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LV

IV

(Paziņojumi)

EIROPAS SAVIENĪBAS IESTĀŽU UN STRUKTŪRU SNIEGTI PAZIŅOJUMI

EIROPAS PARLAMENTS

RAKSTISKI JAUTĀJUMI AR ATBILDĒM

Eiropas Parlamenta deputātu rakstiskie jautājumi un atbildes, ko sniegusi kāda Eiropas Savienības iestāde

(2013/C 317 E/01)

Saturs **Lappuse**

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010590/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(20. November 2012)

Betrifft: Internationale Regeln für den Einsatz von Drohnen

Analytiken ([1]) schlagen vor, dass die EU darauf hinarbeiten sollte, internationale Regeln für den Einsatz unbemannter Fluggeräte (Drohnen) für Überwachungsmaßnahmen und gezielte Tötungen zu entwickeln, um einer Generalisierung durch weit gefasste US-amerikanische Regelungen vorzubeugen. Ein Arbeitsdokument der Kommission ([2]) befasst sich mit der zivilen Nutzung von Drohnen. Einige ethische Aspekte, vor allem psychologische Effekte sowie Missbrauchsmöglichkeiten, finden darin allerdings keine Erwähnung ([3]).

1. Plant die Kommission, eine internationale Initiative zur Definition und Harmonisierung der Regeln für den Einsatz von Drohnen für zivile und nichtzivile Überwachungszwecke vorzuschlagen?

2. Plant die Kommission, eine internationale Initiative zur Definition und Harmonisierung der Regeln für den Einsatz von Drohnen für Angriffshandlungen in und außerhalb von Konflikten vorzuschlagen?

Antwort von Herrn Tajani im Namen der Kommission
(24. Januar 2013)

Wie aus dem Arbeitspapier der Kommission hervorgeht, auf das sich der Herr Abgeordnete bezieht, leitet die Kommission derzeit die Ausarbeitung eines Fahrplans für die sichere Integration ferngesteuerter Luftfahrtsysteme ([4]) in den nicht reservierten Luftraum (der Luftverkehrskontrolle unterworfener Luftraum). Mit dieser Initiative ist die Entwicklung innovativer ziviler Anwendungen von RPAS möglich, wodurch Arbeitsplätze und Wachstum entstehen.

Ein sehr wichtiger Aspekt ist die Zahl der zivilen Anwendungen, die durch RPAS möglich sind. Sie steigt mit den in der Technologie erzielten Fortschritten, etwa in den Bereichen Grenzüberwachung, Rettungseinsatz und Umweltanwendungen.

Der Einsatz von RPAS für Überwachungszwecke muss im Einklang stehen mit den europäischen und einzelstaatlichen Gesetzen zum Schutz der Privatsphäre, persönlicher Daten und anderer Grundrechte. Für die Einhaltung dieser Vorschriften sind nach wie vor in erster Linie die Mitgliedstaaten verantwortlich. Allerdings plant die Kommission Maßnahmen, die dazu beitragen sollen, dass der Einsatz von RPAS im Einklang mit der geltenden Rechtsetzung steht. Die Kommission hat nicht die Absicht, Initiativen zur Definition internationaler Regeln für den Einsatz von RPAS zur Überwachung oder für Angriffshandlungen vorzuschlagen.

([1]) Unter anderem: European Council on Foreign Relations: „Obama's Drone Attacks: How the EU Should Respond" (19. Juni 2012).
([2]) SWD(2012)0259.
([3]) Siehe unter anderem: Statewatch, September 2012: „EU: Commission wants drones flying in European skies by 2016".
([4]) Remotely Piloted Aircraft System — RPAS.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010590/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: International rules on the use of drones

Analysts ([1]) suggest that the EU should develop international rules on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) deployed in surveillance missions and targeted killings, in order to prevent broadly defined rules from the USA being put into general use. A Commission working document ([2]) deals with the civil applications of drones. However, that document does not mention some of the ethical issues involved, in particular psychological effects and potential abuse ([3]).

1. Does the Commission plan to propose an international initiative on the definition and harmonisation of the rules on the use of drones for civil and non-civil surveillance purposes?

2. Does the Commission plan to propose an international initiative on the definition and harmonisation of the rules on the use of drones for acts of aggression during conflicts and in non-conflict situations?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

As mentioned in the Commission working document referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission is leading the preparation of a Roadmap for the safe integration of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems ([4]) into the non-segregated airspace (airspace subject to air traffic control). This initiative will enable the development of innovative civil applications of RPAS, thus creating jobs and growth.

A very important aspect of RPAS pertains to the number of civil applications that RPAS could deliver which is growing in line with the progress of technology including frontier surveillance, rescue operations, environmental applications, etc.

RPAS used for surveillance purposes must comply with the European and national laws on the protection of privacy, personal data and other fundamental rights. Ensuring compliance with these rules remains predominantly the responsibility of the Member States. The Commission, however, plans to undertake actions to promote compliance of RPAS surveillance applications with the existing law. The Commission does not intend to propose initiatives to define international rules on the use of RPAS for surveillance or acts of aggression.

([1]) For example: European Council on Foreign Relations: 'Obama's Drone Attacks: How the EU Should Respond'. (19 June 2012).
([2]) SWD(2012)0259.
([3]) See *inter alia*: Statewatch, September 2012: 'EU: Commission wants drones flying in European skies by 2016'.
([4]) RPAS.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010591/12
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: TVA du lieu de résidence de l'internaute — vente des biens culturels

Le moins disant en matière de taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (TVA) est le Luxembourg avec son taux normal à 15 %, réduit à 12 % et 6 %, voire 3 % de super-taux réduit. Il est suivi par l'Irlande avec ses taux de 21 %, 13,5 % et 4,8 %, ainsi que par l'Espagne à 18 %, 8 % et 4 % ou le Royaume— Uni qui a pratiqué jusqu'en 2010 les taux attractifs de 17,5 % (passé à 20 % en 2011) et de 5 %. Pour la vente de biens culturels sur Internet, comme la musique en ligne ou la vidéo à la demande, voire le livre numérique, les États fiscalement attractifs n'hésitent pas à offrir leur taux réduit, ou super réduit, de TVA pour attirer les entreprises du Web.

1. Le compromis luxembourgeois consistant à permettre à des États comme le Luxembourg de tout conserver jusqu'en 2015, année à partir de laquelle ils ne garderont plus que 30 % des recettes de TVA — le reste étant attribué au pays de résidence du consommateur — puis 15 % à partir de 2017, pour atteindre 0 % à partir de 2019 ne permet-il pas le maintien d'une concurrence déloyale pour des biens et des services vendus sur l'Internet sans frontières?

2. La décision d'attendre 2019 pour que le principe de taxation au lieu de résidence de l'internaute ou du mobinaute puisse pleinement produire ses effets dans l'application de la TVA n'est-elle pas en opposition totale avec la ligne de la Commission européenne qui prône depuis 2000 «harmonisation, simplification et rationalisation» de la TVA?

3. Enfin, cette décision prise par le Conseil à Luxembourg ne va-t-elle pas à l'encontre du marché unique dont nous sommes justement en train de fêter l'anniversaire?

Réponse
(18 février 2013)

Selon les règles établies par la directive 2008/8/CE du Conseil du 12 février 2008 modifiant la directive 2006/112/CE en ce qui concerne le lieu des prestations de services ([1]), le lieu d'imposition des services électroniques est le lieu où le preneur est établi. Ces règles seront applicables à partir du 1er janvier 2015.

Le partage des recettes évoqué par l'Honorable Parlementaire n'a aucune incidence sur la TVA due en application desdites règles, qui entreront pleinement en vigueur à la date susmentionnée.

([1]) JO L 44 du 20.2.2008, p.11.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010591/12
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Charging VAT in the customer's country of residence on online sales of cultural goods

Luxembourg applies the lowest VAT rates, with a standard rate of 15%, reduced rates of 12% and 6% and even a super-reduced rate of 3%. Ireland (21%, 13.5% and 4.8%), Spain (18%, 8% and 4%) and the United Kingdom, which until 2010 offered very attractive rates of 17.5% (increased to 20% in 2010) and 5%, are the next lowest. When it comes to online sales of cultural goods, such as music, video on demand and even e-books, tax-friendly countries are not shy about offering reduced or even super-reduced VAT rates in order to attract Internet firms.

1. The compromise reached in Luxembourg allows Member States such as Luxembourg to retain all VAT revenues until 2015, at which point their share will fall to 30%, with the remainder going to the consumer's country of residence. In 2017, that share will fall still further, to 15%, and in 2019, to 0%.

Would the Council not agree that this compromise will allow unfair competition with regard to the sale of goods and services on the borderless Internet to continue?

2. The decision was made to wait until 2019 for the principle of charging VAT at the online customer's place of residence to come fully into effect. Is this decision not completely at odds with the 'harmonisation, simplification and rationalisation' approach the Commission has taken to VAT since 2000?

3. Finally, does the decision taken by the Council in Luxembourg not run counter to the principles underpinning the single market, whose 20th anniversary we are celebrating this year?

Reply
(18 February 2013)

Council Directive 2008/8/EC of 12 February 2008 amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards the place of supply of services ([1]) lays down rules on the taxation of electronic services at the place where the customer is established. These rules will be applicable as from 1 January 2015.

The revenue sharing referred to by the Honourable Member does not affect the VAT payable under those rules, which will come fully into effect on that date.

([1]) OJ L 44, 20.2.2008, p. 11.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010592/12
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: Subvention de l'UE aux pays ACP

Depuis trois ans, les pays ACP attendent toujours les subventions de l'Union européenne (190 millions d'euros).

Les fonds européens à répartir pour la période 2010-2013 à un groupe de 10 pays ACP dont la Côte d'Ivoire, le Cameroun et le Ghana, les trois plus grands producteurs de banane africains, avaient été annoncés après un accord de commercialisation conclu le 15 décembre 2009 à Genève en Suisse entre la Commission européenne et les pays latino-américains.

Côté africain, malgré le maintien d'un tarif douanier à taux zéro pour 10 pays ACP, cette révision de régime commercial est perçue comme le début de la perte des privilèges accordés par l'UE.

Selon certains dirigeants des pays concernés, la nouvelle subvention de l'UE se fait attendre à cause des divergences, entre autres, au sein du Conseil européen.

Quelle est la position du Conseil sur ce dossier?

Réponse
(4 février 2013)

Les mesures d'accompagnement dans le secteur de la banane (MAB) ont fait l'objet d'une proposition de la Commission le 17 mars 2010. La Commission a proposé de modifier le règlement portant établissement d'un instrument de financement de la coopération au développement (ICD) ([1]) en vue d'y intégrer le programme sous la forme d'un article additionnel.

Les MAB ont pour objectif de lutter contre la pauvreté. Elles soutiendront les processus d'adaptation à l'érosion des marges de préférence des États ACP producteurs de bananes grâce à un budget de 190 millions d'euros répartis entre dix pays. Cet instrument aura à l'évidence un impact sur les conditions de vie et de travail des cultivateurs et des personnes concernées et améliorera la résilience sociale. Les MAB répondent également à des préoccupations environnementales.

L'adoption des MAB est le résultat d'un long processus qui s'est achevé en décembre 2011, moment auquel le Conseil a terminé ses travaux sur ce dossier. Le Conseil européen n'y a pas été associé.

Depuis lors, la Commission a pris les mesures nécessaires pour lancer la phase de programmation des MAB.

Les stratégies d'assistance pluriannuelles pour chacun des dix pays bénéficiaires ont été approuvées par les États membres lors de la réunion du comité ICD du 19 septembre 2012. De même, les plans d'action annuels ont été approuvés par les États membres lors de la réunion du comité ICD du 7 novembre 2012.

Le Conseil ne doute pas que la Commission aura à cœur de mettre les MAB en œuvre dans les meilleurs délais.

([1]) Règlement (CE) n° 1905/2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010592/12
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: EU grant to the ACP countries

The ACP countries have been awaiting grants from the European Union (190 million euros).

European funds to be allocated for the period 2010-2013 to a group of 10 ACP countries including the Ivory Coast, Cameroon and Ghana, the three largest banana producers in Africa, were announced after a trade agreement on 15 December 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland between the European Commission and the Latin American Countries.

On the African side, despite maintaining a zero tariff rate for 10 ACP countries, this revision of the trade regime is perceived as the first step towards losing privileges granted by the EU.

According to some leaders of the countries concerned, the new EU grant has been delayed, by disagreements, including within the European Council.

What is the Council's position on this matter?

Reply
(4 February 2013)

The Banana Accompanying Measures (BAM) were proposed by the Commission on 17 March 2010. The Commission proposed to amend the regulation establishing the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) ([1]) in order to integrate the programme in the form of an additional article.

The objective of the BAM is to fight poverty. The BAM will support processes of adaptation to the erosion of the preference margins of ACP banana producers with a budget of EUR 190 million for ten beneficiary countries. This instrument will have a clear impact on the living and working conditions of farmers and persons concerned and will improve social resilience. The BAM also address environmental concerns.

The adoption of the BAM was a lengthy process that concluded in December 2011, which marked the end of work in the Council on that issue. The European Council was not involved.

Since then, the Commission has taken the necessary steps to launch the BAM programming phase.

The Multiannual Support Strategies for each of the ten beneficiary countries were approved by the Member States at the DCI Committee meeting of 19 September 2012. Similarly, the Annual Action Plans were approved by the Member States at the DCI Committee meeting of 7 November 2012.

The Council is confident that the Commission will pursue the timely implementation of the BAM.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010593/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: Financement Erasmus en péril

Alors que l'absence de mobilité des salariés d'Europe est pointée du doigt, celle des étudiants pourrait connaître un brusque arrêt.

Plus de 100 personnalités européennes du monde de l'éducation, de l'art, de la littérature, de l'économie, de la philosophie et des sports ont signé une lettre ouverte en soutien au programme d'échange d'étudiants Erasmus.

Parmi les signataires originaires de tous les États membres de l'Union Européenne, on compte le réalisateur espagnol Pedro Almodovar, le président du FC Barcelone Sandro Rosell, le lauréat du prix Nobel d'économie Christopher Pissarides. En Belgique, Axelle Red, Kevin et Jonathan Borlée et Lien Van de Kelder se sont mobilisés.

Une bonne éducation est fondamentale car notre jeunesse se prépare à vivre dans un monde en mutation accélérée, et de plus en plus mobile, interdépendant et multiculturel. Le programme Erasmus risque d'accuser un déficit de 90 millions d'euros cette année et la situation pourrait empirer en 2013. Si les budgets 2012 et 2013 de l'UE ne sont pas suffisants, le nombre de places disponibles ainsi que les bourses pourraient se voir fortement réduits. Un nouveau programme de financement appelé «Erasmus pour tous», étendra, à partir de 2014, les avantages du programme actuel à des millions d'autres jeunes Européens. Il coûterait moins de 2 % du budget total de l'Union.

1. Des rencontres sont-elles prévues avec les États membres pour boucler le financement?

2. La Commission a-t-elle un plan B en cas de refus de la part des États? La France, le Royaume-Uni, l'Allemagne, la Finlande, la Suède, les Pays-Bas et l'Autriche ont refusé de financer le budget présenté par la Commission européenne pour l'année 2013, qui s'élève à 138 milliards d'euros.

3. Si la Commission n'obtient pas l'argent demandé, concrètement, quelles seront les conséquences? Sur quels domaines en particulier vont peser ces restrictions budgétaires?

Réponse donnée par Mme Vassiliou au nom de la Commission
(17 janvier 2013)

Le 23 octobre 2012, la Commission européenne a demandé au Conseil et au Parlement européen, en leur qualité d'autorité budgétaire, de voter un budget supplémentaire de 9 milliards d'euros pour des paiements. L'objectif était de faire correspondre plus étroitement les crédits de paiement et le niveau des engagements déjà votés par l'autorité budgétaire dans le cadre du budget 2012. La Commission a, en particulier, demandé 180 millions d'euros supplémentaires pour le programme pour l'éducation et la formation tout au long de la vie afin de garantir que les besoins en paiements soient couverts jusqu'à la fin de l'année. La part représentée par Erasmus a été estimée à 90 millions d'euros. Ce projet de budget rectificatif n° 6/2012 peut être consulté à l'adresse suivante: (http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_fr.cfm).

L'autorité budgétaire ayant récemment donné son accord sur le budget rectificatif n° 6/2012 (http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/fr/ecofin/134128.pdf) et la Commission ayant adopté, le 23 novembre 2012, le projet de budget 2013 révisé, la menace immédiate est écartée.

La Commission continue d'engager l'autorité budgétaire à soutenir ses propositions concernant une augmentation notable des investissements en faveur de l'éducation et de la formation dans le cadre financier pluriannuel 2014-2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010593/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Funding for Erasmus under threat

While the issue of the lack of labour mobility in Europe has drawn attention, student mobility is in danger of coming to an abrupt halt.

More than 100 prominent Europeans from the worlds of education, the arts, literature, economics, philosophy and sport have signed an open letter in support of the Erasmus student exchange programme.

The signatories, who come from all EU Member States, include Spanish film director Pedro Almodóvar, the president of FC Barcelona, Sandro Rosell and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, Christopher Pissarides. In Belgium, Axelle Red, Kevin and Jonathan Borlée, and Lien Van de Kelder have also rallied to the cause.

A good education is vital, as Europe's youth will have to live in a rapidly changing world which is increasingly mobile, interdependent and multicultural. The Erasmus programme is likely to record a EUR 90 million deficit this year, and the situation could get worse in 2013. If the EU budgets for 2012 and 2013 are insufficient, the number of places and grants available could be heavily reduced. A new funding programme entitled 'Erasmus for all' could extend the current programme to cover millions of additional young Europeans from 2014 and would account for less than 2% of the total EU budget.

1. Are meetings to be held with the Member States with a view to ensuring that sufficientfunding is available?

2. Does the Commission have a plan B to fall back on if some Member States are unwilling to cooperate? France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria have all refused to fund the budget for 2013 proposed by the Commission, which covers a total of EUR 138 billion.

3. What will the precise consequences be if the Commission fails to secure the funds requested? Which areas will be hardest hit by budget cuts?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

On 23 October 2012 the European Commission asked the Council and the European Parliament as the Budgetary Authority to vote for an additional budget of EUR 9 billion for payments. This was so that the available payment credits more closely correspond to the level of commitments already voted for by the Budgetary Authority in the 2012 budget. In particular, the Commission requested an additional EUR 180 million for the Lifelong Learning Programme to ensure payment needs could be met until the end of the year. The share for Erasmus was estimated at EUR 90 Million. This Draft Amending Budget 6/12 can be found at

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_en.cfm.

With the recent agreement by the Budgetary Authority

(http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/134073.pdf) on the Amending Budget 6/2012 and the revised Draft budget 2013 adopted by the Commission on 23 November 2012, the immediate threat has been averted.

The Commission continues to urge the Budgetary Authority to support its proposals for a significant increase in investment for education and training in the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010596/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: TIC plus écologiques

Les technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) deviennent un élément incontournable de la vie courante. Les entreprises et les consommateurs exigent en effet des informations et des systèmes en ligne toujours plus rapides.

Un nouveau problème est donc apparu: la durabilité des TIC. Les émissions de ce secteur sont désormais comparables à celles du secteur de l'aviation, réglementées à l'échelle européenne.

Les investissements dans les TIC devraient doubler d'ici à 2020 dans l'Union européenne pour répondre à la demande croissante des consommateurs friands de services en ligne.

Ce phénomène devrait cependant avoir des répercussions sur l'environnement en termes de consommation d'électricité et d'émissions de dioxyde de carbone.

Si aucune mesure n'est prise, les émissions de dioxyde de carbone du secteur des TIC devraient passer de 530 millions de tonnes d'équivalent CO_2 en 2002 à 1,43 milliard en 2020, selon un rapport de la Global e-Sustainability Initiative (GeSI), un consortium de sociétés de pointe dans le secteur des TIC.

1. Quelle est la position européenne sur les TIC?

2. Une législation spécifique ne devrait-elle pas être adoptée pour ce secteur?

Réponse donnée par Mme Kroes au nom de la Commission
(17 janvier 2013)

Les TIC offrent la possibilité de réduire la consommation d'énergie et les émissions de gaz à effet de serre dans d'autres secteurs, par exemple par la dématérialisation physique de biens et services physiques. Les systèmes en ligne ont cependant leur propre empreinte écologique qui va augmenter fortement au cours des années à venir.

La Commission a donné la priorité à la transparence de l'empreinte écologique du secteur. Dans le cadre de la stratégie numérique pour l'Europe, elle a invité le secteur des TIC à établir un cadre méthodologique pour déterminer ses empreintes énergétique et carbone. Des normes ont depuis lors été élaborées par l'UIT, l'ETSI et la CEI et pilotées par plus de 25 entreprises du secteur des TIC. En parallèle, une évaluation d'impact analyse des mesures de suivi.

Il existe une législation ciblée concernant les phases de conception/production, d'utilisation et d'élimination des produits TIC. Des exigences en matière d'écoconception ont été fixées concernant la consommation d'énergie de certains appareils tels que les téléviseurs, et des normes minimales ont été élaborées, par exemple pour la consommation en mode veille des appareils électroménagers et des équipements de bureau. Des mesures supplémentaires sont en préparation pour les ordinateurs et les serveurs informatiques. L'impact environnemental de la phase de production pour les produits TIC nécessite d'apporter une plus grande attention à l'utilisation rationnelle des matières (par exemple, durabilité, possibilités de démonter/recycler) dans les exigences en matière d'écoconception ou dans les accords volontaires. Pendant la phase d'utilisation, le label *EnergyStar* permet aux consommateurs de repérer les produits TIC qui sont particulièrement économes en énergie. Enfin, la directive relative aux déchets d'équipements électriques et électroniques (DEEE) refondue portera à 85 % le taux de récupération des équipements TIC en phase de fin de vie, ce qui améliorera l'efficacité de leur réutilisation ou de leur recyclage.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010596/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Greener ICTs

Information and telecommunications technologies (ICTs) are becoming a key part of everyday life. Enterprises and consumers are demanding ever quicker information and on-line systems.

This has raised the new issue of ICT sustainability. Emissions in this sector are now comparable to those in the aviation sector, which are regulated at EU-level.

Investment in ICTs is set to double between now and 2020 in the EU in order to meet consumers' insatiable demand for on-line services.

However, this will have repercussions for the environment in terms of electricity consumption and carbon dioxide emissions.

According to a report by a consortium of leading-edge ICT companies, the 'Global e-Sustainability Initiative' (GeSI), carbon dioxide emissions in the ICT sector will have increased from 530 million tonnes CO_2 equivalent in 2002 to 1.43 billion tonnes by 2020.

1. What is the EU's position on ICTs?

2. Should targeted legislation not be adopted for this sector?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

ICTs have the potential to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions in other sectors, e.g. through dematerialisation of goods and physical services. However, online systems also have their own environmental footprint which will strongly increase over the next years.

The Commission has prioritised transparency around the sector's environmental footprint. As part of the Digital Agenda for Europe, it called on industry to establish a methodological framework to capture the energy and carbon footprints of ICT. Standards have since been developed by the ITU, ETSI and IEC and piloted by more than 25 ICT companies. In parallel, an impact assessment is analysing follow-up measures.

Targeted legislation exists concerning the design/production, use and waste phases of ICT products. Eco-design requirements addressing energy consumption of specific devices such at televisions, and minimum standards, e.g. for standby consumption of household and office equipment, have been set Additional measures on computers and computer servers are being prepared. The environmental impact of the production phase for ICT products necessitates more attention to material efficiency (e.g. durability, dismantlability/recyclability) in Ecodesign requirements or voluntary agreements. In the use phase the EnergyStar label allows consumers to identify ICT products that are particularly energy-efficient. Finally, the recast WEEE Directive will boost collection rates of ICT equipment at the end-of-life phase to 85% enabling its more effective re-use or recycling.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010597/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: TVA du lieu de résidence de l'internaute — vente des biens culturels

Le moins-disant en matière de taxe sur la valeur ajoutée (TVA) est le Luxembourg avec son taux normal de 15 %, réduit à 12 %, 6 %, voire 3 % de taux super-réduit. Il est suivi par l'Irlande avec ses taux de 21 %, 13,5 % et 4,8 %, ainsi que par l'Espagne avec 18 %, 8 % et 4 % ou le Royaume-Uni, qui a pratiqué jusqu'en 2010 les taux attractifs de 17,5 % (passé à 20 % en 2011) et de 5 %. Pour la vente de biens culturels sur l'internet, comme la musique en ligne ou la vidéo à la demande, voire le livre numérique, les États fiscalement attractifs n'hésitent pas à offrir leur taux réduit de TVA ou leur taux super-réduit pour attirer les entreprises du web.

1. Ne s'agit-il pas là d'un cas de concurrence déloyale pour des biens et des services vendus sur l'internet sans frontières?

2. La décision d'attendre 2019 pour que le principe de taxation au lieu de résidence de l'internaute ou du mobinaute puisse pleinement produire ses effets dans l'application de la TVA n'est-elle pas caduque?

3. Le compromis luxembourgeois permettant à des États comme le Luxembourg de tout conserver jusqu'en 2015, année à partir de laquelle ils ne garderont plus que 30 % des recettes de TVA — le reste étant attribué au pays de résidence du consommateur —, puis 15 % à partir de 2017, pour atteindre 0 % à partir de 2019, est il acceptable par la Commission européenne? La Commission est-elle sur la même ligne?

4. Depuis 2000, les différents commissaires qui se sont succédé ont mis en haut de leur liste de priorités «l'harmonisation, la simplification et la rationalisation de la TVA». Cette décision ne va-t-elle pas à l'encontre de cette citation?

5. Ce marché de l'Union européenne est-il par conséquent moins unique?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(14 janvier 2013)

1. 4. et 5. La dernière étape en date du processus qui vise à «harmoniser, simplifier et rationaliser le régime de TVA» a été l'adoption, le 6 décembre 2011 ([1]), d'une communication sur la voie à suivre pour parvenir à un système de TVÀ plus simple, plus robuste et plus efficace, adapté au marché unique. À titre de suivi, la Commission a récemment lancé une consultation publique sur le réexamen de la législation existante sur les taux réduits de TVA ([2]). Le problème de la distorsion de la concurrence est posé dans la première question de cette consultation. À la lumière des informations dont ils disposent actuellement, les services de la Commission recherchent des éléments de preuve relatifs à toute situation concrète dans laquelle l'application d'un taux réduit par un ou plusieurs États membres sur certaines livraisons de biens ou prestations de services se traduit effectivement par une distorsion de concurrence notable au sein du marché unique.

2. et 3. Les règles de taxation au lieu de prestation des services électroniques ont été adoptées en 2008 dans le cadre du paquet TVA ([3]). Cette modification prendra effet le 1er janvier 2015. La Commission prend toutes les mesures en son pouvoir afin que l'entrée en vigueur de ces nouvelles règles se déroule dans de bonnes conditions. Étant donné que la date prévue pour ce changement du lieu d'imposition n'a été adoptée par le Conseil que dans le cadre d'un compromis global, et compte tenu du temps nécessaire pour que les entreprises et les administrations fiscales se préparent à ce changement, il ne serait pas envisageable d'avancer la date de son entrée en vigueur. Le partage des recettes de TVA, d'ici 2019, entre l'État membre d'identification et l'État membre de consommation fait partie de ce compromis. Dans la mesure où il ne remet pas en cause le principe actuel de taxation au lieu de destination, au taux et aux conditions de l'État membre du preneur à partir de 2015, la Commission ne s'est pas opposée à ce compromis et n'a pas non plus d'objection à émettre à son égard.

([1]) Directive 2008/8/CE du Conseil du 12 février 2008 modifiant la directive 2006/112/CE en ce qui concerne le lieu des prestations de services.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_fr.htm
([3]) Directive 2008/8/CE du Conseil du 12 février 2008 modifiant la directive 2006/112/CE en ce qui concerne le lieu des prestations de services.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010597/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Charging VAT in the customer's country of residence on online sales of cultural goods

Luxembourg applies the lowest VAT rates, with a standard rate of 15%, reduced rates of 12% and 6% and even a super-reduced rate of 3%. Ireland (21%, 13.5% and 4.8%), Spain (18%, 8% and 4%) and the United Kingdom, which until 2010 offered very attractive rates of 17.5% (increased to 20% in 2010) and 5%, are the next lowest. When it comes to online sales of cultural goods, such as music, video on demand and even e-books, tax-friendly countries are not shy about offering reduced or even super-reduced VAT rates in order to attract Internet firms.

1. Does the Commission agree that this is an instance of unfair competition, in that different rules are being applied to goods and services purchased online?

2. The decision was made to wait until 2019 for the principle of charging VAT at the online customer's place of residence to come fully into effect. Does the Commission think that this decision was realistic?

3. The compromise reached in Luxembourg allows Member States such as Luxembourg to retain all VAT revenues until 2015, at which point their share will fall to 30%, with the remainder going to the consumer's country of residence. In 2017, that share will fall still further, to 15%, and in 2019, to 0%. Does the Commission consider the compromise to be acceptable? Does it support it?

4. Since 2000, the EU's various Taxation Commissioners have said that 'harmonising, simplifying and rationalising VAT arrangements' is at the top of their list of priorities. Does the aforementioned decision not run counter to this statement?

5. Can we therefore talk about a single market in the online cultural goods sector?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2013)

1, 4 and 5. The latest step in the process that aims at 'harmonising, simplifying and rationalising VAT arrangements' was the adoption on 6 December 2011 ([1]) of a communication on the way forward to achieve a simpler, more robust and efficient VAT system adapted to the single market. As a follow-up, the Commission recently launched a public consultation concerning the review of existing legislation on VAT reduced rates ([2]). The issue of distortion of competition is raised in the first question of this consultation. In the light of the information currently at its disposal, the Commission's services seek evidence of any concrete situations where the application of a reduced rate on certain supplies by one or more Member States is effectively resulting in a material distortion of competition within the single market.

2 and 3. The rules of taxation at the place of the customer of electronic services were adopted in 2008 as part of the VAT Package ([3]). This change will take place on 1 January 2015. The Commission is taking all measures in its power to ensure the smooth entry into force of these new rules. 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. Sharing VAT revenues up until 2019 between the Member State of identification and the Member States of consumption was part of that compromise. As this does not affect the principle of taxation at destination, at the rate and under the conditions of the Member State of the customer as from 2015, the Commission did not oppose this compromise nor does it have any objections to it.

([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://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/consultations/tax/2012_vat_rates_en.htm
([3]) Council Directive 2008/8/EC of 12 February 2008 amending Direction 2006/112/EC as regards the place of supply of services.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010598/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: Lois européennes sur les véhicules électriques

Pour jouer son rôle et limiter le réchauffement climatique à 2 °C, l'Union européenne s'est engagée à réduire ses émissions de carbone de 80 à 95 % d'ici 2050 par rapport aux niveaux de 1990.

Dans le secteur des transports, cet objectif se traduit par une réduction de 70 % des émissions de gaz à effet de serre, selon les chiffres de 2008.Les voitures électriques représentent le moyen le plus rentable de réduire à long terme les émissions de CO^2 des transports et, si le marché européen en plein essor continue de doubler chaque année, ces véhicules représenteront 3 à 4 % des ventes de voitures d'ici 2020.

De plus, en tant que député européen socialiste, je suis très sensible au fait que ce secteur est générateur de nouveaux emplois dans le secteur automobile, notamment en raison de la combinaison de technologies qui devront être produites, distribuées et réparées.

1. Comment se positionne la Commission sur les mesures prises en Norvège et plus récemment en France et visant à aider les constructeurs automobiles en difficulté à acquérir une part importante du marché naissant des véhicules électriques?

Pour rappel, la Norvège, pays producteur de pétrole, a établi une loi permettant aux véhicules électriques de rouler sur les voies de bus et de bénéficier de places de parking et de bornes de recharge gratuites en centre ville.

La France, elle, va:

— faire passer les bonus écologiques à l'achat de voitures électriques de 5 000 à 7 000 euros,

— doubler les subventions aux voitures hybrides comme celles proposées par PSA Peugeot Citroën, qui passeront de 2 000 à 4 000 euros,

— imposer des amendes aux véhicules polluants,

— introduire une obligation de remplacer 25 % du parc automobile du gouvernement par des voitures électriques,

— développer rapidement les infrastructures de rechargement électrique dans le pays.

2. La Commission ne devrait-elle pas élaborer une série de mesures visant à promouvoir sa vision d'une croissance soutenue pour le secteur des voitures électriques?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(22 janvier 2013)

L'UE a pris l'initiative de réduire significativement ses émissions de gaz à effet de serre et convient que l'électro mobilité est une technologie prometteuse pour limiter les émissions de gaz à effet de serre imputables aux transports. Toutefois, la Commission pose sur le sujet un regard neutre d'un point de vue technologique et pense que plusieurs technologies de propulsion contribueront à atteindre les objectifs de réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre. En particulier, les véhicules classiques disposent encore d'un grand potentiel de développement en matière d'efficacité énergétique et donc de réduction de leurs émissions de CO^2. C'est dans cet esprit que la Commission a proposé des objectifs d'émissions de CO^2 pour la période 2012-2015 et pour 2020, qui ont été adoptés par le Parlement européen et le Conseil ([1]). Récemment, des propositions ont été faites à propos des modalités permettant d'atteindre les objectifs de 2020 pour les voitures particulières et les camionnettes ([2]).

En ce qui concerne les véhicules électriques, leur véritable incidence sur les émissions de CO^2 dépend des modes de production de l'électricité (bouquet énergétique) et de la présence de réseaux intelligents permettant de recharger les véhicules sans faire augmenter la demande en électricité produite à partir de combustibles fossiles.

([1]) Règlement (UE) nº 510/2011 et règlement (CE) nº 443/2009.
([2]) COM(2012)393 final et COM(2012)394 final.

Si les véhicules électriques offrent bien des solutions de mobilité à faibles émissions de carbone, leur taux de pénétration sur le marché demeure actuellement très faible. Les prévisions du marché varient, mais la majorité des experts s'accordent à dire que leur diffusion sur le marché va augmenter d'ici 2020 et ainsi ouvrir certainement des possibilités de création d'emplois. La Commission soutient le développement et le déploiement des véhicules électriques grâce à sa stratégie pour des véhicules propres et économes en énergie adoptée en 2010 ([3]) et plus récemment grâce au plan d'action CARS 2020 ([4]).

Les actions entreprises à l'échelle européenne sont complétées par les mesures déployées au niveau national et par des initiatives telles que celles mentionnées par l'Honorable Parlementaire.

([3]) COM(2010)186 final.

([4]) COM(2012)636 final — Ces documents stratégiques reflètent la vision de la Commission concernant l'électro mobilité, dont s'enquiert l'Honorable Parlementaire dans sa seconde question.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010598/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: EU legislation on electric vehicles

In order to play its part in limiting global warming to 2°C, the European Union has undertaken to cut carbon emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050 as compared to 1990 levels.

In the transport sector, on the basis of the figures for 2008, that target implies reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 70%. Electric cars are the most cost-effective way of reducing transport CO_2 emissions in the long term and, if sales on the burgeoning EU market continue to double every year, such vehicles will account for 3 to 4% of all car sales by 2020.

Moreover, as a Socialist MEP, I am keenly aware of the fact that this sector generates new jobs in the automobile industry, not least owing to the combination of technologies that would have to be produced, distributed and repaired.

1. What is the Commission's position on the measures taken in Norway and more recently in France to help car makers in difficulty to acquire a significant market share in the new electric vehicle market?

By way of reminder, Norway, which is an oil producing country, has passed a law that allows electric vehicles to use bus lanes and free parking spaces and recharging points in city centres.

France, for its part, is going to:

— increase eco-bonuses for the purchase of electric vehicles from EUR 5 000 to EUR 7 000;

— double the subsidies for hybrid vehicles, such as those proposed by PSA Peugeot Citroën, from EUR 2 000 to EUR 4 000;

— impose fines on polluting vehicles;

— introduce the requirement to replace 25% of the government's car fleet with electric cars;

— swiftly install electric recharging facilities across the country.

2. Should the Commission not be developing a set of measures to promote its vision of sustainable growth for the electric car sector?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

The EU has taken the initiative to significantly reduce its greenhouse gas ([1]) emissions and agrees that, concerning the GHG emissions from transport, electro-mobility is a promising technology. The Commission is however looking at this from a technology-neutral perspective and believes that several propulsion technologies will contribute to reaching the GHG emission targets. Notably, conventional vehicles still have a considerable potential of increasing their energy efficiency and hence reducing their CO_2 emissions. In that spirit, the Commission proposed CO_2 emission targets for 2012-2015 and 2020, which have been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council ([2]). Recently, the modalities for reaching the 2020 CO_2 targets for passenger cars and vans have been proposed ([3]).

As regards electric vehicles, the real impact on CO_2 emissions depends on the modalities of electricity production (energy mix) and the availability of smart grids allowing recharging without increasing the demand for electricity generated from fossil fuels.

([1]) GHG.
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 510/2011, Regulation (EC) No 443/2009.
([3]) COM(2012) 393 final and COM(2012) 394 final.

While electric vehicles offer the possibility of low-carbon mobility, their market penetration is currently very low. Market forecasts vary but the majority of experts agree that their market penetration will increase by 2020 and certainly, this will offer opportunities for job creation. The Commission is supporting the development and deployment of electric vehicles with its strategy on clean and energy efficient vehicles adopted in 2010 ([4]) and more recently with the CARS 2020 Action Plan ([5]).

The actions at EU level are complemented by actions at national level and initiatives such as the ones mentioned by the Honourable Member.

([4]) COM(2010) 186 final.

([5]) COM(2012) 636 final — These strategic documents represent the vision on electro-mobility that the Honourable Member enquires about in his second question.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010600/12
alla Commissione
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(20 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Imposte IVIE e IMU in contrasto con l'ordinamento comunitario

Il governo italiano ha recentemente introdotto le imposte IVIE e IMU sul valore degli immobili che i cittadini italiani detengono in Italia e/o all'estero. Per determinare la base imponibile, la normativa prevede che si utilizzi il valore catastale dell'immobile stesso. Per gli immobili siti in paesi dell'Unione europea nei quali tale «valore catastale» non sia determinato né determinabile, la normativa prevede che l'imponibile IVIE sia determinato in base al valore d'acquisto o al valore di mercato del bene.

Poiché il valore catastale italiano, per ragioni interne allo Stato stesso, risulta normalmente inferiore, anche in maniera rilevante, sia rispetto al valore di acquisto che al valore di mercato dell'immobile, agli immobili esteri si applica, di fatto, un criterio di imposizione fiscale più oneroso ed iniquo, evidentemente in contrasto con l'esercizio della libera circolazione dei capitali.

Infatti, l'investimento in beni immobili in altri paesi dell'Unione europea risulta, alla luce di quanto sopra esposto, svantaggioso rispetto all'investimento di beni immobili in Italia. Non ritiene la Commissione che l'imposta IVIE sia quindi contraria ai principi comunitari e, nello specifico, all'articolo 63 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(10 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione desidera informare l'onorevole parlamentare che essa ha già iniziato ad analizzare la conformità dell'imposta sul valore degli immobili situati all'estero [IVIE] (procedura amministrativa EU Pilot n. 3506/2012) con la normativa dell'UE. In questo contesto, sono stati sollevati alcuni dubbi circa la sua compatibilità con il diritto dell'UE e in particolare con l'articolo 63 del TFUE.

Nella loro risposta le autorità italiane si sono impegnate a modificare diversi aspetti delle disposizioni attualmente in vigore. In attesa dell'adozione definitiva di queste modifiche, prevista entro la fine dell'anno, la Commissione si riserva il diritto alla valutazione finale.

Qualora dovessero permanere delle incompatibilità, la Commissione intende avviare una procedura di infrazione a norma dell'articolo 258 del TFUE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010600/12
to the Commission
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: IVIE and IMU taxes contrary to Community law

The Italian Government has recently introduced the IVIE [tax on the value of foreign property] and IMU [single municipal tax] on the value of property owned by Italian citizens in Italy and/or abroad. The legislation provides that the rateable value of the property should be used to determine the taxable amount. For property in EU countries in which there is no 'rateable value' and it is therefore impossible to determine the rateable value, the law provides that IVIE is to be charged on the purchase price or market value of the property.

Since, for reasons internal to the Italian State, rateable values in Italy are usually lower, by a significant margin, than both the purchase price and the market value of property, this means that foreign property is in fact taxed more heavily, and unfairly, which is obviously contrary to the free movement of capital.

In view of the above, it is thus less profitable to invest in property in other EU countries than in Italy. Does the Commission not think that IVIE is thus against Community principles, specifically Article 63 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(10 January 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the honourable MEP that the Commission has already started to analyse the EU conformity of the tax on the value of foreign immovable property [IVIE] (administrative procedure EU Pilot 3506/2012). In this context, some doubts concerning its compatibility with EC law and namely with Article 63 of TFEU have been raised.

In their reply the Italian authorities committed to amend several aspects of the provisions currently in force. Awaiting the final adoption of these amendments, normally foreseen by the end of the year, the Commission reserves its final assessment.

Should any incompatibility persist, the Commission will open an infringement procedure under Article 258 TFUE.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010601/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Deroga al patto di stabilità per fronteggiare l'emergenza maltempo in Veneto

L'11 novembre scorso, a soli due anni dalla precedente devastante alluvione, il Nord Italia è stato colpito da una forte ondata di maltempo che ha causato danni ingenti, sfiorando la catastrofe umana, sociale ed economica in Veneto, Toscana, Liguria e molte altre zone.

Il Veneto, in particolare, è stato duramente colpito. Abitazioni private, scuole, edifici pubblici d'importanza storica, ponti, strade e, inevitabilmente, anche imprese e aziende agricole sono stati gravemente danneggiati.

Considerando la necessità e l'urgenza di interventi concreti per affrontare il dissesto idrogeologico del territorio in Veneto e nel Nord Italia, quale unica via percorribile e logica per fronteggiare questa emergenze e scongiurarne di future, si chiede alla Commissione:

— una deroga al patto di stabilità, che dia la possibilità agli enti locali di investire nuove risorse per la messa in sicurezza del territorio,

— l'introduzione di norme semplificate volte a permettere una rapida riassegnazione dei fondi europei già assegnati all'Italia nell'ambito della programmazione 2007-2013, ma non ancora spesi.

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(25 gennaio 2013)

Conformemente al Patto di stabilità e crescita, nella relazione della Commissione, che deve essere preparata prima di prendere la decisione di avviare una procedura per i disavanzi eccessivi nei confronti di uno Stato membro, si deve tener conto degli investimenti pubblici. Uno Stato membro viene inserito in una procedura per disavanzi eccessivi se il suo debito supera il 60 % del Prodotto interno lordo e il suo deficit supera il 3 % del Prodotto interno lordo, a meno che il superamento non sia di piccola entità e temporaneo.

Come delineato nel suo Piano per un'unione economica autentica e approfondita, la Commissione esaminerà le modalità per conciliare gli investimenti con l'aspetto preventivo del Patto di stabilità e crescita.

La riassegnazione rapida dei fondi dell'UE è già possibile in base alle modalità di attuazione dei programmi dei Fondi europei. La Commissione è sempre pronta a discutere una simile riassegnazione di fondi con gli Stati membri e le regioni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010601/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Exemption from the Stability Pact to deal with the emergency caused by storms in the Veneto region

On 11 November, only two years after the last devastating floods, northern Italy was again struck by severe storms; the Veneto region, Tuscany, Liguria and many other areas suffered enormous damage, amounting to a virtual human, social and economic catastrophe.

The Veneto was particularly hard hit. Serious damage was caused to homes, schools, historic public buildings, bridges, roads and, of course, farms and businesses.

Given that practical measures are urgently needed to cope with hydrogeological instability in the Veneto region and northern Italy, will the Commission take the only logical and feasible course to cope with the emergency and prevent further disasters in future, which is to:

— allow an exemption from the Stability Pact to enable local authorities to invest new resources to make the ground safe,

— simplify the rules to allow speedy reallocation of European funds already earmarked for Italy in the 2007-2013 programming period, but not yet spent.

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

According to the Stability and Growth Pact, public investments are taken into account in the Commission report to be prepared before a decision is taken to place a Member State in Excessive Deficit Procedure. .A Member State will be placed in Excessive Deficit Procedure if its debt breaches 60% of gross domestic product and its deficit breaches 3% of gross domestic product, unless the breach is small and temporary.

As set out in its Blueprint for a deep and genuine economic and monetary union, the Commission will explore ways to accommodate investments within the preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact.

The speedy reallocation of EU funding is already possible due to the way that EU funding programmes are implemented. The Commission is always ready to discuss such reallocation of funding with Member States and regions.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-010602/12
do Komisji
Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR)
(20 listopada 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zalecenie usunięcia z monety euro (Słowacja) symboli religijnych

18 listopada br. rzeczniczka Narodowego Banku Słowackiego poinformowała, że Komisja Europejska zaleciła usunięcie z projektu monety o nominale dwóch euro z wizerunkami świętych Cyryla i Metodego krzyży na ich ornatach oraz aureol. Działania Narodowego Banku Słowacji miały na celu upamiętnienie 1150 rocznicy przybycia obu świętych na Morawy. Wizyta ta w sposób bezsporny zaważyła na dalszej historii tej części Europy.

W związku z powyższym bardzo proszę o odpowiedź na pytanie: dlaczego Komisja nie respektuje chrześcijańskich tradycji Europy?

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-010603/12
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(20 listopada 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Kwestionowanie słowackiego projektu monety 2 euro

Dostosowując się do zaleceń Komisji Europejskiej, Słowacja usunęła z projektu monety o nominale 2 euro krzyż na ornamentach świętych Cyryla i Metodego oraz aureole nad ich głowami. Według doniesień prasowych stało się to na życzenie „niektórych państw członkowskich". W związku z powyższym chcę zapytać Komisję:

1. Które państwa członkowskie domagały się usunięcia krzyża i aureoli z projektu słowackiej monety?

2. Czy Komisja uważa, że krzyż jest elementem, który powinien być wyeliminowany z przestrzeni publicznej w Unii Europejskiej?

3. Czy Komisja kwestionuje prawo Kościoła Katolickiego do nadawania świętości poszczególnym osobom?

4. Czy Komisja kwestionuje wkład chrześcijaństwa w kulturę europejską, cywilizacje zachodnią oraz podstawy, na których wyrosła Wspólnota Europejska?

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-010893/12
do Komisji
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(29 listopada 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Usunięcie symboli religijnych ze słowackich monet euro

W ostatnim tygodniu media podały bulwersującą informację dotyczącą zalecenia usunięcia symboli krzyża oraz aureoli ze słowackich monet euro. Zalecenie to wydane zostało przez Komisję Europejską. Według słów rzecznika Komisja podjęła decyzję pod wpływem nacisków niektórych krajów europejskich.

— Które kraje europejskie zażądały usunięcia znaków krzyża oraz aureoli?

— W jaki sposób Komisja Europejska zamierza propagować chrześcijańskie korzenie i tradycje zjednoczonej Europy?

— Proszę o przedstawienie prawnych argumentów, które zaważyły na podjęciu decyzji o usunięciu symboli religijnych związanych z kulturową i historyczną tradycją Słowacji.

— Instytucje Unii Europejskiej wielokrotnie powtarzają hasła o zjednoczeniu równych sobie państw suwerennych w jedną wspólnotę europejską. Wyrazem tego jest między innymi myśl przewodnia siódmej kadencji Parlamentu Europejskiego „zjednoczeni w różnorodności". Czy Komisja nie uważa, że decyzja o usunięciu symboli religijnych związanych z historią Słowacji stoi w sprzeczności z duchem integracji europejskiej?

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011051/12
do Komisji
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(4 grudnia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Święci Cyryl i Metody a wolność religijna w Europie

Słowacja usunęła niedawno aureole i krzyż z monety o nominale dwóch euro upamiętniającej 1150. rocznicę przybycia świętych Cyryla i Metodego do Wielkich Moraw i Panonii. Media donoszą, że Komisja stwierdziła, iż symbole religijne należy usunąć ze względu na konieczność przestrzegania zasady neutralności religijnej. Słowacja zgodziła się usunąć aureole mimo uznanej świętości Cyryla i Metodego.

Czy Komisja przyznaje, że sprawa ta świadczy o całkowitym braku szacunku dla religijnego i kulturalnego dziedzictwa Europy? Czy Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę, jakie znaczenie dla wiary prawosławnej i jej wyznawców mają święci Cyryl i Metody? Czy Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę z historycznej drażliwości związanej z jej wnioskiem w sprawie usunięcia symboli religijnych oraz z faktu, że w czasach komunizmu władze zwracały się do malarzy i rzeźbiarzy o przedstawianie Cyryla i Metodego bez aureoli będącej oznaką świętości?

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011059/12
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(4 grudnia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Usunięcie krzyża na słowackich monetach euro

Według informacji przedstawionych przez rzeczniczkę Narodowego Banku Słowackiego, Komisja Europejska zaleciła usunięcie z projektu monety o nominale 2 euro z wizerunkami świętych Cyryla i Metodego krzyży na ich ornatach i aureol nad ich głowami. Moneta w zaprezentowanym kształcie miała upamiętnić 1150 rocznicę przybycia obu świętych na Morawy. Oburzenia nie kryje słowacki episkopat, a także duchowni i wierni w Polsce.

Zwracam się więc do Komisji z następującymi pytaniami:

1. Jakie motywy kierowały przedstawicielami Komisji przy podejmowaniu tejże decyzji?

2. Jakimi przesłankami Komisja tłumaczy pozbawienie katolickich świętych ich odwiecznych atrybutów i jakimi prawami się kierowała?

3. Czy nastąpi zmiana stanowiska Komisji w tej bulwersującej sprawie?

4. Czy Komisja poprzez swoje zalecenie odżegnuje się od chrześcijańskiego rodowodu Europy?

5. Czy wobec innych symboli religijnych, nie tylko chrześcijańskich, Komisja planuje stosować podobne działania?

6. Czy eksponowanie przez państwa członkowskie symboli nawiązujących do ich własnej tradycji stoi w sprzeczności z działalnością Komisji?

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-011547/12
do Komisji
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD), Tadeusz Cymański (EFD), Jacek Olgierd Kurski (EFD) oraz Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(18 grudnia 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zmiany w projekcie monety o wartości nominalnej 2 euro na Słowacji

W drugiej połowie listopada br. na Słowacji wybuchł skandal w związku z zaleceniem Komisji Europejskiej dotyczącym konieczności wprowadzenia zmiany w projekcie monety o nominalnej wartości 2 euro. Moneta ma zostać wydana przez Narodowy Bank Słowacki (NSB) w 2013 r. Ma przedstawiać na rewersie wizerunek św. Cyryla i św. Metodego, a okazją ku temu jest 1150. rocznica przybycia obu świętych na Morawy. Zgodnie z zaleceniem Komisji Europejskiej z monety ma zniknąć znak krzyża, a znad głów świętych aureole. Rzeczniczka NSB Petra Pauerova oznajmiła słowackiemu dziennikowi „Pravda", że „Komisja Europejska, przychylając się do »propozycji niektórych krajów Wspólnoty«, zaleciła usunięcie wspomnianych atrybutów z pierwotnego projektu monety. Ponieważ moneta zostanie dopuszczona do obiegu we wszystkich krajach strefy euro, jej projekt powinien respektować zasady »neutralności religijnej«".

Ze względu na silne niezadowolenie słowackiego społeczeństwa, episkopatu i polityków Rada Narodowego Banku Słowackiego postanowiła ostatecznie odrzucić zalecenia Komisji Europejskiej dotyczące projektu nowej monety i wysłała do Brukseli projekt pierwotny, gdzie na ornatach świętych pozostają krzyże i aureole nad ich głowami.

W związku z powyższym pragnę zapytać:

1. Czy opisywana próba ingerencji Komisji nie jest pogwałceniem artykułu 22 Karty praw podstawowych Unii Europejskiej, który mówi o tym, że Unia szanuje różnorodność kulturową, religijną i językową?

2. Ze względu na propozycje których krajów wspólnoty Komisja zaleciła zmianę opisywanego projektu monety?

Wspólna odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Olliego Rehna w imieniu Komisji
(5 lutego 2013 r.)

Unia Europejska opiera się na poszanowaniu praw człowieka, w tym wolności religii i przekonań, oraz szanuje i wspiera różnorodność kulturową i religijną zgodnie z tym, co zapisano w Karcie praw podstawowych Unii Europejskiej.

Historyczne znaczenie biskupów Cyryla i Metodego jest bezsporne, jednak w rozporządzeniu Rady (WE) nr 975/98, zmienionym rozporządzeniem 566/2012, przewidziano, że państwa członkowskie, przygotowując projekty monety euro, muszą uwzględnić fakt, że monety te są w obiegu w całej strefie euro. W ramach procedury konsultacji dwa państwa członkowskie wyraziły zastrzeżenia wobec przedmiotowego projektu i dlatego też zgłosiły swój sprzeciw co do wzoru tej monety okolicznościowej. Komisja nie posiada prawa weta.

W międzyczasie Słowacja przedstawiła ponownie projekt monety i uprzednie zastrzeżenia zostały przez państwa członkowskie wycofane. Projekt został zatwierdzony przez Radę.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010602/12
to the Commission
Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Order to remove religious symbols from Slovak euro coin

On 18 November 2012, a spokeswoman for the National Bank of Slovakia stated that the Commission had ordered a crucifix to be removed from the vestments of Saints Cyril and Methodius, as well as the Saints' halos, on the proposed 2 EUR coin. The National Bank of Slovakia's proposed coin was intended to commemorate the 1150th anniversary of the Saints' arrival in Moravia. This arrival indisputably influenced the course of history in this part of Europe.

In connection with the above, would the Commission answer the following question: Why does the Commission not respect Europe's Christian traditions?

Question for written answer E-010603/12
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Dispute over proposed Slovak EUR 2 coin

In response to the Commission's recommendations, Slovakia removed a crucifix and the halos of Saints Cyril and Methodius from their proposed EUR 2 coin. According to press reports, this was carried out at the request of 'certain Member States'.

1. Which Member States demanded the removal of the crucifix and the halos from the proposed Slovak coin?

2. Does the Commission believe that the crucifix should be removed from public spaces in the EU?

3. Does it question the right of the Catholic Church to confer sainthoods to particular people?

4. Does it dispute the contribution made by Christianity to European culture, Westerncivilisation and the foundations of the European Community?

Question for written answer E-010893/12
to the Commission
Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Removal of religious symbols from Slovak euro coins

In the past week, the media have revealed shocking news concerning an order that was given to remove images of the crucifix and halos from Slovak euro coins. This order came from the Commission. According to a spokesperson, the Commission made its decision after coming under pressure from certain Member States.

— Which European countries demanded the removal of the crucifix and halos?

— How does the Commission intend to promote the Christian roots and traditions of a united Europe?

— Could the Commission please state what legal arguments influenced its decision to order the removal of religious symbols associated with Slovakia's cultural and historical traditions?

— The EU institutions often repeat slogans about sovereign countries with equal status coming together to form a single European community. One expression of this is the motto of the seventh term of the European Parliament: 'united in diversity'. Does the Commission not feel that the decision to remove religious symbols associated with Slovakia's history runs counter to the spirit of European integration?

Question for written answer E-011051/12
to the Commission
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(4 December 2012)

Subject: Saints Cyril and Methodius and religious freedom in Europe

Slovakia has recently removed the halos and cross from the two-euro coin commemorating the 1150th anniversary of the arrival of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Great Moravia and Pannonia. According to media reports, the Commission said that the religious symbols should be removed on account of the need to observe religious neutrality. Slovakia agreed to remove the halos despite Cyril and Methodius's status as saints.

Does the Commission acknowledge that this case marks a total lack of respect for the religious and cultural heritage of Europe? Is the Commission aware of the importance of Saints Cyril and Methodius to the Orthodox faith and its followers? Is the Commission aware of the historical sensitivities surrounding its request that the religious symbols be removed, and of the fact that during the Communist era painters and sculptors were requested by the authorities to portray Cyril and Methodius without the sanctity of halos?

Question for written answer E-011059/12
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(4 December 2012)

Subject: Removal of the crucifix from Slovakian euro coins

According to information provided by a spokeswoman for the National Bank of Slovakia, the Commission has ordered the crucifix to be removed from the vestments of Saints Cyril and Methodius, as well as the Saints' halos, on the proposed 2 euro coin. The coins were to have commemorated the 1150th anniversary of the Saints' arrival in Moravia. This has outraged not only the Slovakian Episcopate, but also the clergy and faithful in Poland.

Could the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. What led the Commission to take this decision?

2. What is the Commission's justification for depriving these Catholic Saints of their traditional symbols, and on what legal grounds did it base its decision?

3. Will the Commission change its position on this contentious matter?

4. By making this recommendation, is the Commission disassociating itself from Europe's Christian heritage?

5. Is the Commission planning to take similar action against other, not only Christian, religious symbols?

6. Is the display by Member States of symbols referring to their own tradition somehow contrary to the Commission's activities?

Question for written answer E-011547/12
to the Commission
Jacek Włosowicz (EFD), Tadeusz Cymański (EFD), Jacek Olgierd Kurski (EFD) and Zbigniew Ziobro (EFD)
(18 December 2012)

Subject: Changes to the proposed design of the Slovak EUR 2 coin

A scandal erupted in the second half of November 2012 when the Commission recommended that Slovakia make changes to the design of its proposed EUR 2 coin. The coin was to be issued by the National Bank of Slovakia (NBS) in 2013. The reverse of the coin was supposed to depict Saints Cyril and Methodius, in commemoration of the 1150th anniversary of their arrival in Moravia. The Commission recommended that depictions of a crucifix and of the Saints' halos be removed from the coin. A spokeswoman for the NBS revealed to the Slovak newspaper 'Pravda' that the Commission, acceding to requests from certain Member States, had recommended that the aforementioned images be removed from the coin's original design. Given that the coin would be in circulation in all eurozone states, its design should respect the principle of 'religious neutrality'.

In response to strong opposition from Slovak society, clergy and politicians, the board of the NBS ultimately decided to reject the Commission's recommendations and forwarded the original design, featuring the crucifix and the Saints' halos, to Brussels.

1. Is the Commission's aforementioned attempt at interference a violation of Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which states that the Union must respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity?

2. On the basis of which Member States' requests did the Commission recommend makingchanges to the design of the Slovak EUR 2 coin?

Joint answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2013)

The European Union is based on the value of respect for human rights, including the freedom of religion and belief, and it shall respect and foster cultural and religious diversity, as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

While the historic importance of Bishops Cyril and Methodius is uncontested, Council Regulation 975/98 as amended by Regulation 566/2012 provides that Member States have to take into account when preparing a draft design for a euro coin that this coin will circulate throughout the whole Eurozone. Two Member States expressed concerns with the design in the course of the consultation procedure and therefore vetoed the design of the commemorative coin. The Commission does not have a right of veto.

In the meantime Slovakia resubmitted the proposal of the design and the former objections by Member States were withdrawn. The design has now been approved by the Council.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010604/12
alla Commissione
Francesco De Angelis (S&D) e Silvia Costa (S&D)
(20 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Regione Lazio e le risorse dell'UE inutilizzate

— Considerato che dal 24 settembre 2012, in conseguenza delle dimissioni della giunta regionale del Lazio, la fase di programmazione nonché di concertazione con le parti interessate sull'impiego delle risorse della politica di coesione è stata completamente sospesa;

— tenuto conto che permangono molte incertezze in relazione alla data effettiva di svolgimento delle elezioni per il rinnovo delle cariche istituzionali della Regione Lazio, e dunque per il rilancio dell'attività di indirizzo sull'impiego delle risorse dell'UE assegnate a codesta regione;

— visto il significativo ritardo della Regione Lazio nell'impiego delle risorse dell'UE nell'ambito dei fondi FSE, FESR e FEASR in relazione alla programmazione 2007-2013,

può la Commissione riferire, in base alle informazioni in suo possesso, a quanto ammontano ad oggi le risorse della Regione Lazio inutilizzate di provenienza UE in attesa dell'operatività della nuova giunta?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(23 gennaio 2013)

Il programma Lazio 2007-2013 cofinanziato dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale ha una dotazione finanziaria complessiva di 743 milioni di euro con un tasso di cofinanziamento del 50 % da parte del FESR. A tutto il 31 ottobre 2012 il livello degli impegni del programma ammontava a 408 milioni di euro (55 %) e il livello dei pagamenti era pari a 279 milioni di euro (37 %). Pertanto, i rimanenti finanziamenti ancora da impiegare entro la fine del periodo ammontano a 464 milioni di euro.

Il programma 2007-2013 cofinanziato dal Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale (FEASR) ha uno stanziamento complessivo di 700 milioni di euro con un tasso di finanziamento del FEASR pari al 45 %.

A tutto il 15 ottobre 2012 la spesa complessiva è stata di 282 milioni di euro (40 %). La regione prevede di aumentare la spesa fino a 331 milioni di euro entro il 31 dicembre 2012 (47 % dello stanziamento totale). Ciò significa che alla fine del periodo rimarranno ancora da usare 418 milioni di euro.

Il programma 2007-2013 cofinanziato dal Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) ha una dotazione finanziaria complessiva di circa 736 milioni di euro con una tasso di finanziamento del FSE pari al 50 %. A tutto il 31 ottobre 2012 il livello degli impegni del programma FSE ammontava a 479 milioni di euro (65 %) e il livello dei pagamenti era pari a 266 milioni di euro (36 %). Pertanto, i fondi rimanenti ancora da impegnare e spendere entro la fine del periodo 2007-2013 sono pari a 257 milioni di euro e a 470 milioni di euro rispettivamente.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010604/12
to the Commission
Francesco De Angelis (S&D) and Silvia Costa (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Lazio region and unused EU resources

Since 24 September 2012, following the resignation of the Lazio regional government, planning procedures and consultation with the relevant stakeholders concerning the use of cohesion policy funding have come to a complete halt.

There is considerable doubt as to the actual date of the elections for the renewal of the Lazio regional government and hence the resumption of activities relating to the management of EU funding earmarked for the region.

There has also been considerable delay on the part of the Lazio regional government regarding the take-up of ESF, ERDF and EAFRD appropriations for the programming period 2007-2013.

In view of this, can the Commission say what amount of EU funding earmarked for the Lazio region still remains unused pending effective assumption of office by the new administration?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

The 2007-2013 Lazio programme co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund has a total financial allocation of EUR 743 million with a co-financing rate of 50% from ERDF. As of 31 October 2012, the level of commitments of the programme amounted to EUR 408 million (55%) and the level of payments equalled EUR 279 million (37%). Therefore, the remaining funds still to be used by the end of the period equal EUR 464 million.

The 2007-2013 programme co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) has a total allocation of EUR 700 million with a EAFRD co-financing rate of 45%.

As of 15 October 2012, total expenditure was EUR 282 million (40%). The region expects to increase the expenditure up to EUR 331 million by 31 December 2012 (47% of total allocation). This means that EUR 418 million is still to be used by end of the period.

The 2007-2013 programme co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) has a total financial allocation of about EUR 736 million with a ESF co-financing rate of 50%. As of 31 October 2012, the level of commitments of the ESF programme amounted to EUR 479 million (65%) and the level of payments equalled EUR 266 million (36%). Therefore, the remaining funds still to be committed and spent by the end of the 2007-2013 period are EUR 257 million and EUR 470 million respectively.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010605/12
à la Commission
Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE) et Yves Cochet (Verts/ALE)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: Définition française du foie gras

Au titre du règlement (CE) nº 543/2008 de la Commission (ainsi que du règlement (CEE) nº 1538/91 antérieur), le gavage n'est pas exigé pour classifier un foie d'oiseau comme étant un «foie gras». Or, depuis 2005, le droit national français définit le «foie gras» comme le foie d'un oiseau engraissé par gavage.

1. Dès lors, la définition française du foie gras empêche tout foie provenant d'un oiseau engraissé par des méthodes autres que le gavage d'être considéré comme foie gras ou d'être commercialisé sous ce nom. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle lever l'obstacle que pose une définition si restrictive à la commercialisation de foie gras obtenu par des méthodes autres que le gavage?

2. Une recommandation du Comité permanent de la Convention européenne sur la protection des animaux dans les élevages n'autorise le gavage que dans les lieux où il est actuellement pratiqué, à condition que soit encouragée la recherche sur d'autres méthodes de production. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle garantir que le droit national des pays producteurs de foie gras ne fasse pas obstacle aux exigences de l'Union en matière de mise au point de méthodes de production de foie gras autres que le gavage?

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

Aux termes du règlement (CE) nº 543/2008 ([1]), les termes «foie gras» désignent «[l]es foies gras d'oies ou de canards des espèces Cairina muschata ou Cairina muschata x Anas platyrhynchos gavés de façon à produire l'hypertrophie cellulaire graisseuse du foie». Aux termes de la législation française ([2]), «on entend par foie gras le foie d'un canard ou d'une oie spécialement engraissé par gavage».

La Commission entend vérifier la conformité de la législation française avec la définition du règlement (CE) nº 543/2008 et déterminer si la définition figurant dans la législation française empêche que le foie gras produit par d'autres méthodes soit pris en compte et commercialisé en tant que «foie gras» en France.

Les aspects de la production de foie gras liés au bien-être des animaux font l'objet de la directive 98/58/CE concernant la protection des animaux dans les élevages ([3]), ainsi que des recommandations du Conseil de l'Europe concernant les oies ([4]) et les canards de Barbarie et les hybrides de ces canards et de canards domestiques ([5]).

Les recommandations font partie de la législation de l'Union européenne et imposent aux pays qui autorisent la production de foie gras d'encourager les travaux de recherche sur les aspects liés au bien-être et sur les méthodes autres que le gavage.

([1]) JO L 157 du 17.6.2008, p. 46.
([2]) http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do;jsessionid=688B38D26FEC1CCDBE806879DD470DCC.tpdjo10v_2?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071367&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006584967&dateTexte=20130109&categorieLien=id#LEGIARTI000006584967
([3]) JO L 221 du 8.8.1998, p. 23.
([4]) http://wayback.archive-it.org/1365/20110117124301/http://www.coe.int/t/f/affaires_juridiques/coop%E9ration_juridique/s%E9curit%E9_biologique%2C_utilisation_des_animaux/elevage/2Rec%20oies%20domestiques%20F%201999.asp
([5]) http://wayback.archive-it.org/1365/20110117124257/http://www.coe.int/t/f/affaires_juridiques/coop%E9ration_juridique/s%E9curit%E9_biologique%2C_utilisation_des_animaux/elevage/2Rec%20canards%20de%20Barbarie%20F%201999.asp

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010605/12
to the Commission
Keith Taylor (Verts/ALE) and Yves Cochet (Verts/ALE)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: French definition of 'foie gras'

Under Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 (and previous Regulation (EEC) No 1538/91), force-feeding is not a prerequisite for classifying livers as 'foie gras'. However, since 2005, 'foie gras' has been defined in French national law as the liver of a bird fattened by force-feeding.

1. Hence, the French definition prevents any fatty liver obtained by alternative methods to force-feeding from being considered or marketed as 'foie gras' in France. How does the Commission intend to lift the obstacle to the marketing of 'foie gras' obtained by alternative methods created by such a restrictive definition?

2. A Recommendation from the Standing Committee of the European Convention for the Protection of Animals kept for Farming Purposes allows force-feeding only where currently practised, under the condition that research on alternative methods is encouraged. How does the Commission intend to ensure that national laws in 'foie gras'-producing countries do not jeopardise EU requirements on the development of alternatives to force-feeding in 'foie gras' production?

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

Under Commission Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 ([1]) the term 'foie gras' denotes 'the livers of geese, or of ducks of the species Cairina muschata or Cairina muschata x Anas platyrhynchos which have been fed in such a way as to produce hepatic fatty cellular hypertrophy'. The French law ([2]) defines 'foie gras' as the liver of a bird fattened by force-feeding (gavage).

The Commission will assess whether the French law is in line with the definition of Regulation (EC) No 543/2008 and clarify whether the definition given in the French law would prevent any fatty liver obtained by alternative methods from being considered and hence marketed as 'foie gras' in France.

The welfare aspects of foie gras production are covered by Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes ([3]) and the recommendations of the Council of Europe concerning geese ([4]) and Muscovy ducks and their hybrids ([5]).

The recommendations are part of EC law and require countries allowing foie gras production to encourage research on its welfare aspects and on alternative methods which do not include gavage.

([1]) OJ L 157, 17.6.2008.
([2]) http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do;jsessionid=688B38D26FEC1CCDBE806879DD470DCC.tpdjo10v_2?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006071367&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006584967&dateTexte=20130109&categorieLien=id#LEGIARTI000006584967
([3]) OJ L 221,8.8.1998.
([4]) http://wayback.archive-it.org/1365/20090215072727/http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/biological_safety%2C_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20geese.asp
([5]) http://wayback.archive-it.org/1365/20090215072750/http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/biological_safety%2C_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20Muscovy%20ducks%20E%201999.asp

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010606/12
an die Kommission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE), Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE) und Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(20. November 2012)

Betrifft: Eine alternative Methode zur Beseitigung des Defizits des Sonderkontos für erneuerbare Energiequellen in Griechenland

Griechenland verpflichtete sich gegenüber seinen Gläubigern unter anderem dazu, das Defizit des Sonderkontos für erneuerbare Energiequellen, das für Ausgleichszahlungen an Hersteller von Elektrizität aus erneuerbaren Energiequellen verwendet wird ([1]), bis Ende Dezember 2013 zu beseitigen. Als eine der wichtigsten Maßnahmen zur Beseitigung dieses Defizits sieht das neue Gesetz ([2]) rückwirkend die Erhebung einer Sondersteuer auf Fotovoltaik-Anlagen vor, was sich auf eine Verringerung des entsprechenden Einspeisetarifs um 25-30 % beläuft, sowie eine pauschale Steuer von 10 % auf alle anderen erneuerbaren Energiequellen. Es wäre jedoch auch möglich, dasselbe Ergebnis durch eine Änderung der Berechnungsmethode der Sondersteuer ETMEAR ([3]) zu erreichen, die von Verbrauchern erhoben wird, um die Entwicklung erneuerbarer Energiequellen in Griechenland zu unterstützen. Laut einer Studie der Stiftung für wirtschaftliche und industrielle Forschung (IOBE) ([4]) beläuft sich der Beitrag der Sondersteuer zu erneuerbaren Energiequellen nur auf ungefähr 40 %, während laut den Berechnungen von Fachverbänden im Bereich der erneuerbaren Energiequellen ([5]) von Januar 2009 bis April 2012 die griechischen Verbraucher insgesamt 336,1 Mio. EUR an ETMEAR gezahlt haben. Von diesem Betrag wurden nur 40 % oder 134,4 Mio. EUR zur Förderung von erneuerbaren Energiequellen verwendet, während der Restbetrag von 201,7 Mio. EUR als Fördermittel an Elektrizitätsversorgungsunternehmen ging. Hätte man diese 201,7 Mio. EUR, die von den Verbrauchern einbezahlt wurden, anstatt für Elektrizitätsversorgungsunternehmen für das Sonderkonto für erneuerbare Energiequellen verwendet, dann wäre das Defizit, das Ende April 2012 bei 201,1 Mio. EUR lag, beseitigt worden.

Die Verfälschung ist auf die Berechnungsmethode der ETMEAR-Steuer zurückzuführen. Derzeit basiert sie auf dem Unterschied zwischen dem garantierten Preis für erneuerbare Energiequellen und dem Systemgrenzpreis nach der Einführung von Energie aus erneuerbaren Quellen und nicht dem Systemgrenzpreis, den die Elektrizitätsversorgungsunternehmen bezahlen müssten, wenn es keine Herstellung von Elektrizität aus erneuerbaren Energiequellen gäbe ([6]). Somit tragen die Verbraucher die Kosten, die von den Versorgungsunternehmen übernommen werden sollten, und es kommt zu einem Defizit des Sonderkontos für erneuerbare Energiequellen. Um dieses zu beseitigen, sind bestimmte Maßnahmen erforderlich, die jedoch die Entwicklung des Marktes für erneuerbare Energiequellen beeinträchtigen.

1. Empfindet die Kommission die derzeitige Berechnungsmethode der ETMEAR-Steuer als den griechischen Verbrauchern gegenüber gerecht?

2. Zieht die Vertretung der Kommission in der Troika eine Änderung der Berechnungsmethode der ETMEAR-Steuer in Betracht, um das Defizit des Sonderkontos für erneuerbare Energiequellen ohne Kosten für die Verbraucher und ohne Schädigung der Glaubwürdigkeit des Einspeisetarifsystems in Griechenland zu beseitigen?

3. Beabsichtigt die Kommission, mit den griechischen Behörden zusammenzuarbeiten, um ein gerechtes System zu schaffen, in dem die zusätzlichen Kosten für Energie aus erneuerbaren Quellen geteilt werden, was auch zur Glaubwürdigkeit des Einspeisetarifsystems beitragen würde?

([1]) Erwägung des Mittelfristigen Rahmenplans zur Haushaltsstrategie 2013-2016, S. 51-53.
([2]) Mittelfristiger Rahmenplan zur Haushaltsstrategie 2013-2016, S. 66-67.
([3]) ETMEAR: Sondersteuer zur Minderung von Abgasemissionen.
([4]) Auswirkungen und nötige Anpassungen der breiten Marktdurchdringung erneuerbarer Energiequellen bei der Herstellung von elektrischem Strom, Stiftung für wirtschaftliche und industrielle Forschung (IOBE), 2011.
([5]) Wahrheiten und Lügen über die Sondersteuer zur Minderung der Abgasemissionen, Griechischer Verband der Hersteller von Elektrizität aus erneuerbaren Energiequellen (ESIAPE), Griechische Wissenschaftliche Vereinigung für Windenergie (ELETAEN), Griechischer Verband der Fotovoltaik-Unternehmen (SEF).
([6]) Es kommt zu einer weiteren Verfälschung, da der Systemgrenzpreis keine weiteren Zahlungen an konventionelle Hersteller über den Kapazitätseffekt und den variablen Kostenmechanismus umfasst, die sich auf 20 % der Kosten für die konventionelle Herstellung von Elektrizität belaufen.

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(24. Januar 2013)

Diskussionen über die Kosten erneuerbarer Energien und über die Finanzierung von Defiziten im Energiesektor generell sind wichtig und können relativ technisch sein. Ein wichtiges Element, das in solchen Diskussionen berücksichtigt werden muss, ist die Frage, wie die Merit-Order-Effekte in geeigneter Weise in die Berechnungen einbezogen werden sollen. Die von den Herren Abgeordneten angesprochenen Punkte sind Teil der technischen Diskussion, die in Griechenland derzeit über die Reform der verschiedenen Preisfestsetzungs- und Finanzierungsregelungen im griechischen Energiesektor generell geführt wird. Die Kommission teilt die Auffassung, wonach Bemühungen in diesem Bereich eine gerechte Abbildung und Allokation der Kosten sicherstellen müssen, die die Belastung der Energieverbraucher möglichst gering halten.

Die Kommission wird ihre enge Zusammenarbeit mit den griechischen Behörden fortsetzen, um das griechische Fördersystem für erneuerbare Energien weiter zu stabilisieren und zu reformieren. Hierzu hat die Kommission den griechischen Behörden ein umfassendes technisches Hilfsprogramm vorgeschlagen, das bald anlaufen könnte.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010606/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE), Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE) και Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(20 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Μια εναλλακτική μέθοδος για την εξάλειψη του ελλείμματος του ειδικού λογαριασμού για τις ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας στην Ελλάδα

Μεταξύ των υποχρεώσεων που η ελληνική κυβέρνηση έχει συμφωνήσει να εκπληρώσει έναντι των πιστωτών της, είναι η κατάργηση, μέχρι το τέλος Δεκεμβρίου 2013, του ελλείμματος του ειδικού λογαριασμού για τις ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας (ΑΠΕ), που χρησιμοποιείται για την αποζημίωση των παραγωγών ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας από ΑΠΕ ([1]). Ως βασικό μέσο για την εξάλειψη του ελλείμματος αυτού, ο νέος νόμος ([2]) επιβάλλει, με αναδρομική ισχύ, ένα ειδικό τέλος για φωτοβολταϊκά συστήματα που ισοδυναμεί με μείωση κατά 25-30% της αντίστοιχης επιδότησης της τιμής της παραγόμενης ενέργειας (FIT), καθώς και μια κατ' αποκοπή εισφορά 10% στις άλλες ΑΠΕ. Θα ήταν δυνατόν, ωστόσο, να επιτευχθεί το ίδιο αποτέλεσμα με αλλαγή του τρόπου υπολογισμού του ειδικού «ΕΤΜΕΑR» ([3]) δηλαδή του φόρου που πληρώνουν οι καταναλωτές για την υποστήριξη της ανάπτυξης ΑΠΕ στην Ελλάδα. Σύμφωνα με μια μελέτη του Ιδρύματος Οικονομικών και Βιομηχανικών Ερευνών (ΙΟΒΕ) ([4]), «*η συμβολή του ειδικού φόρου για τις ΑΠΕ είναι μόνο περίπου 40%», ενώ σύμφωνα με τους υπολογισμούς των επαγγελματικών οργανώσεων ΑΠΕ* ([5]), κατά την περίοδο από τον Ιανουάριο 2009 έως τον Απρίλιο 2012 οι έλληνες καταναλωτές κατέβαλαν συνολικά 336,1 εκατομμύρια ευρώ σε ΕΤΜΕΑR. Από το ποσό αυτό, μόνο το 40%, ή 134,4 εκατομμύρια ευρώ, χρησιμοποιήθηκαν προς όφελος των ΑΠΕ, ενώ το υπόλοιπο ποσό ύψους 201,7 εκατομμυρίων, κυρίως σε επιδοτούμενους προμηθευτές ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας. Αν αυτά τα 201,7 εκατομμύρια ευρώ που πλήρωσαν οι καταναλωτές είχαν εκτραπεί στον ειδικό λογαριασμό για τις ΑΠΕ αντί στους προμηθευτές ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας, το έλλειμμα, το οποίο στο τέλος του Απρίλη 2012 ήταν 201 100 000 ευρώ, θα είχε εξαλειφθεί.

