary of the replies has been published on the Commission's website ([3]).

Based on the outcome of the Green Paper, the Commission intends to focus on the proper implementation of the existing EU legislation in the field of detention ([4]) before developing any new legislative proposals and intends to publish implementation reports on the three Framework Decisions by mid-2013. The Commission considers that the correct implementation of the existing EU legislation will have a positive effect on overcrowding and on pre-trial detention as those instruments promote alternatives to detention.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Green Paper Strengthening mutual trust in the European judicial area — A Green Paper on the application of EU criminal justice legislation in the field of detention, COM/2011/0327 final.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm
([4]) The framework Decision 2008/909/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union, OJ 5.12.2008, L 327/27, the framework Decision 2008/947/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments and probation decisions with a view to the supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions, OJ 16.12.2008, L 337/102, and the framework Decision 2009/829/JHA of 23 October 2009 on the application, between Member States of the European Union, of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions on supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention, OJ 11.11.2009, L 294/20.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009608/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Ecolabelling and paint strippers

Many EU consumers are keen to know whether the products they are purchasing are environmentally friendly, and the EU Ecolabel is a useful tool in aiding customer choice. More than 17 000 products already carry this mark on their labelling.

Under Regulation (EC) No 66/2010, ecolabelling criteria have been developed for a number of product fields, including all-purpose cleaners and 'do-it-yourself' products such as decorating paint and varnishes.

What steps, if any, has the Commission (or the European Union Ecolabelling Board) taken towards developing criteria for an ecolabel for paint strippers and paint removal products?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

Developing Ecolabel criteria is a highly intensive process. It cannot be performed for all product groups at once. Each year, the European Union Ecolabelling Board (EUEB) carefully selects a number of new product groups for which Ecolabel criteria must be developed as a priority. This choice is based *inter alia* on the products' environmental impacts ranking, their market significance and their coverage through national Ecolabels.

Paint strippers and paint removal products are not currently on the list of products for which the Commission intends to develop EU Ecolabel criteria.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009609/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Jam and food hygiene regulations

The European Union rightly has food safety and hygiene legislation in place so that consumers can be confident that food is safe and of high quality.

The domestic preparation and re-use of jam jars by European citizens for gifts or to sell at fetes or other community events to raise money is a common occurrence. However, as a result of provisions in Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and following consultation with the UK's Food Standard Agency, the UK's Churches' Legislation Advisory Service appears to have suggested to its members that EU rules forbid the sale of jams, chutneys and suchlike in reused jam-jars.

Recital 9 of this regulation states that: 'Community rules should not apply either to primary production for private domestic use, or to the domestic preparation, handling or storage of food for private domestic consumption. Moreover, they should apply only to undertakings, the concept of which implies a certain continuity of activities and a certain degree of organisation'. However, concerns remain as to whether or not making jam and selling it at a charity event is 'the domestic preparation, handling or storage of food for private domestic consumption'.

Paragraph 3.8 of the 'Guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs' (SANCO/1731/2008 Rev.6), issued on 16 February 2009, states that 'the occasional handling, preparation, storage and serving of food by private persons at events such as church, school or village fairs are not covered by the scope of the regulation'. It further states that 'somebody who handles, prepares, stores or serves food occasionally and on a small scale (e.g. a church, school or village fair and other situations such as organised charities comprising individual volunteers where the food is prepared occasionally) cannot be considered as an "undertaking"'.

For clarity, can the Commission confirm that as long as sensible hygiene measures are followed, EU rules do not prevent citizens from selling jams, etc., in reused jars at local events to raise money for worthy causes?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

Union legislation on the hygiene of foodstuffs (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 ([1])) does not apply to primary production for private domestic use and to the domestic preparation, handling or storage of food for private domestic consumption. The regulation only applies to 'undertakings', the concept of which implies a certain continuity of activities.

In the Guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (SANCO/1731/2008 Rev. 6), the Commission indeed specified that 'the occasional handling, preparation, storage and serving of food by private persons at events such as church, school or village fairs are not covered by the scope of the regulation'. It also specifies that somebody who handles, prepares, stores or serves food occasionally, and on a small scale (e.g. a church, school or village fair and other situations such as charities comprising individual volunteers where the food is prepared occasionally) is not considered as an 'undertaking'.

Therefore, the Commission can confirm that, as long as the preparation, handling and selling of jams at local events to raise money for worthy causes is an occasional activity, it is not covered by Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. Rules governing such activities are established by Member States under national law.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, OJ L 139, 30.4.2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009610/12
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Solar panels and the People's Republic of China

In its investigation into alleged dumping by the People's Republic of China (PRC) of solar panels on the EU market, will the Commission take account of the extent of involvement of EU companies in the production of solar panels in the PRC?

In other words, will it recognise that some EU countries have seized the opportunity to source production in the PRC for legitimate competition reasons?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

As the Honourable Member is aware, the European Commission has initiated on 6 September 2012 an anti-dumping proceeding concerning imports of solar panels (i.e. crystalline silicon photovoltaic modules and key components) originating in the People's Republic of China. An anti-subsidy investigation on the same imports was also initiated on 8 November 2012. Both investigations are still at an early stage and no conclusion is yet available. The Honourable Member may be assured however that the specific aspect concerning parties who may have sourced production in the People's Republic of China will be investigated on the basis of verified information submitted by the relevant parties.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009611/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(22. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Investitionen in Flughafendrehkreuze und mögliche neue Standorte

Die Kommission hat den Mangel an Investitionen in Flughafendrehkreuze als ein Problem im EU-Luftverkehr identifiziert (s. MEMO/12/714 vom 27. September 2012). Bestehende Drehkreuze befinden sich zumeist in der Nähe von großen europäischen Städten. Die Kommission schlägt vor, neue Drehkreuze „zu entwickeln". Wenn Pläne für den Ausbau bestehender Flughäfen öffentlich werden, führt dies häufig zu Konflikten mit Anwohnern.

1. Sieht die Kommission für die Entwicklung neuer Drehkreuze vor allem den Ausbau bestehender Flughäfen vor oder erachtet sie es als notwendig, Drehkreuze an neuen Standorten aufzubauen?

2. Sollten bestehende Flughäfen erweitert werden, für welche Standorte ist dies nach Ansicht der Kommission besonders notwendig oder sinnvoll?

3. Falls die Kommission die Entwicklung neuer Drehkreuze fördern möchte, welche Regionen oder Standorte zieht sie dafür nach derzeitigem Stand in Betracht?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(10. Dezember 2012)

Die Kommission hat bereits mehrfach darauf hingewiesen, dass einige europäische Flughäfen vollständig ausgelastet sind oder sich ihrer Kapazitätsgrenze nähern. Die Nachfrage kann auf diesen Flughäfen nicht mehr befriedigt werden. Dies ist ein offensichtliches Problem für das europäische Luftverkehrssystem und der maßgebende Beweggrund für die von der Kommission vorgeschlagene neue Zeitnischenverordnung. Mit ihr soll sichergestellt werden, dass die bestehende Kapazität in bestmöglicher Weise genutzt wird. Die Kommission möchte den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Mitteilungen „Flughafenpolitik in der Europäischen Union — Kapazität und Qualität zur Förderung des Wachstums, guter Verkehrsverbindungen und einer nachhaltigen Mobilität" und „Die Luftfahrtaußenpolitik der EU — Bewältigung der künftigen Herausforderungen" hinweisen.

Die Rolle der Kommission besteht darin, die Mitgliedstaaten und die beteiligten Interessengruppen durch eine Bestandsaufnahme der Situation zu unterstützen. Beispielsweise wird Eurocontrol in Zusammenarbeit mit der Kommission bis Mitte 2013 den Bericht „Challenges to Growth" auf den neuesten Stand bringen, in dem die Situation in Europa u. a. bezüglich der Flughafenkapazität analysiert wird. Auf der Grundlage der sich daraus ergebenden Erkenntnisse könnte die Kommission die Mitgliedstaaten auffordern, nationale Strategien für die Flughafenkapazität auszuarbeiten und anzuwenden, bei denen alle Auswirkungen auf das Luftverkehrsnetz berücksichtigt werden, insbesondere auch die Notwendigkeit, den Erfolg des einheitlichen europäischen Luftraums zu gewährleisten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009611/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Investment in and possible new locations for hub airports

The Commission has identified the lack of investment in hub airports as a problem affecting air transport in the EU (see MEMO/12/714 of 27 September 2012). Most of the existing hubs are located in the vicinity of major European cities, and the Commission is now proposing that new hubs should be 'developed'. The publication of plans for the expansion of existing airports often leads to disputes with local residents.

1. Does the Commission regard the expansion of existing airports as the best way to develop new hubs, or does it see a need to develop hub airports in new locations?

2. If existing airports were to be expanded, in which locations would this be necessary or make most sense?

3. Should the Commission decide to support the development of new hub airports, as things stand which regions or locations would it consider?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The Commission has highlighted in several instances that some European airports are saturated or on the way to become saturated; not all demand at those airports can any longer be met. Obviously, this is a problem for the European aviation system and the main reason underlying the Commission proposal for a new Slots Regulation. Its objective is to ensure that existing capacity is used in the best possible way. The Commission would like to draw to the attention of the Honourable Member its communications on 'EU Airport policy in the European Union — addressing capacity and quality to promote growth, connectivity and sustainable mobility' ([1]) and 'The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challenges' ([2]).

The role of the Commission is to assist Member States and stakeholders by taking stock of the situation. For instance, Eurocontrol, in conjunction with the Commission, will finalise by mid-2013 an update of the 'Challenges to Growth' report that analyses the situation in Europe regarding, among others airport capacity. Based on the results, the Commission could ask Member States to develop and provide national strategies on airport capacity, taking into account all network implications and in particular the need to ensure the success of the SES.

([1]) COM(2011) 823 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 556 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009612/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: VAT on e-books

How is the Commission responding to Parliament's resolution of 17 November 2011 on the modernisation of VAT legislation in order to boost the single market, in particular as regards the requirement, under current EC law, that e-books be subject to a standard VAT rate of no less than 15%, and to the proposals set out in Parliament's resolution on this particular issue?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

In its communication adopted on 6 December 2011 ([1]), the Commission has suggested means for a way forward to achieve a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system adapted to the single market. In the guiding principles for a review of the VAT rates, the Commission recognised that the challenge of the convergence between the online and physical environments needs to be addressed. Therefore, the Commission launched an assessment of the current VAT rates structure. At this stage in the process, the Commission is unable to say of what exactly its future proposals will consist.

For additional information regarding the VAT treatment of e-books, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006299/2012 by Ms Mairead McGuinness ([2]).

The Commission is taking all measures in its power to ensure the smooth entry into force of the new rules on the taxation of electronic services at the place of the customer on 1 January 2015. These rules were adopted in 2008 as part of the VAT Package ([3]). Given that the date for this shift in taxation was only agreed by the Council as part of an overall compromise, and considering the time needed for businesses and tax administrations to prepare for this change, an earlier entry into force would not be feasible.

([1]) COM(2011) 851 final — Communication on the future of VAT Towards a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system tailored to the single market.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) Council Directive 2008/8/EC of 12 February 2008 amending Direction 2006/112/EC as regards the place of supply of services.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009613/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Calypso cross-border social tourism programme in Ireland

Could the Commission outline how Ireland has participated in the Calypso programme, which promotes cross-border social tourism, since its inception in 2009, and indicate how a member of the public in Ireland could avail of the opportunities presented by this programme, and how it intends to ensure the continued co-funding of Calypso-related initiatives?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(29 November 2012)

Ireland was one of 21 EU countries to participate in an initial Study carried out within the context of the Calypso preparatory action in 2010, to develop a common understanding on social tourism, and identify best practices at national level. No public or private sector stakeholders from Ireland appear to have participated in the transnational consortia applying for project co-financing either as a partner or lead project coordinator in the three calls for proposals published under the Calypso initiative to date (in 2010, 2011 and 2012). Therefore, the opportunities for a member of the public in Ireland to participate in the Calypso initiative are currently limited. However, the Commission is developing a new initiative to encourage senior citizens to travel in Europe's off-season which public or private partners in Ireland will have an opportunity to join. In the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) 2013, a new call for proposals on 'Facilitating transnational low season tourism' is planned and it will probably be published during the second quarter of 2013, depending on the approval of the provisional budget by the European Parliament and the Council.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009614/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: EU financial support for returning to education

I have received correspondence on behalf of an Irish citizen who is interested in returning to education to upskill and enhance his employment prospects.

Could the Commission indicate what, if any, EU funding programmes would be of interest to my constituent with a view to assisting him either directly or indirectly to this end through Irish-operated programmes?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

Within the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Leonardo da Vinci programme and its mobility action provide opportunities for the re-skilling and up-skilling of people on the labour market. For those seeking to return to work, the Grundtvig programme supports various adult education initiatives, including second-chance programmes to update skills and obtain qualifications. Both these actions are managed by the National Agency in Ireland that can give advice on how to get involved with a project. Only mobility opportunities are aimed directly at individual citizens. The Agency's contact details are as follows:

Léargas the Exchange Bureau
Fitzwilliam Court, Leeson Close, Dublin 2
IE- Dublin 1
Tel: (353) 1 8731411
Fax: (353) 1 8731316
E-mail: lifelonglearning@leargas.ie
Website: http://www.llp.ie

In addition, European Social Fund (ESF) provides Member States with opportunities to address the low-skilled and help them increase their competences for employability. ESF-funded programmes are designed to help prevent and fight unemployment and to prevent people from losing touch with the labour market. How these funds are utilised on the ground is a decision taken by the individual Member States.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009615/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: EU action plan on combating violence against women, domestic violence and female genital mutilation

What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's commitment to present, by the end of 2012, a communication on a strategy to combat violence against women, domestic violence and female genital mutilation, to be followed up by an EU action plan, as specified in its 2010 communication entitled 'Delivering an area of freedom, security and justice for Europe's citizens — Action Plan Implementing the Stockholm Programme' (COM(2010)0171)?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

The Commission is committed to a strong policy response to combat all forms of violence against women, as seen in the Stockholm Programme and the strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) ([1]). The Commission works for the empowerment of women, awareness raising, the promotion of exchanges of good practices, the improvement of data collection, and financial support for transnational projects through the Daphne III programme.

The Commission is also taking criminal justice measures, including legislation on human trafficking ([2]), sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children ([3]) and the rights of victims of crime. The Victims' Package includes a proposal for a directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime which was adopted on 25 October 2012. It reinforces the rights to respect and recognition, to provide and receive information, and to protection. It ensures that needs of victims are individually assessed and that the most vulnerable including victims of gender-based violence receive treatment appropriate to their requirements ([4]). The Package also includes a proposal for a regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters, which complements the European Protection Order (applied in criminal matters) in order to ensure that protection measures issued in one Member State can be recognised in another, to avoid victims losing their protection if they move or travel. The Commission looks forward to seeing these measures adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission intends to continue developing effective and consistent initiatives to support Member States in eradicating violence against women, making full use of EU competences.

([1]) COM(2010) 491 final, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF.
([2]) Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1-11.
([3]) Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA, OJ L 335, 17.12.2011, p. 1-14.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/criminal/victims/docs/com_2011_275_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009616/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Irregular migrants and healthcare

Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union authorises the Union to complement Member States' health policies.

How has the Commission responded to Parliament's resolution of 8 March 2011 on reducing health inequalities in the EU, and most notably to paragraph 5 thereof, which called on the Member States 'to ensure that the most vulnerable groups, including undocumented migrants, are entitled to and are provided with equitable access to healthcare' and 'to assess the feasibility of supporting healthcare for irregular migrants by providing a definition based on common principles for basic elements of healthcare as defined in their national legislation'?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

Member States are responsible for the management of health services and medical care. Access to healthcare must respect the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, notably Articles 35, 21(1) and 24.

Existing Union law ([1]) obliges Member States to provide emergency healthcare and essential treatment of illness to irregular migrants who are subject of return procedures. However access to health services of other irregular migrants is not harmonised at EU level.

Commission policy to support Member States to reduce health inequalities is set out in the communication Solidarity in Health of October 2009 ([2]). This includes the financing of specific projects addressing healthcare access for illegal migrants such as 'Health Care in NowHereland' ([3]) and 'AVERROES- HUMA' ([4]).

([1]) Directive 2008/115/EC.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/socio_economics/documents/com2009_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.nowhereland.info/.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/news/2012/8/news_20120907_avveroes__en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009617/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Treatment of non-Maltese citizens by Maltese authorities

Further to its answer of 23 August 2011 to Question E-005535/2011, what is the current situation with regard to the Commission's contacts with the Maltese authorities on the issue of possible discrimination on the grounds of nationality by Maltese authorities in relation to the issues set out in that question?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(7 December 2012)

As regards the alleged discrimination concerning rebates for water and electricity tariffs in Malta, the European Commission decided on 27 September 2012 to send a letter of formal notice to Malta for incorrect application of the Free Movement Directive ([1]) and the Services Directive ([2]).

The European Commission is awaiting the reply of the Maltese authorities.

As regards the issue of licensing fees for tourism accommodation, the Commission has been in contact with the Maltese authorities to investigate this issue and it has requested to be informed of a forthcoming reform of the system.

Moreover, the Commission has received no complaints from Union citizens regarding the distribution of the European Health Insurance Card in Malta, but has been in contact with Malta in order to investigate the situation. Based on the information provided by the Maltese authorities, the Commission has no reason to believe that nationals from other EU-countries are treated less favourably than Maltese nationals because of their nationality. On the contrary, all applications for a European Health Insurance Card are assessed according to the same criteria when determining the applicable period of validity.

([1]) Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, OJ L 158 of 30 April 2004, p. 77.

([2]) Directive 123/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market, OJ L 376 of 27 December 2006, p. 36.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009618/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Manning of passenger and ferry services operating between Member States

Further to its answer of 18 April 2011 to Written Question E-002674/2011 on the manning of passenger and ferry services operating between Member States, what action has the Commission taken, or is it planning to take, on foot of the report and recommendations of the Task Force on Maritime Employment and Competitiveness mentioned in that answer?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

The report of the Task Force on Maritime Employment and Competitiveness was eventually issued in July 2011 ([1]). Section 3.1.1. of the report entitled 'manning requirements for regular services' deals with a former Commission proposal (the 'manning proposal') looked at the possibility to introduce specific requirements for intra-EU ferry services. In this respect, the report states that reviving that proposal 'would hardly be successful and probably generate emotional opposition, be harmful to the dialogue between social partners as well as to the overall political climate'. The Task Force therefore recommended that the Commission should 'not move forward with a new proposal of this kind for the time being'. The Commission currently intends to follow this recommendation.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/maritime/seafarers/doc/2011-06-09-tfmec.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009619/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Missing children hotline

1. Further to its answer of 29 June 2012 to my Written Question E-005362/2012, what was the response of the Irish authorities to the letter sent by the Commission to Ireland and the nine other Member States where the hotline was still not operational as of June 2012, as outlined in that answer?

2. What is the Commission's current position with regard to coming forward with a legislative proposal for a regulation on EU hotlines for missing children, as announced in its Green Paper of 20 April 2010 (COM(2010)0171)?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

On 22 May 2012, the Commission sent a letter to 10 Member States which at that time did not have a functioning hotline for missing children ([1]), reminding them of their obligations and requesting that they provide the Commission with all information on measures taken to fulfil them.

To date, responses were received from Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Latvia, Luxembourg and Sweden revealing various stages of progress. Irish authorities have not yet replied to the letter. Some Member States were close to implementation. Other Member States cited difficulties, in particular lack of interest of potential operators to respond to the call for proposals to make the hotline operational or the fact that the service provider failed to make the hotline operational and the number had to be reassigned.

Since May 2012, three Member States have implemented the hotline ([2]). The hotline is still not available in seven Member States ([3]) , but the Commission has been informed unofficially that final stages in the implementation are forthcoming in at least two other Member States by the end of 2012. The Commission will consider launching infringement proceedings against those Member States that do not make efforts to ensure access to this service.

([1]) Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Cyprus, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden.
([2]) Austria, Cyprus, Luxembourg.
([3]) Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania.Sweden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009620/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Revision of the Insolvency Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1346/2000)

According to its Recital 4, one of the purposes of the Insolvency Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1346/2000) is to avoid incentives for parties to transfer assets or judicial proceedings from one Member State to another in order to obtain a more favourable legal position ('forum shopping').

How is the Commission responding to Parliament's resolution of 15 November 2011 on insolvency proceedings in the context of EU company law ([1]), most notably to recital B thereof, which calls for steps to be 'taken to prevent abuse, and any spread, of the phenomenon of forum shopping […]', and to the annexed recommendations, most notably Recommendation 2.2, which calls for a revised Insolvency Regulation to include a formal definition of the term 'centre of main interest' formulated in such as way as to prevent fraudulent forum shopping?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

As the Honourable Member pointed out, one of the objectives of Regulation (EC) No 1346/2000 is to avoid abusive forum shopping in cross-border insolvencies.

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that the concept of Centre of Main Interests of the Debtor — so-called 'COMI' — is of paramount importance for the application of the regulation, especially the determination of jurisdiction to open insolvency proceedings. The evaluation carried out by the Commission in 2012 shows that there is general support of the concept of COMI as interpreted by the CJEU.

The Commission has recently presented a full set of measures to modernise EU insolvency law as follows: A Commission Communication defines the new European approach to business failure and insolvency; a Commission Report contains the results of evaluation regarding the Insolvency Regulation; furthermore taking into account all the issues raised in the Parliament's resolution of 15 November 2011 and after having carried out a thorough impact assessment, the Commission proposes the necessary amendments to the regulation on insolvency proceedings. Amongst the proposed measures in the regulation to tackle more efficiently the issue of forum shopping the Commission suggests new provisions which clarify the jurisdiction rules and improve the procedural framework for determining jurisdiction.

([1]) P7_TA(2011)0484.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009621/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Musculoskeletal disorders

How is the Commission responding to Parliament's resolution of 15 December 2011 on health and safety at work, most notably paragraph 29, which called on the EU and the Member States to develop a European programme for the monitoring of occupational hazards such as musculoskeletal problems, and paragraph 94, which emphasised Parliament's wish to see future EU legislative proposals on musculoskeletal disorders cover all workers?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(17 December 2012)

The Commission shares Parliament's view of the need for a common system for monitoring occupational hazards.

Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC ([1]) sets out a list of occupational diseases, including 11 musculoskeletal conditions directly linked to occupation, and invites the Member States to introduce it into their national provisions on recognition and compensation, to ensure that all cases of occupational diseases are reported, and to make their statistics of occupational diseases compatible with the European schedule.

A Commission-funded report has recently been finalised on the situation relating to occupational diseases system in the EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries ([2]). According to information from national authorities, it provides an overview of the state of play in the implementation of Recommendation 2003/670/EC. The conclusions also cover other potential initiatives in this area and identify a number of options for consideration in connection with an EU strategy on health and safety at work for the post-2012 period.

As regards future initiatives on work-related musculoskeletal disorders, the Commission is assessing whether the existing legislation is sufficient to address the key challenges or whether additional action is required to cover a wider range of risk factors and work situations and step up preventive measures in the field of ergonomics. It is currently considering various regulatory and non-regulatory options for reducing the prevalence of such disorders.

([1]) Commission Recommendation 2003/670/EC of 19 September 2003 concerning the European schedule of occupational diseases, OJ L 238, 25.9.2003, p. 28.

([2]) Report on the current situation in relation to occupational diseases' system in EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries, European Commission, EMPL 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009622/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Incentive measures to favour the mobility of disabled drivers

Further to the Commission's answer of 11 July 2012 to my Written Question E-005358/2012 on incentive measures to favour the mobility of disabled drivers, which Member States, if any, have, to its knowledge, applied reduced rates of energy taxation for energy products used by disabled drivers, as outlined in that answer?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

The Commission does not hold any information about the possible application by Member States of reduced rates of energy taxation for energy products used by disabled people, in application of Article 5 of Directive 2003/96/EC ([1]).

([1]) OJ L 283, 31.10.2003.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009623/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Gender identity

Further to its answer of 29 April 2011 to Written Question E-002442/2011 on Commission support to promote equality for transgender people, what action is the Commission now considering on foot of the study on 'Discrimination against trans and intersex people on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression', published in June 2012?

How does it intend to respond to Parliament's resolution of 24 May 2012 on the fight against homophobia in Europe, most notably: paragraph 2, which calls on the Commission to review the framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia with a view to strengthening and enlarging its scope to include hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; paragraph 5, which calls on the Commission (and the Member States) to implement the opinion contained in the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report 'Homophobia, transphobia and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity', to the greatest extent possible; and paragraph 8, which reiterates Parliament's request that the Commission produce a comprehensive roadmap for equality without discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The Commission is committed to combat homophobia and discrimination based on sexual orientation to the full extent of the powers conferred on it by the Treaties. The prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation constitutes an important principle enshrined in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and discrimination based on sexual orientation in the area of employment is explicitly prohibited though Council Directive 2000/78/EC. The Commission also finances projects related to this area ([1]).

While the framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia does not cover the incitement to violence or hatred directed against the LGBT community, the Commission attaches great importance to this issue and therefore asked the EU Fundamental Rights Agency to conduct a survey covering this matter.

The Commission uses the results of the study 'Discrimination against trans and intersex people on the grounds of sex, gender identity and gender expression', to raise awareness in Member States and to encourage the exchange of national best practices.

The Commission's current priority is to ensure that the above instruments are effectively implemented and the progress in this respect are regularly reported through the Annual Report on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

([1]) E.g. Through the Progress programme and the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship programme.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009624/12
to the Council
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Proposal for a directive on improving the portability of supplementary pension rights

What is the current situation with regard to the Council's consideration of the proposal for a directive on improving the portability of supplementary pension rights (COM(2005)0507) and of the subsequent amended proposal (COM(2007)0603)?

Reply
(10 December 2012)

The Council's preparatory bodies resumed their discussions on the amended proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights ([1]) on 5 November 2012 on the basis of a note prepared by the Cyprus Presidency ([2]). Following planned further discussions, the Presidency intends to present the state of play of the work on this proposal to the Council on 6 December 2012.

([1]) 13857/07 REV 1 + COR 1 + REV 1 COR 1.
([2]) 14883/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009625/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Daphne programme

How has the Commission responded, or how is it responding, to Parliament's resolution of 2 February 2012 on the Daphne programme, most notably: paragraph 6, which urged it, *inter alia*, to ease the administrative burden, simplify grant application procedures and shorten the time between the publication of calls for projects and the conclusion of contracts; paragraph 10, which called on it to channel more EU funding towards projects aimed at alerting the young in particular to new forms of violence linked to the growing use of online social networks; and paragraph 14, which urged it to allow the funding of national projects involving small non-profit organisations?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The revision of the Financial Regulation, applicable as from 1st January 2013, is part of the Commission commitment to simplify and improve EU spending. The main benefits from this revision concern simplified cost forms of grants and lighter eligibility requirements and verification In addition, Commission services will have to conclude grant agreements at the latest 9 months after the deadline of the call for proposals. This was already respected during the last call under the DAPHNE III Programme, during which the Commission has been faced with almost three times more projects than for the previous one.

Under the 2013 Annual work programme, the Commission will support projects that empower children, young people and women to use media in a safe way bringing attitudinal and behavioural changes with regard to the potentially harmful impact of gender stereotyping and sexualisation. Furthermore, since 2008, the European Commission is implementing a multi-annual Union programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies (Safer Internet).

Under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, in particular for the Rights and Citizenship Programme, the Commission has proposed to avoid limitation to transnational projects. Promoting transnational projects, by encouraging broad European partnership as currently done in DAPHNE III, gives an opportunity to small non-profit organisations to participate as active partners, to gain experience and to ensure dissemination of their activities in the EU. National projects can be proposed but would have to also demonstrate that they present an EU added value, a key principle governing Commission proposals for 2014-2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009626/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Costs and benefits of Natura 2000 network

In its MEMO/12/159 of 7 March 2012, the Commission stated that the benefits related to the implementation of the Natura 2000 network in France were estimated to be seven times higher than the costs, which were calculated at EUR 142 per hectare per year.

What is the source of this statement, and does the Commission have similar estimates of the costs and benefits of implementing the Natura 2000 network in other Member States, including Ireland?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

In the context of preparing a staff working paper on financing Natura 2000 ([1]) the Commission carried out an assessment of the total investment costs needed for managing the Natura 2000 network in the EU. Based on data supplied by the Member States this assessment estimated the total cost of the network in the EU-27 to be at least 5.8 billion EUR per year. Averaged over the terrestrial land area of the network, the total investment needs amount to 63 EUR per hectare per year. On the basis of data provided by Ireland the average cost of management of the terrestrial part of the Natura 2000 network in Ireland is estimated to be approximately 151 EUR per hectare per year.

The Commission has not carried out detailed financial assessments of the benefits provided by the network in the individual Member States. However, a recent Commission study on the overall economic value of the Natura 2000 network ([2]) estimated the total value of the benefits provided by the network to be in the range of 200-300 billion EUR per year, in the whole EU. This is based on an evaluation of some ecosystem services provided by Natura 2000 such as carbon storage and sequestration, water quality and quantity, flood management, as well as tourism and recreational values. The study confirms that the benefits provided by the network are many times greater than the costs of its effective management.

([1]) SEC(2011) 1573 final http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing_natura2000.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/Economic_Benefits_of_Natura_2000_report.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009627/12
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Health services in cross-border areas

Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, what action has the Commission taken, or is it planning to take, on foot of Article 168(2), especially the clause authorising the Union to '…in particular encourage cooperation between the Member States to improve the complementarity of their health services in cross-border area'?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

Directive 2011/24/EU ([1]) on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, due to be transposed by 25 October 2013, provides in Article 10(3) that the Commission shall encourage Member States, particularly neighbouring countries, to conclude agreements among themselves. It shall also encourage Member States to cooperate in cross-border healthcare provision in border regions.

This directive foresees the creation of national contact points in each Member State whose work will range from the exchange of information on quality and safety systems to clarifying invoices from other health systems. These contact points should closely cooperate with each other and the Commission. The directive also introduces structured cooperation between health systems in several areas, including the setting up of two networks on eHealth and health technology assessment respectively, and the support of the European Reference Networks.

The Commission supports various projects on health in cross-border areas: The Health Programme funds the creation of a pilot network that will investigate hospitals receiving foreign patients (with one third of hospitals being in cross-border regions) and will assess administrative issues related to payment of costs for cross-border patients. EU Structural Funds support cross-border healthcare projects as part of the European Territorial Cooperation objective. Examples are a joint cross-border hospital in Cerdanya (Spain) that offers health services to the Cerdanya and Capcir (France) border region as well as the pooling of healthcare resources between the Belgian and French border region in the areas of cross-border emergency services and cooperation on oncological and urological care.

([1]) OJ L 88, 04.04.2011.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009628/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(22. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Die Bankenunion als mögliche Gefahr für eine Krise des europäischen Binnenmarktes

Die „Bankenunion“ ist als Damoklesschwert über dem europäischen Binnenmarkt zu sehen.

1. Wie schätzt die Kommission die Folgen für den europäischen Binnenmarkt ein, vor allem dann in weiterer Folge für den ohnehin durch die Krise angeschlagenen Finanzmarkt Europas?

2. Wie sieht hierzu eine mögliche längerfristige Strategie der Kommission aus?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(6. Dezember 2012)

1. Nach Auffassung der Kommission wird sich die Bankenunion positiv auf den Binnenmarkt auswirken, denn mit ihr kann das Vertrauen in den Bankensektor als Ganzen wiederhergestellt und die finanzielle Stabilität in der Europäischen Union gesichert werden.

So ist die Kommission nicht der Meinung, dass die Errichtung eines einheitlichen Aufsichtsmechanismus im Euroraum unter der Zuständigkeit der EZB dem Binnenmarkt schaden wird. Der Binnenmarkt für Finanzdienstleistungen beruht auf gemeinsamen Regeln, die gewährleisten, dass für die Banken in der EU gleichwertige Vorschriften gelten und sie einer ordnungsgemäßen Aufsicht unterstehen. Die EZB wird im Einklang mit diesem einheitlichen Regelwerk tätig werden, das für alle Mitgliedstaaten gilt.

Darüber hinaus wird die Europäische Bankenaufsichtsbehörde weiterhin dafür sorgen, dass die Aufsichtsmethoden in der gesamten Union miteinander in Einklang stehen.

2. Die Bankenunion ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil einer längerfristigen Vision für die wirtschafts- und fiskalpolitische Integration. Die Einrichtung eines europäischen Aufsichtsmechanismus für Banken ist der erste Schritt in diesem Prozess, der anschließend mit anderen Schritten kombiniert werden wird. Dazu gehören ein gemeinsames System für den Umgang mit Bankenkrisen und die Abwicklung von Banken und ein harmonisiertes System für die Einlagensicherung. Dadurch wird ein integrierter Finanzrahmen geschaffen, der einer der Bausteine einer echten Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion ist.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009628/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Banking Union: might it trigger a crisis in the European Internal Market?

The 'Banking Union' may be regarded as a sword of Damocles hanging over the European internal market.

1. In the Commission's view, what consequences will it have for the European internal market, and particularly further down the line for the European financial market, which is already in difficulties owing to the crisis?

2. What form might a longer-term Commission strategy in this area take?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

1. The Commission believes that the Banking Union will be beneficial for the single market since it will restore confidence in the banking sector as a whole and will help ensuring financial stability in the European Union.

In particular, the Commission doesn't think that the establishment of a single supervisory mechanism in the Euro area under the responsibility of the ECB will undermine the integrity of the single market. The single market for financial services is based on common rules which ensure that banks are subject to equivalent rules and proper supervision across the EU. The ECB will act in accordance with this single rulebook applicable to all Member States.

In addition, the European Banking Authority will continue to ensure consistency of supervisory practices across the whole Union.