Η στρέβλωση αυτή προκύπτει από τη μέθοδο σύμφωνα με την οποία υπολογίζεται ο ΕΤΜΕΑR. Επί του παρόντος, βασίζεται στη διαφορά μεταξύ της εγγυημένης τιμής για τις ΑΠΕ και της οριακής τιμής συστήματος (SMP), μετά την ενσωμάτωση της ενέργειας από ΑΠΕ, και όχι στην SMP που οι προμηθευτές ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας θα κατέβαλαν εάν δεν είχε υπάρξει καμία παραγωγή ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας από ΑΠΕ ([6]). Έτσι, οι καταναλωτές φέρουν τα έξοδα τα οποία θα έπρεπε να βαρύνουν τους προμηθευτές και ο ειδικός λογαριασμός για τις ΑΠΕ αναπτύσσει ένα έλλειμμα. Για να εξαλειφθεί αυτό, απαιτούνται ειδικά μέτρα, τα οποία όμως θα βλάψουν μακροπρόθεσμα την αγορά των ΑΠΕ.

1. Πιστεύει η Επιτροπή ότι η τρέχουσα μέθοδος υπολογισμού ΕΤΜΕΑR είναι δίκαιη για τους Έλληνες καταναλωτές;

2. Έχει ο εκπρόσωπος της Επιτροπής στην τρόικα εξετάσει αλλαγή της μεθόδου υπολογισμού ΕΤΜΕΑR ως ένα τρόπο εξάλειψης του ελλείμματος του ειδικού λογαριασμού για τις ΑΠΕ, χωρίς κανένα κόστος για τον καταναλωτή και χωρίς να βλαφτεί η αξιοπιστία του συστήματος (FiT) σύστημα στην Ελλάδα;

3. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να συνεργαστεί με τις ελληνικές αρχές προκειμένου να καθιερωθεί ένα δίκαιο σύστημα κατανομής του επιπλέον κόστους των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας, συμβάλλοντας έτσι και στην αξιοπιστία του συστήματος FIT;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Οι συζητήσεις σχετικά με το κόστος των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας και τη χρηματοδότηση των ελλειμμάτων του ευρύτερου τομέα της ενέργειας είναι σημαντικές και μπορεί να είναι ιδιαίτερα τεχνικές. Σημαντικό θέμα που επιβάλλεται να εξετασθεί κατά τις εν λόγω συζητήσεις είναι οι ενδεδειγμένοι τρόποι συνυπολογισμού εν προκειμένω των επιπτώσεων της κατάταξης συναρτήσει της οικονομικής αξίας. Τα στοιχεία που θίγουν τα Αξιότιμα Μέλη του Κοινοβουλίου αποτελούν μέρος της υπό εξέλιξη τεχνικής συζήτησης στην Ελλάδα σχετικά με τη μεταρρύθμιση των επιμέρους διακανονισμών τιμολόγησης και χρηματοδότησης στο σύνολο του ελληνικού ενεργειακού τομέα. Η Επιτροπή συμφωνεί ότι οι προσπάθειες αυτές πρέπει να διασφαλίζουν την ορθή αναπαράσταση και κατανομή των δαπανών ώστε να ελαχιστοποιείται η επιβάρυνση των καταναλωτών ενέργειας.

([1]) Αιτιολογική σκέψη, Μεσοπρόθεσμο Πλαίσιο Στρατηγικής 2013-2016, σελίδες 51-53.
([2]) Μεσοπρόθεσμο Πλαίσιο Δημοσιονομικής Στρατηγικής 2013-2016, σελίδες 66-67.
([3]) ΕΤΜΕΑR: ειδικός φόρος για τη μείωση των εκπομπών αερίων.
([4]) Επιπτώσεις και αναγκαίες προσαρμογές για τη μεγάλης κλίμακας διείσδυση των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας στην παραγωγή ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας, του Ιδρύματος Οικονομικών και Βιομηχανικών Ερευνών (ΙΟΒΕ), 2011.
([5]) Αλήθειες και ψέματα για τον ειδικό φόρο για την μείωση των εκπομπών αερίων, Ελληνικός Σύνδεσμος Ηλεκτροπαραγωγών από Ανανεώσιμες Πηγές ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας (ESIAPE), Ελληνική Επιστημονική Ένωση Αιολικής Ενέργειας (ΕΛΕΤΑΕΝ), Ελληνικός Σύνδεσμος Εταιρειών Φωτοβολταϊκών (ΣΕΦ).
([6]) Μία περαιτέρω στρέβλωση έχει δημιουργηθεί από το γεγονός ότι το SMP δεν περιλαμβάνει άλλες πληρωμές σε συμβατικούς παραγωγούς μέσω της πιστωτικής ικανότητας και του μηχανισμού μεταβλητής κόστους, τα οποία προσθέτουν έως και 20% του κόστους συμβατικής παραγωγής ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας.

Η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να συνεργάζεται στενά με τις ελληνικές αρχές για την περαιτέρω σταθεροποίηση και μεταρρύθμιση του ελληνικού συστήματος υποστήριξης των ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας. Για τον σκοπό αυτόν, η Επιτροπή πρότεινε στις ελληνικές αρχές ολοκληρωμένο πρόγραμμα τεχνικής βοήθειας που θα μπορούσε να δρομολογηθεί σύντομα.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010606/12
à la Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE), Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE) et Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(20 novembre 2012)

Objet: Une autre méthode pour combler le déficit du compte spécial pour les sources d'énergie renouvelables en Grèce

Au nombre des exigences de ses créanciers que le gouvernement grec s'est engagé à respecter figure la résorption du déficit, d'ici à la fin du mois de décembre 2013, du compte spécial pour les sources d'énergie renouvelables, destiné à subventionner les producteurs d'électricité provenant de sources d'énergie renouvelables ([1]). La nouvelle loi ([2]) impose deux instruments clés pour combler ce déficit, tous deux rétroactifs: un prélèvement spécial sur les systèmes photovoltaïques, qui équivaut à une réduction de 25 à 30 % des tarifs de rachat correspondants, et un prélèvement forfaitaire de 10 % sur toutes les autres sources d'énergie renouvelables. Or, le même résultat pourrait être atteint en modifiant la méthode de calcul de la taxe spéciale «Etmear» ([3]), une taxe à la consommation censée soutenir le développement des sources d'énergie renouvelables en Grèce. D'après une étude menée par la Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE) ([4]), seuls quelque 40 % des revenus issus de la taxe spéciale contribuent effectivement à soutenir les sources d'énergie renouvelables. En effet, selon les calculs effectués par des organisations professionnelles du secteur ([5]), les consommateurs grecs ont payé 336,1 millions d'euros au titre de l'Etmear entre janvier 2009 et avril 2012. Or, seuls 40 % de cette somme, soit 134,4 millions d'euros, ont été effectivement consacrés aux sources d'énergie renouvelables, les 201,7 millions d'euros restants ayant bénéficié, dans les faits, aux fournisseurs d'électricité. Si ces 201,7 millions d'euros prélevés sur les consommateurs avaient été affectés au compte spécial pour les énergies renouvelables au lieu d'être transférés aux fournisseurs d'électricité, le déficit dudit compte, qui était, à la fin du mois d'avril 2012, de 201,1 millions d'euros, aurait pu être comblé.

Cette anomalie provient de la méthode de calcul de l'Etmear. À l'heure actuelle, elle repose sur la différence entre le prix garanti de l'énergie produite à partir de sources renouvelables et le prix marginal du système. Or, ce dernier est calculé en incluant l'énergie produite à partir de sources renouvelables, au lieu d'être celui que les fournisseurs auraient à payer s'il n'y avait pas eu d'électricité produite à partir de sources d'énergie renouvelables ([6]). Dès lors, non seulement les consommateurs doivent supporter des coûts qui devraient être à la charge des fournisseurs, mais encore le compte spécial pour les sources d'énergie renouvelable devient déficitaire. Afin de combler ce déficit, des mesures spéciales s'imposent, qui nuisent toutefois au marché des sources d'énergie renouvelables.

1. La Commission estime-t-elle que la méthode actuelle de calcul de l'Etmear est équitable pour le consommateur grec?

2. Le représentant de la Commission au sein de la troïka a-t-il envisagé, pour combler, sans coût pour le consommateur et sans perte de crédibilité du système grec de tarifs de rachat, le déficit du compte spécial pour les sources d'énergie renouvelables, la possibilité de modifier la méthode de calcul de l'Etmear?

3. La Commission compte-t-elle travailler avec les autorités grecques afin de mettre en place un système équitable de partage des coûts liés aux énergies renouvelables, ce qui ne manquerait pas de contribuer également à la crédibilité du système de tarifs de rachat?

([1]) Considérant du Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy Framework 2013-2016, pp. 51 à 53.
([2]) Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy Framework 2013-2016, pp. 66 et 67.
([3]) Etmear: taxe spéciale pour la réduction des émissions de gaz.
([4]) Impacts and necessary adjustments for the large-scale penetration of renewable energy resources in the production of electric power, Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), 2011.
([5]) Truths and lies about the special tax for the reduction of gas emissions, Greek Association of RES Electricity Producers (GAREP), Hellenic Wind Energy Association (Eletaen), Hellenic Association of Photovoltaic companies (Helapco).
([6]) Une anomalie supplémentaire est créée par le fait que les autres paiements en faveur des producteurs conventionnels (au titre du crédit de capacité et du mécanisme d'ajustement des coûts variables, qui représentent ensemble une subvention effective de 20 % des coûts de production d'énergie conventionnelle) ne sont pas inclus dans le calcul du prix marginal du système.

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(24 janvier 2013)

Les discussions menées à propos du coût de l'énergie renouvelable et du financement des déficits qui se creusent dans le secteur de l'énergie sont importantes et peuvent être assez techniques. Le moyen approprié consistant à intégrer dans les calculs l'effet induit par l'«ordre de préséance» constitue un élément important qui doit être pris en considération dans ce type de discussions. Les points soulevés par les Honorables Parlementaires s'inscrivent dans le cadre de la discussion technique qui est en cours en Grèce concernant la réforme des différents systèmes de tarification et de financement utilisés dans le secteur grec de l'énergie dans son ensemble. La Commission convient que ces efforts doivent garantir une représentation et une répartition équitables des coûts permettant de réduire au minimum la charge supportée par les consommateurs d'énergie.

La Commission continuera à collaborer étroitement avec les autorités grecques afin de poursuivre la stabilisation et la réforme du régime d'aides grec en faveur des énergies renouvelables. À cette fin, la Commission a proposé aux autorités grecques un programme global d'assistance technique qui pourrait être mis en œuvre prochainement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010606/12
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE), Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE) and Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: An alternative method of eliminating the deficit of the special account for renewable energy sources in Greece

Among the obligations that the Greek Government has agreed to fulfil towards its creditors is the elimination, by the end of December 2013, of the deficit of the special account for renewable energy sources (RES) which is used to compensate producers of electricity from RES ([1]). As a key means of eliminating this deficit, the new law ([2]) imposes, retroactively, a special levy on photovoltaic systems which amounts to a 25-30% reduction of the corresponding feed-in tariff (FiT) as well as a flat-rate 10% levy on all other RES. It would be possible, however, to achieve the same result by changing the method of calculating the special 'ETMEAR' tax ([3]) that consumers pay to support RES development in Greece. According to a study by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE) ([4]), the contribution of the special tax to RES is only about 40%, while according to the calculations of RES professional organisations ([5]), in the period from January 2009 to April 2012 Greek consumers paid a total of EUR 336.1 million in ETMEAR. Of this amount, only 40%, or EUR 134.4 million, was utilised for the benefit of RES, whereas the remaining EUR 201.7 million in effect subsidised electricity suppliers. If this EUR 201.7 million paid by consumers had been diverted to the special account for RES instead of the electricity suppliers, its deficit, which at the end of April 2012 was EUR 201.1 million, would have been eliminated.

The distortion arises from the method whereby ETMEAR is calculated. Currently, it is based on the difference between the guaranteed price for RES and the system marginal price (SMP) after the incorporation of energy from RES, and not the SMP that the electricity suppliers would pay had there been no electricity production from RES ([6]). Thus consumers bear the costs which should be borne by the suppliers and the special account for RES develops a deficit. In order to eliminate it, special measures are necessary, which however damage the RES market in the process.

1. Does the Commission think that the current method of calculating ETMEAR is fair to Greek consumers?

2. Has the Commission's representative in the Troika considered changing the method of calculating ETMEAR as a way of eliminating the deficit of the special account for RES at no cost to the consumer and without damaging the credibility of the feed-in tariff (FiT) system in Greece?

3. Does the Commission intend to work with the Greek authorities in order to establish an equitable system for sharing the additional cost of renewables, thereby also contributing to the credibility of the FiT system?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

Discussions on the cost of renewable energy and the financing of broader energy sector deficits are important and can be quite technical. The appropriate means of incorporating merit order effects into the calculations is one important element which must be considered in such discussions. The elements the honourable Members raise are a part of the technical discussion currently underway in Greece on the reform of the various pricing and financing arrangements in the Greek energy sector overall. The Commission agrees that such efforts must ensure a fair representation and allocation of costs that minimises the burden to energy consumers.

The Commission will continue to work closely with the Greek authorities to further stabilise and reform the Greek support scheme for renewable energies. To this end the Commission has proposed to the Greek authorities a comprehensive technical assistance programme that could be launched soon.

([1]) Recital of Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy Framework 2013-2016, pages 51-53.
([2]) Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy Framework 2013-2016, pages 66-67.
([3]) ETMEAR: special tax for the reduction of gas emissions.
([4]) Impacts and necessary adjustments for the large-scale penetration of renewable energy resources in the production of electric power, Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), 2011.
([5]) Truths and lies about the special tax for the reduction of gas emissions, Hellenic Association of RES Electricity Producers (ESIAPE), Hellenic Scientific Association of Wind Energy (ELETAEN), Hellenic Association of photovoltaic companies (SEF).
([6]) A further distortion is created by the fact that the SMP does not include other payments to conventional producers through the capacity credit and the variable cost mechanism, which add up to 20% of conventional electricity production cost.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010607/12
to the Commission
Michael Cashman (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Displaying the products of execution

The 'Bodies Unveiled' exhibition is currently on display in Liverpool and has previously displayed in Birmingham. It is a commercial display which charges customers to view exhibits made from human body parts.

The organisers obtained these exhibits from China and one of the suppliers, Dalian Medical University, previously supplied at least two corpses with bullet holes in their skulls for an exhibition in 2004.

In 2008 the company was required by the courts to carry a disclaimer for its New York exhibition, stating that the exhibits were 'human remains of Chinese citizens or residents which were originally received by the Chinese Bureau of Police. The Chinese Bureau of Police may receive bodies from Chinese prisons. Premier cannot independently verify that the human remains you are viewing are not those of persons who were incarcerated in Chinese prisons.'

1. Does the Commission agree that commercial exhibitions should not display, and profit from, the products of execution?

2. What can the Commission do to prevent this?

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

The Commission does not have information regarding this exhibition and is not aware of the provenance of the human body parts used in it.

On the wider issue of the disposal of the bodies of executed prisoners, the European External Action Service (EEAS) has raised the issue of organ harvesting with the Chinese authorities and raised concerns over the secrecy which surrounds both death penalty and organ transplant statistics.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010608/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(20 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Tagli drastici all'agricoltura

— Visto e considerato che in base all'articolo 39 del TFUE (ex articolo 33 del TCE) e seguenti, Titolo III, l'agricoltura e la pesca hanno un regime particolare per quanto riguarda il finanziamento e il commercio nell'UE;

— considerando che l'agricoltura e tutta la filiera agroalimentare sono colpite da una forte crisi europea e mondiale;

— considerata la particolare volatilità dei prezzi propria del settore agricolo;

— considerando che il numero delle aziende agricole italiane è diminuito di circa il 16 %;

— considerando che, qualora i tagli annunciati corrispondenti a 25,5 miliardi di euro per il periodo 2014-2020 saranno effettivi, migliaia di imprese agricole saranno distrutte,

può la Commissione far sapere:

1. quale sarà l'impatto per le aziende agricole europee se queste previsioni saranno reali, e

2. quali sono i criteri stabiliti nell'applicazione dei tagli, al fine di accordare le esigenze di tutti gli Stati membri, soprattutto con un importante settore agricolo da preservare, quale quello italiano?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(29 gennaio 2013)

Per quanto concerne il quadro finanziario pluriennale per il periodo 2014-2020, la Commissione ha proposto ([1]) di congelare gli importi per la politica agricola comune in termini nominali al livello del 2013, tenendo conto del proseguimento della graduale introduzione dei pagamenti diretti agli agricoltori.

I negoziati relativi al prossimo quadro finanziario pluriennale si stanno svolgendo sullo sfondo della gravissima crisi economica e sono soggetti alla pressione per il risanamento del bilancio in tutti gli Stati membri. In tale contesto alcuni tagli degli importi proposti dalla Commissione erano già stati proposti dalla presidenza di Cipro. Durante il Consiglio europeo del 22-23 novembre 2012 sono stati inoltre considerati alcuni adeguamenti degli importi proposti dalla Commissione, non solo per la politica agricola comune ma per tutte le rubriche del quadro finanziario pluriennale.

I negoziati sul quadro finanziario pluriennale sono attualmente in corso. Il Consiglio europeo ha dato mandato al presidente Van Rompuy, di concerto con il presidente della Commissione, di continuare il lavoro e proseguire le consultazioni per trovare un consenso tra gli Stati membri in relazione al quadro finanziario pluriennale per il periodo 2014-2020.

Un adeguato livello di finanziamento è essenziale per la politica agricola comune al fine di poter procedere a una riforma ambiziosa e affinché l'agricoltura europea possa effettivamente far fronte alle sfide future ed assicurare un tenore di vita equo per la comunità agricola in tutta l'Unione europea.

([1]) COM(2012)388 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010608/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: Drastic cuts to agriculture

— Given that, on the basis of Article 39 TFEU (ex Article 33 of the EC Treaty) et seq. (Title III), a specific regime exists for agriculture and fisheries, as regards financing and trade, within the EU;

— considering that agriculture and the whole food supply chain are impacted by an acute European and world crisis;

— in view of the particular price volatility in the agricultural sector;

— considering that the number of agricultural holdings in Italy has fallen by about 16%;

— considering that, if the proposed cuts, amounting to EUR 25,5 billion in the period 2014-2020, are implemented, thousands of farm businesses will be destroyed,

can the Commission say:

1. what will be the impact on agricultural holdings in Europe if these plans are put into effect, and

2. what criteria have been laid down for the implementation of the cuts, in order to reconcile the requirements of all Member States, especially those such as Italy which have a large agricultural sector to preserve?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

For the multi-annual financial framework for the period 2014-2020, the Commission has proposed ([1]) to freeze in nominal terms the amounts for the common agricultural policy at their 2013 level, taking into account the continuing phasing-in of the direct payments to farmers.

The negotiations on the next multi-annual financial framework are taking place against the background of the very severe economic crisis and with pressure for fiscal consolidation in all Member States. In this context, certain cuts in the amounts proposed by the Commission had already been proposed by the Cyprus Presidency. During the European Council of 22-23 November 2012, certain adjustments in the amounts proposed by the Commission have also been considered, not only for the common agricultural policy but for all the headings of the multi-annual financial framework.

The negotiations on the multi-annual financial framework are ongoing. The European Council has given a mandate to President Van Rompuy, together with the President of the Commission, to continue the work and pursue consultations to find a consensus among the Member States over the multi-annual financial framework for the period 2014-2020.

An adequate level of financing is essential for the common agricultural policy in order to be able to undertake an ambitious reform and hence for European agriculture to effectively face its future challenges and to provide a fair standard of living for the agricultural community throughout the European Union.

([1]) COM(2012) 388.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-010609/12
za Svet
Mojca Kleva (S&D)
(20. november 2012)

Zadeva: Sistem faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti

Sistem faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti (ang. *national prosperity factors*) določa nivo evropskih sredstev za manj razvite regije in temelji na izračunih stopnje razvitosti tako regije kot tudi države članice.

V pogajalskem okviru za naslednji večletni finančni okvir je ciprsko predsedstvo predlagalo znižanje teh faktorjev. Prvi izračuni držav članic so pokazali, da bi skupni učinek predlaganih sprememb teh faktorjev nesorazmerno prizadel regije različnih držav članic. Predlagane spremembe bi med drugimi močno občutila tudi slovenska manj razvita regija – Vzhodna Slovenija, ki bi ji novi izračuni prinesli znižanje sredstev za kar 40 %.

V luči tega me zanima naslednje:

1. Evropske poslanke in poslanci nismo imeli nobene možnosti za razpravo o spremembah formul za izračun faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti ter posledicah, ki jih te spremembe nosijo, čeprav le-te več kot očitno spadajo v področje kohezijske politike, kjer ima Evropski parlament pristojnost soodločanja. Zanima me, zakaj poslanke in poslanci nismo bili vključeni v ta proces?

2. V trenutnem kriznem času in ob pogledu na prepotrebno izvajanje solidarnosti in investicijskih politik v EU, je preprosto nemogoče obrazložiti, zakaj bi se morala manj razvita regija v manj razviti državi članici, s svojim BDP, nižjim od 75 % evropskega, soočiti z izgubo skoraj polovice kohezijskih sredstev. Kakšni so razlogi Sveta za podporo predlogom sprememb, ki gredo jasno navzkriž evropski ideji solidarnosti?

Odgovor
(18. februar 2013)

V Svetu še vedno potekajo pogajanja o večletnem finančnem okviru 2014–2020, zato ni mogoče napovedati njihovega izida.

V skladu s členom 312 Pogodbe o delovanju Evropske unije je mogoče uredbo o določitvi večletnega finančnega okvira sprejeti šele potem, ko da soglasje Evropski parlament.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010609/12
to the Council
Mojca Kleva (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: National prosperity factors

National prosperity factors determine the level of EU funding for less prosperous regions and are based on calculations of the level of development of both the region and the Member State.

In the negotiations for the next multiannual financial framework the Cypriot Presidency proposed lowering these factors. Initial calculations by the Member States show that the overall effect of the proposed changes to these factors would have a disproportionate impact on the regions of various Member States. One of the less developed regions where the proposed changes would have a major impact is Eastern Slovenia, which, under the new calculations, would see its funding fall by as much as 40%.

1. The European Parliament had no opportunity to debate the changes to the formulas for calculating national prosperity factors and the consequences of those changes, even though they quite clearly fall under the area of cohesion policy, where the European Parliament has the power of co-decision. I would like to know why we, the Members of the European Parliament, were not included in this process.

2. In the current economic crisis, and given the need for solidarity and investment policies in the EU, it is simply impossible to understand how a less-developed region in a less-developed Member State, with a GDP 75% lower than the EU average, should have to cope with losing almost half of its cohesion funds. What are the Council's reasons for supporting these proposed changes, which clearly run counter to the European idea of solidarity?

Reply
(18 February 2013)

Negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 are continuing to take place within the Council, so it is not in a position to anticipate their outcome.

Under Article 312 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the European Parliament must give its consent before the regulation laying down the Multiannual Financial Framework can be adopted.

(Slovenska različica)

Vprašanje za pisni odgovor E-010610/12
za Komisijo
Mojca Kleva (S&D)
(20. november 2012)

Zadeva: Sistem faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti

Sistem faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti (ang. *national prosperity factors*) določa nivo evropskih sredstev za manj razvite regije in temelji na izračunih stopnje razvitosti tako regije kot tudi države članice.

V pogajalskem okviru za naslednji večletni finančni okvir je ciprsko predsedstvo predlagalo znižanje teh faktorjev. Prvi izračuni držav članic so pokazali, da bi skupni učinek predlaganih sprememb teh faktorjev nesorazmerno prizadel regije različnih držav članic. Predlagane spremembe bi med drugimi močno občutila tudi slovenska manj razvita regija – Vzhodna Slovenija, ki bi ji novi izračuni prinesli znižanje sredstev za kar 40 %.

V luči tega me zanima naslednje:

1. Evropske poslanke in poslanci nismo imeli nobene možnosti za razpravo o spremembah formul za izračun faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti ter posledicah, ki jih te spremembe nosijo, čeprav le-te več kot očitno spadajo v področje kohezijske politike, kjer ima Evropski parlament pristojnost soodločanja. Zanima me, zakaj poslanke in poslanci nismo bili vključeni v ta proces? Glede na to, da so predlogi prišli s strani ciprskega predsedstva za Svet (only in the heading), kako se do njih opredeljuje Komisija?

2. V trenutnem kriznem času in ob pogledu na prepotrebno izvajanje solidarnosti in investicijskih politik v EU, je preprosto nemogoče obrazložiti, zakaj bi se morala manj razvita regija v manj razviti državi članici, s svojim BDP, nižjim od 75 % evropskega, soočiti z izgubo skoraj polovice kohezijskih sredstev. Kakšni so razlogi Komisije za podporo predlogom sprememb, ki gredo jasno navzkriž evropski ideji solidarnosti?

Odgovor komisarja Johannesa Hahna v imenu Komisije
(21. januar 2013)

1. Komisija je v predlogu večletnega finančnega okvira za obdobje 2014–2020 prilagodila različne kvantitativne elemente, na katerih temelji izračun finančnih dodelitev, da bi zagotovila uravnotežen predlog glede na proračunske omejitve. Komisija se je seznanila s predlogi ciprskega predsedstva za Svet (only in the heading). Treba je opozoriti, da bodo končne vrednosti faktorjev nacionalne razvitosti ter drugih elementov, ki določajo raven finančnih dodelitev, določene šele ob koncu pogajanj o večletnem finančnem okviru, v katera je v celoti vključen Evropski parlament.

2. Komisija je predlagala objektivno metodo izračuna finančnih dodelitev za manj razvite regije, ki upošteva regionalno in nacionalno razvitost ter stopnjo brezposelnosti. Glede na lastnosti regij in njihovega razvoja lahko to povzroči znižanje regionalnih finančnih dodelitev v primerjavi z obdobjem 2007–2013. V primeru Vzhodne Slovenije je zmanjšanje v veliki meri mogoče pojasniti z dejstvom, da se je BDP na prebivalca v regiji povečal v primerjavi s povprečjem EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010610/12
to the Commission
Mojca Kleva (S&D)
(20 November 2012)

Subject: National prosperity factors

National prosperity factors determine the level of EU funding for less prosperous regions and are based on calculations of the level of development of both the region and the Member State.

In the negotiations for the next multiannual financial framework the Cypriot Presidency proposed lowering these factors. Initial calculations by the Member States show that the overall effect of the proposed changes to these factors would have a disproportionate impact on the regions of various Member States. One of the less developed regions where the proposed changes would have a major impact is Eastern Slovenia, which, under the new calculations, would see its funding fall by as much as 40%.

1. The European Parliament had no opportunity to debate the changes to the formulas for calculating national prosperity factors and the consequences of those changes, even though they quite clearly fall under the area of cohesion policy, where the European Parliament has the power of co-decision. I would like to know why we, the Members of the European Parliament, were not included in this process. Given that these proposals have come from the Cypriot Council Presidency, what is the Commission's position on them?

2. In the current economic crisis, and given the need for solidarity and investment policies in the EU, it is simply impossible to understand how a less-developed region in a less-developed Member State, with a GDP 75% lower than the EU average, should have to cope with losing almost half of its cohesion funds. What are the Commission's reasons for supporting these proposed changes, which clearly run counter to the European idea of solidarity?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

1. In its proposal for the 2014-2020 Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF), the Commission has adjusted the various quantitative elements underpinning the calculation of financial allocations in order to ensure a balanced proposal given the budgetary constraints. The Commission took note of the proposals by the Cyprus Presidency of the Council. It has to be noted that the final values of the national prosperity factors, and of the other elements determining the level of the allocations, will only be determined at the end of the MFF negotiations, in which the European Parliament is fully engaged.

2. The Commission has proposed an objective allocation calculation method for less-developed regions which takes into account both regional and national prosperity, together with the unemployment level. Depending on the regions' characteristics and its evolution, this can lead to reductions of the regional allocations in comparison to the 2007-2013 period. In the case of Eastern Slovenia the reduction can, to a large extent, be explained by the fact that the region's GDP/capita has increased in comparison with the EU average.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010611/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE) y Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Ataques a Gaza

En los últimos ataques a Gaza murieron un centenar de palestinos, incluyendo niños y niñas, y 3 israelíes. Israel autorizó el desplazamiento de 75 000 militares reservistas y bombardeó 80 lugares solamente durante la noche de domingo a lunes 19 de noviembre. Esto puede desencadenar un conflicto armado en toda la zona.

El presidente de la Autoridad Nacional Palestina (ANP), Mahmud Abbas, exhortó al pueblo palestino a resistir las agresiones de Israel de forma pacífica y el Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas pidió el alto al fuego. Sin embargo, la UE, a través de la Alta Representante Catherine Ashton, ha reconocido el derecho de Israel a defenderse de los ataques de Hamás, que considera «inaceptables». El bloque europeo también ha llamado a las autoridades israelíes a responder de forma proporcionada. En la próxima reunión del Consejo, los ministros de Asuntos Exteriores analizarán la situación.

¿Qué quiere decir concretamente la Sra. Ashton con responder de forma proporcionada? La invasión terrestre que planea Israel, ¿entra dentro de su concepto de «forma proporcionada»? Bombardear un territorio ocupado, donde viven civiles, con un armamento altamente superior, ¿es considerado defensa por parte del Estado de Israel? ¿Por qué la Alta Representante no pide el alto al fuego tal y como hizo el Secretario General de la ONU?

¿Qué contactos tiene la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante con la Liga de países árabes y con la ANP? ¿Cómo piensa intervenir la diplomacia europea para evitar más ataques de Israel a Palestina?

¿Qué acciones tomará la UE para proteger a los civiles, israelíes y palestinos que se encuentran en esta zona? ¿Ha desplegado ya servicios de ayuda a refugiados?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de enero de 2013)

La Sra. Ashton comparte plenamente la valoración realizada por el Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de los acontecimientos en Gaza e Israel en sus conclusiones sobre Gaza de 19 de noviembre, en las que la Unión Europea pedía que se pusiera fin inmediatamente a todas las hostilidades y al sufrimiento injustificable inflingido a civiles inocentes. El Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores reconoció el derecho de Israel a proteger a su población, pero subrayó también, sin entrar en más detalles, que al hacerlo debe actuar de manera proporcionada y garantizar la protección de la población civil en todo momento. Asimismo la UE recalcó la necesidad de que todas las partes respeten plenamente el Derecho internacional humanitario.

A lo largo de toda la escalada de violencia la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta se mantuvo continuamente en estrecho contacto con los principales interesados en la región y fuera de ella, especialmente con Egipto, los Estados Unidos, Israel, la Autoridad Nacional Palestina, las Naciones Unidas y la Liga Árabe.

Las conclusiones del Consejo sobre el proceso de paz en Oriente Próximo, publicadas tras la reunión del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de 10 de diciembre, reflejan el compromiso inquebrantable de la UE de contribuir a que se alcance un acuerdo en este conflicto, entre otras cosas buscando una solución a la situación en la Franja de Gaza, que es insostenible. En dichas conclusiones la UE expuso, entre otras cosas, su determinación a facilitar el desarrollo social y económico de la Franja de Gaza y la necesidad de solucionar urgentemente y de manera efectiva el problema de la transferencia ilegal de armas a la misma. Por añadidura, la UE se mostró dispuesta a utilizar los instrumentos de que dispone para apoyar los esfuerzos de las partes, lo que incluye la posible reactivación, mediante los medios adecuados, de la misión EUBAM Rafah, y subrayó su voluntad de estudiar otras vías para hacer frente a la situación en la Franja de Gaza, especialmente con las partes interesadas de la región, de conformidad con la Resolución 1860 (2009) del Consejo de Segurdiad de las Naciones Unidas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010611/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE) and Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Attacks on Gaza

The latest attacks on Gaza have killed a hundred Palestinians, including children, and three Israelis. Israel authorised the mobilisation of 75 000 military reservists and bombed 80 sites solely during the night of Sunday to Monday 19 November. This could spark off an armed conflict throughout the zone.

The President of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mahmud Abbas, called on the people of Palestine to resist Israel's assaults peacefully and the United Nations Secretary-General called for a cease-fire. The EU, however, through its High Representative Catherine Ashton, has recognised Israel's right to defend itself from the attacks by Hamas, which it considers 'unacceptable'. Europe also urged Israel to ensure that its response is proportionate. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs will analyse the situation at the next meeting of the Council.

What exactly does Baroness Ashton mean by a proportionate response? Does her concept of a proportionate response include the ground invasion planned by Israel? Does she consider the State of Israel to be defending itself when it uses highly superior weapons to bomb occupied territory where civilians live? Why does the High Representative not call for a cease-fire as did the UN Secretary-General?

What contacts does the Vice-President/High Representative have with the Arab League and the PNA? How does European diplomacy intend to intervene to prevent further attacks by Israel and Palestine?

What action will the EU take to protect the Israeli and Palestinian civilians in this zone? Has it yet deployed any aid services for refugees?

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

The HR/VP fully shares the assessment of the events in Gaza and Israel made by the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) in its Conclusions on Gaza of 19 November, in which the EU called for an immediate end to all hostilities and to the unjustifiable suffering on innocent civilians. Whilst recognising the right of Israel to protect its population, the FAC furthermore stressed, without elaborating further, that in doing so it must act proportionately and ensure the protection of civilians at all times. The EU also stressed the need for all sides to fully respect international humanitarian law.

Throughout the escalation of violence, the HR/VP was in continuous close contact with key players in the region and elsewhere, in particular with Egypt, the United States, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations (UN) and the Arab League.

The Council conclusions on Middle East peace process issued following the FAC meeting on 10 December reflect the EU's unwavering commitment to contributing to the settlement of the conflict, including finding a solution to the unsustainable situation in the Gaza Strip. In these conclusions the EU stated among other things that it is committed to facilitating the social and economic development of the Gaza Strip and that the issue of illegal weapons transfer into the Gaza Strip has to be effectively addressed as a matter of urgency. In addition, the EU expressed its readiness to make use of its instruments in support of the parties' efforts, including the possible reactivation, in the appropriate way, of the EUBAM Rafah mission, and underlined its readiness to explore further ways to address the situation in the Gaza Strip, including with concerned parties in the region, in line with UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1860 (2009).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010612/12
a la Comisión
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Fondo Europeo contra la pobreza y la exclusión social

Uno de los efectos más perversos de la actual crisis económica es su impacto sobre el incremento de la pobreza en nuestras sociedades. En los últimos meses hemos presenciado un preocupante incremento de la desigualdad social en muchos países miembros de la Unión Europea.

Por otro lado, la destrucción de puestos de trabajo ha llevado a muchas familias a situaciones de desesperación, aumentando de forma significativa el riesgo de exclusión social.

¿Contempla la Comisión la posibilidad de crear un fondo específico para ayudar a combatir la pobreza y la exclusión social a escala europea?

¿Qué medidas concretas ha adoptado la Comisión para la promoción de la activación de colectivos en situación o en riesgo de exclusión social para combatir y prevenir el desempleo y, así, la pobreza?

En Europa hay casi 20 millones de niños que están en riesgo de pobreza. Resolver este problema es fundamental para el cumplimiento de los objetivos de la UE sobre cohesión social y empleo para el 2020. ¿En qué medida ayudará a erradicar la pobreza infantil el paquete de medidas de inversión social que prevé lanzar la Comisión a comienzos del próximo año?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de enero de 2013)

La Estrategia Europa 2020 para un crecimiento inteligente, sostenible e integrador reconoce como una de las prioirdades de la UE la lucha contra la pobreza y la exclusión social. Los progresos realizados para cumplir este objetivo se evalúan en el Semestre Europeo, que ha conducido a la adopción, en julio de 2012, de recomendaciones específicas por país en ámbitos como los servicios sociales y la reducción de la pobreza. Abordar el desempleo y las consecuencias sociales de la crisis constituye una de las cinco prioridades establecidas en el Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el Crecimiento 2013.

El Paquete sobre Inversión Social, que se adoptará a principios de 2013, se centra en la infancia e incluye una Recomendación de la Comisión sobre la pobreza infantil. En dicha Recomendación se proponen principios comunes en ámbitos como el apoyo a las familias (acceso al mercado laboral para los padres y ayudas a los ingresos), los servicios (cuidado de niños, educación, asistencia sanitaria, vivienda y servicios sociales) y la participación de los niños.

Con respecto a la financiación, la Comisión ha propuesto que al menos el 25 % de los fondos de la política de cohesión en el periodo 2014-2020 se asigne al Fondo Social Europeo, y al menos el 20 % de ese importe específicamente a la inclusión social. En octubre de 2012, la Comisión publicó una propuesta relativa a un Fondo de Ayuda Europea para los Más Necesitados, dotado con un presupuesto de 2 500 millones de euros para el periodo comprendido entre 2014 y 2020, con el objeto de abordar la privación material y apoyar los programas de los Estados miembros destinados a suministrar alimentos, ropa y otros bienes básicos esenciales a las personas sin hogar y a los niños que padecen privaciones materiales. Apoyará asimismo la integración social de las personas más alejadas del mercado laboral, que no pueden beneficiarse de las medidas de activación del FSE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010612/12
to the Commission
Salvador Sedó i Alabart (PPE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: European Fund against poverty and social exclusion

One of the most perverse effects of the current economic crisis is that it is causing poverty to increase within our societies. Over the last few months we have witnessed a worrying increase in social inequality in many EU Member States.

Furthermore, the destruction of jobs has brought many families to a state of despair and has significantly increased the risk of social exclusion.

Is the Commission considering the possibility of setting up a special fund to help combat poverty and social exclusion at European level?

What specific action has the Commission taken in order to stimulate communities which are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion, with a view to combating and preventing unemployment and hence poverty?

In Europe almost 20 million children are at risk of falling into poverty. Solving this problem is essential if the EU's 2020 social-cohesion and employment objectives are to be achieved. To what extent will the package of social-investment measures which the Commission is due to launch at the start of next year help to eradicate child poverty?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

Combating poverty and social exclusion has been recognised as an EU priority in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Progress towards meeting it is monitored through the European Semester and led to the adoption in July 2012 of country-specific recommendations covering such issues as social services and poverty reduction. Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis is one of the five priorities identified in the 2013 Annual Growth Survey.

The Social Investment Package, which will be adopted in early 2013, will focus on children and include a Commission recommendation on child poverty. The latter will propose common principles in the areas of support for families (access to the labour market for parents and income support), services (childcare, education, healthcare, housing and social services) and children's participation.

As regards financing, the Commission has proposed that at least 25% of Cohesion Policy funding in 2014-20 be allocated to the European Social Fund, and at least 20% of that amount be earmarked for social inclusion. In October 2012 the Commission published a proposal for a Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived with a budget of EUR 2.5 billion between 2014-20, which will tackle material deprivation and support Member State schemes providing food, clothing and other essential basic goods to homeless people and materially-deprived children. It will also provide support to the social integration of persons placed the furthest away from the labour market where they cannot sufficiently benefit from activation measures under the ESF.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010613/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Artículo 35 del Reglamento (CE) nº 800/2008: Limitaciones a los préstamos y subvenciones públicas para empresas que se financian con «anticipos reembolsables»

El primer proyecto de Ictineu Submarins SL (empresa de nueva creación) es puramente de I+D+i y ha consistido en el diseño, ingeniería y construcción de un submarino científico para 1 200 metros de profundidad y tres pasajeros, con presupuesto de 2,5 millones de euros. Esta empresa se ha acogido a las líneas de financiación públicas reguladas en el Marco comunitario sobre ayudas estatales de investigación, desarrollo e innovación (2006/C 323/01) y el Reglamento (CE) nº 800/2008 de la Comisión de 6 de agosto de 2008. Estas fijan, para una microempresa de nueva creación, un máximo del 45 % de subvención, y un máximo del 75 % para la suma de subvenciones más préstamos públicos. Las que se acogen además al artículo 35 del Reglamento de 2008, tienen un límite de 1 millón de euros de «ayuda». En España los anticipos reembolsables son los préstamos Neotec del CDTI. En 2010, cuando la empresa solicitó el Neotec 2, estos préstamos estaban limitados a un máximo de 1 millón de euros.

En ese momento la empresa tenía concedido casi medio millón en subvenciones públicas. CDTI contabilizó los anticipos reembolsables como si fueran 100 % subvención, en vez de contabilizar la subvención bruta equivalente, tal como indican el Marco y Reglamento Comunitario en más de 12 ocasiones diferentes en sus textos. De esta forma, CDTI recortó medio millón del préstamo acogiéndose al artículo 5.4 del Marco y alegando que la empresa había llegado al máximo de 1 millón de euros de subvención establecido en el artículo 35 del Reglamento de 2008 del Marco. Puesto que los Neotec son incompatibles con el resto de préstamos y subvenciones de CDTI, esta decisión de CDTI contraviene el apartado 1.5 Motivación de las medidas específicas contempladas en el presente Marco por haber perjudicado la financiación del proyecto de la empresa, ante la imposibilidad de haber llegado a los máximos establecidos. En estos momentos la empresa ha conseguido tan sólo un 11,5 % de subvención pública (500.000 euros), o un 35,5 % si se suman subvención más préstamos públicos.

Cuando en el artículo 35, apartado 4, del Reglamento de 2008 se fija un límite de 1 millón de euros de «ayuda», esta «ayuda» ¿se refiere a subvención a fondo perdido, o se refiere a la suma de subvenciones más préstamos?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión desea señalar que, conforme a lo dispuesto en el artículo 4 del Reglamento (CE) n° 800/2008 de la Comisión, de 6 de agosto de 2008, por el que se declaran determinadas categorías de ayudas compatibles con el mercado común en aplicación de los artículos 87 y 88 del Tratado, *«… Cuando se conceda una ayuda en cualquier forma distinta de una subvención, el importe de la ayuda será su equivalente en subvención.»*.

Por consiguiente, si la ayuda consiste en una combinación de subvenciones no reembolsables e instrumentos reembolsables del tipo préstamos, las autoridades que conceden la ayuda deben asegurarse de que la suma del valor de las subvenciones no reembolsables y del equivalente en subvención de los instrumentos de ayuda reembolsables se mantenga por debajo de los umbrales especificados para el tipo de ayuda correspondiente, es decir, el límite de 1 millón de euros fijado en el artículo 35, apartado 4, del mencionado Reglamento en el caso de las ayudas a empresas jóvenes e innovadoras.

Conviene además mencionar que ese límite de 1 millón de euros representa un importe máximo que no se puede exceder. Por lo que respecta a la ayuda supuestamente insuficiente concedida a Ictineu, la Comisión desea subrayar que las autoridades nacionales que otorgan la ayuda tienen la posibilidad de conceder importes más bajos, para lo que pueden tener en cuenta el valor nominal de los instrumentos reembolsables cuando se combinen distintos instrumentos de ayuda.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010613/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Article 35 of Regulation (EC) No 800/2008: Limits on loans and public grants for enterprises funded by means of repayable advances

The first project of ICTINEU Submarins S.L, a new company, is purely an RDI venture and concerns the design, engineering and construction of a scientific submersible capable of operating at depths of 1 200 metres and holding three people. The project has a budget of EUR 2.5 million. ICTINEU applied for the public funding available under the Community Framework for state aid for Research and Development and Innovation (2006/C 323/01) and Commission Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008. Young micro enterprises are eligible to receive grant funding of up to 45% of the total cost of a project, or a combination of grants and public loans amounting to a maximum of 75% of that total cost. Any aid granted under Article 35 of the aforementioned regulation should not exceed EUR 1 million. In Spain, repayable advances take the form of the NEOTEC loans awarded by the Centre for Industrial and Technological Development (Centro para el Desarrollo Tecnológico Industrial — CDTI). In 2010, when ICTINEU applied for NEOTEC 2 funding, these loans could not exceed EUR 1 million.

At that time the company had received almost EUR 500 000 in public grants. The CDTI classified the repayable advances solely as grants, rather than calculating the gross grant equivalent, as specified in more than 12 different places in the Community framework and regulation. The CDTI thus cut EUR 500 000 from the loan, citing Section 5.4 of the Community Framework and arguing that ICTINEU had received the maximum grant of EUR 1 million laid down in Article 35 of the 2008 regulation. Given that NEOTEC funding is incompatible with the other loans and grants awarded by the CDTI, this decision by the CDTI contravenes Section 1.5 of the Community framework (motivation of specific measures), jeopardising the support for ICTINEU's project by making it impossible for the company to secure the maximum funding for which it is eligible. So far the company has received public grants amounting to only 11.5% (EUR 500 000) of the cost of the project, or 35.5% of the cost if public loans are also taken into account.

When Article 35(4) of the 2008 regulation sets an 'aid' limit of EUR 1 million, does this 'aid' refer to non-repayable grants or to the sum of both grants and loans?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission points out that according to the provisions of Article 4 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in application of Article 87 and 88 of the Treaty, '… where aid is awarded in a form other than a grant, the aid amount shall be the grant equivalent of the aid'.

Therefore, if aid is granted through a combination of non-repayable grants and repayable instruments such as loans, the granting authorities should ensure that the sum of the value of the non-repayable grants and of the grant equivalent of the repayable aid instruments stays below the thresholds specified for the relevant type of aid, e.g. the EUR 1 million aid limit set out in Article 35(4) of the above Regulation with regard to aid to young innovative enterprises.

However, it is worth mentioning that the EUR 1 million aid limit represents a maximum amount that should not be exceeded. As to the allegedly insufficient support granted to ICTINEU, the Commission emphasises that the national granting authorities remain free to grant lower amounts, including by taking into account the nominal value of repayable aid instruments when different aid instruments are combined.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010614/12
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: EU-US trade relations: the nexus provision

Following the EU-US Summit of 24 November 2011, it was decided to launch a high-level working group for growth and jobs, tasked with exploring different ways of deepening the transatlantic trade relationship, with a view to addressing existing barriers to trade prior to the possible opening of formal negotiations.

1. Does the Commission plan to address, within the remit of its negotiating mandate, the use of the 'nexus provision' which unfairly insists that, for example, UK exporters of software goods must register for sales tax and income tax in some parts of the United States, even without having a physical presence in the territory itself?

2. To what extent does the Commission consider this blatant extension of fiscal reach beyond the boundaries of its jurisdiction a barrier to EU exports?

3. To what extent does the Commission foresee a willingness by the US to address this nexus, which exists in 25 states, considering the fact that the states are not themselves bound by US double taxation agreements and the Federal Government has no power to enforce them?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

The work of the EU-US High Level Working Group for Jobs and Growth is under way and good progress has been achieved in the joint analysis that the Commission is carrying out with its American counterparts. The High level Working Group has been looking into the details of all areas and is looking forward to issuing a final report soon.

Work done so far has been of a preparatory nature, and details of various areas will have to be dealt with during negotiations, should the decision be taken to launch such negotiations.

The specific point the Honourable Member is referring to has so far not been dealt with in the context of the preparatory work of the High Level Working Group. It will have to be decided in which manner this point should be analysed and tackled.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010615/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Condizioni estremamente deplorevoli dei canili municipali in Romania

Recentemente sono state sottoposte all'attenzione dell'interrogante le misere condizioni dei canili municipali in Romania. Le associazioni animaliste temono fortemente che questi canili violino i diritti degli animali nell'UE. In base alle informazioni disponibili, le autorità rumene utilizzano metodi crudeli per catturare i cani randagi. Ma le preoccupazioni aumentano una volta che i cani si trovano nei canili municipali, che sono costituiti da recinti di piccole dimensioni, all'aperto e chiusi su ogni lato. I canili non sono riscaldati e pertanto durante l'inverno l'acqua a disposizione dei cani congela, tanto che gli animali corrono il rischio di morire per disidratazione, fame e freddo.

In Romania i proprietari dei cani non vengono registrati e non esistono leggi che impongano l'identificazione di tutti i cani, sia di proprietà sia abbandonati, per cui risulta difficile determinare se un cane sia di proprietà, abbandonato o randagio. La Romania è firmataria della Convenzione europea per la protezione degli animali da compagnia (serie dei trattati del Consiglio d'Europa, n. 125), entrata in vigore in Romania nel 2005, che sancisce l'obbligo morale di rispettare tutte le creature viventi. Allo stesso modo, l'articolo 13 del trattato di Lisbona sancisce che «l'Unione e gli Stati membri tengono pienamente conto delle esigenze in materia di benessere degli animali in quanto esseri senzienti».

1. È la Commissione al corrente delle crudeli condizioni riscontrate nei canili municipali rumeni? Posto che la Romania è divenuta Stato membro nel 2007, qual è la posizione della Commissione in proposito?

2. Ritiene la Commissione opportuno invitare le autorità rumene a effettuare ispezioni in tutti i canili municipali e a impegnarsi nell'attuazione di nuove norme in linea con i trattati dell'UE?

3. Quali azioni intende intraprendere al fine di accrescere il benessere degli animali in Romania?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

Si rinvia l'onorevole deputata alle risposte alle interrogazioni scritte E-006543/2011, E-007161/2011, E-009002/2011, P-004480/2012 e E-002062/2012 ([1]) che affrontano le problematiche dei cani randagi e della gestione delle popolazioni canine.

La Commissione non è chiamata a svolgere un ruolo specifico nella materia poiché i canili sono gestiti dalle autorità nazionali competenti.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010615/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Concern over inhumane conditions at municipal dog pounds in Romania

The extremely poor standard of municipal dog pounds in Romania has recently been brought to my attention. Animal rights groups are much concerned that these pounds violate animal rights in the EU. According to reports, the Romanian authorities employ cruel tactics to catch stray dogs. Such concerns are multiplied, however, once the dogs have been brought to the municipal dog pounds, which are small, outdoor, fenced-off enclosures. As the facilities have no heating, any water the dogs receive freezes over in the winter, so that dogs are likely to die from dehydration, hunger and cold.

In Romania, dog owners are not registered, and there are no laws requiring the identification of all owned and abandoned dogs. This makes it difficult to determine whether a dog is owned, abandoned or stray. Romania is signatory to the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals (Council of Europe Treaty Series No 125). The Convention, which entered into force in Romania in 2005, highlights the moral obligation to respect all living creatures. Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty also states that 'the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals'.

1. Is the Commission aware of the inhumane conditions found at Romanian municipal dog pounds? Given that Romania became a Member State in 2007, what is the Commission's position on this matter?

2. Does the Commission not believe that it would be beneficial to invite the Romanian authorities to inspect all municipal dog pounds and to work strongly to implement new standards that are in line with the EU Treaties?

3. What steps need to be to be taken, in the Commission's view, to improve animal welfare in Romania?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Honourable Member is invited to refer to the answers to written questions E-006543/2011, E-007161/2011, E-009002/2011, P-004480/2012 and E-002062/2012 ([1]) which address the issues of stray dogs and of dog population management.

The Commission has no specific role regarding the way animal shelters are managed by the national competent authorities.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/home.jsp

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010616/12
to the Commission
Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: UK Membership of the EU

A nationwide *Observer* opinion poll in the UK reveals that 56% of the UK's population would likely vote to leave the EU in a referendum, with only 30% in favour of remaining.

The Commission will, of course, be aware of negative sentiment in the UK from its own sources.

1. Is the Commission engaged in any internal discussions or preparations in respect of the probability that the UK will eventually secede from the EU and will almost certainly demand the negotiation of a repatriation of competences?

2. Does the Commission consider that it will be better able to carry out its objective of building an ever closer union without the hostile presence, veto and voting weight of the UK?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(7 January 2013)

1. No.

2. No. The Commission remains convinced that the UK's membership of the EU is in the best interests of both the UK and the EU as a whole.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010618/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Transito merci sulle infrastrutture transalpine: posizione di svantaggio dell'Italia

Dal 1° novembre 2012 il transito degli autocarri con massa superiore alle 3,5t omologati Euro2 sarà inibito nel traforo del Monte Bianco. Inoltre, in tale traforo e nel traforo del Frejus saranno aumentati i pedaggi del 5,01 %, con un ulteriore aggravio di spesa per i mezzi Euro3, come consentito dalla direttiva 2011/79/UE. Inizialmente, le autorità francesi richiedevano anche la sospensione del transito dei veicoli Euro3 nel versante francese, adducendo motivi di inquinamento ambientale. Tuttavia, la presentazione di un secondo studio sull'inquinamento dell'aria, che portava risultati molto differenti e meno negativi rispetto a quelli presentati dalla prefettura dell'Alta Savoia, unitamente all'incongruenza logica di esentare da tale divieto il traffico merci con destinazione nella sola Valle dell'Arve, hanno portato al ritiro della richiesta.

Vanno consideranti i seguenti elementi:

— l'Italia è separata dal resto d'Europa dall'arco alpino e questo pone il mercato dei trasporti italiano in una posizione di netto svantaggio rispetto agli altri Stati membri;

— il trasporto su gomma nelle infrastrutture transalpine esistenti è l'unica via d'accesso delle merci italiane agli altri mercati europei;

— le infrastrutture potenzialmente alternative al trasporto su strada, quali la TAV Torino-Lione o il potenziamento dell'asse ferroviario del Brennero, saranno ultimate solo fra il 2025 e il 2030;

— spesso sono attuate dai paesi di confine, concorrenti dell'Italia, misure unilaterali di contrasto al transito merci dall'Italia sull'arco alpino (come nel caso sopra esposto, un divieto di transito di determinati veicoli nel lato francese è di fatto un divieto di transito nelle infrastrutture transalpine).

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere come intende agire per tutelare l'Italia, il cui mercato rischia di essere relegato sempre più ai margini rispetto ai mercati degli altri Stati membri, schiacciato da normative e balzelli che all'atto pratico ricadono solo sul nostro paese?

Dato che si rende sempre più necessario e giusto, nel rispetto dell'ambiente, un rinnovo dei veicoli commerciali circolanti, intende la Commissione mettere in campo delle risorse destinate alle imprese per sostenerle nell'acquisto di nuovi mezzi meno inquinanti?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(21 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione segue con attenzione le questioni relative al traffico transalpino. Garantisce che le norme che disciplinano le attività del trasporto transalpino rispettino pienamente l'*acquis* dell'UE (ad esempio, che siano applicate senza discriminazioni). Secondo le informazioni di cui dispone la Commissione, i pedaggi da pagare e i divieti di circolazione sulle infrastrutture di transito alpine si applicano nello stesso modo a tutti gli autotrasportatori, a prescindere dal paese di origine.

L'UE favorisce lo sviluppo sostenibile del parco veicoli, tra l'altro, adottando disposizioni volte ad autorizzare pedaggi differenziati in funzione della categoria di emissione EURO (direttiva «Eurobollo») ([1]), promuovendo investimenti nelle tecnologie avanzate e nell'innovazione per veicoli puliti (ad esempio nel contesto dell'iniziativa CARS 2020 lanciata di recente) e consentendo regimi di sostegno di vario genere per il rinnovo della flotta a livello di Stati membri.

([1]) Direttiva 1999/62/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 17 giugno 1999, relativa alla tassazione a carico di autoveicoli pesanti adibiti al trasporto di merci su strada per l'uso di alcune infrastrutture (GU L 187 del 20.7.1999, pag. 42), modificata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010618/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Goods transit through transalpine tunnels: Italy at a disadvantage

From 1 November 2012 heavy goods vehicles of over 3.5 tonnes classified as Euro 2 will be forbidden to use the Mont Blanc tunnel. In addition, the tolls for this tunnel and the Fréjus tunnel will be increased by 5.01%, with a further increase for Euro 3 vehicles, which is permissible under Directive 2011/76/EU. Initially, the French authorities also requested a suspension of transit by Euro 3 vehicles on the French side, for reasons of environmental pollution. However, they withdrew their request when a second air pollution study was submitted, with very different, less negative results than those of the prefecture of Haute-Savoie, and bearing in mind that it was illogical to exempt goods traffic destined only for Valle dell'Arve from the ban.

It should be borne in mind that:

— Italy is separated from the rest of Europe by the Alps, which puts the Italian haulage industry at a distinct disadvantage compared with other Member States;

— road haulage using existing transalpine tunnels is the only way for Italian goods to access other European markets;

— potential alternatives to road haulage, such as the Turin-Lyon TGV, or the upgrade of the Brenner rail link, will not be complete until between 2025 and 2030;

— neighbouring countries, Italy's competitors, often take unilateral measures against goods traffic across the Alps from Italy (as in the case described above, a ban on transit by certain vehicles on the French side is in fact a ban on transit through transalpine tunnels).

Will the Commission say what it intends to do to protect Italy, whose market is at risk of being increasingly marginalised compared with the markets of other Member States, hamstrung by rules and arbitrary taxes which in practice affect only Italy?

Given that it is increasingly necessary and right to replace the commercial vehicles on the roads, on environmental grounds, does the Commission intend to make resources available to businesses to help them buy new, less polluting vehicles?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

The Commission is closely following transalpine traffic issues. It ensures that the rules governing transalpine transport activities fully comply with the EU *acquis* (e.g. that they are applied without discrimination). According to the Commission's information, the charges to be paid and the traffic bans on Alpine transit routes apply equally to all hauliers regardless of their country of origin.

The EU is supporting the sustainable development of the European vehicle fleet among others by adopting provisions which allow for a differentiation of tolls according to EURO emission class (Eurovignette Directive) ([1]), by promoting investment in advanced technologies and innovation for clean vehicles (e.g. in the context of the recently launched CARS 2020 initiative) and by allowing various support schemes for fleet renewal at the level of Member States.

([1]) Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 1999 on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures (OJ L 187 of 20.7.1999, p. 42), as amended.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010619/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE) e Antonio Cancian (PPE)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Crisi del settore delle macchine per costruzioni e revisione della legislazione in materia

L'industria meccanica e, in particolare, quella delle macchine per costruzioni hanno investito milioni di euro per conformarsi alla legislazione in materia di emissioni e rumore, riducendo il loro impatto in termini di emissioni di oltre il 90 % durante gli ultimi dieci anni. Tuttavia si rileva che, a fronte di questi sforzi necessari per mantenere competitivo il prodotto e ottemperare alle normative europee, non è corrisposto da parte delle istituzioni nazionali e dell'Unione europea nessun provvedimento né per premiare chi acquista macchine e attrezzature di ultima generazione, né per contrastare il fenomeno dei mezzi non conformi che, immessi sul mercato, distorcono la concorrenza e possono essere pericolosi per la sicurezza e dannosi per l'ambiente.

Sulla base del piano di lavoro della Commissione europea per il 2012 e della comunicazione del Commissario Tajani del 10 ottobre 2012, emerge che essa sta riflettendo su una proposta di revisione della legislazione per renderla maggiormente effettiva. Tutto ciò premesso, si rivolgono alla Commissione le seguenti domande:

1. Preso atto delle difficoltà in cui versa l'industria europea delle macchine da costruzioni, quali sono le tempistiche per la presentazione della proposta di cui sopra? Ritiene che la proposta in oggetto possa essere analizzata entro la fine dell'attuale legislatura?

2. L'industria delle macchine per costruzioni sta rischiando di subire danni irreparabili a causa della scarsità dei mezzi messi a disposizione dalle autorità di sorveglianza del mercato e dalle dogane. Considerando che l'industria del settore, in diverse sedi, ha proposto varie soluzioni al problema, può la Commissione, partendo da questi suggerimenti, rendere noto se ritiene opportuno armonizzare le sanzioni, assicurare fondi e persone sul territorio e alle frontiere, e istituire un sistema informatico unico di allerta a cui gli operatori economici possano accedere per segnalare la presenza di macchine non conformi alla legge?

3. Il problema della conformità non coincide con la questione della sicurezza poiché la conformità include la sicurezza ma va ben oltre: significa produrre nel rispetto della legislazione ambientale in vigore e, pertanto, nel rispetto delle regole della concorrenza leale sul mercato. Può la Commissione rendere noto se condivide questa visione?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(29 gennaio 2013)

La sorveglianza del mercato è la componente che sottende l'intero quadro normativo per la commercializzazione dei prodotti. È l'ultimo anello in una catena che assicura:

— la conformità dei prodotti immessi sul mercato unionale con i dispositivi in vigore, siano essi finalizzati alla protezione dell'ambiente, alla salute e sicurezza, alla protezione dei consumatori o ad altri interessi pubblici; e

— condizioni di commercio leale per gli operatori economici responsabili.

La Commissione si trova ora nella fase finale di preparazione di una proposta relativa a un nuovo regolamento a se stante sulla sorveglianza del mercato. Esso prepara la via per un sistema maggiormente collaborativo e stretto di sorveglianza del mercato e porrà a livello dell'Unione delle basi atte ad assicurare un quadro giuridico chiaro e con obiettivi ben definiti. La Commissione non intende però proporre l'armonizzazione delle sanzioni poiché quest'ambito è di esclusiva competenza degli Stati membri. Quanto all'istituzione di un sistema informatico unico di allerta, la Commissione ribadisce che già nell'ambito della legislazione attuale gli operatori economici hanno l'obbligo di informare le autorità delle irregolarità che riscontrano. Le autorità, a loro volta, sono tenute a cooperare per il tramite dei sistemi ICSMS e RAPEX.

La proposta della Commissione è prevista per il febbraio 2013. L'obiettivo della Commissione è che essa venga adottata dal legislatore nel corso dell'attuale legislatura.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010619/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE) and Antonio Cancian (PPE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Crisis in the construction machinery sector and revision of the relevant legislation

The mechanical engineering industry, and the construction machinery sector in particular, have invested millions of euros in order to comply with legislation on emissions and noise, reducing their impact in terms of emissions by more than 90% over the last 10 years. It should be noted, however, that these efforts, which have been necessary to keep their products competitive and meet European standards, have not been matched by national and EU institutions with any provisions either to create incentives for purchasing state-of-the-art machinery and equipment or to combat the phenomenon of non-compliant equipment which, when placed on the market, distorts competition and can be dangerous and harmful to the environment.

The European Commission's work plan for 2012, and Commissioner Tajani's Communication of 10 October 2012, indicate that the Commission is envisaging a proposal to revise the legislation in order to make it more effective. In view of all the above, we wish to put the following questions to the Commission:

1. Given the difficulties faced by the European construction machinery industry, what is the timescale for the submission of the above proposal? Does the Commission believe that it will be possible to examine the proposal before the end of the current parliamentary term?

2. The construction machinery industry risks suffering irreparable damage as a result of the paucity of resources made available by the market surveillance authorities and customs services. Considering that, on a number of occasions, the industry has proposed various solutions to the problem, can the Commission, starting from these suggestions, indicate whether it considers it appropriate to harmonise penalties, ensure that resources and personnel are deployed in the field and at borders, and establish a single IT alert system which economic operators can access in order to report the presence of machinery which does not comply with the law?

3. The question of conformity does not conflict with the issue of safety, since conformity includes safety but goes far beyond it: it means that production complies with current environmental legislation and, consequently, with the rules governing fair competition in the market. Can the Commission indicate whether it shares this view?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

Market surveillance is the component that underpins the whole of the regulatory framework for the marketing of products. It is the last link in a chain of elements which ensures:

— the compliance of products placed on the Union market with the applicable requirements, irrespective of whether these refer to environmental protection, health and safety, consumer protection or other public interests ; and

— fair trading conditions for responsible economic operators.

The Commission is now in the final stage of preparation of a proposal for a new stand-alone Regulation on Market Surveillance. It paves the way for a more collaborative, joined-up system of market surveillance and will lay foundations at Union level that bring clarity and real purpose to the legal framework. The Commission, however, does not intend to propose a harmonisation of penalties since this area is the exclusive competence of Member States. As to the establishment of a single IT alert system, the Commission would like to stress that already under the current legislation economic operators have the obligation to inform authorities of the irregularities they witness. Authorities in turn are obliged to cooperate through the ICSMS and RAPEX systems.

The Commission proposal is scheduled for February 2013. Thus, the Commission's aim is indeed adoption by the legislator during the current Parliamentary term.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010620/12
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(21 november 2012)

Betreft: Achtermistlichten

Er bestaat binnen de EU geen eenduidige regelgeving over het gebruik van mistlichten.

In een aantal lidstaten, waaronder België, is het aansteken van de achtermistlichten verplicht wanneer het zicht, in geval van mist, sneeuwval, minder is dan 100 meter, alsook bij felle regen. In andere lidstaten mogen mistlichten enkel gebruikt worden wanneer de zichtbaarheid minder dan 50 meter is, maar het gebruik ervan is in deze landen niet verplicht.

Bovendien zou het gebruik van de achtermistlichten in files tot problemen leiden, omdat achterliggers hierdoor verblind kunnen worden.

Dit zou kunnen worden opgelost door aan automobilisten, wanneer zij in de file staan, de mogelijkheid te geven de achtermistlichten te doven.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de problemen die het gebruik van achtermistlichten bij files kan veroorzaken?

2. Zal de Commissie een initiatief nemen om het gebruik van mistlichten te harmoniseren?

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

1. Zoals het geachte Parlementslid opmerkt, wordt het gebruik van mistlichten geregeld bij nationale wetgeving. Het is de Commissie niet bekend dat het incorrecte gebruik van achtermistlichten, met name in files, een probleem vormt voor de verkeersveiligheid.

2. De Commissie is niet voornemens het gebruik van mistlichten te harmoniseren.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010620/12
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Rear fog lights: There are no uniform rules on the use of fog lights in the EU

In a number of Member States, including Belgium, it is compulsory to switch on rear fog lights when visibility is less than 100 metres due to fog or falling snow, and in heavy rain. In other Member States, fog lights may be used only when visibility is less than 50 metres, but their use is not compulsory in those countries.

Moreover, the use of rear fog lights in traffic jams is said to cause problems because drivers of following vehicles may be blinded by them.

This problem could be solved by allowing drivers to switch off their rear fog lights when they are in traffic jams.

1. Is the Commission aware of the problems that can be caused by the use of rear fog lights in traffic jams?

2. Will the Commission take an initiative to harmonise the use of fog lights?

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

1. As the Honourable Member points out, the use of fog lights is regulated in national legislation. The Commission is not aware that the incorrect use of rear fog lights, particularly in traffic jams, constitutes a problem for road safety.

2. The Commission is not envisaging to harmonise the use of fog lights.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-010621/12
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Deposito illegale di ingenti quantità di rifiuti di amianto sopra una falda acquifera in una discarica a Paese (Treviso), in violazione delle direttive relative alle discariche e alla protezione delle acque

A Paese, comune di circa 22 000 abitanti in provincia di Treviso, si trova una ex cava dalla quale, nel corso degli anni, sono stati estratti oltre 1 100 000 m^3 cubi di ghiaia, e nella quale è stata successivamente autorizzata una discarica per rifiuti inerti di proprietà della ditta Terra S.r.l., appartenente al gruppo Mosole. In questa discarica sono state depositate circa 80 000 tonnellate di rifiuti di amianto a seguito di un'autorizzazione ([1]) rilasciata dalla provincia di Treviso, dichiarata successivamente illegittima dal Consiglio di Stato ([2]) per la violazione della direttiva 1999/31/CE relativa alle discariche di rifiuti e della direttiva 337/85/CEE concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati, valutazione che non è mai stata eseguita per tale discarica.

Nonostante una richiesta di bonifica presentata dall'allora sindaco di Paese, Valerio Mardegan, il 3 aprile 2008 alla provincia di Treviso, i rifiuti cancerogeni non sono stati ancora asportati e al momento sono depositati a pochissimi metri dal livello della falda acquifera dalla quale, a valle, attingono acqua centinaia di pozzi della rete idrica consortile locale, che alimenta di acqua potabile le abitazioni di decine di migliaia di cittadini delle province di Treviso e di Venezia.

In data 17 maggio 2012 la ditta titolare della discarica ha presentato ufficialmente al pubblico un progetto di riclassificazione della discarica da rifiuti inerti a rifiuti speciali, allo scopo di depositare nella stessa ulteriori 460 000 m^3 di rifiuti contenenti amianto.

In tale progetto tuttavia non era ancora prevista la bonifica delle 80 000 tonnellate di rifiuti di amianto già presenti, depositate illegalmente e potenziali fonte di inquinamento della sottostante falda acquifera e dell'atmosfera.

Contro la realizzazione di questo progetto le ONG «Paeseambiente» e «Legambiente Trevignano» hanno presentato una petizione al Parlamento europeo (che ad oggi, in pochi mesi, ha raccolto le firme di ben 7 500 cittadini) e una denuncia alla Commissione.

Alla luce di quanto esposto, la Commissione non ritiene che le autorità competenti debbano procedere al più presto alla bonifica dell'amianto smaltito illegalmente nella discarica di Paese, conformemente alla normativa comunitaria relativa alle discariche di rifiuti e alla tutela delle acque? In caso affermativo, quali azioni intende intraprendere?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(16 gennaio 2013)

I requisiti concernenti lo smaltimento dell'amianto nelle discariche sono stabiliti nella direttiva 1999/31/CE relativa alle discariche di rifiuti ([3]) e nel diritto derivato, ossia la decisione sui criteri per l'ammissione dei rifiuti nelle discariche ([4]). I requisiti in oggetto sono principalmente volti a prevenire le emissioni nell'atmosfera provocate dai rifiuti contenenti amianto nelle discariche e a garantirne, successivamente, un'adeguata copertura.

La direttiva quadro sulle acque ([5]) impone agli Stati membri di evitare qualsiasi tipo di deterioramento della qualità dei corpi idrici sotterranei e di conseguire un buono stato delle acque sotterranee entro il 2015. La direttiva sulle acque sotterranee ([6]) richiede agli Stati membri di determinare standard nazionali di qualità (i cosiddetti valori soglia) in funzione dei rischi di inquinamento delle acque sotterranee. Dalle informazioni a nostra disposizione nessuno Stato membro dell'UE ha stabilito un valore soglia relativo all'amianto.

Poiché la rimozione e l'ulteriore trattamento dell'amianto potrebbero comportare rischi ancora maggiori per la salute rispetto al deposito in discarica, tale opzione in via di principio non è realizzabile.

([1]) Decreto provincia di Treviso n. 843 del 21 ottobre 2004.
([2]) Sentenza Consiglio di Stato n. 1329 del 20 marzo 2007.
([3]) Direttiva 1999/31/CE del Consiglio, del 26 aprile 1999, relativa alle discariche di rifiuti; GU L 182 del 16.7.1999.
([4]) Decisione 2003/33/CE del Consiglio, del 19 dicembre 2002, che stabilisce criteri e procedure per l'ammissione dei rifiuti nelle discariche ai sensi dell'articolo 16 e dell'allegato II della direttiva 1999/31/CE; GU L 11 del 16.1.2003.
([5]) Direttiva 2000/60/CE, GU L 327 del 22.12.2000.
([6]) Direttiva 2006/118/CE, GU L 372 del 27.12.2006.

Tuttavia la Commissione contatterà le autorità italiane per chiedere delucidazioni in merito allo status giuridico della discarica in oggetto e ai potenziali rischi che comporta per le acque sotterranee.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010621/12
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Illegal dumping of huge quantities of waste asbestos over an aquifer at a refuse site in Paese (Treviso), in violation of the waste and water protection directives

In Paese, a municipality with a population of around 22 000 in the Province of Treviso, there is a former quarry from which, over the years, over 1 100 000 m^3 of gravel were extracted, and which was subsequently approved as a refuse site for inert waste run by the company Terra s.r.l., which belongs to the Mosole Group. Around 80 000 tonnes of waste asbestos have been dumped at this site after a licence ([1]) was issued by the Treviso Provincial Government which was then declared to be illegal by the Council of State ([2]) as it violated Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste and Directive 337/85/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment; no assessment has ever been conducted on this refuse site.

Despite a request to treat the waste being made by Valerio Mardegan, then Mayor of Paese, to the Treviso Provincial Government on 3 April 2008 , the carcinogenic waste has still not been removed, and is currently lying just a few metres above the aquifer, which feeds into hundreds of wells on the network managed by the local water company which in turn supplies tens of thousands of homes in the Provinces of Treviso and Venezia.

On 17 May 2012, the company which manages the refuse site officially presented to the public a plan to convert the site from an inert waste to a special waste site, with a view to dumping there a further 460 000 m^3 of waste containing asbestos.

That project still did not provide for the treatment of the 80 000 tonnes of waste asbestos that were already there, which had been dumped illegally and which could potentially pollute the underlying aquifer and the atmosphere.

The NGOs 'Paeseambiente' and 'Legambiente Trevignano' have submitted a petition (in just a few months this has been signed by some 7 500 people) to Parliament to protest against the implementation of that project, and have reported the matter to the Commission.

In the light of the above, does the Commission not consider that the relevant authorities should move as quickly as possible to recycle the asbestos dumped illegally at the Paese refuse site, in line with the Community regulations on landfill waste and water protection? If so, what action does it plan to take?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(16 January 2013)

The requirements for landfilling of asbestos are laid down in the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) ([3]) and its secondary legislation — the decision on Waste Acceptance Criteria ([4]). Such requirements are mainly aimed at preventing emissions into the air when asbestos waste is landfilled and at ensuring its adequate coverage after landfilling.

The Water Framework Directive ([5]) requires Member States to avoid any deterioration in quality of their groundwater bodies and achieve good groundwater status by 2015. The Groundwater Directive ([6]) requires Member States to establish their national quality standards (called threshold values) based on the risks of pollution of groundwater. According to our information no EU Member State has set a threshold value for asbestos.

As the removal and further processing of asbestos could lead to more significant health risks than leaving it in the landfill this option is in principle not advisable.

Nevertheless the Commission will contact the Italian authorities in order to receive clarification concerning the legal status of the landfill in question and the potential risks of the landfill on groundwater bodies.

([1]) Treviso Provincial Government Decree No 843 of 21 October 2004.
([2]) Decision of the Council of State No 1329 of 20 March 2007.
([3]) Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste; OJ L 182, 16.7.1999.
([4]) Council Decision 2003/33/EC of 19 December 2002 establishing criteria and procedures for the acceptance of waste at landfills pursuant to Article 16 of and Annex II to Directive 1999/31/EC; OJ L 11.2003.
([5]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.
([6]) Directive 2006/118/EC OJ L 372, 27.12.2006.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010622/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Vertido de aguas residuales no tratadas en Laguna de Duero

En el municipio español de Laguna de Duero, situado en la Comunidad Autónoma de Castilla y León, con más de 20 000 habitantes, se produce el vertido de aguas residuales directamente sobre el río Duero, en concreto en una zona que forma parte de la Red Europea Natura 2000.

Conforme al artículo 4.1 de la Directiva 91/271/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1991, sobre el tratamiento de las aguas residuales urbanas, el municipio de Laguna de Duero debería haber depurado sus aguas residuales antes del 31 de diciembre de 2000. Exactamente lo mismo contempla la legislación española sobre el tema, en concreto el artículo 5.1 del Real Decreto Ley 11/1995 de 28 de diciembre por el cual se establece el tratamiento obligatorio de las aguas residuales antes del 1 de enero de 2001 para aglomeraciones urbanas mayores de 15 000 habitantes. Por otra parte, el artículo 25.2 de la Ley 7/1985 de 2 de abril, reguladora de las Bases del Régimen Local, obliga al municipio a ejercer las competencias en los términos de la legislación nacional y autonómica, en materia de tratamientos de aguas residuales.

Este marco jurídico obliga al Ayuntamiento de Laguna de Duero al tratamiento de sus aguas residuales, más aún teniendo en cuenta que los vertidos se realizan directamente a la zona «Riberas del río Duero y afluentes», que es una zona protegida dentro de la Red Europea Natura 2000.

El vertido se realiza en un bosque de ribera que forma parte de dicha red y, por tanto, se encuentra protegido por la Directiva Europea 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992. Son diversas las denuncias realizadas por la oposición municipal desde hace años, así como las advertencias por parte de la Confederación Hidrográfica del Duero, por lo que el ayuntamiento es plenamente consciente de la situación y de la ilegalidad del vertido. Este vertido, contaminante de un enclave natural protegido, representa un considerable agravante por parte del Ayuntamiento de Laguna de Duero al suponer la violación simultánea de dos directivas comunitarias y dos leyes nacionales, con un claro conocimiento de la situación.

1. ¿Tiene conocimiento la Comisión de los hechos reseñados?

2. ¿Iniciará la Comisión las acciones necesarias para que el Ayuntamiento de Laguna del Duero ponga fin de una vez a los vertidos de aguas residuales no tratadas?

3. ¿Cuáles son las acciones que pretende llevar a cabo?

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

La Comisión no tiene noticias de la situación a que se refiere Su Señoría. Las autoridades españolas no han informado sobre la aplicación de la Directiva sobre el tratamiento de las aguas residuales urbanas ([1]) en Laguna de Duero (Valladolid, España).

La Comisión tiene la intención de pedir a las autoridades españolas que faciliten información detallada sobre la prestación de servicios de tratamiento de aguas residuales en la zona considerada, a fin de determinar si Laguna de Duero debe ser considerada una aglomeración urbana en los términos de la Directiva y, por lo tanto, sujeta a todas las obligaciones pertinentes. Cuando se reciba la información, la Comisión valorará la necesidad de adoptar medidas particulares.

([1]) Directiva 91/271/CEE (DO L 135 de 30.5.1991).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010622/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Discharge of untreated waste water in Laguna de Duero

In Laguna de Duero, a Spanish municipality in the Autonomous Community of Castile and León with more than 20 000 inhabitants, waste water is being discharged directly into the river Duero, specifically in an area which is part of the European Natura 2000 network.

Pursuant to Article 4(1) of Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste water treatment, the Laguna de Duero municipality should have treated its waste water before 31 December 2000. Spanish legislation on this matter lays down exactly the same requirements; specifically, Article 5(1) of Royal Decree Law 11/1995 of 28 December makes it obligatory to treat waste water before 1 January 2001 in urban agglomerations with over 15 000 inhabitants. Moreover, Article 25(2) of Law 7/1985 of 2 April, which lays down the rules governing local administration, obliges the municipality to exercise its powers under the terms of national and autonomous legislation in the area of waste water treatment.

This legal framework obliges the Laguna de Duero town council to treat this waste water, particularly since the water is being discharged directly into the area along the banks of the river Duero and its tributaries, which is a Natura 2000 protection site.

The water is being discharged into a stretch of riverbank woodland which is part of this network and is therefore protected by Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992. The council's opposition has made many complaints over the years, and the Duero River Hydrographic Authority has issued numerous warnings. The town council is therefore fully aware of the situation and knows that this discharge of waste water is illegal. This pollution of a nature protection site represents a serious infringement by the Laguna de Duero Town Council, which is fully aware that it is in breach of two EU directives and two national laws.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. Will the Commission take the necessary action to ensure that the Laguna del Duero TownCouncil puts an end to the discharge of untreated waste water once and for all?

3. What action does it intend to take?

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

The Commission is not aware of the situation referred to by the Honourable Member. Spanish authorities have not reported on the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Directive ([1]) in Laguna de Duero (Valladolid, Spain).

The Commission intends to request the Spanish authorities to provide detailed information on the provision of waste water treatment services in the area concerned in order to ascertain whether Laguna de Duero has to be considered an agglomeration under the terms of the directive and, therefore, is subject to all relevant obligations. When the information is received, the Commission will assess whether any particular action is needed.

([1]) 91/271/EEC, OJ L 135, 30.5.1991.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010623/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Huelga de hambre de prisioneros kurdos en cárceles de Turquía

El pasado día 12 de septiembre un grupo de mujeres kurdas inició una huelga de hambre indefinida exigiendo una educación en su lengua materna, así como la posibilidad de presentar recursos jurídicos también en su lengua. A esta huelga se han ido sumando diferentes presos políticos kurdos en cárceles de Turquía que han añadido la petición de libertad para Abdullah Ocalan en sus reclamaciones, llegando a la cifra de 776 presos repartidos entre 56 cárceles diferentes de todo el territorio turco.

Dicha huelga se produce en un contexto de represión ejercida por el Gobierno de Turquía ante cualquier reclamación de la comunidad kurda, que es la comunidad étnica sin Estado propio más numerosa del mundo, suponiendo unos 40 millones de personas que viven dentro de las fronteras de Turquía, Siria, Irak e Irán. La estrategia de enfrentamiento llevada a cabo por el Partido Comunista del Kurdistán (PKK) fue abandonada unilateralmente en 2009, demostrando su voluntad política de alcanzar un acuerdo por vías pacíficas. Pero ante esta voluntad el Gobierno turco está llevando a cabo una estrategia de represión contra una nueva generación de activistas que han nacido en años posteriores a la guerra de los años noventa. Entre 2009 y lo que llevamos de 2012 miles de kurdos han sido detenidos bajo todo tipo de acusaciones por el simple hecho de ser kurdos.

El grado de represión de las autoridades turcas contra cualquier expresión de identidad kurda es tal que son cientos los jóvenes kurdos encarcelados prácticamente sin motivo alguno, lo que supone una flagrante violación de los derechos humanos de dicha comunidad, así como un proceso de persecución étnica.

1. ¿Tiene conocimiento la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante de los hechos reseñados? ¿Está siguiendo la situación de las personas en huelga de hambre?

2. ¿Considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que Turquía está cumpliendo con la Carta Universal de Derechos Humanos en el caso del pueblo kurdo?

3. ¿Piensa plantear alguna medida de presión ante el Gobierno turco para garantizar el respeto de los derechos humanos del pueblo kurdo?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de enero de 2013)

La Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta estaba al corriente de la huelga de hambre recientemente llevada a cabo por reclusos y presos preventivos kurdos en Turquía. De hecho, siguió muy de cerca la evolución de esa situación, de la que trató además en su reciente reunión con el Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores Davutoğlu en Bruselas. La AR/VP ha acogido con gran satisfacción el fin de la huelga de hambre.

La AR/VP desea subrayar la importancia de abordar la cuestión kurda en foros democráticos y con la contribución más extensa posible de todas las fuerzas democráticas, lo que incluye su discusión como parte de la actual actividad de elaboración de una nueva constitución democrática. Junto al desarrollo social, económico y cultural, la región sudeste necesita paz, democracia y estabilidad. Ello solo puede conseguirse mediante un consenso sobre medidas concretas que amplíen los derechos sociales, económicos y culturales de los habitantes de la región.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010623/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Kurdish prisoners' hunger strike in Turkish prisons

On 12 September 2012 a group of Kurdish women began an indefinite hunger strike demanding to be educated in their mother tongue and to be able to make legal appeals in their own language. As many as 776 Kurdish political prisoners in 56 different prisons throughout Turkey have joined the strike, calling also for the release of Abdullah Ocalan.

The strike comes against a backdrop of repression by the Government of Turkey with regard to any complaints made by the Kurdish community, which is the largest stateless ethnic community in the world, with some 40 million people living within the borders of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. The strategy of confrontation implemented by the Communist Party of Kurdistan (PKK) was unilaterally abandoned in 2009, demonstrating its political will to reach a peaceful agreement. However, in response to this, the Turkish Government is pursuing a strategy of repression against a new generation of activists who were born in the years after the war in the 1990s. Since 2009, thousands of Kurds have been arrested on all kinds of charges, due to the mere fact of being Kurds.

The degree of repression of any expression of Kurdish identity by the Turkish authorities is such that there are hundreds of young Kurds imprisoned for almost no reason, which is a flagrant violation of the human rights of the Kurdish community, not to mention a process of ethnic persecution.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the facts described? Is she monitoring the situation of the people on hunger strike?

2. Does the Vice-President/High Representative believe that Turkey is complying with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the case of the Kurdish people?

3. Will she bring some kind of pressure to bear on the Turkish Government to ensure that the human rights of the Kurdish people are respected?

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

The HR/VP was aware of the recent hunger strike by Kurdish prisoners and remand prisoners in Turkey. She followed the situation closely and discussed the issue at her recent meeting with Foreign Minister Davutoglu in Brussels. She very much welcomes the end of the hunger strike.

The HR/VP underlines the importance of addressing the Kurdish issue in the democratic arena, with the widest possible contribution of all democratic forces, including in the framework of the ongoing work on a new democratic constitution. The South-East needs peace, democracy and stability as well as social, economic and cultural development. This can only be achieved via consensus over concrete measures expanding the social, economic and cultural rights of the people living in the region.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010624/12
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Instalación de una cantera en la Rambla del Cañuelo

En el término municipal de Felix, situado en la provincia de Almería (España), se encuentra la Rambla del Cañuelo, con importantes recursos naturales y diferentes hábitats de interés con fauna y flora típicos del clima mediterráneo.

El Ayuntamiento de Felix, administración competente en materia de ordenación urbanística, y la Consejería de Medio Ambiente de la Junta de Andalucía, competente en materia de conservación y protección del medio ambiente, han autorizado la instalación de una cantera de explotación de áridos al aire libre.

La cantera tendría un impacto dramático sobre dicha área debido a que se trata de una actividad clasificada dentro del grupo C (cód. 04061602) del Catálogo de Actividades Potencialmente Contaminadoras de la Atmósfera (CAPCA). Además, supondría la voladura con dinamita y la introducción de maquinaria en el terreno, con la correspondiente contaminación del aire y un incremento de los niveles de ruido.

La Rambla del Cañuelo contiene varios hábitats protegidos por el Real Decreto 1193/1998 y también por la Directiva europea de Hábitats (Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo). Estos importantes recursos naturales deben ser conservados y la autorización recibida por la cantera supone una violación de las diferentes normativas que los protegen. En el Catálogo Andaluz de Especies Amenazadas se señala la existencia en dicha zona del búho real o el murciélago cavernícola, siendo estos tan sólo dos ejemplos de la riqueza natural de la flora y fauna de la Rambla del Cañuelo.

Ante la existencia de diferentes normativas que protegen el lugar:

1. ¿Está informada la Comisión de la autorización administrativa otorgada a la cantera en la Rambla del Cañuelo?

2. ¿Ha cumplido dicha autorización con los requisitos sobre evaluación del impacto ambiental que impone la Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y el Consejo?

3. ¿Considera la Comisión que dicha actividad de explotación puede realizarse sin violar la citada Directiva de Hábitats?

4. ¿Piensa actuar la Comisión al respecto y ponerse en contacto con las administraciones para exigir el cumplimiento de las citadas normativas?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(22 de enero de 2013)

La Comisión es sabedora de la publicación en el Diario Oficial de de Andalucía ([1]) de una Autorización Ambiental Unificada para el proyecto «Explotación de la Cantera El Cañuelo» en el municipio de Félix, en la provincia de Almería (Andalucía, España). Según la información que figura en dicha autorización, el proyecto ha sido sometido a una evaluación de impacto ambiental con arreglo a lo dispuesto en la Directiva 2011/92/UE ([2]) y las autoridades competentes han llegado a la conclusión de que el proyecto no afecta a ningún lugar de importancia comunitaria (LIC) y de que los trabajos no afectarán a la red Natura 2000.

Corresponde a los Estados miembros garantizar el cumplimiento de la Directiva 92/43/CEE (Directiva sobre hábitats) ([3]). La Comisión considera que se han respetado los procedimientos requeridos por la legislación ambiental de la UE. No hay razones para pensar que ha habido una infracción de la Directiva sobre hábitats y la Comisión no tiene la intención de ponerse en contacto con las autoridades competentes o tomar cualquier otra medida en esta fase.

([1]) BOJA número. 140 de 19.7.2011 http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/boja/2011/140/22.

([2]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2001, versión codificada de la Directiva 85/337/CEE relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente, en su versión modificada (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012).

([3]) Directiva 92/43/CEE del Consejo, de 21 de mayo de 1992, relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010624/12
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Opening of a quarry in the Rambla del Cañuelo

The Rambla del Cañuelo, located in the province of Almeria (Spain) in the municipal district of Felix, is an area rich in natural resources and different types of conservation habitats with flora and fauna typical of the Mediterranean climate.

Felix Town Council, which is responsible for urban planning, and Andalucia's Regional Ministry of the Environment, responsible for conserving and protecting the environment, have approved the opening of an open surface quarry for aggregates.

The quarry will have a dramatic impact on the area, as quarrying of this kind comes under the Group C classification (ref: 04061602) of the CAPCA Catalogue of possible atmosphere polluting activities. There will be dynamite blasting and heavy machinery on site, bringing with them air pollution and increased noise levels.

Several of the habitats in the Rambla del Cañuelo are protected by Royal Decree 1193/1998, as well as by the EU's Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC). These important natural resources must be conserved and authorising the quarry entails a breach of the various laws protecting them. The Andalusian Catalogue of Endangered Species states that the eagle owl and the cave bat can be found in this area, and these are only two examples of the natural wealth of the flora and fauna in the Rambla del Cañuelo.

In view of the various laws protecting this site:

1. Is the Commission aware that a quarry has been authorised in the Rambla del Cañuelo?

2. Was the environmental impact of this quarry assessed as required pursuant to Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council?

3. In the Commission's view, can this quarry be worked without breaching the Habitats Directive?

4. Is the Commission planning to contact the authorities concerned to ensure they comply with the aforementioned legislation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the publication in the Official Journal of Andalucía ([1]) of a Unified Environmental Authorisation (Autorización Ambiental Unificada) for the project 'Explotación de la Cantera El Cañuelo', in the municipality of Felix, in the province of Almería (Andalucía, Spain). According to the information contained in this authorisation, the project has been subjected to an environmental impact assessment, as required in Directive 2011/92/EU ([2]) and the competent authorities have concluded that the project does not affect any site of Community importance (SCI) and that the works do not affect the Natura 2000 network.

It falls to Member States to ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([3]). The Commission considers that the procedures required by EU environmental legislation have been followed. There is no reason to conclude that there has been a breach of the Habitats Directive and the Commission does not intend to contact the authorities concerned or take any further measure at this stage.

([1]) BOJA núm. 140, 19.7.2011 http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/boja/2011/140/22.
([2]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2001, codified version of Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment as amended (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012).
([3]) 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).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010625/12
al Consejo
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Resolución de las Naciones Unidas sobre el embargo a Cuba

El pasado martes 13 de noviembre de 2012 se presentó a votación en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas la Resolución titulada «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero de los Estados Unidos contra Cuba».

Con el resultado final de la votación de 188 votos a favor, tres en contra (EE.UU., Israel y Palau) y dos abstenciones (Islas Marshall y Micronesia), el embargo volvió a ser condenado por vigésimo primera vez consecutiva en el seno del organismo internacional con mayor representación de Estados de la comunidad internacional.

La totalidad de los Estados miembros de la UE, junto con otros ciento sesenta y un Estados, votaron a favor de esta resolución que emplaza al Gobierno de los EE.UU. a poner fin al injusto bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero que sufre la isla desde 1962 y que fue endurecido con las leyes Torricelli en 1992 y Helms Burton en 1996. Según académicos y varias organizaciones, este cruel bloqueo ha causado daños por valor de 1 066 000 millones de dólares desde su imposición.

En este contexto, resulta incomprensible la Posición Común de la Unión Europea respecto a Cuba, siendo el único trato de excepción que la UE mantiene con un tercer país.

¿Ha iniciado el Consejo los trámites necesarios para mantener un diálogo de alto nivel con las autoridades de EE.UU. respecto al embargo?

¿Respalda el Consejo la presente resolución? ¿Piensa el Consejo trasladar la postura de sus Estados miembros y exigir a los Estados Unidos de América el fin del embargo?

¿Piensa el Consejo iniciar un debate encaminado a que se ponga fin a la Posición Común de la Unión Europea respecto a Cuba?

Respuesta
(11 de marzo de 2013)

La política comercial de los Estados Unidos con respecto a Cuba es fundamentalmente una cuestión bilateral.

La Unión Europea y sus Estados miembros han manifestado regularmente su oposición a la aplicación extraterritorial del embargo de los Estados Unidos, como el contemplado en la Ley para la Democracia en Cuba (*Cuban Democracy Act*) de 1992 y en la Ley Helms-Burton de 1996.

En noviembre de 1996, el Consejo adoptó, con objeto de proteger los intereses de las personas físicas o jurídicas residentes en la Unión Europea contra los efectos de la aplicación extraterritorial de la legislación Helms-Burton, un Reglamento ([1]) y una Acción Común ([2]) que impiden el cumplimiento de dicha legislación. Por otra parte, el 18 de mayo de 1998, en la Cumbre Unión Europea-Estados Unidos celebrada en Londres, se acordó un conjunto de medidas que incluían excepciones de los títulos III y IV de la Ley Helms-Burton, el compromiso del gobierno estadounidense de abstenerse de adoptar nueva legislación extraterritorial similar y un Acuerdo sobre Medidas para reforzar la protección de las inversiones. La Unión Europea sigue instando a los Estados Unidos a que ejecute sus compromisos con arreglo al Acuerdo de 18 de mayo de 1998.

En su sesión del 19 de noviembre de 2012, el Consejo debatió la evolución de la situación en Cuba y la forma de apoyar las reformas en curso en el país y de mejorar la calidad de vida de los ciudadanos cubanos. Tras el debate, el Consejo tomó nota de la intención de la Alta Representante de iniciar la elaboración de un proyecto de directrices de negociación, que se someterá a la aprobación del Consejo, con vistas a un posible acuerdo bilateral UE-Cuba. La Posición común de la UE sobre Cuba sigue vigente. Para su derogación se requeriría el acuerdo unánime de todos los Estados miembros.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 2271/96 del Consejo, de 22 de noviembre de 1996 (DO L 309 de 29.11.1996, p. 1).
([2]) Acción Común de 22 de noviembre de 1996 (DO L 309 de 29.11.1996, p. 7).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010625/12
to the Council
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: UN Resolution on the embargo on Cuba

On 13 November 2012 the General Assembly of the United Nations voted on its Resolution entitled 'Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba'.

With the final result of the vote 188 in favour to three against (US, Israel and Palau) with two abstentions (Marshall Islands and Micronesia), the embargo was condemned for the 21st time in a row by the international body which represents more States in the international community than any other.

All of the EU's Member States, together with another 161 countries, voted in favour of this resolution which calls on the Government of the United States to end the unfair economic, commercial and financial blockade Cuba has been subjected to since 1962 and which was further tightened by the Torricelli law in 1992 and the Helms Burton law in 1996. Academics and various organisations estimate that this cruel blockade has caused damage worth USD 1 066 000 million since it was imposed.

In this context, the European Union's Common Position on Cuba is incomprehensible, since it is the only case of special treatment applied by the EU to a third country.

Has the Council set in motion the procedures necessary for holding a high-level dialogue on the embargo with the US authorities?

Does the Council support this resolution? Will the Council convey the views of the Member States and demand that the United States end this embargo?

Does the Council intend to launch a debate aimed at bringing the EU's Common Position on Cuba to an end?

Reply
(11 March 2013)

The US trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue.

The European Union and its Member States have regularly expressed their opposition to the extraterritorial application of the United States embargo, such as that contained in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996.

In November 1996, the Council adopted a regulation ([1]) and a Joint Action ([2]) to protect the interests of natural or legal persons residing in the European Union against the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton legislation, which prohibit compliance with that legislation. Moreover, on 18 May 1998, at the European Union-United States Summit in London, a package was agreed covering waivers to Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States administration to refrain from further similar extraterritorial legislation, and an Understanding with respect to disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union continues to urge the United States to implement its commitments under the 18 May 1998 Understanding.

At its meeting on 19 November 2012, the Council discussed developments in Cuba and how to support the ongoing reforms in the country and improve the lives of Cuban citizens. Following the discussion, the Council took note of the intention of the High Representative to start preparing the drafting of negotiating directives, to be submitted to the Council for approval, with a view to a possible EU-Cuba bilateral agreement. The EU Common Position on Cuba remains in force. Its repeal would require the unanimous agreement of all Member States.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2271/96 of 22 November 1996, OJ L 309, 29.11.1996, p. 1.
([2]) Joint Action of 22 November 1996, OJ L 309, 29.11.1996, p. 7.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010626/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Resolución de las Naciones Unidas sobre el embargo a Cuba

El pasado martes 13 de noviembre de 2012 se presentó a votación en la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas la Resolución titulada «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero de los Estados Unidos contra Cuba».

Con el resultado final de la votación de 188 votos a favor, tres en contra (EE.UU., Israel y Palau) y dos abstenciones (Islas Marshall y Micronesia), el embargo volvió a ser condenado por vigésimo primera vez consecutiva en el seno del organismo internacional con mayor representación de Estados de la comunidad internacional.

La totalidad de los Estados miembros de la UE, junto con otros ciento sesenta y un Estados, votaron a favor de esta resolución que emplaza al Gobierno de los EE.UU. a poner fin al injusto bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero que sufre la isla desde 1962 y que fue endurecido con las leyes Torricelli en 1992 y Helms Burton en 1996. Según académicos y varias organizaciones, este cruel bloqueo ha causado daños por valor de 1 066 000 millones de dólares desde su imposición.

En este contexto, resulta incomprensible la Posición Común de la Unión Europea respecto a Cuba, siendo el único trato de excepción que la UE mantiene con un tercer país.

¿Ha iniciado la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante los tramites necesarios para incluir en el diálogo bianual de alto nivel la necesidad de que las autoridades de los EE.UU. pongan fin al embargo, trasladando así la postura de los 27 Estados miembros respecto al bloqueo?

¿Respalda la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante esta resolución de las Naciones Unidas?

¿Piensa la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante iniciar un debate encaminado a que se ponga fin a la Posición Común de la Unión Europea respecto a Cuba?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de enero de 2013)

La Unión Europea considera que la política comercial de Estados Unidos respecto a Cuba es fundamentalmente un problema bilateral. No obstante, la Unión Europea y sus Estados miembros han manifestado claramente su oposición a la extensión extraterritorial del embargo estadounidense, propuesto en la *Cuban Democracy Act* de 1992 y en la *Helms-Burton Act* de 1996. El 13 de noviembre de 2012, los Estados miembros de la UE votaron a favor de la Resolución de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero de los Estados Unidos contra Cuba». La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta apoya plenamente esta posición.

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta informó al Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores (CAE) de 19 de noviembre de 2012 sobre los resultados de la reflexión emprendida por el CAE de 25 de octubre de 2010 sobre el futuro de las relaciones UE-Cuba. Posteriormente, la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta dio instrucciones a los servicios para que comenzaran a redactar directrices para un posible acuerdo bilateral con Cuba. La decisión sobre la supresión de la Posición común de 1996 exige unanimidad por parte de los Estados miembros de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010626/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — UN Resolution on the embargo on Cuba

On 13 November 2012 the General Assembly of the United Nations voted on its Resolution entitled 'Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba'.

With the final result of the vote 188 in favour to three against (US, Israel and Palau) with two abstentions (Marshall Islands and Micronesia), the embargo was condemned for the 21st time in a row by the international body which represents more States in the international community than any other.

All of the EU's Member States, together with another 161 countries, voted in favour of this resolution which calls on the Government of the United States to end the unfair economic, commercial and financial blockade Cuba has been subjected to since 1962 and which was further tightened by the Torricelli law in 1992 and the Helms Burton law in 1996. Academics and various organisations estimate that this cruel blockade has caused damage worth USD 1 066 000 million since it was imposed.

In this context, the European Union's Common Position on Cuba is incomprehensible, since it is the only case of special treatment applied by the EU to a third country.

Has the Vice-President/High Representative set in motion the procedures necessary to ensure that the need for the US authorities to end the embargo is included in the biannual high-level dialogue, conveying the views of the 27 Member States on this matter?

Does the Vice-President/High Representative support this UN resolution?

Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to launch a debate aimed at bringing the EU's Common Position on Cuba to an end?

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

The European Union believes that the United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. Notwithstanding, the European Union and its Member States have been clearly expressing their opposition to the extraterritorial extension of the United States embargo, such as that contained in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996. On 13 November 2012, the EU Member States voted again in favour of the GA resolution 'Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the USA against Cuba'. The HR/VP fully supports this position.

The HR/VP reported back to FAC of 19 November 2012 on the results of the reflection launched by the FAC of 25 October 2010 on the future of EU-Cuba relations. As a follow-up, the HR/VP instructed the services to start drafting directives for a possible bilateral agreement with Cuba. The decision on the elimination of the 1996 Common Position requires unanimity by the EU Member States.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-010627/12
Komisijai (Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotojai ir vyriausiajai įgaliotinei)
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)
(2012 m. lapkričio 21 d.)

Tema: VP/HR – ES strategija Irano branduolinės veiklos klausimu

Pastaraisiais metais JAV vyriausybė, visapusiškai remiama ES, išplatino nuomonę, kad vienintelis būdas sutrukdyti Irano vyriausybei kurti branduolinius ginklus yra apkrauti ją sankcijomis ir grasinti kariniu smūgiu. Remiantis tokiu argumentavimu kitos priemonės yra pasmerktos žlugti, nes Iranas neketina pradėti rimtų derybų ir tik nori laimėti laiko, kad leistų savo mokslininkams daryti pažangą kuriant branduolinį ginklą. Laikantis tokio požiūrio į šią problemą nepaisoma Irano pozicijos ir sumenkinamas bet koks pasiūlytas alternatyvus sprendimas. Tokie pasiūlymai buvo iš tikrųjų pateikti: prieš dvejus metus Iranas sutiko su Turkijos ir Brazilijos parengtu planu, pagal kurį šios šalys iš Irano gautų branduolinės medžiagos, kurią prisodrintų laikydamosi civiliniam naudojimui nustatytų apribojimų ir tada grąžintų Iranui. Tačiau JAV administracija, iš pradžių rėmusi šį pasiūlymą, gėdingai pakeitė savo nuomonę spaudžiama Izraelio lobistų Vašingtone. Praeitais metais Rusija parengė planą, pagal kurį Iranui nustatyti apribojimai dėl urano sodrinimo, taip pat nustatyta, kad Tarptautinė atominės energijos agentūra (TATENA) atliktų daugiau žvalgomųjų patikrų. Iranas buvo pasiruošęs aptarti šį projektą, bet iš to ir vėl nieko neišėjo, nes JAV prioritetas buvo padidinti tarptautinį spaudimą Teheranui, kad būtų pritarta naujoms sankcijoms. Nėra jokios informacijos apie Europos poziciją dėl šio pasiūlymo.

Todėl Irano ekstremistai gali lengvai tęsti savo įtartiną urano sodrinimo, kuris dabar pasiekė 20 proc., programą. Taigi nuo šiol į bet kurį naują diplomatinį susitarimą tenka įtraukti reikalavimą dėl vis labiau invazinės stebėsenos, naudojant Irano atominėse gamyklose įrengtą išankstinio perspėjimo sistemą. Tačiau kiekviename susitarime, į kurį įtrauktas šis reikalavimas, taip pat turi būti pateiktas aiškiai apibrėžtų veiksmų, kurių Iranas privalo imtis, kad sankcijos būtų palaipsniui panaikintos, sąrašas. Daugelį metų Iranas pakartotinai siūlydavo laikytis invazinių patikrų režimo, kuris yra griežtesnis nei įprastai taikomas JT atominės energijos agentūros. Buvęs vyriausiasis derybininkas Hossein Mousavian pasiūlė, kad sodrinimo ribinė vertė būtų 5 proc., ir sutiko nelaikyti prisodrinto urano pertekliaus Irane. Mainais Jungtinės Valstijos ir jų sąjungininkai turėtų pripažinti Irano teisę į sodrinimo technologiją – teisę, kuri yra vienas iš svarbiausių Sutarties dėl branduolinio ginklo neplatinimo elementų – ir laipsniškai panaikinti sankcijas.

Atsižvelgiant į išdėstytus argumentus:

1. Ar Sąjungos vyriausioji įgaliotinė ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotoja pasiruošusi kurti aktyvesnę ES strategiją dėl Irano branduolinės programos, kurioje būtų atsižvelgta į Irano vyriausybės norą derėtis dėl taikaus sprendimo?

2. Ar Sąjungos vyriausioji įgaliotinė ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotoja mano, kad perspektyviame susitarime su Irano vyriausybe dėl jos branduolinės programos turėtų būti pateiktas aiškiai apibrėžtų veiksmų, kurių Iranas privalo imtis, kad sankcijos būtų palaipsniui panaikintos, sąrašas?

Europos Sąjungos vyriausiosios įgaliotinės ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotojos Catherine Ashton atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2013 m. sausio 18 d.)

ES pasiryžusi siekti diplomatinio sprendimo dvejopu būdu, derindama ir spaudimo priemones, ir dialogą. Tikslas lieka tas pats – skatinti Iraną dėti daug pastangų, kad būtų kuriama pasitikėjimo atmosfera, vadovaujantis abipusiškumo principais, ir žingsnis po žingsnio artėti prie prasmingų derybų dėl branduolinės programos.

Nuo 2012 m. pradžios Europos Sąjungos vyriausioji įgaliotinė ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotoja dalyvavo atnaujintose pastangose įtikinti Iraną pradėti prasmingas derybas. Kartu su grupės E3+3 (JK, Prancūzija Vokietija ir JAV, Kinija, Rusija) šalimis Europos Sąjungos vyriausioji įgaliotinė ir Komisijos pirmininko pavaduotoja Stambule, Bagdade ir Maskvoje dalyvavo trijuose derybų su Iranu raunduose. Ji taip pat kalbėjosi su dr. S. Jaliliu dvišaliame susitikime Stambule ir pabrėžė būtinybę Iranui imtis esminių veiksmų. Diplomatinės pastangos tęsiamos.

Per šias derybas E3+3 šalys pateikė pagrįstą ir esminį derybinį pasitikėjimo stiprinimo pasiūlymą. Norima pasiekti ilgalaikį ir nuodugnų susitarimą dėl Irano branduolinių klausimų. Pats Iranas turi elgtis atsakingai ir atgauti tarptautinės bendruomenės pasitikėjimą tuo, kad jo branduolinė programa yra visiškai taiki ir kad sankcijas galima panaikinti. Tai patvirtinta 2012 m. spalio 15 d. Tarybos išvadose.

Iranas kol kas nedavė jokių signalų, kad yra pasirengęs rimtai spręsti aktualiausius su jo branduoline programa susijusius klausimus. Naujausioje TATENA ataskaitoje patvirtinta, kad Irano branduolinė programa, ypač urano sodrinimo veikla, plečiama. Be to, Iranas atsisako bendradarbiauti su TATENA, kad išspręstų vis dar atvirus klausimus, įskaitant ir tuos, kurie liudija apie galimą karinį aspektą. Iranas ir toliau nepaiso reikalavimų, nustatytų Jungtinių Tautų Saugumo Tarybos (JTST) ir TATENA rezoliucijose.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010627/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — EU strategy on the Iranian nuclear issue

In recent years, the US Government, with the full support of the EU, has spread the view that the only way to prevent the Iranian Government from building nuclear bombs is to overwhelm it with sanctions and threaten it with military attack. According to this line of reasoning, other methods are doomed to fail, because Iran has no intention of engaging in serious negotiations and only wishes to buy time to allow its scientists to progress towards the building of the bomb. This view of the matter ignores the Iranian position and downplays any proposed alternative solution. Such proposals have indeed been put forward: two years ago, Iran agreed to a plan by Turkey and Brazil, whereby these countries would receive nuclear material from Iran, which they would enrich within the limitations of civilian use and then return to Iran. But the US administration, after endorsing this proposal, made a shameful U-turn after pressure from the Israeli lobby in Washington. Last year, Russia put forward a plan that imposed restrictions on Iran with regards to enriching uranium, coupled with more probing inspections on the part of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Iran was willing to discuss this project, but once again nothing came of it because the US priority was to boost international pressure on Tehran in order to approve new sanctions. There is no report of any European stance on this proposal.

This has made it an easy task for Iranian extremists to continue with their suspicious enrichment of uranium, which has now reached 20%. So from now on, any new diplomatic agreement is forced to include ever more invasive monitoring, with an early warning system placed inside Iran's nuclear establishments. But any agreement that includes this requirement must also include a list of clearly-defined steps that Iran must take in order for the sanctions to be progressively lifted. Over the years, Iran has repeatedly offered to accept a regime of invasive inspections, which go beyond the ones routinely carried out by the UN's atomic energy agency. Former head negotiatior Hossein Mousavian suggested an enrichment threshold equal to 5%, and agreed not to stock any excess enriched uranium on Iranian soil. In exchange, the United States and its allies would have had to acknowledge Iran's right to enrichment technology — a right that is one of the key points of the Non-Proliferation Treaty — and gradually dismantle the sanctions.

Given the arguments above:

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative willing to build a more active EU strategy on the Iranian nuclear programme, capable of taking into account the willingness of the Iranian Government to negotiate a peaceful solution?

2. Does the Vice-President/High Representative believe that a viable agreement with the Iranian Government over its nuclear programme should include a list of clearly-defined steps that Iran must make in order to obtain a progressive lifting of sanctions?

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

The EU is determined to work towards a diplomatic solution on the basis of the double-track approach which combines pressure with dialogue. The objective remains to engage Iran in a serious effort of confidence building, guided by the principles of reciprocity and step by step, leading to meaningful negotiations on the nuclear programme.

Since the beginning of 2012 the HR/VP has been engaged in renewed efforts to move Iran into meaningful negotiations. Together with the E3+3 the HR/VP conducted three rounds of talks with Iran in Istanbul, Baghdad and Moscow. The HR/VP also met bilaterally with Dr Jalili in Istanbul and stressed the need for Iran to make a substantial move. The diplomatic efforts are ongoing.

During these talks the E3+3 put forward a credible and substantial confidence building proposal for negotiations. The objective is to achieve a long-term comprehensive settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue. It is up to Iran to act responsibly and restore international confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme so that sanctions could be finished. This was confirmed by the Council conclusions of 15 October 2012.

Iran has failed to give any signal that it is ready to seriously address the most urgent concerns regarding its nuclear programme. The latest IAEA report confirmed that the Iranian nuclear programme and particularly its enrichment activities are expanding. In addition Iran refuses to cooperate with the IAEA to resolve outstanding issues, including those pointing to a possible military dimension. Iran continues to defy the requirements contained in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and IAEA resolutions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010628/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Fire safety in hotels and hostels

We welcome the commitment made by the Commission at a parliamentary hearing to produce a consultative Green Paper on safety in services, with the specific inclusion of fire safety in hotels as a key issue, and the Commission's offer to go further, such that (to quote) 'when you're going to a hotel, the European Union wants to know that it has the right protection against fire'.

Will the Commission confirm that, subject to the evidence submitted during the consultation on the Green Paper, it would consider, in the light of the hotel industry's failure to self-regulate, proposing a directive on fire safety in hotels and hostels?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission is currently working on the preparation of a comprehensive consultation of stakeholders and interested parties on the safety of services, with a focus on tourism-related services.

The consultation, expected in 2013, will address specific service sectors, including tourism accommodation fire safety. It will be the framework to consult on a set of diverse policy options, to identify gaps in existing legislation, as well as to collect information on the implementation of national rules, initiatives and best practices.

The consultation will support the Commission in assessing the added value of any initiative at European level and its results will be informing and influencing the subsequent actions in the field of service safety. Any more detailed commitment at this stage would be premature.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010629/12
alla Commissione
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Unioni civili e reato di bigamia nei paesi dell'UE che non prevedono le unioni registrate

Più di uno Stato membro dell'Unione europea ha adottato normative al fine di riconoscere e disciplinare le unioni di fatto o le unioni civili sia tra coppie eterosessuali che omosessuali. Inoltre, tali normative ritengono configurato il reato di bigamia qualora un soggetto registri un'ulteriore unione civile o contragga matrimonio, pur essendo coniugato o partner di una convivenza già registrata.

Considerando che non tutti gli Stati membri dell'Unione europea disciplinano le unioni registrate o le unioni civili, può la Commissione far sapere in che modo ritiene debba essere disciplinato il caso in cui un soggetto sia partner di un'unione registrata in uno Stato membro e in seguito contragga matrimonio in un altro Stato membro dove le unioni registrate non sono riconosciute?

La Commissione ritiene di dover disciplinare tale fattispecie, affinché venga assicurata la tutela dei cittadini di Stati membri in cui le unioni registrate non sono riconosciute?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(21 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione informa l'onorevole parlamentare che il reato di bigamia rientra nelle competenze degli Stati membri e che l'attuale legislazione dell'UE non contempla il riconoscimento delle unioni registrate. A tutt'oggi, il riconoscimento di un'unione registrata in uno Stato membro diverso da quello in cui è avvenuta la registrazione è disciplinato dalle legislazioni nazionali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010629/12
to the Commission
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Registered partnerships and the crime of bigamy in EU countries where registered partnerships are not recognised

A number of EU Member States have adopted legislation recognising and regulating de facto unions or registered partnerships, between both heterosexual and homosexual couples. In addition, under such legislation it is considered a bigamous offence for someone to register another partnership or contract a marriage while they are already married or in a partnership that has already been registered.

Given that not all EU Member States regulate registered partnerships, can the Commission say how it thinks cases should be regulated where someone who is in a registered partnership in one Member State subsequently contracts a marriage in another Member State where registered partnerships are not recognised?

Does the Commission think it should regulate such cases in order to protect the citizens of Member States where registered partnerships are not recognised?

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

The Commission wishes to inform the Honorable Member that the offence of bigamy falls in the competence of the Member States and that the existing EC law does not cover the recognition of a registered partnership. Today the recognition of a registered partnership in another Member State than the Member States where the partnership was registered is governed by the national law of Member States.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-010630/12
a la Comisión
Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Regulación del sobreendeudamiento de las familias por causa hipotecaria y mecanismos de ayuda a las personas más vulnerables ante el caso de desahucio

Ante el alarmante crecimiento de los desahucios en España y el elevado nivel de la deuda privada de los hogares, el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI) ([1]), entre otros organismos internacionales, ha recomendado articular medidas para facilitar la reducción y reestructuración de la deuda de los hogares y aliviar la situación de las familias y personas más vulnerables. La ausencia de estas medidas supone una deficiente gestión de la crisis y un freno a la recuperación de la actividad económica con costes sociales inaceptables.

En ausencia de armonización en la EU de las medidas nacionales en este terreno, países europeos como Francia han establecido moratorias temporales de desahucios para sectores vulnerables. En este sentido, también se está debatiendo cómo deben actuar las administraciones públicas para ofrecer ayuda a las personas afectadas por los desahucios, por ejemplo ofreciendo viviendas sociales de alquiler.

A la luz del creciente número de desahucios en diferentes Estados miembros, como España, y del drama social que supone:

1. ¿Piensa emprender la Comisión alguna medida de armonización en línea con las recomendaciones del FMI y en relación con el diseño y ejecución de las medidas nacionales relativas a evitar desahucios?

2. ¿Qué acciones tiene en marcha o puede impulsar la Comisión para velar por que los Estados miembros puedan prevenir el sobreendeudamiento de las familias por causa hipotecaria?

3. ¿Qué propuestas puede plantear la Comisión para instar a los Estados miembros a que intervengan para ayudar a aquellos ciudadanos y ciudadanas afectados por un desahucio a que puedan restablecer su solvencia económica y hacer efectivo su derecho a una vivienda digna?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(9 de enero de 2013)

La Comisión comparte la inquietud de Su Señoría acerca de las repercusiones sociales de la crisis actual. El problema de los desahucios ha sido merecedor de especial atención en España y ha dado lugar a la adopción de nueva legislación que impone una moratoria de dos años para los desahucios en el caso de los grupos especialmente vulnerables. Habida cuenta de las grandes diferencias entre Estados miembros en lo que respecta tanto a la severidad de la situación como a las estructuras institucionales y jurídicas, no se considera recomendable ni posible imponer un enfoque armonizado para esta cuestión.

La Comisión ha estudiado el problema del sobreendeudamiento hipotecario de las familias y sus implicaciones macroeconómicas como parte del procedimiento de desequilibrio macroeconómico a escala de la UE. De forma consiguiente, en el marco del Semestre Europeo 2012 se formularon recomendaciones específicas a una serie de países, incluida España, que pueden contribuir a prevenir el sobreendeudamiento hipotecario, como, por ejemplo, la eliminación de los incentivos fiscales que favorecen el acceso a la vivienda en propiedad, que fueron un importante factor para la acumulación de esa deuda antes de la crisis.

Puede consultarse más información sobre las recomendaciones específicas por país en las páginas web siguientes:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/04_council/es_2012-07-10_council_recommendation_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/op103_en.htm

([1]) «Household debt holds back recoveries but restructuring can help» http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2012/res041012b.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010630/12
to the Commission
Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Dealing with excessive household mortgage debt and assistance for the most vulnerable persons facing eviction

Faced with the alarming increase in evictions in Spain and the high level of private household debt, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ([1]) and other international organisations have called for action to reduce and restructure household debt and alleviate the difficulties encountered by the most vulnerable families and individuals. Failure to take the necessary measures is an indication of inadequate crisis management and is slowing down economic recovery, with unacceptable social consequences.

In the absence of EU harmonisation regarding national measures in this area, European countries such as France have imposed a provisional ban on the eviction of vulnerable members of society. At the same time, ways are being discussed of providing public assistance to those affected by evictions, for example the provision of rented social housing.

In view of the growing number of evictions in various Member States such as Spain and the drastic social consequences of this:

1. Is the Commission envisaging harmonised measures in line with IMF recommendations with regard to the formulation and implementation of measures at national level to prevent evictions?

2. What measures is the Commission taking or is able to take to ensure that Member States are able to prevent excessive household mortgage debt?

3. What measures can the Commission recommend to encourage Member States to assist those affected by evictions, helping them to recover financially and defend their right to decent housing?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2013)

The Commission shares the concerns about the social implications of the current crisis. The issue of evictions has recently gained particular attention in Spain, with the adoption of new legislation introducing a two-year moratorium on evictions for particularly vulnerable groups. Given the large differences across Member States in terms of the severity of the challenge and the institutional and legal setting, it does not appear advisable or possible to impose a harmonised approach in this area.

The Commission has studied the issue of excessive household mortgage debt and its macroeconomic implications in the context of the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure at the EU level. Accordingly, in the framework of the 2012 European Semester country specific recommendations have been addressed to a number of Member States, including Spain, which can help prevent excessive mortgage debt taking in the future, e.g. removing tax incentives favouring home ownership which played a major role in build-up of such debt prior to the crisis.

More details about these country specific recommendations could be found at the following websites:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/pdf/20_scps/2012/04_council/es_2012-07-10_council_recommendation_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/op103_en.htm

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([1]) 'Household debt holds back recoveries but restructuring can help' http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2012/res041012b.htm (10.4.2012).

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení P-010631/12
Komisi
Richard Falbr (S&D)
(21. listopadu 2012)

Předmět: Šetření EK vůči ČEZ (vedeno pod číslem „Case COMP/39727 – ČEZ")

Kromě toho, že jsem poslancem Evropského parlamentu, předsedám Hospodářské a sociální radě Ústeckého kraje (Krajská tripartita), jehož součástí je Mostecko. Tento region je regionem s dlouhodobě nejvyšší nezaměstnaností v ČR. Těžba hnědého uhlí a energetika jsou na Mostecku nejvýznamnějším zdrojem pracovních míst. Zde tvoří zaměstnanci hornictví přibližně 6-7 %. Míra nezaměstnanosti přitom aktuálně činí téměř 16 %.

Pokud Evropská komise umožní společnosti ČEZ řešit zneužívání monopolního postavení na trhu prodejem elektrárny Dětmarovice v úplně jiném regionu, to je na severní Moravě, přímo tím ohrozí zhruba 10 000 pracovních míst spojených s těžbou hnědého uhlí, provozem elektrárny Počerady a souvisejícími službami (při použití multiplikačního faktoru 3). Je si Komise vědoma této skutečnosti a jak se s touto hrozbou hodlá vypořádat?

Jak jsem byl informován, většina účastníků market testu považuje jednu z variant vypořádání – tedy prodej elektrárny Dětmarovice – za nedostatečnou. Proč EK nepřihlédla k těmto připomínkám a elektrárnu Dětmarovice z navrhovaného závazku ČEZ nevyřadila? Hazarduje tím s dramatickým nárůstem nezaměstnanosti až na 30 % v regionu, kde již dnes existuje velké sociální napětí.

Nezávislé studie potvrzují, že účinným řešením by byl závazek prodat elektrárnu Počerady a případně další hnědouhelnou elektrárnu ve vlastnictví ČEZ a.s. Tento postup by zároveň stabilizoval zaměstnanost v regionu Mostecka v horizontu 40 let.

Jak je možné, že společnost ČEZ již od začátku tvrdila, že je s EK dohodnuta, což se nakonec potvrdilo? Zdůrazňuji, že vystupuji v zájmu těžce zkoušeného regionu, jehož problematice se věnuji intenzivně již od roku 1996.

Odpověď pana Almunii jménem Komise
(18. prosince 2012)

Komise si je vědoma neutěšené sociální situace v Ústeckém a Moravskoslezském kraji. Nevidí však jakékoli přímé spojení mezi prodejem elektrárny Dětmarovice společností ČEZ a mírou zaměstnanosti v odvětví těžby hnědého uhlí na severozápadě Čech. Podle informací Komise převyšuje poptávka po hnědém uhlí v České republice nabídku a zdá se, že neexistuje důvod, proč by měla být pracovní místa v oblasti těžby hnědého uhlí nějak ohrožena.

Na základě tržního testu Komise obdržela sedm odpovědí. Pět z nich nezpochybňuje skutečnost, že prodej elektrárny Dětmarovice je vhodným opravným prostředkem.

Kromě toho nebyl proces vyjednávání o opravných prostředcích ještě ukončen. Komise stále analyzuje výrobní zařízení, jež jsou navržena jako závazky. Pokud by Komise dospěla k názoru, že jakékoliv z aktiv, které společnost ČEZ navrhuje, nepředstavuje vhodný opravný prostředek, jenž rozptýlí obavy týkající se hospodářské soutěže, nebyla by tato aktiva přijata jako závazky.

Komise prošetřuje možné porušení článku 102 Smlouvy o fungování Evropské unie a přísně se řídí všemi procesními pravidly, včetně těch, která se týkají vedení jednání o závazcích, jež nabízejí podniky podle článku 9 nařízení č. 1/2003 ([1]). Komise nemá pravomoc kontrolovat prohlášení učiněná třetími osobami, i když jsou předmětem šetření Komise. Komise může pouze zopakovat, že mezi ní a společností ČEZ nebylo zatím dosaženo žádné dohody. V červnu 2012 společnost ČEZ nabídla v souladu s článkem 9 nařízení č. 1/2003 závazky, jejichž cílem je rozptýlit obavy Komise v oblasti hospodářské soutěže. V současné době Komise posuzuje, zda by tyto závazky představovaly vhodný opravný prostředek pro předpokládané protiprávní jednání. Pokud Komise dospěje k závěru, že tomu tak je, závazky se stanou pro společnost ČEZ právně závaznými.

([1]) Nařízení Rady (ES) č. 1/2003 ze dne 16. prosince 2002 o provádění pravidel hospodářské soutěže stanovených v článcích 81 a 82 Smlouvy.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010631/12
to the Commission
Richard Falbr (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Commission investigation into ČEZ (Case COMP/39727 — ČEZ)

In addition to my duties as an MEP, I also chair the Economic and Social Council for Ústecký Region (Regional Tripartite), which includes Mostecko. This region has long had the highest unemployment rate in the Czech Republic. Brown-coal mining and the energy sector are the main providers of employment in Mostecko, with mining staff accounting for some 6-7% of all workers. The current unemployment rate stands at almost 16%.

If the Commission allows ČEZ to settle its abuse of monopoly position on the market by selling off the Dětmarovice power station in the entirely different region of Northern Moravia, this will put directly at risk some 10 000 jobs connected with brown-coal mining, operations at Počerady power plant, and auxiliary services (applying a multiplication factor of three). Is the Commission aware of this situation, and how does it intend to tackle this threat?

I am informed that the majority of market test participants consider one of the options — that of selling off the Dětmarovice power station — to be inadequate. Why has the Commission not taken account of these observations and removed the Dětmarovice power station from the commitment proposed by ČEZ? By failing to do so, it risks provoking a dramatic rise in the region's unemployment to as much as 30% in the region and exacerbating existing social tensions.

Independent studies demonstrate that it would be more effective for ČEZ to commit to selling off the Počerady power plant and, if appropriate, another of its brown-coal power plants. Doing so would also stabilise the employment situation for the next 40 years in the Mostecko region.

How can ČEZ have maintained from the very beginning that it had reached an agreement with the Commission when this was only later proven to be the case? I should like to stress that I am acting on behalf of a hard-hit region whose problems have been one of my major concerns since 1996.

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

The Commission is aware of the bleak social situation in the Ustecky and Moravskoslezsky regions. However, the Commission fails to see any direct connection between the divestment of the Detmarovice plant by CEZ and the employment rate in the lignite mining sector in North-West Bohemia. According to the Commission's information, the demand for lignite in the Czech Republic exceeds supply and there appears to be no reason why jobs in lignite mining should be at risk.

In reply to the market test, the Commission received seven responses. Five do not question selling the Detmarovice power plant as a suitable remedy.

In addition, the process of negotiating the remedies is not over. The Commission is still analysing the generation assets proposed for commitments. If the Commission takes the view that any of the assets propsed by CEZ do not represent suitable remedies to the competition concerns, they would not be accepted as commitments.

The Commission is investigating a possible infringement of Article 102 TFEU and strictly follows all procedural rules, including those on conducting commitments negotiations offered by undertakings under Article 9 of Regulation 1/2003 ([1]). The Commission has no power to control statements made by third parties, even if they are subject to the Commission's investigation. The Commission can only repeat that no agreement has been reached between CEZ and the Commission. In June 2012, CEZ offered, in line with Article 9 of Regulation 1/2003, commitments to meet the Commission's competition concerns. Currently, the Commission is assessing whether they would represent a suitable remedy for the suspected infringement. If the Commission concludes that this is the case, the commitments would be made legally binding upon CEZ.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2003 of 16 December 2002 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010632/12
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D) y Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Fusión de organismos reguladores y de la autoridad de la competencia en España

El Gobierno español ha presentado un proyecto de Ley (Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales de 19 de octubre de 2012) para la creación de la Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia (CNMC) que integrará en un solo organismo a todos los reguladores de industrias de red existentes hasta la fecha junto con la autoridad de la competencia.

El proyecto presentado supone una modificación institucional fundamental. Se trata de una iniciativa cuyo ámbito comprende la autoridad de la competencia y va más allá de la racionalización y simplificación de organismos reguladores sectoriales susceptibles de concentrarse en grandes áreas. La fusión de todos los organismos reguladores y de la autoridad de la competencia afecta negativamente al principio de especialidad esencial para la regulación sectorial y al principio de especificidad clave para un desarrollo consistente de la política de la competencia.

La acumulación de diferentes mandatos limita la independencia regulatoria y obstaculiza la cooperación estructurada en el seno de la Unión Europea quebrando las condiciones fundamentales para el ejercicio adecuado de la actividad reguladora. Todo ello en detrimento de los consumidores, últimos destinatarios de los beneficios de la actividad regulatoria.

1. ¿Cuál es la posición de la Comisión sobre esta iniciativa?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que la concentración en un mismo organismo de tanta heterogeneidad y diversidad de competencias puede dar lugar a disfuncionalidades, ineficiencias y conflictos de intereses en detrimento de la actividad regulatoria?

3. ¿Estima la Comisión que sería beneficioso que las autoridades de la Red Europea de Competencia tuvieran un carácter específico y diferenciado así como plenas garantías de independencia?

4. ¿Va a adoptar la Comisión alguna medida para evitar que se consume este proceso?

Respuesta de la Sra. Kroes en nombre de la Comisión
(10 de enero de 2013)

La Comisión está al corriente de las novedades legislativas españolas en relación a la adopción de la ley por la que se crea la Comisión Nacional de Mercados y Competencia (CNMC). Una vez aprobado por el Consejo de Ministros, el proyecto de ley ha sido presentado al Parlamento para su aprobación definitiva.

Los Estados miembros gozan de un alto grado de autonomía a la hora de establecer sus órganos reguladores sectoriales y de la competencia, siempre que se cumplan todos los requisitos impuestos por el Derecho de la UE. La reestructuración de diferentes reguladores sectoriales específicos en un único organismo puede resultar eficaz en vista de la convergencia cada vez mayor entre esos sectores (es decir, las comunicaciones electrónicas y el sector audiovisual). La «fusión» de un regulador sectorial específico con la autoridad de la competencia también permitirá sinergias. Son varias las autoridades reguladoras que tienen la responsabilidad de aplicar la legislación de competencia en su sector (por ejemplo, Ofcom en el Reino Unido y EETT en Grecia).

Es importante sin embargo que el resultado de esa reorganización no afecte a la independencia de los reguladores. Para que el mercado único funcione correctamente, es fundamental que existan reguladores que sean independientes, eficientes y cuenten con los recursos adecuados. La Comisión no dudará en tomar medidas si la reestructuración merma la independencia, la capacidad reguladora y la eficiencia de los organismos, poniendo en peligro el mercado único.

La Comisión se mantiene en contacto con las autoridades españolas para cerciorarse, ya en esta fase, de que el proyecto de ley ampara la independencia del nuevo organismo y que este tiene atribuciones suficientes para desarrollar sus funciones conforme al Derecho de la UE. La Comisión velará por que se cumpla el Derecho de la UE, analizará la ley atendiendo a esos requisitos y, si procede, adoptará las medidas que sean necesarias.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010632/12
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D) and Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Merger of regulatory bodies and the competition authority in Spain

The Spanish Government has submitted a draft law (Official Journal of the Parliament of 19 October 2012) to set up the National Commission for Markets and Competition (CNMC), which would bring together all the existing network industry regulatory bodies with the national competition authority to form a single entity.

This bill would entail fundamental institutional change. The scope of the proposal includes the competition authority and goes well beyond streamlining and simplifying sectoral regulatory bodies, which tend to concentrate their work in major areas. Merging all the regulatory bodies with the competition authority compromises the principle of speciality, which is essential for sectoral regulation, and the principle of specification, which is necessary for substantially developing competition policy.

Combining roles limits regulatory independence and obstructs structured cooperation in the European Union by changing the framework that is essential for effective regulatory work to take place. This would all be to the detriment of consumers, who benefit from regulation.

1. What is the Commission's view of this initiative?

2. Does the Commission think that merging such diverse entities with varying competencescould lead to failures, inefficiency and conflicts of interest, to the detriment of regulatorywork?

3. Does the Commission think that it would be of benefit for the authorities which make upthe European Competition Network to have a specific and distinct role, as well as beingcompletely independent?

4. Will the Commission take any action to avoid this merger taking place?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the legislative developments in Spain regarding the adoption of the law creating the CNMC. Following its adoption by the Council of Ministers, the draft law has been submitted to the Parliament for adoption.

Member States have a considerable degree of autonomy in deciding how to set up their competition and sector regulatory bodies provided that the requirements imposed by EC law are complied with. The restructuring of different sector specific regulators in a single authority may be efficient in view of the increasing convergence between such sectors (i.e. electronic communications and audiovisual sector). The 'merger' of a sector specific regulator with a competition authority may also allow for synergies. Several regulatory authorities have the responsibility to apply competition law in their sector (i.e. Ofcom in the UK, EETT in Greece).

It is however important to ensure that the result of this reorganisation does not compromise the independence of the regulators. Independent, efficient, and adequately resourced regulators are critical to the effective functioning of the single market. The Commission will not hesitate to take action when restructuring jeopardises independence, regulatory capacity and efficiency of the authorities, thus compromising the single market.

The Commission is in contact with the Spanish authorities regarding this draft law to ensure, already at this stage, the independence of the new authority and to ascertain that it has sufficient powers to fulfil its functions under EC law. The Commission is committed to ensure compliance with EC law and will analyse the law in light of these requirements taking necessary measures, as appropriate.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010633/12
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Protocolo de Pesca entre Mauritania y la UE, y pesca de cefalópodos

La pesca de cefalópodos en Mauritania comenzó en 1965. Desde entonces, junto a la flota mauritana, han explotado esos recursos buques españoles, portugueses, coreanos, japoneses, libios y chinos. El nuevo Protocolo de Pesca UE-Mauritania, rubricado el 26 de julio por un período de dos años y con un coste para la UE de 70 millones de euros por año, a diferencia del anterior, no reconoce posibilidades de pesca al sector cefalopodero de la UE. Esto implica un gran impacto en Galicia (España).

La expulsión de la flota cefalopodera europea no se corresponde con el resultado del informe del Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), utilizado por la Comisión y que, después de evaluar la biomasa en 2008, aconsejaba una «reducción general del esfuerzo pesquero para todas las flotas que desarrollaban la pesquería» pero no una prohibición de capturas.

Recientes informes del sector y del Instituto Español de Oceanografía señalan una evolución positiva de los recursos de cefalópodos a partir de 2008. Además, el informe del STECF señala que la flota mauritana se compone de 900 canoas artesanales y 200 congeladores arrastreros de otras nacionalidades que han sido reabanderados bajo pabellón mauritano. La flota española de congeladores arrastreros es únicamente la octava parte de esta flota reabanderada. En una reciente reunión entre ONGs y representantes del sector pesquero de Mauritania se criticó la existencia de arrastreros chinos faenando con pabellón mauritano, fruto del acuerdo privado entre Mauritania y la compañía china Poly Hondone. En esa reunión se recomendó la no discriminación entre flotas extranjeras y la necesidad de transparencia en los acuerdos y en la actividad pesquera en aguas mauritanas.

1. ¿Va a revisar la Comisión el protocolo para que se reconozcan posibilidades de pesca a la flota europea?

2. ¿Puede confirmar la Comisión la existencia de informes sobre la favorable evolución de los recursos con posterioridad a 2008?

3. ¿Considera que el reabanderamiento como flota mauritana de buques extranjeros es una medida fraudulenta que deja sin efecto el acceso prioritario de las flotas de la Unión Europea a los excedentes de pesca conforme a lo que reconoce en el artículo 1.3 del Protocolo?

4. ¿Va a reclamar la Comisión transparencia sobre los acuerdos pesqueros, públicos o privados, en Mauritania?

5. ¿Va a aceptar la Comisión la discriminación de la flota europea en la captura de cefalópodos en aguas mauritanas?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de febrero de 2013)

En el nuevo Protocolo entre Mauritania y la UE, que se aplica provisionalmente por decisión del Consejo, no se asigna posibilidad de pesca alguna con respecto los cefalópodos, si bien se añade una cláusula de revisión en caso de que Mauritania decida ceder una parte de sus posibles excedentes a las flotas de la UE. La revisión de la cuota de cefalópodos requiere un dictamen científico positivo, aprobado por el Comité Científico Conjunto, una decisión de Mauritania por la que ceda sus excedentes a la UE y, por último, la asignación presupuestaria correspondiente.

La Comisión es consciente de que los cefalópodos son una población de ciclo de vida corto que puede incrementar su biomasa si se aplican medidas de ordenación adecuadas, tales como las propuestas en el último estudio del IEO. Por consiguiente, no se descarta que la población haya mejorado desde las negociaciones. Con todo, en tal caso quedaría por asignar parte del excedente a la UE.

En lo que se refiere a la transparencia en los acuerdos públicos o privados, el artículo 5 del Protocolo prevé la aplicación de condiciones técnicas y financieras idénticas a todos los buques extranjeros que faenan en aguas mauritanas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010633/12
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Fisheries Protocol between Mauritania and the EU and cephalopod fishing

Cephalopod fishing started in Mauritania in 1965. Since then, cephalopod stocks have been fished not only by the Mauritanian fleet but also by Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, Libyan and Chinese vessels. The new EU-Mauritania Fisheries Protocol, which was signed on 26 July for a two-year period and will cost the EU EUR 70 million per annum, does not — unlike the previous protocol — grant the EU cephalopod fisheries sector any fishing opportunities. This will have a major impact in Galicia (Spain).

This expulsion of the EU cephalopod fleet is at odds with the report by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) used by the Commission, which, after assessing the biomass in 2008, recommended an overall reduction in fishing effort by all fleets conducting fisheries operations, but not a catch ban.

Recent industry reports and reports by the Spanish Institute of Oceanography point to an upturn in cephalopod stocks since 2008. The STECF report also notes that the Mauritanian fleet consists of 900 artisanal canoes and of 200 freezer trawlers from other countries, now fishing under the Mauritanian flag. Spanish freezer trawlers account for just one eighth of that reflagged fleet. At a recent meeting between NGOs and representatives of the Mauritanian fisheries industry, criticisms were levelled at the fact that Chinese trawlers were operating under the Mauritanian flag on the basis of a private sector agreement between Mauritania and the Chinese company Poly Hondone. That meeting recommended that there should be no discrimination between foreign fleets and that the agreements, and fishing operations in Mauritanian waters, needed to be transparent.

1. Will the Commission review the Protocol in question so that the EU fleet is granted fishing opportunities?

2. Can the Commission corroborate the reports indicating an upturn in stocks from 2008 onwards?

3. Does it not consider the reflagging of foreign vessels as Mauritanian to be a fraudulent practice that undermines the priority access for EU fleets to fish surpluses granted under Article 1.3 of the Protocol?

4. Will the Commission call for transparency in both public and private fisheries agreements in Mauritania?

5. Is the Commission willing to accept this discrimination against the EU fleet as regards fishing for cephalopods in Mauritanian waters?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

In the new Protocol between Mauritania and the EU, and provisionally applied by the Council, cephalopods are mentioned with zero quota but with a review clause pending the decision of Mauritania to grant a part of its possible surplus to the EU fleets. A revision of the cephalopods quota requires first a positive scientific advice, endorsed by the Joint Scientific Committee, then a Mauritanian decision to grant this surplus to the EU, and finally a subsequent budget allocation.

The Commission is aware of the fact that cephalopods are a short-life-cycle stock and may increase their biomass if appropriate management measures, such as proposed in the last IEO study, are applied. It is therefore not excluded that stock has improved since the negotiation. However, in that case it would be up to allocate part of the surplus to the EU.

Concerning transparency in both public and private agreements, Article 5 of the Protocol provides for the application of identical technical and financial conditions for all foreign fleets in Mauritanian waters.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010634/12
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Transparencia en el proceso negociador del nuevo Acuerdo de Colaboración Pesquera y del nuevo Protocolo entre la Unión Europea y la República de Mauricio

Diversas organizaciones vinculadas al ámbito de la pesca en Mauricio han expresado su malestar por la manera con la que se han desarrollado las negociaciones que han dado lugar a la rúbrica del nuevo Acuerdo de Colaboración Pesquera y del nuevo Protocolo entre la Unión Europea y la República de Mauricio.

Alegan falta de transparencia y de consulta con los actores que hacen uso de los recursos marítimos y pesqueros mauricianos, a fin de asegurar que la sostenibilidad de los recursos y los intereses de todos los implicados están salvaguardados así como de evaluar el impacto social de la iniciativa.

Esta situación puede afectar a la imagen y credibilidad de la Unión Europea en la zona, interesada en generar confianza para desarrollar relaciones a largo plazo mutuamente beneficiosas.

El Convenio de Aarhus sobre acceso a la información, participación pública en la toma de decisiones y acceso a la justicia en materia de medio ambiente (y la pesca afecta a los recursos naturales), suscrito por la Unión Europea, junto con la normativa comunitaria derivada del mismo, suponen la puesta en práctica del concepto de la Administración pública abierta y transparente. Nuestros compromisos internacionales y comunitarios obligan a la transparencia y a la difusión de amplia información ambiental. El derecho a la información ambiental tiene un carácter público y forma parte de los principios democráticos.

¿Considera la Comisión que el proceso de negociación del nuevo Acuerdo de colaboración Pesquera y del nuevo Protocolo de Pesca entre la Unión Europea y la República de Mauricio se ha realizado en condiciones de transparencia y posibilitando la consulta de los interesados?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión otorga una gran importancia a la transparencia en cada una de las fases del proceso de negociación de los acuerdos de colaboración en el sector pesquero (ACP). Con vistas a ello, antes de llevar a cabo las negociaciones con los terceros países se efectúa una evaluación independiente externa, que brinda la oportunidad de consultar a todas las partes afectadas.

En lo que respecta a la información a los grupos interesados, cabe señalar que, en lo que concierne al caso específico del Acuerdo con Mauricio, la Delegación de la UE en este país informó a las organizaciones profesionales, antes de reanudar el proceso de negociación, acerca de las distintas cuestiones que estaban en juego. Durante la evaluación, el evaluador externo tomó contacto, entre otras personas, con el representante de los pescadores locales (*Syndicat des Pêcheurs*) a fin de mantener un franco debate. A nivel institucional, los servicios del Ministerio responsable de la pesca y del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores han estado perfectamente al corriente de los objetivos del ACP y se les remitió una copia de la evaluación *ex-ante*, que también figura publicada en el sitio web de la Comisión.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010634/12
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Transparency with regard to the negotiations on the new Fisheries Partnership Agreement and the new Protocol between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius

Various organisations linked to the fishing sector in Mauritius have expressed concern at the way in which negotiations have been conducted in the run-up to the signing of the new Fisheries Partnership Agreement and the new Protocol between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius.

They claim that there has been a lack of transparency and consultation with stakeholders who use Mauritian maritime and fishery resources, with the aim of ensuring that the sustainability of those resources and the interests of all those involved are safeguarded and assessing the social impact of the initiative.

This may affect the European Union's image and credibility in the area, at a time when the EU is concerned to build trust and develop mutually beneficial long-term relations.

Both the Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters (also relevant to fisheries, since natural resources are affected), which has been signed by the European Union, and Community legislation deriving from that Convention entail implementation of the notion of open and transparent public administration. Our international and Community commitments require transparency and the dissemination of comprehensive environmental information. The right to environmental information is a public right and a democratic principle.

Does the Commission believe that the process of negotiations on the new Fisheries Partnership Agreement and the new Fisheries Protocol between the European Union and the Republic of Mauritius was conducted transparently, providing an opportunity for those concerned to be consulted?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission attaches great importance to transparency in each step of the process of negotiation of Fishery partnership agreements (FPA). To this end, before negotiating with third countries an external independent evaluation is prepared, providing an opportunity for all those concerned to be consulted.

Concerning the information to the stakeholders, in the specific case of the agreement with Mauritius, the EU Delegation in Mauritius informed professional organisations of what was at stake before the negotiation process resumed. During evaluation, the external evaluator was also introduced, inter-alia, to the representative of the local fishermen (Syndicat des Pêcheurs) for an open discussion. At institutional level, the services of the Ministry in charge of fisheries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were also perfectly aware of the objectives of the FPA and were given a copy of the *ex-ante* evaluation study, which is also published on the Internet site of the Commission.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010635/12
a la Comisión
Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D) y Raimon Obiols (S&D)
(21 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Proyecto de Red Eléctrica Española (REE) en Santa Coloma de Gramenet

En su respuesta E-007253/2012, relativa al proyecto de Red Eléctrica Española (REE) para cambiar el cableado de 220 kV por un trazado de 400 kV en la línea eléctrica del tramo Sentmenat/Santa Coloma de Gramenet, la Comisión observaba una posible violación de la Directiva 2011/92/UE sobre evaluación de impacto ambiental y manifestaba su intención de solicitar mayor información al respecto a las autoridades españolas correspondientes. Teniendo en cuenta lo avanzado del proyecto y que la misma Directiva, en el punto 20 de su Anexo I, menciona específicamente a las líneas aéreas de electricidad con voltaje igual o superior a 220 Kv y longitud superior a 15 km como de obligada evaluación ambiental de conformidad con los artículos 5 a 10,

1. ¿Podría informar la Comisión de si ya ha recibido una respuesta por parte de las autoridades españolas? En caso negativo, ¿podría la Comisión detallar los plazos en los que espera recibir dicha respuesta?

2. Si las autoridades españolas correspondientes ya han enviado los datos solicitados, ¿podría la Comisión emitir una primera conclusión sobre si considera que hay indicios de violación de la Directiva 2011/92/UE y si, por lo tanto, debería iniciarse procedimiento de infracción?

Por otro lado, tal y como la Comisión ha indicado, existen también sospechas en este caso de la vulneración de los derechos a la información medioambiental y a los procesos de participación del público en la toma de decisiones. En este sentido, el proyecto de REE en Santa Coloma podría estar vulnerando no sólo el artículo 6 de la directiva de impacto sino asimismo las disposiciones que la UE asumió con la ratificación del Convenio de Aarhus sobre acceso a la información, participación de los ciudadanos y acceso a la justicia (Decisión 2005/370/CE), completados por la Directiva 2003/35/CE sobre participación del público en la elaboración de planes y programas relacionados con el medio ambiente, y la Directiva 2003/4/CE relativa al acceso del público a la información medioambiental.

3. ¿Ha tenido también en cuenta la Comisión el cumplimiento de los preceptos de información y participación del público en su requerimiento de información a las autoridades españolas?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(23 de enero de 2013)

Los servicios de la Comisión se han puesto en contacto con las autoridades españolas, en el marco de una investigación, para pedirles más información sobre el proyecto de Red Eléctrica de España. La respuesta de las autoridades, que se espera recibir en enero de 2013, se examinará con arreglo al Derecho medioambiental de la UE, atendiendo a la Directiva de evaluación del impacto (Directiva 2011/92/UE), que, entre otras disposiciones, contiene las del Convenio de Aarhus ([1]). La Directiva 2003/4/CE ([2]) no es aplicable en este contexto.

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 13 de diciembre de 2011, texto codificado de la Directiva 85/337/CEE, relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente, modificada por las Directivas 97/11/CE, 2003/35/CE y 2009/31/CE (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012).

([2]) Directiva 2003/4/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 28 de enero de 2003, relativa al acceso del público a la información medioambiental y por la que se deroga la Directiva 90/313/CEE del Consejo (DO L 41 de 14.2.2003).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010635/12
to the Commission
Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D) and Raimon Obiols (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Plans by Red Eléctrica Española (REE) in Santa Coloma de Gramenet

In its answer E-007253/2012 regarding Red Eléctrica Española's (REE) plans to upgrade a section of power lines between Sentmenat and Santa Coloma de Gramenet from 220 kV to 400 kV, the Commission picked up on a possible infringement of Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, and it also expressed its intention to request further information on this matter from the competent Spanish authorities. Given the advanced stage that the plans have reached and that in point 20 of Annex I to Directive 2011/92/EU specific reference is made to the requirement for overhead electrical power lines with a voltage of 220 kV or more and a length of more than 15 km to undergo an obligatory assessment in accordance with Articles 5 to 10,

1. Can the Commission specify whether it has already received a response from the Spanish authorities? If it has not, can the Commission give details about the time frame within which it expects to receive a response?

2. If the competent Spanish authorities have already supplied the requested information, can the Commission deliver its initial conclusion on whether it considers there to be evidence of a breach of Directive 2011/92/EU, and on whether it should initiate infringement proceedings accordingly?

In addition, as the Commission has indicated, there are also doubts about whether the right of access to environmental information and the right of public participation in decision-making have been infringed. In this respect, REE's plans in Santa Coloma could be in breach of not only Article 6 of the environmental impact assessment directive, but also of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, and of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information.

3. Has the Commission also taken into account the fulfilment or otherwise of requirements relating to access to information and public participation when requesting information from the Spanish authorities?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(23 janvier 2013)

Dans le cadre d'une investigation, les services de la Commission ont contacté les autorités espagnoles pour obtenir des informations supplémentaires sur le projet de Red Eléctrica de España. La réponse des autorités espagnoles, qui est attendue en janvier 2013, sera examinée à la lumière du droit environnemental de l'UE, en tenant compte de la directive d'évaluation d'impact environnemental 2011/92/UE, qui inclut notamment les dispositions de la Convention d'Aarhus ([1]). La directive 2003/4/CE ([2]) n'est pas d'application dans ce contexte.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/UE du Parlement européen et du Conseil, du 13 décembre 2011, texte codifié de la directive 85/337/CEE, concernant l'évaluation des incidences de certains projets publics et privés sur l'environnement, telle que modifiée par les directives 97/11/CE, 2003/35/CE et 2009/31/CE, JO L 26 du 28.1.2012.

([2]) Directive 2003/4/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil, du 28 janvier 2003, concernant l'accès du public à l'information en matière d'environnement et abrogeant la directive 90/313/CEE du Conseil, JO L 41 du 14.2.2003.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010636/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(21 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Σημαντική αύξηση του διοξειδίου του άνθρακα και των σταθμών καύσης άνθρακα σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο

Σύμφωνα με εκτιμήσεις ([1]) του Διεθνή Οργανισμού Ενέργειας οι εκπομπές διοξειδίου του άνθρακα από την καύση ορυκτών καυσίμων σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο ανήλθαν στο ιστορικά υψηλό επίπεδο των 31,6 γιγατόνων το 2011, σημειώνοντας αύξηση 3,2% σε σχέση με το 2010. Οι εκπομπές αυτές οφείλονταν πρωτίστως στην καύση άνθρακα σε ποσοστό 45%. Παράλληλα, μελέτη ([2]) του World Meteorological Organization διατυπώνει το ίδιο συμπέρασμα, τονίζοντας πως ο πλανήτης αρχίζει πλέον να χάνει την ικανότητα απορρόφησης του πλεονάζοντος διοξειδίου του άνθρακα. Ωστόσο, στη μελέτη «Global Coal Risk Assessment» που δημοσίευσε το World Resources Institute (WRI) αναφέρεται πως προετοιμάζεται η κατασκευή περίπου 1 200 σταθμών ηλεκτροπαραγωγής με καύση άνθρακα σε όλο τον κόσμο, μικρός αριθμός εκ των οποίων θα κατασκευαστεί και στην ευρωπαϊκή επικράτεια. Δεδομένου ότι η ΕΕ κινείται στο πλαίσιο επίτευξης των στόχων για τη μείωση των εκπομπών αερίων του θερμοκηπίου έως το 2020 ([3]) και δεδομένης της πρόθεσης της ΕΕ να συνεχίσει να ανταποκρίνεται στην αυξημένη ζήτηση για ενέργεια ([4]) ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

1. Πως αντιμετωπίζει τα νέα αυτά δεδομένα; Θεωρεί πως θέτουν την ανάγκη αναθεώρησης των πολιτικών για τη μείωση των εκπομπών αερίων σε ευρωπαϊκό και διεθνές επίπεδο;

2. Πως αντιμετωπίζει τη σημαντική αύξηση των σταθμών καύσης σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο; Διαθέτει εκτιμήσεις για τις επιπτώσεις όσον αφορά την παγκόσμια προσπάθεια μείωσης των εκπομπών αερίων του θερμοκηπίου;

3. Η κατασκευή των νέων σταθμών στην ευρωπαϊκή επικράτεια σχετίζεται με την αντικατάσταση υφιστάμενων σταθμών; Σε ποιο πλαίσιο προγραμματισμού κινείται η κατασκευή τους;

4. Συμμερίζεται την άποψη ([5]) της υπεύθυνης της μελέτης του WRI ότι το γεγονός της κατασκευής νέων σταθμών «μας οδηγεί σε μία πραγματικά επικίνδυνη τροχιά»; Αν ναι, πως σκοπεύει να αντιδράσει;

Απάντηση της κ. Hedegaard εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(31 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Τα στοιχεία αυτά είναι παρόμοια με πρόσφατες προβολές του Διεθνούς Οργανισμού Ενέργειας (ΔΟΕ-IEA) στις Παγκόσμιες Ενεργειακές Προοπτικές για το 2012 (World Energy Outlook 2012) αναφορικά με το δυναμικό που θα προκύψει από την κατασκευή νέων μονάδων ηλεκτροπαραγωγής με καύση άνθρακα έως και το 2035 εάν δεν ληφθούν πρόσθετα μέτρα σε παγκόσμια κλίμακα, επιπλέον των ήδη προβλεπομένων. Μέρος του νέου δυναμικού θα αντικαταστήσει υφιστάμενο δυναμικό, συνολικά, όμως, θα υπάρξει συνεχής αύξηση της ηλεκτροπαραγωγής με καύση άνθρακα. Ο ΔΟΕ συνεπέρανε ότι αυτό αντιστοιχεί σε πιθανότητα 50% περιορισμού της μακροπρόθεσμης μέσης αύξησης της θερμοκρασίας του πλανήτη σε 3,6 °C σε σχέση με τα επίπεδα της προβιομηχανικής εποχής. Το αποτέλεσμα αυτό υπολείπεται σαφώς του στόχου των 2 °C και συνεπώς απαιτούνται συνεχείς προσπάθειες για περαιτέρω μείωση των εκπομπών.

Στην ΕΕ προτείνεται συνολική δυναμικότητα περίπου 50 gigawatts και αφορά σταθμούς που λειτουργούν με καύση άνθρακα, υπό μελέτη ή κατασκευή, εκ των οποίων εκτιμώμενη δυναμικότητα 11 gigawatt βρίσκεται στη Γερμανία. Παράλληλα, σχεδιάζεται η απόσυρση δυναμικότητας περίπου 34 gigawatts από το 2013 έως το 2015. Το πλαίσιο σχεδιασμού νέων σταθμών στα περισσότερα κράτη μέλη συνήθως υπερβαίνει την πενταετία.