2. The Banking Union is an important part of a longer term vision for economic and fiscal integration. The creation of a European supervisory mechanism for banks is the first step of this process, which will subsequently be combined with other steps such as a common system for bank crisis management and resolution and harmonised deposit guarantee mechanisms system for deposit protection. This will put in place an integrated financial framework which is one of the building blocks of a genuine Economic and Monetary Union.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009629/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 octombrie 2012)

Subiect: Derogare de la interzicerea din 2013 a introducerii pe piață a produselor cosmetice testate pe animale

Mai multe organizații de protecție a animalelor și-au exprimat îngrijorarea cu privire la posibila intenție a Comisiei de a acorda o derogare de ultimă oră de la interzicerea din 2013 a introducerii pe piață a produselor cosmetice testate pe animale. Intenționează Comisia să acorde o astfel de derogare?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(11 decembrie 2012)

Comisia îl invită pe distinsul membru să consulte răspunsurile la întrebările anterioare referitoare la acest subiect, în special E-005922/2012 ([1]) și, mai recent, E-007793/2012[1]. Comisia nu a luat încă o decizie definitivă cu privire la întrebarea dacă să facă sau nu o propunere în legătură cu interdicția de comercializare prevăzută pentru 2013 din legislația privind produsele cosmetice.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009629/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Derogation to the 2013 marketing ban on animal-tested cosmetics

Several animal welfare organisations expressed their concerns about the possibility that the Commission's intends to permit a late derogation to the 2013 marketing ban on animal-tested cosmetics. Is the Commission planning to permit such a derogation?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to earlier answers to questions in relation to this issue, notably E-005922/2012 ([1]) and most recently E-007793/2012 ([1]). The Commission has not yet taken a final decision on the question of whether or not to make a proposal in relation to the 2013 marketing ban in the Cosmetics legislation.

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009631/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 octobre 2012)

Objet: Condamnation de compagnies aériennes pour clauses abusives

Une compagnie aérienne espagnole a été condamnée récemment pour une série de pratiques et de clauses abusives comme: possibilité d'augmenter le prix du billet après la réservation, refus de remboursement en cas de force majeure, absence d'indemnisation en cas d'annulation pour problèmes techniques, etc.

D'autres compagnies aériennes ont été condamnées depuis 2 ans, notamment en France et en Belgique, pour de nombreuses clauses abusives dans les contrats.

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir quelles mesures supplémentaires elle compte prendre pour faire cesser ces pratiques préjudiciables aux consommateurs, souvent peu ou mal informés de leurs droits et de leurs moyens de défense?

Réponse donnée par Mme Viviane Reding au nom de la Commission
(21 décembre 2012)

Il existe déjà une législation de l'Union qui protège les consommateurs des pratiques déloyales ([1]) des professionnels malhonnêtes, y compris dans le secteur aérien, notamment la directive sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales et la directive sur les clauses contractuelles abusives ([2]).

En outre, le règlement (CE) nº 1008/2008 ([3]) pose le principe de la liberté de tarification pour les tarifs des passagers et impose aux compagnies aériennes de communiquer le prix définitif à payer de façon claire, transparente et non équivoque au début de toute procédure de réservation et tout au long de celle-ci.

Cependant, c'est avant tout aux autorités et juridictions nationales qu'il appartient d'enquêter sur les pratiques d'entreprises spécifiques exerçant une activité sur leur territoire.

En ce qui concerne les professionnels malhonnêtes qui exercent des activités transfrontières, le règlement (CE) nº 2006/2004 ([4]) a créé un réseau d'application de la législation, à l'échelle de l'Union (le «réseau CPC»), et défini un cadre et des conditions permettant à ce dernier de détecter les pratiques déloyales transfrontières, d'enquêter sur ces dernières et de les faire cesser. Le réseau CPC entend intensifier les efforts déployés pour lutter contre les pratiques indélicates des acteurs paneuropéens, grâce à une action davantage concertée, de façon à maximaliser l'impact des mesures de contrôle.

La Commission présentera, au début de l'année 2013, un rapport sur l'application de la directive 2005/29/CE qui décrira les grandes priorités d'action. Elle réalise en outre actuellement un bilan de qualité («fitness check») dans le cadre duquel elle examine la transparence des prix et la bonne application des dispositions. La publication du bilan est prévue pour 2013.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/CE relative aux pratiques commerciales déloyales, JO L 149 du 11.6.2005.
([2]) Directive 93/13/CEE concernant les clauses abusives dans les contrats conclus avec les consommateurs, JO L 095 du 21.4.1993.
([3]) Règlement (CE) n° 108/2008 établissant des règles communes pour l'exploitation de services aériens dans la Communauté.
([4]) Règlement (CE) n° 2006/2004 relatif à la coopération en matière de protection des consommateurs, JO L 364 du 9.12.2004, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009631/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Airlines found guilty of unfair practices

A Spanish airline has recently been found guilty of a series of unfair practices and contract terms such as making it possible for the price of a ticket to be increased after reservation; refusal to reimburse in the event of *force majeure*; lack of compensation in the event of cancellation due to technical problems, etc.

Other airlines have been found guilty over the past two years, particularly in France and Belgium, of including a range of unfair clauses in contracts.

Will the Commission state what additional measures it intends to take in order to put a stop to these practices, which are unfair to consumers, who are often poorly or not at all informed of their rights and ways to protect themselves?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

There is already Union legislation which protects consumers against unfair practices used by rogue traders, including in the airline sector, such as the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ([1]) and the Unfair Contract Terms Directive ([2]).

In addition, Regulation (EC) 1008/2008 ([3]) contains pricing freedom in setting air fares and prescribes that airlines shall communicate the final price to be paid in a clear, transparent and unambiguous way at the start of and throughout any booking process.

This being said, it is the primary competence of the national authorities and courts to investigate the practices of particular companies operating on their territories.

As concerns rogue traders operating cross-border, Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 ([4]) establishes an EU wide enforcement network (the 'CPC Network') and defines a framework and conditions enabling them to detect, investigate and stop cross-border unfair practices. The CPC Network intends to intensify efforts to tackle problematic practices of pan-European players through more concerted action so as to maximise impact of enforcement work.

The Commission will present a report on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC by early 2013 which will outline key priorities for action. The Commission is also working on a fitness check exercise that examines price transparency and the effectiveness of enforcement. Its publication is foreseen in 2013.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices, OJ L149 of 11.6.2005, p. 22.
([2]) Directive 93/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts, OJ L 95, 21.4.1993.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 108/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community.
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 on consumer protection cooperation, OJ L 364, 9.12.2004, p. 1.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009632/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 octobre 2012)

Objet: Contrôle des effets des oméga-3

Une étude très récente du «Journal of the American Medical Association» (JAMA) portant sur 70 000 patients ne trouve pas d'association entre la prise de ces acides gras et une «réduction de la mortalité, toutes causes confondues, de décès d'origine cardiaque, de mort subite, de décès après infarctus du myocarde ou accident vasculaire cérébral».

Or, un marché considérable s'est développé, évalué à plus de 10 milliards d'euros, à la suite de la médiatisation des soi-disant bienfaits liés à la consommation de ces compléments, et la mention «riche en oméga-3» figure notamment sur des margarines, boissons, petits pots pour bébés.

La Commission est invitée à répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. A-t-elle connaissance d'études similaires portant sur la réalité des effets prétendument positifs liés à la consommation d'oméga-3?

2. Quelles mesures entend-elle prendre, le cas échéant, pour informer les consommateurs sur le manque total de bienfaits liés à la consommation de ces compléments alimentaires?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(6 décembre 2012)

Les allégations nutritionnelles et les allégations de santé portant sur les denrées alimentaires sont régies par le règlement (CE) n° 1924/2006 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 20 décembre 2006. Selon ce règlement, les allégations en question doivent être justifiées par des preuves scientifiques généralement admises.

Dans le prolongement de l'avis scientifique de l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) adopté le 30 juin 2009 — avis dans lequel il est conclu que les acides gras oméga-3 jouent un rôle important dans le régime alimentaire —, la Commission a autorisé, par son règlement (UE) n° 116/2010, deux allégations nutritionnelles concernant spécifiquement ces nutriments: «source d'acide gras oméga-3» et «riche en acide gras oméga-3», dès lors qu'il est reconnu que la consommation de ceux-ci a un effet bénéfique.

En outre, l'EFSA autorise, sur la base d'une évaluation scientifique «répondant aux exigences les plus élevées», comme le prévoit le règlement (CE) n° 1924/2006, une allégation de santé concernant les acides gras oméga-3 qui contribuent à une «fonction cardiaque normale», à savoir l'acide docosahexaénoïque (DHA) et l'acide eicosapentaénoïque (EPA). L'avis scientifique correspondant peut être consulté sur le site internet de l'EFSA ([1]).

(1) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/fr/efsajournal/pub/1796.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009632/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Monitoring the effects of omega-3

A recent study by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) involving 70 000 patients found no association between taking omega-3 fatty acids and 'a lower risk of all-cause mortality, cardiac death, sudden death, myocardial infarction, or stroke'.

However, a huge market, with an estimated value of over EUR 10 billion, has grown up on the back of media reports of the so-called benefits of taking these supplements, and the phrase 'rich in omega-3' can be found in particular on margarine, drinks and jars of baby food.

1. Is the Commission aware of similar studies demonstrating the supposedly positive effects of consuming omega-3?

2. What action does the Commission intend to take to inform consumers of the complete absence of benefits associated with the consumption of these dietary supplements?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

Nutrition and health claims are regulated by Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods. According to this regulation, nutrition and health claims shall be based on and substantiated by generally accepted scientific evidence.

Following the scientific opinion of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) adopted on 30 June 2009 where it concluded that omega-3 fatty acids have an important role in the diet, the Commission authorised by Commission Regulation (EU) No 116/2010 two nutrition claims specifically related to omega-3 fatty acids, namely 'source of' and 'high in' given that it is recognised that their consumption has a beneficial nutritional effect.

Furthermore, a health claim for omega-3 fatty acids, namely docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) for the 'normal function of the heart', is authorised on the basis of a scientific assessment of the 'highest possible standard' as foreseen by the regulation on nutrition and health claims and conducted by EFSA. The relevant scientific opinion is publicly available on the website of EFSA ([1]).

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1796.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009633/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 octobre 2012)

Objet: Difficulté de résoudre les petits litiges transfrontaliers et de faire appliquer les procédures existantes

Une étude récente réalisée par le réseau des Centres européens des consommateurs, consacrée à la nouvelle procédure judiciaire européenne pour le règlement des petits litiges transfrontaliers, a mis en évidence de graves difficultés pour les consommateurs à faire valoir leurs droits, soit par manque d'information, soit à cause de la difficulté et du coût de la procédure.

Or, ladite procédure devait effectivement aider les consommateurs à résoudre leurs petits litiges rapidement, facilement et à moindre coût.

Apparemment, la situation réelle est tout à fait différente et la majorité des consommateurs renonce à entamer une procédure, d'autant plus qu'ils peinent à faire exécuter le jugement dans le pays où le commerçant est établi.

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir comment, et selon quel calendrier, elle entend résoudre ces problèmes qui ne cessent de prendre de l'ampleur à cause des ventes par internet, qui sont très souvent transfrontalières?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(24 janvier 2013)

Le règlement instituant une procédure européenne de règlement des petits litiges prévoit la reconnaissance et l'exécution dans un État membre des décisions juridictionnelles d'un autre État membre. Aux fins de son exécution, la décision est traitée comme si elle avait été rendue dans l'État membre d'exécution.

La Commission est consciente de la complexité des procédures d'exécution dans certains États membres. Afin de faciliter le recours aux procédures nationales d'exécution, la Commission a publié des informations au sujet de ces procédures sur le site du réseau judiciaire européen en matière civile et commerciale. Elle publiera, au printemps 2013, deux guides dans lesquels elle fournira de nouvelles lignes directrices sur la procédure européenne de règlement des petits litiges. L'un de ces guides sera destiné aux consommateurs qui ne possèdent pas de connaissances juridiques, et l'autre sera destiné aux praticiens du droit.

Par ailleurs, la directive relative au règlement extrajudiciaire des litiges (REL) et le règlement relatif au règlement en ligne des litiges (RLL) permettront aux consommateurs de saisir des organes extrajudiciaires de qualité afin d'obtenir un règlement rapide, aisé et peu coûteux de leurs litiges avec les opérateurs commerciaux. En particulier, la plateforme européenne de règlement en ligne des litiges sera dédiée à la résolution des litiges résultant exclusivement de transactions en ligne. L'Honorable Parlementaire peut être assuré que la Commission analysera en profondeur les problèmes liés à l'exécution des décisions juridictionnelles rendues dans le cadre de la procédure de règlement des petits litiges dans le rapport qu'elle présentera au Parlement européen et au Conseil en 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009633/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Problems with resolution of cross-border small claims disputes and application of the existing procedures

A recent study by the European Consumer Centre Network on the new European Small Claims Procedure has revealed that consumers are encountering severe difficulties in enforcing their rights, either through lack of information or owing to the complexity and cost of the procedure.

This procedure was intended to help consumers resolve their small-claims disputes quickly, easily and more cheaply.

Apparently the real situation is quite different and most consumers are not bothering to bring proceedings, particularly since they are finding it hard to have judgments enforced in the trader's country of establishment.

Can the Commission state how it plans to resolve these problems, which are becoming more and more widespread as a result of Internet sales, which are very often cross-border? What is its timetable for such action?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

The regulation establishing the European Small Claims Procedure provides for recognition and enforceability of the judgments made in one EU country in another one. For the purposes of enforcement the judgment is treated as if it would have been delivered in the Member State of enforcement.

The Commission is aware of the complexity of enforcement procedures in some Member States. To facilitate the use of national enforcement procedures, the Commission made information on these procedures publicly available through the website of the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters. The Commission will provide further guidance on the European Small Claims Procedure through two guides that will be published in spring 2013. One of the guides will be designed for consumers without legal background, and the other for legal practitioners.

Furthermore, the directive on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and the regulation on Online Dispute resolution (ODR) will enable consumers to address their disputes with traders to quality out-of-court entities and have them resolved in a fast, easy and inexpensive way. In particular, the pan-European ODR platform will deal with disputes stemming exclusively from online transactions. The Honourable member should be aware that the Commission will analyse in depth problems of enforcement of the judgments given in European Small Claims Procedure within the report that it will present to the European Parliament and to the Council in 2013.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-009634/12
a Tanács számára
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(2012. október 22.)

Tárgy: Az EURIPID program jövője

A 2010-ben indult ún. EURIPID program célja egy olyan webalapú gyógyszerár-adatbázis létrehozása és működtetése, amely elsősorban az uniós tagállamok gyógyszerárért és -támogatásért felelős hatóságainak nyújt naprakész információkat. A négy évre szóló program éves költségvetését 90%-ban az Európai Bizottság, 8,5%-ban a magyar és 1,5%-ban az osztrák hatóság finanszírozza. A programban jelenleg 18 uniós ország hatósága vesz részt.

Az EURIPID olyan eszköz, amely lehetővé teszi a referenciaárazás hatékony alkalmazását a részt vevő tagállamok számára, melynek lényege, hogy a gyógyszer csak akkor kerülhessen be a támogatási rendszerekbe, ha az ára nem haladja meg a bizonyos országokban (referencia országokban) alkalmazott árak átlagát. Az EURIPID ezáltal a gyógyszerárak alacsonyan tartásának egyik fontos eszköze, különösen az alacsonyabb költségvetéssel rendelkező tagállamokban.

Tekintettel arra, hogy a Bizottság nem kívánja a programot a jövőben tovább finanszírozni, milyen lépéseket kíván tenni a Tanács annak érdekében, hogy ösztönözze a programban részt vevő tagállamokat a kieső bizottsági hozzájárulás önkéntes átvállalására, illetve felosztására?

Válasz
(2012. december 10.)

A Tanács nem vitatta meg ezt a kérdést.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009634/12
to the Council
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Future of the Euripid project

The objective of the Euripid project, which was launched in 2010, is to establish and operate a web-based database for medicine prices which will, first and foremost, provide up-to-date information to the relevant authorities on the prices of and subsidies given to medicines. The four-year-programme is 90% financed by the European Commission, 8.5% by the Hungarian authorities and 1.5% by the Austrian authorities. The authorities of 18 Member States are currently involved in the project.

Euripid is a tool which enables the effective application of reference pricing to participating Member States. It operates on the principle that a medicine may only be included in the subsidy system if its price does not exceed the average of the prices applied in the reference countries. Euripid is thus one of the most important ways in which medicine prices are kept low, in particular in Member States with lower budgets.

Given that the Commission no longer intends to finance the project in the future, what action does the Council plan to take in order to encourage participating Member States voluntarily to take on, the Commission contribution, which is about to disappear, or to allocate this contribution?

Reply
(10 December 2012)

The Council has not discussed the issue.

(Magyar változat)

Írásbeli választ igénylő kérdés E-009635/12
a Bizottság számára
Bánki Erik (PPE)
(2012. október 22.)

Tárgy: Az EURIPID program jövője

A 2010-ben indult ún. EURIPID program célja egy olyan webalapú gyógyszerár-adatbázis létrehozása és működtetése, amely elsősorban az uniós tagállamok gyógyszerárért és -támogatásért felelős hatóságainak nyújt naprakész információkat. A négy évre szóló program éves költségvetését 90%-ban az Európai Bizottság, 8,5%-ban a magyar és 1,5%-ban az osztrák hatóság finanszírozza. A programban jelenleg 18 uniós ország hatósága vesz részt.

Az EURIPID olyan eszköz, amely lehetővé teszi a referenciaárazás hatékony alkalmazását a részt vevő tagállamok számára, melynek lényege, hogy a gyógyszer csak akkor kerülhessen be a támogatási rendszerekbe, ha az ára nem haladja meg a bizonyos országokban (referencia országokban) alkalmazott árak átlagát.

Tekintve, hogy az EURIPID program a gyógyszerárak alacsonyan tartásának egyik fontos eszköze – különösen az alacsonyabb költségvetéssel rendelkező tagállamokban –, tervezi-e a Bizottság a program finanszírozásának jövőbeni meghosszabbítását?

Antonio Tajani válasza a Bizottság nevében
(2012. december 10.)

A Bizottságnak 2013-ban továbbra is szándékában áll támogatni az Euripid adatbázist.

A Bizottság elismeri, hogy egyes tagállamoknak érdeke fűződhet ahhoz, hogy hozzáférjen a többi tagállamban alkalmazott gyógyszerárakhoz. Mindazonáltal egy gyógyszerár-adatbázis létrehozása, illetve működtetése nem tartozik az EU hatáskörébe (az Európai Unió működéséről szóló szerződés 168. cikke (7) bekezdése), mivel az a gyógyszerek árazására és egészségbiztosítási rendszerbe való belefoglalásukra vonatkozó határozatok tárgyát képezi. A tagállamok kizárólagos felelőssége, hogy az árazásra vonatkozó adatokat gyűjtsék, validálják, valamint alkalmazzák.

A Bizottság az európai gyógyszeripar versenyképességének, illetve a betegek gyógyszerekhez való hozzáférésének szélesebb összefüggésében jelenleg vizsgálja, hogy az Euripid milyen európai hozzáadott értékkel bír, elsősorban a rendszer költséghatékonyságának és a rendelkezésre bocsátott információk átláthatóságának és megbízhatóságának vonatkozásában. Egy ilyen európai gyógyszerár-adatbázis bármely további bizottsági támogatása csak abban az esetben elképzelhető, ha megbízható, validált, szabványosított és átlátható adatok állnak rendelkezésre, mellyel párhuzamosan az érdekelt felek világos célokat határoznak meg és különösen a tagállamok messzemenő támogatást biztosítanak.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009635/12
to the Commission
Erik Bánki (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Future of the Euripid project

The objective of the Euripid project, which was launched in 2010, is to establish and operate a web-based database for medicine prices which will, first and foremost, provide up-to-date information to the relevant authorities on the prices of and subsidies given to medicines. The four-year-programme is 90% financed by the European Commission, 8.5% by the Hungarian authorities and 1.5% by the Austrian authorities. The authorities of 18 Member States are currently involved in the project.

Euripid is a tool which enables the effective application of reference pricing to participating Member States. It operates on the principle that a medicine may only be included in the subsidy system if its price does not exceed the average of the prices applied in the reference countries.

Given that the Euripid project is an important means by which prices of medicines are kept low — particularly in Member States with lower budgets — does the Commission plan to extend financing of the project into the future?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

— The Commission plans to continue its support to the Euripid database in 2013.

— The Commission acknowledges that some Member States might have an interest in having access to prices of medicines in other Member States. However, setting up or maintaining a medicine price database falls outside the EU competences (Article 168(7) TFEU) since it touches upon the substance of the decisions regarding pricing of medicinal products and their inclusion in the scope of health insurance systems. The collection, validation and use of pricing data by Member States are under their sole responsibility.

— The Commission is currently assessing the European added value of Euripid, notably in terms of cost-effectiveness of the system as well as of transparency and reliability of the information provided, in the broader context of competitiveness of the European pharmaceutical industry and patients' access to medicinal products. Any further support of the Commission to such a European database of medicines prices would only be possible on the basis of robust, validated, standardised and transparent data, as well as clear-cut objectives shared by stakeholders and in particular a broad endorsement by Member States.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009636/12
adresată Comisiei
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 octombrie 2012)

Subiect: Acordarea contra cost a cetățeniei UE

Parlamentul bulgar a adoptat în luna octombrie un act normativ pentru încurajarea investițiilor, care prevede că un investitor străin poate obține cetățenia bulgară dacă face o donație de 200 000 de leva (circa 100 000 de euro) către fondul național pentru inovații. Comisia este rugată să se pronunțe asupra acestei prevederi care poate fi interpretată ca o tranzacționare a cetățeniei europene.

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(6 decembrie 2012)

Condițiile de dobândire și de pierdere a cetățeniei unui stat membru sunt reglementate exclusiv de legislația națională a fiecărui stat membru. Aspectele care decurg din definirea de către un stat membru a condițiilor de dobândire a cetățeniei sale nu intră în domeniul de aplicare al dreptului Uniunii Europene și Comisia nu are nicio competență în ceea ce privește măsurile naționale menționate de distinsul deputat în Parlamentul European.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009636/12
to the Commission
Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Granting EU citizenship in exchange for payment

In October, the Bulgarian Parliament adopted a law encouraging investment, whereby foreign investors may obtain Bulgarian citizenship if they make a donation of 200 000 leva (around EUR 100 000) to the national innovation fund. Will the Commission give its views on this provision, which could be interpreted as making European citizenship available for purchase?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 December 2012)

The conditions for obtaining and forfeiting citizenship of a Member State are regulated exclusively under the national laws of the individual Member State. Issues ensuing from the definition by a Member State of the conditions for the acquisition of its nationality do not fall within the ambit of European Union law, and the Commission has no competence regarding the national measures referred to by the Honourable Member.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009637/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(22 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ανισότητες στο κόστος συναλλαγών στην ΕΕ. Η περίπτωση της Ελλάδας

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατη έκθεση ([1]) της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας (ΕΚΤ) για το ιδιωτικό και κοινωνικός κόστος που συνεπάγονται τα μέσα πληρωμών, διαπιστώνεται το περιορισμένο εύρος δεδομένων για τη δυνατότητα συγκριτικών μελετών σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο. Ωστόσο, στη συγκεκριμένη μελέτη, οι χώρες της ΕΕ-27 διαχωρίζονται σε 5 ομάδες, με βάση τις ομοιότητες που παρουσιάζουν στο κόστος συναλλαγών. Σύμφωνα με την κατηγοριοποίηση αυτή, το κοινωνικό κόστος από τις συναλλαγές κυμαίνεται από 0,80% έως 1,20% του ΑΕΠ των κρατών μελών. Χαρακτηριστικό είναι το γεγονός πως εντός των χωρών με το υψηλότερο κόστος βρίσκεται και η Ελλάδα, παρά το γεγονός ότι η καταβολή μετρητών συνιστά τη συντριπτικά δημοφιλέστερη (95%) μέθοδο πληρωμής. Δεδομένου ότι καθορίστηκαν 12 βασικές δράσεις ([2]) για την ενίσχυση της Ενιαίας Αγοράς, μία εκ των οποίων αφορά στους καταναλωτές, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Λαμβάνοντας υπόψιν ότι το κοινωνικό κόστος από τις εξεταζόμενες συναλλαγές προσεγγίζει περίπου το 1% του ευρωπαϊκού ΑΕΠ, αλλά και της σημασίας τους για την εύρυθμη λειτουργία της Ενιαίας Αγοράς, έχει εκπονήσει σχετικές μελέτες για την εν λόγω στρέβλωση; Αν όχι, σκοπεύει να αντιμετωπίσει εκτενέστερα το ζήτημα αυτό και, αν ναι, με ποιο τρόπο;

2. Πως αντιμετωπίζει τις διαφορές αυτές σε επίπεδο κρατών μελών, δεδομένου μάλιστα και του άξονα δράσης της ενιαίας αγοράς για τους καταναλωτές, όπου βασική παράμετρο αποτελεί το ηλεκτρονικό εμπόριο, το οποίο συνήθως βασίζεται σε πληρωμές πέραν της χρήσης μετρητών; Έχει συνυπολογίσει τις στρεβλώσεις αυτές στην προσπάθεια δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής και ανάκαμψης της Ελλάδας; Πού οφείλεται το υψηλό κόστος συναλλαγών στην Ελλάδα;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Η ύπαρξη κόστους που συνδέεται με τη λειτουργία του συστήματος πληρωμών δεν συνιστά στρέβλωση, αλλά οικονομική αναγκαιότητα, δεδομένου ότι δεν μπορεί να υπάρξει μέθοδος πληρωμής που να μη συνεπάγεται κόστος.

Η Επιτροπή συγκεντρώνει δεδομένα για την αγορά από τις δημόσιες διαβουλεύσεις, από εσωτερικές και εξωτερικές μελέτες, καθώς και από ομάδες εργασίας και επαφές με τους ενδιαφερομένους, όμως στηρίζεται επίσης σε πολύ μεγάλο βαθμό στα στατιστικά στοιχεία και στις αναλύσεις της ΕΚΤ, της Eurostat και των εθνικών στατιστικών υπηρεσιών.

Η προσέγγιση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την αγορά πληρωμών βασίζεται στο ιδιωτικό κόστος με το οποίο επιβαρύνονται οι συμμετέχοντες στην αγορά, όπως οι τράπεζες, οι έμποροι, οι επιχειρήσεις και οι καταναλωτές. Το εύρος της μελέτης της ΕΚΤ για το κοινωνικό κόστος των συναλλαγών είναι συγκριτικά πιο περιορισμένο, καθώς δεν περιλαμβάνει το κόστος με το οποίο επιβαρύνονται οι καταναλωτές, οι εταιρείες ή οι δημόσιες αρχές ως χρήστες υπηρεσιών πληρωμών. Κατά την εξέταση του σχετικού κόστους διαφόρων μέσων πληρωμής, η Επιτροπή λαμβάνει υπόψη όχι μόνο την καθαρή σχέση κόστους-αποτελεσματικότητας, αλλά και τα οφέλη που προκύπτουν για την κοινωνία από τα αντίστοιχα αυτά μέσα πληρωμών. Δεν επικεντρώνεται σε ζητήματα τα οποία αφορούν ειδικά ένα κράτος μέλος, αλλά εφαρμόζει μια προοπτική ενιαίας αγοράς.

Προκειμένου να μειωθεί το κόστος των πληρωμών στην Ευρώπη, η Επιτροπή υποστήριξε την καθιέρωση πανευρωπαϊκών μεταφορών πίστωσης και άμεσων χρεώσεων ([3]). Επιπλέον, η Επιτροπή εξετάζει δράσεις όσον αφορά τις διατραπεζικές προμήθειες στις πληρωμές με κάρτα, οι οποίες αναμένεται να μειώσουν το κόστος των πληρωμών με κάρτα στην ΕΕ.

Η Επιτροπή δεν πιστεύει ότι υπάρχει άμεση σχέση μεταξύ του ζητήματος του κόστους των πληρωμών και των προσπαθειών ανάκαμψης της Ελλάδας. Εντούτοις, όπως προέκυψε από προηγούμενες μελέτες ([4]), στην Ελλάδα παρατηρείται πολύ χαμηλή χρήση ηλεκτρονικών μέσων πληρωμής και, ως εκ τούτου, τίθεται το ερώτημα μήπως η κατάσταση αυτή οφείλεται στο υψηλό κόστος ορισμένων υπηρεσιών πληρωμής.

([1]) http://www.ecb.int/pub/pdf/scpops/ecbocp137.pdf?154bb284ed3eb5b642e00d030ec4d3bd
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-469_en.htm
([3]) Βλέπε τον κανονισμό (ΕΕ) αριθ. 260/2012, ΕΕ L 94 της 30.3.2012, σ. 22.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/docs/prices_current_accounts_report_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009637/12
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: Differences in transaction costs in the EU with reference to Greece

According to a recent report ([1]) by the European Central Bank (ECB) on the social and private costs of payment instruments, there is a limited range of information available for making comparisons at European level. However, the report in question splits the EU-27 into five groups, based on similarities in transaction costs. Based on this classification, the social cost of transactions ranges from 0.80% to 1.20% of the Member States' GDP. Interestingly, one of the countries with the highest costs is Greece despite the fact that cash is by far the most popular payment method (95%). In the light of the 12 key actions ([2]) to support the single market, one of which relates to consumers, will the Commission say:

1. Whether, bearing in mind that the social cost of the transactions under review is close to 1% of EU GDP and the importance of these costs for the proper functioning of the single market, there have been any studies on this distortion? If there have not been, does it intend to take extensive action to address this issue and, if so, how?

2. How it is addressing these differences at Member State level, especially given the single market action on consumers, which is predicated on e-commerce, which usually relies on payment other than in cash? Has it taken account of these distortions in Greece's fiscal adjustment and recovery effort? What is the cause of the high cost of transactions in Greece?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

The existence of costs related to the functioning of the payment system is not a distortion, but an economic necessity, as no payment method can exist without generating costs.

The Commission gathers market data through public consultations, internal and external studies, working groups and contacts with the stakeholders, but also relies extensively on statistical data and analyses of the ECB, Eurostat and national statistical offices.

The Commission approach to the payments market is based on the private costs incurred by market participants, such as banks, merchants, businesses and consumers. The ECB study on the social costs of the transactions is in comparison narrower in scope as it does not include the costs incurred by consumers, companies or public authorities in their role of payment service users. In its consideration of the relative costs of different payment means, the Commission takes into account not only pure cost efficiency, but also benefits provided by those respective payment means to society. It does not concentrate on issues specific to one Member State but follows a single market perspective.

To lower payment costs in Europe the Commission supported the introduction of pan-European credit transfers and direct debits ([3]). Furthermore, the Commission is considering actions on the interchange fees in card payments, which should lower the costs of card payments in the EU.

The Commission does not perceive any direct relation between the issue of the cost of payments and the Greek recovery efforts. Nevertheless, as shown by previous studies ([4]) Greece has a very low usage of electronic payments instruments and therefore the question is raised if this situation can be explained by the high costs of some payment services.

([1]) http://www.ecb.int/pub/pdf/scpops/ecbocp137.pdf?154bb284ed3eb5b642e00d030ec4d3bd
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-469_en.htm
([3]) See Regulation 260/2012/EU, OJ L 94, 30.03.2012, p. 22.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/docs/prices_current_accounts_report_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-009638/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Guerra civile in Libano

Il Libano è attualmente in uno stato di ebollizione a seguito dell'attentato del 19 ottobre nel quartiere Ashrafieh di Beirut, in cui il capo dei servizi di intelligence del paese, Generale Wissam Al-Hassan è stato ucciso, insieme al suo autista e a sei altre persone. Al-Hassan era un oppositore del Presidente Bashar al-Assad e stava conducendo le indagini sull'uccisione dell'ex Primo Ministro Rafik Hariri. Nessuno ha rivendicato l'attentato, ma molti sospettano Hezbollah.

La colpa per l'attacco è ricaduta sul Primo Ministro Najib Mikati e gruppi di opposizione chiedono la caduta del suo governo, ma Mikati dichiara che non si dimetterà. Il deputato della Falange, Nadim Gemayel, è convinto che la Siria stia utilizzando Hezbollah nel tentativo di fomentare la violenza settaria. Migliaia di sunniti sono scesi in strada e altri manifestanti hanno tentato di occupare la residenza del Primo Ministro. Ci sono stati attacchi anche nella città libanese di Tripoli, e l'eruzione del sentimento antisiriano ha indotto migliaia di profughi a passare di nuovo il confine tornando in Siria.

1. Qual è la posizione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante in merito allo scoppio di disordini in Libano?

2. Qual è la valutazione dei funzionari dell'UE a Beirut in merito al coinvolgimento della Siria nell'assassinio del Generale Wissam Al-Hassan?

3. La VP/HR è pronta a sollevare le preoccupazioni per il Libano con il Primo Ministro Najib Mikati?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(13 dicembre 2012)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Ashton ha condannato con fermezza l'attentato perpetrato il 19 ottobre 2012 a Beirut, nel quale hanno perso la vita il generale Wissam El-Hassan e altre due persone, caldeggiando un avvio tempestivo delle indagini. A questo stadio non sono disponibili elementi che permettano di risalire ai mandanti dell'assassinio.

Poco dopo l'attentato l'AR/VP Ashton si è recata in Libano, dove ha incontrato i principali leader politici del paese, tra cui il Primo Ministro Najib Mikati. In tale occasione l'AR/VP ha ribadito l'importanza che attribuisce al mantenimento della stabilità in Libano, ha insistito sul fatto che le istituzioni devono continuare a funzionare efficacemente e che l'esercito deve contribuire a riportare la calma, ha espresso il proprio sostegno al dialogo nazionale sotto l'egida del presidente Suleiman e ha messo in guardia contro tutte le iniziative che potrebbero destabilizzare il paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009638/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Civil war in Lebanon

Lebanon is currently in a state of upheaval following a car bombing on 19 October 2012 in the Achrafieh area of Beirut. General Wissam al-Hassan, head of the country's intelligence services, was killed along with his driver and six other people. General al-Hassan, an opponent of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, was leading an investigation into the killing of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but many suspect Hezbollah.