Όλες οι εγκαταστάσεις ηλεκτροπαραγωγής εντός της ΕΕ υπάγονται στο σύστημα εμπορίας εκπομπών, βάσει του οποίου ορίζεται ανώτατο όριο για τις συνολικές εκπομπές το οποίο φθίνει με ετήσιο ρυθμό 1,74%. Σε διεθνές επίπεδο, οι μη βιώσιμες αυτές τάσεις θα πρέπει να αναστραφούν στο πλαίσιο του προσεχούς γύρου διαπραγματεύσεων για την κλιματική αλλαγή, που πρόκειται να ολοκληρωθούν το 2015.

([1]) http://www.iea.org/newsroomandevents/news/2012/may/name,27216,en.html
([2]) http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press_releases/pr_965_en.html
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0112:FIN:EN:PDF.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/star/index_en.cfm?p=ss-comtes&item=Infocentre&artid=26753.
([5]) http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/nov/20/coal-plants-world-resources-institute.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010636/12
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Considerable increase in carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants at global level

According to estimates ([1]) by the International Energy Agency, carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel consumption at global level reached a record high of 31.6 gigatonnes in 2011, a 3.2% increase compared with 2010. These emissions are caused primarily (45%) by coal consumption. At the same time, a study ([2]) by the World Meteorological Organisation has arrived at the same conclusion, emphasising that the planet is now starting to lose the ability to absorb the surplus carbon dioxide. However, the Global Coal Risk Assessment published by the World Resources Institute (W.R.I.) notes that there are plans to construct approximately 1 200 coal-fired power plants throughout the world, a small number of which will be constructed within Europe. Given that the EU is working to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 ([3]) and given the intention of the EU to continue to respond to rising energy demand ([4]), will the Council say:

1. What is its response to these data? Does it consider that they indicate the need for a policy review, in order to reduce emissions at European and international level?

2. What is its response to the considerable increase in combustion plants at global level? Does it have estimates of the impact on global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

3. Are new plants being constructed within Europe to replace existing plants? What is the planning framework for their construction?

4. Does it share the view ([5]) expressed in the W.R.I. study that the construction of new plants 'would put us on a really dangerous trajectory'? If so, how does it intend to react?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

This data is similar to recent projections in the World Energy Outlook 2012 by the International Energy Agency (IEA) regarding the amount of newly built coal capacity between now and 2035 if no additional action is undertaken globally compared to measures foreseen at present. Part of this newly installed capacity would replace existing capacity, but overall it would result in a continued increase of electricity production with coal. The IEA concluded that this would correspond to a 50% probability of limiting the long term average global temperature increase to 3.6 °C relative to pre-industrial levels. This is clearly not in line with the 2C objective, and therefore continued efforts are needed to further reduce emissions.

In the EU a total capacity of circa 50 gigawatts of coal fired power plants are proposed, being developped or already under construction. On the other hand, a capacity of approximatly 34 gigawatts is planned for retirement in the period of 2013 to 2015. The planning framework for new plants in most Member States usually is longer than five years.

Within the EU, all power installations fall under the EU emissions trading system where total emissions are capped and declining at a rate of 1.74% per year. At the international level, these unsustainable trends will have to be reversed as part of the next round of climate change negotiations to be completed in 2015.

([1]) http://www.iea.org/newsroomandevents/news/2012/may/name,27216,en.html
([2]) http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/press_releases/pr_965_en.html
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0112:FIN:EN:PDF.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/infocentre/article_en.cfm?id=/research/star/index_en.cfm?p=ss-comtes&item=Infocentre&artid=26753.
([5]) http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/nov/20/coal-plants-world-resources-institute.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010637/12
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Bird-trapping in Cyprus

What is the Commission's assessment of the degree to which migratory birds are still being illegally trapped in Cyprus? How does this compare with the situation at the time of the country's accession to the European Union, and what further action is being taken to bring the trapping to an end?

Is the Commission able to make an assessment of the degree to which trapping takes place on the territory of the British Sovereign Bases, which are not part of the European Union, and is the Commission content with the degree of cooperation being provided by the police and administration of the Sovereign Bases?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

On the basis of the information provided by the national authorities on their monitoring of illegal trapping of birds and the enforcement efforts deployed in Cyprus, the Commission acknowledges a significant decrease of the problem since the country's accession to the EU. However, recent data shows an alarming upward trend of trapping practices. The Commission is concerned that the number of birds affected by illegal practices is still extremely high in Cyprus and in the Sovereign British Areas (SBA).

The Cypriot and UK authorities have informed the Commission of some concrete measures taken to curb the problem. These include the well-established collaboration between the Cypriot and the SBA administration, a better cooperation with stakeholders, more effective controls and sanctions, and awareness-raising. The Commission is of the opinion that these measures go in the right direction but will assess the forthcoming report containing autumn 2012 monitoring data on trapping activities before determining whether further action is needed.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010638/12
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: CO_2-related trade measures

What is the Commission doing to assess the development of instruments that might be used to ensure that CO_2-related factors are taken into account when determining the terms of trade with countries outside the European Union?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

Global trade is a key driver for growth and jobs, and an important avenue for moving to a low-carbon economy. Trade liberalisation in energy efficient and climate friendly goods and services can bring an important contribution to the fight against climate change by fostering the deployment of low emission technologies. The EU is pursuing this both through the multilateral avenue (e.g. in the WTO) as well as through bilateral free trade agreements.

In order to ensure that trade and climate policies inter-act in a mutually supportive manner, trade agreements recently concluded by the EU contain specific provisions on trade and sustainable development, including the promotion of trade in climate-friendly products and technologies. They are also confirming the sovereign right of Parties to take legislative and regulatory measures necessary to achieve climate change related objectives on the basis of the level of protection that they deem appropriate. The EU also aims at achieving in its trade agreements early liberalisation of green goods, including those that can be described as 'climate-friendly'.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010639/12
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Reduction in potato varieties

1. Can the Commission confirm that EC regulations requiring the licensing of potato varieties, at some expense, have led to a reduction in the range of seed potatoes available for sale, including older 'heritage' varieties?

2. Has the Commission made any assessment of the number of varieties that may have disappeared from sale?

3. Does the Commission plan to propose changes to the current arrangements so as to maintain the diversity of potato varieties?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

1. The Commission cannot confirm that the EU legislation regulating the registration and certification of seed potatoes ([1]) has led to a reduction in the number of seed potato varieties (including conservation varieties) available on the market. The number of potato varieties in the Common Catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species has increased from 815 in 2003 to 1548 in 2012. The latter number includes 41 conservation potato varieties that can be listed as such since 2010 ([2]).

2. The Commission has not undertaken any study to assess the number of potato varieties that may have disappeared from the market. The Commission can only state that since 2000 approximately 450 potato varieties were deleted from the Common Catalogue.

3. The legislation on the marketing of plant reproductive material is currently under review.

([1]) Council Directive 2002/56/EC, OJ L 193, 20.7.2002, p. 60.
([2]) Commission Directive 2008/62/EC, OJ L 162, 21.6.2008, p. 13.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010640/12
à la Commission
Anne Delvaux (PPE)
(21 novembre 2012)

Objet: Interdiction de l'expérimentation animale dans les cosmétiques

La directive «cosmétique» prévoit un cadre réglementaire dans le but d'éliminer progressivement l'expérimentation animale. Elle établit une interdiction d'expérimentation sur les animaux des produits cosmétiques finis et des ingrédients cosmétiques (interdiction d'expérimentation), et une interdiction de mise sur le marché de l'Union européenne, des produits et des ingrédients cosmétiques inclus dans les produits cosmétiques qui ont été expérimentés sur des animaux (interdiction de commercialisation).

L'interdiction d'expérimentation sur les animaux des produits cosmétiques finis s'applique depuis le 11 septembre 2004, alors que l'interdiction d'expérimentation des ingrédients ou de combinaison d'ingrédients s'appliquera graduellement dès que des méthodes alternatives auront été validées et adoptées. Toutefois, pour ce dernier cas, la directive prévoit une date limite maximale de 6 ans après l'entrée en vigueur de la directive, c'est-à-dire le 11 mars 2009, pour la fin des expérimentations sur les animaux, indépendamment de la disponibilité de méthodes alternatives aux expérimentations sur les animaux.

L'interdiction de commercialisation s'appliquera graduellement dès que les méthodes alternatives auront été validées et adoptées dans la législation de l'UE avec le respect dû au processus de validation de l'OCDE. Cette interdiction de commercialisation sera introduite au plus tard 6 ans après l'entrée en vigueur de la directive, c'est-à-dire le 11 mars 2009, pour tous les effets sur la santé humaine, à l'exception de la toxicité des doses répétées, de la toxicité pour la reproduction et de la toxicocinétique. Pour ces effets spécifiques sur la santé, une échéance de 10 ans après l'entrée en vigueur de la directive est prévue, c'est-à-dire le 11 mars 2013, indépendamment de la disponibilité des méthodes alternatives aux expérimentations sur les animaux.

La Commission étudie actuellement l'*effet qu'aura l'entrée en vigueur de l'interdiction en 2013 en l'absence de méthodes de substitution et a annoncé qu'elle déciderait de la marche à suivre sur la base de l'évaluation d'impact complète*.

Un report de l'échéance de 2013 pour l'entrée en vigueur de l'interdiction serait inacceptable et injustifiable à mes yeux. Où en est l'*évaluation de la Commission? Comment se positionne le nouveau commissaire sur cette question?*

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(15 janvier 2013)

La Commission renvoie l'auteur de la question aux réponses qu'elle a données à de précédentes questions sur ce sujet, dont les questions E-005922/2012 et E-007793/2012 et, plus récemment, la question E-009629/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010640/12
to the Commission
Anne Delvaux (PPE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Ban on animal testing of cosmetic products

The Cosmetics Directive provides a regulatory framework for the phasing-out of animal testing. It establishes a ban on testing finished cosmetic products and cosmetic ingredients on animals (testing ban) and a ban on marketing in the European Union finished cosmetic products and ingredients included in cosmetic products which were tested on animals (marketing ban).

The animal testing ban on finished cosmetic products has applied since 11 September 2004; the testing ban on ingredients or combinations of ingredients will apply step by step as alternative methods are validated and adopted. However, in the latter case the directive provides for a cut-off date of six years after entry into force of the directive, i.e. 11 March 2009, for an end to animal testing, irrespective of the availability of alternative non-animal tests.

The marketing ban will apply step by step as alternative methods are validated and adopted in EU legislation with due regard to the OECD validation process. This marketing ban was to be introduced within a maximum of six years after the entry into force of the directive, i.e. by 11 March 2009, for all human health effects with the exception of repeated-dose toxicity, reproductive toxicity and toxicokinetics. For these specific health effects a maximum cut-off date of 10 years after entry into force of the directive, i.e. 11 March 2013, applies, irrespective of the availability of alternative non-animal tests.

The Commission is currently studying the effects which will ensue if the ban comes into force in 2013 without alternative methods having been developed, and has announced that it will decide on the approach to adopt on the basis of a full impact assessment.

Postponing the 2013 deadline for entry into force of the ban would in my view be unacceptable and unjustifiable. How far has the Commission got with its assessment? What is the new Commissioner's position on this issue?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to earlier answers to questions in relation to this issue, notably E-005922/2012, E-007793/2012 and most recently E-009629/2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-010641/12
alla Commissione
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Trasferimenti intra-UE e validità della patente di guida conseguita in uno Stato membro

Considerato che sempre più di frequente i cittadini di uno Stato membro dell'UE si spostano per ragioni di lavoro e di vita, anche per periodi di pochi anni, all'interno dell'Unione europea, in altri Stati membri;

considerato che, ai sensi della normativa vigente, per gli stessi vige l'obbligo di acquisire la patente dello Stato membro UE di trasferimento, con evidenti fastidi e costi legati all'adempimento delle pratiche burocratiche di volta in volta richieste dallo Stato di trasferimento;

ritiene la Commissione opportuno emanare una norma atta a consentire ai cittadini dell'UE di usare la patente di guida conseguita in uno Stato membro anche in qualunque altro Stato membro, indipendentemente dalla residenza e dagli spostamenti della stessa?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(3 gennaio 2013)

La legislazione dell'Unione europea sulle patenti di guida ([1]) non impone ai cittadini di cambiare la patente di guida quando si trasferiscono in un altro Stato membro, in quanto le patenti di guida sono reciprocamente riconosciute da tutti gli Stati membri. Quando una patente di guida scade, il rinnovo può avvenire nello Stato membro in cui una persona normalmente risiede.

([1]) Direttiva 2006/126/CE del Parlamento e del Consiglio concernente la patente di guida, GU L 403 del 30.12.2006, pag. 18.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010641/12
to the Commission
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Intra-EU transfers and validity of driving licences obtained in a Member State

Citizens of EU Member States increasingly move to other EU Member States, for work and private reasons, even for periods of just a few years.

Under the rules in force, those citizens are obliged to acquire the driving licence of the EU Member State to which they move. This obviously causes inconvenience and involves costs relating to the administrative formalities involved, which vary from one Member State to the next.

Does the Commission not agree that legislation should be adopted to allow EU citizens to use driving licences obtained in one Member State in all other Member States too, irrespective of any changes of residency?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(3 January 2013)

The Union legislation on driving licences ([1]) does not require that citizens exchange their driving licence when moving to another Member State. Driving licences shall be mutually recognised by all Member States. Once a driving licence expires, its renewal can take place in the Member State of normal residency.

([1]) Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on driving licences, OJ L 403, 30.12.2006, p. 18.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010642/12
alla Commissione
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Divieto di consumo dell'intestino di bovini: conseguenze sul «sugo di pajata»

Il sugo «alla pajata» è una specialità tipica della cucina popolare romana, usato per condire i rigatoni, fatto con le frattaglie del vitello.

Con la diffusione dell'encefalopatia spongiforme (BSE), malattia che colpisce i bovini e che è comunemente nota come «sindrome della mucca pazza», il Parlamento e il Consiglio hanno adottato il regolamento (CE) n. 999/2001 che, per ridurre il rischio di contagio nell'uomo, vieta una serie di prodotti derivanti dai bovini, tra i quali l'intestino. Dal 2001 ad oggi, con la progressiva scomparsa dell'emergenza della «mucca pazza», l'elenco dei prodotti vietati è stato più volte rivisto: il metodo adottato solitamente è stato quello di innalzare il limite di età dell'animale macellato, in modo da poter utilizzare le parti provenienti da esemplari giovani.

Considerato che:

— il sugo di pajata è un piatto tipico della cucina romana e che, da tempo, i romani ne reclamano la «restituzione»;

— il sugo di pajata si prepara con l'intestino tenue del vitellino da latte (quindi un esemplare giovane di bovino);

— si è già provveduto ad innalzare il limite di età per l'uso di molte altre parti del bovino (vedi il caso della bistecca alla fiorentina — regolamento (CE) n. 357/2008), mentre per l'intestino permane ancora un divieto totale;

si chiede alla Commissione:

1. se è possibile modificare l'attuale regolamento sull'uso e il consumo dell'intestino dei bovini, innalzando il limite d'età dell'animale per la rimozione degli intestini;

2. se, in caso ciò non fosse possibile, esiste qualche altro rimedio che consenta di restituire ai romani il prelibato sugo alla pajata.

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

I materiali specifici a rischio (SRM) sono gli organi che si ritiene ospitino l'infettività in un animale affetto da encefalopatia spongiforme bovina (BSE). Sulla base dei risultati e delle raccomandazioni di diversi pareri scientifici adottati dal Comitato scientifico direttivo tra il dicembre 1997 e il giugno 2001, gli intestini, dal duodeno al retto e il mesentere dei bovini di tutte le età sono attualmente inclusi nell'elenco dei SRM di cui al regolamento (CE) n. 999/2001 ([1]) poiché contengono cellule e tessuti che possono ospitare l'infettività della BSE. Di conseguenza, tali tessuti devono essere rimossi dalla filiera dei mangimi e degli alimenti per proteggere la salute del pubblico e degli animali dal rischio di BSE.

Tra il 2007 e il 2011 l'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare (EFSA) ha adottato tre pareri scientifici relativi alla valutazione quantitativa del rischio di BSE negli intestini dei bovini. Tali pareri sono ripetutamente giunti alla conclusione che non era possibile ritenere negligibile l'esposizione umana ai patogeni contenuti negli intestini di bovini anche in caso di esclusione dell'ileo. Inoltre, l'EFSA ha ribadito la necessità di rafforzare la metodologia degli attuali studi quantitativi e ha formulato diverse raccomandazioni sui soggetti da affrontare negli studi futuri relativi a tale problematica.

Considerato quanto sopra, la Commissione ha chiesto all'EFSA di riesaminare sul piano quantitativo il rischio di BSE derivante dagli intestini bovini, freschi o insaccati. Tale nuova valutazione si baserà su un aggiornamento dei modelli quantitativi esistenti e terrà conto dei nuovi dati scientifici in tema di infettività dei tessuti bovini e dei dati attuali sulla prevalenza della BSE nell'UE.

([1]) GU L 147 del 31.05.2001, pag. 1.

Il parere finale dell'EFSA dovrebbe essere disponibile entro il febbraio 2014 e servire da base per un'eventuale revisione delle regole unionali in tema di SRM.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010642/12
to the Commission
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Ban on consumption of bovine intestines: impact for sugo di pajata (pajata sauce)

Pajata sauce is a speciality of traditional Roman cuisine, used to flavour rigatoni and made from veal offal.

Following the spread of spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), which affects bovines and is commonly known as mad cow disease, the Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 which, to reduce the risk of humans being affected by it, bans a range of products derived from bovines, including intestine. From 2001 to the present, with the gradual disappearance of mad cow disease, the list of banned products has been revised several times. The method usually adopted has been to raise the age limit for slaughter, allowing use of parts coming from animals younger than that limit.

Taking into account that:

— *pajata* sauce is a typical Roman dish, and Romans have for some time been asking for it to be brought back;

— *pajata* sauce is made from the small intestine of suckling calf (thus, young bovine);

— the age limit for use of many other bovine parts has already been raised (see the case of *bistecca alla fiorentina* — Regulation (EC) No 357/2008), while for intestine there is still a total ban;

will the Commission say:

1. if the current Regulation on the use and consumption of bovine intestine can be amended to raise the age limit for removal of the animal's intestine;

2. failing that, if there is any other way to allow delicious *pajata* sauce to be restored to the dinner-tables of Rome?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

Specified Risk Materials (SRM) are the organs considered to harbour the infectivity in an animal affected by Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Based on the results and recommendations of different scientific opinions adopted by the Scientific Steering Committee between December 1997 and June 2001, the intestines from the duodenum to the rectum and the mesentery of bovine animals of all ages are currently included in the list of SRM as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 ([1]) because they contain cells and tissues that may harbour BSE infectivity. Consequently, these tissues must be removed from the food and feed chain to protect public and animal health against the risk of BSE.

Between 2007 and 2011, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) adopted three scientific opinions related to quantitative assessments of BSE risk in bovine intestines. These opinions consistently concluded that it was not possible to consider as negligible the human exposure from bovine intestines, even when the ileum was excluded. Moreover, EFSA emphasised the need to strengthen the methodology of existing quantitative studies and a number of recommendations were made on the topics that should be addressed in future studies on the subject.

In view of the above, the Commission has requested EFSA to re-assess quantitatively the BSE risk posed by bovine intestines, fresh or after processing into casings. This assessment will be based on an update of existing quantitative models and will take into account any new scientific data available on infectivity of bovine tissues and the current data prevalence as regards BSE in EU.

The final EFSA opinion should be available in February 2014 at the latest and will serve as a basis for a possible revision of EU SRM rules.

([1]) OJ 147/1, 31.5.2001.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010643/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Violazioni del diritto umanitario da parte del governo sudanese nelle regioni in guerra del Kordofan meridionale

Diverse fonti riportano la notizia che il governo sudanese starebbe perpetrando dei comportamenti che violano i più basilari diritti umani nelle zone in guerra del Kordofan meridionale, attualmente controllate dal movimento di liberazione *SPLM-North*. In particolare, si afferma che il governo starebbe deliberatamente affamando la popolazione, circa 400 000 persone, come tattica di guerra, al fine di provocare una ribellione della stessa contro il movimento *SPLM-North*.

Considerando che il governo nega l'esistenza del problema e impedisce la fornitura di aiuti umanitari da parte della comunità internazionale;

considerando che il 6 novembre il governo sudanese ha annunciato di aver dichiarato «persona non grata» un'inviata delle Nazioni Unite incaricata di investigare sulla situazione dei diritti umani;

considerando il comunicato ufficiale rilasciato dal Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante Catherine Ashton il 4 agosto scorso, in cui si dichiarava lieta della decisione del governo del Sudan ad acconsentire a un intervento di assistenza umanitaria nelle zone di conflitto, indicando la necessità di attuare tale accordo in tempi rapidi;

considerando che l'Unione europea ha stanziato, nel solo 2012, aiuti per 127 milioni di euro per il Sudan e il Sud Sudan;

considerando che il Sudan ha ratificato vari strumenti internazionali e regionali sui diritti umani, tra cui la Carta africana dei diritti dell'uomo e dei popoli;

Si chiede al Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante:

— quali iniziative ha intenzione di intraprendere;

— con quale livello di priorità l'Unione europea farà pressioni sul governo sudanese per far sì che queste violazioni dei diritti umani finiscano.

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

L'AR/VP nutre serie preoccupazioni per il conflitto in corso nel Kordofan meridionale e nello Stato del Nilo azzurro in Sudan e per le conseguenze sui diritti umani e a livello umanitario. A causa delle restrizioni all'accesso, poste principalmente dal governo del Sudan, non è ancora stato possibile consegnare aiuti umanitari nelle zone controllate dal Movimento per la liberazione del popolo sudanese — nord (SPLM/N). Eppure, i civili continuano a subire le penose conseguenze dei costanti scontri e dell'insicurezza, dovendo far fronte a gravi carenze alimentari e alla mancanza di un'assistenza sanitaria adeguata e di altri servizi di base.

L'AR/VP ha sostenuto attivamente il gruppo tripartito (UA, Lega araba e ONU) e i protocolli d'intesa che quest'ultimo ha sottoscritto con il governo e con il movimento SPLM/N, rispettivamente il 4 e il 5 agosto 2012, per permettere la consegna degli aiuti umanitari. Il 27 settembre 2012, data la mancata attuazione dei protocolli, l'AR/VP ha chiesto a entrambe le parti di consentire alle agenzie internazionali di fornire assistenza ai civili coinvolti nei conflitti. Inoltre, l'AR/VP ha esortato le parti ad avviare immediatamente e senza condizioni colloqui diretti per raggiungere un accordo sulla cessazione delle ostilità e trovare una soluzione politica duratura al conflitto. L'UE incita i membri dell'Unione africana, della Lega araba e del Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU a continuare a trasmettere questo messaggio, ottenendo risultati positivi come il comunicato del Consiglio per la pace e la sicurezza dell'UA del 24 ottobre 2012. L'UE continuerà le proprie iniziative diplomatiche, intervenendo subito prima dell'elaborazione da parte del Consiglio per la pace e la sicurezza dell'UA di una relazione globale sui rapporti tra il Sudan e il Sud Sudan, da presentare al Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU entro la fine del 2012.

L'UE ha inoltre deciso di subordinare l'assegnazione al Sudan di ulteriori aiuti economici e per lo sviluppo alla piena attuazione della tabella di marcia dell'Unione africana del 24 aprile 2012 e della risoluzione 2046 (2012) del Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU (UNSCR).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010643/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights violations by the Sudanese Government in the areas at war in Southern Kordofan

According to a number of reports, the Sudanese Government is perpetrating acts which violate the most fundamental human rights in the areas at war in Southern Kordofan, which is currently controlled by the SPLM-North liberation movement. In particular, the Government is said to be deliberately starving the population, some 400 000 people, as a tactic of war, to induce them to rebel against the SPLM-North movement.

Considering that the Government denies the existence of the problem and is preventing the international community from delivering humanitarian aid;

considering that on 6 November the Sudanese Government announced that it had declared a UN official investigating the human rights situation 'persona non-grata';

in view of the official statement released by High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton on 4 August 2012, in which she welcomed the Government of Sudan's decision to agree to an intervention to deliver humanitarian assistance to the areas affected by the conflict, and stressed the need to implement the agreement rapidly;

considering that, in 2012 alone, the European Union has allocated EUR 127 million in aid to Sudan and South Sudan;

considering that Sudan has ratified a number of international and regional instruments on human rights, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;

the High Representative/Vice-President is asked to state:

— what initiatives she intends to take;

— what priority the European Union will give to putting pressure on the Sudanese Government to ensure that these human rights violations cease.

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

The HR/VP is very worried about the conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile State, in Sudan, and its human rights and humanitarian consequences. Because of access restrictions, mainly due to the Government of Sudan, it has so far not been possible to deliver humanitarian assistance to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM/N) controlled areas. However, civilians are continuing to suffer immensely from the ongoing fighting and insecurity, experiencing serious food shortages and lack of adequate healthcare and other basic services.

The HR/VP actively supported the 'Tripartite Group' (AU, Arab League and UN) and the Memoranda of Understanding they signed with the Government and SPLM/N resp. on 4/5 August 2012 aiming at delivering humanitarian assistance. Due to non-implementation, on 27 September 2012, the HR/VP called on both parties to allow international humanitarian agencies to deliver assistance to civilians caught up in the conflict. The HR/VP has also urged them to enter immediately and unconditionally into direct talks to agree on a cessation of hostilities and to find a lasting political solution to the conflict. The EU lobbies members of the AU, Arab League and UN Security Council to continue impressing this message, with positive results such as the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Communiqué of 24 October 2012. The EU will continue with diplomatic efforts, most immediately ahead of the preparation by the AU PSC of a comprehensive report on relations between Sudan and South Sudan to be submitted to the UN Security Council before the end of 2012.

Also, the EU has conditioned the allocation of further EU economic and developmental support to Sudan to full implementation of the AU Roadmap of 24 April 2012 and UN Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 2046(2012).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010644/12
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: In Bosnia carceri piene e centinaia di condannati in libertà

Il ministro della Giustizia bosniaco, Zoran Mikulic, ha rivelato a testate giornalistiche locali che centinaia di responsabili di reati di vario tipo, con condanne definitive, sono ancora in libertà perché nelle carceri della Federazione BiH (entità a maggioranza croato-musulmana di Bosnia) non ci sono posti liberi. Secondo i dati del ministero della Giustizia, i detenuti che stanno scontando la pena sono 1 788, compresi coloro che sono agli arresti domiciliari.

Il ministro sostiene inoltre che, nonostante quanto sopra e sebbene esista la possibilità di sostituire la reclusione con multe in denaro per pene inferiori a 12 mesi, i condannati che aspettano l'esecuzione della pena sono 859. Tra questi, ci sono 58 condannati con turbe psichiche che hanno commesso il reato in condizioni di infermità mentale e per i quali non esistono strutture sanitarie adeguate. Un altro grave problema è rappresentato dal fatto che 244 persone con condanna definitiva sono latitanti.

La Commissione europea, nella sua comunicazione del 10 ottobre 2012 dal titolo «Strategia di allargamento e sfide principali per il periodo 2012-2013» (COM(2012)0600), sostiene che «si è fatto qualche passo avanti per quanto riguarda le condizioni nelle carceri. La nuova struttura psichiatrica di Sokolac non è ancora operativa. Occorre ancora intraprendere una riforma globale del sistema carcerario e adottare la legge quadro sul gratuito patrocinio. Il paese ha fatto qualche progresso per quanto riguarda l'accesso alla giustizia […]».

1. Come commenta la Commissione quanto riportato dalla stampa bosniaca, in netto contrasto con quanto sostenuto nel suo rapporto?

2. Come intende la Commissione intervenire?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(17 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole delle difficoltà incontrate dalla Bosnia-Erzegovina nell'esecuzione delle sanzioni penali. Tale questione è stata per l'appunto sollevata, assieme ai relativi problemi legati alle strutture carcerarie, ai diritti umani e al personale penitenziario, con gli interlocutori pertinenti, ivi compreso con lo stesso ministro della Giustizia Mikulic nell'ambito del dialogo strutturato sulla giustizia tra l'UE e la Bosnia-Erzegovina.

Nel corso della seconda sessione plenaria del dialogo, nel novembre 2011, la Commissione ha rivolto una raccomandazione alle autorità della Bosnia-Erzegovina, esortandole ad adottare tutte le misure possibili per ridurre l'arretrato nell'esecuzione delle sanzioni penali. Tale richiesta era stata corredata dall'invito a organizzare un seminario regionale per lo scambio di buone pratiche riguardo all'esecuzione di sanzioni penali, tenutosi il 30 novembre 2012 a Sarajevo e finanziato dalla Commissione attraverso lo strumento TAIEX. Dall'inizio dell'intervento della Commissione in materia, l'arretrato giudiziario è diminuito di oltre il 17 %.

La Commissione ha chiesto alle autorità competenti di fare tutto il possibile per garantire soluzioni tempestive e l'allineamento sostenibile del sistema alle norme internazionali ed europee pertinenti. Oltre a fornire una continua assistenza mirata mediante lo strumento di preadesione, la Commissione proseguirà la propria azione nel settore e continuerà a riferire al riguardo.

In aggiunta, la Commissione sostiene la costruzione di un carcere statale di massima sicurezza con due sovvenzioni per un importo complessivo di 9,15 milioni di euro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010644/12
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: In Bosnia, the jails are full and hundreds of convicted criminals are at large

The Bosnian Minister of Justice, Zoran Mikulic, has disclosed to local newspapers that hundreds of individuals who have been sentenced for crimes of various kinds are still at large because there are no prison places available in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Bosnian state with a Croat-Muslim majority). According to the data held by the Ministry of Justice, there are 1 788 individuals serving a sentence in detention, including those under house arrest.

The Minister also maintains that, despite this and although the possibility exists of substituting fines for terms of imprisonment of less than 12 months, there are 859 convicted persons waiting to serve their sentence. Among them there are 58 who are mentally disturbed and committed a crime while suffering from a mental illness, for whom there are no suitable healthcare facilities. Another serious problem is the fact that 244 convicted individuals have absconded.

The European Commission, in its communication of 10 October 2012 entitled 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013' (COM(2012)0600), maintains that 'some progress has been made in improving prison conditions. The new psychiatric facility in Sokolac is not operational yet. A comprehensive reform of the prison system remains outstanding. Adoption of the framework law on free legal aid is still pending. Some progress has been made as regards access to justice […]'.

1. What comment does the Commission have to make concerning the reports in the Bosnian press, which stand in stark contrast to what it asserts in its report?

2. How does the Commission intend to intervene?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the difficulties encountered by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) in the execution of criminal sanctions. This issue, along with related problems of prison facilities, human rights, prison personnel and others, have consistently been raised with the relevant interlocutors, also in the framework of the EU-BiH Structured Dialogue on Justice directly with the FBiH Minister of Justice Mikulic.

At the second plenary of the Dialogue in November 2011, the Commission issued the following recommendation: 'Urges FBiH authorities to undertake all possible measures to reduce the backlog in the execution of criminal sanctions'. This request was complemented with the invitation to organise a regional workshop for the exchange of good practices on execution of criminal sanctions, which was held on 30 November 2012 in Sarajevo and was financed by the Commission through the TAIEX instrument. Since the Commission begun its engagement on the matter, a reduction of the backlog of over 17% was observed.

The Commission has requested that competent authorities do all that is in their powers to guarantee timely solutions and sustainable alignment of the system to relevant international and European standards. The Commission will continue to engage and report on these matters, in addition to continuing targeted assistance through the Instrument for Pre-Accession.

In addition, the Commission supports the construction of a high security state prison with two grants with a total of EUR 9.15 million.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010645/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Fondi europei alle famiglie mafiose

Da fonti di stampa si apprende che esponenti della criminalità organizzata italiana avrebbero ricevuto contributi europei per gli agricoltori.

Tra questi il fratello di un noto boss mafioso siciliano, in carcere da 4 anni, che ha ricevuto tali fondi dal 1997 al 2004; un altro riceveva ingenti somme europee, nonostante fosse anch'egli in carcere e avesse presentato le richieste attraverso associazioni di categoria.

Considerato che i fondi europei non possono essere erogati a chi è sotto sorveglianza speciale o ha una condanna per mafia, può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. è essa a conoscenza di questo fatto?

2. È la Commissione dotata di un sistema di monitoraggio che verifichi la corretta gestione dei fondi dall'erogazione all'utilizzatore finale?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(29 gennaio 2013)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza dei fatti citati.

2. Conformemente al principio della gestione concorrente [regolamento (CE) n. 1290/2005 del Consiglio ([1])] gli Stati membri sono incaricati dei pagamenti dei fondi agricoli dell'UE ai beneficiari, oltre che dei relativi controlli.

D'altro lato la Commissione, nell'ambito del suo ruolo nella gestione della PAC, verifica i sistemi di gestione e di controllo messi in atto dagli Stati membri al fine di verificarne la conformità con le norme dell'UE. Le singole operazioni che danno adito a sospetto di frodi o irregolarità sono oggetto di indagine da parte dell'OLAF, l'Ufficio europeo per la lotta antifrode della Commissione europea, nel quadro del suo ruolo specifico.

In ogni caso la Commissione darà seguito alla questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare con le autorità italiane competenti.

([1]) GU L 209 dell'11.8.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010645/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: European funds paid to mafia families

According to the press, members of organised criminal groups in Italy have received European farm payments.

They include the brother of a well-known Sicilian mafia boss who had been in prison for 4 years, who received payments from 1997 to 2004; another received huge amounts of European funding although he, too, was in prison and had submitted applications through producers' associations.

Considering that payments from European funds cannot be made to persons who are under special surveillance or have been convicted of belonging to the mafia, can the Commission indicate:

1. Whether it is aware of this fact?

2. Whether the Commission has a monitoring system which checks that funds are properly managed, from the authorisation of payments through to the end user?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of these discussions.

2. According to the principle of shared management (Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 ([1])), Member States are responsible for the payments of EU agricultural funds to the beneficiaries, including the related controls.

On the other side, the Commission, in the context of its role in the management of the CAP, audits the management and control systems put in place by the Member States in order to verify their compliance with EU rules. Individual transactions which give raise to suspicion of fraud or irregularity are investigated by OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office of the European Commission, in the context of its specific role.

In any case, the Commission will follow up on the issue raised by the Honourable Member with the competent Italian authorities.

([1]) OJ L 209, 11.8.2005.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-010646/12
Komisijai
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(2012 m. lapkričio 21 d.)

Tema: ES paskolų garantijų priemonė (angl. *EU Loan Guarantee Facility*)

Vienas iš pagrindinių programos „Erasmus visiems“ principų – mobilumas. Jo reikšme tiek asmeniui, tiek visai visuomenei jau seniai neabejojama. Mobilumas labai svarbus siekiant užtikrinti, kad kuo daugiau besimokančių asmenų, ypač iš vargingesnių ekonominių sluoksnių, turėtų galimybę įgyti kokybišką išsilavinimą. Naujas Europos Komisijos pasiūlymas – ES paskolų garantijų priemonė, skirta nuolatinėms vienų (numatoma skirti daugiausia 12 tūkst. eurų) ar dvejų (numatoma skirti daugiausia 18 tūkst. eurų) metų tarpvalstybinėms magistro studijoms finansuoti. Studentams paskolas teiktų privatūs tarpininkai, o laiduotojo vaidmenį šiuo atveju atliktų ES. Tačiau jau daug įvairių studentų organizacijų išreiškė savo susirūpinimą šia priemone, kuri galbūt ne padėtų pasiekti savo tikslo – suteikti jaunam žmogui geresnį gyvenimą, o pridarytų dar daugiau žalos.

Pirma, dėl to, kad ši paskolų schema nebus patraukli studentams iš žemesnių ekonominių sluoksnių, o labiau pasitarnaus kaip papildoma pagalba tiems studentams, kurie ir taip jau turi galimybę būti mobilūs. Antra, gali būti, kad ši priemonė dar labiau paskatins protų nutekėjimą. Pavyzdžiui, studentas iš Lietuvos, pasiėmęs 12 ar 18 tūkstančių eurų paskolą studijoms vienoje iš ekonomiškai stipresnių ES valstybių ir baigęs studijas, tikėtina, neplanuos grįžti į Lietuvą, nes paprasčiausiai ekonominė padėtis ten nebus palanki grąžinti paskolą. Todėl studentas bus priverstas rinktis tą šalį, kurioje matys geresnes perspektyvas, o ne tą, kurioje galbūt jo įgytos žinios būtų labiau reikalingos. Trečia, šiuo metu jaunimas susiduria su didžiule nedarbo problema. Todėl apimti desperatiškų nuotaikų ir tikėdamiesi, kad galbūt pabaigę magistro studijas gaus geresnį darbą, studentai griebsis šitos galimybės net nepagalvoję apie tai, kad pasiimtą paskolą reikės grąžinti, ir tai tik dar labiau padidins jaunų žmonių įsiskolinimą.

1. Ar Komisija nemano, kad tokia paskolų schema paskatins protų nutekėjimą, kadangi studentams iš vargingesnių ES valstybių nebus naudinga grįžti į gimtąją šalį, kadangi ten įvykdyti savo finansinius įsipareigojimus bus daug sunkiau arba tiesiog neįmanoma?

2. Ar Komisija galėtų atsakyti, ar prieš pasiūlant šią schemą buvo konsultuojamasi su pačiais studentais, kuriuos tiesiogiai gali paliesti ši paskolų priemonė?

3. Ar Komisija nemano, kad teikiamų paskolų dydį reikėtų diferencijuoti pagal atitinkamos ES valstybės narės, kurioje studentas sieks magistro studijų, pragyvenimo lygį?

A. Vassiliou atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2013 m. sausio 18 d.)

Komisija siūlo, kad studentų paskolų garantijų sistema turėtų būti įgyvendinta taip, kad ja galėtų naudotis studentai, kilę iš sunkiomis socialinėmis sąlygomis gyvenančių šeimų. Panaikinus įprastus reikalavimus skolą garantuoti užstatu arba tėvų garantijomis tokiems studentams bus daug lengviau gauti tokių rūšių finansavimą, kuris dabar jiems neprieinamas.

Tik vienoje Europos aukštojo mokslo erdvės šalyje (Norvegijoje) šiuo metu vyrauja atvykstančių ir išvykstančių studentų srautų pusiausvyra. Europos studentų paskolų garantijų priemonė yra skirta tokiai studentų grupei, kuri sudarys mažiau nei 0,25 % visų programoje „Erasmus visiems“ dalyvaujančių šalių studentų, todėl, nors ji labai pakeis šia priemone besinaudosiančių studentų galimybes, bendri studentų srautai dėl to nepasikeis.

Suinteresuotųjų asmenų grupės dalyvavo visais šio pasiūlymo rengimo etapais nuo pat 2008 m., kai kilo ši idėja. Atliekant šios priemonės įgyvendinamumo tyrimą, studentai ir jiems atstovaujančios organizacijos dalyvavo tarptautinėje politikos formavimo konferencijoje, Europos ir nacionalinio lygmens renginiuose, seminaruose ir pokalbiuose. Per 2011 m. Eurobarometro apklausą 57 000 jaunuolių teirautasi apie studijas užsienyje ir kas joms trukdo. Nustatyta, kad viena iš didžiausių kliūčių kitur studijuoti pageidaujančiam jaunimui yra sunkumai gauti lėšų.

Komisija mano, kad dėl paskolos dydžio turi susitarti studentas ir finansinis tarpininkas, atsižvelgdami į studento poreikius per studijų laikotarpį kitoje šalyje ir garantuojamos paskolos dydžio ribas, apie kurias užsiminė gerbiamas Europos Parlamento narys.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010646/12
to the Commission
Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: EU Loan Guarantee Facility

Mobility is one of the fundamental principles of the 'Erasmus for all' programme. There has long been no doubt about its value both for individuals and society as a whole. Mobility is very important for ensuring that as many students as possible, particularly from poorer economic sections, have access to quality education. The European Commission's new proposal is the EU Loan Guarantee Facility, intended to finance full-time one-year (an allocation of up to EUR 12 000) or two-year (an allocation of up to EUR 18 000) cross-border Masters studies. Private intermediaries would provide students with loans and in this respect the EU would act as guarantor. However, many different student organisations have already expressed their concern about this facility, which may not perhaps achieve its objective of giving young people a better life, but do even more damage.

Firstly, because this loan scheme will not be attractive to students from lower economic backgrounds, and will instead serve as additional aid for students who already have the opportunity to be mobile. Secondly, it is possible that this facility will exacerbate brain drain. For example, it is likely that a student from Lithuania who has taken out a EUR 12 000 or EUR 18 000 loan for studies in one of the economically stronger EU Member States and has graduated will not plan to return to Lithuania because the economic situation there will simply not be favourable to repaying the loan. The student will therefore be forced to choose the country in which he sees better prospects, perhaps not the one which most needs the knowledge he has gained. Thirdly, young people at the moment face a huge unemployment problem. In a mood of desperation with the expectation that on completion of their Masters studies they will perhaps get a better job, students will therefore grab this opportunity without even thinking about the fact that they will have to pay back the loan they have taken out, and this will only increase debt among young people even more.

1. Does the Commission believe that such a loan scheme will encourage brain drain because it will not be in the interests of students from poorer EU Member States to return to their native country as it will be more difficult or simply impossible for them to honour their financial obligations there?

2. Could the Commission say whether, prior to offering this scheme, there were consultations with those very students who may be directly affected by this loan instrument?

3. Does the Commission believe that the size of loans provided should be differentiated according to the standard of living of the EU Member State in which the student will pursue Masters studies?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission proposes that the Student Loan Guarantee Facility should be delivered in such a way as to ensure that it is accessible to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. By removing the usual requirements for collateral or parental guarantees, it will be particularly helpful for such students by opening up access to forms of finance which are currently denied to them.

Only one country in the European Higher Education Area (Norway) currently has a balance between incoming and outgoing student flows. The Student Loan Guarantee Facility is targeted at a group of graduate students which will amount to less than 0.25% of the total student body in the countries participating in the 'Erasmus for All' programme. Therefore while it will have a significant impact on the opportunities for the graduates involved, it will not affect student flows overall.

Stakeholder groups have been involved in the development of the proposal at all stages since the idea emerged in 2008. Students and their representative bodies participated in an international policy conference, European and national events, as well as workshops and interviews as part of the feasibility study for the instrument. A 2011 Eurobarometer interviewed 57 000 young people on mobility and barriers to mobility, identifying access to finance as one of the major difficulties faced by young people who wanted to be mobile.

The Commission believes that the size of loan should be agreed between the student and the financial intermediary, taking account of the student's needs during their study period in the host country and respecting the limits of the guarantee referred to by the Honourable Member.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-010647/12
an die Kommission
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(21. November 2012)

Betrifft: Konversionsflächen und EU-Beihilferecht

Im Rahmen des Abzugs der US-Armee aus Teilen Deutschlands stellt sich für die betroffenen Städte und Gemeinden die Frage der Konversion und Nutzung der freiwerdenden Flächen. Zum Erwerb solcher Konversionsflächen von der Bundesanstalt für Immobilienaufgaben (Bima) durch Städte und Gemeinden stellt sich in diesem Zusammenhang folgende Frage:

Am 20. Dezember 2011 erließ die Kommission einen Beschluss über die Anwendung von Artikel 106 Absatz 2 des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union auf staatliche Beihilfen in Form von Ausgleichsleistungen zugunsten bestimmter Unternehmen, die mit der Erbringung von Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichem Interesse betraut sind (Aktenzeichen K(2011)9380). Mit Blick auf dessen Artikel 2 nehmen wir an, dass die Bima die Flächen ohne vorherige Anmeldung bei der Kommission gemäß Artikel 108 Abs. 3 AEUV unter Marktpreis an Städte und Gemeinden verkaufen kann, ohne europäisches Beihilferecht zu brechen, wenn die Flächen für sozialen Wohnungsbau bestimmt sind und die übrigen Voraussetzungen, die in dem Beschluss vorgesehen sind, eingehalten werden. Ist diese Annahme zutreffend?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(8. Januar 2013)

Die Vorschriften über staatliche Beihilfen gelten für alle Unternehmen, d. h. für jede eine wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit ausübende Einheit, unabhängig von ihrer Rechtsform. Somit kann die staatliche Finanzierung einer von einer Stadt ausgeübten wirtschaftlichen Tätigkeit wie das Anbieten von Sozialwohnungen ebenfalls eine staatliche Beihilfe darstellen.

In dem Beschluss über die Anwendung von Artikel 106 Absatz 2 AEUV auf staatliche Beihilfen in Form von Ausgleichsleistungen zugunsten bestimmter Unternehmen, die mit der Erbringung von Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichem Interesse betraut sind (im Folgenden „DAWI-Beschluss“) sind die besonderen Voraussetzungen festgelegt, unter denen Ausgleichsleistungen für die Erbringung von Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichem Interesse (im Folgenden „DAWI“) mit dem Binnenmarkt vereinbar und von der Anmeldepflicht befreit sind.

Der soziale Wohnungsbau kann in der Tat als eine Dienstleistung von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichem Interesse definiert werden, auf die der DAWI-Beschluss Anwendung findet. Dazu muss der Dienstleistungserbringer mit einer bestimmten Aufgabe betraut werden, die als DAWI anzusehen ist und zu deren Erfüllung der Dienstleistungserbringer verpflichtet ist. Der Beschluss enthält ferner ausführliche Vorschriften zur Höhe der Ausgleichsleistungen, die der Dienstleistungserbringer für die Erbringung der DAWI erhalten kann, insbesondere die Bestimmungen, dass die Parameter für die Berechnung des Ausgleichs zuvor klar aufzustellen sind und die Höhe der Ausgleichsleistungen unter Berücksichtigung eines angemessenen Gewinns für den Dienstleistungserbringer nicht über die zur Erfüllung der gemeinwirtschaftlichen Verpflichtung nötigen Nettokosten hinausgehen darf. Im Prinzip können die nationalen Behörden die Form der staatlichen Beihilfe bestimmen, die sie zum Ausgleich dieser Kosten gewähren wollen, sofern der Ausgleichsmechanismus im Betrauungsakt beschrieben und die Höhe der Beihilfe genau festgelegt ist, um sicherzustellen, dass die Beihilfe nicht über die obengenannten Kosten hinausgeht.

Die Anwendung des DAWI-Beschlusses auf den von der Frau Abgeordneten vorgebrachten Sachverhalt setzt in jedem Fall voraus, dass sämtliche in diesem Beschluss festgelegten Voraussetzungen erfüllt sind. Dann braucht die Maßnahme nicht nach den EU-Beihilfevorschriften angemeldet zu werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010647/12
to the Commission
Franziska Katharina Brantner (Verts/ALE)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Redevelopment areas and EU state aid rules

As a result of the withdrawal of the US army from parts of Germany, the cities and towns affected must decide what to do with the areas of land thereby released. The following issue arises in connection with any decision by local authorities to purchase such areas for redevelopment from the BImA (Institute for Federal Real Estate):

On 20 December 2011 the Commission issued a decision on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to state aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest (C(2011) 9380). In the light of Article 2 thereof, we presume that the BImA can, without having to inform the Commission in advance pursuant to Article 108(3) TFEU, sell the areas below market value to cities and towns without thereby violating European state aid rules provided that the areas in question are to be used for social housing and provided the other conditions set out in the decision are fulfilled. Is this assumption correct?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

State aid rules apply to all undertakings, which are defined as all entities engaged in an economic activity irrespective of their legal status. Therefore, State financing of an economic activity performed by a city, such as offering social housing, can also constitute state aid.

The decision on the application of Article 106(2) TFEU to state aid in the form of public service compensation granted to certain undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest ('SGEI Decision') sets out specific requirements under which compensation for the provision of an SGEI is compatible with the internal market and exempt from notification.

Social housing can indeed be defined as a service of general economic interest, to which the SGEI Decision applies. It requires that a provider be entrusted with a specific task, which qualifies as an SGEI and which the provider is obliged to perform. The decision also contains detailed rules on the amount the provider may receive for performing the SGEI, most notably that the compensation parameters have to be set out clearly in advance and that the compensation cannot go beyond the net costs of the public service obligation, including a reasonable profit for the provider. In principle, the national authorities can decide the form of state aid they want to grant to compensate for those costs, as long the compensation mechanism is set out in the entrustment act and the amount of aid is precisely quantified so as to ensure that it does not go beyond those costs.

In any case, the application of the SGEI decision to the case mentioned by the Honourable Member presupposes that all the requirements of the decision are fulfilled. In that case, the measure does not need to be notified under EU State aid rules.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-010648/12
adresată Comisiei
George Sabin Cutaş (S&D)
(21 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: O definiție și o listă UE a paradisurilor fiscale

Conform unui studiu realizat de organizația Tax Justice Network în luna iulie, fondurile deținute în paradisuri fiscale reprezentau cel puțin 21 de trilioane de dolari la sfârșitul anului 2010. Totodată, evaziunea fiscală cauzează statelor membre pierderi de aproximativ 1 trilion de euro în fiecare an.

Taxarea stă la baza bunei guvernări și este calea către dezvoltare. Paradisurile fiscale contribuie la creșterea inegalității și a sărăciei, la corodarea democrației, promovarea corupției, subminarea reglementărilor financiare și a creșterii economice.

Parlamentul European a subliniat în repetate rânduri necesitatea luptei împotriva evaziunii fiscale, cu atât mai importantă în contextul de criză și a propus o definiție a paradisurilor fiscale în cadrul Regulamentului privind fondurile europene cu capital de risc.

O listă europeană a acestora lipsește însă, în continuare, iar instituții precum Banca Europeană de Investiții continuă să fie criticate în mod repetat pentru folosirea jurisdicțiilor necooperante prin intermediul proiectelor finanțate.

Pachetul legislativ privind combaterea evaziunii fiscale urmează a fi lansat pe 5 decembrie. În contextul în care lista Organizației pentru Cooperare și Dezvoltare Economică și cea a Grupului de Acțiune Financiară Internațională sunt considerate ca fiind insuficiente:

1. Intenționează Comisia să propună o definiție europeană a paradisurilor fiscale?

2. Dorește Comisia să realizeze o listă proprie a paradisurilor fiscale?

Răspuns dat de dl Šemeta în numele Comisiei
(18 decembrie 2012)

Comisia împărtășește preocupările exprimate de distinsul membru și, drept urmare, a prezentat, la 6 decembrie 2012, un pachet cuprinzător de acțiuni pe termen scurt, mediu și lung [Un plan de acțiune în vederea consolidării luptei împotriva fraudei și a evaziunii fiscale COM(2012)722].

În recomandarea sa privind măsurile menite să încurajeze țările terțe să aplice standarde minime de bună guvernanță în chestiuni fiscale [C(2012)8805], Comisia a stabilit criteriile pentru a determina dacă o țară terță respectă sau nu standarde minime cu privire la transparență, schimbul de informații și concurența fiscală loială. Comisia recomandă tuturor statelor membre să se bazeze pe aceste standarde în relațiile lor cu țări terțe și să întocmească o listă neagră a țărilor terțe care nu le respectă.

Simpla înscriere pe o listă neagră poate încuraja țările terțe să respecte standardele minime menționate. Cu toate acestea, Comisia recomandă, de asemenea, o serie de măsuri pe care statele membre ar trebui să le ia împotriva țărilor terțe care nu îndeplinesc aceste standarde, precum și măsuri în favoarea celor care le respectă. Comisia nu va evalua ea însăși, în mod sistematic, toate țările terțe. Această sarcina le revine statelor membre care au efectiv relații cu țările terțe în cauză. Cu toate acestea, ținând cont de rolul mai extins al platformei pentru buna guvernanță fiscală, pe care Comisia intenționează să o introducă, aceasta ar trebui să contribuie mai ales la aplicarea coerentă de către statele membre a recomandării menționate anterior.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010648/12
to the Commission
George Sabin Cutaş (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: EU definition and list of tax havens

According to a study carried out by the organisation Tax Justice Network in July 2012, the funds held in tax havens amounted to at least USD 21 trillion at the end of 2010. At the same time, the Member States are losing around EUR 1 trillion every year as a result of tax evasion.

Taxation is the foundation of good governance and represents the path towards development. Tax havens contribute to increasing inequality and poverty and help to corrode democracy, foster corruption and undermine financial regulations and economic growth.

The European Parliament has repeatedly stressed the need to combat tax evasion, particularly in the context of the current crisis, and has proposed a definition of tax havens as part of the regulation on European venture capital funds.

Nevertheless, there is still no European list of tax havens, and institutions such as the European Investment Bank are still repeatedly criticised for using uncooperative jurisdictions in connection with projects being financed.

The package of legislation to combat tax evasion is to be launched on 5 December 2012. Bearing in mind that the lists drawn up by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Financial Action Task Force are considered insufficient:

1. Will the Commission propose a European definition of tax havens?

2. Will the Commission draw up its own list of tax havens?

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

The Commission shares the concerns raised by the Honourable Member and as a result has presented a comprehensive package of immediate, mid-term and long-term actions on 6 December 2012 (Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion COM(2012) 722).

In its Recommendation regarding measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters (C(2012) 8805), the Commission has set out the criteria for determining whether a third country does or does not comply with minimum standards on transparency, exchange of information and fair tax competition. The Commission recommends all Member States to base themselves on these standards in their relationships with third countries and to establish a blacklist of third countries not complying with them.

Blacklisting in itself may encourage third countries to comply with the said minimum standards. However, the Commission also recommends a series of measures that Member States should take against third countries which do not meet such standards, as well as measures in favour of those that do. The Commission will not systematically assess all third countries itself. That is for the Member States who actually deal with the third countries concerned. However, as part of its wider role the Platform for Tax Good Governance that the Commission plans to establish should help to achieve notably the consistent application of the said Recommendation by Member States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010649/12
an die Kommission
Bernd Lange (S&D)
(21. November 2012)

Betrifft: Dienstleistungsverkehr

In letzter Zeit häufen sich die Beschwerden deutscher Handwerker, die einen Auftrag in Dänemark ausführen wollen. Bisher benötigten deutsche Handwerker, die in den Bereichen Elektro-, Gas- und Wasserinstallation tätig werden wollten, eine dänische Zulassung hierfür. Diese Zulassung wurde gemäß der Zertifizierungsnorm DIN EN IS 9001 erteilt, die von Dänemark anerkannt und im Dänischen Standard (DS) umgesetzt ist.

Nun wurden die Anforderungen erheblich erhöht. So muss beispielsweise eine gesonderte Zertifizierung beigebracht werden, die explizit die Einhaltung der dänischen Gesetzgebung im Qualitätsmanagement bescheinigt. Ebenfalls werden bereits erteilte und bestehende dänische Zulassungen infrage gestellt.

Dies vorausgeschickt frage ich die Kommission:

1. In welchem Umfang sind der Kommission diese Vorkommnisse oder weitere Einschränkungen des freien Dienstleistungsverkehrs bekannt?

2. Steht die Vorgehensweise der dänischen Behörden mit der Dienstleistungsrichtlinie (Artikel 16, Absatz 1a) im Einklang?

3. Ist eine rückwirkende Aufhebung von Zulassungen mit dem Gemeinschaftsrecht vereinbar?

4. Welche Maßnahmen wird die Kommission ergreifen, um eine diskriminierungsfreie Tätigkeit deutscher Handwerker in Dänemark sicherzustellen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(1. Februar 2013)

Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass Gewerbetreibende aus anderen Mitgliedstaaten auf Schwierigkeiten stoßen, wenn sie in Dänemark Dienstleistungen in den Bereichen Elektro-, Gas- und Wasserinstallation erbringen. In der Arbeitsunterlage der Kommissionsdienststellen mit detaillierten Angaben zur Umsetzung der Dienstleistungsrichtlinie wurde festgestellt, dass das bisherige Zulassungsverfahren für Erbringer grenzüberschreitender Dienstleistungen in den genannten Bereichen überprüft werden muss, um Konformität mit der Dienstleistungsrichtlinie herzustellen.

Die dänischen Behörden bereiten zurzeit einen Legislativvorschlag vor, der bis zum Jahresende in das Parlament eingebracht werden soll und sicherstellen dürfte, dass die einschlägigen dänischen Rechtsvorschriften voll und ganz in Einklang mit den Binnenmarktvorschriften für Dienstleistungen stehen. Die Kommission wird diese Reform im Zuge der Follow-up-Maßnahmen zu der im Juni 2012 veröffentlichten Mitteilung über eine Partnerschaft für neues Wachstum im Dienstleistungssektor ([1]) genau im Auge behalten.

In der Zwischenzeit wenden die dänischen Behörden vorläufige Verfahren an, um die Erbringung von Dienstleistungen in Dänemark durch Anbieter zu erleichtern, die im Mitgliedstaat ihrer Niederlassung internationalen Standards genügen.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/implementation/report/COM_2012_261_de.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010649/12
to the Commission
Bernd Lange (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Trade in services

In recent years, an increasing number of complaints have been lodged by German tradesmen wishing to fulfil orders in Denmark. German tradesmen wishing to work as technicians in the electrical, gas and plumbing sectors have hitherto been required to have the relevant Danish licence, which was granted under the DIN EN IS 9001 international quality standard, which Denmark recognises and has incorporated into its own standards.

Now, however, the requirements have been made significantly stricter. For example, tradesmen must now provide a specific certificate demonstrating that they comply with the criteria laid down in Danish quality management legislation. Danish authorisations that have already been granted may no longer be valid.

1. How much does the Commission know about these facts or other cases of restraint of trade in services?

2. Is the Danish authorities' approach in accordance with the Services Directive (Article 16(1)(a))?

3. Is the retroactive withdrawal of such authorisations compatible with EC law?

4. What measures will the Commission take to ensure that German tradesmen are not discriminated against in Denmark?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the fact that traders from other Member States have been encountering problems in providing services in the sectors of electrical, gas and plumbing installations in Denmark. The Commission Staff Working Document with detailed information on the implementation of the Services Directive indicated that authorisation schemes currently being applied to cross-border providers in these areas needed to be revised to ensure conformity with the Services Directive.

The Danish authorities are working on a legislative proposal (to be submitted to Parliament by the end of the year) that should ensure that their legislation in this area is in full conformity with internal market legislation relating to services. The Commission will closely monitor this reform in the context of the follow-up actions to the communication on a Partnership for new growth in Services ([1]) published in June 2012.

In the meanwhile, provisional mechanisms are currently being applied in practice by the Danish authorities to facilitate the provision of services in Denmark by providers complying with an international standard in their Member State of establishment.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/implementation/report/COM_2012_261_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010650/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(21. November 2012)

Betrifft: Kooperations- und Förderprogramme EU-Japan

In seiner Antwort auf Anfrage E-008430/2012 von Hans-Peter Martin schreibt Kommissar De Gucht: „Ein Freihandelsabkommen zwischen der EU und Japan würde eine Gelegenheit bieten, die bestehenden Kooperations- und Förderprogramme auszubauen und neue Exportförderprogramme vor allem für KMU aufzulegen".

1. Hat die Kommission bereits konkrete Vorschläge für neue Exportförderprogramme — insbesondere solche für KMU?

2. Welche der bestehenden Kooperations- und Förderprogramme könnten noch ausgebaut werden, um den verstärkten Handel zwischen der EU und Japan zu nutzen?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(7. Januar 2013)

1. Die Kommission arbeitet derzeit an der Umsetzung ihrer Mitteilung zur Internationalisierung von KMU „Kleine Unternehmen — große Welt". Im Hinblick auf die Förderung der Internationalisierung ist hier als eines der wichtigsten Ergebnisse die Schaffung eines spezifischen Online-Portals zu nennen, das umfangreiche Informationen für Ausführer sowie eine Auflistung der Dienstleistungen für KMU in den Mitgliedstaaten und in Drittländern (zur stärkeren Nutzung von Synergien) bietet. Über das Finanzierungsinstrument ICI Plus (2011-2013) werden gegenwärtig Unterstützungs-angebote für KMU in Indonesien, Malaysia, den Philippinen und Vietnam finanziert, wodurch das Netz der Unterstützungszentren für Unternehmen in Indien, China und Thailand ergänzt wird. Die Unterstützung wird entsprechend den Leitlinien aus der Mitteilung zur Internationalisierung von KMU erfolgen.

Zudem wird derzeit intern erörtert, wie die künftigen EU-Mittel aus dem Partnerschaftsinstrument (2014-2020) und dem Programm für die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit von Unternehmen und für KMU — COSME (2014-2020) effektiv genutzt werden können, dies u. a. zur Förderung der Internationalisierung von KMU.

Ferner ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass auch die EU-Handelspolitik zur Erleichterung des Ausfuhrgeschäfts kleiner und mittlerer Unternehmen beiträgt. Durch neue Freihandels-abkommen und themenspezifische Dialoge — z. B. zu den Rechten des geistigen Eigentums, zu gesundheitspolizeilichen und pflanzenschutzrechtlichen Maßnahmen oder zum Beschaffungswesen — öffnen sich neue Märkte, während die Marktzugangsstrategie der EU zur Durchsetzung bestehender Handelsabkommen beitragen soll. Mit der Marktzugangsdatenbank stehen den EU-Ausführern zudem Informationen über die für die verschiedenen Märkte weltweit geltenden Einfuhrverfahren zur Verfügung.

2. Als wichtigste Instrumente zur Förderung des Handels mit Japan dienen das EU-Japan-Zentrum für Industrielle Zusammenarbeit, das Programm „Gateway to Japan and Korea" und das Managementschulungsprogramm „Executive Training Programme" (ETP), die spezifische Dienstleistungen, gerade für KMU und Unternehmensmitarbeiter, bieten. Der Ansatz der künftig in Bezug auf Japan verfolgt wird, wird im Rahmen der internen Erörterungen zum Partnerschaftsinstrument (2014-2020) und zum COSME-Programm (2014) behandelt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010650/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: EU-Japan cooperation and support programme

In his answer to my Question E-008430/2012, Commissioner De Gucht writes: 'An EU-Japan FTA would be an opportunity to strengthen existing cooperation and support programmes and create new programmes that focus on helping SMEs to increase their exports'.

1. Does the Commission already have specific proposals for new export support programmes, particularly ones that would benefit SMEs?

2. Which of the existing cooperation and support programmes could be strengthened in order to take advantage of the increased levels of trade between the EU and Japan?

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

1. The Commission is now in the implementation phase of the communication on SME internationalisation 'Small Business, Big World'. The main outcomes to support internationalisation include a specific online portal with comprehensive information for exporters and a mapping of existing services for SMEs in Member States and abroad in order to enhance synergies. The financial instrument ICI+ (2011-2013) is funding new business support for SMEs in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam, which will extend the network of existing business centres in India, China and Thailand This business support will follow the guidelines of the SME internationalisation Communication.

Internal discussions are ongoing on how to use the future EU funds of the 'Partnership Instrument' (2014-2020) and the 'Competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs — COSME' (2014-2020) effectively, including supporting SME internationalisation.

It should also be noted that export of SMEs are facilitated through EU trade policy. New free trade agreements and specific dialogues such as on IPR, SPS or procurement are opening new markets, whereas the Market Access Strategy aims at enforcing existing trade agreements and the Market Access Database provides EU exporters with information on import procedures in global markets.

2. The Japan Centre, the programmes 'Gateway to Japan and Korea' and the 'Executive Training Programme — ETP' are the main instruments to facilitate more trade with Japan. They offer specific services in particular for SMEs and company staff. The future approach towards Japan is covered by the internal discussions on the 'Partnership Instrument' (2014-2020) and 'COSME' (2014).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010651/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(21 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Τίτλοι σπουδών από παρόχους με το σύστημα της δικαιόχρησης

Με πράξη νομοθετικού περιεχομένου (ΦΕΚ Α' 229/19.11.2012), κατ' εφαρμογή του Μνημονίου που υιοθέτησε η ελληνική κυβέρνηση, θεσπίζεται ότι μεταπτυχιακοί τίτλοι σπουδών θα μπορούν εφεξής να χορηγούνται και από ιδιωτικά ελληνικά κολέγια, είτε συνεργάζονται με ευρωπαϊκά ΑΕΙ είτε με πανεπιστήμια εκτός ΕΕ. Στη δεύτερη περίπτωση, θα είναι αρκετό τα εν λόγω ιδρύματα να έχουν πιστοποίηση από ένα διεθνή οργανισμό πιστοποίησης. Δεδομένου ότι στην ίδια πράξη νομοθετικού περιεχομένου γίνεται επίκληση νεότερης οδηγίας του Συμβουλίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, για την αναγνώριση πτυχίων κολεγίων συνεργαζόμενων με πανεπιστήμια χωρών εκτός ΕΕ, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιο είναι το νομοθετικό πλαίσιο που ορίζει τα σχετικά με το λεγόμενο «άνοιγμα της αγοράς υπηρεσιών τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης» και ιδίως όσον αφορά τους παρόχους εκπαίδευσης με το σύστημα της δικαιόχρησης;

2. Στη νομοθεσία ποιών χωρών της ΕΕ δεν έχουν μέχρι σήμερα μεταφερθεί όλες οι οδηγίες που αναφέρονται στους παρόχους εκπαίδευσης με το σύστημα της δικαιόχρησης;

3. Τι προβλέπεται ως προς τον ανταγωνισμό της νέας «αγοράς» υπηρεσιών τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης, που θα δημιουργηθεί; Οι πάροχοι εκπαίδευσης με το σύστημα της δικαιόχρησης δικαιούνται να συμμετέχουν επί ίσοις όροις στα προγράμματα ευρωπαϊκών χρηματοδοτήσεων από το ΕΣΠΑ ή άλλα Ταμεία, ομοίως με τα δημόσια εκπαιδευτικά ιδρύματα; Πώς θα διασφαλιστεί ότι η χρηματοδότηση των δημόσιων εκπαιδευτικών ιδρυμάτων από τον προϋπολογισμό των κρατών μελών δεν θα συνιστά διακριτική μεταχείριση που στρέφεται κατά των ιδιωτικών επιχειρήσεων;

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

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις πρόσφατες τροποποιήσεις της ελληνικής νομοθεσίας σχετικά με τα κολέγια και τα άλλα εκπαιδευτικά κέντρα και ιδιωτικά ιδρύματα επαγγελματικής κατάρτισης, οι οποίες επήλθαν με τον ν. 4093/2012 (ο οποίος εγκρίθηκε στις 12 Νοεμβρίου 2012). Με αυτόν επιδιώκεται η απλούστευση των διαδικασιών πιστοποίησης με την καθιέρωση γενικού πλαισίου το οποίο εφαρμόζεται στο σύνολο των παρόχων ιδιωτικής εκπαίδευσης.

Δεν υπάρχει συγκεκριμένη οδηγία σε επίπεδο ΕΕ που να καλύπτει την αναγνώριση των πτυχίων τα οποία χορηγούνται από κολέγια συνεργαζόμενα με μη ευρωπαϊκά πανεπιστήμια. Το θέμα αυτό αντιμετωπίζεται έμμεσα από την οδηγία 2005/36/ΕΚ σχετικά με την αναγνώριση των επαγγελματικών προσόντων, που εκδόθηκε στις 5 Σεπτεμβρίου 2005 και μεταφέρθηκε στο ελληνικό δίκαιο με το π.δ. αριθ. 38/2010. Η ως άνω οδηγία δεν ρυθμίζει τα τρία ζητήματα που τέθηκαν από το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, δεδομένου ότι καλύπτει μόνο την αναγνώριση των επαγγελματικών προσόντων, συμπεριλαμβανομένων εκείνων που αποκτώνται υπό καθεστώς δικαιόχρησης. Ωστόσο, δεν υπάρχει συγκεκριμένη οδηγία που να αφορά τους παρόχους εκπαίδευσης με το σύστημα δικαιόχρησης, την οποία θα όφειλε να εφαρμόσει η Ελλάδα.

Η Επιτροπή έχει κινήσει διαδικασία επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας από το 2008 — η οποία βρίσκεται σε εξέλιξη — σχετικά με κανονιστική ρύθμιση για τα κολέγια και εξετάζει ήδη το νέο νομοθετικό καθεστώς (νόμος 4093/2012 και τις σχετικές νομοθετικές πράξεις).

Οι πάροχοι τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης με το σύστημα δικαιόχρησης μπορούν να έχουν πρόσβαση σε κονδύλια της ΕΕ στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος για τη δια βίου μάθηση, εφόσον έχουν αναγνωριστεί ως ίδρυμα τριτοβάθμιας εκπαίδευσης από τις αρμόδιες αρχές της χώρας στην οποία βρίσκονται και τους έχει απονεμηθεί ο Πανεπιστημιακός Χάρτης Erasmus.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010651/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Study certificates issued by franchised service providers

Under a legislative act adopted by the Greek Government in application of the Memorandum (Government Gazette I/229/19.11.2012), it is now possible for private Greek colleges working in collaboration with European higher education establishments or non-EU universities to issue postgraduate study certificates. In the latter case, it suffices if the establishment in question has been certified by an international certification organisation. Given that the legislative act cites a recent Council directive on the recognition of diplomas awarded by colleges working in collaboration with non-EU universities, will the Commission say:

1. What is the legislative framework that lays down requirements for the so-called liberalisation of higher education services, especially in respect of franchised service providers?

2. Which EU Member States have transposed all directives relating to franchised education service providers?

3. What provisions have been made regarding competition in the new higher education 'market' that will be created? Are franchised education service providers entitled to participate on an equal footing with State education establishments in programmes financed by Europe under the NSRF or other Funds? What will be done to ensure that financing for State education establishments under Member States' budgets will not be used to discriminate against private undertakings?

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

The European Commission is closely following the latest amendments in Greek legislation regarding colleges and other education centres and private vocational training institutions which were introduced by law 4093/2012 (adopted on 12 November 2012). This law aims to simplify the licensing procedures by establishing a general framework applicable to all private education providers.

There is no specific directive at EU level covering the recognition of diplomas awarded by colleges working in collaboration with non-EU universities. This issue is indirectly covered by Directive 2005/36/EC on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications which was adopted on 5 September 2005 and implemented into Greek law by Presidential Decree no. 38/2010. This directive does not address the three issues raised by the Honourable Member, as it only covers the recognition of professional qualifications, including those delivered under franchise arrangements. However, there is no specific directive related to franchised education service providers that would require implementation by Greece.

The Commission has an ongoing infringement case against Greece since 2008, in respect of the regulation of colleges and is now in the process of analysing the new legislative regime (law 4093/2012 and the relative legislative acts).

Franchised higher education providers may have access to EU funds under the Lifelong Learning Programme if they are recognised as an institution of higher education by the competent authorities of the country where they are located and hold the appropriate Erasmus University Charter.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010653/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 novembre 2012)

Objet: Subventions pour les panneaux solaires chinois

La Commission américaine du commerce international vient de décider que les importations de cellules et de modules photovoltaïques en provenance de Chine ont nui à l'industrie américaine de l'énergie solaire.

Selon un analyste, cette décision va conduire à une guerre commerciale sur le marché mondial des énergies renouvelables, entravant le développement des technologies de l'énergie solaire.

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission?

2. La Commission convient-elle que le gouvernement chinois accorde des subventions aux fabricants de panneaux solaires?

Les États-Unis ont déclaré qu'ils allaient imposer des droits punitifs allant jusqu'à 250 % du coût des panneaux solaires photovoltaïques importés de Chine au cours des cinq prochaines années.

Ces droits de douane ne seront cependant pas imposés aux modules solaires qui sont assemblés en Chine à partir de cellules achetées dans un pays tiers.

3. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission?

4. Ce genre de sanctions est-il imaginable en Europe si une entreprise chinoise est reconnue coupable de dumping?

5. Quelle réponse la Commission pourrait-elle donner à certains analystes en énergies renouvelables qui déclarent que «l'énergie solaire doit voir son prix baisser» et que «cette guerre commerciale va empêcher le solaire de faire des progrès»?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(8 janvier 2013)

La Commission reconnaît aux pays tiers le droit d'utiliser des instruments de défense commerciale dans des conditions strictes, conformément aux règles de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC). Les procédures de défense commerciale doivent servir à rétablir des conditions commerciales équitables. Il est donc erroné de qualifier leur utilisation de «guerre commerciale».

Le 8 novembre 2012, la Commission a ouvert une enquête antisubventions sur les importations de panneaux solaires en provenance de Chine. Cette enquête faisait suite à l'enquête antidumping lancée au début de septembre 2012. La décision d'ouvrir ces enquêtes a été fondée sur des plaintes déposées par l'industrie des panneaux solaires de l'UE, qui reposaient sur des éléments de preuve suffisants à première vue. Ces enquêtes en sont encore à leurs débuts. Pour que la Commission puisse instituer des mesures, certaines conditions doivent être remplies (détermination du dumping, des subventions, du préjudice, du lien de causalité et d'un intérêt de l'Union).

Des conclusions provisoires devraient, le cas échéant, être livrées pour juin 2013 en ce qui concerne la procédure antidumping, et pour août 2013 en ce qui concerne la procédure antisubventions. Toute décision finale devrait être prise au début de décembre 2013.

La directive sur les énergies renouvelables ([1]) exige que, d'ici à 2020, 20 % de l'énergie consommée dans l'UE soit produite à partir de sources renouvelables et permet la mise en place de régimes d'aide à l'échelon des États membres pour faciliter la réalisation de cet objectif. La concurrence entre fabricants peut contribuer à apporter des améliorations technologiques et une réduction des prix demandés aux consommateurs.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 23 avril 2009 relative à la promotion de l'utilisation de l'énergie produite à partir de sources renouvelables et modifiant puis abrogeant les directives 2001/77/CE et 2003/30/CE (texte présentant de l'intérêt pour l'EEE), JO L 140 du 5.6.2009.

S'il est vrai que la Commission préconise l'ouverture des marchés et la libre concurrence, il est tout aussi important que le commerce international observe les règles commerciales convenues au niveau international. Par conséquent, la concurrence internationale doit reposer sur des pratiques commerciales loyales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010653/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Subsidies for Chinese solar panel manufacturers

The United States International Trade Commission has concluded recently that imports of photovoltaic cells and modules from China have damaged the US solar energy industry.

According to an analyst, the commission's decision will lead to a trade war in the global renewable energy market and hinder the development of solar energy technology.

1. What is the Commission's position on this issue?

2. Is the Commission aware that the Chinese Government is subsidising the manufacture of solar panels?

The United States has announced its intention to impose punitive duties of up to 250% of their cost on photovoltaic solar panels imported from China over the next five years.

However, these customs duties will not be imposed on solar models that are assembled in China using cells purchased from third countries.

3. What is the Commission's response to this announcement?

4. Is there a possibility that similar sanctions would be imposed in Europe if a Chinese company was found to be dumping products on the EU market?

5. What is the Commission's response to those renewable energy analysts who say that solar energy must become cheaper and that a trade war will hamper progress in the solar energy sector?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

The Commission recognises the right of third countries to use Trade Defence instruments under strict conditions in accordance with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. The launching of trade defence cases should be aimed at restoring fair trading conditions. Therefore it is incorrect to qualify their use as a 'trade war'.

On 8 November 2012 the Commission initiated an anti-subsidy investigation on imports of solar panels from China. This followed the anti-dumping investigation that was initiated early September 2012. The decision to open these investigations was based on complaints with sufficient *prima facie* evidence lodged by the EU solar panel industry. The investigations are still at an early stage. For the Commission to impose measures, certain conditions (determination of dumping, subsidisation, injury, causal link and Union interest) need to be met.

Provisional findings, if any, are due to be issued by June 2013 for the anti-dumping case and by August 2013 for the anti-subsidy case. Any final decision should be taken early December 2013.

The Renewable Energy Directive ([1]) requires that by 2020, 20% of energy consumed in the EU must be from renewable sources and allows for support schemes at the Member States level to facilitate this objective. Competition among manufacturers can help bring technological improvements and lower prices for consumers.

While the Commission advocates open markets and competition, it is equally important that international trade takes place in line with internationally agreed trade rules. Hence, international competition should be based on fair trade practices.

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC Text with EEA relevance, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010654/12
alla Commissione
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(21 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Documento d'identità italiano «non valido per l'espatrio»

Lo Stato italiano rilascia ai cittadini dell'Unione europea residenti in Italia documenti d'identità nazionali «non validi per l'espatrio». La predetta dicitura è apposta in calce al documento stesso.

Ritiene la Commissione che, nonostante la dicitura «non valido per l'espatrio», il titolare del documento possa utilizzare comunque lo stesso per spostamenti tra Stati aderenti all'area Schengen?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(29 gennaio 2013)

In base all'attuale normativa dell'UE, il rilascio delle carte d'identità rientra nelle competenze degli Stati membri. In situazioni disciplinate dal diritto dell'UE, le norme nazionali in materia devono tenere debito conto di quest'ultimo, in particolare delle disposizioni del trattato riguardanti la libertà di circolare e di soggiornare nel territorio degli Stati membri.

Ai sensi dell'articolo 20 e dell'articolo 21 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea, i cittadini dell'Unione hanno il diritto di circolare e di soggiornare liberamente nel territorio degli Stati membri.