Blame for the attack has fallen on Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati; opposition groups are calling for the fall of his government, but Mr Mikati says that he will not step down. Phalange party MP Nadim Gemayel believes that Syria is using Hezbollah in an attempt to stir up sectarian violence. Thousands of Sunnis have taken to the streets, and other demonstrators have tried to occupy the home of the Prime Minister. There have also been attacks in the Lebanese city of Tripoli, and the eruption of anti-Syrian sentiment has encouraged thousands of refugees to head across the border back into Syria.

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the outbreak of unrest in Lebanon?

2. What is the assessment of EU officials in Beirut regarding the involvement of Syria in the assassination of General Wissam al-Hassan?

3. Is the VP/HR prepared to discuss concerns regarding Lebanon with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The High Representative/Vice-President Ashton strongly condemned the attack on 19 October 2012 in Beirut, which killed Brigadier General Wissam El-Hassan and two other people. She urged an early investigation of the incident. At this point there is no evidence that would indicate involvement of certain parties in the assassination.

Shortly after the incident, HR/VP Ashton visited Lebanon and had direct exchanges with the main political leaders of the country, including with Prime Minister Najib Mikati. She expressed the importance she attaches to preserving stability in Lebanon, stressed the need for the institutions to continue working effectively, including the Army in helping to restore calm. She expressed support for the National Dialogue under the aegis of President Sleiman and warned against any initiatives which could lead to destabilising the country.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009641/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Neonicotinoid pesticide combinations and the decline in bee populations

Recent studies have strongly suggested a link between the increased use of neonicotinoid pesticides and global declines in the populations of pollinating insects, including bees, which play a vital role in agriculture and international food security. The phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder — the disappearance of worker bees — has become a global problem and bee decline is a serious threat to EU and global agriculture because of the insects' vital role in pollination.

Can the Commission tell me what research is being done in this area, including that of the effect of pesticide combinations, and what actions it is planning in order to address this urgent and hugely important issue?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-000160/2012 ([1]) and E-001228/2012 ([2]).

The Commission is providing financial support to research on pesticides, in particular the Bee Doc ([3]) project is looking at the interactions of pests and pesticides at the colony and at the individual level and quantifying the impact of the interactions on honeybee mortality. The project specifically addresses sub lethal and chronic exposure to pesticides and screens how apicultural practices affect colony health. The STEP[3] project assesses the decline in pollinator in general and among other factors, the influence of pesticides on pollination activities.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://www.bee-doc.eu/.
([3]) http://www.step-project.net/.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009642/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(23 octombrie 2012)

Subiect: Sunt necesare soluții urgente pentru programul Erasmus

Dat fiind nivelul alarmant al șomajului în rândul tinerilor și faptul că obiectivul principal al programului Erasmus este de a crea locuri de muncă și de a reduce sărăcia, ceea ce îi permite să aibă un impact direct asupra redresării economice, creșterii și productivității Europei, trebuie să găsim o soluție pe termen lung care să poată salvgarda finanțarea pentru toate generațiile viitoare de studenți Erasmus.

Trebuie să se trimită un mesaj clar care să confirme garantarea granturilor acordate în cadrul programului Erasmus nu numai pentru întregul an academic 2012/2013, ci și pentru anii următori. Dacă persistă actuala lipsă de plată, studenții care se află în străinătate în al doilea semestru al anului academic 2012/2013 se vor confrunta cu probleme.

Dat fiind faptul că orice reducere a finanțării va crește inegalitatea dintre tineri și ar putea transforma programul Erasmus într-un privilegiu pentru studenții înstăriți, mai degrabă decât un drept al tuturor, ar putea Comisia să soluționeze actualul deficit financiar al Fondului social european utilizând bani din alte fonduri UE rămase necheltuite?

Răspuns dat de dl Lewandowski în numele Comisiei
(21 decembrie 2012)

Comisia a examinat, mai întâi, disponibilitatea plăților, în conformitate cu normele de bună gestiune financiară. Aceste sume limitate nu au permis Comisiei să acopere miliardele lipsă din cadrul creditelor de plată alocate pentru finanțarea Fondului social european (politica de coeziune), a programului Erasmus (programul de învățare pe tot parcursul vieții), precum și a altor fonduri și programe europene, astfel cum este prevăzut în bugetul adoptat pentru anul 2012. Din acest motiv, Comisia a prezentat, la 23 octombrie 2012, proiectul de buget rectificativ nr. 6/2012 prin care solicită punerea la dispoziție a unor resurse suplimentare în valoare de aproximativ 9 miliarde EUR. Acest proiect de buget rectificativ poate fi consultat la adresa:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_en.cfm

Pentru programul Erasmus, Comisia oferă pe site-ul său informații suplimentare:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-785_ro.htm

Comisia se declară mulțumită de adoptarea proiectului de buget rectificativ nr. 6/2012. Cu toate că nu acoperă toate necesitățile identificate de către Comisie, acest proiect de buget va acoperi în întregime deficitul de finanțare pentru programul Erasmus.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009642/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Urgent solutions needed for the Erasmus programme

Given the alarming level of youth unemployment and the fact that the aim of the Erasmus programme is to create jobs and reduce poverty, thereby enabling it to have a direct impact on Europe's economic recovery, growth and productivity, we need to find a long-term solution which can safeguard funding for all future generations of Erasmus students.

A clear message needs to be sent, confirming that grants under the Erasmus programme will be guaranteed not only for the whole of the 2012/2013 academic year, but for subsequent years as well. If the present lack of payment continues, it will cause problems for students who are already abroad during the second semester of the 2012/2013 academic year.

Given that any reduction in funding will increase inequality among young people and could lead to the Erasmus programme becoming a privilege of wealthy students instead of a right for everyone, could the Commission solve the current financial shortfall in the European Social Fund by using money from other, underspent EU funds?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

The Commission has, in line with the sound financial management rules examined in the first place whether there were any available payments. These very limited amounts did not allow the Commission to cover the billions missing for the European Social Fund (Cohesion policy), the Erasmus programme (Lifelong learning), as well as for other EU funds and programmes from the payment appropriations as foreseen in the adopted 2012 budget. For this reason, it presented on 23 October 2012 the Draft Amending Budget 6/2012 which requests additional resources of about EUR 9 billion. This Draft Amending Budget can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_en.cfm.

For Erasmus, the Commission has provided additional information on its website:
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-12-785_en.htm

The Commission is satisfied that the Amending Budget 6/2012 has been adopted. While it doesn't cover all the needs identified by the Commission, it will cover the full financing gap for Erasmus.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009643/12
aan de Commissie
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(23 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Marokko — Schending van de mensenrechten en ratificatie van het Facultatief Protocol bij het Verdrag tegen foltering

Op 22 september 2012 ([1]) stelde Juan Méndez, de speciale VN-rapporteur voor foltering, dat ondanks de vooruitgang in Marokko, foltering en het gebruik van excessief geweld door de politie zijn toegenomen. Er zijn bewijzen van geweld tegen onderzoekers van mensenrechten ([2]). De speciale rapporteur zal in maart 2013 een definitief rapport indienen bij de Raad voor de mensenrechten van de VN.

De EU is de belangrijkste handelspartner van Marokko ([3]) en deze relatie komt tot uiting in (regionale) handelsovereenkomsten:

— het Europees-mediterraan partnerschap ([4]), de pan-Euro-mediterrane preferentiële oorsprongsregels ([5]) en het Europees nabuurschap- en partnerschapsinstrument (ENPI), waaruit Marokko 11,9 miljard euro ontvangt voor de periode van 2007 tot 2013. Een van de vijf voorwaarden voor financiële samenwerking in het kader van het ENPI zijn de mensenrechten. Bilateraal wordt er gewerkt aan een diepe en brede vrijhandelsovereenkomst (DCFTA) ([6]), naast de associatieovereenkomst van 1996. Recentelijk keurde het EP de liberalisering goed van de handel tussen de EU en Marokko op het gebied van landbouw en visserij ([7]), teneinde de banden tussen de EU en Marokko te versterken en het democratieproces in Marokko te steunen. Het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie verplicht de EU de verdere bescherming en de bevordering van de mensenrechten in al haar externe acties na te streven, bijvoorbeeld door middel van voorwaardelijkheidsclausules in handelsovereenkomsten. Marokko speelt een belangrijke rol in de regio en moet op het gebied van mensenrechten een voorbeeld stellen.

1. Is de Commissie het eens met de voorlopige conclusies van de speciale rapporteur? Zo nee, kan de Commissie dan haar eigen beoordeling geven over de huidige situatie aangaande de mensenrechten in Marokko? Zo nee, waarom niet?

2. Is de Commissie van mening dat de Marokkaanse regering momenteel voldoet aan de voorwaarden met betrekking tot de mensenrechten, die zijn vastgelegd in de regionale en bilaterale (handels)overeenkomsten van Marokko met de EU? Zo ja, waarom?

3. Hoe denkt de Commissie ervoor te zorgen dat de EU werkelijk als een gemeenschap van waarden zal handelen en een duidelijk signaal zal afgeven aan de Marokkaanse autoriteiten dat ze schenders van de mensenrechten aansprakelijk moeten stellen voor hun daden?

4. Zal de Commissie de Marokkaanse regering ertoe aansporen het Facultatief Protocol bij het Verdrag tegen foltering te ratificeren, onder andere als een noodzakelijke voorwaarde voor de voortzetting van de DCFTA-gesprekken? Zo niet, waarom niet?

5. Heeft de Commissie de Marokkaanse autoriteiten benaderd en haar bezorgdheid geuit over de verslagen van de speciale rapporteur? Zo niet, waarom niet? Is de Commissie bereid de nieuwe speciale vertegenwoordiger van de Europese Unie voor de mensenrechten, Stavros Lambrinidis, naar Marokko te sturen om de situatie te beoordelen? Zo niet, waarom niet?

6. Op welke manier denkt de Commissie ervoor te zorgen dat schenders van de mensenrechten strafrechtelijk worden vervolgd, om straffeloosheid te verhinderen?

7. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de EU een consistente aanpak moet hanteren voor alle buur- en partnerlanden met betrekking tot de schending van de mensenrechten, teneinde haar geloofwaardigheid te behouden?

([1]) http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=11829&LangID=E.
([2]) http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/15/moroccowestern-sahara-no-action-police-beating-rights-worker.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/countries/morocco/.
([4]) http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bMOTION%2bB7-2012-0061 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML %2bV0 %2f%2fEN&language=EN#_part1_def5.
([6]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=766.
([7]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120216IPR38354/html/Green-light-for-EU-Morocco-trade-deal.

Antwoord van de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(13 februari 2013)

Ondanks blijvende redenen voor bezorgdheid is de Commissie van mening dat de mensenrechtensituatie in Marokko erop vooruitgaat. Marokko heeft belangrijke vooruitgang geboekt in 2011-2012: de bekrachtiging van het Internationaal Verdrag ter bescherming van alle personen tegen gedwongen verdwijning, het eerste protocol bij het Internationaal Verdrag inzake burgerrechten en politieke rechten ([8]), het facultatief protocol bij het Verdrag inzake de uitbanning van alle vormen van discriminatie van vrouwen ([9]) en het Facultatief Protocol bij het Verdrag tegen foltering ([10]). Er werden nieuwe instanties opgericht in Marokko voor de verdediging van de mensenrechten en de verbetering van het bestuur. Positieve ontwikkelingen zijn onder meer de versterking van de fundamentele vrijheden en de democratische beginselen in de nieuwe grondwet en de oprichting en consolidatie van bevoegdheden van de nationale mensenrechtenraad.

De mensenrechtensituatie werd met de Marokkaanse autoriteiten besproken in het subcomité Mensenrechten, democratie en bestuur en tijdens de bilaterale politieke dialoog. De voorlopige conclusies, opgesteld door Juan Méndez, zijn bijvoorbeeld besproken tijdens de vergadering van oktober 2012, waarop de EU haar bezorgdheid heeft geuit over de situatie in Marokkaanse gevangenissen en er bij de regering heeft op aangedrongen de akte van bekrachtiging van de OPCAT neer te leggen.

De uitroeiing van foltering is een prioriteit van de EU-mensenrechtenstrategie voor Marokko.

De mensenrechtensituatie is een van de voornaamste aspecten van het nieuwe bilaterale actieplan waaraan de EU en Marokko de laatste hand leggen. De EU bevordert de naleving van de mensenrechten en de democratische principes door verschillende projecten te steunen in het kader van het Europees instrument voor de democratie en de mensenrechten ([11]). De EU heeft een project gesteund van de Vereniging ter voorkoming van foltering ([12]) inzake de oprichting van nationale preventiemechanismen in het kader van de OPCAT en inzake de omzetting van het VN-Verdrag tegen foltering in de nationale wetgeving.

De verbetering van de mensenrechten en de fundamentele vrijheden is een cruciaal onderdeel van de nieuwe aanpak van het Europees nabuurschapsbeleid van 2011.

([8]) ICCPR = Internationaal Verdrag inzake burgerrechten en politieke rechten.
([9]) IVDV = Verdrag inzake de uitbanning van alle vormen van discriminatie van vrouwen.
([10]) OPCAT = Facultatief Protocol bij het Verdrag tegen foltering.
([11]) EIDHR = Europees instrument voor de democratie en de mensenrechten.
([12]) VVT = Vereniging ter voorkoming van foltering.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009643/12
to the Commission
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Morocco — human rights violations and ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture

The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Méndez, stated on 22 September 2012 ([1]) that, despite some progress in Morocco, torture and the use of excessive force by the police have been on the rise. Violence against human rights researchers has been documented ([2]). The Special Rapporteur will present a final report to the UN Human Rights Council in March 2013. The EU is Morocco's leading trade partner ([3]), a relationship that is covered by (regional) trade agreements: the Euro-Mediterranean partnership ([4]), the pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin ([5]), and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which is endowing Morocco with EUR 11.9 billion for the 2007-2013 period. One of the five priorities for financial cooperation under the ENPI is human rights. Bilaterally, a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement (DCFTA) is on its way ([6]), in addition to the 1996 Association Agreement. Recently, the EP approved the liberalisation of EU-Morocco trade in agriculture and fisheries ([7]), in order to boost EU-Morocco ties and support Morocco's transition to democracy. The Treaty on European Union obliges the EU to seek to further the protection and promotion of human rights in all its external actions, e.g. through conditionality clauses in trade agreements. Morocco plays a leading role in the region and has to set an example when it comes to human rights.

1. Does the Commission agree with the Special Rapporteur's preliminary conclusions? If not, can it give its own assessment of the current human rights situation in Morocco? If it cannot, why not?

2. Does the Commission consider that the Moroccan Government is currently complying with the human rights conditions laid down in Morocco's regional and bilateral (trade) agreements with the EU? If so, why?

3. How will the Commission ensure that the EU actually acts as a community of values and sends a clear signal to the Moroccan authorities that they should hold human rights violators accountable?

4. Will the Commission urge the Moroccan Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, *inter alia* as a prerequisite for proceeding with DCFTA talks? If not, why not?

5. Has the Commission approached the Moroccan authorities to express its concerns over the reports of the Special Rapporteur? If not, why not? Is it willing to send the new EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, to Morocco in order to make an assessment? If not, why not?

6. How will the Commission seek to bring those responsible for human rights violations before a court of law in order to prevent impunity?

7. Does the Commission agree that the EU should adopt a consistent approach to all neighbouring and partner countries in respect of human rights violations, in order to retain its credibility?

([1]) http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12570&LangID=E.
([2]) http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/05/15/moroccowestern-sahara-no-action-police-beating-rights-worker.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/countries/morocco/.
([4]) http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bMOTION%2bB7-2012-0061%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN#_part1_def5.
([6]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=766.
([7]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20120216IPR38354/html/Green-light-for-EU-Morocco-trade-deal.

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

Despite some concerns the Commission considers that the human rights situation in Morocco is improving. Morocco has taken important steps in 2011-2012: ratification of the international convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disparition, the first protocol of the ICCPR ([8]), the optional protocol to the CEDAW ([9]) and the OPCAT ([10]). New bodies have been set up in Morocco to defend human rights and improve goverance. The strengthening of fundamental freedoms and democratic principles by the new Constitution and the establishment and consolidation of prerogatives of the National Council for Human Rights are positive developments.

The situation of human rights is discussed with the Moroccan authorities in the Sub-Committee on 'Human rights, democracy and governance' and the bilateral political dialogue, e.g. the preliminary conclusions drawn up by Juan Méndez were discussed during the meeting in October 2012, where the EU expressed concern about the situation in Moroccan prisons and urged the authorities to deposit the instrument of ratification of the OPCAT.

Eradication of torture is a priority of the EU Human Rights Strategy for Morocco.

The human rights situation is a key aspect of the new bilateral action plan being finalised by the EU and Morocco. The EU is promoting the respect of human rights and democratic principles by supporting several projects in the framework of EIDHR ([11]). The EU has financed a project implemented by APT ([12]) on the set up of National Preventive Mechanisms under the OPCAT and on the transposition of the UN Convention against Torture in national legislation.

Improvement of human rights and fundamental freedoms is a crucial component of the new approach to the European neighbourhood policy adopted in 2011.

([8]) ICCPR = International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
([9]) CEDAW = Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.
([10]) OPCAT = Optional Protocol to the International Convention Against Torture.
([11]) EIDHR = European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.
([12]) APT = Association contre la Torture.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009644/12
adresată Comisiei
Adrian Severin (NI)
(23 octombrie 2012)

Subiect: Demisia Comisarului John Dalli

Printr-un comunicat dat publicității în ziua de 16 octombrie 2012, Comisia Europeană a anunțat că domnul John Dalli, comisarul european pentru sănătate, i-a prezentat Președintelui Jose Manuel Barroso demisia sa, „cu efect imediat".

Din Comunicat lipsesc două precizări esențiale: a) care sunt prevederile legale concrete încălcate de comisarul Dalli; b) ce crede Comisia despre vinovăția comisarului Dalli.

Dacă domnul Dalli nu a încălcat nicio normă legală, înseamnă că este nevinovat. Dacă este nevinovat, nu trebuia să demisioneze, iar Comisia trebuia să îl susțină. Dacă, însă, domnul Dalli este vinovat, Comisia trebuia să îl sancționeze, asumându-și totodată răspunderile care îi revin.

Demisia domnului Dalli nu apără reputația Comisiei. Dacă este nevinovat, Comisia este vinovată pentru că a sacrificat un membru inocent. Dacă este vinovat, Comisia este vinovată pentru că nu a prevenit, descoperit și sancționat ilegalitatea.

Ideea că demisia a fost necesară spre a-i permite domnului Dalli să își apere reputația este inacceptabilă, întrucât, dacă un nevinovat se retrage din funcție, nu se înțelege ce mai poate face un vinovat. Mai mult, nu acuzatul trebuie să își dovedească nevinovăția, ci vinovăția lui trebuie dovedită de acuzator. Dovadă pe care nimeni (inclusiv OLAF) nu a prezentat-o până acum.

Față de cele de mai sus cerem Comisiei să precizeze:

1. De ce a demisionat domnul Dalli dacă a fost nevinovat și de ce Comisia nu l-a susținut?

2. De ce nu a fost demis domnul Dalli dacă a fost vinovat și cum înțelege Comisia să răspundă pentru că nu a luat măsurile necesare prevenirii unor asemenea ilegalități?

3. Ce dispoziții legale a încălcat domnul Dalli și ce înțelege Comisia prin prezumția de nevinovăție, respectiv prin obligația acuzatorului de a dovedi vinovăția acuzatului?

4. În condițiile acestei demisii, care este data realistă la care Comisia va putea adopta Directiva privind produsele din tutun propusă de comisarul Dalli?

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(17 ianuarie 2013)

1.-3. Dl Dalli a demisionat din funcția de membru al Comisiei la 16 octombrie întrucât a convenit cu președintele că poziția sa a devenit inacceptabilă din punct de vedere politic. Comisia respectă pe deplin principiul prezumției de nevinovăție și se abține de la formularea, chiar indirectă, a unei încadrări juridice a evenimentelor în cauză și a vreunei eventuale responsabilități.

4. Propunerea ([1]) pentru o nouă directivă privind produsele din tutun a fost adoptată de către Comisie la 19 decembrie, astfel cum s-a prevăzut inițial.

([1]) COM (2012) 788 final, 19.12.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009644/12
to the Commission
Adrian Severin (NI)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Resignation of Commissioner John Dalli

In a press release issued on 16 October 2012 the European Commission announced that John Dalli, Commissioner for Health, had tendered his resignation to Commission president José Manuel Barroso, effective immediately.

The press release fails to provide two key elements: (a) which specific legal provisions has Mr Dalli contravened; and (b) what is the Commission's opinion regarding Mr Dalli's guilt?

If Mr Dalli has not contravened any law, it follows that he is innocent. If he is innocent, he has no need to resign and the Commission should support him. If, however, Mr Dalli is guilty, the Commission has a duty to punish him.

Mr Dalli's resignation casts the Commission in a very poor light. If he is innocent, the Commission is guilty of sacrificing an innocent commissioner. If he is guilty, the Commission is guilty of failing to prevent, uncover and penalise illegal behaviour.

The notion that resignation was necessary in order to enable Mr Dalli to defend his name is unacceptable because if an innocent person leaves his/her post, it is difficult to understand what a guilty person can do. Furthermore, it is not for the accused to prove his innocence, but for the accuser to prove his guilt — proof of which has not been presented by anyone so far, including OLAF.

In light of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Why did Mr Dalli resign if he was innocent and why did the Commission not support him?

2. Why was Mr Dalli not dismissed from his post if he was guilty and how does the Commission intend to answer for the fact that it failed to take the necessary steps to prevent such illegal behaviour?

3. What laws did Mr Dalli break and what is the Commission's understanding of the presumption of innocence and the obligation for the accuser to prove the guilt of the accused?

4. Given this resignation, what is the realistic date for the Commission to adopt the directive on tobacco products proposed by Mr Dalli?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

1-3. Mr Dalli resigned as a member of the Commission on 16 October having agreed with the President that his position had become politically untenable. The Commission fully respects the principle of the presumption of innocence and refrains from entering, even indirectly, into a legal qualification of the events at stake and of any eventual responsibility.

4. The proposal ([1]) for a new tobacco products directive was adopted by the Commission on 19 December as originally foreseen.

([1]) COM(2012) 788 Final, 19.12.2012.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009645/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 de octubre de 2012)

Asunto: Investigación sobre el posible fraude en la formulación del Euríbor

Existen consistentes indicios de que, durante el periodo comprendido entre 1999 y 2008, las principales entidades bancarias europeas han estado actuando fraudulentamente en la elaboración del Tipo de Interés Interbancario Europeo (Euríbor) y por tanto deberían devolver importantes sumas cobradas indebidamente a sus clientes.

En Inglaterra, recientemente se ha iniciado un proceso para esclarecer responsabilidades por la manipulación similar del índice LIBOR, estando imputados la mayoría de los 44 bancos de diferentes países que elaboran el Euríbor. El LIBOR, de parecido mecanismo de formulación que el índice europeo, ha supuesto la variable de referencia para buena parte de los productos financieros comercializados en el mundo, entre ellos las hipotecas Suprime, y la estafa que su elaboración fraudulenta lo convertiría en el mayor fraude de la historia contemporánea. El proceso de formulación del Euríbor que parece coincidir tanto en método de elaboración como en las entidades responsables.

A este lado del Canal de Mancha, la situación no ha diferido mucho de lo ocurrido con el LIBOR ya que el proceso de formulación del Euríbor coincide tanto en su método de elaboración como en las entidades responsables.

A raíz de algunos casos sobre hipotecas, el abogado español Juan Moreno Yagüe, inició una investigación para aclarar el método de formulación del Euríbor y encontró diversas irregularidades relacionadas con la inexistencia del volumen de operaciones interbancarias necesario para poder fijar dicho índice y, por lo tanto, su falsificación para mantenerlo en vigor.

Teniendo en cuenta que, pese a al falta de control y vigilancia, el índice europeo ha sido el tipo de referencia para la mayoría de las hipotecas, elevándose a un 82 % en el caso de España.

¿Cuál es la metodología empleada en el cálculo de dicho índice en la actualidad? ¿Está la Comisión sometiendo a vigilancia el cumplimiento de la normativa en la formulación de dicho índice? En octubre del año pasado la Comisión abrió una investigación, ¿en qué estado se encuentra? En el supuesto de que se confirme el fraude, ¿está la Comisión considerando la posible nulidad de todas las hipotecas formuladas bajo este índice? ¿Piensa la Comisión Europea intervenir para que las entidades financieras hagan frente a las obligaciones de devolución, así como al pago de los daños causados, en el caso de hipotecas ejecutadas?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de diciembre de 2012)

La Comisión investiga desde 2011 presuntas infracciones de las normas de defensa de la competencia relacionadas con el LIBOR y el Euribor ([1]). Esa investigación, que reviste para la Comisión una prioridad absoluta, tiene por objeto determinados bancos que operan con productos derivados de tipo de interés vinculados al Euribor y el LIBOR. Las pesquisas, que ocuparán una parte significativa de la actividad de la Comisión en 2013, se hallan ya en una fase avanzada.

El 25 de julio de 2012 ([2]), la Comisión modificó sus propuestas de Reglamento sobre abuso de mercado y de Directiva sobre sanciones penales por abuso de mercado con el fin de prohibir tajantemente toda manipulación de los índices de referencia y asegurar la aplicación de sanciones administrativas o penales. La consulta pública de la Comisión sobre los índices de referencia, incluido el Euribor, se cerró el 29 de noviembre de 2012 ([3]). El Programa de Trabajo de la Comisión para 2013 ([4]) incluye una iniciativa sobre los índices de referencia.

([1]) En octubre de 2011, la Comisión llevó a cabo inspecciones inopinadas de empresas activas en el sector de productos derivados vinculados al Euribor.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/docs/abuse/COM_2012_421_es.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/benchmarks_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp2013_es.pdf

Por lo que respecta a la posibilidad de reembolso e indemnización de las víctimas de hipotecas vinculadas al LIBOR, la Comisión tiene únicamente competencia para conocer de las infracciones del Derecho de competencia. En caso de quebrantamiento del artículo 101 del TFUE, la Comisión puede adoptar una decisión que determine la existencia de esa infracción, la prohíba en lo sucesivo, e imponga la multa correspondiente. Según el artículo 101, apartado 2, del TFUE, toda o decisión o acuerdo prohibido con arreglo al mismo se considera automáticamente nulo de pleno derecho y no precisa de declaración específica alguna de la Comisión ([5]). La nulidad de una cláusula contraria a la competencia puede extenderse al resto del acuerdo del que forme parte, siempre que ambos elementos no sean separables (el carácter separable o no de una cláusula lo han de dirimir los tribunales nacionales).

Si se demuestra que las presuntas manipulaciones han perjudicado a las víctimas de las hipotecas vinculadas al LIBOR, estas pueden presentar demandas civiles por daños y perjuicios ante sus tribunales nacionales.

El método de cálculo del Euribor puede consultarse en el sitio web de la Federación Bancaria Europea ([6]).

([5]) De conformidad con la jurisprudencia del Tribunal de Justicia, «la nulidad de pleno derecho prevista en el artículo [101], apartado 2, solo afecta a las disposiciones contractuales incompatibles con el artículo [101], apartado 1. Las consecuencias de esta nulidad respecto de los demás elementos del acuerdo no están reguladas por el Derecho comunitario. Lo mismo sucede en relación con los posibles pedidos realizados y los suministros efectuados en conforme a dicho acuerdo y con las obligaciones de pago que de ellas resultan de los mismos». Asunto 319/82, Société de Vente de Ciments et Bétons de l'Est SA/Kerpen & Kerpen GmbH und Co. KG, [1983] REC 4173.

([6]) Preguntas más frecuentes sobre el Euribor: http://www.euribor-ebf.eu/assets/files/Euribor%20FAQs%20Final.pdf y página específica del Euribor en el sitio web de la FBE http://www.euribor-ebf.eu/euribor-org/about-euribor.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009645/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Investigation into the possible rigging of the Euribor rate

There is substantial evidence to suggest that the Euro Interbank Offered Rate (Euribor) was being rigged by the major European banks in the period between 1999 and 2008. If true, the banks would have to repay the substantial sums of money unduly charged to their clients.

Proceedings have been initiated recently in England to determine who was responsible for the manipulation of the London interbank lending rate (Libor); of the 44 banks (from various countries) that set the Euribor rate, the majority are also accused of involvement in the Libor scandal. Calculated in a similar way to Euribor, Libor has been the benchmark interest rate for many financial products sold across the world, including sub-prime mortgages. The Libor scandal is therefore the biggest fraud case in recent history. Claims about the way Euribor was rigged and who was involved are similar to those levelled previously in relation to Libor.

Following a number of mortgage-related cases, Spanish lawyer Juan Moreno Yagüe launched an investigation into the way in which Euribor was being calculated and uncovered a number of irregularities. He found that an insufficient number of interbank operations were being used as the basis for setting the rate, the implication being that banks were fiddling Euribor to ensure that it remained viable.

Despite the fact that Euribor was not subject to any checks and controls, it was used as the benchmark interest rate for most mortgages (82% in Spain).

What method is currently being used to calculate Euribor? Is the Commission taking measures to ensure that banks observe the rules governing the setting of the Euribor rate? In October 2011, the Commission launched an investigation; what stage has been reached? If it is proven that the banks acted fraudulently, would the Commission consider declaring legally invalid all the mortgages calculated on the basis of that rate? Would it take steps to ensure that the banks fulfil their obligations regarding repayments and pay compensation to anyone who suffered as a result of taking out Euribor-pegged mortgages?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

Since 2011, the Commission has been investigating alleged violations of the antitrust rules in relation to LIBOR and EURIBOR ([1]). The investigation, a top priority for the Commission, concerns certain banks active in interest-rate derivative products linked to EURIBOR and LIBOR. Investigations are at an advanced stage and will take up a significant part of the Commission's work in 2013.

On 25 July 2012 ([2]) the Commission amended its proposals for the market abuse Regulation and the criminal sanctions for market abuse Directive to clearly prohibit manipulation of benchmarks and ensure administrative or criminal sanctions. The Commission's public consultation on benchmarks including the EURIBOR, was closed on 29 November 2012 ([3]). An initiative on benchmarks is included in the Commission Work Programme for 2013 ([4]).

Concerning possible repayment and compensation to victims of LIBOR-pegged mortgages, the Commission only has jurisdiction to address infringements of competition law. If Article 101 TFEU is infringed, the Commission may adopt a decision establishing and prohibiting for the future such infringement and imposing fines. Under Article 101(2) TFEU, any agreements or decisions prohibited pursuant to this Article are automatically void and no specific declaration is necessary from the Commission ([5]). The nullity of an anti-competitive clause can extend to the rest of the agreement of which it is part provided the two are not severable (whether a clause is severable or not is decided by national courts).

([1]) In October 2011, the Commission made unannounced inspections of companies active in the derivatives sector linked to EURIBOR.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/docs/abuse/COM_2012_421_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/benchmarks_en.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp2013_en.pdf
([5]) In accordance with the case law of the Court of Justice 'the automatic nullity decreed by Article [101](2) applies only to those contractual provisions which are incompatible with Article [101](1). The consequences of such nullity for other parts of the agreement are not a matter for Community law. The same applies to any orders and deliveries made on the basis of such an agreement and to the resulting financial obligations'. Case 319/82, Société de Vente de Ciments et Bétons de l'Est SA v Kerpen & Kerpen GmbH und Co. KG, [1983] ECR 4173.

If the alleged manipulation is proven to have harmed to victims of LIBOR-pegged mortgages, they can make private damages claims in their national courts.

The method how to calculate Euribor can be found at the European Banking Federation website ([6]).

([6]) FAQ on Euribor: http://www.euribor-ebf.eu/assets/files/Euribor%20FAQs%20Final.pdf and Euribor specific site in the EBF website http://www.euribor-ebf.eu/euribor-org/about-euribor.html

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009646/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(23 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Παραβιάσεις θεμελιωδών εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων στην Ελλάδα σύμφωνα με απόφαση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής Κοινωνικών Δικαιωμάτων

Η Επιτροπή Κοινωνικών Δικαιωμάτων του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης εξέδωσε απόφαση όπου επισημαίνει ότι κάποιες από τις ρυθμίσεις που εισήχθησαν στην ελληνική εργατική νομοθεσία κατά το 2010, έπειτα από προηγούμενη δέσμευση στο Μνημόνιο Συνεργασίας, συνιστούν παραβίαση εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων σε σχέση με τον Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Χάρτη. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, εντοπίζει παραβιάσεις αναφορικά τόσο με την απόλυση χωρίς αποζημίωση και προειδοποίηση στην περίπτωση της «δοκιμαστικής περιόδου» ενός έτους, η οποία αντιβαίνει στη ρήτρα της Χάρτας για «προειδοποίηση απόλυσης σε ένα εύλογο χρονικό διάστημα», όσο και με τη θεσμοθέτηση μειωμένου βασικού μισθού για τους νέους κάτω των 25 ετών, που βρίσκεται κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει λάβει γνώση της συγκεκριμένης απόφασης και πώς την αξιολογεί με δεδομένη τη διακηρυγμένη δέσμευση της Επιτροπής για ενίσχυση της προστασίας των θεμελιωδών δικαιωμάτων και ελευθεριών — όπως αυτά καταγράφονται στο Χάρτη Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της ΕΕ — ενόψει των οικονομικών εξελίξεων και των κοινωνικών αλλαγών;

2. Θεωρεί ότι η ελληνική κυβέρνηση οφείλει να προβεί σε διορθωτικές κινήσεις στα συγκεκριμένα ζητήματα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη ότι, βάσει μίας σειράς παρατηρήσεων και αξιολογήσεων που παρουσιάζονται στις αποφάσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής Κοινωνικών Δικαιωμάτων, η ΕΕΚΔ κατέληξε στο συμπέρασμα ότι ορισμένα άρθρα του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Χάρτη ([1]) παραβιάζονται από πρόσφατες ελληνικές νομοθετικές ρυθμίσεις. Η Επιτροπή σημειώνει με ενδιαφέρον ότι, στην απάντησή της στα συμπεράσματα της ΕΕΚΔ, η Ελλάδα τόνισε την προσωρινή φύση των εν λόγω μέτρων. Η Επιτροπή επιβεβαιώνει την ετοιμότητά της να συνεχίσει να συνδράμει τις ελληνικές αρχές στον σχεδιασμό των μεταρρυθμίσεων και των σχετικών κανονιστικών μέτρων.