A tal fine, l'articolo 4, paragrafo 3, della direttiva 2004/38/CE stabilisce che gli Stati membri «rilasciano o rinnovano ai loro cittadini, […] una carta d'identità o un passaporto dai quali risulti la loro cittadinanza». Gli Stati membri non sono tenuti a rilasciare a cittadini di un altro Stato membro residenti nel loro territorio una carta d'identità valida per l'espatrio. A norma della direttiva, in determinate circostanze gli Stati membri devono rilasciare ai cittadini dell'UE un semplice attestato d'iscrizione presso le autorità competenti.

Inoltre, ai sensi dell'articolo 5, paragrafo 1, della direttiva 2004/38/CE, gli Stati membri sono tenuti ad ammettere nel loro territorio i cittadini dell'Unione muniti di una carta d'identità o di un passaporto in corso di validità. I cittadini dell'UE devono pertanto essere muniti di una carta di identità o di un passaporto in corso di validità per recarsi in un altro Stato membro.

Il documento cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare non può essere considerato una carta d'identità ai sensi dell'articolo 4, paragrafo 3, della direttiva 2004/38/CE e non può pertanto essere utilizzato come documento di viaggio valido. Tuttavia, in base all'articolo 5, paragrafo 4, della stessa direttiva, in mancanza di una carta d'identità o di un passaporto validi, lo Stato membro interessato dovrebbe valutare se tale documento costituisca una prova sufficiente dell'identità e della cittadinanza del viaggiatore ai fini dell'ingresso nel paese.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010654/12
to the Commission
Francesco Enrico Speroni (EFD)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Italian identity document 'not valid for travel abroad'

The Italian state issues, to citizens of the European Union who are resident in Italy, national identity cards which are 'not valid for travel abroad'. This wording ('non valido per l'espatrio') is printed at the bottom of the document.

Does the Commission consider that, irrespective of the phrase 'not valid for travel abroad', the bearer of such a document may nevertheless use it to travel to states belonging to the Schengen area?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

As EC law stands at present, the issuance of identity cards falls within the competence of the Member States. In situations covered by European Union law, the national rules concerned must have due regard to the latter, including the Treaty provisions on the freedom to move and reside within the territory of the Member States.

According to Articles 20 and 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, every citizen of the Union has the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.

To this end, Article 4(3) of Directive 2004/38/EC obliges Member States to 'issue to their own nationals, and renew, an identity card or passport stating their nationality'. There is no obligation on Member States to provide nationals of another Member State residing on their territory with an identity card valid for expatriation. According to the directive, Member States are, under certain circumstances, obliged to issue EU citizens with a simple registration certificate.

Furthermore, according to Article 5(1) of Directive 2004/38/EC, Member States must allow Union citizens holding a valid identity card or passport to enter their territory. Thus, EU citizens must hold a valid ID card or passport when travelling to another Member State.

The document referred to by the Honourable Member cannot be considered as an identity card within the meaning of Article 4(3) of Directive 2004/38/EC and may thus not be used as a valid travelling document. Nevertheless, under Article 5(4) of the same Directive, in the absence of a valid identity card or passport, the Member State concerned should consider whether it is sufficient proof of identity and nationality for the purpose of entry.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010655/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(21 November 2012)

Subject: Foie gras production

Force-feeding for foie gras production is prohibited in most EU countries because of the cruelty involved for ducks and geese. Council Directive 98/58/EC on the protection of animals kept for farming purposes states that 'no animal shall be provided with food or liquid in a manner […] which may cause unnecessary suffering or injury'.Thus, force-feeding does not comply with the minimum EU standards for the protection of animals.

1. Will the Commission clarify the ban on providing food in a manner that compromises the health and welfare of ducks and geese raised for foie gras, by explicitly prohibiting force-feeding in the Animal Welfare Framework Law that it plans to present in 2014?

2. Moreover, at least two EU Member States which produce foie gras — France and Hungary — infringe the European ban on keeping ducks in individual cages. Will the Commission ensure that effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions are applied to such non-compliant countries?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

Animal welfare aspects in foie gras production are covered by Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes ([1]) and the recommendation of the Council of Europe concerning Muscovy ducks and their hybrids ([2]).

The above Recommendation puts countries allowing foie gras production, such as Hungary and France, under certain obligations; in particular, it requires them to encourage research on its welfare aspects and on alternative methods, which do not include gavage. The recommendation also foresees that, until new scientific evidence on alternative methods and their welfare aspects is available, the production of foie gras shall be carried out only where it is current practice.

The Commission does not plan to present any legislative proposal on this issue at the moment.

At this stage, the Commission is mainly concentrating its actions to ensure enforcement of the existing EU welfare legislation in the Member States. In particular, the Commission inspection services carried out on-the-spot audits in the Member States producing foie gras ([3]). In the case of France, the state of implementation of the ban of individual cages for ducks was examined during the audit carried out in November 2012. Commission services will continue to monitor the situation in France and Hungary with a view to obtaining in these countries compliance with the ban on individual cages for ducks.

([1]) OJ L 221,8.8.1998, p.23.
([2]) http://wayback.archive-it.org/1365/20090215072750/http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/biological_safety%2C_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20Muscovy%20ducks%20E%201999.asp.
([3]) Audits in Hungary in 2011 and in France in 2012. The audit report in Hungary is available at http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/rep_details_en.cfm?rep_id=2802. The report in France will be published in the first half of 2013.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-010657/12
do Komisji
Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE)
(22 listopada 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Zamierzenia oraz plany Komisji Europejskiej w kontekście bezzałogowych statków latających

Sterowanie, określanie położenia oraz nawigowanie UAV odbywa się m.in. w oparciu o sensor GPS. Operacyjnie działający europejski satelitarny system wspomagający GNSS/SBAS/EGNOS obecnie funkcjonuje w oparciu o GPS. Powołany został na szczeblu europejskim provider, dostarczający danych dotyczących operacyjności EUPOS i możliwości jego stosowania w różnych fazach lotu. Mimo scertyfikowania providera, za realizowanie procedur lotniczych w oparciu o system europejski EGNOS (jego poprawne działanie) w obszarze danego państwa – odpowiada państwo. Oznacza to, że należy również kontrolować stan satelitów GPS oraz archiwizować dane o statusie satelitów.

Skoro istnieje provider europejski związany z systemem EGNOS, to nasuwa się pytanie, czy nie byłoby możliwe przyjęcie rozwiązania, aby uzyskane dane od providera można było bezpośrednio zastosować w całej Europie w działalności operacyjnej przez służby ATS, również przez państwa objęte działaniem systemu wspomagania satelitarnego. Pojawia się sugestia, czy nie można by na szczeblu europejskim ujednolicić procedur certyfikacji użytkowników systemu EGNOS (jednolite wymagania dla lotnisk, przewoźników, służb, krajowych i providerów).

Pytanie jest istotne, gdyż powołana firma ESSP może zbankrutować – wówczas zagrożona może być ciągłość, dostępność, dokładność, wiarygodność dostarczanej informacji lotniczej z systemu EGNOS. Skoro EGNOS jest europejskim systemem wspomagającym, to Europa powinna dokonać jego ujednolicenia oraz zagwarantować operacyjne 24/7 H dostarczanie niezbędnych danych z EGNOS na odpowiednim poziomie.

Kolejna kwestia to sprawa UAV i ich przemieszczanie się w europejskiej przestrzeni powietrznej. Czy Komisja planuje jakieś rozwiązania legislacyjne w kontekście poruszania się po Europejskiej Przestrzeni Powietrznej bezzałogowych statków powietrznych oraz sposób ich nadzoru?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Antonia Tajaniego w imieniu Komisji
(8 stycznia 2013 r.)

Dane dotyczące satelitów EGNOS i GPS przechowywane są zgodnie z wymogami ICAO przez usługodawcę EGNOS (ESSP – *European Satellite Service Provider*). Dane te są dostępne dla każdego podmiotu zainteresowanego realizacją operacji opartych na EGNOS.

ESSP, jako certyfikowanego usługodawcę w rozumieniu rozporządzenia o jednolitej europejskiej przestrzeni powietrznej, uznaje się za instytucję zapewniającą służby żeglugi powietrznej w całej Europie, co gwarantuje, że sygnały i dane EGNOS mogą być używane bez potrzeby odrębnej certyfikacji przez władze lokalne.

Za publikację procedur podejścia odpowiedzialne są organy krajowe działające na podstawie przepisów, które są stopniowo harmonizowane. Na szczeblu międzynarodowym ICAO ustanowiło specjalne kryteria dla procedur podejścia z zastosowaniem systemu wspomagającego opartego na wyposażeniu satelitarnym (SBAS). Na szczeblu europejskim Eurocontrol ułatwia harmonizację krajowych programów dotyczących SBAS oraz przedstawia wytyczne na temat autoryzacji procedur SBAS. We wspomnianą harmonizację ma także wkład Europejska Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Lotniczego (EASA), która ostatnio ustanowiła dopuszczalne sposoby potwierdzania zgodności do celów lotniczej walidacji podejść SBAS. Komisja uważnie monitoruje przebieg wspomnianego procesu harmonizacji.

UE zobowiązała się do długoterminowego uruchomienia usługi EGNOS „bezpieczeństwo życia" i musi zawiadomić społeczności użytkowników o jej ewentualnym przerwaniu z co najmniej sześcioletnim wyprzedzeniem.

Określając zakres kompetencji UE, prawodawca wykluczył bezpilotowe statki powietrzne o masie operacyjnej poniżej 150 kg.

Komisja (przy wsparciu ze strony EASA), w ramach swoich kompetencji i z uwagi na zmianę 43 do załącznika 2 do konwencji chicagowskiej ICAO, wdroży przepisy lotnicze odnośnie do zdatności do lotu, licencjonowania personelu powietrznego oraz do operacji lotniczych, niezbędne do bezpiecznej eksploatacji wspomnianych bezpilotowych statków powietrznych latających w niezarezerwowanej przestrzeni powietrznej.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010657/12
to the Commission
Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Commission's plans and intentions concerning unmanned airborne vehicles (UAVs)

GPS sensors are used to guide UAVs and to locate their positions. The European satellite network supporting GNSS, SBAS and EGNOS currently operates on the basis of GPS. A company, ESSP, was appointed to supply data at European level on the operability of EUPOS and its possible use in different phases of flight. Although the company is certified, responsibility for carrying out aviation procedures on the basis of the EGNOS system — the activity for which the system is primarily intended — in a given country rests at national level. This means that the status of GPS satellites should be monitored, and data on the status of satellites should be archived.

Since it is a European company that is associated with EGNOS, would it not be possible to adopt a solution whereby the data received from that company could be used directly by the ATS in its activities throughout the EU, as well as by countries covered by the satellite support system?

Could certification procedures for users of the EGNOS system be harmonised (uniform requirements for airports, carriers, national services and providers) at European level?

These are important considerations, since ESSP could go bankrupt. This would potentially endanger the continuity, availability, accuracy and credibility of the aviation data supplied by the EGNOS system. Since EGNOS is a European support system, it should be Europe that carries out this harmonisation and ensures that vital EGNOS data is provided 24/7 at the appropriate level.

The next question relates to the issue of UAVs and their movements through European airspace.

Is the Commission planning to introduce legislation concerning the movements of unmanned airborne vehicles through European airspace and a mechanism for monitoring such vehicles?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

EGNOS and GPS satellites data are stored by the EGNOS Service Provider (ESSP) in accordance with ICAO requirements. Such data is available for use by any entity wishing to implement operations based on EGNOS.

As a certified service provider under the Single European Sky regulation, ESSP is recognised as an Air Navigation Service Provider throughout Europe, which guarantees that EGNOS signals and data can be used without the need for local authorities to proceed with their own certification.

The publication of approach procedures falls under the responsibility of national authorities, which operate in a progressively harmonised context. At international level, ICAO has set specific design criteria for SBAS approach procedures. At European level, Eurocontrol facilitates the harmonisation of national programmes for SBAS and provides guidance on the way to authorise SBAS procedures. The EU Agency for Aviation Safety (EASA) also contributes to this harmonisation, with its recently established acceptable means of compliance for the airborne approval of SBAS approaches. The Commission closely monitors these harmonisation developments.

The EU has committed to delivering EGNOS Safety-of-Life service on the long term and must warn user communities at least 6 years ahead of service termination.

When establishing the scope of the EU competence, the legislator excluded unmanned aircraft with an operating mass below 150 kg.

Within its remit and with reference to Amendment 43 to Annex A to the ICAO Chicago Convention, the Commission (with the support of EASA) will implement the aviation rules in the domains of airworthiness, crew licensing and air operations necessary for a safe integration of these unmanned aircraft in a non-segregated airspace.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010658/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Ámbito de aplicación en la propuesta de Directiva relativa a la adjudicación de contratos de concesión (COM(2011)0897)

El Anexo III de la propuesta de Directiva especifica las actividades objeto de la misma. En el punto 4 se detallan las redes de transporte. Las definiciones en este punto dan lugar a confusiones, puesto que se basan en el medio de transporte empleado y no en la actividad para la que se realiza dicho transporte, el criterio de ser una actividad contemplada en la Directiva. En España las competencias de transporte de viajeros están transferidas a las autoridades regionales. La Ley 12/2022 de Transporte por Cable de la Generalitat de Cataluña hace una diferenciación entre los distintos tipos de transporte público según la naturaleza del servicio que prestan. Tienen consideración de «servicio público», están sujetas a un régimen de concesión aquellas destinadas a satisfacer las necesidades de desplazamiento de personas, garantizando el derecho a la movilidad y que prestan el servicio de forma continuada, sujeto a un calendario y horario aprobados por la Administración. Tienen consideración de servicio privado las destinadas a transportar personas para practicar actividades deportivas o de ocio, considerando de este tipo las instalaciones situadas en las estaciones de esquí. En este caso para su explotación se requiere una autorización administrativa.

Las instalaciones de transporte público por cable se diferencian por la naturaleza del servicio que prestan:

— Las que tienen la consideración de servicio público, que son las instalaciones destinadas a satisfacer las necesidades de desplazamiento de las personas, garantizando los derechos de movilidad y que prestan servicios de forma continua, sujetas a un calendario y horarios aprobados por la Administración.

— Las que no tienen la consideración de servicio público, que son las instalaciones destinadas a transportar habitualmente personas para practicar una actividad deportiva o de ocio. Se consideran incluidas en este apartado las instalaciones situadas en las estaciones de esquí o similar.

1. ¿Contempla la comisión la posibilidad de diferenciar, en función del servicio prestado, la exclusión de algunas actividades?

2. En caso de contemplarse, ¿por qué motivo no se excluyen los sistemas de transporte que no tienen consideración de servicio público del ámbito de la Directiva?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión desea informar a Su Señoría de que la propuesta de Directiva relativa a la adjudicación de contratos de concesión es de aplicación transversal y, por lo tanto, abarca todos los tipos de actividades realizadas con arreglo a dichos regímenes jurídicos. La Comisión observa también que la propuesta recoge todos los tipos de servicios de transporte por cable (independientemente de que hayan sido o no definidos como públicos a nivel nacional) cuando estos se prestan con arreglo a contratos de concesión. No obstante, el transporte de personas por cable (especialmente para actividades deportivas o de ocio) se lleva a cabo, en la mayoría de los casos, mediante agentes económicos privados en virtud de un régimen de autorización y no con arreglo a concesiones. Por lo tanto, estas situaciones no están cubiertas por las normas propuestas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010658/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Scope of the proposal for a directive on the award of concession contracts (COM(2011)0897)

Annex III to the proposal for a directive COM(2011)0897 specifies the activities which are subject to its provisions. Point 4 defines transport networks. The definitions provided in this point give rise to confusion since they are based on the mode of transport used and not on the activity to be pursued by making use of the transport, and because the criteria provided for determining the applicability of the directive are activities themselves. In Spain, regional authorities are responsible for managing passenger transport services. Law 12/2022 on Cable Transport put into place by the Catalan government makes a distinction between the different modes of public transport depending on the type of service which they provide. Public services, which are subject to concession regulations, are considered to be those aimed at meeting people's transport needs, by guaranteeing the right to mobility and providing a continuous service according to a timetable approved by the authorities. Private services are considered to be those which provide transport to people for sporting or leisure activities, such as the transport facilities used in ski resorts. In such cases, public authorisation is required to operate them.

Public cable transport facilities are distinguished according to the type of service which they provide.

— Public services are considered to be those facilities which are intended to meet people'stransport needs, by guaranteeing the right to mobility and providing a continuous serviceaccording to a timetable approved by the authorities.

— Those facilities not considered to be public services are those which generally providetransport to people for sporting or leisure activities. Included in this category are thefacilities found in ski resorts or similar places.

1. Does the Commission envisage differentiating between the types of activities which areexcluded from the directive, depending on the service provided?

2. If so, for what reason do transport systems which are not considered to be publicservices not fall outside the scope of the directive?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the proposal for a directive on the award of concession contracts is of horizontal application and thus covers all types of activities conducted on the basis of such legal arrangements. The Commission also notes that the proposal covers all types of transport services by cable (irrespectively whether they have been defined at national level as public or not) where they are provided on the basis of concession contracts. However, the transport of passengers by cable (notably for sporting or leisure) is conducted, in most cases, by private economic operators under an authorisation regime and not on the basis of concessions. Such situations are therefore not covered by the proposed rules.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010659/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Posible inseguridad jurídica en la aplicación de la Directiva relativa a la adjudicación de contratos de concesión (COM(2011)0897)

Se desprende de la lectura de la propuesta de Directiva relativa a la adjudicación de contratos de concesión que su espíritu es el de garantizar la coherencia dentro de la CE en los criterios y procedimientos para la adjudicación de contratos de concesión de los servicios básicos que deben garantizarse a los ciudadanos. En alguno de estos servicios coexisten operadores que ya en la actualidad operan bajo el régimen de concesión de acuerdo con la legislación de los distintos países y operadores privados que ofrecen los mismos servicios. El caso de los servicios postales y las empresas de mensajería es tal vez uno de los más evidentes y conocidos, y posiblemente de los que mayor volumen mueve. Otro caso es el del sector del esquí; en España, al igual que en otros países de la CE, parte de las estaciones de esquí han nacido a partir de la iniciativa pública para dinamizar unas zonas de creciente despoblación y otras se pusieron en marcha con capital privado.

1. ¿Cómo contempla la Comisión la adaptación de las situaciones actuales a la situación que se desprendería de aplicar la nueva Directiva tal y como está en su propuesta actual?

2. ¿Ha valorado la Comisión la inseguridad jurídica que representaría para las empresas que han tomado decisiones y efectuado importantes inversiones en sistemas de transporte la imposición de un plazo de tiempo cuando en su momento esta limitación no existía y ello permitía amortizar dichas inversiones?

3. ¿No cree la Comisión que la Directiva debería incluir explícitamente la descripción de esta realidad excluyendo de la Directiva las iniciativas privadas?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(8 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión desearía informar a Su Señoría de que el objetivo de la propuesta de Directiva relativa a la adjudicación de contratos de concesión es aportar más seguridad jurídica en el proceso de adjudicación tanto a las autoridades públicas como a los agentes económicos, y garantizar que la oferta seleccionada es la que presenta la mejor relación calidad-precio para las inversiones públicas.

La propuesta no fija ninguna duración específica para los contratos de concesión, pero establece que debe limitarse al tiempo que se calcule necesario para que el concesionario recupere las inversiones realizadas para explotar las obras o los servicios, junto con un rendimiento razonable sobre el capital invertido. No obstante, las normas sobre la duración de la concesión tienen la finalidad de asegurar la igualdad de acceso a las oportunidades económicas a todas las empresas de la UE y de garantizar que los mercados no excluyan indefinidamente a la competencia.

La Directiva no regula las adquisiciones de bienes y servicios por agentes económicos privados, con la única excepción de aquellos que disfrutan de derechos exclusivos y desarrollan su actividad en el sector de los servicios regulados por la Directiva 2004/17/CE.

Por último, la propuesta de Directiva relativa a la adjudicación de contratos de concesión no se aplicará a las concesiones ofertadas o adjudicadas antes de su entrada en vigor. Por tanto, ninguna de las situaciones descritas por Su Señoría que pudieran entrar en la categoría de concesiones se regiría por las normas propuestas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010659/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Possible legal uncertainty concerning the implementation of the proposal for a directive on the award of concession contracts (COM(2011)0897)

Reading the proposal for a directive on the award of concession contracts, it seems that its aim is to ensure consistency in the criteria and procedures used in the EU to award concession contracts for basic services that must be provided to citizens. Some providers of certain services already function alongside one another as concessions in accordance with their own national legislation, and there are also private service providers offering the same services as each other. Postal services and courier companies are perhaps one of the most visible and well-known examples of this, and possibly one of the services which command the greatest amount of business. The ski sector is another example; in Spain, as in other EU countries, some ski resorts were set up with public funding as part of initiatives to revive areas with a decreasing population, while others were started with private capital.

1. What is the Commission's view on adapting the current circumstances to those whichwould result from the new Directive being implemented as it stands?

2. Has the Commission evaluated the legal uncertainty that the introduction of a time limitwould pose for businesses that have taken decisions and made significant investments intransport systems at a time when this restriction was not in place, meaning that it waspossible to recoup the investment made?

3. Does the Commission not think that the directive should include a clear description ofthis situation and that private initiatives should be excluded from it?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the objective of the proposal for a directive on the award of concessions contracts is to provide more legal security in the process of the award of concession for both public authorities and for the economic operators and to ensure that the offer chosen in the process of selection represents the best value for public money.

The proposal does not lay down any specific time limit on the duration of the concession contracts: it provides that such duration shall be limited to the time estimated to be necessary for the concessionaire to recoup the investments made in operating the works or services together with a resonable return on invested capital. However, rules on the duration of the concession serve the purpose of ensuring equal access to the economic opportunities to all EU companies and guarantee that the markets are not foreclosed for indeterminate period of time.

The directive does not cover acquistions of goods or services by private economic operators with the sole exception of those which enjoy exclusive rights and operate in the Utilities sectors, covered by Directive 2004/17.

Finally, the proposal for a directive on the award of concession contracts will not apply to concessions tendered or awarded before its entry into force. Hence none of the situations described by the Honourable Member which may qualify as concessions will be covered by the proposed rules.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010660/12
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Anti-dumping duties imposed on SME importers, wholesalers and retailers in the EU

Early this year, on behalf of many concerned London constituents, I asked the Commission about the anti-dumping duties (ADD) imposed on ceramic tableware and kitchenware currently being imported into the EU from China. I specifically asked the Commission whether it had considered the severe financial consequences that a large increase in duties would have for some of the EU's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) 'should a proposed increase of 60-70% (based on recent ADD increases for candles and tiles) go ahead'.

On 27 April 2012, the Commission responded to my question and informed me that 'if any definitive measures were to be taken, they would have to be imposed by 15 May 2013'. I was also told that 'Commission findings in anti-dumping investigation are the results of a proper and impartial investigation to which all interested parties can contribute'.

However, in recent days, numerous SMEs operating in my constituency of London have informed me that they have suddenly, and without warning, been given notice that they now have to pay an arbitrary 58.8% duty on Chinese porcelain shipments entering the EU (instead of the 12% duty they have been paying until now).

Given these circumstances, could the Commission please answer the following questions:

1. Would it not agree that this sudden increase in the duty to be paid is very disconcerting for EU SMEs operating in this sector?

2. Would it not agree that SME importers, wholesalers and retailers have not been informed, and that their situation, which it acknowledges to be 'part of the Union interest analysis', has not been taken into consideration in an adequate manner?

3. Can the Commission explain why the duty has been increased excessively, according to my constituents from 12% to 58.8%?

4. Can the Commission explain what action these SMEs can take to remove or reduce the severity of this duty on the operating costs to their businesses?

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

The 12% customs duty applicable to porcelain tableware and kitchenware is not linked to the ongoing anti-dumping investigation.

The imposition of provisional anti-dumping duties was the result of the preliminary findings by the Commission and the reasons that led to such action were published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* ([1]) on 15 November 2012. The calculations of such duties have also been provided to the companies concerned, due regard being paid to the protection of confidential information. While such duties are not without impact in the EU market, it should be noted that only one-third of the imports of these products from China are subject to the highest duty rate.

The Commission would like to underline that these anti-dumping duties are provisional ones. Any definitive duties need to be imposed by the Council of Ministers by mid-May 2013.

All parties which came forward have been invited to make comments by 17 December 2012 and the situation of SME importers, wholesalers and retailers will be further analysed in the remainder of the proceeding. For instance, the Commission sent specific questionnaires to importers and retailers that were known to the Commission, as well as to relevant multipliers (e.g. associations). The Commission is pursuing a proper and impartial investigation to which all interested parties can contribute.

([1]) OJ L 318, 15.11.2012, p. 28.

The Commission cannot find a one-size-fits-all action that SMEs could take to reduce the impact, if any, of the duty on their operating costs. The impact and then the action will heavily depend on their activities. It is noted that the investigation showed that, besides other import sources, Union manufacturers are capable of further serving the Union market.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010661/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Farhad and Rafiq Aliyev

On 25 September 2012 video material was made public which shows Gular Ahmadova and Elshad Abdullayev haggling over the price of a parliamentary seat in Azerbaijan. In the same video Ms Ahmadova reminds Mr Abdullayev about the fate of arrested former ministers Ali Insanov and Farhad Aliyev and threatens him with a warning: 'This is serious, this is politics — this is about power'.

As depicted also in this video, the arrests of Farhad and Rafiq Aliyev were clearly politically motivated. Court proceedings were held under circumstances of constant and serious human rights violations, and the brothers were treated in a biased and prejudiced manner both at the stage of the preliminary investigation and during trial. In two separate judgments the European Court of Human Rights found Azerbaijan in violation of several provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

On 23 October 2012 several NGOs wrote an appeal letter to President Aliyev calling on him to release all political prisoners with health problems. Farhad, who suffers from a heart condition which was aggravated following his arrest and imprisonment, is also included in this appeal. Article 78 of the Criminal Code stipulates the release from prison for a person with a serious illness such as Farhad's.

1. What pressure is the Vice-President/High Representative exerting on the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, following this video? And is the Vice-President/High Representative confronting the Azeri authorities regarding the Aliyev case?

2. What measures has the Vice-President/High Representative undertaken to request that the Government of Azerbaijan complies with the two ECHR judgments?

3. Will the Vice-President/High Representative demand that the state authorities in Baku consider Farhad's early release, as foreseen in Article 78 of the Criminal Code in Azerbaijan?

4. Will the Vice-President/High Representative approach the question of political prisoners more decisively with Azerbaijan, particularly given that other organisations such as the Council of Europe have stepped up their efforts to this end with the approval of the definition of the term political prisoner?

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

The European Union is concerned about the situation of human rights and the level of corruption in Azerbaijan. Despite efforts carried out to improve the situation on both accounts, outstanding commitments made by Azerbaijan in the context of the Council of Europe, the OSCE and in its relations with the European Union, need to be honoured. Let me assure you that the EU expresses its concerns about the human rights situation on a regular basis at the highest political level, including at the recent Cooperation Council of 17 December, as well as through the structured dialogue on these matters.

The report by Mr Strasser to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the follow up to the issue of political prisoners in Azerbaijan includes the brothers Aliyev in the list of alleged political prisoners for which specific recommendations have been proposed. As you know the report will be discussed at the plenary in early 2013. The EU is following very closely this discussion.

My services in Headquarters and on the ground are following up the case of Farhad Aliyev including its legal components and detention conditions, in cooperation with the Red Cross, the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010662/12
an die Kommission
Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE)
(22. November 2012)

Betrifft: Ausfuhrbeschränkungen Chinas in Bezug auf die Seltenen Erden

Da sich 97 % der weltweiten Vorkommen von Seltenen Erden auf chinesischem Hoheitsgebiet befinden, verfügt China über eine absolute Vormachtstellung im Hinblick auf die weltweite Verteilung und den Handel mit Seltenen Erden. Durch die Aufrechterhaltung der geltenden Ausfuhrabgaben, Ausfuhrkontingente und weiterer unnötiger Ausfuhrverfahren und -auflagen beeinträchtigt China die Tätigkeit der Industriezweige und Sektoren, die die Seltenen Erden in ihren Produktionsprozessen verarbeiten. Die Folgen dieser Ausfuhrbeschränkungen sind unlautere Vorteile für die chinesische Industrie und gleichzeitig eine Marktverzerrung durch den künstlichen, vonseiten des Staates geschaffenen Nachteil für europäische und andere Unternehmen außerhalb Chinas.

Diese Beschränkungen bei der Ausfuhr von Seltenen Erden aus China in die übrige Welt behindern die Produktion und die Bereitstellung von Erzeugnissen, die für den Ausbau einer fortschrittlichen, den Herausforderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts gewachsenen Wirtschaft in Europa von Bedeutung sind. Die Seltenen Erden kommen in Windkraftanlagen, energieeffizienten Lampen, Motoren für Fahrzeuge mit Elektro- und Hybridantrieb, Flachbildschirmen und Anzeigen (LED, LCD, Plasmatechnologie), Katalysatoren, Festplattenlaufwerken, Kameraobjektiven, Glasanwendungen, Industriebatterien und medizinischen Geräten zum Einsatz, um nur einige Beispiele zu nennen. Die Marktverzerrungen durch den fehlenden Zugang zu diesen Stoffen wirken sich auf Arbeitnehmer und Arbeitgeber sowohl in Europa als auch in der übrigen Welt negativ aus.

1. Karel De Gucht, für Handel zuständiges Mitglied der Kommission, hat kürzlich seine Absicht bekundet, die Klärung dieses Problems durch ein Schlichtungsverfahren der Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) herbeizuführen. Es gibt jedoch bislang keine Anzeichen dafür, dass China die Aufhebung seiner Beschränkungen plant, obwohl die WTO diese chinesische Strategie in der Vergangenheit bereits für mit den Regeln der WTO unvereinbar erklärt hat. Was beabsichtigt die Kommission zu unternehmen, falls China Aufrufe zur Aufhebung dieser Beschränkungen weiterhin unberücksichtigt lässt?

2. Verfügt die Kommission für den Fall, dass das Schlichtungsverfahren scheitert, über einen Alternativplan, der den Unternehmen die Sicherheit gibt, dass die Kommission das Thema weiterverfolgen wird?

3. Auf welche Weise gewährleistet die Kommission für den Fall der Aufhebung einiger Beschränkungen durch China, dass dies in einer für die Handelspartner Chinas akzeptablen Weise geschieht?

4. Ist die Kommission der Ansicht, dass es sich hierbei um eine nicht verhandelbare und wesentliche Frage in allen bilateralen Gesprächen mit China handelt, für die eine Lösung zu suchen ist, um auch in Zukunft gute Wirtschaftsbeziehungen mit der Europäischen Union zu gewährleisten?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(15. Januar 2013)

Die Ausfuhrbeschränkungen Chinas auf Rohstoffe und insbesondere auf seltene Erden geben seit langem in wirtschaftlicher, rechtlicher und systemischer Hinsicht Anlass zur Sorge. Anfang 2012 gewann die EU gegen China einen WTO-Streit über Ausfuhrbeschränkungen auf bestimmte Rohstoffe (ausgenommen seltene Erden). Während mit der WTO-Entscheidung zugunsten der EU die Regelungen für Ausfuhrbeschränkungen geklärt werden, bezieht sich die Verpflichtung Chinas, die WTO-Entscheidung umzusetzen, nur auf die in diesem Fall abgedeckten Stoffe.

Trotz der eindeutigen Entscheidung und der zahlreichen diplomatischen Bemühungen der EU hat China bisher nicht signalisiert, dass es seine umfassendere Ausfuhrregelung, auch in Bezug auf seltene Erden, überarbeiten werde. Daher musste die EU (gemeinsam mit den USA und Japan) erneut auf rechtliche Schritte zurückgreifen, um für seltene Erden, Wolfram und Molybdän eine Lösung herbeizuführen. Obwohl die vorherige WTO-Entscheidung eine feste Grundlage für weitere Anfechtungen bildet, wird jeder Fall für sich beurteilt. Ein Abschlussbericht des WTO-Panels, dem die Einlegung von Rechtsmitteln und Durchführungsverfahren folgen könnten, ist möglicherweise Ende 2013 zu erwarten.

Damit will die Kommission die chinesischen Beschränkungen vollständig abbauen. Jeder Schritt Chinas zur Lockerung der Ausfuhrregelung müsste sorgfältig geprüft werden, um zu beurteilen, ob das Vorgehen WTO-kompatibel und für die EU-Industrie zufriedenstellend ist.

Diese Angelegenheit bleibt ein zentrales Element in unseren Beziehungen zu China. Die Kommission wird außerdem weiterhin bestrebt sein, die Interessen der europäischen Unternehmen durch zahlreiche politische Maßnahmen zu schützen. Dazu gehört sicherzustellen, dass die Wirtschaftsakteure der EU faire Bedingungen für Investitionen in neue Produktionsprojekte in Ländern erhalten, die über umfangreiche Vorkommen an seltenen Erden verfügen, und dass Handelsabkommen über den Zugang zu Rohstoffen angemessene Regelungen enthalten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010662/12
to the Commission
Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: China's export restrictions on rare earth elements

As 97% of the world's rare earth deposits are within Chinese territory, China has an absolute monopoly over the global distribution and trade of rare earth elements. By maintaining current export duties, quotas and additional, unnecessary export procedures and requirements, China disrupts the industries and sectors that have incorporated these rare earths into their production processes. The effect of these export restrictions is to unfairly benefit Chinese industry, while distorting the market by putting European and other non-Chinese companies at an artificial, state-engineered disadvantage.

The restrictions placed on the export of rare earths from China to the rest of the world disrupt the production and supply of products that are vital to Europe's continued construction of an advanced, 21st century economy. Rare earth elements are used in wind power turbines, energy-efficient bulbs, engines for electric and hybrid vehicles, flat screens and displays (LED, LCD, plasma), catalysers, hard drives, camera lenses, glass applications, industrial batteries and medical equipment, to name various examples. Both European and global consumers and employers are impacted negatively by the market distortions caused by lack of access to these materials.

1. EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht has recently stated that he intends to solve this issue by litigation through the World Trade Organisation (WTO); however, there have so far been no signals from China that it has any plans to remove its restrictions, even though the WTO has in the past declared this Chinese policy incompatible with WTO rules. What does the Commission intend to do if China keeps ignoring calls for these restrictions to be eased?

2. If litigation fails, does the Commission have a back-up plan to reassure the business community that it will continue pursuing this issue?

3. If China does ease restrictions somewhat, how will the Commission ensure that it does so to an extent acceptable to China's trading partners?

4. Does the Commission consider that this issue remains a non-negotiable and vital point in all bilateral talks with China, which must be addressed in order to ensure a good future economic relationship with the European Union?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(15 January 2013)

China's export restrictions on raw materials, and on rare earths in particular, are of longstanding economic, legal and systemic concern. Earlier in 2012, the EU prevailed against China in a WTO dispute on export restrictions on certain raw materials (not including rare earths). While this first WTO ruling in favour of the EU clarifies the disciplines on export restrictions, China's obligation to implement the WTO ruling relates only to the materials covered in that case.

Despite that clear ruling, and the EU's numerous diplomatic efforts, China has not sent any signal that it would review its broader export regime, including on rare earths. Therefore, the EU had to resort once more to legal proceedings (jointly with the US and Japan) to seek a solution regarding rare earths, tungsten and molybdenum. While the previous WTO ruling sets a firm basis for further challenges, each case is judged on its own merits. A final report by the WTO Panel may possibly be expected at the end of 2013 and might be followed by appeal and possible implementation procedures.

Through that action, the Commission's intention is to fully remove the Chinese restrictions. Any possible move by China to relax the export regime would have to be carefully assessed to judge on whether it is WTO-compatible and satisfactory for EU industry.

This matter will at the same time remain a key element in our relations with China. The Commission will also pursue its efforts to protect European companies' interests through various policies. This includes, among others, striving to ensure that EU operators enjoy fair conditions of investment in new production projects in countries abundant in rare earths reserves, and enshrining adequate rules on access to raw materials in trade agreements.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010663/12
à la Commission
Jean-Paul Besset (Verts/ALE)
(22 novembre 2012)

Objet: Règlement (CE) nº 1224/2009 du Conseil instituant un régime communautaire de contrôle afin d'assurer le respect des règles de la politique commune de la pêche

D'après les informations du Conseil international pour l'exploration de la mer (CIEM) figurant dans sa dernière évaluation des stocks d'eau profonde publiée en juillet 2012, les chiffres provisoires des captures de sabre noir par l'Union européenne dans les eaux européennes et internationales des zones V, VI, VII et XII atteignent 3 001 tonnes en 2011 alors que le total admissible de captures (TAC) en 2011 était de 2 356 tonnes pour ces zones (soit un dépassement de 27 %). Ce dépassement est principalement le fait de la surpêche pratiquée par la France, qui a déclaré 2 407 tonnes de captures pour un TAC de 1 884 tonnes.

En vertu de l'article 105, paragraphe 1, du règlement (CE) nº 1224/2009, «lorsque la Commission a établi qu'un État membre a dépassé les quotas qui lui ont été attribués, la Commission procède à des déductions sur les futurs quotas dudit État membre». Le paragraphe 2 de cet article fixe les montants à déduire, en fonction de l'importance du dépassement, tandis que le paragraphe 3, point b), indique qu'un facteur multiplicateur de 1,5 s'applique si «il ressort des avis scientifiques, techniques et économiques disponibles et, en particulier, des rapports établis par le CSTEP que le dépassement constitue une menace grave pour la conservation du stock concerné».

À la lumière de ce qui précède, la Commission voudrait-elle répondre aux questions suivantes?

— Entre 2003 et 2011, quels sont les États membres à avoir dépassé les quotas qui leur avaient été attribués pour les diverses espèces d'eau profonde, et de combien? La Commission pourrait-elle communiquer, pour chacune des espèces d'eau profonde figurant à l'annexe I du règlement (CE) nº 2347/2002 du Conseil, les captures déclarées par année et par stock et indiquer, à titre de comparaison, les divers quotas attribués aux États membres en question?

— Si un ou plusieurs États membres ont dépassé ces quotas pendant la durée d'application du règlement de contrôle, quelles mesures la Commission a-t-elle prises ou compte-t-elle prendre en vertu de l'article 105 de ce règlement?

Réponse donnée par Mme Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(21 janvier 2013)

La Commission attire l'attention de l'Honorable Parlementaire sur le fait que les données publiées par le Conseil international pour l'exploration de la mer (CIEM) auxquelles il fait référence sont de simples estimations. Elles ne constituent pas une preuve d'infraction aux règlements de l'UE sur les TAC et les quotas.

La Commission envoie directement à l'Honorable Parlementaire et au secrétariat du Parlement un tableau contenant les informations demandées relatives aux stocks d'eau profonde pour lesquels des quotas ont été attribués aux États membres. Veuillez noter que certaines des espèces d'eau profonde définies à l'annexe I du règlement (CE) n° 2347/2002 du Conseil ([1]) n'ont pas fait l'objet d'une attribution de quotas aux États membres.

([1]) Règlement (CE) n° 2347/2002 du Conseil du 16 décembre 2002 établissant des conditions spécifiques d'accès aux pêcheries des stocks d'eau profonde et fixant les exigences y afférentes (JO L 351 du 28.12.2002). .

L'article 105 du règlement (CE) n° 1224/2009 du Conseil ([2]) prévoit un certain nombre de mesures que la Commission peut prendre pour répondre à diverses situations de surpêche (dépassement du quota au cours de l'année précédente, comportant différents niveaux de surpêche pour lesquels des déductions sont opérées sur la base de coefficients multiplicateurs; dépassement historique, c'est-à-dire au cours des années précédentes; déductions en l'absence de quota ou de quota suffisant). En application de cette disposition et des lignes directrices pour la déduction de quotas publiées au JO C 72 du 10 mars 2012, la Commission a adopté un certain nombre de règlements prévoyant des déductions de quotas comportant, le cas échéant, l'utilisation des coefficients multiplicateurs prévus à l'article 105, paragraphe 3 [règlements (UE) n[os] 1004/2010 ([3]), 1016/2011 ([4]), 1021/2011 ([5]), 700/2012 ([6]) et 1136/2012 ([7])].

([2]) Règlement (CE) n° 1224/2009 du Conseil du 20 novembre 2009 instituant un régime communautaire de contrôle afin d'assurer le respect des règles de la politique commune de la pêche (JO L 343 du 22.12.2009).

([3]) Règlement (UE) n° 1004/2010 de la Commission du 8 novembre 2010 procédant à des déductions sur certains quotas de pêche pour 2010 en raison de la surpêche pratiquée au cours de l'année précédente (JO L 291 du 9.11.2010).

([4]) Règlement d'exécution (UE) n° 1016/2011 de la Commission du 23 septembre 2011 procédant à des déductions sur les quotas de pêche disponibles pour certains stocks en 2011 en raison de la surpêche de ces stocks au cours de l'année précédente (JO L 270 du 15.10.2011).

([5]) Règlement d'exécution (UE) n° 1021/2011 de la Commission du 14 octobre 2011 procédant à des déductions sur les quotas de pêche disponibles pour certains stocks en 2011 en raison de la surpêche d'autres stocks au cours de l'année précédente (JO L 270 du 15.10.2011).

([6]) Règlement d'exécution (UE) n° 700/2012 de la Commission du 30 juillet 2012 procédant à des déductions sur les quotas de pêche disponibles pour certains stocks, en 2012, en raison de la surpêche au cours des années précédentes (JO L 203 du 31.7.2012).

([7]) Règlement d'exécution (UE) n° 1136/2012 de la Commission du 30 novembre 2012 procédant à des déductions sur les quotas de pêche disponibles pour certains stocks, en 2012, en raison de la surpêche d'autres stocks au cours des années précédentes et modifiant le règlement d'exécution (UE) n° 700/2012, en ce qui concerne les montants à déduire pour les années à venir (JO L 331 du 1.12.2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010663/12
to the Commission
Jean-Paul Besset (Verts/ALE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy

According to documentation provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) in its latest evaluation of deep-sea stocks, made public in July 2012, preliminary EU catches of black scabbardfish in EU and international waters in areas V, VI, VII and XII amounted to 3 001 tonnes in 2011, as compared to a 2011 total allowable catch (TAC) for those areas of 2 356 tonnes (27% in excess). Most of this excess is due to overfishing by France, which has a reported catch of 2 407 tonnes, as compared to a TAC of 1 884 tonnes.

According to Article 105(1) of the Control Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009, 'when the Commission has established that a Member State has exceeded the quotas which have been allocated to it, the Commission shall operate deductions from future quotas of that Member State'. Paragraph 2 of the same article establishes the amounts to be deducted, based on the extent of overfishing, while paragraph 3(b) establishes that a multiplying factor of 1.5 shall apply if 'the available scientific, technical and economic advice and in particular the reports drawn up by STECF have established that overfishing constitutes a serious threat to the conservation of the stock concerned'.

In light of the above, we would like to ask the Commission the following questions:

— For the years 2003 to 2011, which Member State(s) have exceeded any existing deep sea species quotas allocated to them, and by what amounts? Can the Commission provide the reported catches for each of the deep sea species, as defined in Annex I of Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002, broken down by year and stock and compared with each of the quotas allocated to the Member States in question?.

— If any Member State(s) have exceeded such quotas for years in which the Control Regulation is applicable, what action has the Commission taken or is it planning to take pursuant to Article 105 of the Control Regulation?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

The Commission draws the attention of the Honourable Member to the fact that the data published by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to which he refers to are merely estimates. They are not evidence of an infringement to the EU regulations on TAC and quotas.

The Commission is sending direct to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat a table containing the information requested with regard to the deep sea stocks for which quotas have been allocated to Member States. Please note that some of the deep sea species defined in Annex I of Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002 ([1]) have not been the subject of quota allocation to Member States.

Article 105 of Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 ([2]) provides for a number of measures by the Commission to cater for different situations of overfishing (overfishing in the previous year with various levels of overfishing with qualified deductions on the basis of multiplying factors; historical overfishing, i.e. in earlier years; deductions without having a

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002 of 16 December 2002 establishing specific access requirements and associated conditions applicable to fishing for deep-sea stocks (OJ L 351, 28.12.2002).
([2]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 of 20 November 2009 establishing a Community control system for ensuring compliance with the rules of the common fisheries policy (OJ L 343, 22.12.2009).

quota or a sufficient quota). In application of this provision and the guidelines for the deduction of quotas, published in OJ 2012, C 72, the Commission has adopted a number of regulations foreseeing quota deductions, including, where appropriate, the utilisation of multiplying factors foreseen in Article 105(3) (Regulations (EU) No 1004/2010 ([3]), 1016/2011 ([4]), 1021/2011 ([5]), 700/2012 ([6]) and 1136/2012 ([7])).

([3]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 1004/2010 of 8 November 2010 of operating deductions from certain fishing quotas for 2010 on account of overfishing in the previous year (OJ L 291, 9.11.2010).

([4]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1016/2011 of 23 September 2011 operating deductions from fishing quotas available for certain stocks in 2011, on account of overfishing of those stocks in the previous year (OJ L 270, 15.10.2011).

([5]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1021/2011 of 14 October 2011 operating deductions from fishing quotas available for certain stocks in 2011, on account of overfishing of other stocks in the previous year (OJ L 270, 15.10.2011).

([6]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 700/2012 of 30 July 2012 operating deductions from fishing quotas available for certain stocks in 2012 on account of overfishing in the previous years (OJ L 203, 31.7.2012).

([7]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1136/2012 of 30 November 2012 operating deductions from fishing quotas available for certain stocks in 2012 on account of overfishing of other stocks in the previous years and amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 700/2012 as regards amounts to be deducted in future years (OJ L 331, 1.12.2012).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010664/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Allegations that the Egyptian Government has passed a decree restricting property rights in Sinai

On behalf of many of my concerned London constituents, I would like to know whether the European External Action Service (EEAS) is aware of allegations that the Egyptian Government has passed a decree restricting the property rights in Sinai of non-Egyptians, even those of dual nationals or of one Egyptian-parental origin.

In light of this, what action is the EEAS putting into place to protect EU investments in Sinai, and has it petitioned the Egyptian Government on behalf of EU citizens who face the confiscation of their property or are being forced to sell their investments?

In responding, could the EEAS please take into account of the following points:

1. The decree is retroactive, so citizens who in good faith invested in Sinai before the decree was issued are now being forced to comply.

2. Due to the large number of sales at this time in Sinai, the value of property is likely to be reduced significantly and could potentially leave individuals and their families in financial difficulty, both in my constituency of London, and in the wider European Union.

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

The EU is fully aware of the Law 14 of 2012 that regulates investment of projects and ownership and use of lands in Sinai.

The EU shares the concern raised by the Honourable Member. These developments are alarming and the timeframe for the implementation of the regulations by the property and land owners is very tight. The EU Delegation in Cairo and Member States' Embassies are closely following up the matter and are coordinating a joint response to the Egyptian authorities.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010665/12
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia in Greece

Given that Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia does not give the Commission the power to launch infringement proceedings until 1 December 2014, what information does the Commission have on the transposition of the framework Decision by Greece?

With reports of a number of incidents of anti-immigrant violence in Greece, are the Greek courts, in the Commission's opinion, satisfactorily determining whether or not these incidents amount to incitement to racist or xenophobic hatred or violence?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

The Commission's role is to verify the compliance with the framework decision of the transposition done at national level. The Commission cannot pronounce itself about the situation in Greece until it receives and analyses the notification of the transposition measures. The Commission intends to prepare the first report on the implementation of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA in 2013.

Greece informed the Commission on January 2012 that the draft law transposing Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA into Greek law was ready to be submitted to the plenary session of the Greek Parliament for discussion and voting. Since then the Commission has not received further information and Greece has not notified its transposition measures to the Commission.

(Tekstas lietuvių kalba)

Klausimas, į kurį atsakoma raštu, Nr. E-010666/12
Komisijai
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)
(2012 m. lapkričio 22 d.)

Tema: Jūrų reikalų ir žuvininkystės politikos fondas

Žuvininkystė svarbi daugeliui Europos Sąjungos regionų. 2014-2020 m. laikotarpiu siūlomas įsteigti naujas ES jūrų reikalų ir žuvininkystės politikos fondas sudarys tinkamas sąlygas, kad būtų galima pasiekti bendros žuvininkystės politikos reformos plataus užmojo tikslus.

1. Atsižvelgdamas į šio būsimo fondo reikšmę, prašau Komisijos patikslinti, kokius paramos skirstymo principus ir metodiką numatoma taikyti siekiant kuo objektyvesnių kriterijų ir paramos teikimo skaidrumo.

2. Ar numatoma galimybė visoms šalims taikyti bendras visiems ES regionams veiklos programas (t. y. neatskirti konvergencijos ir ne konvergencijos regionų ir tuo pagrindu suvienodinti visiems paramą) ir ar tai neturės neigiamų padarinių tokioms šalims, kaip Lietuva, kurios vis dar atsilieka nuo senųjų ES šalių, todėl joms būtina didesnė pagalba?

3. Ar yra svarstomos galimybės tokiems regionams, kaip Lietuva, nustatyti didesnį paramos akvakultūrai ir savai produkcijai perdirbti intensyvumą 25 procentiniais punktais? Pažymėtina, kad atokiems regionams pagalbos intensyvumas didinamas net 35 proc.

4. Kokiomis priemonėmis, siekiant sukurti ekonomiškai gyvybingą, konkurencingą ir ekologišką akvakultūrą, ketinama skatinti socialinio dialogo struktūrizavimą žvejybos ir akvakultūros sektoriuose?

5. Kokią paramą numatoma skirti gamintojų organizacijoms ir gamintojų organizacijų asociacijoms, vykdančioms partnerystę su mokslininkais ir žvejais?

6. Kokiomis priemonėmis bus siekiama užtikrinti, kad Europos vartotojai būtų geriau aprūpinami Europos akvakultūros ūkiuose užaugintomis žuvimis?

M. Damanaki atsakymas Komisijos vardu
(2013 m. sausio 21 d.)

1. EJRŽF pasiūlyme išdėstyti lėšų paskirstymo valstybėms narėms kriterijai susiję su kiekvienos valstybės narės žuvininkystės ir akvakultūros sektorių apimtimi, veiklos rodikliais ir poreikiais. Tai, kad taikomi sektoriams pritaikyti kriterijai, atspindi metodo objektyvumą ir skaidrumą

2. EJRŽF yra konkrečiam sektoriui skirtas fondas, o jo svarbiausia paskirtis – teikti paramą žuvininkystės ir akvakultūros sektoriams vykstant bendros žuvininkystės politikos reformai. Lėšų paskirstymo kriterijai nustatyti atsižvelgiant į šį tikslą

3. EJRŽF visų pirma orientuotas į pagrindines žuvininkystės ir akvakultūros sektorių sritis. Parama perdirbimo pramonei gali būti skiriama ir per kitus ES fondus, pavyzdžiui, Europos regioninės plėtros fondą, t. y. gali būti skiriama veiksmingų investicijų technologijų vystymui skatinti, inovacijoms ir verslo infrastruktūrai. Kalbant apie akvakultūros sektorių, EJRŽF pasiūlyme šio sektoriaus įmonėms numatoma teikti labai įvairią paramą, skirtą ekonominėms perspektyvoms ir aplinkos tvarumui užtikrinti.

4. EJRŽF pasiūlymo 31 ir 49 straipsniuose numatoma padėti užmegzti naudingus ryšius, keistis patirtimi ir žiniomis apie geriausius darbo metodus bei skatinti socialinį dialogą žuvininkystės ir akvakultūros srityje.

5. 30 straipsnyje numatyta EJRŽF parama žvejų ir mokslininkų partnerystėms taip pat gali būti skirta gamintojų organizacijoms bei gamintojų organizacijų asociacijoms.

6. EJRŽF pasiūlyme numatyta priemonių, kuriomis būtų skatinamos inovacijos, veiksmingos investicijos, modernizavimas, pridėtinės vertės kūrimas akvakultūros sektoriuje, bei rinkodaros priemonių, skirtų akvakultūros produktų reklamai, siekiant kuo labiau padidinti rinkos potencialą ir informuoti vartotojus.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010666/12
to the Commission
Rolandas Paksas (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Fishing is important for many regions of the European Union. The new EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund policy, which is proposed to be established in the period 2014-2020, will create the right conditions to achieve the ambitious goals of the reform of the common fisheries policy.

1. Given this significance of this future fund, I ask the Commission to specify the assistance distribution principles and methodology that are envisaged with a view to ensuring criteria that are as objective as possible and transparency in the provision of assistance.

2. Is it possible for a joint programme of activities for all EU regions to be applied to all countries (i.e. not to separate convergence and non-convergence regions and, on this basis, harmonise assistance for all), and would this have negative consequences for countries like Lithuania, which are still lagging behind old EU Member States and therefore need greater aid?

3. Are the possibilities of increasing aid intensity for aquaculture and the processing of own production by 25% being considered for regions like Lithuania? It should be noted that aid intensity for remote regions is being increased by as much as 35%.

4. What measures, to achieve economically viable, competitive and green aquaculture, are planned to promote the structuring of social dialogue in the fisheries and aquaculture sector?

5. What support is to be allocated to producer organisations and associations of producer organisations working in partnership with scientists and fishermen?

6. What measures will be aimed at ensuring that European consumers are better provided with fish raised in European fish farms?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

1. Criteria set out in EMFF proposal for financial distribution among Member States are linked to the size, performance and needs of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in every Member State. The application of sector-specific criteria reflects an objective and transparent approach.

2. EMFF is a sector-specific fund with its main objective to provide support for fisheries and aquaculture sectors in implementing the reform of Common Fisheries Policy. The criteria for financial allocations reflect that objective.

3. EMFF is designed to focus on core areas in fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Support for processing industry can also be granted through other EU Funds such as the European Regional Development Fund, i.e., productive investments for strengthening technological development, innovation and business infrastructure. As regards aquaculture sector, EMFF proposal foresees a broad scope of support for firms in the sector, designed to ensure economic viability and environmental sustainability.

4. Articles 31 and 49 of EMFF proposal foresee support for networking, exchange of experience and best practice, and promoting the social dialogue in fisheries and aquaculture.

5. EMFF support for partnerships between scientists and fishermen established in Article 30 can also be allocated to the producer organisations and associations of producers organisations.

6. EMFF proposal contains measures to stimulate innovation, productive invesments, modernization, added value in aquaculture as well as marketing measures for the promotion activities of aquaculture products in order to maximise market potential and raise consumer awareness.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-010667/12
do Komisji
Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE)
(22 listopada 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Stan prawny bezzałogowych statków powietrznych zarejestrowanych lub odbywających loty na terytorium Unii Europejskiej

Wyraźnie trzeba określić, co jest modelem, a co UAV. Wynika, że UAV może też być wykonany w nanotechnologii. Zatem nie tylko rozmiary powinny decydować, ale przede wszystkim i przeznaczenie. Kolejne zagadnienie to kontakt z UAV. W przypadku wojska zazwyczaj prowadzi go operator naziemny i w momencie utraty łącza, następuje zniszczenie tego aparatu. Natomiast nie ma ustaleń – i to wymaga regulacji – odnośnie do strony cywilnej i zastosowania np. do monitoringu środowiska naturalnego. Kolejna sprawa to, czy jeżeli już będzie decyzja, że cywilny UAV musi mieć operatora, to sprawa certyfikatu/licencji dla tego typu specjalisty. Czy potrzeba uprawnień pilota, czy wystarczy zwykłe przeszkolenie?

Odnośnie do samych bezzałogowych statków latających spoza UE i ich przelotu przez Europejską Przestrzeń Lotniczą, trzeba ustalić, czy UAV to też statek powietrzny (mimo że jest bez pilota) i wtedy musiałby spełniać wymagania, jak każdy np. ultralight statek powietrzny, jeżeli wchodziłby w przestrzeń europejską. Zatem jak Unia Europejska oraz państwa członkowskie powinny interpretować bezzałogowce, czy jest może jakieś stanowisko w tej sprawie czy wytyczne?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wiceprzewodniczącego Siima Kallasa w imieniu Komisji
(14 stycznia 2013 r.)

Klasyfikacja bezpilotowych statków powietrznych pilotowanych ze stacji zdalnego sterowania jest obecnie opracowywana. Zgodnie z załącznikiem II do konwencji o międzynarodowym lotnictwie cywilnym modele samolotów uznaje się za przeznaczone jedynie do celów rekreacyjnych i nie podlegają one postanowieniom tej konwencji.

Każda operacja transgraniczna bezpilotowego statku powietrznego podlega przepisom art. 8 wyżej wspomnianej konwencji. Zgodnie z tym artykułem przelot nad terytorium umawiającego się państwa wymaga specjalnego upoważnienia ze strony tego państwa oraz musi być zgodny z warunkami takiego upoważnienia.

Jak wyjaśniono w odpowiedzi na pytanie P-010657/2012 ([1]), Komisja opracuje i przyjmie przepisy lotnicze odnośnie do zdatności do lotu, licencjonowania personelu powietrznego oraz do operacji lotniczych w celu wspierania transgranicznych operacji bezpilotowych statków powietrznych.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010667/12
to the Commission
Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Legal status of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) registered in or flying over EU territory

A clear distinction must be made between models and UAVs. Given that UAVs may also be made using nanotechnology, it should not be solely the device's dimensions that determine its classification, but above all its intended purpose. Another issue is contact with UAVs. In military applications, UAVs are usually controlled by a ground-based operator, and loss of contact leads to the immediate destruction of the device. However, rules — which are essential — have not been established concerning civilian applications and use in environmental monitoring. Furthermore, if it is decided that civilian UAVs must have an operator, what type of certificate or licence should such a specialist hold? Will a pilot's licence be required, or will standard training be sufficient?

With regard to UAVs from outside the EU that use European airspace, it must be ascertained whether the UAV is also an aircraft, albeit a pilotless aircraft, in which case it would have to meet the same requirements that ultralight aircraft have to in order to enter European airspace.

How should the EU and the Member States classify UAVs? Is there an opinion or are there guidelines on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2013)

The classification of unmanned aircraft piloted from a remote pilot station is currently under development. In accordance with Annex 2 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, model aircraft are recognised as intended for recreational purposes only and fall outside the provisions of this Convention.

Any cross-border operation of an unmanned aircraft is subject to the provisions of Article 8 of the aforementoned Convention. This Article states that the flight over the territory of a Contracting State of this Convention must be submitted to a special authorisation by that Contracting State and must be conducted with the terms of such authorisation.

As explained in the answer to the Question P-010657/2012 ([1]) aviation rules will be developped and adopted by the Commission in the domains of airworthiness, crew licensing and air operations to support cross-border operation of unmanned aircraft.

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010668/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Βιωσιμότητα ελληνικών μικρομεσαίων επιχειρήσεων

Σύμφωνα με την ετήσια έκθεση της Εθνικής Συνομοσπονδίας Ελληνικού Εμπορίου (ΕΣΕΕ) οι προοπτικές ανάκαμψης σε ορατό χρόνο για τις εμπορικές επιχειρήσεις θεωρούνται ελάχιστες, καθώς οι διαπιστώσεις για το 2011 και οι εκτιμήσεις για το 2012 είναι δυσοίωνες συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της αγοραστικής δύναμης των καταναλωτών, η οποία εκτιμάται ότι έχει επιστρέψει στα επίπεδα του '84 με τις τιμές να κινούνται συνεχώς ανοδικά σε πορεία το 2012. Συγκεκριμένα, το 2011, οι πωλήσεις και τα μεικτά κέρδη σημείωσαν για τρίτο συνεχές έτος πτώση, κατά 7,3% και 12,2% αντίστοιχα ενώ το ποσοστό μεικτού κέρδους περιορίστηκε σε 19,1%. Οι ζημίες των εμπορικών εταιρειών ξεπέρασαν το 1 δισ. ευρώ και ήταν σχεδόν πενταπλάσιες σε σχέση με το προηγούμενο έτος. Κανένας τομέας του εμπορίου δεν ήταν κερδοφόρος, ενώ το βαρύτερο πλήγμα δέχθηκε το χονδρικό εμπόριο. Επίσης το 2011 εντοπίζεται για πρώτη φορά πτώση των επενδύσεων παγίου κεφαλαίου στο ελληνικό εμπόριο συνολικά. Η αποεπένδυση αφορά και τους τρεις τομείς, ενώ ήταν ιδιαίτερα έντονη στο χονδρικό εμπόριο. Όμως και το 2012 το κλίμα δεν διαφέρει και πολύ καθώς περισσότερες από 8 στις 10 εμπορικές επιχειρήσεις εκτιμούν ότι οι πωλήσεις και τα κέρδη τους το 2012 είναι μειωμένα. Εν τω μεταξύ συνεχίζεται η επενδυτική άπνοια, καθώς 6 στις 10 επιχειρήσεις, δήλωσαν στασιμότητα στις επενδύσεις παγίου κεφαλαίου. Η πλειονότητα των εμπορικών επιχειρήσεων δήλωσε στασιμότητα απασχόλησης, ενώ για πρώτη φορά τα τελευταία 12 χρόνια η απασχόληση στο εμπόριο έπεσε κάτω από τις 700 000 θέσεις εργασίας με 98 000 λουκέτα και 93 500 απώλειες θέσεων εργασίας τον τελευταίο χρόνο. Τέλος, σχεδόν οι 9 στις 10 εμπορικές επιχειρήσεις εκτιμούν ότι επιδεινώθηκε η ρευστότητά τους το 2012.

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Τυγχάνουν οι ελληνικές μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις (ΜΜΕ) ίσης αντιμετώπισης όσον αφορά τους όρους συνδιαλλαγής (π.χ. όροι πληρωμής, παραλαβής, παράδοσης) με συνεργαζόμενες επιχειρήσεις σε άλλα κράτη μέλη;

2. Δεδομένου ότι η πρόσβαση στη χρηματοδότηση των ΜΜΕ είναι ιδιαίτερης σημασίας τόσο για την οικονομική ανάπτυξη όσο και για τη δημιουργία θέσεων απασχόλησης εκτός από τα προγράμματα που έχει δρομολογήσει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση για την τόνωση της ρευστότητας, ποιές κατευθυντήριες γραμμές σκοπεύει να δώσει η Επιτροπή προς αυτό το σκοπό;

3. Ποιες είναι οι εκτιμήσεις και οι προβλέψεις της Επιτροπής για τη βιωσιμότητα των ΜΜΕ στην Ελλάδα το 2013; Διαθέτει επίσημα στατιστικά στοιχεία για το 2012;

Απάντηση του κ. Tajani εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

1. Η Επιτροπή δεν συγκεντρώνει στοιχεία σχετικά με τις εμπορικές συναλλαγές μεταξύ των ιδιωτικών επιχειρήσεων στα κράτη μέλη.

2. Η Επιτροπή προτρέπει την ελληνική κυβέρνηση να διευκολύνει την πρόσβαση στη χρηματοδότηση των ΜΜΕ, ιδιαίτερα κατά τη διάρκεια της τρέχουσας περιόδου, η οποία χαρακτηρίζεται από έλλειψη πόρων. Αναμένεται ότι η τελευταία εκταμίευση, η οποία εγκρίθηκε από την Ευρωομάδα στις 13 Δεκεμβρίου, θα δώσει στην ελληνική οικονομία την απαιτούμενη ρευστότητα, ώστε να ωφεληθούν άμεσα οι ΜΜΕ που αντιμετωπίζουν προβλήματα ρευστότητας.

Μέσα στα επόμενα τρίμηνα θα διεξαχθεί ένα κυβερνητικό σχέδιο για την αποπληρωμή των καθυστερημένων οφειλών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης και της επιστροφής φόρων, και οι ΜΜΕ θα είναι σημαντικοί δικαιούχοι. Επιπλέον, διάφοροι χρηματοδοτικοί μηχανισμοί έχουν αναπτυχθεί προς όφελος των ΜΜΕ. Μερικά από τα εν λόγω προγράμματα περιλαμβάνουν την υποστήριξη από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης. Στις 21 Μαρτίου 2012 οι ελληνικές αρχές και η ΕΤΕπ υπέγραψαν συμφωνία συγκρότησης ενός μηχανισμού, ο οποίος συνίσταται σε εγγύηση από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία (ανώτατου ύψους 500 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ), με σκοπό την υποστήριξη της χορήγησης πρόσθετων συνολικών δανείων από την ΕΤΕπ στις τράπεζες. Ο εν λόγω μηχανισμός θα επιτρέψει στις τράπεζες να χορηγήσουν δάνεια στις ΜΜΕ.

3. Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει στη διάθεσή της στοιχεία όσον αφορά τον αντίκτυπο των οικονομικών πολιτικών που εφαρμόζονται επί του παρόντος, με σκοπό την προώθηση της βιωσιμότητας των ΜΜΕ. Δεν υπάρχουν επίσημες διαθέσιμες στατιστικές για το 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010668/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Viability of Greek SMEs

According to the annual report of the National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce, commercial undertakings have little prospect for growth in the foreseeable future. Findings for 2011 and forecasts for 2012 are inauspicious, taking into account consumer purchasing power, which is forecast to return to 1984 levels, with prices set to rise continuously over 2012. Specifically, in 2011 sales and gross profits fell for the third consecutive year, by 7.3% and 12.2% respectively, and gross profit margins fell to 19.1%. Losses sustained by commercial companies exceeded EUR 1 billion, almost five times the losses sustained in the previous year. Not one commercial sector reported a profit, with the wholesale trade being the hardest hit. Investments in fixed capital by Greek commerce as a whole also fell for the first time in 2011. Disinvestment applied to all three sectors, but was most marked in the wholesale trade. However, there is no change in 2012, with more than 8 out of 10 commercial undertakings forecasting reduced sales and profits for 2012. In the meantime, the investment calm continues, with 6 out of 10 undertakings stating that investments in fixed capital stagnated. The majority of commercial undertakings declared that employment had stagnated and, for the first time in the past 12 years, employment in commerce fell below 700 000 jobs, with 98 000 businesses going bankrupt and 93 500 jobs lost in the past year. Finally, almost 9 out of 10 commercial undertakings expect their liquidity to deteriorate in 2012.

Will the Commission say:

1. Do Greek small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) receive the same treatment in respect of trading terms (such as terms of payment, receipt and delivery) as the enterprises in other Member States with which they do business?

2. Given that access to financing for SMEs is vital to both economic growth and job creation, what guidelines does the Commission intend to issue for that purpose over and above the programmes introduced by the Greek Government to stimulate liquidity?

3. What are the Commission's estimates and forecasts for the viability of Greek SMEs in 2013? Does it have official statistics available for 2012?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(16 January 2013)

1. The Commission does not collect information regarding private business to business trading among Member States.

2. The Commission encourages the Greek Government to facilitate access to finance for SMEs, in particular during this period of shortage of funds. It is expected that the latest disbursement agreed by the Eurogroup on 13 December will provide much needed liquidity to the Greek economy thus directly benefit SMEs that face liquidity problems.

A government plan for repayment of arrears including tax refunds will be carried out over the next quarters, and SMEs will be significant beneficiaries. In addition, various financial instruments have been developed for SMEs. Some of the schemes involve the support of the European Regional Development Fund. An agreement was signed by the Greek authorities and the EIB on 21 March 2012 for an instrument which consists of structural funds (up to EUR 500 million) to support additional EIB global loans to banks. This instrument will allow banks to lend to SMEs.

3. The Commission does not have data on the impact of the economic policies currently being implemented to promote viability of SMEs. There are no available official statistics for 2012.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010669/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Αδικαιολόγητη η επιβολή πρόσθετων επιβαρύνσεων από τις τράπεζες για δάνεια

Με επίσημη ανακοίνωση, η ελληνική ανεξάρτητη αρχή «Συνήγορος του Καταναλωτή» επισημαίνει για μια ακόμη φορά το ζήτημα της επιβολής των αποκαλούμενων εξόδων «μελέτης» ή «φακέλου» ή «προέγκρισης» ή «διαχείρισης», καθώς και εξόδων με συναφείς διατυπώσεις κατά τη χορήγηση τραπεζικών δανείων και συστήνει στα τραπεζικά ιδρύματα να απέχουν από τη χρέωσή τους στους καταναλωτές (εκτός αν πρόκειται για έξοδα υπέρ τρίτων).

Δεδομένου ότι:

— η εξέταση της πιστοληπτικής ικανότητας των υποψήφιων δανειοληπτών από τα τραπεζικά ιδρύματα είναι απαραίτητη και αποσκοπεί στη γενική προστασία του πιστωτικού συστήματος από επισφαλή δάνεια, αλλά και την προάσπιση των συμφερόντων των καταθετών- πελατών και πιστωτών.

— το λειτουργικό κόστος διατήρησης εκ μέρους των τραπεζών, υπηρεσιών και οργανωτικών δομών για τη διεκπεραίωση των αναγκαίων ελέγχων και γραφειοκρατικών διαδικασιών, συνυπολογίζεται στο επιτόκιο με το οποίο χορηγούνται τα δάνεια στους καταναλωτές και άρα με την επιβολή πρόσθετων εξόδων «μελέτης» ή «φακέλου» ή «προέγκρισης» ή «διαχείρισης» ζητείται στην ουσία από τους καταναλωτές να πληρώσουν διπλά για τα λειτουργικά έξοδα των τραπεζικών ιδρυμάτων.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Με δεδομένο ότι οι συστάσεις δεν αποτελούν απαγορεύσεις, πώς προστατεύονται τελικά οι ήδη υπερχρεωμένοι, καταναλωτές-δανειολήπτες από τέτοιου είδους διπλοχρεώσεις που ακόμα και σε οξύτατες περιόδους ύφεσης συνεχίζουν και επιβάλλουν τα τραπεζικά ιδρύματα;

— Υπεβλήθη η έκθεση σχετικά με την εφαρμογή της οδηγίας για τις αθέμιτες εμπορικές πρακτικές που είχε προγραμματιστεί για τον Ιούνιο του 2011; Ποια τα αποτελέσματα;

— Η Επιτροπή σχεδίαζε την οργάνωση εργαστηρίου με τις εθνικές αρχές αρμόδιες για τον έλεγχο της εφαρμογής των εθνικών νομοθεσιών με τις οποίες υλοποιούνται η οδηγία σχετικά με τις καταχρηστικές ρήτρες των συμβάσεων και οι απαιτήσεις πληροφόρησης βάσει της οδηγίας για τις υπηρεσίες πληρωμών. Στόχος ήταν η ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών αναφορικά με αθέμιτες εμπορικές πρακτικές στις λιανικές χρηματικές και οικονομικές υπηρεσίες, ιδιαίτερα σε ότι αφορά τη διαφάνεια των τραπεζικών τελών. Υλοποιήθηκε η εν λόγω δράση; Ποια τα αποτελέσματα;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(1 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

Η οδηγία για τις υπηρεσίες πληρωμών ([1]) (PSD) καθορίζει στον τίτλο ΙΙΙ σειρά κανόνων για τη διασφάλιση της διαφάνειας των όρων και των απαιτήσεων ενημέρωσης όσον αφορά τις υπηρεσίες πληρωμών. Οι κανόνες αυτοί περιλαμβάνουν την υποχρέωση των παρόχων υπηρεσιών πληρωμών, όπως οι τράπεζες, να παρέχουν στους πελάτες τους τις πληροφορίες και τους όρους σχετικά με τις χρεώσεις, τα επιτόκια και τις συναλλαγματικές ισοτιμίες. Η Επιτροπή επιθυμεί να ενημερώσει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος ότι το έργο της παρακολούθησης της συμμόρφωσης των τραπεζών και των οργανισμών πληρωμών με την ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία αποτελεί, πρωτίστως, αρμοδιότητα των επιμέρους κρατών μελών.

Η έκθεση σχετικά με την εφαρμογή της οδηγίας 2005/29/ΕΚ ([2]) προβλέπεται για έγκριση στις αρχές του 2013. Θα περιλαμβάνει, ειδικότερα, κατάλογο των συνηθέστερων αθέμιτων εμπορικών πρακτικών που απαντώνται στα κράτη μέλη, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του κλάδου των χρηματοπιστωτικών υπηρεσιών.

([1]) Οδηγία 2009/64/ΕΚ για τις υπηρεσίες πληρωμών στην εσωτερική αγορά.
([2]) Οδηγία 2005/29/ΕΚ για τις αθέμιτες εμπορικές πρακτικές, ΕΕ L 149 της 11.6.2005, σ. 22.

Η Επιτροπή δεν σκοπεύει να οργανώσει συγκεκριμένο εργαστήριο με τα κράτη μέλη σχετικά με την εφαρμογή των απαιτήσεων ενημέρωσης που προβλέπονται στην PSD. Οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής διατηρούν τακτική επαφή με τις εθνικές αρχές μέσω της επιτροπής πληρωμών, στην οποία εξετάζεται τακτικά το ζήτημα της διαφάνειας και των απαιτήσεων ενημέρωσης. Η τελευταία συζήτηση επ'αυτού πραγματοποιήθηκε στις 17 Οκτωβρίου 2012, ενόψει της αναθεώρησης της PSD. Επίσης, σε συμφωνία με το πρόγραμμα εργασίας της Επιτροπής για το 2013 ([3]) και την Πράξη για την Ενιαία Αγορά II ([4]), η Επιτροπή σκοπεύει να λάβει διορθωτικά μέτρα με στόχο, μεταξύ άλλων, την αύξηση της διαφάνειας και της συγκρισιμότητας των εξόδων που βαρύνουν τους τραπεζικούς λογαριασμούς. Η Επιτροπή βρίσκεται στο στάδιο της ολοκλήρωσης της προετοιμασίας της εν λόγω νομοθετικής πρωτοβουλίας.

([3]) COM(2012)629.
([4]) COM(2012) 573.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010669/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Unwarranted additional bank charges for loans

The Greek Consumer Ombudsman, who is an independent authority, has once again noted in an official report that so-called 'administration' , 'file', 'preliminary approval', 'management' or similarly-worded costs are being charged for bank loans and has recommended that banks refrain from charging consumers such costs (unless they are third party costs).

Given that:

— banks need to investigate the credit rating of potential borrowers in order to protect the credit system in general from bad debts and defend the interests of depositors and creditors;

— the operating costs to banks for maintaining services and organisational structures to carry out the necessary checks and bureaucratic procedures are included in the interest rate on loans to consumers and thus, by charging additional 'administration', 'file', 'preliminary approval' or 'management' costs, they are essentially asking consumers to pay the bank's operating costs twice,

Will the Commission say:

— Given that a recommendation is not a ban, how are consumers/borrowers already deeply in debt protected from these double costs which the banks are still charging, even though we are in deep recession?

— Has the report on the application of the directive on unfair trading practices scheduled for June 2011 been submitted? What were the results?

— Does the Commission plan to organise a workshop with the national authorities responsible for monitoring the application of national laws implementing the Unfair Contract Terms Directive and information requirements based on the Payment Services Directive? The plan was to exchange information on unfair trading practices in retail monetary and financial services, especially regarding the transparency of banking charges. Was that action implemented? What were the results?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Payment Services Directive ([1]) (PSD) in its Title III establishes a set of rules to ensure transparency of conditions and information requirements for payment services. These comprise the obligation of payment service providers, such as banks, to provide their customers with information and conditions on charges, interest and exchange rates. The Commission wishes to inform the Honourable Member that the task of monitoring compliance of banks and payment institutions with the European legislation is, above all, the responsibility of individual Member States.

The report on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC ([2]) is foreseen for adoption early 2013. It will, in particular, provide a list of the most common unfair commercial practices encountered in the Member States, including in the area of financial services.

([1]) Directive 2009/64/EC on payment services in the internal market.
([2]) Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22.

The Commission does not plan to organise a specific workshop with Member States on the application of the information requirements set out in the PSD. The Commission services are in regular contact with national authorities via the Payment Committee, where the issue of transparency and information requirements is being addressed regularly as appropriate. It was last discussed on 17 October 2012 in view of the revision of the PSD. Moreover, in line with the Commission's work programme for 2013 ([3]) and the single market Act II ([4]), the Commission intends to take concrete measures aiming *inter alia* at increasing transparency and comparability of bank account fees. The Commission is currently finalising the preparation of this legislative initiative.

([3]) COM(2012)629.

([4]) COM(2012) 573.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010670/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Συνεχής αύξηση του δείκτη τιμών καταναλωτή στην Ελλάδα — άνοδος στις τιμές των προϊόντων

Σύμφωνα με την ανακοίνωση της Ελληνικής Στατιστικής Αρχής, από τη σύγκριση του γενικού δείκτη τιμών καταναλωτή του μηνός Οκτωβρίου 2012, προς τον αντίστοιχο δείκτη του Οκτωβρίου 2011, παρατηρείται αύξηση 1,6%, έναντι αύξησης 3%, που σημειώθηκε κατά την ίδια σύγκριση του έτους 2011 προς το 2010. Παράλληλα, ο μέσος δείκτης του δωδεκάμηνου Νοεμβρίου 2011-Οκτωβρίου 2012, σε σύγκριση προς τον αντίστοιχο δείκτη της ίδιας περιόδου για το 2010-2011, παρουσίασε αύξηση της τάξης του 1,8%, έναντι αύξησης 3,7%, που σημειώθηκε κατά τα αντίστοιχα προηγούμενα δωδεκάμηνα.

Πιο συγκεκριμένα η αύξηση του γενικού δείκτη τιμών καταναλωτή, κατά 1,6% το μήνα Οκτώβριο 2012, προήλθε κυρίως από τις αυξήσεις των δεικτών:

— Κατά 1,0% της ομάδας «Διατροφή και μη αλκοολούχα ποτά», λόγω αύξησης των τιμών σε βασικά είδη διατροφής.

— Κατά 1,9% της ομάδας «Ένδυση και υπόδηση», λόγω αύξησης των τιμών σε αυτά τα είδη.

— Κατά 13,2% της ομάδας «Στέγαση», λόγω αύξησης των τιμών, κυρίως, του πετρελαίου θέρμανσης, του φυσικού αερίου και του ηλεκτρισμού.

— Κατά 3,0% της ομάδας «Μεταφορές», λόγω αύξησης, κυρίως, των τιμών στα είδη: καύσιμα αυτοκινήτου, τέλη κυκλοφορίας, εισιτήρια αεροπλάνων.

Σύμφωνα με τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Σε τι επίπεδα κυμαίνεται ο ετήσιος μέσος δείκτης τιμών καταναλωτή στα κράτη μέλη της ζώνης του ευρώ;

— Δεδομένου ότι πολλές φορές οι τιμές καθορίζονται από μονοπώλια, ολιγοπώλια και καρτέλ, σε ποιες συστάσεις προτίθεται να προβεί η Επιτροπή προκειμένου να ενισχυθεί ο ανταγωνισμός στην ελληνική αγορά με λογικό επακόλουθο τη πολυπόθητη μείωση των τιμών;

— Αφού ήδη έχει επιτευχθεί μείωση στο μισθολογικό κόστος, στους μισθούς και τις συντάξεις με παρέμβαση των εκάστοτε κυβερνήσεων, θα μπορούσε να εφαρμοστεί κατά παρέκκλιση και ως αναγκαιότητα, για συγκεκριμένο αριθμό βασικών ειδών διατροφής και για συγκεκριμένο χρονικό διάστημα μέχρι να αποκατασταθεί η λειτουργία της αγοράς, η πρακτική της διατίμησης;

— Εφαρμόζονται ευνοϊκές τιμές ή άλλου τύπου εκπτωτικές πολιτικές τουλάχιστον σε είδη βασικής διατροφής για τις ευπαθείς και ευάλωτες ομάδες του πληθυσμού σε άλλα κράτη μέλη;

— Πιστεύει ότι η μείωση των τιμών θα μπορούσε πράγματι να αποτελέσει σημαντικό στόχο για την ανάπτυξη της ελληνικής οικονομίας;

— Πώς οι καταναλωτές μπορούν να κάνουν συνειδητές επιλογές, δεδομένου ότι είναι δυσκολότερο να συγκρίνουν τιμές, όταν αυτές αλλάζουν συχνά για ομοειδή προϊόντα και υπηρεσίες;

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

Δεδομένου του αντικτύπου τους στην αγοραστική δύναμη των Ελλήνων πολιτών και στους όρους ανταγωνιστικότητας στην οικονομία, η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά την εξέλιξη των τιμών στην Ελλάδα. Σύμφωνα με τα τελευταία στοιχεία της ΕΛΣΤΑΤ, το προηγούμενο έτος ο πληθωρισμός ΕνΔΤΚ στην Ελλάδα επιβραδύνθηκε αισθητά από 2,1% σε ετήσια βάση τον Ιανουάριο του 2012 σε 0,3% τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012, ενώ, κατά μέσο όρο, ο πληθωρισμός στη ζώνη του ευρώ (Δείκτης Τιμών Καταναλωτή της Νομισματικής Ένωσης, ΔΤΚΝΕ) παρέμεινε πάνω από το 2%. Τα στοιχεία αυτά επιβεβαιώνουν ότι, αν και με κάποια καθυστέρηση, οι τιμές στην Ελλάδα προσαρμόζονται στις εξελίξεις στους μισθούς και τις συντάξεις. Άλλος παράγοντας που συμβάλλει στον μειωμένο πληθωρισμό είναι ο αντίκτυπος των διαρθρωτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων στην αγορά προϊόντων οι οποίες συντελέστηκαν στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα. Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις στοχεύουν, μεταξύ άλλων, στην ενίσχυση του εσωτερικού ανταγωνισμού και στη μείωση της δύναμης των επιχειρήσεων για τιμολόγηση, εξαλείφοντας κατά συνέπεια αδικαιολόγητες προσόδους επί υπερβολικών κερδών και τη μετακύλισή τους στους καταναλωτές.

Είναι σημαντικό η προσαρμογή των τιμών να συντελεστεί βάσει όρων οικονομίας της αγοράς, οι οποίοι εξασφαλίζουν αποτελεσματική κατανομή των πόρων της οικονομίας. Ο καθορισμός των τιμών εμφανίζει σημαντικά μειονεκτήματα που μπορεί να επηρεάσουν δυσμενώς την ταχύτητα της διαδικασίας μακροοικονομικής προσαρμογής της Ελλάδας και ως εκ τούτου περιορίζεται σε στενό φάσμα αγαθών και υπηρεσιών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010670/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Steady increase in consumer price index in Greece/rising prices for goods

According to an announcement by the Hellenic Statistical Authority, the general consumer price index rose by 1.6% in October 2012 compared with October 2011, against a 3% increase in 2011 compared with 2010. At the same time, the average index for the twelve months from November 2011 to October 2012 rose by 1.8% compared with the same period between 2010 and 2011, against a 3.7% increase in the previous twelve months.

The 1.6% increase in the general consumer price index in October 2012 was caused mainly by increases in the following indexes:

— a 1.0% increase in the 'food and non-alcoholic drinks' index, due to rising prices for basic foodstuffs;

— a 1.9% increase in the 'clothing and footwear' index, due to rising prices for such goods;

— a 13.2% increase in the 'housing' index, mainly due to rising prices for heating oil, natural gas and electricity;

— a 3.0% increase in the 'transport' index, mainly due to rising prices for vehicle fuel, road tax and aeroplane tickets.

In light of the above, will the Commission say:

— To what extent does the average annual consumer price index fluctuate in the Member States of the euro area?

— Given that prices are often set by monopolies, oligopolies and cartels, what recommendations does the Commission intend to make in order to improve competition in the Greek market and thus bring about a much-needed reduction in prices?

— As a reduction in wage costs, wages and pensions has already been achieved following intervention by individual governments, could price-fixing be used, as a necessary exception, for a specific number of basic foodstuffs for a specific period of time, until the market starts to function properly again?

— Are favourable prices or some other form of discount policy applied at least to basic foodstuffs for vulnerable sections of the population in other Member States?

— Does the Commission believe that price reductions might in fact represent an important objective for the purpose of stimulating growth in the Greek economy?

— How can consumers make informed choices, given that it is very difficult to compare prices, which often change for similar goods and services?

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

The Commission follows closely the price developments in Greece given their effects on the purchasing power of Greek citizens and competitive conditions of the economy. According to the latest ELSTAT data release, in the course of the last year, the HICP inflation in Greece visibly slowed down from 2.1% year-on-year in January 2012 to 0.3% in December 2012, while on average the inflation for the euro area (monetary union index of consumer prices, MUICP) remained above 2%. This evidence confirms that the prices in Greece are adjusting to wage and pension developments although with some lag. Another factor contributing to the decreasing inflation is the effect of product market structural reforms undertaken within the Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece. The reforms are aimed at, among others, enhancing internal competition and reducing pricing power of enterprises, therefore eliminating unwarranted rents on excessive profits, and transferring them to consumers.

It is important that the price adjustment occurs under market economy conditions, which provide an efficient allocation of the resources in the economy. Price-fixing has severe drawbacks that can have an adverse influence on the speed of the macroeconomic adjustment process in Greece, and therefore is limited to a narrow set of goods and services.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010671/12
to the Commission
Phil Bennion (ALDE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Nobel Peace Prize money

On 12 October 2012 the Nobel Prize Committee decided to award the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union for its contribution to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe. The Commission took the decision, that I welcome, to allocate the approximately EUR 930 000 in prize money to child victims of violent conflict.

In light of this, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Could it provide further details on how these projects will be selected?

2. Will the prize money be managed centrally, with a proportion lost in administrative costs, or does the Commission intend to donate the money directly to the organisations responsible for delivering the projects?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission has formally accepted the Nobel Peace prize money on behalf of the European Union and decided to top up the amount of the prize, for a total of EUR 2 million to be allocated to projects for children affected by conflict.

The Commission has selected the projects in line with normal procedures for funding humanitarian actions based on professional selection criteria such as quality, impact, value for money, feasibility and sustainability. The results were announced on 18 December 2012 and these are the projects and humanitarian partner organisations that have been selected:

— Norwegian Refugee Council

— Save the Children UK: Protecting and teaching displaced children in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

— Unicef ([1]): providing learning opportunities for displaced children in Pakistan;

— UNHCR ([2]): improving access to education in Colombia and Ecuador for Colombian children affected by the conflict;

— ACTED ([3]): providing protection and education to Syrian refugee children in Iraq.

The entire EUR 2 million, including the amount received with the Nobel Peace Prize, will be directly attributed to the selected projects, and the Commission will not use the funds for administrative purposes. The projects will benefit over 23 000 conflict-affected children worldwide and will provide access to basic education and child-friendly spaces.

In 2013 it is intended to launch similar projects to the benefit of children in crisis.

([1]) Unicef = United Nations Children's Fund.
([2]) UNHCR = United Nations Refugee Agency.
([3]) ACTED = Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010673/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Crisi della cantieristica navale italiana

Riguardo alla questione in oggetto vanno considerati i seguenti elementi:

— la cantieristica navale italiana sta attualmente affrontando una grave crisi economica che sta portando il livello degli ordini ai minimi storici;

— in Europa, dal 2008 ad oggi, 42.000 lavoratori dell'industria navale hanno perso il posto di lavoro;

— la Cina e la Corea del Sud ricevono aiuti consistenti e grandi commesse pubbliche;

— la Repubblica di Corea si sta rivelando il più pericoloso concorrente straniero, detenendo da sola il 53,2 % delle quote del mercato globale;

— la dislocazione della domanda a favore dei cantieri coreani ha avuto come conseguenza un drastico crollo dei prezzi, soprattutto per quanto riguarda la costruzione delle navi di grande stazza e di quelle tecnicamente più avanzate;

— Fincantieri, leader italiano nella costruzione navale, si trova con un portafoglio ordini dimezzato fino al 2014.

1. Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere se intende intervenire per ripristinare la parità delle condizioni concorrenziali in questo settore, al fine di rafforzare le regole di concorrenza leale e di rispettare la clausola di salvaguardia della concorrenza inclusa negli accordi di libero scambio firmati con la Repubblica di Corea?

2. Come intende operare la Commissione al fine di rispettare il «Verbale concordato relativo al mercato cantieristico navale» siglato il 10 aprile 2000 con il governo coreano?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza della crisi che ha colpito il settore cantieristico in diversi paesi europei, tra cui l'Italia, in cui gli ordinativi sono a un livello estremamente basso e i prezzi continuano a calare, essenzialmente a causa del rallentamento della crescita dei commerci marittimi e della sovraccapacità della flotta mondiale. A partire dal 2000 la Corea è la maggiore economia cantieristica superata nel 2010 dalla Cina. I grandi produttori coreani si concentrano sempre di più sui mercati high-tech in cui i cantieri europei hanno tradizionalmente una posizione forte e la concorrenza coreana è forte per i cantieri europei di dimensioni molto più piccole.

La Commissione continua ad adoperarsi per creare condizioni eque nel settore cantieristico nell'ambito del gruppo di lavoro Cantieri (WP6) dell'Organizzazione per la cooperazione e lo sviluppo economici (OCSE) al fine di identificare e di ridurre i fattori che distorcono le normali condizioni di concorrenza. Inoltre, nell'ambito del WP6 sono in corso i lavori di revisione dell'intesa settoriale sui crediti all'esportazione relativi alle navi, aspetto questo importante poiché i crediti all'esportazione sono diventati la misura di sostegno predominante dall'inizio della crisi nel 2008.

La Commissione attualmente non dispone di informazioni su un aumento delle importazioni dalla Corea a seguito dell'entrata in vigore dell'accordo di libero scambio (ALS) che giustificherebbe l'applicazione della clausola di salvaguardia bilaterale. I «Verbali concordati» stipulati con la Corea per affrontare contratti specifici sono invocati per integrare, se del caso, l'ALS. Inoltre, poiché la gravità delle condizioni in cui versa il settore richiede un più ampio approccio politico, la Commissione ha rilanciato l'iniziativa *LeaderShip* per identificare le misure atte a promuovere la competitività delle industrie marittime europee.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010673/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Crisis in Italian shipbuilding

Regarding the above issue, the following should be borne in mind:

— the Italian shipbuilding sector is currently facing a major economic crisis, which has seen orders fall to an all-time low;

— in Europe, since 2008, 42 000 workers in the shipbuilding industry have lost their jobs;

— in China and South Korea, the industry receives substantial aid and large State-sector orders;

— the Republic of Korea is proving to be the most dangerous foreign competitor, since it alone holds 53,2% of the world market;

— the shift in demand to Korean shipyards has resulted in a dramatic fall in prices, especially as regards the construction of large-tonnage and technically advanced ships;

— at Fincantieri, the leading Italian shipbuilder, the order book up to 2014 has halved in value.

1. In view of the above, can the Commission say whether it intends to intervene to re-establish a level playing-field in this sector, to strengthen the fair competition rules and comply with the competition safeguard clause included in the free trade agreements concluded with the Republic of Korea?

2. How does the Commission intend to act in order to ensure compliance with the 'Agreed Minutes relating to the World Shipbuilding Market' concluded on 10 April 2000 with the Korean Government?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the shipbuilding crisis in many European countries, including Italy, with orders at a very low level and prices still decreasing, largely due to slow growth of maritime trade and overcapacity of the world fleet. Since 2000, Korea is the largest shipbuilding economy until China overtook it in 2010. Large Korean producers increasingly focus on high-tech markets in which European yards traditionally have a strong position, and they are strong competitors for the much smaller yards in Europe.

The Commission continues work to establish a level playing-field in the shipbuilding sector through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Working Party on Shipbuilding (WP6) identifying and reducing factors distorting normal competitive conditions. Moreover, in WP6 work is ongoing on an overhaul of the Sector Understanding on Export Credits for Ships, which is important as export credits have become the dominant support measure since the outbreak of the 2008 crisis.

The Commission currently has no indication of increased imports from Korea as a result of the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that would justify the application of the bi-lateral safeguard clause. The 'Agreed Minutes' concluded with Korea to address specific contracts are invoked to complement the FTA when relevant. Moreover, as the acute state in the sector requires a wider policy approach, the Commission has re-launched the LeaderShip initiative to identify measures to foster the competitiveness of the European maritime industries.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010674/12
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Uccisioni di civili da parte di gruppi armati nella provincia del Nord Kivu (Congo)

Un rapporto dell'ONU afferma che almeno 264 civili, di cui 83 bambini, sono stati arbitrariamente uccisi da gruppi armati nella provincia orientale del Nord Kivu, dopo una serie di rastrellamenti avvenuti in diversi villaggi tra aprile e settembre. Il bilancio di questi scontri, che coinvolgono ormai dall'aprile scorso la Repubblica democratica del Congo e il Ruanda, potrebbe essere addirittura superiore. Oltre agli assassinii, si registrano anche saccheggi, stupri e sfollamenti forzati.

A tale riguardo vanno considerati i seguenti elementi:

— secondo stime redatte dall'UNHCR, i profughi causati dallo scoppio delle nuove ostilità in aprile hanno raggiunto, a settembre, la cifra di 450.000 persone;

— il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante Catherine Ashton ha rilasciato molteplici comunicati ufficiali, tra cui quello del 10 luglio scorso in cui si dichiarava profondamente preoccupata per la situazione nel paese, auspicando una veloce risoluzione del conflitto anche attraverso l'intervento dell'ONU;

— l'Unione europea ha stanziato fondi per l'«Intervento sanitario d'urgenza per le popolazioni colpite dai conflitti armati nel Kivu Sud, Repubblica democratica del Congo»;

— gli accordi di pace firmati nel 2009 da Ruanda e Repubblica democratica del Congo non sono mai stati veramente rispettati.

1. Ciò premesso, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante far sapere con quali mezzi intende esercitare pressione sui governi ruandese e congolese per far rispettare gli accordi di pace e in tal modo porre fine alla guerra e alle violazioni dei diritti umani che ne conseguono?

2. Può indicare se sono previsti finanziamenti, e in caso affermativo di quale portata, per migliorare le condizioni di vita della popolazione coinvolta?

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

L'ultima delle molteplici cause del conflitto in corso nell'est del Congo è la sollevazione di un gruppo di ex soldati congolesi, meglio noto come M23, che, secondo una recente relazione del gruppo di esperti del Consiglio di sicurezza dell'ONU, riceverebbe sostegno esterno, in particolare dal Ruanda. Tra quest'ultimo paese e la Repubblica democratica del Congo non si sono registrati scontri diretti. L'UE, in coordinamento con altri partner della comunità internazionale, ricorre al dialogo politico per chiarire ciò che ci si aspetta da tutte le parti coinvolte per contribuire a una soluzione duratura. L'AR/VP ha già trasmesso, in diverse occasioni, chiari messaggi ai presidenti Kabila e Kagamé.

A tal riguardo, l'UE ha chiaramente condannato la nuova sedizione militare nel Kivu (M23) e ha affermato che qualunque sostegno al movimento, anche esterno, è inaccettabile e che l'integrità territoriale della RDC deve essere rispettata. L'UE ha deciso di rinviare le decisioni su un sostegno di bilancio aggiuntivo al Ruanda. Nel dialogo politico con il governo della RDC, l'UE pone particolare enfasi sulla lotta all'impunità, sul rafforzamento dello Stato di diritto e sui rapidi progressi da effettuare nell'attuazione di una riforma autentica del settore della sicurezza.

In termini di cooperazione allo sviluppo, l'UE sostiene già la RDC in settori quali la sanità e la giustizia (nell'ambito del 10° FES si sono destinati all'est della RDC oltre 100 milioni di euro). La Repubblica democratica del Congo è uno dei principali beneficiari degli aiuti umanitari dell'UE: si è recentemente deciso di aggiungere ai 60 milioni di euro annuali già assegnati alla RDC nel 2012 15 milioni di euro da destinare alla regione orientale del paese. Tali aiuti sono utilizzati principalmente per alleviare le sofferenze della popolazione e migliorare le condizioni di vita nell'est della RDC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010674/12
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: HR/VP — Civilians killed by armed groups in the province of North Kivu (Congo)

According to a UN report, at least 264 civilians, including 83 children, were arbitrarily executed by armed groups in the eastern province of North Kivu in a series of attacks on villages between April and September. The actual number of victims of the fighting between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda which has been going on since April this year could be even higher. In addition to the killings, there are also reports of looting, rapes and mass forced displacement.

Bearing in mind that:

— according to UNHCR estimates, 450 000 refugees were forced to flee their homes between April, when fighting broke out anew, and September;

— High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton has issued a number of official statements, including a declaration on 10 July this year expressing deep worry at the situation in the country and calling for an speedy resolution of the conflict, including through UN intervention;

— the European Union has earmarked funds for an 'Emergency health response for the population affected by armed conflicts in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo';

— the peace agreements signed between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2009 have never been properly observed.

1. Can the High Representative/Vice-President say how she intends to put pressure on the Rwandan and Congolese Governments to comply with the peace agreements and thus put an end to the war and the resulting human rights violations?

2. Can she say whether financial provision has been made, and if so, how much, to improve living conditions for the people affected by the conflict?

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

The latest amongst the many causes of the current conflic in eastern Congo is the uprising of a group of former congolese soldiers better know as M23. A recent report of the UN Security Council Group of Experts, suggests that this group has been receiving external support, mainly from Rwanda. No direct fighting has been recorded between this country and DRC. The EU, in coordination with other international community partners, is using political dialogue to clarify what is expected from all concerned parties to contribute to a lasting solution. On several occasions, the HR/VP has already passed clear messages to Presidents Kabila and Kagamé.

In this regard the EU has clearly condemned the new military sedition in the Kivus (M23), stated that any support to this movement, including external support, is not acceptable and that the territorial integrity of the DRC should be respected. The EU has decided to delay decisions on additional budget support to Rwanda. In its political dialogue with the DRC government, the EU puts a clear focus on fighting impunity, strenghtening the rule of law and swift progress in the implementation of a genuine Security Sector Reform.

In terms of development cooperation, the EU is already present in the Eastern DRC in areas such as Health and Justice (over EUR100 million have been commited in Eastern DRC from the 10th EDF). DRC is also one of the biggest beneficiary of EU humanitarian aid : EUR15 million has recently been decided for eastern DRC in addition to the annual EUR60 million already allocated to DRC in 2012. This money is mostly used to mitigate the suffering of the population and improve the living conditions in Eastern DRC.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010675/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Inițiativa pentru antreprenoriatul social

Deși reprezintă aproximativ 2 milioane de întreprinderi cu 11 milioane de angajați în UE, întreprinderile sociale au parte de sisteme de finanțare subdezvoltate, prin comparație cu cele de care beneficiază întreprinderile clasice.

Astfel, este absolut necesar să intensificăm sprijinul acordat întreprinderilor din sectorul economiei sociale, prin promovarea unor mijloace financiare suplimentare atât la nivel național, cât și la nivelul Uniunii Europene.

În acest sens doresc să întreb Comisia dacă are în vedere simplificarea accesului întreprinderilor sociale la fondurile structurale relevante din cadrul financiar multianual 2014-2020 și dacă se are în vedere transmiterea unor recomandări pentru statele membre pentru a include în cadrul „Fondului Social European", al „Fondului european de dezvoltare regională", al „Programului Orizont 2020" și al „Programului pentru schimbări sociale și inovare socială" a unor axe special destinate microfinanțării și antreprenoriatului social?

Răspuns dat de dl Andor în numele Comisiei
(29 ianuarie 2013)

Comisia a subliniat în mod repetat necesitatea identificării de noi modalități de susținere a întreprinderilor sociale. Autoritățile naționale, regionale și locale încep să își dea seama de potențialul acestora și să revizuiască acțiunile în curs. Comisia este decisă să stimuleze și să sprijine acest proces pe tot parcursul lui. Prin urmare, în 2011, a prezentat Inițiativa privind antreprenoriatul social, care prevede trei categorii de măsuri:

— pentru îmbunătățirea accesului la finanțare al întreprinderilor sociale;

— pentru îmbunătățirea vizibilității și recunoașterii antreprenoriatului social și pentru facilitarea învățării reciproce și consolidării capacităților;

— pentru îmbunătățirea cadrului juridic și de reglementare, astfel încât întreprinderile sociale să fie tratate în mod egal cu celelalte întreprinderi.

Ca parte din punerea în aplicare a primului punct, Comisia a propus un program pentru schimbări sociale și inovare socială, cu un buget de 92,28 de milioane de EUR dedicat sprijinirii întreprinderilor sociale ([1]). În prezent, programul este în curs de negociere între Parlament și Consiliu.

Mai mult, se pot desfășura activități punctuale și sub umbrela priorității de investiții în „întreprinderi sociale" din cadrul programelor FEDR și FSE pentru perioada 2014-2020. În acest scop, Comisia sprijină consolidarea capacităților autorităților de gestionare. În plus, sprijinul dedicat antreprenoriatului social se poate dovedi esențial și pentru realizarea obiectivelor specifice ale altor priorități de investiții.

([1]) Propunerea privind programul pentru schimbări sociale și inovare socială, COM(2011) 609 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010675/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Social entrepreneurship initiative

Although social enterprises account for two million entrepreneurs and 11 million employees in the EU, the systems for financing those enterprises are underdeveloped in comparison to those for traditional enterprises.

There is hence a clear need to increase the assistance provided to social economy enterprises by generating additional financial resources at both national and EU level.

Can the Commission state, in this respect, whether it will simplify access for social enterprises to structural funding under the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework, and whether it will recommend that Member States include specific measures on micro-financing and social entrepreneurship under the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Horizon 2020 Programme and the Programme for Social Change and Innovation?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

The Commission has repeatedly emphasised the need to find new ways to support social entrepreneurs. National, regional and local authorities are starting to recognise the potential of social enterprises and are reviewing actions in place. The Commission is committed to stimulating, backing and accompanying this process. Therefore in 2011 it presented the Social Business Initiative (SBI) which envisages three categories of measures:

— To improve access to funding for social enterprises;

— To improve the visibility and recognition of social entrepreneurship, facilitating mutual learning and capacity building;

— To improve the legal and regulatory framework, in order to ensure that social enterprises are considered on equal terms with other businesses.

As part of the implementation of the first point, the Commission has proposed a Programme for Social Change and Innovation with a budget of EUR 92.28 million earmarked for support to social enterprises ([1]). The programme is currently under negotiations between Parliament and Council.

Moreover, targeted activities can be carried out under the investment priority 'social enterprises' in the ERDF and ESF programmes 2014-2020. To this end, the Commission is supporting capacity-building of managing authorities. In addition, dedicated support to social entrepreneurship can also be instrumental for the achievement of specific objectives under other investment priorities.

([1]) PSCI proposal COM(2011) 609 final.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010676/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Securitatea informatică

La nivel mondial, mai mult de un milion de oameni devin victime ale criminalității informatice în fiecare zi și costul criminalității cibernetice ar putea ajunge la un total de 388 miliarde dolari la nivel mondial.

Având în vedere că infractorii cibernetici sunt din ce în ce mai profesioniști în ceea ce privește pătrunderea frauduloasă în rețele protejate, consider că singura cale reală de a câștiga războiul cu aceștia este de a avea de partea noastră specialiști cu cunoștințe și expertiză similară în lupta împotriva infracțiunilor informatice.

În acest sens doresc să întreb Comisia dacă are în vedere introducerea la nivelul Uniunii Europene a unei strategii de tipul „white hat"?

(Termenul „white hat" în limbajul de Internet se referă la un hacker cu comportament etic sau un expert în securitate informatică, care este specializat în teste de penetrare și în alte metodologii de testare utilizate pentru asigurarea securității sistemelor informatice ale unei organizații)

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(8 ianuarie 2013)

Comisia împărtășește opiniile domnului deputat conform cărora amenințările la adresa securității informatice, atât accidentale, cât și cu premeditare, constituie o provocare importantă pentru prosperitatea economiei și a societății noastre. Comisia consideră că orice organizație care intenționează să abordeze în mod adecvat securitatea rețelelor informatice și a datelor ar trebui să aibă la dispoziție personal calificat și să includă auditul securității în procesele sale de gestionare a riscurilor privind securitatea.

Viitoarea comunicare referitoare la o strategie privind securitatea informatică pentru Uniunea Europeană, pe care Comisia intenționează să o adopte, împreună cu Înaltul Reprezentant al Uniunii pentru afaceri externe și politica de securitate, va contura o viziune și va prezenta acțiuni strategice concrete menite să asigure siguranța și rezistența mediului digital și să prevină în mod eficient criminalitatea informatică, respectând și promovând drepturile fundamentale și valorile fundamentale ale UE.

Strategia propusă ar trebui să includă priorități strategice și acțiuni specifice care să stimuleze creșterea nivelului de competențe în materie de securitate informatică ale profesioniștilor domeniului tehnologiei informațiilor, ale studenților, ale industriei, ale administrațiilor publice, cât și ale utilizatorilor finali. Strategia va urmări, de asemenea, să consolideze educația și formarea în materie de securitate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010676/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: IT security

Over a million people across the world fall prey to cybercrime each day, with such crime costing an estimated USD 388 billion worldwide.

Since cybercriminals are becoming increasingly expert at illegally penetrating protected networks, the only realistic way of defeating them is by having skilled specialists with a similar level of expertise at one's disposal in order to combat cybercrime.

In this connection, can the Commission state whether it plans to introduce a 'white hat' type strategy across Europe?

(The term 'white hat' in Internet slang refers to an ethical computer hacker, or a computer security expert, who specialises in penetration testing and in other testing methodologies to ensure the security of an organisation's information systems).

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

The Commission shares the views of the Honorable Member that cybersecurity threats, be it accidental or malicious, pose significant challenges to the prosperity of our economy and society. The Commission believes that any organisation which intends to address network and information security in an adequate way should have at its disposal skilled professionals and include security audits in the security risk management process it carries out.

The upcoming Communication on a Cybersecurity Strategy for the European Union, that the Commission plans to adopt together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, would outline a vision and present concrete policy actions to ensure a safe and resilient digital environment and effectively prevent cybercrime, while respecting and promoting fundamental rights and EU core values.

The proposed Strategy should include strategic priorities and specific actions setting incentives to raise the level of security skills for IT professionals, students, industry, public administrations and the end users. The strategy will also aim to step up security education and training.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010677/12
adresată Comisiei
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Programul Daphné: realizări și perspective

De la lansarea programului Daphné până în prezent, peste 500 de ONG-uri, autorități publice sau instituții au implementat cu succes proiecte finanțate ce au vizat protecția copiilor, a tinerilor și a femeilor împotriva tuturor formelor de violență, precum și atingerea unui nivel înalt de protecție a sănătății, de bunăstare și coeziune socială.

1. Având în vedere că din 2014 Daphné va fi inclus în programul „Drepturi și cetățenie", are în vedere Comisia păstrarea obiectivelor inițiale ale programului, alături de obiectivele noului program „Drepturi și cetățenie"?

2. În același timp, având în vedere reușitele, eficacitatea și popularitatea programului, ce va face Comisia pentru a spori vizibilitatea acestuia și pentru a asigura o finanțare corespunzătoare în cadrul noii generații de programe?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(8 ianuarie 2013)

Propunerea Comisiei de creare a programului „Drepturi și cetățenie" pentru perioada 2014-2020 include actualul program Daphne III. Deși denumirea Daphne nu este păstrată ca atare pentru perioada de după 2013, finanțarea va continua să se concentreze asupra obiectivelor, activităților și beneficiarilor acestui program.

Comisia va urmări să folosească vizibilitatea sporită a programului Daphne și în cadrul noului program. Fondurile programului „Drepturi și cetățenie" care acoperă prioritățile actuale ale programului Daphne vor fi completate de fonduri acordate în cadrul programului „Justiție" care a fost propus, în special pentru finanțarea activităților în domeniul drepturilor victimelor. Combinarea fondurilor provenind de la aceste două programe propuse ar avea ca rezultat un buget comparabil cu cel pus la dispoziție pentru perioada 2007-2013, cu condiția ca suma totală care urmează să fie alocată ambelor programe să nu fie redusă în mod semnificativ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010677/12
to the Commission
Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Daphne programme — achievements and outlook

Since the Daphne programme was launched, around 500 NGOs, public authorities and institutions have successfully implemented projects funded under the programme geared to protecting children, young people and women against all forms of violence and attaining a high level of health protection, well-being and social cohesion.

1. Bearing in mind that Daphne will be included in the 'Rights and citizenship' programme from 2014 onwards, does the Commission intend to retain the programme's initial objectives alongside the objectives of the new 'Rights and citizenship' programme?

2. At the same time, given the programme's success, effectiveness and popularity, what will the Commission do to raise its profile and guarantee corresponding funding under the new generation of programmes?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

The proposal of the Commission to establish the Rights and Citizenship Programme for the period 2014-2020 includes the current Daphne III programme. Although the Daphne name is not maintained as such for the period after 2013, funding will continue to be targeted at its objectives, its activities and its beneficiaries.

The Commission will aim to make use of the high profile of Daphne also in the framework of the new programme. The funds of the Rights and Citizenship Programme, covering the current Daphne priorities, will be supplemented by funds under the proposed Justice Programme, especially for funding activities in the area of victims' rights. The combination of funds from these two proposed programmes would result in a budget comparable to what has been made available for the period of 2007-2013, provided the total amount to be allocated to both programmes will not be reduced significantly.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010678/12
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)
(22 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Măsuri pentru dezvoltarea de competențe și crearea de locuri de muncă în domeniul industrial

Competitivitatea Uniunii depinde de dezvoltarea sectorului industrial. Traiul decent al cetățenilor europeni depinde de locurile de muncă pe care aceștia le au. Uniunea și statele membre trebuie să investească urgent într-o politică industrială capabilă să asigure locuri de muncă pe întreg teritoriul european. Politica industrială presupune și investiții în educație și cercetare.

Astăzi rata șomajului în UE depășește 10%, iar în cazul tinerilor și al lucrătorilor slab calificați, aceasta depășește 20%. De asemenea, în 2011, media investițiilor publice în cercetare și inovare era de doar 2,3% iar rata abandonului școlar era de 13,5%. Tot în 2011, doar unul din trei tineri europeni, cu vârste între 30 și 34 de ani, erau absolvenți de studii superioare.

1. Cum intenționează Comisia să stimuleze investitorii europeni și străini să investească în industria europeană?

2. Care sunt măsurile de sprijin pentru a stimula dezvoltarea de competențe și crearea de locuri de muncă în ramurile industriale în care Uniunea poate fi competitivă pe plan internațional?

Răspuns dat de dl Tajani în numele Comisiei
(29 ianuarie 2013)

Mediul de investiții plin de provocări este un aspect important în noua comunicare privind politica industrială ([1]) care propune un parteneriat între UE, statele membre și industrie, pentru a spori investițiile în noile tehnologii și pentru a conferi Europei un avantaj competitiv în contextul noii revoluții industriale. Revitalizarea investițiilor necesită creșterea încrederii întreprinderilor în mediul economic, creșterea cererii de pe piață, un acces mai bun și mai ușor la finanțare și concentrarea pe competențe. Ca atare, aceștia sunt cei patru piloni ai politicii industriale consolidate. Au fost selectate șase linii de acțiune prioritare, care vor pune accentul pe investiții și inovare pentru o nouă societate industrială.

Comunicarea invită la un mediu deschis și nediscriminatoriu pentru a spori și mai mult atractivitatea investițiilor în UE. În plus, politica de coeziune și politica comercială reprezintă instrumentele principale ale UE pentru creșterea gradului de atractivitate a UE pentru investițiile străine directe (ISD) și sunt esențiale pentru îmbunătățirea competitivității, a creșterii și a creării de locuri de muncă. În timp ce obiectivul politicii industriale este stabilirea condițiilor-cadru adecvate eliberării capacității creatoare a industriei europene și stimularea de noi investiții, întreprinderile însele vor fi întotdeauna responsabile în ultimă instanță pentru reușita sau eșecul lor pe piața mondială.

Vor fi luate o serie de măsuri adiacente pentru a crea locuri de muncă și pentru a crește investițiile în capitalul uman și competențe prin punerea la dispoziția forței de muncă a mijloacelor necesare pentru a face față transformărilor industriale, în special printr-o mai bună anticipare a nevoilor și a neconcordanțelor în materie de competențe. Comunicarea prezintă o serie de măsuri complementare în acest scop, la care Comisia lucrează deja, pentru a se asigura că sunt disponibile competențele necesare pentru dezvoltarea producției și a piețelor cu un potențial ridicat de stimulare a creșterii economice și a ocupării forței de muncă.

([1]) COM(2012) 582 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010678/12
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Measures to develop skills and create jobs in industry

The Union's competitiveness depends on the development of the industrial sector. Decent living standards for European citizens depend on the jobs they hold. The Union and Member States must urgently invest in an industrial policy that will be capable of safeguarding jobs across the whole of Europe. Industrial policy also requires investment in education and research.

The unemployment rate in the EU now stands at over 10%, while for young people and unskilled workers the rate is over 20%. In 2011, average public investment in research and innovation stood at only 2.3%, whilst the school dropout rate stood at 13.5%. At the same time, only one in three young Europeans aged between 30 and 34 had completed higher education in 2011.

1. How will the Commission encourage European and foreign investors to invest in European industry?

2. What measures are being taken to support and stimulate the development of skills and the creation of jobs in sectors of industry where the Union can compete at international level?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

The challenging investment climate is an important issue in the new Communication on industrial policy ([1]) which proposes a partnership between the EU, Member States and industry to step up investment in new technologies and to give Europe a competitive lead in the new industrial revolution. Revitalising investment requires more business confidence, stronger market demand, better and easier access to finance and a focus on skills. As such, these are the 4 key pillars of the reinforced industrial policy. Six priority action lines have been selected that will focus on investment and innovation for a new industrial society.

The communication calls for an open and non-discriminatory environment in order to further increase the attractiveness of investing in the EU. In addition, cohesion and trade policy are major EU instruments for enhancing the attractiveness of the EU for FDI and are key to enhancing competitiveness, growth and job creation. While the objective of industrial policy is to establish the appropriate framework conditions to release the creative capacity of the European industry and stimulate new investments, businesses themselves will always be ultimately responsible for their success or failure in the global market.

Accompanying measures will be taken to create jobs and increase investment in human capital and skills by equipping the labour force for industrial transformation, notably through better anticipating skills needs and mismatches. The communication presents a number of complementary measures to that end on which the Commission is already working to ensure that the necessary skills are available for the development of production and markets with a high potential of boosting growth and employment.

([1]) COM(2012) 582 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010679/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Commenti del Primo ministro turco su Israele

Il 19 novembre 2012, fonti di informazione, hanno riferito che il premier turco Recep Tayyib Erdogan ha definito Israele «Stato terrorista» a seguito del bombardamento di Gaza. Al Consiglio islamico eurasiatico a Istanbul ha dichiarato: «Coloro che associano l'Islam al terrorismo chiudono gli occhi di fronte a uccisioni di massa di musulmani, distolgono lo sguardo dalla strage di bambini a Gaza».

Le relazioni tra i due paesi sono particolarmente tese. L'ambasciatore di Israele è stato espulso da Ankara e la cooperazione militare è stata congelata a seguito della pubblicazione del rapporto delle Nazioni Unite sull'attacco a bordo della Mavi Marmara nel 2010.

1. Qual è la posizione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante in merito alle recenti dichiarazioni del Primo ministro turco?

2. Quali iniziative ha intrapreso la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante per avviare un processo di riconciliazione tra Turchia e Israele?

3. Qual è la valutazione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante sull'escalation delle tensioni tra i due paesi?

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

Turchia e Israele sono partner fondamentali dell'Unione europea. Pertanto, il dialogo e le buone relazioni tra i due paesi sono nell'interesse dell'UE se si considerano il suo impegno a favore della pace e della stabilità nel nostro vicinato comune e soprattutto i problemi della regione, quali il difficile processo di pace in Medio Oriente. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente esorta la Turchia e Israele a dar prova di moderazione per evitare un ulteriore deterioramento delle loro relazioni bilaterali e attribuisce grande importanza al processo di ravvicinamento, al dialogo e a nuovi sforzi costruttivi per migliorare i rapporti tra i due paesi. L'Unione europea è pronta a contribuire a questo processo se invitata a farlo da entrambe le parti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010679/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Turkish Prime Minister's comments on Israel

On 19 November 2012, various news sources reported that Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan had called Israel a 'terrorist state' following its bombardment of Gaza. He said: 'those who associate Islam with terrorism close their eyes in the face of mass killing of Muslims, turn their heads from the massacre of children in Gaza'. He made his statements at the Eurasian Islamic Council in Istanbul.

Relations between the two countries are particularly strained. Israel's ambassador was expelled from Ankara and military cooperation has been frozen as a result of the release of the UN report on the attack on board the Mavi Marmara in 2010.

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the recent comments of the Turkish Prime Minister?

2. What efforts have been made by the Vice-President/High Representative to help start a process of reconciliation between Turkey and Israel?

3. What is the assessment of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the escalation of tension between the two countries?

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

Turkey and Israel are crucial partners of the EU. Therefore, dialogue and good and functional relations between them are in the interest of the EU in the quest for peace and stability in our shared neighbourhood, especially when considering the difficult problems in the region, such as the Middle East Peace Process. The HR/VP urges both Turkey and Israel to exercise restraint in order to avoid further deterioration of bilateral relations and places great importance on a constructive rapprochement process, dialogue and further efforts to improve ties. The EU stands ready to assist in this process if invited by both parties.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010680/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la realizzazione di un progetto giovanile per la promozione culturale e sociale nel Comune di Roma

YUT è un network di associazioni giovanili del XIII Municipio del Comune di Roma, nato grazie a un progetto europeo del programma Youth in Action. Nel rispetto delle libertà individuali e sulla base dei principi di democrazia e di partecipazione, YUT si propone di creare un progetto atto a promuovere le iniziative dei propri associati a favore dei giovani del territorio di Ostia. Tra le attività proposte rientrano: la formazione, l'attivazione di laboratori, seminari, spettacoli, concerti, mostre e attività di volontariato. Proprio per venire incontro alle esigenze del XIII Municipio, il Comune di Roma ha recentemente individuato uno spazio di circa 1200 mq da far utilizzare ai giovani aderenti allo YUT per la promozione di iniziative culturali.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se sono previsti finanziamenti per la realizzazione delle attività suesposte attraverso il Programma cultura;

2. se esiste un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione desidera informare l'onorevole deputata che l'attuale programma Cultura ha l'obiettivo di promuovere la mobilità transnazionale delle persone che operano nel campo della cultura, incoraggiare la circolazione transnazionale di opere d'arte e culturali e agevolare il dialogo interculturale. Questo programma si concluderà nel 2013 e la Commissione ha proposto di rimpiazzarlo con il programma «Europa creativa» che offrirà possibilità di cofinanziamento a condizioni analoghe. Poiché la dimensione transnazionale delle attività patrocinate rimarrà della massima importanza, una delle condizioni per la selezione dei progetti continuerà ad essere la partecipazione di diverse organizzazioni di paesi diversi.

Ulteriori informazioni sono reperibili al seguente indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

Ulteriori informazioni sul programma Youth in Action menzionato dall'onorevole deputata sono reperibili all'indirizzo:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/20121207_yia.htm.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010680/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Possible funding for a youth project for cultural and social advancement in the municipality of Rome

YUT is a network of youth associations in the 13th sub-municipality of the municipality of Rome, and was created thanks to an EU project under the Youth in Action programme. In compliance with individual freedoms and on the basis of the principles of democracy and participation, YUT proposes to create a project to promote the initiatives of its associations for young people in the Ostia area. The proposed activities include: training, holding workshops, seminars, shows, concerts, exhibitions and volunteering activities. To meet the 13th sub-municipality's needs, the municipality of Rome recently identified a space of around 1200 m^2 for use by young people who are part of YUT for the promotion of cultural initiatives.

1. Can the Commission say whether there is any funding earmarked for the above activities under the cultural programme?

2. Can it give an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the objectives of the current Culture programme are to promote the transnational mobility of people working in the field of culture, encourage the transnational circulation of artistic and cultural works, and enhance the intercultural dialogue. This programme will end in 2013 and the Commission has proposed to replace it by the Creative Europe programme, which will provide co-funding opportunities under similar conditions. As the transnational dimension of supported activities will remain of paramount importance, one of the conditions for projects to be selected will continue to be the involvement of a number of organisations from different countries.

Further information can be found on the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

Further information on the Youth in Action programme, mentioned by the Honourable Member in the question, can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/20121207_yia.htm.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010681/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Possibile finanziamento per la costruzione di una seggiovia tra il Santuario francescano e il «Sacro Speco», presso il comune di Poggio Bustone

Il Comune di Poggio Bustone, in provincia di Rieti, è situato a 756 m di altitudine ed è classificato come totalmente montano. Esso domina la cosiddetta Valle Santa, una pianura dove sono situati quattro Santuari francescani. Tale luogo è considerato di grande importanza storica e attrae moltissimi pellegrini da tutto il mondo che vengono a visitare uno dei più importanti e suggestivi itinerari di San Francesco d'Assisi. Il «Sacro Speco», invece, è una cappella situata all'interno di una piccola grotta tra due rocce, luogo di preghiera di San Francesco dove, secondo la tradizione cristiana, vi dimorò nell'anno 1209. Tuttavia, oggi, per raggiungere la cappella partendo dal Santuario francescano, bisogna percorrere un sentiero nel bosco che sale per circa 600 metri. Si tratta di un percorso difficilmente percorribile soprattutto per le persone anziane o quelle con problemi motori. Proprio per questo motivo, il Circolo Diurno di Poggio Bustone è impegnato nella realizzazione di una seggiovia che colleghi il Santuario francescano al «Sacro Speco».

Dato il valore turistico del progetto, con ricadute in termini di valorizzazione del territorio e creazione di posti di lavoro, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se vi sono finanziamenti o programmi per la costruzione della seggiovia;

2. se esiste un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(8 gennaio 2013)

Il programma 2007-2013 per la regione Lazio, cofinanziato dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale, prevede la protezione e la valorizzazione del patrimonio naturale e culturale. L'obiettivo è generare crescita economica con un'attenzione particolare per il turismo sostenibile e per la sostenibilità finanziaria e gestionale degli interventi selezionati.

A condizione che siano soddisfatti le condizioni e i requisiti specifici del programma, il progetto menzionato dall'onorevole deputata sembrerebbe in linea con le attività previste nell'ambito della priorità II «Ambiente e prevenzione dei rischi», e in particolare dell'obiettivo 4 «Valorizzazione delle strutture di fruizione delle aree protette» (che intende promuovere gli itinerari storico-religiosi) e l'obiettivo operativo 5 «Valorizzazione e promozione del patrimonio culturale e paesistico».

Tuttavia, in linea con il principio di gestione condivisa utilizzato per l'implementazione della politica di coesione, la selezione dei progetti e la loro attuazione rientrano nelle responsabilità delle autorità nazionali. Per ulteriori informazioni la Commissione suggerisce pertanto all'onorevole deputata di mettersi direttamente in contatto con l'autorità di gestione del programma:

Autorità di gestione del programma operativo regionale della Regione Lazio 2007-2013, Via R. R. Garibaldi, 7, 00145 Roma, adgcomplazio@regione.lazio.it

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010681/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Possible funding for the construction of a chairlift between the Franciscan monastery and the 'Sacro Speco' in the municipality of Poggio Bustone

The municipality of Poggio Bustone, in the province of Rieti, is 756 m above sea level and is entirely mountainous. It dominates the 'Holy Valley', a plain on which there are four Franciscan monasteries. This place is considered to be of great historic importance and attracts huge numbers of pilgrims from around the world who come to visit one of the most important and evocative routes travelled by Saint Francis of Assisi. The 'Sacro Speco' is a chapel located inside a small cave between two rocks, a place of prayer to Saint Francis where, according to Christian tradition, he stayed in 1209. However, today the chapel is reached from the Franciscan monastery along an uphill path through the woods, which is around 600 m long. The path is very difficult to walk along, particularly for elderly people or those with mobility problems. For that very reason, the Poggio Bustone social club is constructing a chairlift to connect the Franciscan monastery to the 'Santo Speco'.

Given the project's value with regard to tourism, with knock-on effects in terms of promoting the area and job creation, can the Commission answer the following:

1. Is there any funding or programmes for the construction of the chairlift?

2. Is there an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

The 2007-2013 programme for the region of Lazio, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, foresees the protection and exploitation of natural heritage and cultural attractions. The aim is to generate economic growth with a particular focus on sustainable tourism and on the financial and managerial sustainability of the selected interventions.

Provided that the programme-specific conditions and requirements are met, the project mentioned by the Honourable Member, would appear to be in line with the activities foreseen under priority II 'Environment and risk prevention', and in particular objective 4 'Development of infrastructures for the exploitation of protected areas' (which also aims to promote historic and religious itineraries) and operational objective 5 'Development of cultural and natural resources'.

However, in line with the shared management principle used for the implementation of cohesion policy, project selection and implementation is the responsibility of the national authorities. For more information, the Commission therefore suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the managing authority of the programme:

Autorità di gestione del programma operativo regionale della Regione Lazio 2007-2013, Via R. R. Garibaldi, 7 00145 Roma, adgcomplazio@regione.lazio.it.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010682/12
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per l'Istituto Calasanzio di Frascati, nella provincia di Roma

L'Istituto Calasanzio è il nome dato nel 1918 alle Scuole Pie, alle quali San Giuseppe Calasanzio (1557-1648) diede vita a Frascati, nella provincia di Roma, il 14 settembre 1616. Da questa scuola del Calasanzio è derivata la scuola moderna occidentale, che già da allora, attraverso le fondazioni in Italia, Moravia, Boemia e Polonia, si è diffusa in ogni nazione europea. Questa istituzione ancora in funzione rappresenta, pertanto, un punto di riferimento storico e pedagogico per tutte le famiglie del territorio, e non solo.

Di fatto è «la scuola popolare pubblica più antica d'Europa» (L.v. Pastor), che custodisce la storia e le radici della tradizione educativa cristiana; è un luogo della memoria del patrimonio culturale europeo nonché mondiale.

La struttura rischia attualmente di essere chiusa per mancanza di fondi e, conseguentemente, di essere destinata ad altro uso, di tipo commerciale. Inoltre la scuola conta, tra personale didattico e amministrativo, più di venti posti di lavoro, che andrebbero persi senza un intervento da parte delle Istituzioni.

La Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea sancisce all'articolo 14 il diritto all'istruzione e in particolare, al paragrafo 3, il diritto dei genitori di provvedere all'educazione e all'istruzione dei loro figli secondo le loro convinzioni religiose, filosofiche e pedagogiche. L'accesso a tale servizio educativo andrebbe quindi garantito e supportato al fine di tutelare i diritti di diverse famiglie del territorio, come sancito dalla Carta europea dei diritti fondamentali.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione:

1. far sapere se vi sono programmi o finanziamenti a sostegno di questa tipologia di struttura e di tale progetto educativo e culturale;

2. fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Androulla Vassiliou a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

L'onorevole deputata saprà già che, conformemente all'articolo 165 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea, la responsabilità dell'organizzazione e del finanziamento dei sistemi di istruzione e formazione ricade sugli Stati membri. Di conseguenza, i fondi dell'Unione europea non possono essere usati a sostegno dei costi di gestione di una scuola come l'Istituto Calasanzio.

Si tenga presente tuttavia che, mentre il programma di apprendimento permanente dell'UE (Lifelong Learning Programme-LLP) nel campo dell'istruzione e della formazione non implica un'azione specifica a sostegno dell'infrastruttura scolastica, esso supporta attività che possono innalzare il profilo delle scuole contribuendo indirettamente al loro ulteriore sviluppo. L'onorevole deputata potrà trovare una sintesi delle attività attualmente supportate per il tramite di Comenius, un sotto-programma dell'LLP, dedicato all'istruzione scolastica, sul sito web:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/comenius_en.htm.

Il programma Cultura può stimolare la cooperazione tra gli operatori culturali dei diversi paesi partecipanti su progetti volti a evidenziare e promuovere il patrimonio culturale europeo a patto che essi rispondano ai criteri e ai requisiti del programma. Ulteriori informazioni sono reperibili all'indirizzo:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm.

Il Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) non può intervenire nel finanziamento delle scuole. Esso, tuttavia, può cofinanziare iniziative come la formazione degli insegnanti. La Commissione rammenta che, conformemente al principio di gestione condivisa, i programmi del FSE sono gestiti a livello nazionale o regionale sotto la responsabilità delle autorità di gestione. La Commissione invita pertanto l'onorevole deputata a mettersi in contatto con le autorità di gestione del FSE per il Lazio ([1]).

([1]) Sig.ra Elisabetta Longo (Tel.: +390651684949, e-mail elongo@regione.lazio.it).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010682/12
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Possible funding for the Istituto Calasanzio in Frascati, in the province of Rome

'Istituto Calasanzio' is the name given in 1918 to the Pious Schools founded by Saint Joseph Calasanctius (1557-1648) in Frascati, in the province of Rome, on 14 September 1616. Calasanctius's school inspired the modern Western school, which has since spread throughout Europe through foundations in Italy, the Czech Republic and Poland. This institution is still operating and therefore represents an historical and educational reference point for all families in the area and beyond.

According to Ludwig von Pastor, it is the oldest public free school in Europe, which preserves the history and roots of the Christian educational tradition. It is a memorial to Europe's and the world's cultural heritage.

The building is currently facing closure due to a lack of funds and, consequently, is at risk of being used for other, commercial uses. Moreover, the school employs more than 20 teaching and administrative staff, whose jobs would be lost without any intervention by the institutions.

Article 14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union enshrines the right to education and, in particular, paragraph 3 enshrines the right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions. Access to this education service should thus be guaranteed and supported to protect the rights of families in the area, as enshrined in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

1. Can the Commission say whether there are any programmes or funding to support this kind of organisation and this educational and cultural project?

2. Can it provide an overview of the situation?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Honourable Member will be aware that in accordance with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union the responsibility for the organisation and funding of education and training systems rests with Member States. Accordingly, European Union funds cannot be used to support the running costs of a school such as the Istituto Calasanzio.

It should be borne in mind, however, that while the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in the field of education and training does not have a specific action in support of school infrastructure, it does support activities which can raise the profile of schools contributing indirectly to their further development. The Honourable Member will find an overview of activities which are currently supported through Comenius, a sub-programme of the LLP addressed to school education, on the website http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/comenius_en.htm.

The Culture Programme can stimulate cooperation between cultural operators from different participating countries for projects aiming at highlighting and promoting European Cultural heritage provided they match the criteria and requirements of the Programme. More information can be found on: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm.

The European Social Fund (ESF) cannot intervene in the financing of schools. However, it can co-fund initiatives such as the training of teachers. The Commission recalls that, according to the principle of shared management, ESF programmes are managed at national or regional level under the responsibility of a managing authority. Therefore, the Commission invites the Honourable Member to contact the Lazio ESF managing authority ([1]).

([1]) Ms. Elisabetta Longo (phone: +390651684949, e-mail elongo@regione.lazio.it).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010683/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Rilancio del porto di Taranto

Da notizie giornalistiche rileviamo che nel giugno scorso è stato firmato un piano per il rilancio del traffico portuale di Taranto, con lo stanziamento di 187 milioni di euro, al fine di rendere il porto un hub efficiente ed attrattivo. Altri 219 milioni verranno dal piano di investimenti nella piattaforma logistica. 80 milioni saranno investiti dagli operatori privati, mentre i restanti lo saranno da investitori pubblici. Le opere da intraprendere sono diverse: da una diga foranea di protezione dai flutti, al collegamento del bacino logistico del porto con la rete ferroviaria nazionale, dal dragaggio dei fondali alla realizzazione di una piattaforma logistica e all'allargamento della banchina San Cataldo. Dal 2014 il piano prevede l'operabilità di un milione di container. Un accordo con il porto di Rotterdam e con la Cina farebbe del terminal di Taranto una delle piattaforme logistiche marittime più importanti dell'Europa e del Medio Oriente.

Che il progetto sia realizzato nei tempi previsti è l'auspicio di tutte le parti interessate e dei lavoratori di Taranto, che ora sono iscritti alla cassa integrazione, dopo la chiusura dell'acciaieria dell'Ilva.

Può la Commissione riferire:

1. se conosce questo progetto;

2. in caso affermativo, se ha un'opinione sulla qualità del piano e sulle prospettive di sviluppo dell'attività portuaria commerciale nel Mediterraneo;

3. se partecipa in modo diretto o indiretto (fondi strutturali) al suo finanziamento?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(25 gennaio 2013)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza del fatto che un accordo per lo sviluppo delle attività marittime e commerciali nel porto di Taranto è stato firmato nel giugno 2012. Per quanto concerne il piano più ampio riguardante lo stanziamento di 219 milioni di euro, la Commissione non è a conoscenza dello stato attuale di implementazione dei progetti in questione.

2. La Commissione non è a conoscenza dei dettagli dell'accordo e non può formulare commenti sulla qualità del piano. Le prospettive di breve termine relative ai volumi del traffico portuale nel Mediterraneo sono condizionate dalla situazione di incertezza in cui versa attualmente l'economia europea e mondiale. Nel medio e lungo termine le prospettive per i porti del Mediterraneo dovrebbero migliorare.

3. Soltanto il collegamento ferroviario tra il porto di Taranto e la rete ferroviaria nazionale è attualmente cofinanziato dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale tramite il programma «Reti e Mobilità». Il porto di Taranto, tuttavia, è stato posto in prima fila ([1]) dalla Commissione come uno dei porti che presentano la massima importanza strategica nell'ottica del raggiungimento degli obiettivi di sviluppo della rete transeuropea dei trasporti (nodo della rete centrale da completarsi entro il 2030).

([1]) Cfr. Proposta di regolamento del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio sugli orientamenti dell'Unione per lo sviluppo della rete transeuropea dei trasporti, COM(2011)650/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010683/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Revival of the port of Taranto

According to press reports, in June, a plan was signed to revitalise port traffic in Taranto and given a budget of EUR 187 million, to make the port into an efficient and attractive hub. A further EUR 219 million will come from the logistics platform investment plan. EUR 80 million will be invested by private operators, while the remaining funds will come from public investors. There is a substantial amount of work to be done: the building of a storm-surge barrier, connection of the logistics area of the port to the national rail network, dredging of the sea bed to build a logistics platform and extension of the San Cataldo quay. From 2014, according to the plan, the port will be able to handle one million containers. An agreement with the port of Rotterdam and with China would make the Taranto terminal one of the most important maritime logistics platforms in Europe and the Middle East.

All the stakeholders and workers of Taranto, who have now been made redundant after the closure of the Ilva steelworks, hope that the project can be delivered on time.

1. Is the Commission aware of this project?

2. If so, does it have an opinion on the quality of the plan and on the prospects for the development of commercial port facilities in the Mediterranean?

3. Is it participating, directly or indirectly (Structural Funds), in its funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

1. The Commission is aware that an agreement for the development of maritime and trade activities in the port of Taranto was signed in June 2012. As concerns the wider plan of EUR 219 million , the Commission is not aware of the actual state of implementation of the relevant projects.

2. The Commission is not aware of the details of the agreement and cannot comment about the quality of the plan. Short term prospects for port traffic volumes in the Mediterranean are affected by the current uncertainties of the European and world economies. In the medium and long term, prospects for Mediterranean ports should improve.

3. Only the rail link between the port of Taranto and the national rail network is currently co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund through the 'Reti e Mobilità' programme. Nevertheless, the port of Taranto has been put forward ([1]) by the Commission as one of the ports with the highest strategic importance for achieving the development objectives of the Trans-European transport network (node of the core network to be completed by 2030 at the latest).

([1]) Cf. Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, COM(2011) 650/2.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010684/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Rapporti con il Bangladesh

Come è tristemente noto, l'industria del Bangladesh è la prostituzione. Le cronache giornalistiche sono esplicite nel parlare di fanciulle di undici-dodici anni vittime di stupri quotidiani o di ragazzini che ogni giorno si accoppiano con più uomini diversi per qualche soldo da portare a casa. Incessante, inoltre, è l'attività dei bordelli legalmente autorizzati della città di Faridpur, dove un migliaio di prostitute è al lavoro sette giorni la settimana senza tregua, così come avviene nell'isola di Bani Shanta, interamente popolata dalle «operaie del sesso». Uno dei postriboli più grandi del mondo si trova a Daulatdia, forte di un esercito di 1 600 donne che ogni giorno accolgono circa 3 000 uomini. Le prostitute nel Paese sono circa 100 000. Nel 2004 l'Unicef calcolava in 10 000 le prostitute minorenni, mentre stime ufficiose arrivano a 30 mila. Il 90 per cento delle giovani prostitute — secondo dati forniti da ActionAid, una Onlus che si occupa a tempo pieno del Bangladesh — ricorre alla «cow pill» (l'Oradexon), un farmaco che viene dato anche alle mucche perché raggiungano il giusto peso e adeguate dimensioni fisiche. Gli steroidi, dicono però gli esperti, comportano anche effetti negativi come il diabete, la pressione alta, gli sfoghi cutanei e il mal di testa. La cow pill ha pure la capacità di invecchiare gradualmente le ragazzine di 13-15 anni che dovrebbero aspettare i 18 anni per intraprendere — come stabilito dalla legge — la carriera di famiglia, così tenacemente onorata dalle loro donne. Le schiave del sesso vengono regolarmente vendute dalle famiglie e l'industria dei bordelli incrementa il turismo.

Di fronte a questa stupefacente realtà incredibile a credersi, se non fosse vera, può la Commissione dire:

1. quali relazioni intrattiene con il Bangladesh;

2. se ha la possibilità di esercitare pressioni per fare in modo che dal punto di vista sanitario siano garantite maggiori tutele nei confronti delle minorenni;

3. quali eventuali aiuti può negoziare, al fine di favorire lo sviluppo dell'istruzione e la realizzazione di programmi scolastici per avviare le giovani donne verso mestieri diversi dalla prostituzione;

4. quali iniziative può suggerire per smantellare il turismo «sessuale»?

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

L'UE intrattiene relazioni di lunga data con il Bangladesh, di cui è attualmente il principale donatore in materia di aiuti allo sviluppo (UE e Stati membri congiuntamente), e solleva regolarmente la questione dei diritti delle donne e dei minori nell'ambito dei suoi contatti con il governo e la società civile del Bangladesh.

Benché la prostituzione sia indubbiamente un problema diffuso, contrastarla è difficile. È necessario farvi fronte adottando misure nei settori della protezione giuridica, dell'azione penale, della politica sociale e dell'istruzione. L'UE ha cercato di farlo intervenendo su istruzione, salute e diritti e mediante una serie di progetti volti a contrastare lo sfruttamento sessuale e i relativi problemi legati alla tratta di esseri umani e all'abuso sessuale. Nello stesso spirito, l'UE ha sostenuto l'attuazione della politica nazionale per i minori (2010), della politica di lotta contro il lavoro minorile (2010) e della politica nazionale di sviluppo delle donne (2011), nonché il diritto delle lavoratrici a retribuzioni che garantiscano loro un'esistenza dignitosa, l'esecuzione di controlli nell'ambito del lavoro minorile nei settori pericolosi e la realizzazione di campagne di sensibilizzazione sociale.

L'UE è uno dei principali donatori nel settore dell'istruzione. L'ammontare totale dei programmi in corso destinati a tale ambito è approssimativamente di 144 milioni di euro, compresi i circa 14 milioni stanziati a favore dell'alimentazione nelle scuole per i bambini più vulnerabili. I recenti programmi di sostegno all'istruzione non formale dell'UE, per un importo di 52 milioni di euro, sono destinati a 650 000 bambini che altrimenti non riceverebbero alcun tipo di istruzione. L'UE ha inoltre concentrato la propria assistenza sulla creazione di opportunità di sussistenza per le donne e le famiglie monoparentali guidate da una donna più indigenti (oltre 86 milioni di euro), sostenendo la sicurezza alimentare e mediante vie d'uscita sostenibili dalla povertà.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010684/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Relations with Bangladesh

It is a sad fact that the main industry of Bangladesh is prostitution. News reports explicitly refer to girls of 11 or 12 who are the victims of daily rapes, and youngsters who have sex with different men each day to make some money to take home. The legally authorised activities of brothels in the city of Faridpur, moreover, where a thousand or so prostitutes work seven days a week without respite, are incessant, as they are on the island of Bani Shanta, which is entirely populated by sex workers. One of the world's largest brothels is in Daulatdia, where an army of 1 600 women welcome around 3 000 men every day. There are approximately 100 000 prostitutes altogether in the country.

In 2004, Unicef calculated that there were 10 000 underage prostitutes, while according to unofficial estimates there may be as many as 30 000. 90% of young prostitutes, according to data provided by ActionAid, a non-profit organisation that works full-time in Bangladesh, use the so-called cow pill (Oradexon), a drug that is also given to cows to enable them to grow big and heavy enough. Steroids, however, according to experts, also have adverse side-effects such as diabetes, high blood pressure, rashes and headaches. Cow pills also have the ability to gradually age girls aged 13-15 years, who are supposed to wait until they are 18 to begin, as required by law, playing their role as wives and mothers, which is so important to women there. The sex slaves are regularly sold by families and the brothel industry increases tourism.

Given this astonishing situation, which would be impossible to believe were it not true, can the Commission say:

1. what kind of relations it has with Bangladesh;

2. whether it is able to exert pressure to ensure that, from a health point of view, children can receive greater protection;

3. what, if any, aid it can negotiate in order to promote the development of education and the implementation of educational programmes to give young women the option of choosing jobs other than prostitution;

4. what measures it would suggest to dismantle sex tourism?

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

The EU has had a longstanding relationship with Bangladesh and it is currently its largest development aid contributor (EU and Member States together). The EU regularly raises women's and children's rights in its contacts with the Government of Bangladesh and civil society.

Although it is clear that prostitution is a widespread problem, action against prostitution is difficult. It must be addressed through measures in the fields of legal protection and prosecution, social policy and education. The EU has sought to do so from the angles of education, health and rights and in a number of projects specifically targeting sex work and related problems of human trafficking and sexual abuse. The EU has consistently advocated the implementation of the National Child Policy (2010), Child Labour Elimination Policy (2010) and the National Women Development Policy (2011), including the provision of living wages for women workers, the monitoring of child labour in hazardous sectors and the implementation of social sensitisation campaigns.

The EU is one of the largest contributors to the education sector. The total amount of ongoing education programmes is almost EUR 144 million, including approximately EUR 14 million towards school-feeding for the most vulnerable children. Recent EU supported non-formal education programmes amounting to EUR 52 million aim to reach 650 000 children who would otherwise not receive any instruction. EU assistance has also concentrated on providing livelihood opportunities to ultrapoor women and women-headed households (more than EUR 86 million) through support for food security and sustainable graduation from poverty.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010685/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Violenza contro le bambine in India

È appena trascorsa la Giornata delle bambine organizzata dall'Onu, ma la violenza nei loro confronti continua imperterrita e si accampano giustificazioni che sembrano un sopruso. È emblematico il caso di una povera sedicenne dell'Haryana, in India, che è stata violata da cinque uomini, fra cui un poliziotto, e, incapace di sostenere la vergogna, si è suicidata. Interrogata sui possibili interventi da mettere in atto per evitare gli stupri delle minorenni, una personalità politica dello stesso Stato in cui si è svolta la tragedia della sedicenne ha risposto: «Il miglior modo per evitare lo stupro è quello di farle sposare presto, anche prima dei 15 anni». Secondo un avvocato-donna della Corte Suprema, legittimare le nozze delle minorenni col sopruso dello stupro è come giustificare tale atto senza condannarlo. Le bambine, infatti, non potrebbero difendersi dalla violenza dei mariti all'interno del matrimonio, compito difficile anche per una donna adulta. Il fenomeno della violenza sui minori è un delitto assolutamente inaccettabile che deve essere condannato legalmente e in modo inesorabile, trattandosi di una palese violazione dei diritti umani fondamentali.

1. Non ritiene la Commissione che, ogni volta che un paese partner con cui è stato stipulato un accordo commette una grave violazione dei diritti umani, l'UE debba applicare le opportune sanzioni, come previsto nelle clausole sui diritti umani dell'accordo stesso?

2. Non crede che la riaffermazione di questo principio possa influenzare positivamente la classe dirigente dei paesi che negoziano accordi con l'UE rispetto alla questione dei diritti umani?

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

L'UE segue con estrema attenzione la situazione dei diritti umani in India e prende atto con preoccupazione delle segnalazioni di casi quali quello descritto nell'interrogazione. L'ampia copertura mediatica degli incidenti, riportati dalla stampa locale e commentati dai canali di informazione 24 ore su 24, rispecchia l'indignazione dell'opinione pubblica al riguardo. Anche la Commissione nazionale indiana per le donne esamina la situazione nell'ambito del suo mandato e invita la popolazione a presentare suggerimenti per ampliare il lavoro del comitato di esperti per le questioni di genere e l'istruzione, istituito di recente. La violenza nei confronti delle donne è inoltre un tema ricorrente nell'ambito del dialogo UE-India in materia di diritti umani, un incontro periodico la cui prossima sessione è prevista tra alcune settimane a Delhi.

Le attività dell'UE in materia di sviluppo in India sono incentrate principalmente su donne e bambini mediante il sostegno a programmi nazionali attuati dal governo nei settori dell'istruzione e della sanità. Tali attività sono integrate da una serie di progetti di ONG, di cui alcuni destinati ai diritti dei bambini.

L'UE deplora gli episodi di violenza nei confronti delle donne e, in linea con le clausole di natura politica previste dagli accordi bilaterali tra l'UE e i paesi terzi, solleva regolarmente queste questioni, nonché altri argomenti relativi ai diritti umani.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010685/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Violence against girls in India

The UN's International Day of the Girl was celebrated only recently, but violence against girls continues unabated and proposals put forward concerning ways of combating it themselves often betray an inherently abusive attitude towards women. The problem is symbolised by the case of a poor 16 year-old in India's Haryana province, who was raped by five men, one of them a policeman, and, unable to bear the shame, committed suicide. When questioned about possible ways of preventing the rape of under-age girls, a leading politician from Haryana replied that the best way is to 'ensure that girls marry early, even before the age of 15'. According to a woman lawyer who sits on the Indian Supreme Court, legitimising the marrying-off of under-age girls by arbitrarily portraying it as a means of preventing rape amounts to a failure to recognise where the real problem lies, namely that girls would be unable to defend themselves against acts of violence by their husbands within marriage, something which is already beyond many adult women. Violence against minors is a completely unacceptable crime and a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights, which must be punished with the full force of the law.

1. Does the Commission not take the view that, when a partner country with which the EU has concluded an agreement commits a serious human rights violation, the EU should impose appropriate sanctions, as provided for in the human rights clauses of the agreement itself?

2. Does it not believe that reaffirming this principle could encourage political leaders in countries which are negotiating agreements with the EU to pay closer attention to the issue of respect for human rights?

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

The EU monitors the human rights situation in India very closely and notes with concern reports on situations as described in the question. The incidents were widely reported in the local press and commented in 24/7 media, reflecting the public opinion's outcry to these incidents. The Indian National Commission for Women is also looking into the situation as part of its mandate. It currently invites suggestions from the general public to expand the work of the recently established Expert Committee on Gender and Education. Furthermore, violence against women is a regular discussion point at the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue, a regular meeting which is expected to take place again in Delhi within a few weeks.

The EU development portfolio in India is overwhelming centered on women and children through support in Government national programmes in education and health. A series of NGO projects complement these actions, including a few dedicated to children's rights.

The EU deplores the instances of violence against women, and in line with the political clauses in bilateral agreements between the EU and third countries raises these and other human rights issues on a regular basis.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010686/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Libera concorrenza per il gioco d'azzardo online

È d'attualità il caso recentemente scoppiato in Belgio che vede contrapposti lo Stato e i gestori di siti online di gioco d'azzardo. Il gioco online è stato legalizzato in Belgio nel 2002 ed oggi i siti che vi operano legalmente sono 239. I siti stranieri che hanno ottenuto la licenza per accogliere giocatori belgi sono 9. Un'altra cinquantina invece operano senza licenza ed ora figurano su una lista nera compilata dal governo. Questi gestori tuttavia, protestano ed invocano presunte regole dell'UE: nei 27 Stati membri dell'Unione — secondo questi operatori stranieri — deve valere la libera concorrenza anche per il gioco online e nessuno può imporre norme protezionistiche per favorire i propri operatori. Il Belgio, a quanto pare, ha giustificato le sue norme con la necessità di proteggere i propri cittadini da troppe truffe e dal pericolo di ritrovarsi schiavi del gioco, vale a dire ludopatici. Nella vicenda figura anche il fermo di due ore, per interrogatorio, del capo di un colosso del gioco d'azzardo online «Bwin Party» che opera a Gibilterra.

Può la Commissione riferire:

1. se è già stata adottata la comunicazione annunciata sul gioco d'azzardo online nel mercato interno;

2. in caso affermativo, se c'è un riferimento alla libera concorrenza anche per il gioco d'azzardo online;

3. considerato il volume vieppiù crescente di questo tipo di gioco e valutata altresì la crescita esponenziale dei ludopatici, soprattutto tra i minori, se ritiene opportuno prevedere clausole di salvaguardia che limitino la libertà di concorrenza al fine di evitare derive altamente negative provocate dall'azzardo?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(21 gennaio 2013)

Il 23 ottobre 2012 la Commissione ha adottato la comunicazione «Verso un quadro normativo europeo approfondito relativo al gioco d'azzardo on-line»; è disponibile, insieme ad altri documenti pertinenti, sul sito web della Commissione: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/gambling_en.htm.

In linea di massima gli Stati membri sono liberi di fissare gli obiettivi delle rispettive politiche sui giochi di sorte e di definirne nei dettagli il grado di tutela; possono restringere o limitare l'offerta di tutti o di determinati servizi di raccolta a distanza sulla base degli obiettivi di interesse generale che cercano di proteggere. Tuttavia, la comunicazione sottolinea anche che il quadro normativo nazionale deve rispettare i principi e le regole del mercato interno.

Nella comunicazione, la Commissione propone un insieme completo di azioni e principi comuni sulla tutela del consumatore, con misure destinate soprattutto a proteggere meglio i giovani. La Commissione incoraggia in particolare lo sviluppo di più efficienti strumenti di controllo dell'età e di filtri on line del contenuto. Intende promuovere inoltre una pubblicità più responsabile e una maggiore consapevolezza dei genitori sui pericoli associati ai giochi d'azzardo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010686/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Free competition for online gambling

A case has recently emerged in Belgium in which the government is opposing operators of online gambling sites. Online gambling was legalised in Belgium in 2002 and there are now 239 sites that operate there legally. Nine foreign sites have obtained a licence for Belgian players, while another fifty are operating without a licence and are now on a government blacklist. The latter operators, however, are complaining and invoking alleged EU rules: according to these foreign operators, there must be free competition among the 27 EU Member States for online games too and nobody can lay down protectionist rules to benefit their own operators. The justification given by Belgium for its rules, apparently, is the need to protect its citizens from too many scams and from the danger of becoming gambling addicts. In connection with this case, the head of a giant online gambling company 'Bwin Party' operating in Gibraltar, was even held for questioning for two hours.

1. Has the Commission already adopted its pre-announced communication on online gambling in the internal market?

2. If so, is there any reference to free competition for online gambling?

3. Given the ever increasing volume of such gambling and the exponential growth of gambling addicts, particularly among young people, does the Commission not think it should provide safeguard clauses that restrict freedom of competition in order to avoid the extremely negative impact that gambling can have?

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

The Commission has adopted its communication 'Towards a comprehensive European framework for online gambling' on 23 October 2012. The communication and other relevant documents are available on the Commission's website: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/gambling_en.htm.

Member States are in principle free to set the objectives of their policy on games of chance and to define in detail the level of protection sought. They may indeed restrict or limit the supply of all or certain types of online gambling services on the basis of public interest objectives that they seek to protect in relation to gambling. However, the communication also stresses that national regulatory frameworks have to comply with internal market principles and rules.

With the communication the Commission is proposing a comprehensive set of actions and common principles on consumer protection. These measures aim in particular at a better protection of young people. The Commission is *inter alia* encouraging the development of better age-verification tools and online content filters. It is also pushing for more responsible advertising and increased parental awareness of the dangers associated with gambling.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010687/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Diga di Ilisu sul Tigri

È un progetto del governo turco che ha l'inconveniente, se verrà realizzato — come tutto sembra far credere — di sommergere il millenario sito archeologico di Hasankeyf. Per protesta, 12 scultori di 9 paesi appartenenti a «Scultori senza frontiere» creeranno dodici opere d'arte da collocare nella città che verrà sommersa per attirare l'attenzione del mondo civile su un'operazione che ritengono funesta. Il sito archeologico, infatti, si trova nel cuore della Mesopotamia ed è una delle perle del patrimonio giunto fino a noi dall'antichità. Il progetto fa parte di un piano molto più ampio per favorire la sviluppo di un'area depressa con 22 dighe e 19 centrali idroelettriche. Lo sbarramento previsto, comunque, costerà la perdita di un'eredità che risale a 12.000 anni fa e l'evacuazione forzata della popolazione. Ambientalisti e archeologi sono contro il governo turco, che ora sta accelerando i lavori e mira a completare la diga entro il 2015, dopo anni di incertezze dovute anche al ritiro di alcuni investitori internazionali, dubbiosi sulla sostenibilità del progetto.

Sembra però che l'interesse strategico del governo per questa zona curda superi quello culturale, che verrebbe risolto qualora il ministro per le acque assicurasse di salvare i manufatti archeologici in un apposito museo. I progetti sui fiumi Tigri ed Eufrate rappresentano tuttavia la chiave per il controllo delle risorse idriche delle regioni contese con Iraq e Siria. Anche la proposta di introdurre nella nuova Costituzione un «diritto all'ambiente» — che avrebbe lasciato alle popolazioni coinvolte l'ultima parola — è stata sonoramente bocciata.