Όσον αφορά τη συμμόρφωση της Ελλάδας προς το δίκαιο της ΕΕ, η Επιτροπή επισημαίνει ότι ο Ευρωπαϊκός Κοινωνικός Χάρτης συνιστά διεθνή συνθήκη που δεν αποτελεί τμήμα της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ. Όσον αφορά τα δύο ειδικά θέματα που έθεσε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, η Επιτροπή είναι της γνώμης ότι τα σχετικά ελληνικά μέτρα δεν παραβιάζουν το δίκαιο της ΕΕ, και ιδίως τον Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της ΕΕ. Ανεξάρτητα από το εάν η Ελλάδα εξέδωσε τα ανωτέρω μέτρα στο πλαίσιο της εφαρμογής του δικαίου της Ένωσης, τα μέτρα αυτά δεν παραβιάζουν το άρθρο 31 του Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της ΕΕ. Πράγματι, με βάση το περιεχόμενό του και νομοθετικό ιστορικό, το άρθρο 31 του Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της ΕΕ δεν φαίνεται να εγγυάται συγκεκριμένο ελάχιστο επίπεδο μισθών πάνω από το όριο της φτώχειας. Σύμφωνα με τις επεξηγήσεις σχετικά με τον εν λόγω Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων ([2]), το άρθρο 31 βασίζεται στις διατάξεις για την υγεία και την ασφάλεια ([3]). Επίσης, το άρθρο 31 (και το άρθρο 30) του Χάρτη της ΕΕ δεν απαιτούν μια εύλογη περίοδο προειδοποίησης σε περίπτωση απόλυσης κατά τη διάρκεια δοκιμαστικής περιόδου.

([1]) Αποφάσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής Κοινωνικών Δικαιωμάτων του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης για τις καταγγελίες αριθ. 65/2011 και 66/2011 της 19ης Οκτωβρίου 2012.

([2]) ΕΕ C 303 της 14.12.2007, σ. 17.

([3]) Οι εξηγήσεις αναφέρουν ιδίως τις οδηγίες της ΕΕ τις σχετικές με την ασφάλεια και την υγεία των εργαζομένων κατά την εργασία και τα άρθρα 2 και 3 του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Χάρτη, καθώς και το άρθρο 26 του αναθεωρημένου Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Χάρτη. Αντίθετα, δεν αναφέρεται το άρθρο 4 του εν λόγω Χάρτη για το δικαίωμα σε δίκαιη αμοιβή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009646/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Violations of fundamental labour rights in Greece according to European Committee of Social Rights ruling

The European Committee of Social Rights has ruled that certain arrangements introduced into Greek labour legislation in 2010 further to a commitment in the memorandum of understanding violate labour rights under the European Social Charter. Specifically, it has observed violations involving dismissal without severance pay or notice during the one-year 'trial period', which violates the clause in the Charter on a 'reasonable period of notice for termination of employment', and the reduced minimum wage for young people under the age of 25, which falls below the poverty line. In the light of the above:

1. Is the Commission aware of this specific ruling and how does it assess this decision, given its public commitment to strengthen protection for fundamental rights and freedoms as set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the light of economic developments and social changes?

2. Does it consider that the Greek Government should take corrective measures on these specific issues?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2013)

The Commission is aware that, on the basis of a number of considerations and qualifications presented in its Decisions, the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) concluded that some recent Greek legislation violates some articles of the European Social Charter (ESC) ([1]). The Commission notes with interest that in its reply to the conclusions of the ECSR, Greece stressed the provisional nature of the measures in question. The Commission confirms its readiness to continue to assist the Greek authorities with the design of reforms and of the related regulatory measures.

Concerning the compliance of Greece with EC law, the Commission points out that the ESC is an international treaty which does not form part of EC law. As regards the two specific points raised by the Honourable Member, the Commission is of the opinion that the relevant Greek measures do not infringe EC law, and in particular the EU Charter of fundamental rights (EU Charter). Regardless of whether Greece adopted the above measures in implementing Union law, these measures do not violate Article 31 of the EU Charter. Indeed, on the basis of its content and legislative history, Article 31 of the EU Charter does not seem to guarantee a concrete minimum level wage above the poverty line. According to the Explanations relating to the EU Charter ([2]), Article 31 is based on health and safety provisions ([3]). Nor does Article 31 (or Article 30) of the EU Charter require a reasonable period of notice when terminating employment during a probationary period.

([1]) Decisions of the European Committee of Social Rights of the Council or Europe in cases of complaints No65/2011 and No66/2011 released on 19 October 2012.
([2]) OJ C 303, 14.12.2007, p 17.
([3]) The Explanations cite in particular EU Directives relating to safety and health of workers at work and Articles 2 and 3 ESC as well as Article 26 of the revised ESC. In contrast, Article 4 ESC on the right to fair remuneration is not mentioned.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009647/12
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Fee for European Health Insurance Card on fraudulent and unofficial websites

Some fraudulent and unofficial websites have been set up, notably in the United Kingdom, on which the European Health Insurance Card can be ordered for a fee.

Can the Commission answer the following in the light of this:

1. What actions have been taken by the Commission to identify the legal loopholes that allow these website to operate, to the disadvantage of the European consumer, and to make sure they are closed down?

2. Does the Commission have further information as to whether other Member States as well as the United Kingdom have faced this problem?

3. What measures are planned by the Commission, jointly with the Member States and national health insurers, to improve communication on the European Health Insurance Card, the associated terms and conditions and how to apply for it, so that European citizens are better protected against such fraudulent websites?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of websites that charge fees for checking and submitting applications for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ([1]) (UCPD), which seeks to prevent misleading or aggressive commercial practices harming consumers, may apply to the practices referred to by the Honourable Member. These must be misleading or otherwise unfair to qualify as breaching the UCPD. Charging consumers is not in itself unfair, unlike misleading consumers into thinking they have to pay for the EHIC when it can be obtained free from the national healthcare institution, or falsely presenting the website as endorsed or approved by the EU (e.g. by using the EU emblem). It is for the national authorities to decide whether websites offering EHIC application services infringe national law transposing the UCPD.

With a view to combating abuse of the terms 'EHIC' and 'European Health Insurance Card', the Commission's Central Intellectual Property Service looked into the possibility of registering them as trade marks, but concluded that an application for registration was unlikely to be accepted by the Office for Harmonisation in the internal market ([2]). It believes that registering them as trade marks is also not the best way to act against fraudulent activity in the future.

The Commission has requested that the EU emblem be withdrawn from websites in the UK and Spain and has informed the Member States within the Administrative Commission for the Coordination of Social Security Schemes of its views on this matter.

The Commission continues to publicise the EHIC through campaigns and via its webpages, and recently launched a smartphone application on the EHIC.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/EC, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.

([2]) Community trade marks are governed by the Community Trade Mark Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 207/2009 of 26 February 2009 on the Community trade mark, OJ L 78, 24.3.2009, p. 1). The Office for Harmonisation in the internal market (OHIM), a European agency, is responsible for applying the regulation, which states that descriptive or otherwise non-distinctive signs are excluded from registration.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009648/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(23 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Minoranza etnica e religiosa Chin in Birmania

Nonostante i notevoli progressi verso la libertà compiuti in Birmania negli ultimi due anni, tra gli aspetti più trascurati della situazione dei diritti umani nel paese vi sono la discriminazione e la persecuzione perpetrate dal regime nei confronti delle minoranze etniche e religiose. Secondo fonti internazionali e locali, nello Stato Chin della Birmania hanno luogo continue violazioni della libertà religiosa, tra cui violazioni del diritto di libertà di associazione religiosa, le conversioni coatte al buddismo (religione praticata dalla maggioranza etnica della popolazione della Birmania) e la distruzione di croci cristiane.

Un rapporto dell'organizzazione per i diritti umani dei Chin denuncia le violazioni dei diritti umani perpetrate nei cosiddetti «Istituti di formazione per lo sviluppo della gioventù delle razze nazionali nelle zone di confine», dove è proibita la pratica del cristianesimo a scuola e gli studenti Chin sono costretti a convertirsi al buddismo, principalmente dietro minaccia di coscrizione.

Il rispetto dei diritti delle persone appartenenti a minoranze è uno dei valori dell'UE. Questo valore è menzionato esplicitamente nell'articolo 2 del TUE e nell'articolo 21 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, entrambi i quali vietano espressamente la discriminazione sulla base dell'appartenenza a una minoranza nazionale.

Alla luce di quanto suesposto, si sottopongono all'attenzione dell'Alto Rappresentante i seguenti quesiti:

1. Intende l'AR invitare le autorità birmane a mettere in atto misure di protezione efficaci, al fine di permettere alle minoranze etniche di godere pienamente dei loro diritti civili e politici, così come dei loro diritti economici, sociali e culturali?

2. Ha richiesto un'indagine in merito alla promozione e alla tutela dei diritti delle minoranze etniche in Birmania?

3. Quali misure concrete intende l'UE intraprendere, nell'ambito delle riunioni ASEM e UE-ASEAN, al fine di far presenti le preoccupazione dell'Unione e incoraggiare il governo birmano a impegnarsi a rispettare il diritto di libertà religiosa?

4. Ritiene l'AR che, per sviluppare la pace, l'armonia, il rispetto, la comprensione e la cooperazione tra la popolazione Chin e la popolazione Bamar, occorra intraprendere ulteriori iniziative, nel rispetto del diritto, degli usi e delle prassi internazionali, al fine di garantire i diritti della popolazione Chin?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(11 dicembre 2012)

L'UE segue da vicino i cambiamenti in Myanmar/Birmania e sa che, per essere pienamente attuate e operative, le riforme hanno bisogno di tempo. L'UE è perfettamente consapevole che il nascente processo di riconciliazione nazionale deve andare di pari passo con sforzi volti a rafforzare lo stato di diritto e il rispetto dei diritti umani. Ancora una volta quest'anno l'UE è tra i sostenitori, in seno alle Nazioni unite, di una risoluzione sulla situazione dei diritti umani in Myanmar/Birmania.

L'UE eroga già finanziamenti per contribuire a rafforzare la capacità della neo-costituita Commissione nazionale per i diritti umani, affinché possa operare quale istituzione indipendente, efficace ed efficiente, in linea con i principi di Parigi sui diritti umani. L'UE collabora anche con le autorità centrali e locali e con altre parti interessate per sostenere il processo di pacificazione e stabilizzazione delle regioni etniche e favorirne lo sviluppo nel lungo periodo. Nello Stato di Chin, l'UE sostiene misure che alleviano la povertà garantendo la fornitura di servizi, assistenza sanitaria e istruzione di base alle popolazioni etniche vulnerabili colpite dalle deportazioni, dall'isolamento e dall'assenza di strutture pubbliche. Il prossimo anno l'UE intende potenziare il proprio sostegno se la valutazione congiunta che dovrà essere concordata dal governo e dai gruppi etnici permetterà di dar vita a un piano regionale.

L'UE fa pressione sul governo perché i diritti umani e lo stato di diritto siano ulteriormente tutelati, soprattutto nelle regioni etniche. L'AR/VP ha sollevato il problema con il presidente U Thein Sein in occasione dell'incontro tenutosi a settembre a New York. Analogamente il presidente della Commissione ne ha parlato in occasione dell'incontro con il presidente del Myanmar/Birmania durante la sua recente visita nel paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009648/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mario Mauro (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Chin ethnic and religious minority in Burma

Despite major progress toward liberty in Burma over the last two years, one of the most under-reported aspects of the country's human rights record has been the discrimination and persecution perpetrated by the regime towards religious and ethnic minorities. According to international and local reports, there are ongoing violations of religious freedom in Burma's Chin State, including violations of the right to freedom of religious assembly, coercion to convert to Buddhism (the religion of the majority ethnic Burmese population), and the destruction of Christian crosses.

A report by the Chin Human Rights Organisation exposes the human rights abuses perpetrated in the so-called 'Border Areas National Races Youth Development Training Schools', where Chin students are prevented from practising Christianity while at the schools and have been coerced to convert to Buddhism, primarily via the threat of conscription.

Respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities is one of the values of the EU. This value is explicitly mentioned in Article 2 TEU and in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights , both of which explicitly prohibit discrimination on the grounds of being a member of a national minority.

In the light of this, the following questions are submitted for the consideration of the High Representative:

1. Does the HR intend to call on the Burmese authorities to put effective protection measures in place in order to allow ethnic minorities full enjoyment of their civil and political rights, as well as their economic, social and cultural rights?

2. Has the HR ever called for an investigation concerning the promotion and protection of ethnic minorities' rights in Burma?

3. What concrete measures does the EU intend to take, in the framework of the ASEM and EU-ASEAN meetings, to raise the Union's concerns and encourage the Burmese Government to commit itself to respecting the right of freedom of religion?

4. Does the HR feel that in order to develop peace, harmony, respect, understanding and cooperation between the Chin people and the Bamar people, further actions, in compliance with international laws, customs and practices, should be taken in order to guarantee the rights of the Chin people?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(11 December 2012)

The EU has followed with close attention the changes in Myanmar/Burma while recognising that reforms will need time to be fully implemented and bear fruit. The EU is fully conscious that the nascent national reconciliation process must be coupled with endeavours to strengthen the rule of law and the respect of human rights. The EU is again in the lead this year in the framework of the United Nations for a Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar/Burma.

The EU has already provided funding to help strengthen the capacity of the recently-established national Human Rights Commission so that it can work as an independent, effective and efficient institution in line with the Paris Principles on Human Rights. The EU is also collaborating with the central and local authorities and other stakeholders to support the process of bringing peace and stability to ethnic regions and to open a long-term perspective for their development. In Chin state, the EU is supporting poverty alleviation through the provision of basic services, essential healthcare and basic education to vulnerable ethnic populations affected by displacement, isolation and the absence of public structures. The EU looks forward to increasing its support next year if the agreed joint assessment to be undertaken by government and ethnic groups forms the basis of a regional plan.

The EU encourages the Government to make further progress on the protection of human rights and the preservation of the rule of law, especially in ethnic areas. The HR/VP raised these issues with President U Thein Sein during their meeting in September in New York, and the President of the Commission also made these points when he met the President during his recent visit to the country.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009649/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Criação de um logótipo UE-RUP para os produtos das regiões ultraperiféricas

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou uma estratégia renovada para as regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia para atingir os objetivos da UE2020, isto é, um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo, na sua Comunicação de 20 de junho de 2012, intitulada «As regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo»;

— Esta estratégia para a ultraperiferia veio na sequência de uma resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre o papel da política de coesão nas regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no contexto da UE2020, documento que consagra uma série de propostas a serem tidas em conta nas ações da União no horizonte 2020;

— O Comité das Regiões irá emitir um parecer sobre a Comunicação da Comissão, tendo já apresentado e discutido um documento de trabalho; neste documento de trabalho, o relator do Comité das Regiões defende a necessidade de implementar medidas para a criação de um logótipo UE-RUP para facilitar a identificação dos produtos destas regiões no mercado interno da UE e de a Comissão incentivar atividades específicas de «marketing territorial»;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Como vê a criação de um logótipo UE-RUP para uma melhor identificação dos produtos das regiões ultraperiféricas no mercado interno da União?

2. Qual a possibilidade e a viabilidade de tal logótipo e quando prevê que este possa existir?

3. Quais as medidas específicas de «marketing territorial» que a Comissão pode propor ou aconselhar implementar nas RUP?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

A questão colocada pelo Senhor Deputado baseia-se num documento de trabalho do Comité das Regiões que ainda se encontra em fase de projeto. Isto significa que as declarações do relator ainda podem ser modificadas. A Comissão responderá às observações do Comité das Regiões em tempo oportuno, depois de o Comité ter adotado o seu parecer.

Já existe um logótipo da UE para identificar melhor os produtos agrícolas das regiões ultraperiféricas, em conformidade com o Regulamento POSEI ([1]). A Comissão, na sua proposta de reformulação do Regulamento POSEI, continua a apoiar o logótipo ([2]), uma vez que este constitui um instrumento apropriado para alertar os consumidores da UE para os produtos das regiões ultraperiféricas que satisfazem padrões de qualidade específicos.

([1]) Artigo 14.° (símbolo gráfico) do Regulamento (CE) n.° 247/2006 do Conselho, de 30 de janeiro de 2006, que estabelece medidas específicas no domínio agrícola das regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia.

([2]) Artigo 20.° (logótipo) da Proposta de Regulamento (UE) n.°…/ do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho que estabelece medidas específicas no domínio agrícola nas regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia, [COM(2010) 498 final].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009649/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Creation of an EU-OR logo for products from the outermost regions

In its communication 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', of 20 June 2012, the Commission presented a renewed strategy for the EU's outermost regions to enable them to meet the EU2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

This strategy for the outermost regions followed on from Parliament's resolution on the role of cohesion policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020, which laid out a series of proposals to be taken into account in EU actions towards 2020.

The Committee of the Regions is due to issue an opinion on the Commission communication, and has already presented and discussed a working document, in which the rapporteur for the Committee of the Regions defends the need to move towards the creation of an EU-outermost regions (OR) logo to make products from these regions more easily identifiable on the EU internal market, and for the Commission to promote specific 'territorial marketing' activities.

1. How does the Commission view the creation of a EU-OR logo to better identify products from the outermost regions on the Union's internal market?

2. What is the feasibility and viability of such a logo and when could it be brought into existence?

3. What specific 'territorial marketing' measures is the Commission able to propose or recommend be implemented in the outermost regions?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The question posed by the Honourable Member is based on a working document of the Committee of the Regions which still has the status of a draft. This means that the statements made by the rapporteur may still be modified. The Commission will reply to the observations of the Committee of the Regions in due time after the Committee has adopted its opinion.

There is already an EU logo to better identify agricultural products from the outermost regions under the POSEI Regulation ([1]). The Commission, in its proposal for the recast POSEI Regulation, has continued to support it ([2]) as it constitutes an appropriate tool to raise awareness of the EU consumer towards products from the outermost regions that respond to specific quality standards.

([1]) Article 14 (graphic symbol) of Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006, of 30 January 2006, laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union.

([2]) Article 20 (logo) of Proposal for a regulation (EU) No …/ of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union (COM(2010) 498 final).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009650/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Adaptação dos níveis do sistema de educação e de formação nas RUP aos níveis da UE

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou, na sua Comunicação, de 20 de junho de 2012, intitulada «As Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um Crescimento Inteligente, Sustentável e Inclusivo», uma estratégia renovada para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia, a fim de que elas atinjam os objetivos da UE2020, isto é, um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo;

— Esta estratégia para a ultraperiferia veio na sequência de uma resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre o papel da política de coesão nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no contexto da UE2020, documento que consagra uma série de propostas a serem tidas em conta nas ações da União no horizonte de 2020;

— O Comité das Regiões irá emitir um Parecer sobre a Comunicação da Comissão, tendo já apresentado e discutido um documento de trabalho; e que, neste documento de trabalho, o relator do Comité das Regiões insiste na necessidade de adaptar o sistema de educação e de formação nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas aos níveis da União Europeia;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Quais os incentivos e as orientações que a Comissão pode dar para a referida adaptação dos níveis do sistema de educação e de formação nas RUP aos níveis da União Europeia?

2. Na prática, haverá alguma medida específica relacionada com a melhoria dos níveis do sistema de educação e de formação das RUP que, no âmbito da sua competência, poderá propor ao Conselho e ao Parlamento? Em caso afirmativo, o que poderia propor?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(19 de dezembro de 2012)

A pergunta baseia-se num documento de trabalho do Comité das Regiões que ainda se encontra em fase de projeto. Isto significa que as declarações do relator ainda podem ser modificadas. A Comissão responderá às observações do Comité das Regiões em tempo oportuno depois de o Comité ter adotado o seu parecer.

O Fundo Social Europeu (FSE) apoia políticas que procuram melhorar a educação e os sistemas de formação. Na proposta da Comissão para um Regulamento sobre o Fundo Social Europeu em 2014-20 ([1]), um dos desafios suplementares é o nível do desempenho insuficiente dos sistemas educativos. É por esse motivo que a Comissão propõe que o FSE deva reduzir o abandono escolar precoce e promover a igualdade de acesso à educação infantil, primária e secundária, melhorar a qualidade do ensino superior ou equivalente com o objetivo de aumentar a participação e os níveis de habilitação, assim como aumentar o acesso à aprendizagem ao longo da vida, atualizar as aptidões e competências da mão-de-obra e aumentar o peso da educação e dos sistemas de formação no mercado de trabalho.

Os objetivos principais da cooperação europeia para a educação e formação estão definidos no quadro estratégico «EF2020» ([2]). Em conformidade com o EF2020, a Comissão lançou recentemente uma nova estratégia, «Repensar a educação» ([3]), para que se obtenham melhores resultados socioeconómicos ([4]) em todo o território da UE.

([1]) COM(2011) 607 final /2 2011/0268 (COD) ligação em: http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=pt.
([2]) Ver as Conclusões do Conselho de 12 maio de 2009 sobre um quadro estratégico para a cooperação europeia a nível da educação e formação («EF2020») (2009/C 119/02).
([3]) COM(2012) 669 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=pt.

As regiões ultraperiféricas da UE estão plenamente integradas nos programas atuais de educação, formação e juventude e farão parte do novo programa proposto para a UE no domínio da educação, formação, juventude e desporto, Erasmus para Todos, que irá reforçar a mobilidade dos estudantes e do pessoal docente, assim como apoiar a cooperação além-fronteiras entre a educação, a formação e as organizações de jovens.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009650/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Adapting the standards of the education and training system in the outermost regions to those of the EU

In its communication 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', of 20 June 2012, the Commission presented a renewed strategy for the EU's outermost regions to enable them to meet the EU2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

This strategy for the outermost regions followed on from Parliament's resolution on the role of cohesion policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020, which laid out a series of proposals to be taken into account in EU actions towards 2020.

The Committee of the Regions is due to issue an opinion on the Commission communication, and has already presented and discussed a working document, in which the rapporteur for the Committee of the Regions stresses the need to adapt the education and professional training system in the outermost regions to that of the EU.

1. What incentives and guidelines can the Commission provide for the abovementioned adaptation of the levels of the education and training system in the outermost regions to those of the EU?

2. In practical terms, are there any specific measures to improve the standards of the educational and training system in the outermost regions which the commission could propose, within its field of competence, to Parliament and the Council? If so, what would these be?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

The question is based on a working document of the Committee of the Regions which still has the status of a draft. This means that the statements made by the rapporteur may still be modified. The Commission will reply to the observations of the Committee in due time after the Committee has adopted its opinion.

The European Social Fund (ESF) supports policies aiming to improve education and training systems. In the Commission proposal for a regulation on the ESF for 2014-20 ([1]), one of the additional challenges is the under-performance in education systems. Hence, the Commission proposes that the ESF shall reduce early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education, improve the quality of tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainments levels and enhance access to lifelong learning, upgrading the skills and competences of the workforce and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems.

The key objectives of European cooperation in education and training are defined in the 'ET2020' Strategic Framework ([2]). In accordance with ET2020, the Commission recently launched a new strategy on 'Rethinking Education' ([3]), for better socioeconomic outcomes ([4]) across the entire territory of the EU.

The EU's outermost regions are fully integrated into the current education, training and youth programmes and will be part of the proposed new EU programme in the area of education, training, youth and sport, Erasmus for All which will enhance the mobility of students and educational staff, and support cross-border cooperation between education, training and youth organisations.

([1]) COM(2011) 607 final /2 2011/0268 (COD) link to: http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en.
([2]) See Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02).
([3]) COM(2012) 669 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/rethinking_en.htm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009651/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Definição do papel de cada DG da Comissão na implementação da estratégia das RUP

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou, na sua Comunicação de 20 de junho de 2012, intitulada «As Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um Crescimento Inteligente, Sustentável e Inclusivo», uma estratégia renovada para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia, a fim de que elas atinjam os objetivos da UE2020, ou seja, um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo;

— Esta estratégia para a ultraperiferia veio na sequência de uma resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre o papel da política de coesão nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no contexto da UE2020, documento que consagra uma série de propostas a serem tidas em conta nas ações da União no horizonte de 2020;

— O Comité das Regiões irá emitir um Parecer sobre a Comunicação da Comissão, tendo já apresentado e discutido um documento de trabalho; e que, neste documento de trabalho, o relator do Comité das Regiões insiste que a DG Emprego, Assuntos Sociais e Inclusão deve estar envolvida na implementação desta Estratégia, mas que tal papel deve caber também às outras Direções-Gerais da Comissão, bem como o trabalho próximo dos Comités *ad hoc* das RUP;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Qual o papel que considera caber a cada uma das Direções-Gerais na implementação da estratégia renovada para as RUP no horizonte 2020?

2. Considera que a Direção-Geral do Emprego deve tomar a dianteira na implementação da Estratégia? Como seria, nesse caso, articulado o trabalho no seio da Comissão entre as várias Direções-Gerais?

3. Qual o maior grau de envolvimento que podem ter os Comités *ad hoc* das RUP na execução desta estratégia renovada?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

A questão colocada pelo Senhor Deputado baseia-se num documento de trabalho do Comité das Regiões que ainda se encontra em fase de projeto. Isto significa que as declarações do relator ainda podem ser modificadas. A Comissão responderá às observações do Comité das Regiões em tempo oportuno, depois de o Comité ter adotado o seu parecer.

No âmbito da Comissão, a implementação da estratégia da UE para as regiões ultraperiféricas (RUP) é efetuada por cada Direção-Geral no âmbito das suas competências e estreitamente coordenada pela Direção-Geral da Política Regional e Urbana.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009651/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Definition of the role of each Commission DG in implementing the strategy for the outermost regions

In its communication 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', of 20 June 2012, the Commission presented a renewed strategy for the EU's outermost regions to enable them to meet the EU2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

This strategy for the outermost regions followed on from Parliament's resolution on the role of cohesion policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020, which laid out a series of proposals to be taken into account in EU actions towards 2020.

The Committee of the Regions is due to issue an opinion on the Commission communication, and has already presented and discussed a working document, in which the rapporteur for the Committee of the Regions expresses the view that the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion should be involved in the implementation of this strategy, and that this role should also be extended to other Commission DGs, as well as work relating to the *ad hoc* committees of the outermost regions.

1. What role does the Commission consider should be played by each DG in the implementation of the renewed strategy for the outermost regions towards 2020?

2. Does the Commission consider that the DG Employment should take a leading role in implementing the strategy? If so, how would work within the Commission be distributed among the various DGs?

3. What is the greatest extent to which the outermost regions' ad hoc committees will be able to participate in the implementation of the renewed strategy?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

The question posed by the Honourable Member is based on a working document of the Committee of the Regions which still has the status of a draft. This means that the statements made by the rapporteur may still be modified. The Commission will reply to the observations of the Committee of the Regions in due time after the Committee has adopted its opinion.

Within the Commission, the implementation of the EU Strategy vis-à-vis the outermost regions (ORs) is carried out by each Directorate-General within its remit of competence and closely coordinated by the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009652/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Participação de instituições regionais (que não RUP) nos trabalhos da Unidade RUP da Direção-Geral da Política Regional

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou, na sua Comunicação, de 20 de junho de 2012, intitulada «As Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um Crescimento Inteligente, Sustentável e Inclusivo», uma estratégia renovada para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia, a fim de que elas atinjam os objetivos da UE2020, isto é, um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo;

— Esta estratégia para a ultraperiferia veio na sequência de uma resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre o papel da política de coesão nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no contexto da UE2020, documento que consagra uma série de propostas a serem tidas em conta nas ações da União no horizonte de 2020;

— O Comité das Regiões irá emitir um Parecer sobre a Comunicação da Comissão, tendo já apresentado e discutido um documento de trabalho; e que, neste documento de trabalho, o relator do Comité das Regiões considera que outras instituições regionais (que não RUP) com características e constrangimentos semelhantes devem assistir a Unidade RUP da Direção-Geral da Política Regional no seu trabalho;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Como vê a participação de outras instituições regionais (que não RUP) com características e constrangimentos semelhantes na assistência da Unidade RUP da Direção-Geral da Política Regional?

2. Como pode esta assistência contribuir para a prossecução dos objetivos e a implementação das medidas, com vista à realização da estratégia renovada para as RUP?

3. Em que termos esta assistência pode ser profícua para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas e como assegurar que ela esteja num patamar diferente da assistência garantida pelas próprias RUP?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

A questão colocada pelo Senhor Deputado baseia-se num documento de trabalho do Comité das Regiões que ainda se encontra em fase de projeto. Isto significa que as declarações do relator ainda podem ser modificadas. A Comissão responderá às observações do Comité das Regiões em tempo oportuno depois de o Comité ter adotado o seu parecer.

A Unidade de Coordenação das Regiões Ultraperiféricas da Direção-Geral de Política Regional e Urbana da Comissão Europeia está disponível para receber e ponderar contributos que sejam relevantes, apropriados e adequados para o desenvolvimento da estratégia da UE para as regiões ultraperiféricas, incluindo de «outras instituições regionais (que não RUP) com características e constrangimentos semelhantes».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009652/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Participation of other (non-outermost) regional institutions in the work of the outermost regions unit of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy

In its communication 'the outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', of 20 June 2012, the Commission presented a renewed strategy for the EU's outermost regions to enable them to meet the EU2020 goals of smartt, sustainable and inclusive growth

This strategy for the outermost regions followed on from Parliament's resolution on the role of cohesion policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020, which laid out a series of proposals to be taken into account in EU actions towards 2020.

The Committee of the Regions is due to issue an opinion on the Commission communication, and has already presented and discussed a working document, in which the rapporteur for the Committee of the Regions expresses the view that other (non-outermost) regional institutions with similar characteristics and constraints should assist the Outermost Regions Unit of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy in its work.

1. How does the Commission view the participation of other (non-outermost) regional institutions with similar characteristics and constraints in assistance provided by the Outermost Regions Unit of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy?

2. How can the involvement of such institutions be of benefit in achieving the objectives and applying the measures of the renewed strategy for the outermost regions?

3. How can their presence be of advantage to the outermost regions, and what guarantees can be provided that they will receive a different level of assistance to that reserved for the outermost regions?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The question posed by the Honourable Member is based on a working document of the Committee of the Regions which still has the status of a draft. This means that the statements made by the rapporteur may still be modified. The Commission will reply to the observations of the Committee of the Regions in due time after the Committee has adopted its opinion.

The 'outermost regions' unit in the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy is open to receive and consider contributions that are relevant, appropriate and suitable to develop the EU strategy for the outermost regions, including those from 'other (non-outermost) regional institutions with similar characteristics and constraints'.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009653/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Incentivo da Comissão Europeia a programas de gestão regionais nas RUP

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou, na sua Comunicação, de 20 de junho de 2012, intitulada «As Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um Crescimento Inteligente, Sustentável e Inclusivo», uma estratégia renovada para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia, a fim de que elas atinjam os objetivos da UE2020, ou seja, um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo;

— Esta estratégia para a ultraperiferia veio na sequência de uma resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre o papel da política de coesão nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no contexto da UE2020, documento que consagra uma série de propostas a serem tidas em conta nas ações da União no horizonte de 2020;

— O Comité das Regiões irá emitir um Parecer sobre a Comunicação da Comissão, tendo já apresentado e discutido um documento de trabalho; e que, neste documento de trabalho, o relator do Comité das Regiões propõe à Comissão que incentive nas RUP programas de gestão pelas autoridades regionais e de parceria a todos os níveis com os Estados-Membros;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Tenciona agir para incentivar a existência de programas de gestão pelas autoridades regionais nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas?

2. Como pode a Comissão agir e que medidas pode propor para incentivar a existência de programas de gestão regionais?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

A questão colocada pelo Senhor Deputado baseia-se num documento de trabalho do Comité das Regiões que ainda se encontra em fase de projeto. Isto significa que as declarações do relator ainda podem ser modificadas. A Comissão responderá às observações do Comité das Regiões em tempo oportuno, depois de o Comité ter adotado o seu parecer.

Na sequência da adoção do Tratado de Lisboa, que introduziu a noção de «coesão territorial», a Comissão apresentou uma proposta para a política de coesão em 2014-2020 que reforça a dimensão territorial dos programas. Neste contexto, os Estados-Membros e as regiões deverão analisar o potencial e capacidade de desenvolvimento de cada território, em particular das regiões ultraperiféricas, tendo em conta os principais desafios, a identificação dos pontos de estrangulamento e as ligações necessárias, bem como as lacunas de inovação, incluindo a falta de planeamento e de capacidade de implementação que restringe o potencial de crescimento e de emprego a longo prazo.

No entanto, cabe a cada Estado-Membro decidir, com base no princípio da gestão partilhada, e de acordo com a sua organização institucional, qual é o nível de administração mais apropriado para assumir o papel de autoridade de gestão.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009653/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Promotion by the Commission of regional management programmes in the outermost regions

In its communication 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', of 20 June 2012, the Commission presented a renewed strategy for the EU's outermost regions to enable them to meet the EU2020 goals of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

This strategy for the outermost regions followed on from Parliament's resolution on the role of cohesion policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020, which laid out a series of proposals to be taken into account in EU actions towards 2020.