Può la Commissione dire se:

1. ha un'opinione sulla questione, dato che la Turchia è candidata all'adesione,

2. considera che la distruzione di un patrimonio di così alto valore sia un passaggio obbligato verso il cosiddetto progresso;

3. ha la possibilità di far sentire la sua voce nei confronti del governo Erdogan;

4. è in grado di assicurare che nessun finanziamento dell'UE è coinvolto nel progetto della diga di Ilisu?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione ha già sollevato la questione della costruzione della diga in occasione di incontri bilaterali con la Turchia per sottolineare la necessità di prendere in considerazione le preoccupazioni in materia di diritti dell'uomo. Essa incoraggia la Turchia a consultare tutte le parti interessate, comprese le ONG, al fine di garantire il rispetto dei diritti della popolazione, nonché la protezione dei siti archeologici e il rispetto della legislazione in materia di ambiente. La Commissione ha inoltre sollecitato le autorità turche a fornire informazioni sulle autorizzazioni rilasciate per le centrali idroelettriche.

Come indicato nella relazione 2012, l'eventuale impatto negativo di grandi progetti infrastrutturali sullo sviluppo sostenibile nella parte sudorientale del paese resta un problema importante da risolvere. La Commissione continuerà a monitorare da vicino tutti gli aspetti connessi alla costruzione di dighe in Turchia.

L'Unione europea, che finanzia soltanto i progetti che rispettano l'acquis, ha precisato in diverse occasioni che il progetto per la diga di Ilisu non è conforme all'acquis dell'UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010687/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Ilisu Dam on the Tigris River

The Ilusu Dam is a Turkish Government project which, if implemented — as it is highly likely to be — will have the disadvantage of engulfing the age-old archaeological site of Hasankeyf. In protest, 12 sculptors from nine countries belonging to 'Sculptors without borders' will create 12 works of art to be placed in the town that is going to be submerged, to attract the attention of the civilised world to an operation they consider to be tragic.

The archaeological site, in fact, is in the heart of Mesopotamia and is one of the jewels of the heritage that has been handed down to us from ancient times. The project is part of a much broader plan to encourage the development of a depressed area by installing 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric power plants. The dam in question, however, will involve the loss of a 12 000-year old heritage and the forced evacuation of the population. Environmentalists and archaeologists are opposing the Turkish Government, which is now stepping up the work and aims to complete the dam by 2015, after years of uncertainty also due to the withdrawal of several international investors who doubted the sustainability of the project.

However, it would appear that the government's strategic interest in this Kurdish area exceeds its cultural interest. This is a matter which would be resolved if the Minister for Water undertook to save archaeological artefacts in a special museum. The projects on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, however, are the key to controlling water resources in these disputed regions shared with Iraq and Syria. Even the proposal to insert a 'right to the environment' into the new constitution — which would have given the last word to the people involved — was firmly rejected.

1. Does the Commission have an opinion on this issue, given that Turkey is a candidate for EU membership?

2. Does it believe that the destruction of such a precious heritage is a necessary step towards so-called progress?

3. Can it make the Erdogan government listen to its views?

4. Can it ensure that no EU funding is involved in the Ilisu Dam project?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission has raised the issue of dam projects on a number of occasions in its bilateral relations with Turkey to underline the need to take into account human rights concerns. The Commission is encouraging Turkey to consult with all interested stakeholders, including NGOs, in order to assure respect for the rights of the inhabitants as well as the protection of the archaeological sites and the respect for environmental legislation. The Commission has also requested the Turkish authorities to provide information on authorisations given for hydropower schemes.

As indicated in the 2012 Progress Report, the possible negative impact of major infrastructure projects on sustainable development in the South-East remains a major issue. The Commission will continue to closely monitor all aspects related to the construction of dams in Turkey.

The EU does not fund projects that do not comply with the EU *acquis*, and the EU has indicated at various instances that the Ilisu Dam project does not comply with the *acquis*.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010688/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Mattanza di elefanti

Nel giugno scorso si è riunito a Ginevra il comitato permanente della Convenzione sul commercio internazionale delle specie minacciate, che costituisce l'accordo internazionale in base al quale è stata messa al bando la compravendita mondiale dell'avorio. All'ordine del giorno figurava un rapporto intitolato «Salvaguardia degli elefanti, uccisioni illegali e commercio dell'avorio» dal quale emergono i seguenti dati catastrofici: 8 575 elefanti uccisi tra il 2002 e il 2011 in 27 paesi diversi, di cui 1 408 nel solo 2011, con l'intercettazione in operazioni di polizia di 24,3 tonnellate di avorio. La rete del traffico illegale di avorio copre l'intero continente africano e il prezzo dell'avorio sul mercato clandestino continua ad aumentare. È passato infatti da 120 a 280 euro al chilo tra il 2002 e il 2004 ed ora ha raggiunto la soglia dei 600 euro. La domanda, attualmente concentrata in Cina e, in secondo luogo, in Tailandia, cresce senza posa e l'offerta non riesce a soddisfarla. Si tratta di un effetto paradossale della messa al bando del commercio dell'avorio che risale al 1989. Corruzione e inadeguatezza del sistema giudiziario dei paesi coinvolti contribuiscono al disastro.

1. Può la Commissione far sapere se ha la possibilità di intervenire per combattere questa mattanza, destinata presumibilmente ad aumentare, e questa funesta tendenza?

2. Non crede che la presenza controllata di questi animali contribuisca a un equilibrio ecologico ambientale assolutamente necessario anche per le popolazioni che vivono in quei territori?

3. Non ritiene che un'azione concertata, in collaborazione con le Nazioni Unite e con i governi interessati, a sostegno della lotta alla criminalità internazionale responsabile del mercato clandestino dell'avorio, e quindi della mattanza in corso, possa dare frutti migliori rispetto a quelli ottenuti fino ad ora?

4. Non ritiene opportuno subordinare gli eventuali accordi commerciali con i paesi in cui si verificano queste stragi ai risultati da essi raggiunti nella lotta alla mattanza e al mercato clandestino dell'avorio?

5. Dispone di dati relativi all'eventuale mercato dell'avorio nell'Unione europea?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(30 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione riconosce l'importanza dell'elefante africano per l'equilibrio ecologico delle zone in cui esso vive, con il conseguente beneficio degli abitanti di quei territori e dell'ambiente. La Commissione è molto allarmata dalle proporzioni che hanno assunto il bracconaggio di elefanti e il commercio illegale dell'avorio. La quantità di avorio sequestrato nell'UE nel 2011 si aggirava intorno ai 100 kg, trattandosi nella maggior parte dei casi di articoli in transito dall'Africa verso l'Asia.

Per affrontare questo problema l'UE sostiene varie iniziative, tra cui le seguenti:

il programma MIKE (*Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants* — Controllo delle uccisioni illegali di elefanti), realizzato dal segretariato della CITES e gestito dall'UNEP. Da dieci anni l'UE finanzia questo programma (10 milioni di euro) e continuerà a farlo nella nuova fase nella quale, forti del successo, della reputazione e delle competenze acquisite nell'ultimo decennio, si cercherà di consolidare gli investimenti effettuati e garantire massima continuità con le due fasi precedenti del programma;

le attività del Consorzio internazionale per la lotta ai reati contro le specie selvatiche, entità di recente creazione che, costituita da cinque organizzazioni internazionali con esperienza in fatto di attività di contrasto, traffico illecito di flora e fauna selvatiche e gestione di progetti, ha il compito di fronteggiare i reati contro le specie selvatiche, nonché vari progetti volti a migliorare la gestione della popolazione di elefanti e a intensificare l'attività di contrasto e la cooperazione internazionale tra gli Stati d'origine delle specie, i paesi di transito e quelli di destinazione.

L'UE fa sì che negli accordi bilaterali di libero scambio siglati con paesi terzi figurino disposizioni sullo sviluppo sostenibile, in modo da poter sollevare problemi e ricercare soluzioni in merito a questioni ambientali quali il bracconaggio di elefanti e il traffico di avorio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010688/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Elephant slaughter

In June 2012, the Standing Committee of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) met in Geneva. This Convention is the international agreement under which the world sale of ivory was banned. On the agenda for the meeting was a report entitled 'Elephant conservation, illegal killing and ivory trade', which gave the following disastrous information: 8 575 elephants were killed between 2002 and 2011, in 27 different countries, 1 408 of which in 2011 alone, and 24.3 tonnes of ivory were intercepted in various police operations. The network of illegal ivory trafficking covers the entire African continent and the price of ivory on the black market continues to increase. It rose from EUR 120 to EUR 280 per kilo between 2002 and 2004 and has now almost reached EUR 600. Demand for ivory, currently mainly in China, followed by Thailand, is constantly growing, and supply is unable to meet it. This is a paradoxical effect of the ban on the ivory trade, which dates back to 1989. Corruption and the inadequacy of the legal systems in the countries concerned are contributing to this disaster.

1. Can the Commission say whether it is able to take any action to combat this deadly trend and this slaughter, which is presumably destined to increase?

2. Does it not agree that the controlled presence of these animals contributes to an environmental balance that is vital also for the people who live in those areas?

3. Does it not agree that a concerted effort, in cooperation with the United Nations and the governments concerned, to support the fight against the international criminal organisations that are responsible for the black market in ivory, and therefore for the current slaughter, might yield better results than those achieved so far?

4. Does it not think that any trade agreements with the countries in which these massacres are taking place should be made subject to the results they achieve in the fight against this elephant slaughter and the black market in ivory?

5. Does it have any information relating to the ivory market in the European Union, if there is one?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission agrees that the African elephant contributes to an environmental balance throughout the zones it inhabits, which is beneficial for the inhabitants of the region as well as the environment. The Commission is deeply concerned about the high levels reached by elephant poaching and illegal ivory trade. In 2011, it is estimated that around 100 kg of ivory was seized in the EU; most of the seized items were on transit from Africa to Asia.

To address that problem, the EU supports initiatives like:

the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme carried out by the CITES Secretariat and administered by UNEP. It has been funded by the EU for the last decade (10 million EUR), and continues to do so with a new phase of this programme that seeks to build on the strong success, reputation and expertise that have been established over the past decade of operation of MIKE, consolidating previous investments and ensuring a high degree of continuity with the two previous phases of the programme.

the activities of the recently created International Consortium for Combating Wildlife Crime, which comprises five international organisations with expertise in law enforcement, wildlife trafficking and project management and is tasked to tackle transnational wildlife crime and various projects to enhance elephant population management, enforcement and international cooperation between range States, transit countries and countries of final destination.

The EU makes sure that its bilateral free trade agreements with third countries contain provisions on sustainable development, which would allow the EU to raise concerns and seek solutions on environmental issues such as elephant poaching and ivory trade.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010689/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Università a Dadaab

Nel più grande campo profughi del mondo, a Dadaab, situato nel Kenia, al confine con la Somalia e che ospita oltre 470mila persone, sta per aprirsi una facoltà universitaria vera e propria: management, finanza, marketing, scienza dell'educazione, gestione dei conflitti. È la Kenyatta University ad organizzarla, primo ateneo al mondo ad avviare un campus in un campo profughi, dove 5.000 ragazzi raggiungono la fine degli studi della scuola superiore. I corsi saranno frequentati dai rifugiati, la maggior parte dei quali sono somali fuggiti dal Corno d'Africa a causa della siccità e delle violenze dei fondamentalisti islamici, ma anche giovani keniani potranno frequentarli. L'Agenzia dell'Onu per i rifugiati sta pensando ad un pacchetto di borse di studio.

1. Perché la Commissione non promuove un'iniziativa analoga e predispone borse di studio per i somali, così tanto colpiti dalla guerra civile che insanguina il loro Paese da più di vent'anni?

2. Perché non invita i governi degli Stati membri a promuovere partnership tra l'università del campus e università dei rispettivi paesi aventi le stesse facoltà?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2013)

Si invita l'onorevole parlamentare a consultare la risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-0010151/2012, anch'essa relativa al campo di Dadaab ([1]).

L'UE è il principale donatore nel settore dell'istruzione in Somalia, con un sostegno di 85 milioni di euro (2008-2013) destinato ai sottosettori «istruzione» e «sviluppo delle capacità» del ministero dell'Istruzione.

Una parte del programma (2 milioni di euro) prevede di fornire assistenza mediante l'assegnazione di borse di studio ai somali e ai diplomati della scuola secondaria del campo profughi di Dadaab, che in tal modo avranno la possibilità di intraprendere gli studi in Somalia o nella regione, ivi compreso nella nuova università di Dadaab. Obiettivo della parte del programma riguardante le borse di studio per i rifugiati di Dadaab è promuovere il miglioramento di mezzi di sussistenza, livelli di reddito, competenze e prospettive di rimpatrio, o altre soluzioni durature. Un'altra parte (3,5 milioni di euro) è destinata specificamente ai rifugiati di Dadaab e mira, da un lato, a fornire loro, e in una certa misura anche alla popolazione locale ospitante di Dadaab, conoscenze e competenze personali, necessarie per il loro ritorno in Somalia e, dall'altro, a offrire a 240 insegnanti di Dadaab la possibilità di beneficiare di borse di studio per seguire corsi di formazione per docenti prima dell'entrata in servizio e in servizio.

La Francia è stata in prima linea per quanto concerne l'ampliamento delle opportunità di istruzione superiore offerte mediante borse di studio ai giovani rifugiati di Dadaab e, in consultazione con l'UE, ha assegnato a 10 giovani somali del campo profughi di Dadaab borse di studio per seguire corsi universitari nelle università del Kenya, compresa l'università Kenyatta. L'università di Dadaab è stata inaugurata nell'ottobre 2012 e sarà possibile avviare un dialogo sulle relazioni con le università europee quando il campus universitario aprirà le porte ai primi studenti nel 2013 e le strutture amministrative e operative saranno in funzione.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010689/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: University in Dadaab

In the largest refugee camp in the world, in Dadaab, Kenya, on the border with Somalia, which is home to over 470 000 people, a university faculty is about to open, dealing with management, finance, marketing, educational science and conflict management. It will be run by Kenyatta University — the first university in the world to launch a campus in a refugee camp, where 5 000 children manage to reach the end of their secondary school studies. The courses will be attended by refugees, most of whom are Somalis who have fled from the Horn of Africa because of drought and the violence of Islamic fundamentalists, but young Kenyans will also be able to attend. The UN Refugee Agency is considering introducing a scholarship package.

1. Why does the Commission not support a similar initiative and establish scholarships for Somalis, who have been so severely affected by the civil war that has been bloodying their country for over twenty years?

2. Why does it not call on the governments of the Member States to promote partnerships between this campus university and universities in their respective countries which have the same faculty?

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

The Honourable Member is kindly referred to written reply to Question E-0010151/2012 also concerning the Dadaab camp ([1]).

The EU is the largest donor to the education sector in Somalia with a support of EUR 85 million (2008-2013) to address all sub-sectors of education and capacity development of the Ministry of Education.

Part of the programme (EUR 2 million) provides scholarship assistance to Somalis including secondary school leavers in the Dadaab refugee camps, so that they will be able to take up studies inside Somalia or in the region including the new Dadaab University. The objective of the Dadaab refugee's scholarship component is to promote improved livelihoods, income levels, skills and prospects for repatriation or other durable solutions. Another part (EUR 3.5 million) is targeting Dadaab's refugees specifically aiming to equip them and to a certain extent the local host population in Dadaab with education and life skills to enable them return to Somalia and also to provide scholarship opportunities to 240 teachers in Dadaab to undertake pre-service and in-service teacher training courses.

France has been in the forefront of expanding higher education opportunities for young refugees in Dadaab through scholarships and has offered, in consultation with the EU, scholarships to 10 young Somalis from the Dadaab refugee camps to undertake undergraduate degree courses in Kenyan universities, including Kenyatta University. Dadaab University was launched in October 2012 and dialogue on linkages with European Universities will be possible when the university campus opens its door to the first intake of students in 2013 and administrative and operational structures of the campus are in place.

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010690/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Η αποτελεσματικότητα των ελληνικών αποκρατικοποιήσεων εν μέσω οικονομικής κρίσης

Η πρόσφατη έρευνα της εταιρείας επιχειρηματικών συμβούλων BDO έδειξε ότι η Ελλάδα θεωρείται πιο επικίνδυνη χώρα ακόμα και από την εμπόλεμη Συρία ως προς την επένδυση από το εξωτερικό. Το 11% των ερωτηθέντων CFOs κατέταξε την Ελλάδα στον λιγότερο ασφαλή προορισμό για επενδύσεις, ενώ το 80% των συμμετεχόντων σχολίασε πως θεωρεί τη χώρα μας επισφαλή προορισμό λόγω των οικονομικών της προβλημάτων. Μόνο το Ιράν και το Ιράκ θεωρούνται πιο επικίνδυνες χώρες από την Ελλάδα!

Είναι σαφές ότι οι οικονομικοί διευθυντές (ιδιαίτερα εκείνοι που προέρχονται από τις αναπτυσσόμενες οικονομίες όπως είναι η Βραζιλία και η Κίνα) δείχνουν απροθυμία να επενδύσουν σε υπερχρεωμένες χώρες της Ευρώπης, κάτι το οποίο είναι εξαιρετικά μεγάλης σημασίας αφού σε μεγάλο βαθμό το μέλλον αυτών των χωρών και η οικονομική τους αποκατάσταση εξαρτάται από τις επενδύσεις του ιδιωτικού τομέα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Όταν μεγάλο μέρος υποψηφίων επενδυτών έχουν την προαναφερόμενη άποψη για την Ελλάδα, πόσο ωφέλιμο μπορεί να είναι το επιβεβλημένο πρόγραμμα αποκρατικοποιήσεων κατά την τρέχουσα χρονική περίοδο;

— Δεν κινδυνεύει η Ελλάδα, ιδιαιτέρως από τη στιγμή που όλοι γνωρίζουν ότι η είσπραξη εσόδων από τις αποκρατικοποιήσεις αποτελεί μνημονιακή δέσμευση προκειμένου να μειωθεί το δημόσιο χρέος, να αντιμετωπίσει καταστάσεις όπου τα προσφερόμενα οικονομικά ανταλλάγματα να μην ανταποκρίνονται στην πραγματική αξία των ελληνικών περιουσιακών στοιχείων;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Η συμμετοχή του ιδιωτικού τομέα στον εκσυγχρονισμό των δημόσιων επιχειρήσεων μπορεί να ενισχύσει την αποτελεσματικότητα, τη διαφάνεια, τη λογοδοσία και τη στήριξη των επενδύσεων και της καινοτομίας. Η απόφαση όσον αφορά τα περιουσιακά στοιχεία του Δημοσίου ή τις δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις που θα ιδιωτικοποιηθούν, τον βαθμό και τη σειρά με την οποία θα διεξαχθούν οι εν λόγω ιδιωτικοποιήσεις, θα ληφθεί αποκλειστικά και μόνον από τα κράτη μέλη, αφού ληφθούν υπόψη οι ανάγκες που αντιμετωπίζουν και οι στόχοι που τα ίδια έχουν θέσει.

Η προσέλκυση ιδιωτικών επενδύσεων έχει ιδιαίτερη σημασία σε χώρες με σοβαρές χρηματοδοτικές ανάγκες και δημοσιονομικές δυσχέρειες. Μολονότι τα έσοδα από ιδιωτικοποιήσεις δεν υποκαθιστούν άμεσα τις προσπάθειες δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης, εντούτοις μειώνουν τις δαπάνες για τοκοχρεολύσια, τις επιδοτήσεις και άλλου είδους πληρωμές ή κρατικές εγγυήσεις σε κρατικές επιχειρήσεις και, ως εκ τούτου, συμβάλλουν στη δημοσιονομική βιωσιμότητα, βοηθούν στη μείωση του χρέους και ελευθερώνουν πόρους για άλλους σκοπούς.

Η πολιτική ιδιωτικοποιήσεων που εφαρμόζεται στην Ελλάδα λαμβάνει υπόψη τη βέλτιστη διεθνή πρακτική και ακολουθεί ενδελεχή διαδικασία σύναψης δημοσίων συμβάσεων που διασφαλίζει διαφάνεια και ισότιμη πρόσβαση για τους δυνητικά ενδιαφερόμενους και, ως εκ τούτου, τη δημιουργία των κατάλληλων συνθηκών που θα οδηγήσουν στην μεγιστοποίηση του οφέλους για τον δημόσιο τομέα. Συνεπώς, το αποτέλεσμα θα αντικατοπτρίζει την εύλογη αξία τους λαμβανομένων υπόψη των συνθηκών στη διεθνή αγορά και των προοπτικών που προσφέρονται στους επενδυτές, η οποία μπορεί να ενισχυθεί με το κατάλληλο μείγμα οικονομικών πολιτικών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010690/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: The efficiency of the Greek privatisation programme in the midst of an economic crisis

According to a recent survey conducted by BDO Consulting, Greece is considered a riskier country even than war-torn Syria for inward investment. 11% of the CFOs surveyed ranked Greece as the least safe destination for investments, while 80% of the participants stated that they consider our country a risky destination due to its economic problems. Only Iran and Iraq are viewed as riskier countries than Greece!

It is clear that the CFOs (especially the ones from developing economies such as Brazil and China) are reluctant to invest in highly indebted European countries: this is an extremely important observation, since the future of these countries and their economic recovery depends to a great extent on private sector investments.

Will the Commission say:

— When a large section of potential investors have the abovementioned view of Greece, how beneficial can the imposed privatisation programme be during this period?

— Is there not a risk, since everyone knows that income from privatisations is an obligation under the Memorandum in order to reduce public debt that Greece may be facing a situation where the financial compensation offered is not equivalent to the real value of the Greek assets?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

Involving the private sector in the modernization of the public companies can reinforce efficiency, transparency, accountability and support investment and innovation. 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.

Attracting private sector investors is particularly important in countries that have severe financing needs and budgetary difficulties. Although privatisation proceeds are not a direct substitute for fiscal consolidation efforts, they reduce debt interest payments, subsidies and other transfers or state guarantees to state-owned enterprises and hence contribute to fiscal sustainability, help put the debt ratio on a declining trend and free resources for other purposes.

Privatisation policy in Greece is implemented taking into account international best practices models and is following a thorough public procurement process guaranteeing transparency and equal access for potential bidders and thus creating the proper conditions for maximisation of the public sector benefit. The resulting outcome should thereby reflect fair value given the international market conditions and the prospects offered to investors, which can be reinforced by a sound and consistent mix of economic policies.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010691/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Κίνητρα για την δημιουργία ψηφιακά ανεπτυγμένων πόλεων

Η πόλη του Ηρακλείου Κρήτης βρίσκεται για 2η χρονιά στον κατάλογο με τις 21 πιο έξυπνες — ψηφιακά πόλεις του κόσμου, σύμφωνα με τον οργανισμό Intelligent Community Forum (ICF) που εδρεύει στη Νέα Υόρκη. Ας σημειωθεί ότι στον κατάλογο συμπεριλαμβάνονται μόλις 5 ευρωπαϊκές πόλεις, ενώ από αυτές μόνο 2 (η μία είναι το Ηράκλειο) διακρίνονται για 2η συνεχή χρονιά. Ο λόγος της διάκρισης, σύμφωνα με το δήμο Ηρακλείου, είναι οι ποιοτικές ψηφιακές υπηρεσίες προς τους πολίτες αλλά και οι υποδομές ευρυζωνικότητας.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ποιά είναι τα κίνητρα που δίδονται στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ έτσι ώστε περισσότερες ευρωπαϊκές πόλεις να αναπτυχθούν σε ψηφιακό επίπεδο, κάτι που αποτελεί απαίτηση της εποχής μας προκειμένου να διευκολυνθούν αλλά και να απλοποιηθούν πολλές λειτουργίες;

Απάντηση της κ. Kroes εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή αναπτύσσει πολιτικές και χρηματοδοτεί την έρευνα και καινοτομία με σκοπό να βοηθά τις ευρωπαϊκές πόλεις να προσφέρουν αποδοτικότερες δημόσιες υπηρεσίες, να ανταποκρίνονται και επικεντρώνονται περισσότερο στις ανάγκες του πολίτη και να επιτυγχάνουν όλα αυτά κατά περιβαλλοντικώς αειφόρο και οικονομικώς βιώσιμο τρόπο.

Ειδικότερα, η προσέγγισή μας για έξυπνες πόλεις στοχεύει στην αξιοποίηση του ανεκμετάλλευτου δυναμικού καινοτομίας στο σημείο τομής των πεδίων της ενέργειας, των μεταφορών και της ΤΠΕ (τεχνολογίας πληροφοριών και επικοινωνιών). Στη δέσμη πρωτοβουλιών για τις «έξυπνες πόλεις» εντάσσεται σειρά δραστηριοτήτων όπως λόγου χάρη η προτεινόμενη ευρωπαϊκή σύμπραξη καινοτομίας (ΕΣΚ) για τις έξυπνες πόλεις και κοινότητες και, εν μέρει, η ΕΣΚ για την ενεργό και υγιή γήρανση, η ευρωπαϊκή πρωτοβουλία «πράσινων» οχημάτων και η σύμπραξη ιδιωτικού και δημόσιου τομέα (ΣΔΙΤ) για ενεργειακά αποδοτικά κτίρια, καθώς και οι πολιτικές μας περί ανοιχτών δεδομένων.

Οι δύο ΕΣΚ στοχεύουν στον συντονισμό πολυποίκιλων δραστηριοτήτων και, ειδικότερα, στην προσέλκυση σημαντικών επενδύσεων πέρα από την ενωσιακή χρηματοδότηση. Το τρέχον έβδομο πρόγραμμα πλαίσιο χρηματοδοτεί τις προαναφερθείσες πρωτοβουλίες και τις ΣΔΙΤ, καθώς και άλλα έργα, υποβοηθώντας τις πόλεις στην αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων τους και στη βελτίωση της αποδοτικότητας των δημόσιων υπηρεσιών τους. Στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος «Ορίζοντας 2020», εν αναμονή συμφωνίας του Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, η Επιτροπή εξετάζει ακόμα πιο ολοκληρωμένες δραστηριότητες με σκοπό την εφαρμογή ΤΠΕ ώστε οι πόλεις να μπορούν να προσφέρουν περισσότερα στους πολίτες και στις επιχειρήσεις τους, και να καταστούν φιλικότερες για το περιβάλλον.

Για το διάστημα 2014-2020, η Επιτροπή πρότεινε να προβλεφθούν περίπου 370 εκατ. ευρώ από το ΕΤΠΑ για καινοτόμες αστικές δράσεις μέσω των οποίων αναμένεται να προωθηθούν νέοι και καινοτόμοι τρόποι αντιμετώπισης των αστικών προκλήσεων και οι οποίες ίσως αφορούν πιλοτικά έργα ή έργα επίδειξης ευρωπαϊκού ενδιαφέροντος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010691/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Incentives for the creation of digitally advanced cities

Heraklion, Crete, has been included for the second year in the list of the 21 digitally smartest cities in the world, according to the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF), a New York-based organisation. It should be noted that the list features only 5 European cities, of which only 2 (one is Heraklion) have been honoured for the second consecutive year. According to the municipality of Heraklion, this is due to the high-quality digital services provided to the citizens, as well as the available broadband infrastructure.

Will the Commission say:

What are the incentives put in place in the EU Member States so that more European cities become digitally advanced, which is a requirement of our times as a means of facilitating and simplifying numerous operations?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 January 2013)

The European Commission develops policy and funds research and innovation designed to help Europe's cities to provide more efficient public services; to be more responsive and citizens-centred, and to achieve all this in an environmentally sustainable and economically viable way. In particular, our approach towards Smart Cities aims at exploiting the untapped innovation potential at the intersection of the energy, transport and ICT sectors. Several activities fall under the smart cities umbrella, such as for instance the proposed Smart Cities and Communities European Innovation Partnership (EIP) and parts of the Active and Healthy Ageing EIP, the European Green Vehicle Initiative and the Energy-efficient Buildings Public-Private Partnership (PPP), as well as our policies on Open Data.

The two EIPs are aimed at coordinating a large variety of activities and, in particular, triggering substantial investments beyond just EU funding. The current Seventh Framework programme finances the mentioned Initiatives and PPPs as well as other projects helping cities to address their problems and improve the efficiency of their public services. With Horizon 2020, pending agreement of Parliament and Council, the Commission considers even more integrated activities with the purpose of applying ICT so that cities can better deliver to their citizens and businesses and become greener.

For 2014-2020 Commission proposed to set aside approximately 370 million Euro from ERDF for Urban Innovative Action which should foster new and innovative ways of dealing with urban challenges and could be pilot or demonstration projects that are of European interest.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010692/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(22 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Στήριξη των ανασφάλιστων ανέργων

Με τις αλλαγές που έχει φέρει η κρίση στην Ελλάδα αλλά κυρίως τα μνημόνια και τα μέτρα λιτότητας που αυτά επιβάλλουν, είναι πολλοί εκείνοι που χάνουν καθημερινά τη δουλειά τους. Ένα από τα κυριότερα προβλήματα είναι και το γεγονός ότι όσοι χάνουν τη δουλειά τους μένουν, μετά από ένα σύντομο χρονικό διάστημα, ανασφάλιστοι και έτσι αναγκάζονται να πληρώνουν μόνοι τους (όσοι μπορούν βεβαίως) τα ιατρικά τους έξοδα. Οι εθελοντικές οργανώσεις αναφέρουν ότι την κατάσταση αυτή αντιμετωπίζουν στην πραγματικότητα εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες Ελλήνων. Ειδικότερα στην περίπτωση των καρκινοπαθών όμως το πρόβλημα μεγιστοποιείται, αφού οι θεραπείες κοστίζουν πολύ ακριβά και ως εκ τούτου οι περισσότεροι εξ' αυτών δεν έχουν πρόσβαση σε χημειοθεραπείες ή χειρουργεία, πολλές φορές ούτε καν σε απλά φάρμακα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιά είναι η πολιτική στήριξης των ανασφάλιστων ασθενών και ειδικότερα των καρκινοπαθών στις χώρες της ΕΕ;

2. Υπάρχει σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο μέριμνα για την υποστήριξη τέτοιων περιπτώσεων σε χώρες όπως η Ελλάδα, όπου το τελευταίο χρονικό διάστημα πλήττονται βαριά από τα υψηλότατα και ΣΥΝΕΧΩΣ ΑΥΞΑΝΟΜΕΝΑ ποσοστά ανεργίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(30 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Σύμφωνα με τις πληροφορίες που δόθηκαν από τις ελληνικές αρχές, οι Έλληνες πολίτες χάνουν το δικαίωμα της ιατροφαρμακευτικής κάλυψης ύστερα από δύο έτη ανεργίας και μη καταβολής των εισφορών κοινωνικής ασφάλισης, ένας κανόνας ο οποίος ίσχυε ήδη πριν από την εμφάνιση της οικονομικής κρίσης. Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 168 της Συνθήκης για την λειτουργία της ΕΕ, η δράση της Ένωσης αναπτύσσεται χωρίς να θίγονται οι αρμοδιότητες των κρατών μελών όσον αφορά την οργάνωση και την παροχή υγειονομικών υπηρεσιών και ιατρικής περίθαλψης. Επομένως, με βάση αυτή τη διάταξη, δεν προβλέπεται καμία πρωτοβουλία σε επίπεδο ΕΕ, με σκοπό την υποστήριξη των ανασφάλιστων Ελλήνων ασθενών.

Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή ανησυχεί για τη δύσκολη κατάσταση που διέπει το ελληνικό σύστημα υγειονομικής περίθαλψης. Συνεπώς, στο Μνημόνιο Συμφωνίας σχετικά με τους ειδικούς όρους της οικονομικής πολιτικής ανάμεσα στην Ελλάδα, την Επιτροπή, την Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα και το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο, αναφέρεται ότι η διατήρηση της καθολικής πρόσβασης στην ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη αποτελεί έναν από τους στόχους που πρέπει να υλοποιηθεί.

Επιπλέον, η ομάδα δράσης της Επιτροπής για την Ελλάδα εργάζεται ενεργά με σκοπό να υποστηρίξει τις προσπάθειες μεταρρύθμισης της Ελλάδας, οι οποίες στοχεύουν στη βελτίωση της μακροπρόθεσμης βιωσιμότητας του ελληνικού συστήματος υγείας. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο υποστηρίζει, για παράδειγμα, την αναδιάρθρωση του τομέα ψυχικής υγείας, την ανάπτυξη της πρωτοβάθμιας υγειονομικής περίθαλψης, καθώς και την προστασία της υγείας των ανθρώπων, παρέχοντας κονδύλια ύψους 268 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ περίπου.

Η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να υποστηρίζει την Ελλάδα στις προσπάθειες παροχής ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης στους πολίτες της σε διαρκή βάση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010692/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Support for uninsured unemployed persons

Due to the changes caused by the crisis in Greece, but mostly due to the Memoranda and the austerity measures imposed as a result, many people are losing their jobs every day. One of the main problems is the fact that those losing their jobs are left, after a short period of time, without any insurance cover and are therefore forced to cover their medical expenses themselves (if they can afford to do so). Voluntary organisations report that this situation is indeed being faced by hundreds of thousands of Greek citizens. For cancer patients especially the problem is even worse, since treatments are very expensive and therefore most patients do not have access to chemotherapy or surgery and often not even to basic medicines.

Will the Commission say:

1. What is the policy to support patients without insurance and, more particularly, cancer patients in the EU Member States?

2. Has any attention been paid at a European level to support cases of this kind in countries such as Greece, which have been heavily affected recently by the extremely high and constantly increasing unemployment rates?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

According to information provided by the Greek authorities, Greek citizens lose health insurance coverage after two years in unemployment and failing to pay social security contributions, a rule which was already in place before the financial crisis started. According to Article 168, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, Union action shall respect the responsibilities of the Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. Hence, in respect of this provision, no initiative at EU level is envisaged to provide support to Greek patients who do not have an insurance.

The Commission is however concerned with the difficult situation of the Greek healthcare system. Hence, the memorandum of understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality between Greece, the Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund mentions that maintaining universal access to healthcare is one of the objectives to be met.

Furthermore, the Commission's Task Force for Greece has been working actively to support Greek reform efforts to improve the long-term viability of the Greek health system. The European Social Fund supports for example the reform of the mental health sector, as well as the development of primary healthcare and the protection of people's health with a budget of approximately EUR 268 million.

The Commission will continue to support Greece in its efforts to deliver healthcare to its citizens on a sustainable basis.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010693/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — La libertà di parola a rischio in India: una donna viene arrestata a motivo del suo post su Facebook

Questa settimana le restrizioni alla libertà di parola in India sono state evidenziate dall'arresto di Shaheen Dhada per aver criticato la serrata di Mumbai dopo la morte, sabato, del politico nazionalista indù Bal Thackeray. La sua amica, Renu Srinivasan, è stata arrestata per aver «apprezzato» il suo commento. Le due sono state poi liberate su cauzione. Le donne sono state accusate di «creare o promuovere inimicizia, odio o rancore tra le classi» e anche di reati a titolo della legge sulla tecnologia dell'informazione.

Si è riferito che negli ultimi tempi la polizia ha arrestato un certo numero di persone per accuse che gli attivisti definiscono violazioni della libertà di parola. Sebbene gli arresti siano stati ampiamente criticati in India, il fatto che si siano verificati dimostra il persistere dell'intolleranza in India per la libertà di parola e di espressione. Quest'anno delle persone sono state arrestate anche per tweets e cartoni animati che criticavano il governo. Considerato quanto sopra, può la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante rispondere alle seguenti domande:

1. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante è a conoscenza degli arresti di Shaheen Dhada e Renu Srinivasan per un commento espresso su facebook? In caso affermativo, qual è la posizione della Commissione in merito?

2. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante è a conoscenza di altri casi di restrizione della libertà di espressione in India quest'anno, e constata l'emergenza di una tendenza negativa in termini di abuso da parte dell'autorità nell'applicazione della legislazione allo scopo di limitare la libertà di espressione?

3. Dato che l'Unione europea intrattiene relazioni estese con l'India, incoraggerà l'India ad essere più tollerante nei confronti delle opinioni dei propri cittadini?

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

Nel corso dell'ultimo anno, la delegazione UE in India ha riferito all'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente di una tendenza negativa per quanto riguarda la libertà di espressione su Internet nonché degli arresti di Shaheen Dhada e Renu Srinivasan a Mumbai. La delegazione ha riportato le azioni intraprese nei confronti dei poliziotti responsabili di aver interpretato la legge in maniera scorretta. Da allora, le accuse nei confronti di Shaheen Dhada e Renu Srinivasan sono state ritirate.

Questi arresti hanno sollevato una protesta pubblica in seguito alla quale il governo ha pubblicato nuove linee direttrici sulla imputabilità per i commenti pubblicati online. In base alle nuove linee direttrici, prima di poter registrare la denuncia a norma della sezione 66A della legge indiana sulla tecnologia dell'informazione, è necessaria l'approvazione di un funzionario di grado superiore. La Corte Suprema è intervenuta a sua volta e ha annunciato che intende conoscere la controversia di interesse pubblico che riguarda la sezione in questione.

Le autorità indiane sono a conoscenza dell'importanza che la libertà di espressione riveste per l'UE. La tematica della libertà di espressione su Internet è regolarmente discussa con le autorità indiane nel quadro del dialogo sui diritti umani con l'India e delle consultazioni in materia di sicurezza informatica.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010693/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Freedom of speech at risk in India as woman is arrested over her Facebook post

This week the curtailment of freedom of speech in India was highlighted by the arrest of Shaheen Dhada for having criticised the shutdown of Mumbai after the death on Saturday of Hindu nationalist politician Bal Thackeray. Her friend Renu Srinivasan was also arrested for having 'liked' the comment. However, the two were later freed on bail. The women were charged with 'creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes' and also with offences under the Information Technology Act.

It has been reported that police have recently arrested a number of people in cases which campaigners call a breach of freedom of speech. Despite the arrests having been widely criticised in India, the fact that they took place shows the continuing intolerance in India for freedom of speech and expression. This year, people have also been jailed over tweets and cartoons criticising the Government. Considering the above, can the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following:

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the arrests of Shaheen Dhada and Renu Srinivasan over a comment made on Facebook? If so, what stance does the Commission take on this matter?

2. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of other freedom of expression cases in India this year, and does it see a negative trend emerging, in terms of the authorities misusing the law to quash freedom of expression?

3. Given that the EU has extensive relations with India, will the EU encourage India to be more tolerant of its citizens' opinions?

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

The EU Delegation in Indiahas reported to the HR/VP about the negative trend in freedom of expression on the Internet over the last year and also on the arrests of Shaheen Dhada and Renu Srinivasan in Mumbai. It has reported on the action taken against the policemen responsible for interpreting the law in an abusive manner. Charges against Ms. Dhada and Ms. Srinavasan have since been dropped.

The arrests led to a public outcry and as a result the government has issued new guidelines on the culpability of comments made online. These include a requirement for the approval of a senior officer before a complaint can be registered under Section 66A of the Information Technology Act. The Supreme Court has also stepped in and announced that it will hear a public-interest litigation challenging the section.

The EU attachment to the freedom of speech is well known to the Indian authorities. The issue of freedom of speech on the Internet is regularly raised with the Indian authorities in the context of the Human Rights Dialogue with India and the Cybersecurity consultations.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010694/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — L'inferno del Sinai

Nella risposta data alla mia interrogazione E-010998/2011 del 25 novembre 2011, avente per oggetto «I martiri del Sinai», il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante Catherine Ashton afferma che la Commissione è pienamente consapevole della tragica situazione dei profughi sub sahariani in Egitto e che l'UE ha continuato a far pressione sulle autorità egiziane «affinché affrontino la questione e garantiscano il rispetto dei diritti dei profughi conformemente agli impegni assunti».

Nel frattempo, mentre nella zona sud della penisola cuscinetto tra Israele e l'Egitto il turismo internazionale affolla i resort sul Mar Rosso, nella zona nord i beduini imperversano violentemente contro i malcapitati che attraversano la penisola in cerca di salvezza. I servizi giornalistici riportano episodi di rapimento, d'assassinii finalizzati al traffico di organi, di violenze d'ogni genere. Quell'angolo del Sinai è diventato un vero triangolo della morte, dove si combatte una guerra di cui nessuno parla.

A distanza di un anno dalla risposta riportata più sopra, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante dire:

1. se le sue pressioni sulle autorità egiziane hanno portato a qualche risultato;

2. in caso negativo, quali iniziative intende finalmente intraprendere per far pesare maggiormente le sue rimostranze a tutela della sicurezza dei profughi, a prescindere dalla loro provenienza;

3. se non ritiene opportuno un suo intervento a carattere umanitario, magari coi fondi previsti per il sostegno della democrazia, al fine di garantire un minimo d'aiuto alle vittime predestinate al peggio?

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

L'UE continua a seguire la situazione della tratta di esseri umani e dei rifugiati in Egitto, in particolare nella regione del Sinai. A tal proposito, l'UE intrattiene contatti regolari con il ministro degli Affari esteri e il ministro dell'Interno egiziani, così come con gli uffici regionali dell'Alto commissariato delle Nazioni unite per i rifugiati (UNHCR) e dell'Organizzazione internazionale per le migrazioni (OIM). L'UE ha espresso alle autorità competenti le sue preoccupazioni in numerose occasioni.

L'UE continuerà a esortare le autorità egiziane affinché prendano le misure appropriate per assicurare che i diritti umani dei migranti e dei rifugiati siano pienamente rispettati. L'UE fa pressione sulle autorità egiziane perché assicurino che il principio di non respingimento sia rispettato per tutti i migranti bisognosi di protezione internazionale. Le ha inoltre incitate a permettere all'UNHCR di eseguire il proprio mandato su tutto il territorio egiziano, compresa la regione del Sinai, nel rispetto degli impegni internazionali del paese.

L'UE segue attentamente la situazione umanitaria nei paesi del Maghreb e del Mashrek, grazie alla sua rete di esperti che lavorano direttamente in quest'ambito e in stretta cooperazione con i suoi partner, vale a dire le agenzie delle Nazioni Unite, le organizzazioni internazionali non governative e le organizzazioni della Croce rossa e della Mezzaluna rossa. Fino a oggi, la Commissione non ha sostenuto alcun programma umanitario in Egitto poiché dalle valutazioni effettuate non sono emerse finora esigenze umanitarie critiche in questo paese. La questione delle esigenze umanitarie va distinta da quella relativa ai diritti umani di cui sopra, che viene al momento affrontata dall'UE di concerto con le autorità egiziane.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010694/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — The hell of Sinai

In her answer to my question E-010998/2011 of 25 November 2011, on the 'martyrs of the Sinai', Vice-President/High Representative Ashton stated that the Commission was well aware of the tragic situation of Sub-Saharan refugees in Egypt and that the EU had kept the pressure on the Egyptian authorities 'to address this issue and to ensure the respect of refugees' rights in accordance with the commitments undertaken in this regard'.

In the meantime, while international tourists flock to the Red Sea resorts in the south of the peninsula, which acts as a buffer between Israel and Egypt, in the north the Bedouins are inflicting cruel violence on the unfortunate people crossing the peninsula in search of salvation. There are media reports of abductions, murder for organ trafficking, and violence of all kinds. That corner of Sinai has become a real triangle of death, where an unspoken war is being fought.

One year on from the above answer, can the Vice-President/High Representative please state:

1. Whether her pressure on the Egyptian authorities has produced any results?

2. If not, what steps does she intend to take at last to object more strongly to protect the safety of refugees, regardless of where they come from?

3. Does she not think she should provide humanitarian aid, perhaps using the funds earmarked to support democracy, in order to guarantee a minimum amount of aid for the victims who face a terrible fate?

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

The EU continues to follow the situation of human trafficking and refugees in Egypt, in particular in the Sinai. The EU maintains regular contacts with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Interior as well as with the regional offices of UNHCR and IOM on these matters. The EU's concerns have been expressed on numerous occasions to the competent authorities.

The EU will continue to urge the Egyptian authorities to take the appropriate measures to ensure that the human rights of migrants and refugees are fully respected. The EU has pressed the Egyptian authorities to ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is observed for all migrants in need of international protection. The EU has called on them to allow UNHCR to implement its mandate on the entire territory of Egypt, including the Sinai region in compliance with Egypt's international commitments.

The EU is monitoring closely the humanitarian situation in the Maghreb and Mashrek countries. The EU is constantly assessing the humanitarian situation via its own network of experts working directly in the field and in close cooperation with its partners, namely UN agencies, International Non-Governemental Organisations, and Red Cross/Red Crescent Organisations. To date, the Commission does not support any humanitarian programme in Egypt since the humanitarian needs assessments carried out so far have not led to the identification of significant unmet humanitarian needs in Egypt. Humanitarian needs are to be distinguished from the abovementioned human rights issues which are currently addressed by the EU with the Egyptian authorities.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010695/12
a la Comisión
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Transparencia fiscal y jurisdicciones no cooperantes

La evasión y el fraude suponen siempre una sangría inaceptable para las cuentas públicas y son intolerables en los actuales momentos de crisis que afecta a todos los sectores de la sociedad y, especialmente, a los más vulnerables.

A lo largo de los últimos meses se ha divulgado en distintos países de la Unión Europea la existencia de datos relativos a cuentas bancarias en terceros países no declaradas o sospechosas de suponer una conducta irregular fuera del control de las autoridades fiscales. Ni el derecho a la privacidad ni el secreto bancario pueden justificar esta situación que daña la economía de los Estados miembros de la Unión Europea y es, por tanto, una cuestión de interés común. No es admisible que terceros Estados establezcan sanciones contra quienes realizan prácticas de legítima cooperación con los miembros de la UE ni que las jurisdicciones de los Estados miembros puedan contribuir de alguna manera a su persecución.

Cabe tener en cuenta las posiciones reiteradas por el Parlamento Europeo y las conclusiones del Consejo Europeo de marzo en las que se solicitaba al Consejo y a la Comisión que desarrollasen con celeridad vías concretas para mejorar la lucha contra el fraude y la evasión fiscales, también con respecto a terceros países.

1. ¿Qué iniciativas tiene previsto adoptar la Comisión en legítima defensa de los intereses de las haciendas públicas de los integrantes de la Unión Europea?

2. ¿Qué medidas va a adoptar la Comisión para responder a las sanciones contra quienes cooperen con los miembros de la Unión Europea?

3. ¿Qué medidas va a adoptar la Comisión para proteger a quienes puedan ser perseguidos por cooperar con los miembros de la Unión Europea?

4. ¿Va a impulsar la Comisión el intercambio automático de información entre las autoridades fiscales?

Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de enero de 2013)

1) El 6 de diciembre, la Comisión adoptó un Plan de Acción ([1]) para reforzar la lucha contra el fraude y la evasión fiscal, junto con dos recomendaciones ([2]). Se trata de mejorar la eficacia de las actuaciones de los Estados miembros para proteger sus sistemas fiscales contra la erosión desleal de la base imponible, en consonancia con los principios de transparencia, intercambio de información y competencia leal en materia fiscal. Este planteamiento incluye, en particular, los llamados «paraísos fiscales». Además, la Comisión remite a su Comunicación de 27 de junio de 2012 ([3]), en la que analiza la situación actual y propone soluciones concretas que se consignan detalladamente en el Plan de Acción.

2) y 3) La Comisión no tiene competencias en lo que respecta los sistemas judiciales penales de terceros países. La Comisión puede comunicar sus inquietudes a las autoridades de esos países a través de los canales diplomáticos.

4) Por lo que se refiere al intercambio automático de información entre las autoridades fiscales a escala internacional ([4]), la Comisión ha presentado sus puntos de vista en el mencionado Plan de Acción.

([1]) COM(2012) 722 final.
([2]) C(2012) 8806 final, C(2012) 8805 final.
([3]) COM(2012) 722 final.
([4]) Cabe recordar que, a nivel de la UE, el intercambio automático de una serie de datos entre las autoridades fiscales ya está previsto en la Directiva 2011/16/UE del Consejo, de 15 de febrero de 2011, relativa a la cooperación administrativa en el ámbito de la fiscalidad y por la que se deroga la Directiva 77/799/CEE (DO L 64 de 11.3.2011, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010695/12
to the Commission
Antolín Sánchez Presedo (S&D)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Fiscal transparency and uncooperative jurisdictions

Evasion and fraud are an unacceptable drain on public finances, and they are particularly deplorable given the crisis currently affecting society as a whole, especially the most vulnerable.

Over the last few months, information has come to light in several EU Member States revealing the existence of data relating to bank accounts in third countries that have either not been declared or that are suspected of being used illegally, outside the control of the tax authorities. Neither the right to privacy nor the principle of banking secrecy can justify this situation, which is hurting the economies of EU Member States and which is, therefore, a matter of common interest. It is unacceptable that third countries can impose sanctions against those who cooperate legally with EU Member States and that the jurisdictions of EU Member States can contribute in some way to their prosecution.

The views repeatedly expressed by Parliament, and the Council's conclusions of March 2012 — in which it called on the Council and the Commission to rapidly develop concrete ways to improve the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion, including in relation to third countries — need to be taken into account.

1. What measures is the Commission planning to adopt in order to defend the legitimateinterests of the public budgets of EU Member States?

2. What measures will the Commission adopt to respond to the sanctions being imposed onthose who cooperate with EU Member States?

3. What measures will the Commission adopt to protect those who might be prosecuted forcooperating with EU Member States?

4. Will the Commission push for automatic information-sharing between tax authorities?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

1. On 6 December the Commission adopted an Action Plan ([1]) to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion together with two recommendations ([2]). The aim is to improve the effectiveness of Member States' actions to protect their tax systems against unfair tax base erosion, in line with established principles of transparency, information exchange and fair tax competition. This approach includes in particular so-called 'tax havens'. Furthermore, the Commission refers to its communication of 27 June 2012 ([3]) which analyses the existing situation and proposes concrete ways forward which are further detailed in the action plan.

2 and 3. The Commission has no competence regarding the criminal justice systems of third countries. The Commission can address its concerns to the authorities of those countries through its diplomatic channels.

4. With regard to automatic information-sharing between tax authorities on an international level ([4]), the Commission presented its views as part of the abovementioned Action Plan.

([1]) COM(2012) 722 final.
([2]) C(2012) 8806 final, C(2012) 8805 final.
([3]) COM(2012) 722 final.
([4]) It shall be recalled that, at EU level, the automatic exchange of a number of elements of information between tax authorities is already foreseen in Council Directive 2011/16/EU of 15 February 2011 on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation and repealing Directive 77/799/EEC, OJ L 64, 11.3.2011, p. 1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010696/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Le Moschee nei territori palestinesi inneggiano all'attentato esplosivo su un autobus a Tel Aviv

Il 22 novembre 2012, fonti di informazione britanniche riferivano che attraverso annunci degli altoparlanti a Gaza, si era celebrato l'attentato esplosivo a un autobus che ha ferito 27 persone a Tel Aviv. Si è trattato del primo attentato a Tel Aviv dal 2006. Ha fatto saltare in aria un autobus in una delle strade più trafficate della città, nei pressi del Quartier generale militare israeliano. Il ministro israeliano della sicurezza interna ha detto che la bomba è stata collocata all'interno dell'autobus da un uomo che è poi sceso dal veicolo. L'esplosione è avvenuta mentre l'autobus era in movimento.

Un portavoce di Hamas, Fawzi Barhoum ha dichiarato: «Lo consideriamo come una risposta naturale ai crimini dell'occupazione e ai massacri in corso ai danni della popolazione civile nella Striscia di Gaza».

Secondo il Jerusalem Post, una certa Brigata dei martiri di Al-Aqsa affiliata ad Al-Fatah ha rivendicato l'attentato, ma la rivendicazione non è stata ancora confermata.

Gli Stati Uniti hanno condannato l'attentato e un addetto stampa della Casa Bianca ha osservato: «Gli Stati Uniti rimarranno al fianco dei nostri alleati israeliani, e forniranno tutta l'assistenza necessaria per individuare e assicurare alla giustizia chi ha perpetrato l'attentato».

1. Qual è la posizione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante sulla notizia delle manifestazioni di giubilo decretate da Hamas per l'esplosione sull'autobus a Tel Aviv il 21 novembre 2012?

2. Qual è la valutazione della Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante sul mantenimento dell'attuale cessate il fuoco tra Israele e Hamas?

3. Quale sarà il ruolo dell'Unione europea per contribuire a mantenere il cessate il fuoco?

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

Le conclusioni del Consiglio Affari esteri sul Processo di pace in Medio Oriente del 10 dicembre riguardano anche la situazione nella Striscia di Gaza e il recente intensificarsi della violenza a Gaza e in Israele. Le conclusioni non fanno esplicitamente riferimento alle reazioni scatenate nella Striscia di Gaza dall'esplosione di una bomba su un autobus a Tel Aviv che si è verificata 21 novembre. Tuttavia, l'Unione europea ha ribadito il suo impegno fondamentale a favore della sicurezza di Israele e ha confermato la sua opposizione contro coloro che abbracciano e promuovono la violenza come strumento per raggiungere obiettivi politici. Allo stesso modo, l'UE non smetterà di adoperarsi per combattere contro il terrorismo, che tenta di minare l'apertura e la tolleranza delle società attraverso atti indiscriminati di violenza contro i civili.

In riferimento all'accordo di cessate il fuoco del 21 novembre, il Consiglio Affari esteri di dicembre ha sottolineato che è di vitale importanza che questo accordo sia attuato in tutte le sue parti e ha confermato l'impegno dell'UE a favore della promozione dello sviluppo sociale ed economico della Striscia di Gaza. Inoltre, l'UE ha affermato che la questione del trasferimento illegale di armi nella Striscia di Gaza deve essere affrontata urgentemente in maniera efficace. L'UE ha espresso la propria disponibilità ad avvalersi degli strumenti di cui dispone a sostegno degli sforzi delle parti, compresa la possibilità di riattivare, nel modo opportuno, la missione EUBAM Rafah. L'UE ha evidenziato di essere disposta a esplorare nuove vie per affrontare la situazione nella Striscia di Gaza, anche in collaborazione con le parti interessate nella regione, conformemente alla risoluzione 1860 (2009) del Consiglio di Sicurezza delle Nazioni Unite.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010696/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Mosques in Palestinian Territories celebrate Tel Aviv bus bombing

On 22 November 2012, British media sources reported that announcements had been made over loudspeakers in Gaza, celebrating the attack on a bus which injured 27 people in Tel Aviv. This was the first attack in Tel Aviv since 2006. It blew up a bus on one of the city's busiest streets, near the Israeli military headquarters. The Israeli Minister of Internal Security said that a bomb had been placed inside the bus by a man who then left the vehicle. The explosion occurred while the bus was moving.

A spokesman for Hamas, Fawzi Barhoum, has said: 'We consider it as a natural response to the occupation crimes and the ongoing massacres against civilians in the Gaza Strip.'

According to the *Jerusalem Post*, a Fatah-affiliated al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade has claimed responsibility for the attack, but this has yet to be confirmed.

The United States has condemned the attack, and a White House press secretary has stated: 'The United States will stand with our Israeli allies, and provide whatever assistance is necessary to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of this attack.'

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding reports of Hamas-sanctioned celebrations of the bus bombing in Tel Aviv on 21 November 2012?

2. What is the assessment of the Vice-President/High Representative as regards the maintenance of the current ceasefire between Israel and Hamas?

3. What will be the EU's role in helping maintain the ceasefire?

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

The Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) conclusions on MEPP of 10 December address, among others, the situation in the Gaza Strip and the latest escalation of violence in Gaza and Israel. The conclusions do not specifically refer to the reactions in the Gaza Strip to the bus bombing in Tel Aviv on 21 November. However, the EU reiterates its fundamental commitment to the security of Israel and states that it will remain opposed to those who embrace and promote violence as a way to achieving political goals nor cease its efforts in combatting terrorism, which seeks to undermine the openness and tolerance of societies through indiscriminate acts of violence against civilians.

In reference to the cease-fire agreement of 21 November, the December FAC stessed that it is vital that all parts of the ceasefire agreement are implemented and confirmed that the EU is committed to facilitating the social and economic development of the Gaza Strip. In addition, the EU assesses that the issue of illegal weapons' transfer into the Gaza Strip has to be effectively addressed as a matter of urgency. The EU expressed its readiness to make use of its instruments in support of the parties' efforts, including the possible reactivation, in the appropriate way, of the EUBAM Rafah mission, and underlined its readiness to explore further ways to address the situation in the Gaza Strip, including with concerned parties in the region, in line with UNSC Resolution 1860 (2009).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010697/12
to the Commission
David Campbell Bannerman (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: EU employees working in London but residing outside the UK

Can the Commission state how many people employed by the European Union work in London but reside outside the UK?

Question for written answer E-010698/12
to the Commission
David Campbell Bannerman (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: EU employees working in London

The Commission is asked to state how many people employed by the European Union work in London.

Joint answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

The Commission can only reply for its own employees.

On 1 November 2012 the Commission employed 32 persons in London.

According to Article 20 of the Staff Regulations, 'An official shall reside either in the place where he is employed or at no greater distance there from as is compatible with the proper performance of his duties'. The Commission can confirm that all the 32 employees of the Commission working in London reside in the United Kingdom.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010699/12
to the Commission
David Campbell Bannerman (ECR)
(22 November 2012)

Subject: Single farm payments to recipients in the UK

How much did it cost to administer the single farm payments to recipients in the UK in the financial years 2011-12, 2010-11 and 2009-10?

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

The information available to the Commission on the administrative costs of EU Funds in Member States does not provide a comprehensive overview of administering single farm payments to recipients in the United Kingdom.

However, for the common agricultural policy, the Commission Communication ([1]) of 26 May 2010 on 'More or less controls? Striking the right balance between the administrative costs of control and the risk of error' includes information on the costs incurred by Member States in 2008 for controlling agricultural expenditure financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), on the basis of data provided by Member States to the Commission. The analysis shows that the costs of controls amounted to EUR 2.7 billion in total for the EU-27. Comparing these figures with the total agricultural expenditure across the EU-27, the average cost of controls in the common agricultural policy in 2008 was estimated to represent 4.94% of total expenditure (on average 2.73% for the EAGF and 7.27% for the EAFRD).

([1]) COM(2010) 261 final and SEC(2010)640.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-010700/12
an die Kommission
Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE)
(23. November 2012)

Betrifft: Tätigkeit als Immobilienmakler

Für die Tätigkeit als Immobilienmakler gibt es in den EU-Staaten unterschiedliche Voraussetzungen.

1. Welche Voraussetzungen gelten in den einzelnen EU-Staaten für die Ausübung des Berufs des Immobilienmaklers?

2. Gibt es Überlegungen in der EU-Kommission, die Voraussetzungen für die Tätigkeit als Immobilienmakler einheitlich zu regulieren? Wenn ja, wie?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(19. Dezember 2012)

Nach dem durch die Richtlinie über Berufsqualifikationen ([1]) („die Richtlinie“) festgelegten Rechtsrahmen können Immobilienmakler ihren Beruf in einem anderen EU-Mitgliedstaat als jenem, in dem sie ihre Berufsqualifikation erworben haben, als Selbstständige oder Angestellte ausüben. Sie können entweder im Rahmen der Regelung für die vorübergehende Erbringung von Dienstleistungen (auf der Grundlage einer jährlichen vorherigen Meldung, wenn dies vom Aufnahmemitgliedstaat gefordert wird) oder im Rahmen der Regelung für die dauerhafte Niederlassung arbeiten. Die besonderen Regeln und Anforderungen für die Arbeit im Rahmen der beiden Regelungen sind in der Richtlinie aufgeführt. Immobilienmakler, die sich im Einzelnen über die Voraussetzungen für die Ausübung ihres Berufs in einem EU-Mitgliedstaat informieren möchten, können den Benutzerleitfaden der Kommission ([2]) zu Rate ziehen oder sich an die jeweiligen nationalen Kontaktstellen zu Berufsqualifikationen ([3]) wenden.

Die Kommission beabsichtigt derzeit nicht, einheitliche Voraussetzungen für die Tätigkeit als Immobilienmakler in einem anderen Mitgliedstaat einzuführen. Weder der aktuelle Wortlaut der Richtlinie noch der von der Kommission im Dezember 2011 angenommene Vorschlag für ihre Modernisierung ([4]) sind darauf ausgerichtet, harmonisierte Regeln für die grenzüberschreitende Ausübung dieses Berufs festzulegen. In diesem Zusammenhang würde das im Vorschlag dargelegte System des Europäischen Berufsausweises besonders der Vereinfachung und Erleichterung der vorübergehenden Mobilität und der Anerkennung der Qualifikationen für die betreffenden Berufe dienen, die mittels des bestehenden Binnenmarkt-Informationssystems (IMI) von diesem freiwilligen System profitieren könnten.

([1]) Richtlinie 2005/36/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 7. September 2005 über die Anerkennung von Berufsqualifikationen, (ABl. L 255 vom 30.9.2005, S. 22-142).
([2]) Abrufbar unter: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/guide/users_guide_de.pdf
([3]) Abrufbar unter: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/contactpoints/index.htm
([4]) Abrufbar unter: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/policy_developments/modernising/COM2011_883_de.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010700/12
to the Commission
Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Working as an estate agent

Various conditions must be met in the EU Member States in order to work as an estate agent.

1. What conditions apply in the individual EU countries in order to exercise the profession of estate agent?

2. Is the Commission considering introducing uniform conditions that must be met in order to work as an estate agent? If so, how?

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

Pursuant to the legal framework established by the Professional Qualifications Directive ([1]) ('the directive'), real estate agents can pursue their profession in an EU Member State other than that in which they obtained their professional qualifications, on either a self-employed or employed basis. They can work either under the regime for provision of temporary services (on the basis of an annual prior declaration, if such is required by the host Member State), or under the permanent establishment regime. The specific rules and requirements for working under both regimes are set out in the directive. Should real estate professionals wish to obtain specific details on the conditions of exercising their profession in any of the EU Member States, they could refer to the Commission's User Guide ([2]) or consult the relevant national contact points ([3]) on professional qualifications.

The Commission is currently not considering the introduction of uniform conditions that must be met in order to work as a real estate agent in another Member State. Neither the current text of the directive, nor the proposal for its modernisation ([4]) adopted by the Commission in December 2011 aim to set out harmonised rules for the cross-border practice of this profession. In this context, the European professional card mechanism set out in the proposal would be specifically intended to simplify and facilitate temporary mobility and recognition of qualifications for interested professions that could ultimately benefit from this voluntary system mediated by the existing Internal Market Information System (IMI).

([1]) Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications (OJ L 255, 30.9.2005, p. 22-142).
([2]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/guide/users_guide_en.pdf
([3]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/contactpoints/index.htm
([4]) Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/policy_developments/modernising/COM 2011_883_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010701/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Reality of grassland

Is the Commission aware that productive grasslands are re-sown, on average, every 8 to 10 years across the EU, and in some Member States every 20 years or more? This being the case, how does the Commission intend to address the matter of sowing practices in the context of the CAP reform proposals for permanent grasslands?

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

The Commission in its proposal on future direct payments ([1]) defined in Article 4(h) 'permanent grassland' as 'land used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally (self-seeded) or through cultivation (sown) and that has not been included in the crop rotation of the holding for five years or longer'. In the 'Concept paper on greening' presented at the Council in May the Commission mentioned that it would be favourable to increasing the number of years during which grassland has to be out of rotation before becoming 'permanent' from five to possibly eight years. Notwithstanding the number of years it is clear that in the definition it is the 'rotation' that matters and not the re-sowing (as it can potentially occur without rotating).

As regards the details of the future management of areas declared as 'permanent grassland' in 2014, these will be laid down based on Article 31(3) of the abovementioned proposal, which empowers the Commission to set rules on 'the renewal of permanent grassland'. It is in this framework that the Commission, keeping in mind the policy goal of the measure (carbon sequestration) could define the rules for re-seeding permanent grassland.

([1]) COM 625 final/2.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-010702/12
à la Commission
Karima Delli (Verts/ALE)
(23 novembre 2012)

Objet: Décision de la Commission de mettre fin à l'activité du Crédit immobilier de France et de procéder au licenciement de ses 2 600 salariés

Lors d'une séance de l'Assemblée nationale, en France, le ministre de l'économie et des finances a déclaré publiquement que la Commission européenne posait comme condition à l'octroi d'une garantie de l'État au Crédit immobilier de France (CIF), un établissement bancaire spécialisé dans l'accession sociale à la propriété des ménages à revenus modestes, la cessation de l'activité de cet établissement, avec pour conséquence le licenciement de ses 2 600 salariés.

Établissement centenaire, le Crédit immobilier de France accompagne les familles modestes et les primo-accédants à la propriété dans l'accès à un logement décent et abordable. Ne collectant aucun dépôt, il doit se refinancer uniquement sur les marchés financiers et se trouve aujourd'hui confronté à une crise de liquidités à la suite de la soudaine dégradation de sa notation, alors même qu'il possède 2,5 milliards d'euros de capitaux propres et un ratio de solvabilité de plus de 14 %.

L'État français a pris des mesures d'urgence en vue d'apporter des garanties au Crédit immobilier de France pour lui éviter de sombrer. Toutefois, les inquiétudes restent nombreuses, notamment en ce qui concerne les difficultés d'accession sociale à la propriété des ménages à revenus modestes de par leur exclusion croissante de l'offre de prêt des banques commerciales et en raison de la décision de la Commission, annoncée par le ministre devant l'Assemblée nationale, d'imposer la cessation d'activité du Crédit immobilier de France en contrepartie de l'octroi de la garantie.

Alors qu'un nombre toujours croissant de banques commerciales ont obtenu un accord pour des mesures analogues de sauvetage:

1. Sur quelle base juridique la Commission a-t-elle pris cette décision d'extinction de l'activité de financement de l'accès au logement des personnes à revenus modestes assurée par le Crédit immobilier de France?

2. Quelles seraient les options alternatives pour maintenir cette activité d'utilité sociale du Crédit immobilier de France face à la défaillance de l'offre de prêts des banques commerciales pour les ménages à revenus modestes, au regard des dispositions du droit de l'Union européenne en vigueur, et notamment de l'article 14 et de l'article 106, paragraphe 2, du traité FUE relatifs au service d'intérêt économique général?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(21 décembre 2012)

La Commission n'a posé aucune condition de cessation d'activité du Crédit immobilier de France. En effet, à ce jour, les autorités françaises ne lui ont pas formellement notifié un quelconque projet de garantie en faveur du CIF.

Les autorités françaises ont bien informé la Commission de façon très informelle de l'existence d'un projet de garantie, mais la Commission n'a pas reçu à ce stade de dossier complet et suffisamment clair, en dépit de plusieurs demandes d'informations de leur part, dont la plus récente date du 29 novembre 2012.

De ce fait, la Commission n'est pas en mesure de prendre la moindre position en la matière. A fortiori, elle ne peut pas suggérer la moindre mesure dans le cadre d'un plan applicable au CIF, en l'absence d'information sur ce dossier. La Commission n'est pas davantage en mesure d'examiner à ce stade des options alternatives à un éventuel projet de cessation d'activité du CIF dont elle n'est pas à l'origine.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010702/12
to the Commission
Karima Delli (Verts/ALE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Commission decision to close down Crédit immobilier de France and make all its 2 600 employees redundant

At a sitting of the French National Assembly, the Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance publicly announced that the Commission was making its approval of a state guarantee to Crédit immobilier de France (CIF) — a bank which specialises in helping low-income families get on the property ladder — contingent on the closure of CIF, which would result in all 2 600 employees losing their jobs.

Founded 100 years ago, CIF helps low-income families and first-time buyers secure decent and affordable housing. As it does not accept deposits, CIF has to refinance itself solely on the financial markets. Following the sudden downgrading of its rating, the bank is now facing a liquidity crisis, even though it has EUR 2.5 billion in equity and a solvency ratio of over 14%.

The French Government has taken urgent measures to provide guarantees for CIF, in an effort to prevent the bank from folding. Nevertheless, many concerns remain to be addressed, particularly the difficulties low-income families have in buying property, given their increasing exclusion from the mortgage market by commercial banks, and the Commission's decision to force CIF to cease trading in exchange for approving a guarantee.

Given that an ever increasing number of commercial banks have secured approval for similar rescue measures,

1. what is the legal basis for the Commission's decision to put an end to CIF's work of providing mortgages to people on low incomes who want to buy property?

2. what alternative ways would there be of continuing CIF's socially beneficial work, given the reluctance of commercial banks to extend loans to low-income families and in the light of current EC law, particularly Articles 14 and 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which deal with services of general economic interest?

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

The Commission did not set as a condition that the Crédit immobilier de France should close down. In fact, the French authorities have not to date notified to the Commission any proposal for a guarantee in favour of the CIF.

The French authorities informed the Commission very informally that a proposal for a guarantee existed but the Commission has not yet received any complete and sufficiently clear data, despite its repeated requests for information, the most recent dating from 29 November 2012.

The Commission is therefore unable to take a position of any kind on the issue. It certainly cannot suggest any measure in the framework of a plan that would apply to the CIF given the lack of information on this matter. This also means that the Commission is unable at this stage to look into alternatives to any potential plan for closing down the CIF. In any case, the Commission did not initiate any such plan.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-010703/12
до Комисията
Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE)
(23 ноември 2012 г.)

Относно: Български моряци, обвинени в участие в организирана престъпна група в Испания: грубо незачитане на процесуалните права на обвиняемите

На 15 август 2012 г. 22 български моряци бяха задържани в Испания на борда на кораб, плаващ под български флаг и натоварен с три тона кокаин. През септември стартира дело срещу българския екипаж в Специализирания съд в Испания. Българите са обвинени в застрашаване на общественото здраве, с уточнение „наркотрафик“. Разпределени са в четири затвора, назначени са им служебни адвокати и им е забранено свиждането с близките и получаването на колети от тях. Връчени са им обвинителни актове на испански език, без да е предоставен писмен превод (само сбит устен такъв) и не им е обяснено, че имат право да обжалват. Поради тази причина те пропускат тридневния срок за обжалване.

Правата на задържаните произтичат от Конвенцията за защита на правата на човека и основните свободи. Правото на справедлив съдебен процес и правото на защита са посочени в членове 47 и 48 от Хартата на основните права на ЕС, както и в член 6 от Европейската конвенция за правата на човека. Базирайки се на гореспоменатите документи, се отчита тежко нарушение на правата на българските обвиняеми:

1. Липса на подходяща защита: на българските моряци са били назначени служебни адвокати, които не са се срещали с тях нито веднъж. Служебната защита не е присъствала и по време на връчването на обвинителните актове.

2. Липса на превод: официално постановлението за привличането на българите като обвиняеми е било на испански език и писмен превод не е предоставен нито преди връчване на обвинителния акт, нито след това.

3. Липса на информация по случая им: на членовете на българския екипаж не е било обяснено в нито един момент правото им да обжалват обвинителния акт и в какъв срок.

Разполага ли Комисията с информация относно прилагането от Испания на Директива 2010/64 и Директива 2012/13 и относно намеренията на Испания да предприеме мерки, за да се осигури зачитане на правата на задържаните българи и извършването на прозрачен и справедлив съдебен процес, който зачита процесуалните права на задържаните?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Рединг от името на Комисията
(11 февруари 2013 г.)

Комисията придава особена важност на зачитането на процесуалните права на заподозрените лица и обвиняемите във всички държави членки, за да се повиши доверието на гражданите, че Европейският съюз и неговите държави членки ще защитават и гарантират техните права. Вече бяха взети конкретни мерки с оглед гарантирането на правото на справедлив съдебен процес. Бяха приети две директиви относно правото на устен и писмен превод в наказателното производство[1] и относно правото на информация в наказателното производство[2]. Те ще трябва да бъдат транспонирани в националното законодателство съответно до 27 октомври 2012 г. и до 2 юни 2014 г. В тях се съдържат по-специално разпоредби относно правото на писмен превод на основните документи, включително обвинения, и относно правото на информация относно правата и обвинението, включително правото да се обжалва законността на задържането. Комисията следи отблизо процеса на прилагане в държавите членки. Понастоящем през законодателната процедура минава ново предложение на Комисията за директива относно правото на достъп до адвокат и правото на комуникация при задържането[3]. Запланувани са предложения за по-нататъшни мерки, по-специално за гарантирането на презумпцията за невинност и правна помощ. Същевременно, обаче, Европейската комисия не разполага с правомощия да се намесва в ежедневното управление на съдебните системи на отделните държави членки.

([1]) Директива 2010/64/ЕС от 20 октомври 2010 г., ОВ L 280, 26.10.2010 г., стр. 1—7.
([2]) Директива 2012/13/ЕС от 22 май 2012 г., ОВ L 142, 1.6.2012 г., стр. 1—10.
([3]) COM(2011) 326 окончателен.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010703/12
to the Commission
Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Bulgarian seamen charged with belonging to an organised crime group in Spain: serious failure to respect the procedural rights of the accused

On 15 August 2012, 22 Bulgarian seamen were arrested in Spain on board a vessel flying the Bulgarian flag which was carrying three tonnes of cocaine. Legal proceedings were opened against the Bulgarian crew in September before a special court in Spain. They are charged with endangering public health through the trafficking of drugs. The crew were split between four different prisons and assigned public service lawyers. They were not allowed visits from their relatives or to receive parcels from them. They were served with indictments in Spanish, without a written translation (receiving only a summary oral translation) and it was not made clear to them that they were entitled to appeal. As a result, they missed the three-day deadline set for lodging an appeal.

The rights of detainees stem from the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The right to a fair trial and the right of defence are set out in Articles 47 and 48 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, and in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights. On the basis of the aforementioned texts, the rights of the Bulgarian seamen have been seriously violated:

1. Lack of suitable defence: the Bulgarian seamen have been assigned public service lawyers who have not met with them on any occasion. There was no defence lawyer present at the time the indictments were issued.

2. Lack of a translation: the official document indicting the Bulgarians was in Spanish and no written translation was provided either before it was issued, or subsequently.

3. Lack of information on their situation: it was not made clear to the Bulgarian crew at any juncture that they were entitled to appeal against the indictment or what the deadline for this was.

Does the Commission have information on the implementation in Spain of Directive 2010/64 and Directive 2012/13 and on Spain's intent to take steps to ensure that the rights of the Bulgarian detainees are upheld and that their trial is conducted in a transparent manner that safeguards their procedural rights?

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

The Commission attaches great importance to the respect of the procedural rights for suspects and accused persons in all Member States to enhance the citizens' confidence that the European Union and its Member States will protect and guarantee their rights. Concrete measures with a view to guaranteeing the right of a fair trial have already been taken. Two Directives on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings ([1]) and on the right to information in criminal proceedings ([2]) have been adopted. These will need to be transposed in national law by 27 October 2012 and 2 June 2014 respectively and contain notably provisions on the right to translation of essential documents, including indictments, and on the right to information about rights and charges, including the right to challenge the lawfulness of the arrest; the Commission is closely following the implementation process in the Member States. A further proposal of the Commission for a directive on the right of access to a lawyer and to communicate upon arrest ([3]) is currently going through the legislative procedure. Proposals for further measures, notably on the guarantee of the presumption of innocence and legal aid, are planned. The European Commission has however no competence to intervene in the day-to-day administration of the justice systems of individual Member States.

([1]) Directive 2010/64/EU of 20 October 2010, OJ L 280 of 26.10.2010, p. 1-7.
([2]) Directive 2012/13/EU of 22. Mai 2012, OJ. L 142 of 1.6.2012, p. 1-10.
([3]) COM(2011) 326 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010704/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — EU intervention in Somalia and the African Peace Facility

Since 2007 the EU has contributed EUR 411.4 million in support of the African Union-led Amisom peacekeeping mission in Somalia. In addition, in 2011, the EU made a commitment to spend an extra EUR 175 million.

Whilst EU funds focus on development and stabilisation, the two leading military actors engaged in Amisom, Uganda and Kenya, are not stable nation-states. Uganda has singularly failed to quell the rebellion within its borders by the Lord's Resistance Army, a movement renowned for its human rights violations and use of child soldiers. Kenya has suffered ethnic and political tensions in the aftermath of its national elections, and an International Crisis Group report in January 2012 warned of the real risk of the infiltration of Al-Shabaab from Somalia to Kenya as a result of that country's recent peacekeeping mission. In view of this and the fact that no end to the violence in Somalia is in sight, can the Vice-President/High Representative:

1. give details on what conditions she requires Amisom to fulfil for the mission to be considered successful and for new funds to be approved;

2. comment on whether EU funds are being effectively spent in support of the AU mission, given that the International Crisis Group considers the armies of countries such as Kenya to be 'poorly trained and equipped to fight' the guerrilla warfare tactics of Al-Shabaab;

3. give details on how she monitors the use of EU funds by external agencies and the measures taken to ensure that aid reaches the intended recipients, and present evidence to that effect?

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

Amisom is a UN-mandated AU-led Peace Support Operation in Somalia financed by multiple donors. Amisom is mandated by UNSC Resolutions to conduct operations to protect the Somali Federal Institutions and key infrastructure, assist implementation of the National Security and Stabilisation Plan (NSSP), contribute to the security conditions for provision of humanitarian assistance, and support the implementation of the 2008 Djibouti Agreement. UNSCR 2036(2012) further mandated Amisom to conduct operations beyond Mogadishu. The EU provides new funds to the African Union (AU) for Amisom through its African Peace Facility (APF) following AU requests, upon approval of their political appropriateness by the Council and a subsequent Commission decision. It has provided funds since 2007, in view of the continued successful implementation of the Amisom mandate.