The Committee of the Regions is due to issue an opinion on the Commission communication, and has already presented and discussed a working document, in which the rapporteur for the Committee of the Regions proposes that the Commission promote the creation of management programmes in the outermost regions by the regional authorities and partnership programmes at all levels with the Member States.

1. Does the Commision intend to take action to promote the creation of management programmes by the regional authorities in the outermost regions?

2. What action can the Commission take and what measures can it propose to encourage the creation of regional management programmes?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The question posed by the Honourable Member is based on a working document of the Committee of the Regions which still has the status of a draft. This means that the statements made by the rapporteur may still be modified. The Commission will reply to the observations of the Committee of the Regions in due time after the Committee has adopted its opinion.

Further to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, which has introduced the notion of 'territorial cohesion', the Commission has tabled a proposal for cohesion policy in 2014-2020 which reinforces the territorial dimension of programmes. In this respect, Member States and regions shall analyse the development potential and capacity of each territory, in particular the outermost regions, according to an assessment of their major challenges, the identification of the bottlenecks and missing links, innovation gaps, including the lack of planning and implementation capacity that inhibit the long-term potential for growth and jobs.

However, it is up to each Member State to decide, on the basis of the shared management principle, and in accordance with its own institutional set up, what layer of government is the most appropriate to take on the role of managing authority.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009654/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Um regulamento para o programa POSEI Pescas na Política Comum das Pescas reformada

Considerando que:

— As regiões ultraperiféricas beneficiam de um estatuto particular consagrado no artigo 349.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, o qual permite que sejam adotadas medidas específicas nestas regiões, tendo em conta a sua situação estrutural particular em razão dos seus constrangimentos geográficos e das suas dificuldades permanentes;

— Ao longo dos anos, em vários domínios da legislação europeia, foram criadas medidas específicas para estas regiões da União com o intuito de compensar os custos do seu afastamento e de incentivar o seu desenvolvimento económico e social, entre as quais o programa POSEI para as Pescas;

— Porém, o programa POSEI para as Pescas não consta, tal como o programa POSEI para a Agricultura, de um documento separado do atual Fundo Europeu para as Pescas, e a proposta da Comissão Europeia relativa ao futuro Fundo Europeu para os Assuntos Marítimos e Pescas, no âmbito da reforma em curso da Política Comum das Pescas, não aborda esta questão, indicando simplesmente o valor das ajudas a conceder a cada uma das regiões ultraperiféricas;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Qual o valor, a preços de 2011, do limite das ajudas a serem concedidas a cada uma das regiões ultraperiféricas no período de 2007 a 2013? Qual o valor das ajudas até à data concedidas?

2. Pretende avançar com uma proposta de regulamento especial sobre o programa POSEI Pescas, à imagem do regime do programa POSEI Agricultura para as regiões ultraperiféricas adaptado ao domínio das pescas e aos objetivos da atual reforma da Política Comum das Pescas? Em caso afirmativo, quando prevê apresentar tal proposta?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009658/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: RUP e futuro do POSEI Pescas

Considerando que:

— As Regiões Ultraperiféricas beneficiam de um estatuto particular consagrado no artigo 349.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, o qual permite que sejam adotadas medidas específicas nestas regiões, tendo em conta a sua situação estrutural particular em razão dos seus constrangimentos geográficos e das suas dificuldades permanentes;

— Ao longo dos anos, em vários domínios da legislação europeia, foram criadas medidas específicas para estas regiões da União com o intuito compensar os custos do seu afastamento e de incentivar o seu desenvolvimento económico e social, de entre as quais o programa POSEI para as Pescas;

— O programa POSEI para as Pescas nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas é alvo de avaliação e de revisão e que a Política Comum das Pescas é, atualmente, objeto de uma reforma no seio das instituições europeias;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Qual o valor e a evolução das ajudas POSEI atribuídas a cada uma das Regiões Ultraperiféricas ao longo dos anos?

2. Face à tendência verificada, como vê o futuro do POSEI Pescas nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas?

Resposta conjunta dada por Maria Damanaki em nome da Comissão
(20 de dezembro de 2012)

As medidas específicas para o setor da pesca e aquicultura nas regiões ultraperiféricas estão previstas no regime de compensação instituído pelo Regulamento (CE) n.° 791/2007 ([1]), aplicável até ao final de 2013.

A Comissão envia diretamente ao Senhor Deputado e ao Secretariado do Parlamento um quadro com as informações solicitadas: montantes máximos concedidos a cada uma das regiões em questão e montantes já concedidos.

Quanto ao período posterior a 31 de dezembro de 2013, a Comissão propôs um regime de compensação semelhante ao que está em vigor. O novo regime foi integrado na proposta de regulamento do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho sobre o Fundo Europeu para os Assuntos Marítimos e as Pescas (FEAMP) ([2]).

A Comissão propôs a manutenção do regime em vigor em termos de níveis de financiamento (após arredondamento), critérios de elegibilidade e âmbito geográfico, uma vez que, no que respeita a este último, é possível alargá-lo a outras regiões ultraperiféricas, se os Estados-Membros em questão assim o desejarem, desde que se mantenha dentro dos envelopes orçamentais.

Na proposta de FEAMP, a Comissão mantém os montantes previstos no atual regulamento, com base no argumento de que são suficientes para garantir o funcionamento do regime.

([1]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 791/2007 do Conselho, de 21 de maio de 2007, que institui um regime de compensação dos custos suplementares relativos ao escoamento de determinados produtos da pesca das regiões ultraperiféricas dos Açores, da Madeira, das ilhas Canárias, da Guiana Francesa e da Reunião.

([2]) Os artigos 73.°, 74.° e 75.° da proposta do FEAMP incluem disposições específicas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009654/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Regulation of the POSEI fisheries programme within the revised Common Fisheries Policy

The outermost regions are granted special status under the terms of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows specific measures to be adopted in these regions, taking into account their special structural situation owing to their geographical constraints and permanent difficulties.

Over the years, specific measures for these EU regions have been created in a number of areas of European legislation, in order to compensate the costs derived from their isolation and to promote their economic and social integration. One such measure is the POSEI fisheries programme.

However, unlike the POSEI agriculture programme, the POSEI fisheries programme is not covered by a text separate from the current European Fisheries Fund, and the Commission's proposal concerning the future European Fund for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, in the context of the present reform of the common fisheries policy, does not address this issue. It merely indicates the amount of aid to be granted to each of the outermost regions.

Can the Commission say:

1. How much, in 2011 prices, is the maximum amount of aid granted to each of the outermost regions for the 2007 to 2013 period? What amounts of aid have been granted so far?

2. Does the Commission intend to put forward a proposal for a special regulation on the POSEI fisheries programme, along the lines of the system used for the POSEI agriculture programme for the outermost regions, tailored to the fisheries sphere and the goals of the current reform of the common fisheries policy? If so, when does it intend to present this proposal?

Question for written answer E-009658/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Outermost regions and the future of the POSEI fisheries programme

The outermost regions are granted special status under the terms of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows specific measures to be adopted in these regions, taking into account their special structural situation owing to their geographical constraints and permanent difficulties.

Over the years, specific measures for these EU regions have been created in a number of areas of European legislation, in order to compensate the costs derived from their isolation and to promote their economic and social integration. One such measure is the POSEI fisheries programme.

The POSEI fisheries programme in the outermost regions has undergone a number of assessments and revisions over the years, despite the fact that the legislation applied to it is separate from that regulating direct payments, within the sphere of the Common Agriculture Policy, which is now under process of reform by the European institutions.

Can the Commission say:

1. What has been the value and evolution of POSEI funding allocated to each of the outermost regions over the years?

2. In light of current trends, how does the Commission view the future of the POSEI fisheries programme in the outermost regions?

Joint answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(20 December 2012)

The specific measures for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the outermost regions are provided for by the compensation regime governed by Council Regulation (EC) No 791/2007 ([1]), which expires at the end of 2013.

The Commission is sending directly to the Honourable Member and to the Parliament's Secretariat a table containing the information requested: maximum amounts granted to each of the concerned regions and amounts granted so far.

For the period after 31 December 2013, the Commission has proposed a compensation scheme, similar to the one currently in force. This new scheme has been integrated into the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) ([2]).

The Commission has proposed to maintain the current regime in terms of financing levels (after rounding), eligibility criteria and geographical scope, considering that, with regard to the latter, it could be extended to other outermost regions, if the concerned Member States so wish, as long as it remains within the limits of the budget envelopes.

In its proposal for the EMFF the Commission maintains the amounts provided for in the current regulation on the basis that they are sufficient to ensure the proper functioning of the scheme.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 791/2007 of 21 May 2007 introducing a scheme to compensate for the additional costs incurred in the marketing of certain fishery products from the outermost regions the Azores, Madeira, the Canary Islands, French Guiana and Réunion.

([2]) Specific provisions are included in Articles 73, 74 and 75 of the EMFF proposal.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009655/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Relatório geral sobre os programas nas regiões ultraperiféricas

Considerando que:

— As regiões ultraperiféricas beneficiam de um estatuto particular consagrado no artigo 349.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, o qual permite que sejam adotadas medidas específicas nestas regiões, tendo em conta a sua situação estrutural particular em razão dos seus constrangimentos geográficos e das suas dificuldades permanentes;

— Ao longo dos anos, em vários domínios da legislação europeia, foram criadas algumas regras especiais para estas regiões da União com o intuito de aproximar o seu nível de desenvolvimento do nível das demais regiões europeias, quer através de um esquema de compensação dos custos do seu afastamento, quer através de um incentivo aos setores com elevado potencial nestas regiões, o que se refletiu em vários programas, como o POSEI, o LIFE ou o SAVE e o Interprise;

— No relatório Solbes, destaca-se a necessidade de adotar medidas específicas que sejam capazes de melhor integrar as regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no mercado interno e afirma-se que a promoção e o acompanhamento de programas de índole especial adaptados às RUP se revestem de uma importância primordial;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Estaria a Comissão disposta a apresentar um relatório geral relativo à implementação e aos resultados dos vários programas específicos até à data existentes nas regiões ultraperiféricas?

2. Como vê a possibilidade de passar a apresentar, posteriormente, um relatório geral anual ou bianual, que verse sobre os progressos alcançados e os aspetos a melhorar, numa base periódica que permita, de forma constante e objetiva, promover informação sobre o sucesso das várias medidas?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(5 de dezembro de 2012)

Na Comunicação sobre as regiões ultraperiféricas (RUP), de junho de 2012 ([1]), a Comissão estabeleceu um plano de trabalho em parceria com estas regiões no âmbito da Estratégia Europa 2020. Em particular, a Comissão indicou que, o mais tardar até ao final de 2017, irá avaliar o estado da implementação de cada uma das medidas propostas na Comunicação. O trabalho do grupo interserviços dedicado permitirá a integração das RUP no mercado único e no seu ambiente geográfico. A Comissão considera que esta é atualmente a forma mais eficiente e eficaz de vigiar as medidas específicas às RUP. O seguimento dado às medidas e aos programas legislativos específicos está sujeito a regras particulares de calendário e conteúdo. A Comissão sublinha a importância de as RUP apresentarem os seus planos de ação, tal como é sugerido na comunicação, uma vez que tal contribuiria para uma melhor implementação e seguimento das medidas e ações propostas em junho de 2012.

([1]) Comunicação da Comissão, «As regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo»; COM(2012) 287 final de 20.6.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009655/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: General report on programmes in the outermost regions

The outermost regions are granted special status under the terms of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows specific measures to be adopted in these regions, taking into account their special structural situation owing to their geographical constraints and permanent difficulties.

Over the years, a number of special rules for these EU regions have been created in various areas of European legislation, in order to bring their level of development closer to that of other EU regions, either by means of systems to compensate the cost of their remoteness or by offering incentives to sectors within these regions showing high potential. This has been reflected in various programmes, such as POSEI, LIFE, SAVE and INTERPRISE.

The Solbes report emphasised the need to adopt specific measures to better integrate the EU's outermost regions in the internal market. The report stressed the prime importance of promoting and supporting programmes specially adapted to the outermost regions.

1. Would the Commission be prepared to present a general report on the implementation and results of the various specific programmes currently in existence in the outermost regions?

2. How does the Commission view the possibility of subsequently presenting annual or bi-annual general reports detailing progress made and aspects open to improvement, on a periodic basis, so as to provide, in an ongoing and objective manner, information on the success achieved by the various measures?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(5 December 2012)

In the communication on the outermost regions (ORs) of June 2012 ([1]), the Commission set out its plan on how to work in partnership with these regions in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. In particular, it indicated that it will review the state of implementation of each of the measures proposed in the communication by the end of 2017 at the latest. It will strengthen the integration of the ORs in the single market and in their geographical environment in a dedicated interservice group. The Commission considers this is currently the most efficient and effective way to monitor the specific measures affecting the ORs. An ad hoc follow-up of specific legislative measures and programmes is subject to particular rules for timing and content. The Commission underlines the importance of the ORs presenting their action plans as suggested in the communication, since this would contribute to a better implementation and follow-up to the measures/actions proposed in June 2012.

([1]) Communication from the Commission 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'; COM(2012)287 final, of 20.06.2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009656/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Regiões ultraperiféricas e acordos externos

Considerando que:

— As regiões ultraperiféricas beneficiam de um estatuto particular consagrado no artigo 349.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, o qual permite que sejam adotadas medidas específicas nestas regiões, tendo em conta a sua situação estrutural particular em razão dos seus constrangimentos geográficos e das suas dificuldades permanentes;

— O papel das regiões ultraperiféricas nas relações externas da União Europeia, em virtude da sua localização geográfica e da sua posição geoestratégica, tem vindo a ser progressivamente reconhecido pelo Parlamento Europeu e pela Comissão Europeia;

— A Comissão Europeia, na sua recente estratégia renovada para as regiões ultraperiféricas, antevê a possibilidade de as RUP concluírem acordos com países vizinhos para liberalizar os transportes e aumentar as suas ligações;

— Além disso, as RUP podem vir a servir de entreposto aquando da implementação dos acordos comerciais entre a União Europeia e países terceiros, podendo beneficiar, em termos de emprego e de volume de trocas, de um papel mais ativo no contexto de tais relações comerciais internacionais da União Europeia;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. No caso dos acordos concluídos pelas RUP, está disposta a conceder a possibilidade de derrogação ao direito da União e admitir a inclusão de regras especiais, ao abrigo do artigo 349.° do TFUE, no texto dos mesmos?

2. Como podem as RUP ter um papel mais ativo no âmbito dos acordos comerciais celebrados pela União? Está disposta a considerar tal aspeto no contexto de futuras negociações? Com que parceiros e em que áreas de comércio lhe parece mais pertinente considerar um papel mais ativo das RUP enquanto entreposto comercial?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(18 de dezembro de 2012)

A comunicação sobre as regiões ultraperiféricas ([1]) (RUP), adotada em junho de 2012, não prevê a possibilidade de estas regiões «celebrarem acordos com países vizinhos para liberalizar os transportes e aumentar as suas ligações», mas menciona que «a UE ponderará a celebração de acordos com os países vizinhos para liberalizar os transportes e aumentar as ligações com as RUP». No que diz respeito aos transportes aéreos em particular, a Comissão, na sua recente Comunicação sobre a política externa da UE no setor da aviação ([2]), afirmou que «os contactos e as negociações com os restantes países vizinhos», ou seja, aqueles com quem ainda não foi possível concluir as negociações, «devem ser intensificados e acelerados tendo em vista a conclusão de acordos até 2015».

Quanto a um papel mais ativo das RUP nas relações externas da UE, os acordos da UE, quando tal é relevante, fazem referências específicas às RUP para as encorajar a desempenhar um papel ativo na implementação desses acordos. Este é o caso do artigo 132.°, alínea h) e do artigo 239.° do Acordo de Parceria Económica UE/Cariforum sobre a promoção e reforço das atividades de cooperação regional que envolvam as RUP. As próprias RUP têm de aproveitar as oportunidades oferecidas nos acordos da UE que dizem respeito às suas zonas geográficas. As RUP dispõem frequentemente de uma mão-de-obra com níveis de educação e de qualificação mais elevados e de serviços públicos e de competências mais avançados do que os seus vizinhos, o que lhes dá possibilidade de prestar serviços e conhecimentos especializados em setores de elevado valor acrescentado. As RUP têm também potencial para se transformarem em plataformas para as empresas e a cooperação e em centros logísticos.

([1]) COM(2012) 287 final, de 20.6.2012. Comunicação da Comissão «As regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo».

([2]) COM(2012) 556 final, de 27.9.2012. Comunicação da Comissão ao Parlamento Europeu, ao Conselho, ao Comité Económico e Social Europeu e ao Comité das Regiões «A política externa da UE no setor da aviação — Responder aos futuros desafios».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009656/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Outermost regions and external agreements

The outermost regions are granted special status under the terms of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows specific measures to be adopted in these regions, taking into account their special structural situation arising from their geographical constraints and permanent difficulties.

The role of the outermost regions in the EU's external relations, due to their geographical location and geostrategic position, has been increasingly recognised by Parliament and the Commission.

In its recent renewed strategy for the outermost regions, the Commission foresaw the possibility of the outermost regions being able to conclude agreements with neighbouring countries in order to liberalise transport and increase their connections.

In addition, the outermost regions could take on a role as staging posts in the implementation of trade agreements between the EU and third countries, enabling them to assume a more active role, in terms of employment and volume of exchanges, in the EU's international commercial relations.

1. Would the Commission be prepared, in the case of agreements signed by the outermost regions, to grant the possibility of derogating from EC law to allow the inclusion therein of special rules, under the terms of Article 349 TFEU?

2. How can the outermost regions take a more active role in trade agreements concluded by the Union? Is the Commission prepared to consider this aspect when engaging in future negotiations? With which partners and in which areas of trade does it consider it most appropriate to provide for a more active role for the outermost regions as commercial terminals?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The communication on the outermost regions ([1]) (ORs) adopted in June 2012 does not foresee the possibility of these regions 'being able to conclude agreements with neighbouring countries in order to liberalise transport and increase their connections', but mentions that 'the EU will consider the conclusion of agreements with countries neighbouring the OR to liberalise transport and increase connections'. As regards air transport in particular, the Commission, in its recent Communication on the EU's External Aviation Policy ([2]) stated that 'Contacts and negotiations with the remaining neighbouring countries', i.e. those with which no agreement has been reached so far, 'should be intensified and accelerated with a view to reaching agreements by 2015'.

As regards a more active role of the ORs in EU external relations, EU agreements, when relevant, do make explicit reference to the ORs and encourage them to play an active role in the implementation of such agreements. This is the case for Article 132(h) and Article 239 of the EU/CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement on the promotion and reinforcement of regional cooperative activities involving the ORs. The ORs themselves have to seize the opportunities offered in the EU agreements concerning their geographical zones. The ORs often have a better educated and skilled workforce, public services, and more advanced know-how than their neighbours, which gives them the possibility to sell services and expertise in high added value sectors. The ORs have also the potential to become business and cooperation platforms and logistical hubs.

([1]) COM(2012) 287 final of 20.6.2012. Communication from the Commission 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'.

([2]) COM(2012) 556 final of 27.9.2012. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challenges'.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009657/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Regiões Ultraperiféricas e futuro do POSEI Agricultura

Considerando que:

— As Regiões Ultraperiféricas beneficiam de um estatuto particular consagrado no artigo 349.° do Tratado sobre o Funcionamento da União Europeia, o qual permite que sejam adotadas medidas específicas nestas regiões, tendo em conta a sua situação estrutural particular em razão dos seus constrangimentos geográficos e das suas dificuldades permanentes;

— Ao longo dos anos, em vários domínios da legislação europeia, foram criadas medidas específicas para estas regiões da União com o intuito compensar os custos do seu afastamento e de incentivar o seu desenvolvimento económico e social, de entre as quais o programa POSEI para a Agricultura;

— O programa POSEI para a Agricultura nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas tem sido alvo de avaliações e revisões ao longo dos anos, apesar de o regime deste programa estar previsto numa legislação separada da própria regulamentação dos pagamentos diretos, no âmbito da Política Agrícola Comum, e que esta é atualmente objeto de uma reforma no seio das instituições europeias;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Qual o valor e a evolução das ajudas POSEI atribuídas a cada um das Regiões Ultraperiféricas ao longo dos anos?

2. Face à tendência verificada, como vê o futuro do POSEI Agricultura nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(10 de dezembro de 2012)

As medidas específicas no domínio agrícola a favor das regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia são regidas pelo Regulamento (CE) n.° 247/2006 do Conselho ([1]).

Os programas POSEI para a agricultura são constituídos essencialmente por dois tipos de medidas: as medidas de apoio à produção agrícola local e o regime específico de abastecimento, que tem por objetivo atenuar os custos adicionais do abastecimento das regiões ultraperiféricas em produtos agrícolas essenciais ao consumo humano ou animal e como fatores de produção agrícola.

Os montantes financeiros máximos disponíveis anualmente, fixados no artigo 23.° do regulamento acima referido, constam do anexo.

O aumento progressivo das dotações do POSEI a partir de 2007 deve-se à reforma de 2006 da organização comum de mercado das bananas, na sequência da qual os montantes do apoio à produção de bananas nas regiões ultraperiféricas foram transferidos para o POSEI.

No que respeita ao futuro do programa POSEI para a agricultura, a Comissão planeia realizar em 2013 um exame da eficácia do regime tendo em conta a política agrícola comum reformada. Se necessário, a Comissão apresentará propostas legislativas adequadas ao Parlamento Europeu e ao Conselho.

([1]) JO L 42 de 14.2.2006, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009657/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Outermost regions and the future of the POSEI agriculture programme

The outermost regions are granted special status under the terms of Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which allows specific measures to be adopted in these regions, taking into account their special structural situation owing to their geographical constraints and permanent difficulties.

Over the years, specific measures for these EU regions have been created in a number of areas of European legislation, in order to compensate the costs derived from their isolation and to promote their economic and social integration. One such measure is the POSEI programme for agriculture.

The POSEI programme for agriculture in the outermost regions has undergone a number of assessments and revisions over the years, despite the fact that the legislation applied to it is separate from that regulating direct payments, within the sphere of the Common Agriculture Policy, which is now under process of reform by the European institutions.

Can the Commission say:

1. What has been the value and evolution of POSEI funding allocated to each of the outermost regions over the years?

2. In light of current trends, how does the Commission view the future of the POSEI agriculture programme in the outermost regions?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(10 December 2012)

The specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the union are governed by Council Regulation (EC) No 247/2006 ([1]).

The POSEI programmes for agriculture consist essentially of two types of measures, i.e. measures to support the local agricultural production and the specific supply arrangements to mitigate the additional costs for the supply of agricultural products which are essential in the outermost regions for human and animal consumption and as agricultural input.

The maximum financial resources available annually, as set out in Article 23 of the abovementioned Regulation are shown in the annex.

The progressive increase in the POSEI allocations as of 2007 is due to the 2006 reform of the common market Organisation for bananas, following which the amounts to support the banana production in the outermost regions was transferred to POSEI.

With regard to the future of the POSEI programme for agriculture, the Commission is planning to carry out in 2013 a review of the effectiveness of the scheme, taking account of the reformed Common Agricultural Policy, and will, if necessary, submit appropriate legislative proposals to the European Parliament and the Council.

([1]) OJ L 42, 14.2.2006, p.1.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009659/12
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: As RUP como embaixadores da União e o seu contributo para as relações com as nações emergentes

Considerando que:

— A Comissão Europeia apresentou, na sua Comunicação, de 20 de junho de 2012, intitulada «As Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um Crescimento Inteligente, Sustentável e Inclusivo», uma estratégia renovada para as Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia, a fim de que elas atinjam os objetivos da UE2020, ou seja, um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo;

— Esta estratégia para a ultraperiferia veio na sequência de uma resolução do Parlamento Europeu sobre o papel da política de coesão nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia no contexto da UE2020, documento que consagra uma série de propostas a serem tidas em conta nas ações da União no horizonte de 2020;

— O Comité das Regiões irá emitir um parecer sobre a Comunicação da Comissão, tendo já apresentado e discutido um documento de trabalho; e que, neste documento de trabalho, o relator do Comité das Regiões realça que se deve dar um papel de destaque às Regiões Ultraperiféricas como embaixadores da União Europeia e ao contributo destas para melhorar as relações da UE com os seus países vizinhos existentes nas diversas áreas oceânicas e, particularmente, com nações emergentes, como o Brasil e a África do Sul;

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

— Como pretende dar relevo a esta dimensão externa das Regiões Ultraperiféricas e reforçar o seu papel como embaixadores da União Europeia? Em que área(s) considera prioritário agir?

— Como podem, na perspetiva da Comissão, estas regiões contribuir para as relações da União com as nações emergentes, como o Brasil e a África do Sul? O que propõe a Comissão para melhorar estas relações?

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(13 de dezembro de 2012)

A questão colocada pelo Senhor Deputado baseia-se num documento de trabalho do Comité das Regiões que ainda se encontra em fase de projeto. Isto significa que as declarações do relator ainda podem ser modificadas. A Comissão responderá às observações do Comité das Regiões em tempo oportuno depois de o Comité ter adotado o seu parecer.

Tal como indicado na sua Comunicação sobre as regiões ultraperiféricas (RUP) ([1]), adotada em junho de 2012 para reforçar o papel das RUP como embaixadoras da UE, a Comissão pretende continuar a fortalecer a integração regional destas regiões nas suas respetivas zonas geográficas. Neste contexto, as relações e a cooperação entre a UE e os países como a África do Sul e o Brasil podem desempenhar um papel instrumental no fomento dessa integração e na expansão das esferas de influência socioeconómica e cultural da UE através das RUP, além de promover uma atividade comercial mais intensa e partilha de conhecimento. Para este objetivo, a Comissão propôs uma série de ações na Comunicação sobre as RUP.

([1]) Comunicação da Comissão, «As regiões ultraperiféricas da União Europeia: Parceria para um crescimento inteligente, sustentável e inclusivo»; COM(2012) 287 final, de 20.6.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009659/12
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: The outermost regions as EU ambassadors and their contribution to relations with emerging nations

In its communication of 20 June 2012, entitled 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', the Commission put forward an updated strategy for the outermost regions of the European Union to help them meet the EU 2020 objectives, inter alia smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

This strategy for the outermost regions follows on from the European Parliament resolution on the role of cohesion policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020, which contains a series of proposals to be taken into account in the EU's actions between now and 2020.

The Committee of the Regions is to issue an opinion on the Commission communication, having already submitted and discussed a working document. In this working document, the rapporteur for the Committee of the Regions stresses that the outermost regions should be given a leading role as EU ambassadors and can help to improve the EU's relations with its neighbouring countries in various parts of the world, particularly emerging nations such as Brazil and South Africa.

How does the Commission intend to emphasise the contribution the outermost regions make to external relations and strengthen their role as EU ambassadors? In which areas does it believe that action is a priority?

In its opinion, how can these regions help to improve the EU's relations with emerging nations, such as Brazil and South Africa? How does the Commission plan to improve these relations?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The question posed by the Honourable Member is based on a working document of the Committee of the Regions which has currently the status of a draft. This means that the statements made by the rapporteur may still be subject to change. The Commission will reply to the observations of the Committee in due time after the Committee has adopted its opinion.

As stated in its communication on the Outermost Regions (ORs) ([1]) adopted in June 2012, in order to reinforce the role of the ORs as EU ambassadors, the Commission intends to continue strengthening the regional integration of these regions in their respective geographic zones. In this context, relations and cooperation between the EU and countries such as South Africa and Brazil can play an instrumental role in fostering such integration and in expanding the EU's sphere of socioeconomic and cultural influence through the ORs and foster greater trade and sharing of knowledge. To this end, the Commission has proposed a series of actions in the communication on the ORs.

([1]) Communication from the Commission 'The outermost regions of the European Union: towards a partnership for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'; COM(2012) 287 final, of 20.06.2012..

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009660/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Requalificação das pedreiras da Lourosa em Santa Maria da Feira

Numa visita recente ao concelho de Santa Maria da Feira pude constatar o atraso na requalificação das pedreiras da Lourosa, objeto de queixas por parte de grupos de cidadãos portugueses junto das instituições europeias (nomeadamente junto da Comissão de Petições do Parlamento Europeu) por violação da legislação ambiental (petições 977/2004 e 638/2005). Em fevereiro do corrente ano, a Comissão Europeia afirmava estimar que «a situação evoluiu de forma favorável». Todavia, reservava-se «uma tomada de posição final sobre o presente dossiê após a execução do projeto de reabilitação dos sítios». Adiantava ainda que «atendendo aos sucessivos adiamentos de execução do projeto de saneamento dos sítios, (…) a Comissão decidiu enviar uma carta de notificação ao abrigo do artigo 260.° do TFUE».

Em face do exposto e das observações realizadas no terreno, oito meses decorridos desde a última tomada de posição da Comissão, solicito que me informe sobre os desenvolvimentos ocorridos neste caso. Que diligências efetuou a Comissão desde fevereiro?

Que medidas irá tomar no imediato?

Dispõe de informações concretas relativamente ao funcionamento da Comissão de Acompanhamento (que integra, entre outras entidades, os cidadãos queixosos)?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(9 de janeiro de 2013)

Na sequência do envio da carta de notificação para cumprir, nos termos do artigo 260.° do TFUE, as autoridades portuguesas comunicaram, regularmente, informações sobre esta matéria.

O programa de recuperação está atualmente a ser implementado. Tal inclui a limpeza e selagem das antigas pedreiras e a instalação de um sistema de drenagem adequado para as águas pluviais. A segunda parte do programa envolve a recuperação paisagística dos locais.

Entretanto, prossegue a monitorização das águas subterrâneas, com base num maior número de pontos de amostragem.

As conclusões finais sobre a adequação das medidas técnicas utilizadas só podem ser retiradas depois da conclusão da primeira fase do programa, em especial a selagem dos sítios.

A Comissão continuará a acompanhar de perto a evolução da situação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009660/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Restoration of quarries in Lourosa, Santa Maria da Feira

During a recent visit to the municipality of Santa Maria da Feira I noticed that the restoration of quarries in Lourosa had been delayed. This issue has been the subject of complaints from Portuguese citizens to the EU institutions (in particular the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions) citing breaches of environmental law (Petitions 977/2004 and 638/2005). In February 2012, the Commission stated that 'the situation has improved'. However, it also stated that it 'will not adopt a final position on the matter until the completion of the site restoration project'. It added that 'as implementation of the remediation plan for the sites has been postponed repeatedly, (…) the Commission has decided to send a letter of formal notice under Article 260 TFEU'.

In view of this, and my own observations, and as eight months have passed since its last statement on this case, what action has the Commission taken since February?

What measures will it take in the near future?

Does it have specific information on the work of the monitoring committee (which includes, *inter alia*, the members of the public who submitted complaints)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2013)

Following the issuing of the letter of formal notice, under Article 260 of the TFEU, the Portuguese Authorities have provided information on the file at regular intervals.

The recovery programme is currently being implemented. This includes the cleaning and sealing of the old quarries, and the installation of an adequate draining system for rainwater. The second part of the programme entails landscape recuperation of the sites.

In the meantime, the monitoring of ground waters is continuing, on the basis of an increased number of sampling points.

The final conclusions, relative to the adequacy of the technical measures used, can only be drawn once the first phase of the programme has been completed, in particular the sealing of the sites.

The Commission will continue to monitor the evolution of the situation closely.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009661/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Requalificação ambiental de cursos de água em Santa Maria da Feira

Numa visita recente ao concelho de Santa Maria da Feira, pude verificar o estado de conservação deplorável em que se encontram vários cursos de água da região — em especial nas freguesias de Santa Maria de Lamas, Paços de Brandão e S. Paio de Oleiros, ao longo do curso da Ribeira do Rio Maior.

Apesar dos investimentos realizados na rede de esgotos no concelho e das verbas despendidas na sequência da opção de a concessionar a privados, sem que nunca lhes tenham sido exigidos objetivos a atingir no que à recuperação ambiental de ribeiras e rios se refere, a poluição das ribeiras persiste, em virtude de descargas industriais e domésticas ilegais. Para além de um atentado ecológico, estamos perante um manifesto problema de saúde pública.

Em face do exposto, solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Que fundos comunitários foram, até à data, dirigidos à rede de esgotos do concelho (incluindo ETAR) e à requalificação das ribeiras em questão?

2. Foi, até à data, dirigida alguma queixa à Comissão por incumprimento da legislação ambiental relativamente a estes cursos de água? Em caso afirmativo, que diligências efetuou a Comissão?

3. Que fundos comunitários poderão ser mobilizados para apoiar a despoluição destas ribeiras?

Resposta dada por Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(21 de dezembro de 2012)

1. No último período de programação, de 2000-2006, os Fundos de Coesão cofinanciaram o projeto da «Barrinha de Esmoriz» ([1]), integrado no Sistema Plurimunicipal de Saneamento da «Ria de Aveiro». Incluía-se a ampliação da estação de tratamento de Espinho, ligações e estações de bombagem.

2. A aglomeração de Espinho/Feira foi abrangida por um processo por infração (2004/2035) aberto pela Comissão contra Portugal no âmbito dos artigos 3.° e 4.° da Diretiva 91/271/CEE ([2]). No acórdão de 7 de maio de 2009, o Tribunal de Justiça condenou Portugal ([3]). Na sequência deste acórdão, Portugal informou que toda a aglomeração está agora abrangida por uma rede de coletores adequada e equipada com estação de tratamento, e que as vistorias mostram o cumprimento das normas exigidas pela diretiva em termos de tratamento secundário.

3. As infraestruturas de recursos hídricos podem ser financiadas ao abrigo do tema prioritário 6.2.1, «Ciclo Urbano da Água», inserido na Prioridade 2: «Serviços ambientais e sistemas de gestão, acompanhamento e mitigação de riscos» do Programa Operacional de Valorização do Território.

Contudo, como é do conhecimento do Senhor Deputado, devido ao princípio da administração partilhada dos fundos estruturais, as autoridades nacionais são responsáveis pela execução dos programas, incluindo os critérios e processos de seleção. A Comissão sugere, pois, que o Senhor Deputado entre diretamente em contacto com as autoridades portuguesas responsáveis pela gestão do programa em causa ([4]).

([1]) Projeto 2003/PE/005 — Saneamento da Barrinha de Esmoriz, da Simria.
([2]) Diretiva «Tratamento de Águas Residuais Urbanas», JO L 135 de 30.5.1991.
([3]) Acórdão C-530/07.
([4]) Programa Operacional Valorização do Território, Avenida D. João II, lote 1.07.2.1 — 2.o, 1998-014 Lisboa, Tel: 211 545 000; Correio eletrónico: povt@povt.qren.pt; Sítio web: www.povt.qren.pt

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009661/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Environmental rehabilitation of waterways in Santa Maria da Feira

On a recent visit to the municipality of Santa Maria da Feira I saw at first hand the terrible state of several waterways in the region — particularly in the parishes of Santa Maria de Lamas, Paços de Brandão and S. Paio de Oleiros, along the banks of the Rio Maior.

Despite investments in the municipality's sewer network and the funds spent following the decision to grant concessions to private companies — although the latter were not required to meet any targets or bring about any environmental rehabilitation of waterways — the streams and rivers continue to be polluted as a result of illegal discharges of industrial and household waste. In addition to causing environmental damage, this is clearly a public health problem.

1. What EU funds have been allocated to develop the municipality's sewer network (including sewage treatment plants) and for rehabilitation of the streams in question?

2. Has the Commission received any complaints concerning non-compliance with environmental law with regard to these waterways? If so, what action has the Commission taken?

3. What EU funds could be mobilised to support the clean-up of these streams?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

1. In the previous programming period 2000-2006, the Cohesion Fund co-financed the 'Barrinha de Esmoriz' project ([1]), integrated in the Multimunicipal System of sanitation of the 'Ria de Aveiro'. It included the enlargement of the water treatment plant of Espinho, connections and pumping stations.

2. The agglomeration of Espinho/Feira was included in an infringement procedure (2004/2035) opened by the Commission against Portugal concerning compliance with Articles 3 and 4 of Directive 91/271/EEC ([2]). In its ruling of 7 May 2009, the Court of Justice condemned Portugal ([3]). Following this ruling, Portugal has communicated that the whole agglomeration is now covered by an adequate collection network and equipped with treatment plants and that monitoring shows that it complies with the standards required by the directive for secondary treatment.

3. Water infrastructure can be financed under the priority theme 6.2.1 'Urban water cycle' included in priority 2: 'Environmental systems and systems for management, monitoring and mitigation of risks' of the Operational Programme Territorial Development.

However, as the Honourable Member is aware, due to the shared management principle of administering the Structural Funds, the national authorities are responsible for the implementation of the programmes, including project selection criteria and procedures. The Commission would therefore suggest the Honourable Member contacts directly the Portuguese authorities in charge of managing the programme concerned ([4]).

([1]) Project 2003/PE/005 — Sanitation of Barrinha de Esmoriz, of SIMRIA.
([2]) Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, OJ L 135, 30.5.1991.
([3]) Case C-530/07.
([4]) Programa Operacional Valorização do Território, Avenida D. João II, lote 1.07.2.1 — 2.o, 1998-014 Lisboa, Tel: 211 545 000; Correio eletrónico: povt@povt.qren.pt; Sítio web: www.povt.qren.pt

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009662/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Privatização dos serviços de água — resposta da Comissão Europeia a ONG

Em resposta à carta que lhe foi dirigida por um conjunto de Organizações Não Governamentais sobre as pressões que a Comissão Europeia está a desenvolver sobre um conjunto de países para que estes privatizem os seus serviços de água, a Comissão, inacreditavelmente, afirma que: «a privatização de empresas públicas contribui para a redução da dívida pública, (…) aumenta a eficiência das empresas e, por extensão, a competitividade da economia como um todo, atraindo investimento direto estrangeiro». E prossegue o neoliberal destempero, acrescentando ao anterior dislate que «a Comissão acredita que a privatização de serviços públicos gera benefícios para a sociedade quando feita cuidadosamente».

Tendo em conta que:

— A privatização de empresas públicas, em diversos países, como é o caso de Portugal, deu-se a par do aumento assinalável da dívida pública, com o disparar da fuga de capitais, sob a forma de lucros e dividendos, para o estrangeiro, por via da tomada de posições estratégicas pelo capital estrangeiro em empresas anteriormente públicas;

— As privatizações estão associadas a despedimentos, a uma diminuição do investimento, a um aumento dos custos dos serviços prestados (às empresas e às famílias) e a uma degradação da qualidade desses serviços;

Solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Em que evidências empíricas se baseou a Comissão para fazer as afirmações supracitadas, nomeadamente quanto à evolução da dívida pública (considerando-a, evidentemente, no médio e longo prazo)?

2. Que avaliação faz dos casos em que, na Europa, a experiência de privatização dos serviços de água foi de tal modo desastrosa que os processos foram revertidos e os serviços voltaram à propriedade e gestão públicas?

3. Como justifica as pressões a que aludem as ONG, concretamente no caso de Portugal e da Grécia, à luz do disposto no artigo 345.° do TFUE e no artigo 17.°, n.° 1, da Diretiva 2006/123/CE, segundo os quais, supostamente, a UE seria neutral do ponto de vista da natureza da propriedade e da gestão — pública ou privada — dos serviços de água (e outros)?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(6 de fevereiro de 2013)

Atrair os investidores do setor privado reveste-se de particular importância nos países confrontados com grandes necessidades de financiamento e dificuldades orçamentais. Envolver o setor privado na modernização das empresas públicas pode reforçar a eficiência, a transparência e a responsabilização, bem como promover o investimento e a inovação, contribuindo ao mesmo tempo para a sustentabilidade orçamental.

A escolha dos ativos ou empresas públicos que devem ser privatizados, até que ponto devem sê-lo e por que ordem cabe inteiramente aos Estados-Membros, tendo em conta as suas várias limitações e os objetivos que se tiverem proposto atingir. As várias experiências a nível da UE oferecem uma grande diversidade de modelos de propriedade pública ou privada do setor da água. Tanto no modelo público como no privado existem casos de resultados problemáticos, mas também casos de sucesso.

Nos Tratados da UE não está prevista a obrigação de os Estados-Membros, incluindo os países beneficiários, privatizarem o setor da água, e a Comissão não está a solicitar aos países para que o façam ou a exercer pressões nesse sentido. Em conformidade com o artigo 345.° do TFUE, a Comissão mantém uma posição neutra nesta matéria. No entanto, a Comissão considera que a criação de uma autoridade regulamentar e um contexto adequado para o funcionamento do mercado são condições essenciais para garantir o êxito de qualquer um destes modelos, no sentido de proteger os interesses dos consumidores e manter os padrões ambientais.

O memorando de entendimento prevê expressamente que o fornecimento de bens e serviços de utilidade pública por empresas privatizadas será plenamente salvaguardado, em consonância com os objetivos da política nacional e em conformidade com o Tratado UE e com as normas de direito derivado pertinentes (p. 192 de relatório de conformidade ([1])).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp123_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009662/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Privatisation of water services — the Commission's response to NGOs

In response to a letter sent by a group of non-governmental organisations on the pressure that it is putting on several countries to privatise their water services, the Commission, unbelievably, states the following: 'privatising public companies helps reduce the public debt, […] makes the companies more efficient and, by extension, makes the economy more competitive as a whole, attracting foreign direct investment'. The neoliberal folly continues, adding to the previous nonsense that 'the Commission believes that privatising public services creates benefits for society when done carefully'.

The privatisation of publicly-owned companies in several countries, such as Portugal, has been accompanied by a significant increase in public debt and by capital flight, in the form of profits and dividends disappearing abroad as a result of foreign investors taking strategic stakes in what were previously publicly-owned companies.

Privatisations go hand in hand with redundancies, reduced investment, increases in the costs of the services provided (to companies and to households) and a deterioration in the quality of those services.

1. On the basis of what empirical evidence did the Commission make the abovementioned assertions, particularly with regard to the evolution of public debt (looking at it in the medium and long term)?

2. What view does it take of instances in Europe, in which the experiment of privatising water services proved so disastrous that the process was reversed and the services returned to public ownership and management?

3. How can it justify the pressure referred to by the NGOs, specifically in the case of Portugal and Greece, in view of the provisions of Article 345 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 17(1) of Directive 2006/123/EC, in accordance with which the EU is supposed to be neutral with regard to the nature of the ownership and management — whether public or private — of water (and other) services?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2013)

Attracting private sector investors is particularly important in countries that have severe financing needs and budgetary difficulties. Involving the private sector in the modernisation of the public companies can reinforce efficiency, transparency, accountability and support investment and innovation, while contributing to fiscal sustainability.

The choice of what, how far and in which sequence public assets or companies should be privatised remains entirely with the Member States, taking into account the various constraints they face and objectives they set for themselves. EU-wide experience offers a variety of different public or private property models for water utilities. In both public and private models, there are cases of problematic outcomes, but also success stories.

There is no obligation under the EU Treaties for Member States, including programme countries, to privatise the water sector and the Commission is not asking or pressuring countries to do so. The Commission's position on this is neutral in accordance with Article 345 of the TFEU. However, the Commission considers that the creation of a regulatory authority and an appropriate market functioning environment are crucial prerequisites for guaranteeing the success of any of these models to protect consumers' interests and maintain environmental values.

The Memorandum of Understanding explicitly states that the provision of basic public goods and services by privatised industries will be fully safeguarded, in line with national policy goals and compliance with the EU Treaty and appropriate secondary legislation rules (p. 192 of the Compliance Report ([1])).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp123_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009663/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Dia Internacional para a Redução de Catástrofes Naturais

Assinalou-se no passado dia 13 de outubro o Dia Internacional para a Redução de Catástrofes Naturais. Na mensagem dirigida, na ocasião, pelo Secretário-Geral das Nações Unidas, afirma-se que, este ano, a comemoração deste dia procura destacar o papel das mulheres na redução de riscos e na gestão da resposta às catástrofes.

Solicito à Comissão que me informe sobre o seguinte:

1. Até à data, que seguimento foi dado às recomendações da resolução aprovada pelo Parlamento Europeu, em setembro de 2010, sobre a prevenção de catástrofes naturais e provocadas pelo Homem?

2. Na sequência da comunicação da Comissão sobre uma abordagem comunitária em relação à prevenção de catástrofes naturais e provocadas pelo Homem, de que forma está a ser considerado o papel das mulheres na redução de riscos e na gestão da resposta às catástrofes?

Resposta dada por Kristalina Georgieva em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

Em resposta às recomendações contidas na Resolução sobre a prevenção de catástrofes naturais ou provocadas pelo homem, aprovada pelo Parlamento em setembro de 2010, a Comissão aplica atualmente uma série de medidas para a promoção da avaliação e da gestão dos riscos a nível nacional, a melhoria dos conhecimentos no domínio das catástrofes e a integração da prevenção de catástrofes na legislação da UE.

Como parte de um programa de melhores práticas no domínio da prevenção de catástrofes, a Comissão deu início a debates com os Estados-Membros sobre a forma como as melhores práticas podem ser utilizadas para apoiar a prevenção dos riscos a nível nacional e local, eventualmente através de orientações sobre questões horizontais como a governação, o planeamento em caso de catástrofe e ações de sensibilização.

As ações implementadas pela Comissão em matéria de prevenção e resposta têm em consideração as necessidades dos grupos mais vulneráveis às consequências das catástrofes, incluindo as crianças, as mulheres e os idosos. Em especial, a Comissão recorre aos convites à apresentação de projetos de cooperação no âmbito do Instrumento Financeiro para a Proteção Civil a fim de apoiar projetos no domínio da sensibilização, educação e formação, visando, nomeadamente, as necessidades das pessoas mais vulneráveis. Além disso, o programa de preparação para as catástrofes da DG Ajuda Humanitária da Comissão (Dipecho), com o objetivo de ajudar as comunidades altamente vulneráveis que vivem nas regiões do mundo mais propensas a catástrofes, tem em conta as questões de género no âmbito de um conjunto de projetos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009663/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: International Day for Disaster Reduction

13 October 2012 was International Day for Disaster Reduction. In a message issued that day, the United Nations Secretary-General stated that, this year, the day was being used to highlight the role of women in reducing risks and in managing the response to disasters.

1. To date, what action has been taken in response to the recommendations set out in the resolution on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters adopted by the European Parliament in September 2010?

2. Further to the Commission communication on a Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters, how should the role of women be regarded in terms of reducing risks and managing the response to disasters?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

In response to the recommendations set out in the resolution on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters adopted by Parliament in September 2010, the Commission is implementing a number of measures to promote national risk assessment and risk management, improve disaster knowledge, and mainstream disaster prevention in EU legislation.

As part of a best practice programme in disaster prevention, the Commission has started discussions with Member States on how best practice could be used to support risk prevention at national and local level possibly through guidance on horizontal issues such as governance, planning disaster data and awareness-raising.

The actions implemented by the Commission in prevention and response consider the needs of the most vulnerable groups to the impact of disasters, including children, women, and elderly people. In particular, the Commission is using the calls for cooperation projects under the civil protection financial instrument to support projects on awareness-raising, education, and training, targetting *inter alia* the needs of the most vulnerable. In addition, the Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO) targeting highly vulnerable communities living in the main disaster-prone regions of the world, is addressing gender-based issues in a number of projects.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009664/12
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Observância do princípio do respeito pelo multilinguismo por parte da Comissão Europeia (Internet)

O Regulamento do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho que cria uma Autoridade Europeia de Supervisão (Autoridade Bancária Europeia) data de 24 de novembro de 2010. Quase dois anos depois, a informação disponibilizada na Internet sobre esta Autoridade apenas está disponível em língua inglesa ([1]).

Por outro lado, a página relativa à «supervisão financeira» apenas está disponível em inglês, francês e alemão ([2]).

Pergunto à Comissão:

1. Por que razão esta informação apenas está disponível ao público nas línguas referidas?

2. Que razões justificam a não observância do princípio do respeito pelo multilinguismo por parte da Comissão, na Internet?

3. Está disponível para corrigir esta situação, disponibilizando aos cidadãos dos diferentes Estados-Membros o acesso, sem discriminações, a toda a informação na sua língua?

Resposta dada por Michel Barnier em nome da Comissão
(14 de dezembro de 2012)

Relativamente às traduções no sítio Web europa.eu em geral, a Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a sua resposta à pergunta escrita P-3280/11 ([3]).

O regulamento mencionado pelo Senhor Deputado está efetivamente disponível em todas as línguas oficiais da UE no portal EUR-LEX ([4]).

As duas páginas Web a que o Senhor Deputado faz referência contêm uma ligação para o texto do regulamento no EUR-LEX. No entanto, no caso da página Web relativa à supervisão financeira, não é fácil, para os utilizadores, encontrar o acesso a todas as versões linguísticas do regulamento. A Comissão corrigirá a referida ligação a fim de resolver o problema sem demora.

([1]) http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/single_market_services/financial_services_general_framework/mi0069_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finances/committees/index_en.htm
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([4]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010R1093:EN:NOT.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009664/12
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Compliance by the Commission with the principle of multilingualism (Internet)

The regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Supervisory Authority (European Banking Authority) is dated 24 November 2010. Almost two years on, information about that Authority is available online only in English ([1]).

What is more, the page on 'financial supervision' is available only in English, French and German ([2]).

1. Why is this information publicly only available in these languages?

2. What justification is there for the Commission's failure to comply with the principle of multilingualism on the Internet?

3. Is the Commission prepared to rectify this situation by granting the citizens of the various Member States access, without discrimination, to all the relevant information in their own languages?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 December 2012)

As regards translations on the europa.eu website in general, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question P-3280/11 ([3]).

The regulation mentioned by the Honourable Member is actually available in all EU official languages on the EUR-LEX portal ([4]).

The two web-pages mentioned by the Honourable Member provide a link to the text of the regulation on EUR-LEX. However, in the case of the web-page on Financial Supervision, it is not easy for users to find access to all the linguistic versions of the regulation. The Commission will fix this problem without delay by correcting this link.

([1]) http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/internal_market/single_market_services/financial_services_general_framework/mi0069_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finances/committees/index_en.htm
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([4]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010R1093:EN:NOT

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009665/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — A política de dois pesos e duas medidas da UE: Irão e Israel

A UE decidiu esta semana aplicar novas sanções ao Irão. Estas sanções, como as anteriores, surgem por contraposição a uma via diplomática para a resolução do diferendo relativo ao programa nuclear iraniano. Decorrem, alegadamente, do perigo de este país vir a desenvolver armas nucleares. Isto, não obstante as dificuldades em comprovar os fins militares do programa nuclear iraniano.

Há poucas semanas, as autoridades israelitas recusaram participar numa conferência da ONU, em Helsínquia, sobre «Um Médio Oriente livre de armas nucleares». Tal recusa surge na sequência de ameaças, feitas por altos responsáveis israelitas, de iniciar uma guerra contra o Irão — atitude de consequências não inteiramente previsíveis mas potencialmente catastróficas. Recorde-se que Israel é, comprovadamente, o único país da região que detém um vasto arsenal nuclear. Recorde-se também que este país, ao arrepio do direito internacional e das resoluções da ONU, vem aprofundando a ocupação e a opressão na Palestina e desrespeitando os mais elementares direitos humanos do povo palestiniano. Apesar disso, Israel é considerado um parceiro privilegiado da UE, o que tem tido tradução prática em inúmeros acordos assinados com este país, designadamente no domínio comercial.

Pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Como justifica esta política de dois pesos e duas medidas?

2. Por que razão serve o argumento nuclear para determinar sanções contra o Irão e por que razão é o mesmo ignorado (assim como o desrespeito pelo direito internacional) no momento de celebrar acordos com Israel?

3. Que medidas tomou a UE perante a recusa de Israel em participar na conferência da ONU, em Helsínquia, sobre «Um Médio Oriente livre de armas nucleares» e perante as ameaças dirigidas por este país contra o Irão?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(21 de dezembro de 2012)

A proliferação de armas de destruição maciça (ADM) e respetivos vetores foi identificada na Estratégia Europeia de Segurança como uma das principais ameaças à segurança internacional e da UE, exigindo uma abordagem global. A UE continua a fazer uso de todos os instrumentos políticos e diplomáticos ao seu dispor para enfrentar esta ameaça, sublinhando constantemente a importância do pleno cumprimento e da aplicação, a nível nacional, dos tratados, acordos e outras obrigações internacionais pertinentes em matéria de desarmamento e de não-proliferação. A UE tem vindo a apelar a todos os países para que instituam sistemas eficazes de controlo das exportações nacionais e para que fiscalizem a exportação e o trânsito de bens relacionados com as ADM.

A UE tem repetidamente sublinhado a importância da universalização do Tratado de Não Proliferação de Armas Nucleares (TNP), pedra angular do regime mundial de não proliferação nuclear, convidando os Estados que ainda não tenham aderido ao Tratado que o façam, tornando-se Estados não detentores de armas nucleares.

Fiel aos princípios de um multilateralismo efetivo, que está no cerne da estratégia da UE contra a proliferação de armas de destruição maciça, a UE mantém um diálogo político regular com um certo número de países, incluindo os que ainda não aderiram ao TNP.

Com a declaração de Barcelona de 1995, a UE comprometeu-se com o objetivo de uma zona livre de armas nucleares no Médio Oriente acordado voluntariamente pelos países da região e apoiou os planos de ação do TNP adotados em 2010, que apelavam à realização de uma conferência nesta área em 2012. A UE está também a cooperar estreitamente com a Agência Internacional da Energia Atómica e com a Organização do Tratado de Proibição Total de Ensaios Nucleares responsáveis pela verificação do TPTE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009665/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — The European Union's policy of double standards with regard to Iran and Israel

This week the EU decided to impose new sanctions on Iran. These sanctions, like previous sanctions, are at odds with resolving the dispute over the Iranian nuclear programme via diplomatic channels. They have allegedly been imposed due to the danger of Iran developing nuclear weapons. This is despite the difficulties in proving that the Iranian nuclear programme is for military purposes.

A few weeks ago, the Israeli authorities refused to attend a UN conference in Helsinki on 'A Nuclear-Free Middle East'. That refusal came after threats, made by senior Israeli officials, to start a war against Iran — an attitude with not entirely foreseeable but potentially catastrophic consequences. Israel is evidently the only country in the region with a large nuclear arsenal. Furthermore, Israel, contrary to international law and UN resolutions, is increasing its occupation and oppression in Palestine and disregarding the most fundamental human rights of the Palestinian people. Despite this, Israel is considered a privileged partner of the EU, which in practice has resulted in many agreements being signed with that country, particularly in the area of trade.

1. How can the Vice-President/High Representative justify this policy of double standards?

2. Why is the nuclear issue used as grounds for imposing sanctions on Iran and why is the same issue ignored (along with its disregard for international law) when concluding agreements with Israel?

3. What measures has the EU taken with regard to Israel's refusal to attend the UN conference in Helsinki on 'A Nuclear-Free Middle East' and with regard to the threats made by Israel against Iran?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery has been identified in the European Security Strategy as one of the greatest threats to international and EU's security that calls for a global approach. The EU has continued to make use of all political and diplomatic instruments at its disposal to address that threat while constantly underlining the importance of full compliance with and national implementation of existing disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, agreements and other relevant international obligations. Furthermore, the EU has been calling on all countries to establish effective systems of national export controls, controlling export and transit of WMD-related goods.

The EU has continuously emphasised the importance of universalising the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, and calls on States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty as non-nuclear weapon states.

Faithful to the principles of effective multilateralism, which is at the core of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the EU conducts a regular political dialogue with a number of countries, including those that have not yet joined the NPT.

The EU is committed since the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 to the aim of a Weapons of Mass Destruction Zone in the Middle East, freely arrived at by the countries of the region and has supported the NPT action plans adopted in 2010 that called for a Conference to be held on the issue in 2012. The EU is also closely cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency and with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation in charge of the verification of the CTBT.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009666/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23. Oktober 2012)

Betrifft: Umgang mit staatlichen Fluglinien in Luftverkehrsabkommen

Dem MEMO/12/714 vom 27. September 2012 zufolge, arbeitet die Kommission auf den Abschluss von Luftverkehrsabkommen mit Drittländern hin, darunter auch mit der Volksrepublik China. Chinesische Fluggesellschaften sind größtenteils im Besitz des chinesischen Staates oder werden durch diesen beeinflusst und weitgehend kontrolliert. Die EU möchte mit den Luftverkehrsabkommen eine Marktöffnung sowie die „Schaffung der Bedingungen für einen fairen und offenen Wettbewerb durch Konvergenz im Regulierungsbereich" erreichen.

Kann die Kommission darlegen, welche Prinzipien sie für den Umgang mit staatseigenen oder durch den Staat kontrollierten Fluglinien für Partnerländer wie China anwenden will?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(30. November 2012)

In ihrer Mitteilung „Die Luftfahrtaußenpolitik der EU — Bewältigung der künftigen Herausforderungen" (KOM(2012)556 endg.) vom 27. September 2012 verweist die Kommission darauf, dass sich aus den umfassenden Luftverkehrsabkommen der EU mit beispielsweise China nachweislich ein signifikanter wirtschaftlicher Nutzen ergeben kann. Die Kommission hat daher bereits 2005 vorgeschlagen, ein umfassendes Luftverkehrsabkommen zwischen der EU und China auszuarbeiten.

Bislang stützen sich die Luftverkehrsbeziehungen der EU zu China auf die bilateralen Luftverkehrsabkommen, die einzelne EU-Mitgliedstaaten mit China geschlossen haben. Diese Abkommen sind hinsichtlich der Zugangsmöglichkeiten zu den Märkten meist restriktiv und schränken daher die Wahl der Verbraucher ein. Außerdem bieten bilaterale Abkommen nur wenig Spielraum für regulatorische Zusammenarbeit und Konvergenz, wie sie die EU bei umfassenden Abkommen auf EU-Ebene mit wichtigen Partnern anstrebt, um so faire Wettbewerbsbedingungen und gleiche Voraussetzungen für alle zu schaffen. Die Kommission ist nach wie vor der Auffassung, dass sich diese Ziele mit einem großen Partner wie China am besten im Rahmen eines einzigen, umfassenden Luftverkehrsabkommens zwischen der EU und China verwirklichen lassen. Die Kommission kann ein solches Abkommen nur aushandeln, wenn der Rat seine Genehmigung für die Aufnahme dieser Verhandlungen erteilt hat.

Die EU verfolgt die Grundsätze und Ziele der regulatorischen Konvergenz, der gleichen Ausgangsbedingungen und des fairen Wettbewerbs unabhängig davon, ob Luftfahrtunternehmen eines Partnerlandes vollständig in Staatsbesitz, teilweise staatlich kontrolliert oder vollständig privatisiert sind.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009666/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Dealing with State airlines in air transport agreements

According to MEMO/12/714 of 27 September 2012, the Commission is working towards the conclusion of air transport agreements with third countries, including the People's Republic of China. Chinese airlines are mainly owned by the Chinese State, or else are influenced and largely controlled by the State. The EU would like to achieve market opening with these agreements, 'creating the conditions for fair and open competition through regulatory convergence'.

Can the Commission explain what principles it will apply for dealing with State-owned or State-controlled airlines in partner countries like China?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 November 2012)

In the Commission's Communication 'The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challenges' (COM(2012) 556 final) dated 27 September 2012, the Commission recalled that significant potential economic benefits have been demonstrated from comprehensive EU air transport agreements with, *inter alia*, China. Already in 2005, the Commission therefore proposed to negotiate a comprehensive air transport agreement between the EU and China.

Today, the EU's aviation relations with China are based on bilateral air services agreements which individual EU Member States have with China. Most of these agreements are restrictive in terms of offering access to markets and therefore consumer choice. The bilateral agreements also provide little scope for regulatory cooperation and convergence which is something the EU is pursuing in EU-level comprehensive agreements with key partners and which can help create conditions for fair competition and a level playing field. The Commission still believes that these objectives can best be achieved with a large partner such as China through a single comprehensive air transport agreement between the EU and China. In order to be able to negotiate such an agreement, the Commission would need to be authorised by the Council to open such negotiations.

The principles and objectives of regulatory convergence, level playing field and fair competition are principles that the EU seeks to pursue regardless of whether airlines of a partner country are fully State-owned, partly State-controlled or fully privatised.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009668/12
do Komisji
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)
(23 października 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Centrum Szkolenia Lotniczego w Krośnie

Projekt „Utworzenie Ponadregionalnego Centrum Szkolenia Lotniczego w oparciu o zmodernizowaną infrastrukturę lotniska w Krośnie – I etap" w 2007 r. otrzymał od Komisji Europejskiej akceptację i został wpisany na indykatywną listę Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego Województwa Podkarpackiego 2007-2013. W ramach realizacji projektu lotnisko miało zostać dostosowane do współczesnych potrzeb szkoleniowych i sportowych. W lipcu 2012 r. po skompletowaniu pełnej dokumentacji aplikacyjnej i technicznej, w formie, jaką złożył beneficjent – Gmina Krosno, okazało się, iż Komisja Europejska ocenia projekt jako niekwalifikowalny w ramach funduszy europejskich.

1. Czy można otrzymać konkluzję uzgodnień negocjacyjnych z 2007 r., w których Komisja wstępnie zaakceptowała ten projekt?

2. Jakie czynniki zdecydowały, że Komisja stwierdza obecnie, iż złożony ostatecznie w 2012 r. przez beneficjenta wniosek o dofinansowanie projektu w ramach funduszy europejskich jest niekwalifikowalny?

3. Które ze złożonych we wniosku o dofinansowanie dokumentów zaważyły na wydaniu przez Komisję negatywnej oceny projektu?

4. W oparciu o które akty prawne rozporządzenia Komisja negatywnie oceniła wniosek o dofinansowania z funduszy europejskich?

5. Czy Komisja zidentyfikowała jakiekolwiek błędy w przedłożonej we wniosku dokumentacji?

6. Czy wniosek ostatecznie złożony w 2012 r. przez beneficjenta został rozszerzony w stosunku do pierwotnie akceptowanej koncepcji i czy wykroczył poza zakres modernizacji do celów szkoleniowych?

7. Czy wg Komisji są jakiekolwiek szanse na dofinansowanie przebudowy i modernizacji zaplecza szkoleniowego lotniska w Krośnie?

8. Jakie, zdaniem Komisji, działania należałoby podjąć, aby projekt uznany został za kwalifikowalny w ramach funduszy z UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(4 grudnia 2012 r.)

Wbrew temu, o czym pisze Szanowny Pan Poseł, modernizacja infrastruktury lotniska w Krośnie nie została zaakceptowana przez Komisję jako projekt, który miałby otrzymać dofinansowanie w ramach funduszy europejskich. Indykatywna lista projektów kluczowych nie była przedmiotem negocjacji z Komisją, nie wymagała ona także oficjalnej akceptacji z jej strony. Potwierdzają to wyniki drugiej rundy negocjacji z władzami polskimi przeprowadzonej dnia 5 września 2007 r. w Brukseli, kiedy to wsparcie finansowe przeznaczone na infrastrukturę portów lotniczych w ramach programu województwa podkarpackiego ograniczono wyłącznie do lotniska Rzeszów-Jasionka. Decyzja ta została zaakceptowana przez władze polskie.

Nie złożono żadnych wniosków o dofinansowanie modernizacji infrastruktury lotniska w Krośnie. Komisja podtrzymuje swoją opinię wyrażoną w piśmie z dnia 30 sierpnia 2012 r., opartą na wyniku negocjacji dotyczących programu z 2007 r. W związku z tym projekty rozbudowy innych portów lotniczych niż Rzeszów-Jasionka nie są kwalifikowalne, jeśli chodzi o przyznanie dofinansowania ze środków unijnych w ramach programu województwa podkarpackiego na okres 2007-2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009668/12
to the Commission
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Flight Training Centre in Krosno

A project to set up an inter-regional Flight Training Centre ('Centrum Szkolenia Lotniczego') by upgrading the airport in Krosno was accepted by the Commission in 2007 and included on the indicative list of the Regional Operational Programme for the Podkarpackie province 2007-2013. As part of the implementation of this project the airport was to have been adapted to meet current training and sports flying requirements. In July 2012, following completion of the full application and technical documentation in the form in which it was submitted by the beneficiary (the municipality of Krosno), the Commission judged the project to be ineligible for EU funding.

1. Is it possible to obtain the conclusions of the 2007 negotiations, in which the Commission initially accepted this project?

2. What factors led the Commission to decide now that the application for co-financing from EU funds for the project which the beneficiary ultimately submitted in 2012 is ineligible?

3. Which of the documents submitted in the co-financing application led the Commission to give a negative assessment of the project?

4. On which legal acts or regulations did the Commission base its assessment of the application for co-financing from EU funds?

5. Did the Commission identify any errors in the documents submitted as part of the application?

6. Had the application submitted by the beneficiary in 2012 been extended compared to the originally accepted concept, and did it go beyond upgrading for training purposes?

7. Does the Commission believe there is any possibility of obtaining co-financing for the redevelopment and upgrading of the training centre at the airport in Krosno?

8. What action does the Commission believe should be taken in order for the project to be considered eligible for EU funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(4 December 2012)

Contrary to the statement of the Honourable Member, the upgrade of the airport in Krosno was never accepted by the Commission as a project that would receive co-financing from EU funds. The indicative list of key projects was neither subject to negotiations nor to any official approval of the Commission. This is confirmed by the conclusions of the 2nd round of negotiations with the Polish authorities held in Brussels on 5 September 2007, where the support of the Podkarpackie programme for airport infrastructure was limited only to Rzeszów-Jasionka airport. These conclusions were accepted by the Polish authorities.

No documents were submitted asking for the co-financing of the upgrade of Krosno airport. The Commission maintains its opinion expressed in its letter of 30 August 2012 which is based on the outcome of the negotiations on the programme in 2007. The development of any airport other than Rzeszów-Jasionka airport is therefore not eligible for EU co-financing under the 2007-2013 Podkarpackie programme.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-009669/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(23 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Corretta applicazione del regime di deroga di cui all'articolo 9 della direttiva 2009/147/CE

La Commissione europea è recentemente intervenuta, con una lettera inviata dal Commissario Janez Potocnik il 25/05/2012 al Ministro dell'ambiente italiano, Corrado Clini, per invitare lo Stato italiano a garantire la corretta applicazione della normativa comunitaria anche alla luce delle sentenze di condanna pronunciate dalla Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea.

A tale riguardo può la Commissione far sapere in quali paesi dell'Unione europea vige l'obbligo, da parte del cacciatore, di annotare capi di selvaggina migratoria di cui all'Allegato II parte (A) ed Allegato II parte (B) e, tra questi, in quali vige l'obbligo di annotare i capi immediatamente dopo l'abbattimento, in quali vige l'obbligo di annotare a fine giornata di caccia e in quali vige l'obbligo di annotarli a fine stagione venatoria?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(21 dicembre 2012)

La lettera menzionata dall'onorevole parlamentare si riferisce al problema delle deroghe applicate dall'Italia in violazione dell'articolo 9 della direttiva Uccelli selvatici 2009/147/CE ([1]) (procedure d'infrazione 2006/2131, 2004/4926, 2011/2205).

La questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare riguarda la caccia di specie di uccelli in applicazione dell'articolo 7 della direttiva. Nel suo documento orientativo sulla caccia sostenibile ([2]) ai sensi della direttiva Uccelli, la Commissione ha sottolineato (sezione 2.4.16) la necessità di efficaci sistemi di monitoraggio basati su dati scientifici, che comprendano informazioni sulle statistiche di caccia, che sono attualmente ben definite in alcuni Stati membri, ma tuttora inesistenti o poco sviluppate per la maggior parte delle specie in molti altri paesi. Tuttavia, questo aspetto è di competenza degli Stati membri e la Commissione non dispone di informazioni relative a tale prassi nei vari Stati membri.

([1]) GU L 20 del 26.1.2010.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/docs/hunting_guide_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009669/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Proper implementation of derogations provided for in Article 9 of Directive 2009/147/EC

Commissioner Janez Potočnik wrote to the Italian Minister for the Environment, Mr Corrado Clini, on 25 May 2012, urging Italy to ensure proper implementation of Community legislation. This was also in light of judgments by the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Can the Commission confirm which European Union countries require hunters to note the migratory wild game referred to in Annex II, Part A and Annex II, Part B, and in which of these countries must the game caught be noted immediately after it has been killed, in which at the end of the hunting day and in which at the end of the hunting season?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

The letter mentioned by the Honourable Member refers to the problem of derogations applied by Italy in breach of Article 9 of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC ([1]) (infringement procedures 2006/2131, 2004/4926, 2011/2205).

The question raised by the Honourable Member relates to hunting of bird species pursuant to Article 7 of the directive. In its guidance document on sustainable hunting ([2]) under the Birds Directive, the Commission has underlined (Section 2.4.16) the need for sound, scientifically based monitoring mechanisms including information on bag statistics, which are at present well established in some Member States but still lacking or poorly developed for most species in many others. However, this is the responsibility of the Member States and the Commission does not hold information relating to this practice in the different countries.

([1]) OJ L 020, 26.1.2010.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/wildbirds/hunting/docs/hunting_guide_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009670/12
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE) et Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(23 octobre 2012)

Objet: Transparence des industries extractives et traçabilité des minerais

En 2008, les exportations africaines de pétrole, gaz et minerais représentaient neuf fois l'aide publique au développement vers ce continent, sans bénéfice réel pour les populations. Ce chiffre édifiant montre à quel point la transparence du secteur extractif et la traçabilité des minerais sont des enjeux cruciaux pour la stabilité démocratique et le développement économique des pays à revenus inférieurs.

Le Parlement européen examine actuellement deux propositions de directives visant à améliorer la transparence financière dans les secteurs des industries extractives et de l'exploitation des forêts primaires, en imposant la publication d'un rapport annuel sur les sommes versées aux gouvernements («country by country reporting»). Au niveau international, l'Initiative pour la transparence des industries extractives (ITIE) rassemble notamment des gouvernements, des entreprises et des groupes de la société civile autour de trois objectifs: assurer la transparence des paiements et des revenus générés par les industries extractives, rendre cette information accessible à la société civile et au grand public, et favoriser ainsi le bon usage de cette richesse. La prochaine conférence mondiale de l'ITIE aura lieu à Sydney, en mai 2013, et sera l'occasion d'une révision en profondeur de la norme ITIE.

1. Dans la mesure où plusieurs États membres de l'Union sont membres de cette initiative, mais que la Commission n'en est que partenaire, comment la Commission envisage-t-elle l'implication de l'Union européenne dans cette révision?

Il est également important de rappeler que l'exploitation illégale des minerais nourrit des guerres civiles et des conflits. On parle d'ailleurs de «minéraux de conflit» ou de «minéraux du sang». À l'issue du troisième sommet UE-Afrique en novembre 2010, le Parlement européen a soutenu l'initiative d'une législation destinée à garantir la traçabilité des minerais importés. Cet appel a été réitéré par l'Assemblée parlementaire paritaire ACP-UE lors de sa 20e session, à Kinshasa (RDC), en décembre 2010.

2. En complément de sa participation au processus de Kimberley, qui a établi un régime international de certification des diamants bruts, comment la Commission a-t-elle décidé d'agir pour garantir la traçabilité des minerais importés d'Afrique?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(21 décembre 2012)

1. Le statut de la Commission dans le cadre de l'initiative pour la transparence des industries extractives (EITI) est le même que celui des autres pays participants, avec les mêmes droits et responsabilités, notamment la participation, en alternance, au conseil d'administration de l'EITI. La Commission est très active au sein de l'EITI et défend fermement la position de l'UE sur la transparence. Elle agit en coordination avec les États membres et profite de certaines occasions, comme la présentation des rapports sur la responsabilité de l'UE, pour partager des informations et coordonner les positions sur la fiscalité et la transparence des paiements. Elle soutient le renforcement de la norme EITI et participe activement aux débats, plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne les rapports projet par projet et la transparence du marché. Elle fait partie du groupe chargé de la préparation de la conférence de Sydney, au cours de laquelle la Commission insistera sur le rôle essentiel de la transparence et de la responsabilité dans le développement.

2. En ce qui concerne la traçabilité des minerais, la Commission procède actuellement à la mise en œuvre du système de certification du processus de Kimberley pour le commerce international des diamants bruts. L'Union européenne soutient l'«initiative régionale de lutte contre l'exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles» de la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs qui a l'intention de mettre en place un mécanisme visant à certifier que les minéraux provenant de la région ne financent pas les conflits.

La Commission étudie des moyens d'améliorer les aspects liés au devoir de diligence sur l'ensemble de la chaîne d'approvisionnement, sur la base de l'expérience du processus de Kimberley, de l'initiative pour la transparence des industries extractives, du plan d'action «Application des réglementations forestières, gouvernance et échanges commerciaux» (FLEGT) et du règlement dans le domaine du bois. Ce processus s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un ensemble complet de mesures visant à rompre le lien entre le financement des groupes armés et l'exploitation des ressources naturelles dans les zones de conflit, qui comprend également le soutien de l'UE au guide de l'OCDE sur le devoir de diligence pour la gestion responsable des chaînes d'approvisionnement ([1]).

([1]) Comme indiqué dans la stratégie de l'UE relative aux matières premières [COM(2011) 25 final] et la communication intitulée *Commerce, croissance et développement* [COM(2012) 22 final].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009670/12
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE) and Tokia Saïfi (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Transparency of extractive industries and traceability of minerals

In 2008, exports of oil, gas and minerals from Africa were valued at nine times as much as official development aid to that continent, but did not confer any genuine benefits on its people. This edifying figure shows that transparency of the extractive industries and traceability of minerals are crucial to the democratic stability and economic development of low-income countries.

The European Parliament is currently considering two proposals for directives to improve financial transparency in the extractive industries and the primary forest exploitation industry, by requiring the publication of an annual report on payments made to governments ('country by country reporting'). At international level, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) brings together, in particular, governments, undertakings and civil-society groups with three aims: to ensure transparency of the payments and revenue generated by the extractive industries, to make this information accessible to civil society and the general public, and thus to promote good use of these resources. The next world conference of the EITI will be held in Sydney in May 2013, when the EITI standard will be thoroughly revised.

1. As several EU Member States are members of this initiative, while the Commission is merely a partner, how does the Commission propose that the European Union should be involved in this revision?

It is also important to recall that illegal exploitation of minerals foments civil war and conflict. It is not for nothing that the terms 'conflict minerals' and 'blood minerals' have been coined. Following the third EU-Africa summit in November 2010, the European Parliament supported the initiative to adopt legislation to ensure the traceability of imported minerals. The call for this was reiterated by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly at its 20th session in Kinshasa (DRC) in December 2010.

2. By way of a complement to its participation in the Kimberley process, which has established an international certification scheme for raw diamonds, what action has the Commission decided to take to ensure the traceability of minerals imported from Africa?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 2012)

1. The status of the Commission at the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is the same as of other supporting Countries with the same rights and responsibilities, including being part of the EITI Board on a rotating basis. It is very active in the EITI and strongly defends the EU views on transparency. It coordinates with MS and uses opportunities, such as the EU Accountability Reports to share information and coordinate views on taxation and transparency of payments. It supports the strengthening of the EITI standard and participates actively in the debates, particularly as regards project-by-project reporting and contract transparency. It is part of the preparation group for the Sidney Conference, during which the Commission will emphasise the key role of transparency and accountability in development.

2. As regards traceability of minerals, the Commission is implementing the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) for the international trade in rough diamonds. The EU supports the 'Regional Initiative on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources' of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region, which intends to set-up a mechanism aiming at certifying conflict-free minerals sourced in the region.

The Commission is exploring ways of improving due diligence throughout the supply chain thereby building on the experience of KPCS, the EITI, the Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan and the Timber Regulation. This process is part of a comprehensive response to curb the link between the financing of armed groups and the exploitation of natural resources in conflict areas, which also includes EU support to the OECD due diligence guidance for responsible supply chains management ([1]).

([1]) As indicated in both the EU Raw Materials Strategy (COM(2011) 25 final) and the communication 'Trade Growth and Development" (COM(2012) 22 final).'.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009671/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(23 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Stati membri in cui è applicata una tassa sulla proprietà della prima abitazione

Considerata l'introduzione da parte dell'attuale governo italiano dell'imposta municipale unica (I.M.U.) che impone ai cittadini una tassa sulle proprietà immobiliari, siano esse terreni, immobili industriali, prime o seconde abitazioni;

Tenendo conto che il governo centrale romano ha stabilito ex-ante quanto ogni singolo comune debba versare per l'anno corrente come gettito derivante dall'IMU applicata agli immobili dei cittadini del singolo comune, fissando anche la percentuale minima da applicare al valore catastale con cui calcolare l'imposta sulla prima abitazione;

Ritenendo che sia un diritto fondamentale dell'individuo poter avere un'abitazione di proprietà che garantisca la tranquillità sociale e lo sviluppo del nucleo familiare;

Considerando che molti cittadini sulla propria abitazione hanno già pagato non solo le più svariate tasse per atti notarili, ma anche gli interessi per il mutuo o le imposte di successione nel caso di lasciti;

Vista l'importanza strategica per il territorio e per la società derivante dalla proprietà della prima abitazione;

Può la Commissione far sapere in quali altri Stati membri dell'Unione esistono tasse sulla proprietà della prima abitazione, siano esse una tantum oppure calcolate come percentuali del valore catastale?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(27 novembre 2012)

La Commissione non dispone di un elenco completo delle tasse di cui all'interrogazione. Tuttavia, se producono entrate superiori allo 0,1 % del PIL, tali tasse vengono inserite nella banca dati su imposte e tasse in Europa («Taxes in Europe») ([1]).

Una recente visione d'insieme del «Tax treatment of owner-occupied housing» (Trattamento fiscale delle abitazioni occupate dai proprietari) è disponibile nel seguente documento, dal titolo: «Possible reforms of real estate taxation: Criteria for successful policies» (Possibili riforme in materia di tassazione delle proprietà immobiliari: criteri per politiche efficaci, pagine 31-34, ECFIN Occasional Papers 119, ottobre 2012) ([2]).

([1]) Si veda il seguente link: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/tedb/taxSearch.html
([2]) Si veda il seguente link: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp119_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009671/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Member States where a property tax is levied on primary residences

Given that the present Italian Government has introduced a single municipal tax (*imposta municipale unica — IMU*) requiring citizens to pay a tax on property, whether it be land, industrial property, or primary or secondary residences;

Given that the central government in Rome has determined in advance how much each individual commune will have to pay for the current year by way of revenue from IMU on the citizens of the commune, and has even set the minimum percentage to be applied to the rateable value used to calculate the primary-residence tax;

Noting that it is a fundamental right of the individual to own a home, that ensures social harmony and the development of the nuclear family;

Considering that many citizens have already paid, in respect of their own residence, not only widely varying charges for notarial deeds but also loan interest or inheritance taxes in the case of bequests;

In view of the strategic importance of home ownership to the country and to society,

Can the Commission say which other EU Member States have primary-residence property taxes, either as a lump sum or as percentages of the rateable value?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(27 November 2012)

The Commission has no full list of such taxes. However, if such taxes create revenue of more than 0.1% of GDP, they are reported in the 'Taxes in Europe' database ([1]).

A recent overview of the 'Tax treatment of owner-occupied housing' can be found in the following paper: 'Possible reforms of real estate taxation: Criteria for successful policies' (pages 31-34, ECFIN Occasional Papers 119, October 2012) ([2]).

([1]) See http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/tedb/taxSearch.html
([2]) See http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/tedb/taxSearch.html

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009672/12
adresată Comisiei
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(23 octombrie 2012)

Subiect: Ecomobilitate

Uniunea Europeană s-a angajat să reducă emisiile de CO_2, pentru a contribui la combaterea schimbărilor climatice. Una dintre componente este și extinderea folosirii vehiculelor electrice și hibride și dezvoltarea ecomobilității.

Pentru aplicarea acestei măsuri la scară largă, sunt însă necesare o serie de etape suplimentare, între care și dezvoltarea sistemului de borne de încărcare pentru vehiculele electrice și hibride atât în mediul urban, cât și în mediul rural și pe marile artere de transport.

1. Cum intenționează Comisia să sprijine planurile autorităților regionale și locale de dezvoltare a sistemului de borne electrice, mai ales în mediul rural și de-a lungul arterelor medii de transport, pentru a încuraja cetățenii să opteze pentru vehicule electrice și hibride?

2. În ce măsură Comisia va încuraja punerea în aplicare a unor proiecte de implantare a sistemelor de borne de încărcare pentru autovehiculele electrice în coproprietate?

Răspuns dat de dl Kallas în numele Comisiei
(20 decembrie 2012)

1. Comisia intenționează să adopte „Pachetul de măsuri privind energia nepoluantă pentru transport", care va stabili o strategie cuprinzătoare referitoare la combustibilii alternativi pentru substituirea pe termen lung a petrolului ca sursă de energie pentru transport, în privința tuturor modurilor de transport. Scopul principal este de a asigura un cadru dedicat în special unei rețele de infrastructură pentru combustibili alternativi pentru orientarea investițiilor și dezvoltarea tehnologică astfel încât să se accelereze introducerea pe piață a unor mijloace alternative de transport.

2. Inițiativa CIVITAS, care face parte din cel de-Al șaptelea program-cadru de cercetare, sprijină orașele europene în vederea introducerii de măsuri și politici de transport ambițioase pentru o mobilitate urbană sustenabilă. Partajarea automobilului, inclusiv a vehiculelor electrice, se numără printre aceste măsuri.

În plus, Comisia ar dori să recomande distinsei membre să consulte răspunsul său la întrebările cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-008744/2011, E-000021/2012, E-000671/2012, E-000870/2012, E-004505/2012, E-006724/2012 și E-008869/2012 adresate de domnul Jim Higgins (PPE), doamna Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), domnul Andreas Mölzer (NI), domnul Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D), Sir Graham Watson (ALDE), domnul Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE), doamna Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE) și domnul Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009672/12
to the Commission
Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Ecomobility

The European Union has undertaken to cut CO_2 emissions in order to help combat climate change. One aspect of this is expanding the use of electric and hybrid vehicles and developing ecomobility.

A number of additional steps are needed for this measure to be rolled out on a large scale, such as the development of a network of charging stations for electric and hybrid vehicles in urban and rural areas and along major roads.

1. How does the Commission intend to support local and regional authorities' plans to develop a network of charging stations, particularly in rural areas and along sub-motorway class roads, in order to encourage the general public to opt for electric and hybrid vehicles?

2. To what extent will the Commission encourage the implementation of projects to set up networks of charging stations for shared electric vehicles?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(20 December 2012)

1. The Commission plans to adopt, the 'Clean Power for Transport Package' which will lay out a comprehensive alternative fuels strategy for the long-term substitution of oil as energy source for transport, concerning all modes of transport. The main purpose is to provide a framework dedicated in particular to a network of alternative fuels infrastructure to guide investments and technological development so as to accelerate the market uptake of alternative transport means.

2. The Civitas initiative, part of the 7th Research framework programme, supports European cities to introduce ambitious transport measures and policies towards sustainable urban mobility. Car sharing, including shared electric vehicles are among such measures.

In addition, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-008744/2011, E-000021/2012, E-000671/2012, E-000870/2012, E-004505/2012, E-006724/2012 and E-008869/2012 by Mr Jim Higgins (PPE), Ms Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), Mr Andreas Mölzer (NI) , Mr Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D), Sir Graham Watson (ALDE) , Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE), Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE) and Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) ([1]).

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

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009673/12
aan de Commissie
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(23 oktober 2012)

Betreft: Uitspraken van energiecommissaris Oettinger

Op de website van de grootste Nederlandse nieuwsorganisatie (de NOS) ([1]) werd afgelopen zaterdag melding gemaakt van uitspraken van energiecommissaris Oettinger op een partijbijeenkomst in Münsingen. Blijkbaar waarschuwde EU-commisaris Oettinger ervoor dat er teveel wordt verwacht van zonne-energie en vindt hij dat er overdreven veel zonnepanelen worden geïnstalleerd.

1. Sprak de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie toen hij bovenstaande uitspraken deed?

2. Zo niet, gaat Commissaris Oettinger dan zijn excuses aanbieden voor deze uitspraken?

3. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de „Duitse hype zonne-energie" gestopt moet worden? Is de Commissie van plan maatregelen te nemen om deze „hype" een halt toe te roepen en welke?

4. Op welke analyse baseert de heer Oettinger zich als hij zegt dat deze euforie in Duitsland moet worden afgeremd?

5. Is de Commissie van mening dat het Duitse succesverhaal van zonnestroom een teken is dat Europese doelen voor duurzame energie werken en er nieuwe duurzame energiedoelen moeten worden vastgesteld in het post-2020 klimaat- en energiepakket?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(13 december 2012)

1 tot en met 4. De snelle groei bij de installatie van fotovoltaïsche (PV) zonnepanelen in 2011 hield verband met het ontstaan van een grote, nu mondiale, PV-industrie. De schaalvoordelen en de vermindering van de kosten per eenheid die resulteerden uit het ontstaan van die mondiale markt, werden niet beantwoord met een snelle en tijdige aanpassing van de door de lidstaten voor PV-installaties verstrekte steun. De desbetreffende uiterst snelle groei werd voortgedreven door de royale returns en bepaalde waarnemers waren van oordeel dat hierdoor een buitensporige kortetermijndruk op de elektriciteitsprijzen en, in het geval van Spanje en Griekenland, op de overheidsfinanciën werd gelegd. Het is om die reden dat de lidstaten de steunniveaus voor PV-installaties drastisch hebben verlaagd of die steun zelfs tijdelijk hebben stopgezet. Een ander belangrijk element is de noodzaak hernieuwbare energie naar behoren te integreren in het gehele energiesysteem. Om de overgang naar een koolstofarme economie te maken en de energie-voorzieningszekerheid tegen zo laag mogelijke kosten te handhaven, is een volledige integratie van Europa's energienetwerken en -systemen essentieel. De verklaring waarnaar het geachte Parlementslid verwijst, moet in die context worden gezien.

5. Naar het oordeel van de Commissie heeft het EU-beleidskader voor hernieuwbare energie, inclusief de desbetreffende wettelijk bindende streefcijfers voor 2020 en de nationale tienjarige actieplannen voor hernieuwbare energie, bijgedragen tot de totstandbrenging van een stabiel en ondersteunend investeringsklimaat dat het ontstaan van deze mondiale industriële sector mogelijk heeft gemaakt.

In haar mededeling van juni ([2]) heeft de Commissie als haar standpunt weergegeven dat het huidige beleidskader voor hernieuwbare energie tot dusverre effectief lijkt en dat de opties voor de periode na 2020 verder moeten worden uitgewerkt en geanalyseerd alvorens nieuwe beslissingen kunnen worden genomen.

([1]) http://nos.nl/artikel/431506-eu-stop-duitse-hype-zonneenergie.html
([2]) COM(2012) 271 definitief: „Hernieuwbare energie: een belangrijke speler op de Europese energiemarkt".

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009673/12
to the Commission
Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Statements by Energy Commissioner Oettinger

Last Saturday, the website of the Netherlands' largest news organisation, the NOS ([1]), reported statements made by Energy Commissioner Oettinger at a party meeting in Münsingen. Apparently, Commissioner Oettinger warned that too much is being expected of solar energy and he considers that too many solar panels are being installed.

1. Was Mr Oettinger speaking on behalf of the Commission when he made these statements?

2. If not, will Commissioner Oettinger then apologise for these statements?

3. Does the Commission agree that the 'German solar energy hype' must be stopped? Does the Commission intend to take steps to end this 'hype' and what would these steps be?

4. On what analysis does Mr Oettinger base his statement that this euphoria in Germany must be curbed?

5. Does the Commission consider that the German success story with solar power is a sign that European renewable energy targets work and that new renewable energy targets should be set in the post-2020 climate and energy package?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

1 to 4. The rapid growth in solar PV power installations in 2011 has resulted from the creation of a large, now global, PV industry. The economies of scale and reduction in unit costs which resulted from this global market were not matched by rapid and timely adjustments of support in Member States. Such rapid growth has been driven by generous returns and seen by some as placing excessive short term pressure on electricity prices and in the case of Spain and Greece, on public finances. It is for this reason that Member States are cutting the support levels for PV or have temporarily stopped support for PV. Another important element is the need to ensure that renewable energy is properly integrated, in the energy system. The full integration of Europe's energy networks and systems are essential to make the transition to a low-carbon economy and maintain secure supplies at the lowest possible cost. The statement referred to by the Honourable Member should be seen in this context.

5. The Commission believes that the EU's renewable energy policy framework, including legally binding targets for 2020 and Member States 10-year national renewable energy action plans helped create a stable and supportive investment climate that has spurred the creation of this global industry.

In its communication of June ([2]), the Commission expressed its views that the current renewable energy policy regime appears to be effective so far and that the options for the post 2020 period need to be elaborated and analysed before further decisions can be taken.

([1]) http://nos.nl/artikel/431506-eu-stop-duitse-hype-zonneenergie.html
([2]) COM(2012) 271 final, 'Renewable energy: a major player in the European energy market'.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009674/12
alla Commissione
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(23 ottobre 2012)

Oggetto: Enterococcus faecium: urgenza di investimenti nella ricerca

Ricercatori dell'Istituto di Microbiologia dell'Università Cattolica di Roma e microbiologi degli ospedali Universitari di Caen (Francia) e di Utrecht (Olanda), hanno recentemente pubblicato un'importantissima ricerca riguardo a uno dei più temuti batteri gastrointestinali che si diffonde pericolosamente ogni anno all'interno degli ospedali.

L'Enterococcus faecium ha sviluppato dagli anni '80 una forte resistenza alle terapie e alle cure antibiotiche attualmente disponibili. Si tratta della seconda causa principale di infezioni urinarie, con possibili conseguenze di enorme gravità, quali sepsi ed endocardite, fino al decesso.

È pertanto di grandissimo valore la scoperta del «punto debole» dell'Enterococcus faecium. I ricercatori hanno identificato in questo microrganismo il gene che codifica per il regolatore AsrR (regolatore della risposta allo stress e agli antibiotici) e compreso il suo meccanismo d'azione.

La proteina AsrR è un interruttore che tiene spenta una serie di altri geni che rendono cattivo il batterio. In condizioni di stress cellulare, ovvero quando l'enterococco si sente in pericolo, il gene AsrR si disattiva e tutti i geni che sono sotto il suo diretto controllo diventano a quel punto liberi di funzionare, rendendo il batterio virulento e resistente alle cure, quali gli antibiotici ampicillina e vancomicina e quindi difficile da fermare.

La necessità è ora quella di individuare delle sostanze che siano in grado di potenziare l'attività di AsrR, in modo da ottenere un farmaco che aiuti a controllare la virulenza dell'enterococco.

— Era la Commissione a conoscenza di tale scoperta?

— In caso affermativo, quali azioni intende intraprendere la Commissione al fine di accelerare la ricerca e lo sviluppo di un farmaco che indebolisca definitivamente il batterio dell'Enterococcus faecium?

Risposta di Máire Geoghegan-Quinn a nome della Commissione
(18 dicembre 2012)

La Commissione è pienamente al corrente delle ricerche sul ruolo del regolatore AsrR nell'*Enterococcus faecium* Gram-positivo menzionato dall'onorevole parlamentare.

In realtà i suddetti lavori sono stati sovvenzionati da finanziamenti a titolo del Sesto e del Settimo programma quadro di ricerca e sviluppo tecnologico, rispettivamente 6° PQ 2002-2006 (ACE) ([1]) e 7° PQ 2007-2013 (TROCAR) ([2]). La ricerca sugli enterococchi continua ad essere sovvenzionata, ad esempio nel quadro del progetto EvoTAR del 7° PQ (accordo di sovvenzione 284004) ([3]), coordinato da uno degli istituti menzionati dall'onorevole parlamentare e iniziato l'anno scorso.

La ricerca sulla resistenza agli agenti antimicrobici ha beneficiato della massima priorità a partire dal Quinto fino al Settimo programma quadro. Solo quest'anno, è stato stanziato un bilancio fino a 147 milioni di EUR per la ricerca sugli antimicrobici, di cui 63 milioni di EUR per lo sviluppo di nuovi medicinali, vaccini e terapeutica. Inoltre, la Commissione europea insieme alla Federazione europea delle associazioni farmaceutiche, attraverso la loro impresa comune, l'iniziativa sui medicinali innovativi (IMI) ([4]), ha recentemente lanciato un programma di 223,7 milioni di EUR ([5]) inteso a combattere la resistenza agli antibiotici, grazie al quale si dovrebbero ottenere rapidamente nuovi antibiotici quanto mai necessari per i pazienti. Nell'ambito del programma IMI saranno indetti bandi di gara per studi di sperimentazione clinica e un nuovo tema di ricerca sulla scoperta e lo sviluppo di nuovi medicinali atti a combattere le infezioni da Gram-negativi.

([1]) FP6-2005-LIFESCIHEALTH-6-037410: Approaches to control multi-resistant Enterococci: studies on molecular ecology, horizontal gene transfer, fitness and prevention, http://www.aceproject.eu/project_outline.php.
([2]) FP7-Health —2007B — 223031: Translational research on combating antimicrobial resistance, http://www.trocarproject.eu/.
([3]) FP7-Health —2011 — 282004: Evolution and transfer of antibiotic resistance, http://www.evotar.eu/.
([4]) http://www.imi.europa.eu/.
([5]) IMI-Call-2012-6, scadenza 9 luglio 2012, http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/6th-call-2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009674/12
to the Commission
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Enterococcus faecium: urgent need for investment in research

Researchers at the Institute of Microbiology of the Catholic University of Rome and microbiologists at the University Hospitals of Caen (France) and Utrecht (Netherlands) have recently published a very important study concerning one of the most feared gastro-intestinal bacteria that is spreading dangerously within hospitals every year.

Since the 1980s, Enterococcus faecium has developed strong resistance to treatment and to the antibiotic medication currently available. It is the second major cause of urinary infections, with potentially extremely serious consequences, such as septic poisoning and endocarditis, and can even be fatal.

The discovery of the 'weak point' of Enterococcus faecium is therefore extremely valuable. The researchers have identified in this microorganism the codifying gene for the AsrR regulator (antibiotic and stress response regulator), including its action mechanism.

The AsrR protein is a switch which keeps turned off a range of other genes which make the bacterium harmful. In conditions of cellular stress, or when the enterococcus feels threatened, the AsrR gene is deactivated and all the genes directly under its control then become free to function, making the bacterium virulent and resistant to therapy such as the antibiotics ampicillin and vancomycin, and therefore difficult to halt.

It is now necessary to find out what substances are able to boost the activity of AsrR, so as to obtain a drug that helps to control the virulence of the enterococcus.

— Was the Commission aware of this discovery?

— If so, what action does the Commission intend to take to speed up the research and development of a drug that definitively weakens the Enterococcus faecium bacterium?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

The Commission is fully aware of the research on the role of the AsrR regulator in the Gram-positive *Enterococcus faecium*, as described by the Honourable Member.

As a matter of fact, this work has been supported by grants under the Sixth and Seventh Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development FP6, 2002-2006 (ACE) ([1]) and FP7, 2007-2013 (TROCAR) ([2])). Research on Enterococci continues to be supported, for instance in the FP7 project EvoTAR (grant agreement 284004) ([3]), coordinated by one of the institutions mentioned by the Honorable Member and started one year ago.

Research on antimicrobial resistance has received a very high priority from FP5 to FP7. This year only, a budget of up to EUR 147 million has been made available for antimicrobial research, including EUR 63 million for the development of new drugs, vaccines and new therapeutics. In addition, the European Commission together with the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations through their Joint Undertaking, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) ([4]), recently launched a EUR 223.7 million programme ([5]) for combating antibiotic resistance which should speed up the delivery of much-needed new antibiotics to patients. In the IMI programme, future calls will be launched for clinical trial studies as well as a new topic on the discovery and development of new drugs for combating Gram-negative infections.

([1]) FP6-2005-LIFESCIHEALTH-6-037410: Approaches to control multi-resistant Enterococci: studies on molecular ecology, horizontal gene transfer, fitness and prevention, http://www.aceproject.eu/project_outline.php
([2]) FP7-Health -2007B — 223031: Translational research on combating antimicrobial resistance, http://www.trocarproject.eu/
([3]) FP7-Health -2011 — 282004: Evolution and transfer of antibiotic resistance, http://www.evotar.eu/
([4]) http://www.imi.europa.eu/
([5]) IMI-Call-2012-6, deadline 9 July 2012, http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/6th-call-2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009675/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: invasão da sede do PAIGC

Segundo diversas fontes, no dia 22 de outubro de 2012, militares invadiram a sede do maior partido da Guiné-Bissau, o PAIGC, e detiveram Iancuba Djola Indjai, líder da Frenagolpe, nas suas imediações. Este poderá correr perigo de vida.

Informações obtidas pelo jornal português Público dão conta de que terá também sido detido um ex-comissário da polícia, Bitchofla Na Fafé. Ibrahima Sow, militante do PAIGC, terá tentado procurar refúgio na representação da União Europeia em Bissau, depois de não ter conseguido entrar na representação das Nações Unidas.

Muitos dirigentes do PAIGC encontram-se escondidos em parte incerta, com medo de represálias por parte dos militares, que, ao que consta, parecem agir sem controlo nem respeito pelos direitos, liberdades e garantias dos cidadãos guineenses.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação?

2. De que informações dispõe a seu respeito?

3. Qual o paradeiro dos detidos e qual a sua situação?

4. Contactou o PAIGC, representantes da sociedade civil, nomeadamente a Frenagolpe, e o legítimo governo da Guiné-Bissau, no exílio, a este respeito? Que respostas obteve?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(16 de janeiro de 2013)

A AR/VP está muito preocupada com as violações dos direitos humanos, ocorridas na Guiné-Bissau nas últimas semanas. A delegação da UE está a desempenhar um papel importante na proteção dada às potenciais vítimas de violência.

A informação disponível relativamente às 15 pessoas atualmente detidas é limitada; no entanto, espera-se que haja um relatório da ONU/Cruz Vermelha em breve.

De acordo com as informações disponíveis, Incuba Djola Indjai encontra-se agora a salvo em Portugal, ao passo que Ibrahima Sow permanece ainda nas instalações da Delegação da UE em Bissau.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009675/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: invasion on the PAIGC headquarters

According to various sources, on 22 October 2012, soldiers raided the headquarters of Guinea-Bissau's largest political party, the PAIGC, and detained Iancuba Djola Indjai, the leader of Frenagolpe, the national anti-coup coalition. His life may be in danger.

Information obtained by the Portuguese newspaper *PUBLIC* suggests that Bitchofla Na Fafé, a former police commissioner, has also been detained. Ibrahima Sow, a PAIGC activist, tried to seek refuge at the EU Representation in Bissau, after being turned away at the UN Representation.

Many PAIGC leaders remain in hiding, fearful of reprisals by members of the armed forces who seem to be out of control and acting with complete disregard for the rights, freedoms and security of the citizens of Guinea-Bissau.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this situation?

2. What information does she have on it?

3. What are the detainees' whereabouts and their situation?

4. Has she contacted the PAIGC, representatives of civil society, particularly Frenagolpe, and Guinea-Bissau's legitimate government-in-exile on this matter? What answers has she received?

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

The HRVP is very concerned with the Human Rights violations which occurred in Guinea Bissau in the last weeks. The EU Delegation is playing an important role in providing protection to potential victims of violence.

The information available in respect of the 15 persons currently detained is limited; a report by the UN/Red Cross is expected soon.

According to the information available Mr Incuba Djola Indjai is now safe in Portugal, while Mr Ibrahima Sow is still in the premises of the EU Delegation in Bissau.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009676/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: Guiné-Bissau: surto forte de diarreia ou cólera

Diversas fontes recentes dão conta de que se registaram na Guiné-Bissau mais de 540 casos de diarreia, que já provocaram 3 mortes, aventando-se a possibilidade de se tratar de um surto de cólera. O autoproclamado governo de transição declarou, entretanto, não se tratar desta última doença apesar de ser conhecido que, neste momento, ela atinge o Senegal e a Guiné-Conacri.

As autoridades sanitárias informaram a população de que deverá ter cuidados especiais com o manuseamento de alimentos e bebidas, alertando também para os riscos de aglomeração de pessoas nas cerimónias fúnebres ou festas.

Não se registava um problema sério de saúde pública na Guiné-Bissau desde 2008.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento destas situações?

2. De que informações dispõe a seu respeito?

3. Está em condições de confirmar qual o tipo de enfermidade que efetivamente assola a Guiné-Bissau?

4. Contactou representantes da sociedade civil e o legítimo governo da Guiné-Bissau, no exílio, a este respeito? Que respostas obteve?

5. Considera que a degradação do ambiente social, político e económico na Guiné-Bissau após o golpe militar de 12 de abril agravou as condições de vida das populações guineenses e as tornou mais vulneráveis a este tipo de epidemias?

Resposta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(19 de dezembro de 2012)

Os primeiros casos de cólera foram confirmados em 25 de agosto. De acordo com o Regulamento Sanitário Internacional, o Governo da Guiné-Bissau declarou oficialmente a existência de uma epidemia à Organização Mundial de Saúde em 8 de outubro, após serem notificados 468 casos. Desde então, o número de casos tem vindo a aumentar, chegando a 2090 em 10 de novembro. Oitenta e dois por cento dos casos ocorreram na capital. A maior parte dos restantes casos registaram-se nas Ilhas Bijagos. O pico ainda não foi atingido, mas este surto deverá estar controlado em breve.

A cólera é a doença mais importante que afeta atualmente a Guiné-Bissau. Existem igualmente casos frequentes de diarreia, malária e, com menor frequência, de hepatite A.

As agências internacionais e as organizações da sociedade civil intervieram assim que o surto de cólera foi declarado, apoiando a resposta do Governo, em particular a Unicef, a OMS, a MSF e também a AMI (Portugal). Não foram colocados quaisquer obstáculos ou restrições à intervenção destas organizações. Foi criada uma célula de crise formada pelas autoridades e os principais interessados, que realiza reuniões de coordenação duas vezes por semana.

O sistema de saúde na Guiné-Bissau está subfinanciado e mal equipado. Segundo o índice de desenvolvimento humano, apenas 39 % dos nascimentos são realizados por pessoal médico e apenas 24 % das crianças estão vacinadas contra o sarampo. A deterioração da situação social, política e económica na sequência do golpe militar de 12 de abril de 2012 não favorece a situação sanitária mesmo se, no que respeita a este surto de cólera, a gestão dos casos foi eficiente. Consciente desta situação, a UE apoia diretamente as populações nos setores da saúde e da água, tendo esta ajuda atingido o valor total de 57 milhões de euros.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009676/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Guinea-Bissau: serious outbreak of diarrhoea or cholera

Various sources recently reported more than 540 cases of diarrhoea in Guinea-Bissau, which have caused three deaths and may point to a cholera outbreak. The self-proclaimed interim government has stated that the cases are not linked to cholera, although the disease is currently affecting people in Senegal and Guinea.

Health authorities have advised the population to handle food and beverages with special care, and also warned of the risk to members of crowds at funeral ceremonies and celebrations.

No serious public health problems have been recorded in Guinea-Bissau since 2008.

1. Is the Commission aware of these cases?

2. What information does the Commission have on them?

3. Can the Commission confirm which illnesses are plaguing Guinea-Bissau?

4. Has the Commission contacted representatives of civil society in Guinea-Bissau and the country's legitimate government-in-exile on this matter? What answers has it received?

5. Does the Commission believe that the deterioration in the social, political and economic situation in Guinea-Bissau following the military coup of 12 April 2012 has worsened living conditions for the people there, thus increasing their vulnerability to outbreaks of disease?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

The first cases of cholera were confirmed on 25th August. According to the International Health Regulations, the Governement of Guinea Bissau declared the epidemic officially to World Health Organisation on October 8th, when 468 cases were already notified. Since then the number of cases has increased and there was 2090 cases at 10th November. 82% of the cases occurred in the capital. Most of the other cases are located in Bijagos Islands. The peak is not reached yet but the outbreak should be under control soon.

Cholera is the most important illness plaguing Guinea-Bissau. There are also frequent cases of diarrheoa illnesses, malaria and, more rarely, hepatitis A.

International agencies and civil society intervened as soon as the cholera outbreak was declared, to support the government in the response, especially Unicef, WHO, MSF and also AMI (Portugal). They have not encountered any difficulties or constraints in their intervention. A crisis cell has been set up between the authorities and the main stakeholders through biweekly coordination meetings

The health system in Guinea-Bissau is under-funded and poorly equipped. The Human Development Index report states that only 39% of births are managed by professional medical staff and only 24% of children are vaccinated against measles. The deterioration in the social, political and economic situation after the military coup of 12 April 2012 will not help the sanitary situation even if, for this specific cholera outbreak, the management of the cases has been efficient. Fully aware of this situation, the EU provides direct support to the population in the health and water sectors for a total amount of EUR 57 million.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009677/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: ameaça de expulsão de representante da ONU

Notícias recentes dão conta de que o chefe de estado-maior das forças armadas da Guiné-Bissau, António Indjai, envolvido nas convulsões militares que têm flagelado o país, fez críticas públicas a Jopseph Mutaboba, representante em Bissau do Secretário-Geral das Nações Unidas, tendo chegado a dizer que, podendo, o expulsava do país.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação?

2. De que informações dispõe a seu respeito?

3. Teme pela segurança de Joseph Mutaboba?

4. Contactou representantes da sociedade civil e o legítimo governo da Guiné-Bissau, no exílio, a este respeito? Que respostas obteve?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(22 de janeiro de 2013)

De acordo com as informações disponíveis, o Governo de Transição dirigiu, de facto, ao Secretário-Geral da ONU uma missiva solicitando a substituição do Representante Especial Joseph Mutaboba.

O Secretariado-Geral das Nações Unidas não emitiu uma resposta formal, provavelmente porque a ONU não reconhece o Governo de Transição.

As Nações Unidas examinam regularmente as condições de segurança do seu representante, cujo mandato termina a 31 de janeiro de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009677/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: threat to expel the UN representative

Recent news reports claim that António Indjai, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Guinea-Bissau who has been involved in the military upheavals that have plagued the country, has publicly criticised Joseph Mutaboba, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, saying he may expel him from the country.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this situation?

2. What information does she have on it?

3. Are there fears for Joseph Mutaboba's safety?

4. Has she contacted representatives of civil society in Guinea-Bissau and the country's legitimate government-in-exile about this? What answers has she received?

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

According to the information available, the Transitional Government indeed wrote to the UN Secretary General, requesting the replacement of Special Representative Mutaboba.

The UNSG did not issue any formal reply, probably in view of the fact that the Transitional Government has not been recognised by the UN.

The United Nations has kept Mr Mutaboba's security under regular review. His mandate comes to an end on 31.1.2013.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009678/12
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 de outubro de 2012)

Assunto: VP/HR — Guiné-Bissau: tentativa de assalto a quartel

No dia 21 de outubro de 2012, um grupo de homens armados atacou o quartel do Regimento de para-comandos na capital da Guiné-Bissau.

Diversas fontes apontam para que terão morrido seis pessoas durante o ataque que não teria sido bem sucedido e existem dúvidas sobre a sua motivação.

Este facto vem tornar uma vez mais evidente a instabilidade crescentemente vivida no país, agudizada com o golpe de Estado de 12 de abril de 2012 e com a instauração de um poder político ilegítimo em Bissau.

Assim, pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante:

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação?

2. De que informações dispõe a seu respeito?

3. Contactou representantes da sociedade civil e o legítimo governo da Guiné-Bissau, no exílio, a este respeito? Que respostas obteve?

4. Como analisa a situação político-militar no país?

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(13 de dezembro de 2012)

1. A AR/VP está plenamente ciente da situação.

2. As causas dos acontecimentos de 21 de outubro de 2012 não são totalmente claras. As autoridades de transição alegam que se tratou de uma tentativa de golpe de Estado, mas outras fontes sugerem que este foi um confronto entre fações no seio das Forças Armadas, relacionado com o controlo do intenso tráfico ilegal de drogas efetuado através da Guiné-Bissau.

3. A Delegação da UE tem estado em contacto com os representantes da sociedade civil e outras partes na Guiné-Bissau. A sociedade civil está muito preocupada com as violações dos direitos humanos e com a marginalização de certos partidos políticos, nomeadamente o partido maioritário no Parlamento, e da sociedade civil por parte das autoridades de transição. Para a sociedade civil e para o Governo no exílio, estes eventos salientam, uma vez mais, a necessidade urgente de regressar à ordem constitucional e de acabar com o controlo do poder por parte das Forças Armadas. Tal exige uma verdadeira e profunda reforma do setor da segurança, que só será possível com uma alteração completa da atual chefia militar.

4. A AR/VP está preocupada com a situação na Guiné-Bissau, incluindo as graves e repetidas violações dos direitos humanos que têm ocorrido. A violação dos direitos humanos é inaceitável e os seus autores devem ser responsabilizados. A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente instou as autoridades de facto a garantir a segurança de todos os cidadãos, em plena conformidade com o direito nacional e internacional. Foram igualmente impostas sanções (congelamento de ativos e proibição de visto) a 21 líderes militares. A UE está determinada, em cooperação com outras organizações internacionais, em garantir o restabelecimento de uma situação em que os cidadãos da Guiné-Bissau sejam livres de eleger um governo e em que as Forças Armadas desempenhem um papel subordinado às autoridades civis legítimas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009678/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Guinea-Bissau: attempted attack on barracks

On 21 October 2012, a group of armed men attacked the Para-Commando Regiment's barracks in Guinea-Bissau's capital.

Various sources claim six people died during the unsuccessful attack, the motivation for which is unclear.

This incident once again highlights the growing instability in the country, which has been exacerbated by the coup of 12 April 2012 and the establishment of an illegitimate political regime in Guinea-Bissau.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this situation?

2. What information does she have on it?

3. Has she contacted representatives of civil society and Guinea-Bissau's legitimate government-in-exile on this matter? What answers has she received?

4. How does she view the country's political and military situation?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

1. The HR/VP is fully aware of the situation.

2. The causes of events of 21.10.2012 are not entirely clear. The transitional authorities claim it was an attempted coup, but other sources suggest it was a clash between opposed factions within the Armed Forces, about control of the massive illegal drugs trafficking through Guinea-Bissau.

3. The EU delegation has been in close contact with Civil Society & other parties in Guinea Bissau. Civil Society is very concerned about human rights abuses and by the marginalisation of certain political parties, namely the majority party in Parliament, and of Civil Society by the transitional authorities. For both Civil Society and the government in exile, these events highlight once more the urgent need to return to a constitutional order and to remove the grip of the armed forces on the civilian powers. This requires a genuine and deep reform of the security sector which will only be possible with a complete change of the current military leadership.

4. The HR/VP is concerned about the situation in Guinea Bissau including the serious and repeated violations of Human Rights which have occurred. Human Rights violations are not acceptable and perpetrators must be held responsible. The High Representative/Vice-President has urged the de facto authorities to ensure the security of all citizens, in full compliance with national and international law. Sanctions (asset freeze + visa ban) have also been imposed on 21 military leaders. The EU is determined, in cooperation with other international organisations, to ensure the restoration of a situation where the citizens of Guinea Bissau are free to elect a government of their choice, and where the armed forces play a role subordinate to the legitimate civil authorities.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009679/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Πρόγραμμα ΗΛΙΟΣ

Έχει γίνει πολύ μεγάλη συζήτηση και έχουν γραφτεί εκατοντάδες άρθρα στον Τύπο σχετικά με το λεγόμενο πρόγραμμα ΗΛΙΟΣ για παραγωγή ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας από φωτοβολταϊκά στην Ελλάδα και μεταφορά του ρεύματος στην Γερμανία. Το Συμβούλιο, στη δήλωση της Συνόδου Κορυφής της 26ης/10/2011, αναφέρθηκε στο πρόγραμμα ΗΛΙΟΣ «η Ελλάδα δεσμεύει μελλοντικές ταμειακές ροές από το πρόγραμμα ΗΛΙΟΣ … για την περαιτέρω μείωση του χρέους της Ελληνικής Δημοκρατίας». Συγκροτήθηκε συντονιστική επιτροπή από το ελληνικό Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος με την συμμετοχή και της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για την υλοποίηση του.

Ένα χρόνο μετά την ανακοίνωση της Συνόδου Κορυφής υπάρχουν πληροφορίες και δηλώσεις, σύμφωνα με τις οποίες «το πρόγραμμα, ενώ προβλέπονταν να είχε δυναμικότητα 10 000 MW, τελικά θα περιοριστεί σε κλίμακα κάτω των 500 MW», «η υλοποίηση του προγράμματος είναι αδύνατη» … «η γερμανική και η ελληνική κυβέρνηση επανεξετάζουν το σχέδιο εξαγωγής ηλιακής ενέργειας στη Γερμανία, λόγω του μεγάλου κόστους των απαιτούμενων υποδομών» … «το πρόγραμμα επανεξετάζεται καθώς οι δυνατότητες του ηλεκτρικού δικτύου είναι περιορισμένες και μια επιχείρηση αναβάθμισης θα ήταν πολυδάπανη και θα απαιτούσε πολύ καιρό για να ολοκληρωθεί.».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Μπορεί να δώσει μια συγκεκριμένη απάντηση ως προς την πορεία αυτού του σχεδίου; Εξακολουθεί να υπάρχει; Υπάρχει επενδυτικό ενδιαφέρον και από ποιόν; Ποιες είναι οι δυσκολίες που αντιμετωπίζει;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Η Επιτροπή κατανοεί ότι η ελληνική κυβέρνηση που ανέλαβε καθήκοντα μετά τις βουλευτικές εκλογές του Ιουνίου 2012 εξετάζει τώρα αν θα χρειαστούν προσαρμογές της αρχικής στρατηγικής για το πρόγραμμα Helios, όπως πρότεινε η προκάτοχός της. Αναμένεται ότι η διευθύνουσα επιτροπή που λειτουργεί υπό την αιγίδα της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης θα επαναλάβει τις εργασίες της μόλις ληφθούν οι αναγκαίες αποφάσεις. Σύμφωνα με τις πληροφορίες της Επιτροπής, δεν έχουν πραγματοποιηθεί μέχρι στιγμής συγκεκριμένες συζητήσεις μεταξύ της σημερινής ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και δυνητικών επενδυτών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009679/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: HELIOS Project

Major debates have taken place and several press articles have been written regarding the HELIOS project for producing electricity from photovoltaics in Greece and the transmission of the power to Germany. In the Euro Summit Statement of 26 October 2011 the Council stated that 'Greece commits future cash flows from project Helios (…) to further reduce indebtedness of the Hellenic Republic'. A Steering Committee was set up by the Greek Ministry of the Environment with the participation of the European Commission for its implementation.

A year after the announcement was made at the EU summit, there have been reports that 'although the project was expected to have a power capacity of 10 000 MW, it will be restricted to less than 500 MW', 'implementing the project is impossible' (…) 'the German and Greek Governments are reconsidering the plan to export solar energy to Germany, due to the high cost of the required infrastructures' (…) 'the project is being reconsidered as the capacity of the electrical grid is limited and an upgrade would be extremely expensive and would take a long time to complete'.

Will the Commission answer the following:

Can it provide a definitive answer regarding the progress of this project? Does it still exist? Are there any investors interested in the project, and if so, who? What difficulties are involved in the project?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(12 December 2012)

The Commission understands that the Greek Government that has come into office following the parliamentary elections in June 2012 is currently assessing if adaptations to the initial strategy for Helios, as put forward by its predecessor, will be needed. It is expected that the Steering Committee organised under the auspices of the Greek Government will resume its work once the necessary decisions have been taken. According to the Commission's information no concrete discussions between the current Greek Government and potential investors have taken place so far.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009680/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 Οκτωβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Διαφάνεια και σύγκριση τιμών στο VDSL

Με βάση την προσπάθεια της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για την ανάπτυξη των δικτύων ευρυζωνικότητας και γενικότερα την παροχή υψηλού επιπέδου τηλεπικοινωνιακών συστημάτων, μέσω της «μεγιστοποίησης του κοινωνικού και οικονομικού δυναμικού των τεχνολογιών πληροφοριών και επικοινωνιών», έχει ιδιαίτερη σημασία η διαφάνεια των ακολουθούμενων τιμολογιακών πολιτικών στις χώρες μέλη.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Με βάση τα πιο πάνω δεδομένα, ποια στοιχεία μπορεί να παράσχει, προκειμένου να είναι συγκρίσιμες και διαφανείς οι εφαρμοζόμενες τιμολογιακές πολιτικές;

Μπορεί η Επιτροπή να αναφέρει τα κράτη μέλη στα οποία είναι διαθέσιμες οι υπηρεσίες VDSL (Very-high-bit-rate Digital Subscriber Line), καθώς και τους τιμοκαταλόγους των αντίστοιχων παρόχων στις χώρες αυτές;

Απάντηση της κ. Kroes εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Δεκεμβρίου 2012)

Στο ψηφιακό θεματολόγιο για την Ευρώπη αναγνωρίζεται η σημασία που έχει η βελτίωση της συγκρισιμότητας των τιμών καταναλωτή προκειμένου να ενισχυθεί ο ανταγωνισμός και να βελτιωθεί η προστασία των καταναλωτών στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση ([1]).

Το ενωσιακό ρυθμιστικό πλαίσιο για τις ηλεκτρονικές επικοινωνίες, ιδίως η οδηγία για την καθολική υπηρεσία ([2]), περιέχει ειδικές απαιτήσεις όσον αφορά τη διαφάνεια και τη δημοσίευση πληροφοριών, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των τιμών, εκ μέρους των επιχειρήσεων. Τα κράτη μέλη εξασφαλίζουν ότι οι ρυθμιστικές αρχές είναι σε θέση να υποχρεώνουν τους παρόχους τηλεπικοινωνιών να δημοσιεύουν διαφανείς, συγκρίσιμες, κατάλληλες και επικαιροποιημένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις τιμές. Η Επιτροπή καταρτίζει επίσης σύσταση σχετικά με το ανοιχτό διαδίκτυο, όπου, μεταξύ άλλων, αντιμετωπίζονται τα θέματα της διαφάνειας και της συγκρισιμότητας.

Παράλληλα, όπως αναφέρεται στην ανακοίνωση σχετικά με ένα συνεκτικό πλαίσιο για την ενίσχυση της εμπιστοσύνης στην ενιαία ψηφιακή αγορά ([3]) και στο Ευρωπαϊκό θεματολόγιο για τους καταναλωτές ([4]), η Επιτροπή σκοπεύει να αντιμετωπίσει το θέμα της διαφάνειας και της αξιοπιστίας των πληροφοριών με απευθείας διάλογο με τα ενδιαφερόμενα μέρη σε όλους τους τομείς, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των τηλεπικοινωνιών. Τα συμπεράσματα και οι συστάσεις από τον εν λόγω διάλογο θα παρουσιαστούν την άνοιξη του 2013 σε έκθεση, θα μπορούσαν δε να αποτελέσουν τη βάση για τη συγκρότηση δέσμης από κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για οριζόντια εφαρμογή σε επίπεδο ΕΕ.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί εκ του σύνεγγυς τις εξελίξεις στις τεχνολογίες NGA (πρόσβασης επόμενης γενιάς), συμπεριλαμβανομένων των υπηρεσιών VDSL, ενώ κάθε έξι μήνες διεξάγει αναλύσεις των αγορών ευρυζωνικών υπηρεσιών ([5]). Όσον αφορά τις τιμές ευρυζωνικών συνδέσεων, η Επιτροπή δημοσιεύει κάθε χρόνο έκθεση, συμπεριλαμβανόμενων πληροφοριών για τις τιμές γραμμών DSL υψηλής ταχύτητας. Μία από τις κύριες διαπιστώσεις της είναι η διαφορά του μέσου κόστους ευρυζωνικής πρόσβασης στο διαδίκτυο μεταξύ των κρατών μελών ([6]).

([1]) COM(2010)245. Ψηφιακό θεματολόγιο για την Ευρώπη.
([2]) ΕΕ L 108 της 24.4.2002, σ. 51.
([3]) COM(2011)942. Ένα συνεκτικό πλαίσιο για την ενίσχυση της εμπιστοσύνης στην ενιαία ψηφιακή αγορά ηλεκτρονικού εμπορίου και διαδικτυακών υπηρεσιών.
([4]) COM(2012)225. Ευρωπαϊκό θεματολόγιο για τους καταναλωτές — Προώθηση της εμπιστοσύνης και της ανάπτυξης.
([5]) Η τελευταία έκθεση είναι διαθέσιμη στον ακόλουθο ιστότοπο: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/study-broadband-coverage-2011.
([6]) Η τελευταία έκθεση είναι διαθέσιμη στον ακόλουθο ιστότοπο: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/study_broadband_access_costs_0.pdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009680/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Price transparency and comparison for VDSL

In the light of the EU's efforts to develop broadband networks and, in general, to provide high-level telecommunication systems by 'maximising the social and financial potential of Information and Communication Technologies', the transparency of pricing policies applied in the Member States is of particular importance.

Can the Commission say:

In the light of the above, what information it can provide in order to make applied pricing policies comparable and transparent?

Which Member States offer VDSL services (Very-high-bit-rate Digital Subscriber Line), and give the pricelists of the respective providers in these countries?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(13 December 2012)

The Digital Agenda for Europe acknowledges the importance of improving the comparability of consumer prices in order to drive competition and to enhance consumer protection in the EU ([1]).

The EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, in particular the Universal Service Directive ([2]), contains specific requirements regarding transparency and publication of information, including prices, by undertakings. Member States shall ensure that regulatory authorities are able to oblige telecommunication providers to publish transparent, comparable, adequate and up-to-date information on prices. The Commission is also preparing a recommendation on the open Internet addressing, amongst others, the issues of transparency and comparability.

In parallel, as announced in the communication on a framework for building trust in the Digital Single Market ([3]) and the European Consumer Agenda ([4]), the Commission aims to address the issue of transparency and reliability of information through a direct dialogue with stakeholders across sectors including telecommunications. Conclusions and recommendations from this dialogue will be presented in spring 2013 in a report, and could form the basis for developing a set of horizontally applicable EU-wide guidelines.

The Commission has been closely monitoring the developments in NGA technologies including VDSL services and carries out analyses of broadband markets every six months ([5]). As for broadband prices, the Commission publishes a report every year, including information on high-speed DSL prices. One of its main findings is the difference of the average Broadband Internet Access Costs between Member States ([6]).

([1]) COM(2010)245. A Digital Agenda for Europe.
([2]) OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 51.
([3]) COM(2011)942. A coherent framework for building trust in the Digital Single Market for e-commerce and online services.
([4]) COM(2012)225. A European Consumer Agenda — Boosting confidence and growth.
([5]) The latest report is available in the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/study-broadband-coverage-2011.
([6]) The latest report is available in the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/study_broadband_access_costs_0.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009681/12
à la Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(23 octobre 2012)

Objet: Statut des gens du voyage contraire à la directive sur la non-discrimination

En France, la loi nº 69-3 du 3 janvier 1969 a créé une catégorie administrative, celle des gens du voyage, qui représente entre 300 000 et 400 000 personnes sur le territoire. Les personnes de plus de seize ans n'ayant ni domicile ni résidence fixes pendant plus de six mois sont considérées comme tels. Suite aux conclusions du Conseil constitutionnel du 5 octobre 2012, le carnet de circulation a été supprimé, mais parallèlement, le livret de circulation, qui était jusqu'alors réservé aux gens du voyage ayant des ressources régulières, est désormais généralisé à l'ensemble d'entre eux. Il est certes légèrement moins contraignant (visa d'un an au lieu de 3 mois) mais il relève du même principe de séparation de la population en deux catégories. Pour le Conseil constitutionnel, le maintien d'un titre de circulation est légitimé par la nécessité de «protéger l'ordre public», ce qui signifie que les gens du voyage sont considérés comme faiseurs de troubles sans qu'ils n'aient commis aucune infraction.

Étant donné qu'est ainsi créée une catégorie de population à part, ne relevant pas du droit commun, la directive 2000/43/CE sur la non-discrimination n'est visiblement pas respectée. Certes, ce texte traite de discrimination «ethnique ou raciale», mais d'après la délibération no 2007-372 du 17 décembre 2007 de la Halde (Haute autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité), «présentés par les textes nationaux comme une catégorie administrative définie par son mode de vie, les gens du voyage apparaissent en pratique comme un groupe identifié ayant en commun d'être victimes des mêmes différences de traitement, du fait de leur appartenance, réelle ou supposée, à la communauté Tzigane».

1. La Commission est-elle informée qu'il existe en France une catégorie de population à part, relevant d'un régime en dehors du droit commun?

2. Que compte faire la Commission pour mettre fin à cette atteinte au principe de non-discrimination?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(19 décembre 2012)

La Commission a connaissance de la loi nº 69-3 du 3 janvier 1969, de la décision du Conseil constitutionnel du 5 octobre 2012 abrogeant certaines de ses dispositions, ainsi que des appels à l'abrogation des autres dispositions de cette loi.

Le 22 août 2012, à la suite d'une réunion interministérielle, plusieurs engagements visant à renforcer l'intégration des Roms ont été annoncés publiquement. L'un de ces engagements porte sur la révision de la stratégie nationale française d'intégration des Roms.

En soutien à ce processus de révision, des réunions bilatérales ont été organisées, à Bruxelles le 31 août et à Paris le 20 septembre, pour permettre à la Commission et aux décideurs français de discuter des conclusions détaillées de l'évaluation par la Commission de la stratégie de la France et de tirer des enseignements des pratiques actuelles.

Dans ce cadre, la Commission a souligné que le groupe cible du «Cadre de l'UE pour les stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms» inclut clairement les gens du voyage et que les stratégies nationales sont également censées remédier aux obstacles à l'intégration de ce groupe.

La Commission rendra compte des progrès accomplis dans la mise en œuvre des stratégies nationales au printemps 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009681/12
to the Commission
Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(23 October 2012)

Subject: Legal status of Travellers not consistent with the European directive on non-discrimination

In accordance with Law No 69-3 of 3 January 1969, Travellers in France are treated as a separate administrative category of persons, which currently numbers between 300 000 and 400 000 individuals. The category covers persons over 16 years of age who do not have a fixed address or abode for a period of more than six months. In response to the conclusions of the Constitutional Council of 5 October 2012, the Travellers' movement permit was abolished. At the same time, however, a different movement permit, normally reserved for Travellers with a regular income, had its scope extended to cover all members of the Traveller community. Whilst the new permit is slightly less restrictive (being valid for a year, rather than only three months), it maintains the principle of dividing the population into two categories of persons. According to the Constitutional Council, the continued use of movement permits is justified by the need to 'safeguard public order', the implication being that Travellers are troublemakers even if they have never broken the law.

Given that these arrangements establish Travellers as a separate category of persons not covered by the ordinary law, France is in clear breach of Directive 2000/43/EC on non-discrimination. Although the directive deals specifically with ethnic or racial discrimination, decision No 2007-372 of 17 December 2007 by the HALDE (the French Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination Commission) states that whilst Travellers are presented in national law as an administrative category of persons defined by their way of life, they have come to be seen in practice as a group whose members have in common the fact that they suffer the same forms of unequal treatment simply because they belong, or are perceived as belonging, to the gypsy community.

1. Is the Commission aware that Travellers are treated in France as a separate administrativecategory not covered by the ordinary law?

2. What does it intend to do to stop the principle of non-discrimination being flouted in thisway?

Answer given by Vivianne Reding on behalf of the Commission
(19 December 2012)

The Commission is aware of Law 69-3 of 3 January 1969, of the decision of the Constitutional Court of 5 October 2012 repealing some of its provisions and of the calls to repeal the remaining parts of the law.

On 22 August 2012, following an inter-ministerial meeting, several commitments to bolster Roma integration were made public. One is to revise the French national Roma integration strategy.

In order to support this revision, bilateral meetings between the Commission and France's decision-makers took place on 31 August in Brussels and on 20 September in Paris so as to discuss the detailed results from the assessment by the Commission of France's strategy and draw lessons from existing practices.

In this frame, the Commission highlighted that the target group of the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies clearly includes gens du voyage and that it is expected that the national strategies also tackle the obstacles to their integration.

The Commission will report on progress on the implementation of the national strategies in spring 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010355/12
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(13 November 2012)

Subject: Declining bee population

Will the Commission be bringing forward any proposals or conducting any studies regarding the declining bee population?

Will the Commission be bringing forward any proposals relating to the mandatory enforcement of crop rotation?

If so, how would the Commission see this being policed and enforced?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(16 January 2013)

1. Comprehensive information on the EU actions addressing bee health has been provided in the Commission replies to written questions E-07852/10, E-05654/2011, E-10188/11, E-11165/2011, and E-00160/2012 ([1]). Surveillance studies on honeybee colony losses financially supported by the Commission (EUR 3.2 million) are currently ongoing in 17 Member States. Further information on these studies is available on the Commission website ([2]).

The Commission continues to closely monitor the bee health situation and is ready to take further legislative or non-legislative measures as appropriate, based on new scientific information as it becomes available.

2 and 3. The Commission in its proposal on direct payments ([3]) establishes three 'greening' measures mandatory for farmers. One of the obligations involves 'crop diversification'. IN the 'Concept paper on Greening' the Commission showed its willingness to consider rural development programs involving crop rotation as 'equivalent' with the diversification obligation. Based on this possibility a farmer applying a crop rotation on 100% of his arable land could be considered as fulfilling the diversification obligation.

Directive 2009/128/EC ([4]) lays down in its Annex III the General Principles of Integrated Pest Management which will have to be applied by all users of pesticides from January 2014. Among those principles, the technique of rotation is one of possible options to prevent diseases occurrence, it is therein an option and not an obligation. The Commission considers not opportune to bring forward a proposal for mandatory enforcement of crop rotation at this stage.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/bees/bee_health_en.htm
([3]) COM(625) final/2.
([4]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011530/12
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(18 grudnia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Kryzys w zakresie praw człowieka na terytoriach plemiennych w Pakistanie

Amnesty International wydała właśnie raport, w którym stwierdziła, że Pakistan nie podejmuje działania w sprawie tysięcy przypadków naruszenia praw człowieka na terytoriach plemiennych na północnym zachodzie kraju, gdzie ludność jest terroryzowana zarówno przez talibów, jak i wojsko. Akurat dzisiaj, 17 grudnia, na targu w regionie Chajber miał miejsce samochodowy atak bombowy, w którym zginęło 17 osób i do którego dotychczas nikt się jednak nie przyznał.

W raporcie Amnesty stwierdzono, że przypadki naruszenia pozostają bezkarne, ponieważ nie działa ochrona konstytucyjna. Organizacja nazywa ten obszar królestwem bezprawia, nasilającego kryzys praw człowieka. Odnotowano szereg przypadków śmierci w areszcie, lecz sprawcy nie zostali ukarani z powodu panującej bezkarności. W raporcie zauważono, że pozwalając siłom zbrojnym na bezkarne popełnianie tych zbrodni, pakistański rząd dał im wolną rękę do przeprowadzania tortur i wymuszonych zaginięć.

Czy Komisja wezwała pakistański rząd do przeprowadzenia reformy systemu prawnego na tych terytoriach plemiennych, aby można było lepiej egzekwować prawo? Jeżeli nie, czy planuje podjęcie takiego działania?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(14 marca 2013 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca zna sytuację na terytoriach plemiennych FATA i PATA w północno-zachodnim Pakistanie.

W 2012 r., w ramach dialogu między UE i Pakistanem dotyczącego praw człowieka, UE poruszyła w szczególności problem praw obywatelskich, politycznych i praw człowieka ludności FATA oraz wezwała władze Pakistanu do podjęcia środków zmierzających do zapewnienia ochrony fizycznej oraz ochrony praw wszystkich obywateli Pakistanu, zgodnie z międzynarodowymi standardami i konwencjami dotyczącymi praw człowieka.

Równocześnie UE wspiera projekty mające na celu poprawę dostępu do wymiaru sprawiedliwości oraz skuteczniejsze egzekwowanie prawa w Pakistanie, zwłaszcza przez policję i prokuraturę. UE będzie ponadto finansować projekty służące budowaniu potencjału instytucji federalnych i regionalnych w celu zwiększenia świadomości w zakresie praw człowieka oraz ich ochrony, poprawy dostępu do wymiaru sprawiedliwości dla grup najbardziej zagrożonych oraz wzmocnienia organizacji społeczeństwa obywatelskiego.

Pakistan musi stawić czoła ogromnym wyzwaniom w sferze bezpieczeństwa w strefie przygranicznej z Afganistanem, jak i potrzebie przywrócenia władz cywilnych na skutek powstań na terytoriach plemiennych. W następstwie przyjęcia planu zaangażowania UE-Pakistan przewiduje się regularne rozmowy sektorowe poświęcone kwestiom bezpieczeństwa i zwalczania terroryzmu. Część tych rozmów poświęcona ma być kwestii egzekwowania prawa, w tym skuteczniejszego oskarżania w procesach sądowych o terroryzm, oraz zwalczaniu brutalnego ekstremizmu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-011530/12
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(18 December 2012)

Subject: Human rights crisis in tribal areas of Pakistan

Amnesty International has just put out a report stating that Pakistan is failing to address thousands of human rights violations that are taking place in its tribal areas in the north-west, as people are being terrorised by both the Taliban and the military. Just today, 17 December, there was a car bomb attack in a market in the Khyber region that killed 17 people, although no one has yet taken responsibility for the attack.

The Amnesty report claims that abuses take place with impunity because constitutional safeguards do not apply. It calls the area a legal wilderness which is fuelling a human rights crisis. There have been numerous cases of deaths in custody, with the perpetrators receiving no punishment because of the impunity that exists. The report states that by allowing the armed forces to commit these crimes unchecked, the Pakistani Government has given them free reign to carry out torture and enforced disappearance.

Has the Commission urged the Pakistani Government to reform the legal system in these tribal areas so that better enforcement can take place? If not, is it planning to do so?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the situation in the Federally administered and Provincially administered tribal areas (FATA and PATA) in north-west Pakistan.

At the 2012 EU-Pakistan human rights dialogue, the EU raised in particular the issue of the civil, political and human rights of the people of FATA, and has called on the Pakistani authorities to adopt measures to ensure the physical protection and rights of all Pakistani citizens in line with international human rights standards and conventions.

In parallel, the EU is also supporting projects which are intended to improve access to justice and to improve the quality of law enforcement in Pakistan, not least with the police and prosecution services. Furthermore the EU will be funding capacity-building projects in Pakistan's federal and provincial institutions to improve awareness and protection of human rights, access to justice for vulnerable groups and strengthen civil society organisations.

Pakistan faces enormous security challenges in its frontier areas with Afghanistan, as well as needing to re-establish civil authority following insurgencies in the tribal areas. Following adoption of the EU-Pakistan Engagement Plan regular sector dialogues on security and counter-terrorism are scheduled. Law enforcement — including more effective prosecutions in terrorist trials — as well as countering violent extremism are expected to be part of those dialogues.