Funds have been effectively spent; Amisom has been successful in creating the security pre-conditions for a political and peace process to take place and has made significant military gains against the Al-Shabaab insurgency over the past year. The use of funds is closely monitored by the Commission in Brussels, and its Delegations to the African Union in Addis Ababa and in Nairobi. Amisom support arrangements require the AU to submit a bi-monthly financial reports to the EU on the status of their implementation. External expenditure verifications are also conducted and Amisom financial contributions are subject to regular external financial audits. The AU Commission (AUC) is following up on these audits. Financial management has steadily improved over the years. The Commission has also deployed a financial management expert to support the AUC.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010705/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — War crimes by Amisom forces

In a 2011 report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accuses the African Union Mission in Somalia (Amisom) and forces of the Somali Transitional Federal Government, and in particular those Kenyan and Ethiopian forces engaged under Amisom, of having committed a number of human rights violations outlawed by the Geneva Conventions. These include, but are not limited to, a significantly high number of instances of 'indiscriminate' shelling of densely populated areas, such as Mogadishu's Bakara Market.

A March 2011 report from the International Crisis Group similarly reported that Amisom mortar rounds were hitting camps for internally displaced persons, wounding dozens of civilians.

Amisom has also admitted that it has attacked civilians unlawfully, as in the incident on 23 November 2010 in which 'troops opened fire on civilians at a busy intersection near Aden Adde airport'. The HRW report documents various such other instances. Given these reports, can the Vice-President/High Representative:

1. confirm that she is aware of the range and severity of the human rights abuses taking place under the auspices of the AU mission;

2. confirm that she is monitoring these abuses;

3. comment on what actions she has taken to address these serious abuses and state whether she is willing to withhold or withdraw funds from the Amisom peacekeeping and stability mission unless these concerns are addressed?

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

The HR/VP deplores the loss of innocent civilian life in the conduct of Amisom operations. The EU, fully in line with the AU's position, calls for the immediate investigation into any reports of such incidents. In that respect, the EU is working closely with the AU and its international partners to improve respect for legal norms during peace-keeping and peace-building missions through control and monitoring as well as effective training, notably in international humanitarian law.

With specific regard to the Somali security forces, the EU training mission in Somalia (EUTM Somalia), besides contributing to the strengthening of the Somali armed forces, also covers international humanitarian laws and human rights. The training provides legal and practical knowledge in order to guarantee the protection of civilians, including specific protection needs of women and children. It is worth recalling that on 22 January 2013 the Council extended EUTM Somalia for two years.

Amisom and the Somali security forces have increasingly been successful in stabilising Somalia. The EU supports the AU in its efforts to prevent and investigate incidents during the conduct of Amisom activities. It is essential that Amisom ensures close adherence to international humanitarian law and applicable human rights law. Meanwhile, the AU has *inter alia* adopted and implements an indirect fire policy and established a civilian casualty tracking cell. These measures have led to a substantial decrease of incidents with innocent civilian casualties. In close communication with the EU authorities, the African Union Commission monitors the overall implementation of the mission.

The EU as provider of substantial funding to Amisom, contributes to the stabilisation of Somalia as a component of its comprehensive approach to the Horn of Africa.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010706/12
alla Commissione
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Problematiche relative alla destinazione dei fondi europei

Negli scorsi giorni la Corte dei Conti italiana ha condannato il signor Gaetano Riina, fratello del più tristemente celebre Salvatore detto Totò, a restituire all'AGEA (Agenzia che si occupa delle Erogazioni in Agricoltura) una cifra attorno ai 25 000 euro.

Si tratta di contributi diretti agli agricoltori a norma della Politica Agricola Comune europea (PAC), che in questo caso sono finiti nelle mani di una persona pericolosa, sottoposta a misure di sorveglianza speciale della polizia; credo inoltre che il fratello del signor Gaetano, Salvatore detto Totò, sia ben conosciuto da tutti per essere stato il capo supremo della mafia siciliana per un lungo periodo.

Questo caso emblematico non è isolato, ma riguarderebbe anche altre persone legate ad ambienti malavitosi siciliani.

La responsabilità primaria dei controlli dovrebbe spettare all'organismo pagatore, l'AGEA in questo caso, ma ciò non toglie che si tratti di fondi che provengono direttamente dall'Europa, il cui cattivo utilizzo è lesivo della stessa immagine e reputazione dell'Unione.

1. Alla luce di tutto questo, e in considerazione anche della recente modifica della PAC, quali misure intende prendere la Commissione europea per cercare di prevenire e di evitare il ripetersi di casi analoghi?

2. Quali strumenti di controllo ha in essere per verificare la reale destinazione di questi fondi europei?

3. In Italia alcune Regioni hanno un proprio organismo pagatore per le erogazioni in agricoltura: ritiene la Commissione europea che il dotarsi di soli organismi regionali possa agevolare la gestione di questi fondi rispetto a un ente nazionale?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(14 gennaio 2013)

In base al principio della gestione condivisa (regolamento (CE) n. 1290/2005 del Consiglio ([1])), la responsabilità dei pagamenti dei fondi agricoli UE ai beneficiari nonché dei relativi controlli spetta agli Stati membri.

La Commissione, dal canto suo, supervisiona — nel quadro delle mansioni che svolge nella gestione della PAC — i sistemi di gestione e di controllo messi in atto dagli Stati membri onde verificarne l'ottemperanza alla normativa europea. L'OLAF (Ufficio europeo della Commissione europea per la lotta antifrode) sta attualmente indagando — nell'ambito del suo ruolo specifico — su singole transazioni che danno adito a sospetti di frodi o di irregolarità.

Ad ogni modo, la Commissione continuerà a monitorare, in collaborazione con le competenti autorità italiane, la problematica sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare.

Nell'ambito del contesto giuridico definito dall'articolo 6, paragrafo 2, del regolamento (CE) n. 1290/2005 del Consiglio, spetta ai singoli Stati membri decidere in merito alla specifica struttura dei propri sistemi nazionali per quanto riguarda l'organismo pagatore/gli organismi pagatori.

([1]) GU L 209 dell'11.8.2005, pagine 1-25.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010706/12
to the Commission
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Problems relating to the use of EU funds

The Italian Court of Auditors recently ordered Mr Gaetano Riina, brother of the more notorious Salvatore (known as Totò), to return a sum of around EUR 25 000 to the Agricultural Payments Agency (AGEA).

The sum relates to direct payments to farmers under the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which in this case ended up in the hands of a dangerous person who has been placed under special surveillance by the police. I think everyone is aware that the brother of Mr Gaetano Riina, Salvatore (Totò), was the supreme head of the Sicilian mafia for a long time.

This emblematic case is not an isolated one, but also concerns other people linked to the Sicilian mafia.

The primary responsibility for monitoring should lie with the paying agency — AGEA in this case — but the fact remains that these are funds that come directly from Europe and that their misuse is detrimental to the image and reputation of the EU.

1. In the light of the above and in view of the recent CAP reform, what measures will the Commission take to try to prevent similar cases from occurring?

2. What monitoring tools does it have in place to check where these funds are really going?

3. In Italy, some regions have their own paying agencies for agricultural payments. Does the Commission think that having regional bodies alone might facilitate the management of these funds, as opposed to having a single national body?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2013)

According to the principle of shared management (Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 ([1])), Member States are responsible for the payments of EU agricultural funds to the beneficiaries, including the related controls.

On the other side, the Commission, in the context of its role in the management of the CAP, audits the management and control systems put in place by the Member States in order to verify their compliance with EU rules. Individual transactions which give raise to suspicion of fraud or irregularity are investigated by OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office of the European Commission, in the context of its specific role.

In any case, the Commission will follow up on the issue raised by the Honourable Member with the competent Italian authorities.

Within the legal context set by Article 6(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005, it is for each Member State to decide upon the specific structure of their national systems in relation to paying agency(ies).

([1]) OJ L 209, 11.8.2005, p. 1-25.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010707/12
alla Commissione
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Sviluppi UE-Cina su tematiche ambientali

Nella mia interrogazione E-007275/2011 di luglio 2011 segnalavo come in Cina numerose aziende tessili utilizzassero nella loro produzione diverse sostanze tossiche, con danni ingenti per la salute umana.

Nella sua risposta il Commissario De Gucht affermava che l'Unione europea «incoraggia i paesi partner ad aderire ai principi, agli standard e agli accordi sociali e ambientali internazionalmente riconosciuti, compresi gli accordi multilaterali sull'ambiente» e che «nel quadro del dialogo UE-Cina in tema di politica ambientale la Commissione si è adoperata per aiutare la Cina ad aggiornare la pertinente legislazione in campo ambientale e a migliorarne l'applicazione».

Proseguiva dicendo che «la Commissione continuerà a incoraggiare la Cina a portare avanti l'avvicinamento normativo alle regole dell'UE e agli standard in tale ambito» e, inoltre, che «per migliorare il livello di attuazione e il rispetto della legislazione ambientale in Cina, è stato avviato il programma di governance ambientale UE-Cina».

Un nuovo rapporto di Greenpeace sottolinea che, a distanza di oltre un anno, la situazione non è affatto migliorata, essendo stata dimostrata , ad esempio, la presenza in molti capi analizzati (oltre i due terzi) di nonilfenoli etossilati, composti chimici molto dannosi che possono causare pesanti alterazioni ormonali agli individui che ne vengono a contatto.

1. Alla luce di tutto questo, può la Commissione europea indicare cosa sia stato realmente fatto su questo specifico punto nell'ambito del dialogo UE-Cina sulla politica ambientale?

2. Quali sono i risultati concreti ottenuti da questo programma di governance ambientale UE-Cina?

3. In attesa che anche la Cina si doti di norme rigorose in termini di rispetto della salute e di tutela dell'ambiente, non ritiene necessario interrompere l'importazione in Europa di prodotti che non rispettino appunto queste caratteristiche?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(25 gennaio 2013)

I prodotti immessi sul mercato dell'UE devono essere conformi all'acquis dell'Unione. Il regolamento REACH limita il contenuto di alcune sostanze pericolose nei prodotti importati e in quelli prodotti all'interno dell'UE. Per quanto riguarda i tessili, sono previste specifiche restrizioni.

L'esecuzione dei controlli sulle importazioni spetta alle autorità doganali degli Stati membri. RAPEX ([1]), il sistema di allerta rapida dell'UE, garantisce lo scambio di informazioni sui prodotti pericolosi per la salute e la sicurezza dei consumatori dei quali le autorità degli Stati membri impediscono o limitano la commercializzazione o l'uso. Le notifiche RAPEX riguardanti i prodotti provenienti dalla Cina sono trasmesse alle autorità cinesi affinché effettuino le indagini del caso e adottino le misure necessarie a impedire che i prodotti pericolosi vengano esportati nell'UE. Dal 2008 le autorità doganali hanno comunicato un numero limitato di provvedimenti in materia di coloranti azoici provenienti dalla Cina. Non sono state notificate misure riguardanti la presenza di nonilfenolo o ftalati negli indumenti.

Inoltre, la Commissione ritiene di particolare rilievo far sì che le autorità cinesi comprendano appieno i requisiti dell'UE. Essa ha organizzato corsi di formazione per responsabili politici ed esperti sulla registrazione, valutazione e autorizzazione delle sostanze chimiche. La Commissione sta inoltre finanziando un nuovo progetto volto a ridurre l'impatto ambientale della stampa dei tessili e dell'industria tintoria in Cina.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm

Il programma di governance ambientale UE-Cina è basato sulla consapevolezza comune che la Cina necessita di una più vasta partecipazione dei soggetti interessati, di una più efficace accessibilità delle informazioni al pubblico, nonché di una maggiore partecipazione pubblica e responsabilità aziendale. Il programma è stato avviato di recente e i primi risultati sono attesi nel giro di due o tre anni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010707/12
to the Commission
Claudio Morganti (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: EU-China developments on environmental issues

In my Written Question E-007275/2011 of July 2011, I pointed out that in China many textile companies were using various toxic substances in their manufacturing processes, causing huge damage to human health.

In his reply, Commissioner De Gucht said that the EU 'encourages partner countries' adherence to internationally recognised social and environmental principles, standards and agreements, including Multilateral Environmental Agreements' and that 'in the framework of the EU-China environment policy dialogue, the Commission has sought to help China upgrade the relevant environmental legislation and improve its application.'

He went on to say that 'the Commission will continue to encourage China to carry out regulatory approximation with EU rules and standards in this area' and that 'in order to improve the level of implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation in China, the EU-China Environmental Governance Programme has been launched.'

A new Greenpeace report has stressed that, after more than a year, the situation has not improved at all and that, for example, nonylphenol ethoxylates have been found in many garments tested (over two-thirds of all those tested); these are very harmful chemical compounds that can cause powerful hormonal changes in those who come into contact with them.

1. Can the Commission therefore say what has really been done with regard to this specific issue in the EU-China dialogue on environmental policy?

2. What specific results have been achieved by this EU-China Environmental Governance Programme?

3. Whilst waiting for China, too, to lay down stringent rules in terms of respect for health and environmental protection, does the Commission not think it should halt all imports into Europe of products that do not comply with such criteria?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

Products placed on the EU market need to comply with EU *acquis*. The REACH Regulation restricts the content of certain hazardous substances in products imported, and those produced in the EU. Certain specific restrictions apply to textiles.

Import controls are the responsibility of Member States' customs authorities. The EU rapid alert system RAPEX ([1]) ensures information exchange about products which are dangerous to consumer health and safety and for which Member State authorities prevent or restrict the marketing or use. RAPEX notifications for products of Chinese origin are transmitted to the Chinese authorities, for investigation and taking measures so that dangerous products are not exported to the EU. Since 2008 customs authorities have notified a few measures regarding azodyes from China. No measures were notified pertaining to garments concerning nonylphenol or phthalates.

In addition, the Commission pays particular attention to ensure that Chinese authorities fully understand the EU requirements. The Commission has organised training for policy-makers and experts on the registration, evaluation and authorisation of chemicals. The Commission is funding a new project that aims to reduce environmental impacts from the textile printing and dyeing industry in China.

The EU-China Environmental Governance Programme is based on the shared recognition that China needs greater stakeholder involvement, public access to information and public participation as well as stronger corporate responsibility. The programme started recently and the first results are expected in two to three years.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-010708/12
komissiolle
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)
(23. marraskuuta 2012)

Aihe: Energiatehokkuusdirektiivin 7 artiklan 7 c kohdan tulkinta

Komissio on esittänyt uuden energiatehokkuusdirektiivin 7 artiklan 7 c kohdasta tulkinnan, jonka mukaan ne jäsenvaltiot, joilla on käytössä energiayhtiöille kohdistettu energiatehokkuuden velvoiteohjelma, saavat laskea energiansäästöä vuosina 2010-2013 ja 2021-2023 toteutetuista toimista siten, että nämä säästöt eivät ole osa 7 artiklan 3 kohdassa ns. joustomekanismeille asetettua 25 % enimmäismäärää. Komissio on todennut, että nämä ”lisämahdollisuudet” laskea energiansäästöjä eivät koske jäsenvaltioita, jotka käyttävät 7 artiklan täytäntöönpanossa muita politiikkatoimia. Näiden jäsenvaltioiden ennen vuotta 2014 saavuttamat energiansäästöt ovat kokonaisuudessaan 25 % enimmäismäärän piirissä eivätkä ne voi laskea vuoden 2020 jälkeen toteutetuista toimista energiansäästöjä lainkaan.

1. Kuinka suuren edun prosentteina ilmaistuna saa 7 artiklan täytäntöönpanossa jäsenvaltio, jolla on jo vuonna 2010 ollut käytössä energiayhtiöille kohdistettu energiatehokkuuden velvoiteohjelma, verrattuna jäsenvaltioon, joka käyttää muita politiikkatoimia?

2. Kuinka paljon energiatehokkuusdirektiivillä EU:ssa vuoteen 2020 mennessä saavutettava energiansäästö vähenee, jos kaikki ne jäsenvaltiot, joilla on ollut energiayhtiöiden velvoiteohjelma käytössä jo vuonna 2010, hyödyntävät täysimääräisenä komission 7 c kohdan tulkinnan kumulatiivisen energiansäästön laskennassa?

3. Miten komissio katsoo 7 artiklan 7 c kohdan tulkinnan suhteutuvan periaatteeseen jäsenvaltioiden yhdenvertaisesta kohtelusta?

4. Komissio vastusti keväällä 2012 tiukasti monia jäsenvaltioiden haluamia muutoksia perustellen kantaansa sillä, että direktiivin kunnianhimon tasoa ei voi laskea. Miten komissio selittää tässä valossa 7 c kohdasta tekemänsä tulkinnan?

Günther Oettingerin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(30. tammikuuta 2013)

1. ja 2.) Komissio analysoi parhaillaan muiden kysymysten ohella sitä, miten energiatehokkuusdirektiivin ([1]) 7 artiklan 7 kohdan c alakohta vaikuttaa energiatehokkuuspyrkimyksiin jäsenvaltioissa ja EU:n tavoitteeseen kokonaisuudessaan.

3. ja 4.) Komissio keskustelee parhaillaan jäsenvaltioiden kanssa tulkintaan liittyvistä huomautuksista, jotka auttavat jäsenvaltioita direktiivin saattamisessa osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä, 7 artiklan 7 kohdan c alakohta mukaan luettuna.

Kun tämä työ saadaan valmiiksi, se annetaan julkisesti saataville.

([1]) Euroopan parlamentin ja neuvoston direktiivi 2012/27/EU, annettu 25 päivänä lokakuuta 2012, energiatehokkuudesta, direktiivien 2009/125/EY ja 2010/30/EU muuttamisesta sekä direktiivien 2004/8/EY ja 2006/32/EY kumoamisesta, EUVL L 315, 14.11.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010708/12
to the Commission
Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Interpretation of Article 7(7)(c) of the Energy Efficiency Directive

The Commission has put forward a new interpretation of Article 7(7)(c) of the Energy Efficiency Directive whereby Member States employing energy efficiency obligation schemes for energy companies may calculate energy savings achieved in the years 2010 to 2013 and 2021 to 2023 in such a way that those savings would not count towards the 25% limit imposed on the 'flexible mechanisms' by Article 7(3). It has said that these 'extra possibilities' for calculating energy savings do not apply to Member States implementing Article 7 by other policy measures. The energy savings achieved by those Member States before 2014 will, in their entirety, fall under the 25% maximum and there is no way in which they may be factored into the energy savings from measures taken after 2020.

1. As far as the implementation of Article 7 is concerned, how great an advantage can a Member State secure in percentage terms if it has been applying an energy efficiency obligation scheme to energy companies since 2010, compared with a Member State employing other policy measures?

2. What will be the extent of the reduction in the energy savings achieved under the Energy Efficiency Directive by 2020 if all the Member States which have been implementing energy efficiency obligation schemes since 2010 make full use of the Commission's interpretation of paragraph 7(c) when calculating their cumulative energy savings?

3. How far, in the Commission's opinion, does the interpretation of Article 7(7)(c) tally with the principle that Member States must be treated equally?

4. In spring 2012 the Commission fiercely resisted the changes being called for by many Member States, its argument being that nothing should detract from the directive's intrinsic ambitiousness. How does it explain its interpretation of paragraph 7(c) from that point of view?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

1 and 2. The Commission is currently analysing, among other issues, how Article 7(7)(c) of the Energy Efficiency Directive ([1]) affects energy efficiency efforts in Member States and the target of the EU as a whole.

3 and 4. The Commission is currently discussing interpretative notes with the Member States that will assist them in the national transposition of the directive, including for Article 7(7)(c).

When this work is completed it will be made publicly available.

([1]) Directive 2012/27/EU of the Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор P-010709/12
до Комисията
Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D)
(23 ноември 2012 г.)

Относно: Инцидент в България

В нощта на 15 срещу 16 октомври 2012 г. жители на село Коиловци, област Плевен — България, забелязват петима души на територията на частна собственост. Тъй като жителите в района често са ставали жертва на кражби, неизвестните мъже са припознати като нарушители. Стига се до физическа саморазправа и стрелба, при която са ранени двама от тях. Според една от версиите, мъжете са френски военнослужещи от отдел „Действие“ на френското външно разузнаване.

Версията е, че военнослужещите са правили обучение на българска територия. След инцидента те са прибрани и изведени от България с френски правителствен самолет. Френското правителство и българските власти се разминават в своите версии. От страна на българското вътрешно министерство се твърди, че те не са военнослужещи, а заблудени екстремни туристи, скочили с парашут от Румъния.

Обръщаме се към Комисията от името на българските граждани, които са силно притеснени от този инцидент и поради липсата на каквато и да било обективна информация.

Какво прави Европейската комисия по отношение на транснационалните престъпления в границите на Европейския съюз? На основата на дял V, глава 5, член 87 от ДФЕС имала ли е Комисията информация за сътрудничество между правоприлагащите органи на България, Франция и Румъния?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Малмстрьом от името на Комисията
(7 януари 2013 г.)

Комисията няма правомощия за операции на въоръжените сили или на службите за разузнаване.

Всички държави — членки на ЕС, редовно осъществяват сътрудничество в областта на правоприлагането съгласно дял V, глава 5, член 87 от ДФЕС. При определени условия това сътрудничество може да включва и присъствието на служители на правоприлагащите служби на една държава членка на територията на друга държава членка, например между съседни държави съгласно дял III, член 40 и член 41 от Конвенцията за прилагане на споразумението от Шенген или в контекста на съвместни операции съгласно глава 5 от Решението от Прюм 2008/615/ПВР.

Държавите членки не са задължени да информират Комисията относно мерките за оперативно сътрудничество в областта на правоприлагането. Комисията няма информация за операция по правоприлагане, като описаната във въпроса.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010709/12
to the Commission
Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Incident in Bulgaria

On the night of 15 to 16 October 2012, the inhabitants of the village of Koilovstsi, in the Pleven district of Bulgaria, noticed five men on land that was private property. Since there had been numerous robberies in the area, the unknown men were identified as troublemakers. Physical fighting broke out and shots were fired, wounding two of the men. According to one version of the events, the men were members of the French armed forces from the Operations Unit of the French Intelligence Service.

According to this version of events, the soldiers were carrying out training on Bulgarian territory. After the incident they were recalled and taken out of Bulgaria on a French Government aircraft. However, the versions of events provided by the French and the Bulgarian authorities differ. According to the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior, the men were not members of the armed forces but extreme tourists who had mistakenly parachuted across the border from Romania.

I am approaching the Commission on this matter on behalf of the Bulgarian citizens seriously concerned by this incident, and on account of the lack of any objective information.

What is the Commission doing in relation to cross-border crime within the borders of the European Union? Has the Commission received any information, pursuant to Title V, Chapter 5, Article 87 TFEU, on cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of Bulgaria, France and Romania?

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

The Commission has no competence either for operations of armed forces or for intelligence service operations.

Law enforcement cooperation under Title V, Chapter 5, Article 87 TFEU takes place on a regular basis between all Member States of the EU. Such cooperation can, under specific conditions, also include the presence of law enforcement officers of one Member State on the territory of another, e.g. between neighbouring countries under the Convention implementing the Schengen agreement Titel III, Art 40 and Art 41 or in the context of joint operations under the Prüm Decision 2008/615/JHA Chapter 5.

Member States are not required to inform the Commission about operational law enforcement cooperation measures. The Commission is not aware of a law enforcement operation as described in the question.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010710/12
to the Council
David Martin (S&D)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement

Will the Council press the Japanese Government for an early date to be announced for the next EU-Japan Summit, so that the negotiations for an EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement can be formally launched there?

Reply
(30 January 2013)

It is for the Japanese Government, since it will host the next EU-Japan Summit, to propose the date for the Summit. The date will then be fixed in agreement with the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010711/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement

Will the Commission press the Japanese Government for an early date to be announced for the next EU-Japan Summit, so that the negotiations for an EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement can be formally launched there?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(8 January 2013)

The EU-Japan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Framework Agreement (FA) negotiations are indeed expected to be launched at the next EU-Japan Summit. Since the next Summit will be hosted by Japan, it is up to the Japanese side to propose a date. Not surprisingly, the Japanese side prefers to wait until a new Cabinet is installed following the 16 December 2012 elections before committing to possible dates.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010713/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Valutazione dell'impatto sulla sostenibilità del commercio relativa all'accordo di libero scambio tra UE e India: recenti critiche da una prospettiva di genere

Nell'ambito della valutazione dell'impatto sulla sostenibilità (SIA) del 2009 relativa all'accordo di libero scambio UE-India è stata omessa l'analisi delle ripercussioni di tale accordo sul settore informale. Dal momento che il settore formale rappresenta unicamente l'8 % dell'economia indiana, ciò significa che è stata ignorata un'ampia fetta dell'economia. Le valutazioni d'impatto contengono quindi un concetto di sostenibilità che non tiene conto dell'importanza della giustizia sociale, dell'uguaglianza di genere e dell'emancipazione femminile quali aspetti chiave dello sviluppo sostenibile. In misura limitata il fattore genere è stato ovviamente incluso nell'analisi della sostenibilità, ma non si può ritenere che essa sia stata eseguita sulla base di un approccio olistico. L'analisi deve spingersi oltre la semplice identificazione dell'impatto della liberalizzazione del commercio sull'occupazione e sul reddito di uomini e donne. Occorrerebbe piuttosto approfondire le variazioni in termini di impatto che le misure legate al commercio hanno sul genere e su altre categorie a rischio di esclusione sociale, non solo in ambito sociale bensì anche in quello economico.

Dal momento che la Commissione sta attualmente negoziando accordi commerciali con altri paesi, in particolare Cina e Pakistan, può la Commissione confermare di aver eseguito una valutazione dell'impatto sostenibile per tutti i settori dell'economia (formale e informale) e può porre in evidenza gli effetti sulle donne nelle società coinvolte, essendo risaputo che l'impatto sulla popolazione femminile è di gran lunga maggiore?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

Nel documento di sintesi che dà risposta alla Valutazione d'impatto per la sostenibilità (SIA) di un potenziale accordo commerciale UE-India la Commissione prende atto del settore informale relativamente ampio esistente in India e riconosce che si sarebbe potuto prestare maggiore attenzione agli impatti sull'occupazione informale. Si tenga però presente che la mancanza di dati affidabili e omogenei per i paesi in via di sviluppo rende un'analisi quantitativa estremamente difficoltosa per gli esperti della SIA. I dati sui settori informali (sempre che ve ne siano) sono pochi e la raccolta di dati primari sarebbe inattuabile nel quadro di una SIA. Per tale motivo l'occupazione informale non può essere colta da una modellizzazione economica.

Una SIA è stata realizzata in relazione ai negoziati del partenariato UE-Cina e dell'Accordo di cooperazione (PCA) ed è stata finalizzata nel 2008. Essa valuta l'impatto sulla parità tra i sessi, ma non nel settore informale per i motivi summenzionati. Attualmente non è in via di negoziazione nessun accordo con il Pakistan.

Si noti che il commercio non è una panacea — le riforme domestiche continueranno a essere la chiave per migliorare la situazione delle donne in queste società. Il commercio può tuttavia dare impulso al cambiamento e fornire un contributo positivo per la parità tra i sessi; il Bangladesh costituisce un esempio rimarchevole in tal senso. La Commissione mantiene il proprio impegno per una politica commerciale sensibile alla parità tra i sessi e attenta al modo per accrescere i vantaggi in tema di parità tra i sessi derivanti dalla liberalizzazione degli scambi. La SIA UE-India, ad esempio, raccomanda un'attenzione particolare per l'istruzione e la riqualificazione delle lavoratrici scarsamente qualificate nel settore dei servizi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010713/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment for the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and India: fresh criticism from a gender perspective

In the 2009 Sustainable Impact Assessment (SIA) for the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) there was no analysis of the impact of an FTA on the informal sector. As the formal sector constitutes only 8% of the Indian economy, this means that a large percentage of the economy has been ignored. Thus a concept of sustainability is integrated into the SIAs that fails to capture the importance of social justice, gender equality and women's empowerment as key elements of sustainable development. Obviously, to a limited extent, gender was included in the analysis; however, by no means can this be considered as applying a holistic sustainability analysis. Such an analysis must move beyond simply identifying the impact of trade liberalisation on male/female employment and income. Instead, the impact changes in trade-related measures on gender and other categories of social exclusion should be developed not only in relation to the social, but also in relation to the economic sector.

Given that the Commission is now negotiating trade agreements with other countries, in particular China and Pakistan, can the Commission confirm that it has carried out a sustainable impact assessment on all sectors of the economy, informal and formal, and can it highlight the effects on women in those societies as we know that women are disproportionately affected?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

In the position paper responding to the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of a potential EU-India trade agreement, the Commission acknowledges the relatively large informal sector in India and recognises that more attention could have been paid to the impacts on informal employment. However, it should be borne in mind that the lack of reliable and homogenous data for developing countries makes quantitative analysis by SIA practitioners extremely difficult. Data on informal sectors (if any) is scarce and the collection of primary data would be unworkable within the framework of an SIA. For that reason, informal employment cannot be captured by economic modelling.

An SIA was conducted for the EU-China Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) negotiations and finalised in 2008. It assesses the impacts on gender equality but not in the informal sector for the aforementioned reasons. There is no agreement being negotiated with Pakistan at the moment.

It should be noted that trade is not a panacea — domestic reforms will continue to be the key to improving the situation of women in these societies. Notwithstanding, trade can spur change and give a positive contribution for gender equality; Bangladesh is a notable case-study. The Commission remains committed to a gender sensitive trade policy which looks at ways to enhance the pro-gender benefits of trade liberalisation. The EU-India SIA for example recommends special attention to education and re-training for low-skilled female workers in the services sector.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010714/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Pakistan: accesso all'istruzione e disparità di genere, quanti passi avanti

Il caso di Malala Youseafza, ancora una volta, ha evidenziato come è cruciale l'accesso all'istruzione per i bambini — specialmente le femmine in Pakistan. È evidente che le bambine in Pakistan continuano a subire svantaggi significativi nell'accesso all'istruzione.

Nel quadro della cooperazione dell'UE con il Pakistan, come sottolineato dal documento strategico 2007-2013, l'Unione europea ha stanziato fondi e si è impegnata a dare assistenza al Pakistan in diversi settori, tra cui l'istruzione.

Considerando che l'istruzione è un diritto umano universale fondamentale, riconosciuto come tale dalla Dichiarazione universale dei diritti umani, e ribadito nelle convenzioni internazionali sui diritti umani e nella Convenzione europea per la salvaguardia dei diritti umani e delle libertà fondamentali.

Il Pakistan si è impegnato al raggiungimento della parità di accesso all'istruzione a livello nazionale ed è anche uno dei firmatari di dichiarazioni e accordi internazionali che sostengono la parità di accesso all'istruzione di base.

1. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante, baronessa Catherine Ashton, vorrà spiegare quali passi ha effettuato perché il Pakistan risponda dell'uso dei fondi comunitari erogatigli per estendere l'istruzione gratuita a tutti i bambini, femmine e maschi, e può riferire sugli obiettivi e gli impegni del Pakistan per conseguire la parità di genere nelle sue disposizioni in materia di istruzione di base?

2. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante spiegherà anche come intende far sì che il denaro dei contribuenti dell'UE non sia speso invano?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(25 gennaio 2013)

1. Il Pakistan è ancora lontano dal conseguimento degli obiettivi di sviluppo del Millennio in materia di istruzione, in particolare femminile, fatto di cui sia il governo federale sia i governi provinciali sono consapevoli. Attualmente l'UE sostiene alcune pertinenti riforme dell'istruzione nel paese tramite due programmi di sostegno al bilancio settoriale, uno nel Sindh e l'altro nel Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, per assistere il governo nelle iniziative di promozione dell'istruzione femminile. Nella provincia del Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa il programma va, tra l'altro, a beneficio della ricostruzione e riparazione di scuole femminili danneggiate da attività di militanti anti-istruzione. Nella provincia del Sindh le riforme sostenute dall'UE comprendono il versamento di indennità periodiche specifiche per l'istruzione femminile, il cui obiettivo è incoraggiare i genitori a mandare le figlie a scuola dando loro i mezzi necessari.

Per quanto riguarda l'impegno politico del Pakistan sulla questione dei diritti delle ragazze, la Commissione rimanda l'onorevole deputato alla risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-9523/2012 ([1]).

2. Nel quadro dei programmi di sostegno all'istruzione i fondi sono erogati soltanto dopo che il governo abbia conseguito i risultati concordati, ad esempio il completamento della ricostruzione e riparazione di circa 360 scuole situate in zone interessate da conflitti, la distribuzione generalizzata e gratuita di libri di testo in tutte le scuole primarie e secondarie, la riduzione di almeno il 50 %, incrementando le assunzioni di insegnanti che abbiano ricevono una formazione professionale, del numero di scuole in cui il rapporto insegnanti/alunni è superiore a 1:40, ecc. La delegazione dell'UE intrattiene un dialogo periodico con i governi provinciali per discutere progressi e risultati. L'esecuzione dei programmi è monitorata dalla delegazione dell'UE e dai suoi partner operativi.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010714/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Pakistan: access to education and gender inequality, how many steps forward

The case of Malala Youseafza has once again highlighted how vitally important access to education is for children — especially for girls in Pakistan. It is evident that girls in Pakistan continue to face significant disadvantages in access to education.

In the context of its cooperation with Pakistan, as outlined in the strategy Paper 2007-2013, the EU has allocated funds to and undertaken to assist Pakistan in several areas, one of which is education.

Education is a universal, fundamental human right, recognised as such in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and reaffirmed in international human rights conventions and in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Pakistan has committed itself to achieving equality of access to education at national level and is also a signatory to international declarations and agreements upholding the principle of equal access to basic education.

1. Will the Vice-President/High Representative, Baroness Ashton, explain what steps she has taken to hold Pakistan accountable for the use of EU funds allocated to extend free education to all girls and boys? Will she report on Pakistan's commitment to achieving gender equality in its basic education provision?

2. Will the Vice-President/High Representative also explain how she intends to ensure that EU taxpayers' money is not spent in vain?

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

1. Pakistan is far from reaching the Millennium Development Goals in terms of education and girls' education in particular. The federal and provincial Governments are aware of this. Currently the EU supports relevant education reforms in Pakistan in two sector budget support programmes, one in Sindh and one in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The programmes support the Government's efforts to promote education of girls. In KP this includes the reconstruction and repair of girls' schools that have been affected by militants' anti-education activities. In Sindh, the EU-supported reforms include specific stipends for girls' education to encourage and allow their parents to send them to school.

Concerning the political engagement of Pakistan on the issue of girls' rights, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answer to Written Question E-9523/2012 ([1]).

2. A release of funds in the framework of the education support programmes is made only after the Government has achieved agreed results, for example full reconstruction and repair of around 360 schools in conflict affected areas, full distribution of free textbooks to all primary and secondary schools, reduction by at least 50% of the number of schools with teacher/student ratios above 1:40, through enhanced recruitment of professionally trained teachers, etc. The EU Delegation has a regular dialogue with the provincial governments about progress and results. The programmes are regularly monitored by the EU Delegation and by its implementing partners.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010715/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Nuova valutazione d'impatto del settore dei microfinanziamenti in Pakistan: la discriminazione di genere

Secondo il rapporto della Banca Mondiale: «Le donne imprenditrici del Pakistan sono ben servite dal settore dei microfinanziamenti?», meno del 25 % delle imprenditrici del Pakistan sono debitrici di microfinanziamenti. Pratiche di prestito discriminatorie stanno escludendo le donne imprenditrici del Pakistan dal sistema di microfinanziamenti, costringendole a cercare altrove i capitali per avviare e sostenere la propria attività. Quando si tratta di ottenere finanziamenti per le loro imprese, le donne pakistane si trovano ad affrontare più sfide che opportunità, sebbene l'ambiente dei microfinanziamenti del paese sia uno dei più avanzati del mondo. Severi requisiti di garanzie e la pratica di offrire prodotti di finanziamento esclusivamente agli operatori economici uomini, hanno ancor più allargato il divario tra le donne imprenditrici pakistane e il settore dei microfinanziamenti. In mancanza di altre opzioni, la maggior parte delle imprenditrici fa conto solo sui risparmi, i beni personali e i prestiti familiari di capitali.

Il rapporto rileva inoltre che i prestiti di microfinanza non sempre vanno a beneficio delle mutuatarie donne. Gli uomini che hanno bisogno di prestiti, compresi quelli che in passato sono falliti, hanno cominciato a usare le donne per accedere al credito. Tra il 50 e il 70 % dei microprestiti alle donne in Pakistan forse in realtà, è essere utilizzato dai loro parenti maschi. Trovare garanti di genere maschile non parenti può essere un limite per le donne pakistane microimprenditrici, che spesso sono costrette tra mobilità limitata e barriere sociali. I fornitori di microfinanziamenti non accettano garanti donne per questi prestiti.

Può la Commissione far sapere se il documento di strategia nazionale pakistano per il periodo 2007-2013 comprenda investimenti in cultura finanziaria e i prodotti meglio progettati, suscettibili di far pervenire alle donne imprenditrici le risorse di cui hanno bisogno per far crescere la loro attività economica e indicare quali misure possano introdurre per monitorare l'impatto dei microfinanziamenti, soprattutto nella definizione di standard di protezione dei consumatori per le mutuatarie donne, sostenendo la trasparenza nei dati di genere e scoraggiando le pratiche e le politiche discriminatorie?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(30 gennaio 2013)

Il «Programma di cambiamento» ([1]) della Commissione pone la crescita economica inclusiva e sostenibile al centro della politica della sviluppo dell'UE. L'Unione, impegnata a garantire la partecipazione di tutti — uomini e donne — al processo economico, rinviene nell'inclusione finanziaria un efficace strumento per favorire lo sviluppo inclusivo e sostenibile.

In Pakistan l'Unione ha finanziato, nell'ambito del precedente documento di strategia nazionale, un programma di microfinanza (50 milioni di EUR) mirante a favorire la parità di genere nella formazione e in termini opportunità. Per effetto del programma, conclusosi nel 2007, sono aumentati nel paese il numero di prestiti concessi alle donne e di istituti di microfinanza che sviluppano programmi di credito femminile. Le riforme finanziarie nazionali sostenute dal programma hanno inoltre permesso di istituire camere di commercio femminili in ambito federale e provinciale e si registra un numero del imprenditrici.

Attualmente non sono in corso in Pakistan specifici programmi di microfinanza finanziati dall'UE ma l'assistenza dell'Unione continua a essere improntata alla parità di genere al fine di combattere qualsiasi forma di discriminazione femminile. Le iniziative attualmente in corso mirano a garantire alle giovani pachistane un'istruzione più accessibile e di qualità, l'accesso delle donne alla giustizia e la partecipazione delle donne alla sfera politica.

([1]) COM(2011)637 definitivo, approvata dalle conclusioni del Consiglio del 14 maggio 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010715/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: New impact assessment for microfinance in Pakistan: gender discrimination

According to the World Bank report entitled 'Are Pakistan's Women Entrepreneurs Being Served by the Microfinance Sector?', less than 25% of Pakistan's businesswomen are microfinance borrowers. Discriminatory lending practices are forcing Pakistan's women entrepreneurs to look beyond microfinance providers for capital to start and sustain their businesses. When it comes to getting funding for their businesses, Pakistani women are faced with more challenges than opportunities, even though the country's microfinance environment is one of the world's most progressive. Strict guarantor requirements and the practice of offering business loan products exclusively to men have only widened the gap between Pakistani businesswomen and the microfinance sector. With no other options, most businesswomen rely on savings, personal assets and family loans for capital.

The report also finds that microfinance loans do not always benefit women borrowers. Men who need loans, including those who have defaulted in the past, have begun to use women to access credit. Between 50% and 70% of microloans to women in Pakistan may actually be used by their male relatives. Finding unrelated male guarantors can be a limit for Pakistani women micro-entrepreneurs, who are often constrained by limited mobility and social barriers. Microfinance providers do not accept women guarantors for these loans.

Could the Commission indicate whether the Pakistan country strategy paper for 2007-2013 includes investments in financial literacy and better-designed products, which can give women entrepreneurs the resources they need to grow their businesses, and indicate the measures it may adopt to monitor the impact of microfinance, especially in setting consumer protection standards for women borrowers, advocating for transparency in gender reporting and discouraging discriminatory practices and policies?

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

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth is a pillar of the EU's updated development policy 'An Agenda for Change' ([1]). The EU is therefore committed to ensuring that all people, irrespective of gender, can participate in the economy and recognises that financial inclusion is an effective tool to help deliver inclusive and sustainable growth.

An EU-funded EUR 50 million microfinance-related programme was financed under the previous Country Strategy Paper and aimed, among other objectives, at increasing gender equality in terms of opportunities and training. The programme lasted until 2007 and effectively contributed to increasing the number of loans received by women and the number of microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Pakistan with an enhanced focus on tailored credit programmes for women. In addition, as a result of the Pakistani Government's financial reforms supported by the programme, women Chambers of Commerce now exist at the federal and provincial levels and the number of women entrepreneurs has increased over the years.

While there is no current specific microfinance programme, gender equality is however mainstreamed in current EU development assistance to Pakistan, with the aim of combating all forms of discrimination against women. To this end, ongoing initiatives are contributing to improving access to, and quality of, education for girls, women's access to justice and women's political empowerment.

([1]) COM(2011)637 final, endorsed by Council Conclusions of 14 May 2012.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-010716/12
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(23. november 2012)

Om: Manglende opfyldelse af kravene i forordning (EF) nr. 764/2008 om princippet om gensidig anerkendelse

Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 764/2008 af 9. juli 2008, hvori fastlægges procedurer for anvendelsen af visse nationale tekniske forskrifter på produkter, der markedsføres lovligt i en anden medlemsstat, udgjorde en del af »varepakken« og trådte i kraft den 13. maj 2009.

Formålet med forordningen er at sikre, at det indre marked for produkter fungerer bedre på områder, som ikke er underkastet den fælles EU-lovgivning.

I forordningen hedder det blandt andre bestemmelser, at de akkrediterede undersøgelser bør accepters af alle medlemsstater (artikel 5), og at bevisbyrden ligger hos medlemsstaterne, dvs. at det ikke er tilstrækkeligt at henvise til en national bestemmelse (artikel 6, stk. 1). På trods af disse bestemmelser, viser erfaringen, at medlemsstaterne fortsat kræver, at nationale laboratorier foretager nye undersøgelser, selv når produkterne allerede er blevet undersøgt for de samme egenskaber.

Det har vist sig, at problemløsningsnettet SOLVIT ikke har været i stand til at fremkomme med løsninger i tilfælde, der vedrører nationale administrative bestemmelser eller standarder. Hvis en klage skal indbringes for en højere instans, er det næste skridt, at Kommissionen indleder en traktatbrudsprocedure. En sådan procedure vil tage yderligere tre til fire år, hvor virksomhederne sædvanligvis skal betale 15 000-20 000 EUR for hvert produkt, som de anmoder om godkendelse for, ud over de årlige revisionsudgifter på omkring 10 000 EUR.

Det synes hensigtsmæssigt at etablere en hurtig appelprocedure for indlysende brud på EU-lovgivningen for at undgå sådanne yderligere undersøgelses- og godkendelsesprocedurer, som ikke tilfører produktet eller samfundet øget værdi men medfører en betydelige ekstra finansiel og administrativ belastning for virksomhederne.

Overvejer Kommissionen at indføre en sådan hurtig appelprocedure, eller findes der alternative løsninger med henblik på at sikre, at kravene i forordning (EF) nr. 764/2008 opfyldes?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Antonio Tajani
(22. januar 2013)

I forordning (EF) nr. 764/2008 kræves det, at hvis en kompetent myndighed har til hensigt at træffe afgørelse om at begrænse eller forbyde, at et produkt eller en produkttype bringes i omsætning, skal myndigheden sende den erhvervsdrivende en skriftlig meddelelse om sin hensigt med angivelse af den tekniske forskrift, der ligger til grund for afgørelsen, og teknisk eller videnskabelig dokumentation. Denne dokumentation er almindeligvis fremkommet i forbindelse med prøvninger foretaget af eller på vegne af de offentlige myndigheder. Skulle myndighederne imidlertid anmode om supplerende prøvning af det pågældende produkt eller den pågældende produkttype, før produktet eller produkttypen kan bringes i omsætning eller forblive på markedet, bør det ske efter den procedure, der er fastsat i forordningen.

I mange tilfælde er de vanskeligheder, som virksomhederne er udsat for, en følge af markedsovervågningsaktiviteter. Kommissionen vil i den kommende produktsikkerheds- og markedsovervågningspakke foreslå foranstaltninger for at strømline og forenkle markedsovervågningen for produkter i EU. Disse foranstaltninger omfatter en forpligtelse til at anerkende prøvningsresultater.

Derudover planlægger Kommissionen i løbet af de kommende uger at iværksætte en offentlig høring og en omfattende evaluering af det indre marked for industriprodukter dels med henblik på eventuel opdatering og forenkling af reglerne om produkters frie bevægelighed på det indre marked, dels med henblik på indkredsning af mangler, der stadigvæk blokerer for frie varebevægelser i EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010716/12
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Failure to fulfil the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 764/2008 concerning the principle of mutual recognition

Regulation (EC) No 764/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 laying down procedures relating to the application of certain national technical rules to products lawfully marketed in another Member State was part of the 'Goods Package' and came into force on 13 May 2009.

The purpose of the regulation is to ensure better functioning of the single market for products in areas not subject to common EU regulation. Among other provisions, the regulation states that accredited tests should be accepted by all Member States (Article 5), and that the burden of proof is on Member States, i.e. it is not sufficient to refer to a national rule (Article 6(1)).

In spite of these provisions, experience shows that Member States continue to require new tests by national laboratories, even when products have already been tested for the same properties.

The online problem-solving mechanism Solvit has proven unable to provide solutions to cases concerning national regulations or standards. If a complaint is to be taken to a higher level, the next step is to bring the an infringement case before the Commission. Such a procedure will take a further three to four years, with companies typically having to pay EUR 15 000 to EUR 20 000 for each product for which they seek approval, in addition to annual auditing costs of around EUR 10 000.

It seems appropriate to establish a fast-track appeal procedure for obvious breaches of EC law in order to avoid such extra testing and approval procedures, which do not add any value to the product or to society, but represent considerable extra financial and administrative burdens for companies.

Would the Commissioner consider such a fast-track appeal procedure, or does it have alternative solutions for ensuring that the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 764/2008 are fulfilled?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

Regulation (EC) No 764/2008 requires that, where a competent authority intends to adopt a decision to restrict or prohibit the placing on the market of a product or type of product, it must send the economic operator written notice of that intention, specifying the technical rule on which the decision is to be based and setting out technical or scientific evidence. That evidence is usually obtained as a result of testing by or on behalf of public authorities. If, however, the authorities should require additional testing of that product or type of product before it can be placed or kept on the market, this should be done according to the procedure laid down in the regulation.

In many cases, the difficulties encountered by businesses are a consequence of market surveillance activities. In its forthcoming 'Product Safety and Market Surveillance Package', the Commission plans to propose measures to streamline and simplify market surveillance for products in the EU. These measures will include the obligation to recognise test results.

In addition, the Commission plans to launch, in the coming weeks, a public consultation and a major evaluation of the single market for industrial products with a view to, on the one hand, the possible update and simplification of the rules for the circulation of products in the single market and, on the other hand, the identification of gaps still hampering free circulation within the Union.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010717/12
to the Commission
David Campbell Bannerman (ECR)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Travel expenses of EU employees travelling to work in the UK from other Member States

The Commission is asked to provide aggregate figures for travel expenses incurred by people employed by the European Union travelling to work inside the UK from other Member States in the following financial years:

1. 2009-2010

2. 2010-2011

3. 2011-2012

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

The Commission is not in possession of expenses incurred by all staff employed by all EU institutions. The only information it has is the amount reimbursed to Commission staff who take part in missions to the United Kingdom as unique destination. An annex with figures regarding 2009 to 2011 is sent directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament's Secretariat.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010718/12
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Nuove restrizioni per allergeni in profumi e sostanze naturali: misure sproporzionate rispetto al mercato europeo ed effetti distorsivi sulla concorrenza

Da diversi mesi sono poste in consultazione pubblica da parte della Commissione europea una serie di questioni relative agli ingredienti utilizzati nei prodotti cosmetici. Al termine delle consultazioni pubbliche (regolamentate con decisione 2008/721/CE) sui pareri preliminari dei comitati scientifici, la Commissione procederà alle consultazioni con gli Stati membri al fine di adottare i provvedimenti più opportuni. L'indagine scientifica del 1999 evidenziava che l'1-3 % della popolazione europea è soggetto a reazioni allergiche dovute a ingredienti presenti nei profumi. Il comitato scientifico SCCNFP allora aveva identificato una prima serie di 26 ingredienti ritenuti allergenici. Tali sostanze erano state regolamentate attraverso la direttiva Cosmetici 76/768/CEE, successivamente dal regolamento Detergenti 2004/648/CE e dalla direttiva sui giocattoli 2009/48/CE, con l'obbligo di figurare singolarmente sull'etichetta, nell'elenco degli ingredienti, al fine di consentire una migliore diagnosi di allergia e l'identificazione dei prodotti da parte dei consumatori allergici a tali componenti. Da allora, la conoscenza sulle sensibilizzazioni dovute a componenti di fragranze è aumentata notevolmente e risulta che la Commissione abbia chiesto il riesame delle prove disponibili all'attuale comitato SCCS per aggiornare il parere SCCNFP del 1999. Il parere preliminare (SCCS/1459/11) ha individuato ben 100 ingredienti (rispetto ai 26) che possono essere causa di reazioni allergiche; in particolare, «mette al bando» una serie d'ingredienti presenti in profumi e in sostanze naturali/oli essenziali naturali definibili come allergeni da contatto per l'uomo, sulla base di prove cliniche con parziali evidenze di allergenicità. Vengono annoverati fra i prodotti: aldeide cinnamica, i derivati del muschio (come il muschio ambretta e il muschio di quercia), sandalo, aldeide amilcinnammica, citronella, eugenolo, isoeugenolo, geraniolo. Insieme a tali elementi, che a ragion veduta verrebbero vietati, è prevista inoltre la riduzione a una percentuale minima tollerata, dello 0,01 %, delle sostanze indicate.

Considerato che i cosmetici fanno parte in maniera insostituibile del nostro stile di vita, e l'arte della profumeria è caratterizzata da un processo di produzione molto complesso con i suoi costi, chiedo alla Commissione:

— se tali misure restrittive per le sostanze naturali, in realtà, non provocano l'effetto contrario di favorire l'impiego di sostanze sintetiche create in laboratorio;

— se tali misure restrittive, sulla base dei principi di ragionevolezza e proporzionalità, tengano in dovuta considerazione l'impatto economico sulla concorrenza e il mercato di tali prodotti, provocando una distorsione dei costi diretti e indiretti per le imprese;

— se, piuttosto, le misure non dovrebbero dare maggiore attenzione alla provenienza e al canale di distribuzione dei profumi acquistati, poiché attualmente sono disponibili sul mercato cosmetici prodotti in Cina o in paesi non regolati nell'UE, quindi molto meno sicuri.

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

Il parere sulle fragranze allergizzanti nei cosmetici, emanato nel giugno 2012 dal Comitato scientifico della sicurezza dei consumatori (SCCS), aggiorna l'elenco delle fragranze allergizzanti che riveste interesse per i consumatori, confermando nel contempo che le 26 fragranze allergizzanti già disciplinate dalla direttiva Cosmetici ([1]) di cui è prevista l'etichettatura individuale suscitano ancora preoccupazioni.

È difficile per la Commissione affermare se e come le restrizioni imposte a certi ingredienti, che sono presenti negli estratti naturali, incoraggerebbero l'uso di sostanze sintetiche nei cosmetici.

La Commissione riflette attualmente sul modo per dare attuazione a detto parere in modo da contribuire all'informazione e alla sicurezza dei consumatori nel modo più appropriato e più proporzionato, mantenendo nel contempo l'innovazione e la competitività del settore cosmetico. A tal fine, essa valuta gli impatti socioeconomici delle possibili opzioni in tema di sicurezza, disponibilità dei prodotti e occupazione, tenendo anche conto dei dati sulla vigilanza e di elementi addizionali che interessano l'esposizione dei consumatori.

([1]) Direttiva 76/768/CEE del Consiglio, del 27 luglio 1976, concernente il ravvicinamento delle legislazioni degli Stati membri relative ai prodotti cosmetici, GU L 262 del 27.9.1976, pag. 169.

Le eventuali misure che si proporranno si applicherebbero del pari ai prodotti fabbricati o importati nell'UE. La Commissione ribadisce che la sorveglianza del mercato rientra nelle responsabilità degli Stati membri che devono assicurare che sul mercato dell'UE siano immessi soltanto prodotti sicuri.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010718/12
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: New restrictions for allergens in perfumes and natural substances: disproportionate measures for the European market and distortion of competition

For several months, the Commission has been consulting the public on several issues relating to the ingredients used in cosmetic products. After the public consultations (regulated by Decision 2008/721/EC) on the preliminary opinions of the scientific committees, the Commission will consult the Member States in order to adopt the most suitable measures. The scientific investigation conducted in 1999 showed that 1-3% of the European population suffered from allergic reactions to the ingredients contained in perfumes. The Scientific Committee on Cosmetic Products and Non-Food Products intended for Consumers (SCCNFP) then identified an initial list of 26 ingredients considered allergenic. These substances had been regulated by the Cosmetics Directive 76/768/EEC, then by the Detergents Regulation (EC) No 2004/648/EC and by the Toys Directive 2009/48/EC, and have to appear individually in the list of ingredients on the label, in order to improve the diagnosis of allergies and to enable consumers allergic to those ingredients to identify products. Understanding of sensitisation caused by fragrance ingredients has improved significantly since then, leading the Commission to ask the current Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) to re-examine the available evidence in order to update the SCCNFP's 1999 opinion. The preliminary opinion (SCCS/1459/11) identified 100 ingredients (compared with 26) that may cause allergic reactions. In particular, it 'bans' a range of ingredients found in perfumes and in natural substances/natural essential oils that can be defined as contact allergens in humans, on the basis of clinical tests with limited evidence of allergenicity. The following products are included: cinnamaldehyde, musk derivatives (such as musk ambrette and oakmoss), sandalwood, amylcinnamaldehyde, citronella, eugenol, isoeugenol, geraniol. Together with these ingredients, which would rightly be banned, it is also planned to introduce a minimum tolerated percentage of 0.01% for the listed substances.

Considering that cosmetics are an irreplaceable part our lifestyle and the art of perfumery is typified by a very complex and expensive production process, I would ask the Commission:

— whether these restrictions on natural substances actually have the opposite effect of encouraging the use of synthetic substances produced in the laboratory;

— whether these restrictions, on the basis of the principles of reasonableness and proportionality, take due account of the economic impact on competition and the market for these products, distorting direct and indirect costs for businesses;

— whether the measures should instead focus more on the provenance and distribution channels of perfumes that are bought, since cosmetics produced in China or in unregulated non-EU countries, and which are thus much less safe, are currently available on the market?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The opinion on fragrance allergens in cosmetic products, 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 ([1]) for individual labelling are still of concern.

It is difficult for the Commission to say whether and how restrictions for some ingredients, that are present in natural extracts, would encourage the use of synthetic substances in cosmetic products.

The Commission is currently reflecting on how to implement this opinion so that it contributes to consumer information and safety in the most appropriate and proportionate way, while maintaining innovation and the competitiveness of the cosmetics sector. To this end, it is assessing the social and economic impacts of possible options on safety, the availability of products and on employment also, taking into accounts vigilance data and additional elements of consumer exposure.

([1]) 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.

Any proposed measure would apply equally to products manufactured or imported into the EU. The Commission would underline that market surveillance is the responsibility of Member States, who must ensure that only safe products are placed on the EU market.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010719/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Escalation di violenze in Nigeria

Secondo un rapporto di Human Rights Watch pubblicato in ottobre, 815 persone sarebbero rimaste uccise in Nigeria negli attacchi del gruppo islamista Boko Haram nei primi nove mesi del 2011, una cifra più alta delle vittime totali del 2010 e 2011 messe insieme.

Gli attacchi di Boko Haram, sempre secondo Human Rights Watch, sono indirizzati principalmente verso la polizia e gli altri agenti di sicurezza così come contro cristiani e musulmani accusati di lavorare o di cooperare con il governo.

Il governo, secondo alcune testimonianze, sembrerebbe rispondere a tale violenza con altrettante violenze: le forze di sicurezza avrebbero dichiarato di aver ucciso centinaia di persone semplicemente sospettate di far parte del gruppo Boko Haram.

Considerando che questa escalation di violenze da entrambe le parti non fa altro che acuire la crisi in Nigeria, quali azioni intende adottare il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante per fermare questa spirale di violenze?

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

L'inasprirsi della violenza in alcune zone della Nigeria settentrionale è fonte di crescenti preoccupazioni per chi si trova all'interno e all'esterno del paese. Collaboriamo con la Nigeria per sostenerla nel difficile tentativo di creare condizioni di sicurezza durature e di agire sui fattori che conducono alla radicalizzazione, sia mediante un costante dialogo politico sulle migliori strategie per affrontare i problemi, sia con interventi di aiuto mirati. Nel paese è attualmente in corso (inizio dicembre) una missione finalizzata a esaminare modalità specifiche di sostegno per lottare contro il terrorismo.

L'UE ha già avviato una serie di programmi di assistenza sociale, ad esempio nel settore della maternità e in materia di risorse idriche nel nord del paese. Stiamo tuttavia prendendo in considerazione la possibilità di concentrarci maggiormente, nell'ambito dell'11° FES, su programmi integrati che affrontino l'insieme delle questioni economiche e sociali all'origine della violenza.

Inoltre, nel luglio 2012 l'UE ha sostenuto il rafforzamento delle capacità di mediazione in una delle aree più sensibili, ricorrendo ai fondi di un'iniziativa speciale del Parlamento europeo (EEAS BL 2238). Stiamo altresì preparando un altro progetto, incentrato sulla prevenzione dei conflitti e sull'occupazione giovanile in quest'area.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010719/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Iva Zanicchi (PPE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Escalation of violence in Nigeria

According to a report by Human Rights Watch published in October, 815 people were killed in Nigeria in attacks by the Islamist group Boko Haram in the first nine months of 2012, which is more than the total number of people killed in 2010 and 2011 combined.

According to Human Rights Watch, Boko Haram's attacks mainly target the police and other security personnel as well as Christians and Muslims accused of working or cooperating with the government.

Accounts suggest that the government is responding to this violence in an equally violent way. The security forces have stated that they have killed hundreds of people simply suspected of belonging to Boko Haram.

Given that this escalation of violence on both sides only intensifies the crisis in Nigeria, what action will the Vice-President/High Representative take to put an end to this spiralling violence?

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

The escalating violence in parts of northern Nigeria are a growing cause of concern for those inside and outside the country. We are working with Nigeria to help it tackle the challenges of creating durable security and dealing with the factors conducive to radicalisation, through both continuous political dialogue on appropriate approaches to the problems, as well as targeted aid interventions. A mission is currently (early December) in Nigeria to examine specific forms of support to fight terrorism.

The EU already undertakes a number of programmes providing social assistance, e.g. through maternal care, and water resources in the North. We are considering, however, focusing more attention under the 11th EDF on integrated programmes that tackle the full range of economic and social challenges that give impetus to the violence.

In addition, in July 2012 the EU provided capacity building for mediation in one of the most fragile areas, using funds from a special initiative by the European Parliament (EEAS BL 2238). We are also preparing another project focusing on conflict prevention and youth employment for this area.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris P-010720/12
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(23 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Fondurile pentru Programul Erasmus

Tăierile bugetare îi afectează și pe studenții europeni, întrucât programul Erasmus, care le permite acestora să studieze într-o universitate dintr-un alt stat membru, este amenințat de lipsa fondurilor.

În cei 25 de ani de existență, programul Erasmus a oferit burse unui număr de peste trei milioane de studenți, care au putut în acest mod să studieze în străinătate. Însă, în acest moment, programul este amenințat de tăierile bugetare. În contextul șomajului ridicat în rândul tinerilor, este deosebit de important ca programele de acest gen să fie finanțate în mod corespunzător.

Întrucât în momentul de față negocierile dintre Parlament și Consiliu în ceea ce privește bugetul pentru anul 2013 sunt departe de a ajunge la un compromis, politici precum programul Erasmus, dezvoltarea rurală, Fondul Social, Fondul de Coeziune, Programul Cadru 7 pentru cercetare și dezvoltare riscă să fie afectate.

Ce măsuri intenționează să ia Comisia pentru a preveni situații ca cea din anul acesta, când politici precum Erasmus au rămas fără finanțare în ultimele 2 luni ale anului?

Răspuns dat de dna Vassiliou în numele Comisiei
(18 decembrie 2012)

La 23 octombrie, Comisia a cerut Parlamentului și Consiliului să aprobe un buget suplimentar pentru plăți în valoare de 9 miliarde de euro, astfel încât creditele de plată disponibile să corespundă mai îndeaproape nivelului angajamentelor aprobate deja de autoritatea bugetară în bugetul pe 2012. Comisia a solicitat, în special, o sumă suplimentară de 180 de milioane de euro pentru Programul de învățare pe tot parcursul vieții, ceea ce ar garanta că angajamentele de plată pot fi îndeplinite până la sfârșitul anului. Cota pentru Erasmus este estimată la 90 de milioane de euro. Acest proiect de buget rectificativ este disponibil la adresa:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_en.cfm

Studenții Erasmus care merg în străinătate în primul semestru al anului universitar 2012-2013 nu ar trebui să aibă niciun fel de probleme. Cu toate acestea, dacă bugetul rectificativ nu este aprobat de autoritatea bugetară, pot să apară probleme serioase în cursul anului 2013 ([1]).

Reacțiile în presa din întreaga Europa vorbesc de la sine: în această perioadă în care șomajul a atins niveluri inacceptabile în rândul tinerilor, a le oferi tinerilor europeni oportunități de învățare și de mobilitate în cadrul unor universități sau întreprinderi din străinătate le poate îmbogăți considerabil experiența, le poate crește șansele de angajare și le poate schimba viața în bine. Din acest motiv, este absolut esențial să nu se întrerupă finanțarea națională sau din partea UE pentru studenți.

Comisia se bazează pe Parlament și pe Consiliu să adopte rapid bugetul rectificativ 6/2012, precum și proiectul său de buget revizuit 2013 propus de Comisie la 23 noiembrie, pentru a garanta finanțarea adecvată și continuitatea punerii în aplicare a programelor europene.

([1]) O explicație detaliată a situației a fost publicată de către Comisie la data de 23 octombrie:. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1137_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010720/12
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Funding for the Erasmus programme

The budget cuts are also affecting European students, who are now faced with the prospect of inadequate funding for the Erasmus programme, which provides them with the opportunity to study in universities in other Member States.

In its 25 years of existence, over 3 million students have received Erasmus grants enabling them to study abroad. However, the programme is now threatened with budget cuts. In view of the high level of unemployment among young people, it is particularly important for such programmes to receive adequate funding.

Given that negotiations between Council and Parliament regarding the 2013 are far from reaching a compromise, policy areas relating to the Erasmus programme, rural development, the Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Seventh Framework Programme of research and development are likely to be affected.

What measures will the Commission take to prevent any recurrence of the situation this year, with initiatives such as the Erasmus programme being left without funding for the final two months?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 December 2012)

On 23 October the Commission asked the Parliament and the Council to vote for an additional budget of EUR 9 billion for payments so that the available payment credits more closely correspond with the level of commitments already voted for by the Budgetary Authority in the 2012 budget. In particular, the Commission requested an additional EUR 180 million for the Lifelong Learning Programme, which would ensure payment commitments can be met until the end of the year. The share for Erasmus is estimated at EUR 90 million. This Draft Amending Budget can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_en.cfm.

Erasmus students going abroad in the first semester of the academic year 2012-2013 should not have any problems. However, if the amended budget is not voted for by the Budgetary Authority, severe problems would likely occur later in 2013 ([1]).

Reactions in the press across Europe speak for themselves: at this period of unacceptably high youth unemployment, providing Europe's young people with learning and mobility opportunities in universities or enterprises abroad can significantly widen their experience, increase their employability and change their lives for the better. This is why it is absolutely crucial not to interrupt national or EU funding to students.

The Commission relies on the Parliament and the Council to swiftly adopt the amending budget 6/2012, as well as its revised draft budget 2013 proposed by the Commission on 23 November, in order to guarantee the adequate funding and continuity in the implementation of the European programmes.

([1]) A detailed explanation of the situation was published by the Commission on 23 October: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1137_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010721/12
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE) und Heide Rühle (Verts/ALE)
(23. November 2012)

Betrifft: EU-Mittel für den Bahnhof „Stuttgart 21"

In ihrer Entscheidung K(2008)8055 (endgültig) vom 12.12.2008 geht die Kommission im Vergleich zum bestehenden Stuttgarter Kopfbahnhof davon aus, dass „Stuttgart 21 […] als Durchgangsbahnhof die doppelte Leistungsfähigkeit hat". Ich frage die Kommission mit der Bitte um Beantwortung der einzelnen Fragen:

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission heute die oben zitierte Annahme über Kapazitätssteigerungen vor dem Hintergrund des „Audits zur Betriebsqualitätsüberprüfung von Stuttgart 21", den die SMA & Partner AG am 21. Juli 2011 im Auftrag des Infrastrukturmanagers „DB Netz AG Baden-Württemberg" vorlegte und in dem lediglich gegenüber dem aktuell existierenden Kopfbahnhof — der erheblich unter der potentiellen Leistungsfähigkeit bleibt — eine Kapazitätssteigerung von rund 30 % festgestellt wird?

2. Ist es richtig, dass die Förderung der „Aktivität 1 — Planfeststellungsabschnitt 1.1 Anteil Neue Verkehrsstation" auch die Maßnahme „Abriss Nordflügel Hauptbahnhof" (S. 13) umfasst?

3. Wenn ja, warum weicht die Kommission damit von der folgenden, wiederholt gegenüber dem Parlament vertretenen Aussage ab: „Eine eventuelle Kofinanzierung durch die Gemeinschaft kann sich nicht auf die Errichtung des Bahnhofs selbst erstrecken. Allenfalls können die mit der Errichtung der Linie unmittelbar in Zusammenhang stehenden Kosten kofinanziert werden, also der sogenannte Schienenanteil. […] In Anbetracht der begrenzten Finanzmittel für die Entwicklung des transeuropäischen Verkehrsnetzes sind die Bahnhöfe und alle dazugehörigen Infrastrukturen von den kommunalen, regionalen und nationalen Behörden selbst zu finanzieren"?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(29. Januar 2013)

1. Der Text der Entscheidung entspricht dem zum Zeitpunkt der Annahme vorhandenen Kenntnisstand. Die Kommission nimmt die Ergebnisse der genannten Studie zur Kenntnis. Es liegt in der Verantwortung des Mitgliedstaats, hinsichtlich der Studienergebnisse über die am besten geeigneten Folgemaßnahmen und ihre Umsetzung zu entscheiden.

2. Es trifft zu, dass die Entscheidung K(2008)8055 endg. vom 12. Dezember 2008 auch den Abriss des Nordflügels des Hauptbahnhofs umfasst.

3. Der Abriss war für den Zugang zur unterirdischen Gleistunnelbaustelle erforderlich. Für die Modernisierung des bestehenden Bahnhofsgebäudes „Bonatzbau" sind keine TEN-V-Finanzmittel vorgesehen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010721/12
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE) and Heide Rühle (Verts/ALE)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: EU financial aid for the Stuttgart 21 railway station

In its decision K(2008)8055 (final) ([1]) of 12 December 2008, the Commission makes the assumption that Stuttgart 21 as a through railway station has twice the capacity of the existing terminus in Stuttgart. I would appreciate if the Commission would answer each of the following questions separately:

1. The Audit examining the operational quality of Stuttgart 21 issued by SMA & Partner AG on 21 July 2011 on behalf of the infrastructure manager DB Netz AG Baden-Württemberg refers to a capacity increase of some 30% compared to the existing terminus, which is operating at considerably less than its potential capacity. Taking this into consideration, what is the Commission's view today on the capacity increase figure quoted above?

2. Is it correct that financial aid for the 'New rail station' project phase (Activity 1 — point 1.1 of the planning documents) includes the demolition of the main station's north wing (p. 13)?

3. If so, why is the Commission no longer adhering to the following statement it has made repeatedly before Parliament: 'Any co-financing involving the Community cannot cover the construction of the station itself. At most the costs directly associated with the construction of the line itself could be jointly financed, in other words the railway track ("Schienenanteil"). […] Bearing in mind the limited funds available in the Community budget for the development of a trans-European transport network, the stations and all other accompanying infrastructures have to be the responsibility of the local, regional and national authorities themselves.'?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

1. The text of the decision reflects the knowledge at the time the decision was taken. The Commission acknowledges the results of the abovementioned study. It is in the responsibility of the Member State to decide on the most appropriate follow up measures and their implementation with regard to the study results.

2. It is correct that the decision K(2008) 8055 (final) of 12 December 2008 also covers the demolition of the main station's north wing.

3. The demolition was necessary for getting access to the underground construction site for the tracks' tunnels. The refurbishment of the existing station building 'Bonatzgebäude' is not part of TEN-T funding.

([1]) Translator's note: This document exists only in German.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010722/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(23 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Adesione della Turchia all'UE

La Turchia è un paese islamico, la cui cultura opprime le donne. Le donne sono maltrattate anche fisicamente, infatti l'Islam considera gli uomini sesso dominante.

Di conseguenza si pongono due problemi principali per l'accettazione della Turchia come Stato membro dell'UE:

— Uno dei requisiti di appartenenza è che il paese candidato deve condividere i valori etici dell'UE. È chiaro come il sole che l'UE non tollera abusi sulle donne e si fonda sull'eguaglianza di genere e dei diritti umani, per non parlare della libertà di parola.

— La seconda ragione è sociale. Non è un segreto che molte persone provenienti dalla Turchia sono già immigrate nei paesi dell'Unione europea. Mentre l'immigrazione clandestina è ovviamente un problema, ancora più grande preoccupazione suscita lo status sociale degli immigrati. A causa delle loro differenze culturali, non si integrano nella società locale, situazione che ha dato luogo anche ad atti di violenza. Non possiamo permettere che un ordine sociale instabile si radichi nei paesi dell'Unione europea; per evitarlo dobbiamo porre un freno all'allargamento dell'UE e concentrarsi su come migliorare noi stessi, dati i tempi difficili che ci troviamo ad affrontare.

La Turchia è per religione e cultura troppo diversa per potersi integrare nella struttura sociale dell'UE. Accettare la Turchia come Stato membro creerebbe solo una società instabile e porterebbe molti conflitti culturali e religiosi.

Oltre ai problemi di cui sopra, nei sette anni da quando sono iniziati i negoziati di adesione, la Turchia ha aperto solo 13 capitoli dell'«acquis», e ne ha chiuso solo uno, su scienza e ricerca. Nessun capitolo è stato aperto per due anni. Diciotto capitoli sono stati congelati — otto dall'UE, a causa del rifiuto della Turchia di consentire alle navi cipriote di utilizzare i porti turchi, e il restante 10 dai governi di Cipro e Francia.

Ci sono alcuni capitoli dell'«acquis» per cui la Turchia è ben lungi dal soddisfare i requisiti, tra questi il capitolo 23 «giudiziario e diritti fondamentali», il capitolo 24 «giustizia, libertà e sicurezza», o il capitolo 28 «tutela dei consumatori e della salute». La Turchia non riconosce Cipro — uno degli Stati membri dell'Unione europea — e rifiuta di affrontare il grave problema della popolazione curda, dimostrando con ciò una chiara mancanza di rispetto dei diritti umani.

1. Qual è la posizione della Commissione relativamente all'adesione della Turchia all'Unione europea?

2. Non è il momento di smettere di dare false speranze alla Turchia?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(18 gennaio 2013)

La Turchia ha avviato i negoziati di adesione all'Unione europea nel 2005 a seguito di una decisione unanime degli Stati membri dell'UE.

Nelle sue conclusioni dell'11 dicembre 2012 il Consiglio ha dichiarato che: «*Negoziati di adesione attivi e credibili, nel rispetto degli impegni dell'UE e delle condizioni poste, accanto a tutte le altre dimensioni delle relazioni UE-Turchia affrontate nelle presenti conclusioni, consentiranno a tali relazioni di sviluppare al meglio le proprie potenzialità. Il rapido rilancio dei negoziati di adesione è nell'interesse delle due parti se si vuole che la prospettiva verso l'UE continui ad essere il parametro delle riforme del paese*».

È su questa base che la Commissione lavora per risolvere i problemi in collaborazione con le autorità turche.

La Commissione segue da vicino tutte le questioni sollevate dall'onorevole parlamentare e riferisce in merito agli sviluppi nelle sue relazioni annuali sulla Turchia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010722/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(23 November 2012)

Subject: Turkey's accession to the EU

Turkey is an Islamic country whose culture oppresses women. Women are even physically mistreated, as Islam sees men as being the dominant sex.

There are consequently two main problems in accepting Turkey as an EU Member State:

— One of the requirements for membership is that the candidate country must share the same ethical views as the EU. It is crystal-clear that the Union does not tolerate the abuse of women and is based on gender equality, human rights and freedom of speech.

— The second problem is one of social order. It is no secret that many people from Turkey have already migrated to EU countries. While illegal immigration is of course a concern, an even greater concern is the social status of immigrants. On account of cultural differences, they do not integrate into local society, a situation that has even provoked acts of violence. We cannot allow an unstable social order to take root in EU countries; in order to avoid this, we have to put a stop to the enlargement of the EU and focus on how to improve the Union, given the difficult times we are currently facing.

In both religious and cultural terms, Turkey is too different to integrate into the EU's social structure. Accepting Turkey as a Member State would only create an unstable society and lead to many cultural and religious conflicts.

In addition to the aforementioned issues, in the seven years since the accession negotiations began, Turkey has opened only 13 chapters of the *acquis* and closed only one (on science and research). No chapters have been opened for two years, while 18 have been frozen — 8 by the EU in response to Turkey's refusal to allow Cypriot ships to use Turkish ports, and the remaining 10 by the governments of Cyprus and France.

In some chapters of the *acquis*, Turkey is far from meeting the requirements. These include Chapter 23 ('Judiciary and fundamental rights'), Chapter 24 ('Justice, Freedom and Security') and Chapter 28 ('Consumer and health protection'). Turkey does not recognise Cyprus — an EU Member State — and is refusing to address the serious issue regarding the country's Kurdish population, thereby showing a clear lack of respect for human rights.

1. What is the Commission's position with regard to the Turkey's accession to the European Union?

2. Is it time to stop giving Turkey false hopes?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

Turkey started EU accession negotiations in 2005 further to a unanimous decision of EU Member States.

In its conclusions issued on 11 December 2012, the Council stated that: 'Active and credible accession negotiations which respect the EU's commitments and established conditionality, along with all the other dimensions of the EU-Turkey relationship addressed in these conclusions, will enable the EU-Turkey relationship to achieve its full potential. It is in the interest of both parties that accession negotiations regain momentum soon, ensuring that the EU remains the benchmark for reforms in Turkey'.

It is on this basis that the Commission works to address issues in cooperation with the Turkish authorities.

The Commission follows closely all issues raised by the Honourable Member and reports on developments in its yearly Progress Reports on Turkey.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-010723/12
alla Commissione
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(26 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Richiesta di rigetto del decreto interministeriale n. 2012/0534/I — C50A

Il decreto interministeriale n. 2012/0534/I — C50A, che modifica il decreto legislativo n. 31/2001 relativo alla qualità delle acque destinate al consumo umano, è attualmente in esame presso la DG ENTR della Commissione. Detto decreto interministeriale introduce l'ammissibilità della presenza di contaminazione da cianobatteri e loro microcistine nelle acque destinate al consumo umano.

Considerato che:

— il decreto legislativo n. 31/2011, recante attuazione della direttiva 98/83/CE del Consiglio, non può essere modificato per introdurre criteri più laschi, ma solo per introdurre termini più stringenti, e che non è questo il caso della modifica prevista dal suddetto decreto interministeriale;

— la modifica proposta è in palese contrasto con le evidenze scientifiche, in quanto sono accertate la potenzialità tossica dei cianobatteri e le azioni epigenetiche, genotossiche e oncogene dei vari tipi di microcistine da essi prodotti;

— l'approvazione di questo decreto comporterebbe un rischio documentato e concreto per la salute umana e che è necessario, invece, rispettare pienamente il principio di precauzione;

— l'Associazione italiana medici per l'ambiente — Isde (International Society of Doctors for the Environment — Italy) ha inviato al responsabile per la direttiva 98/34/CE della Commissione un documento recante una serie di osservazioni volte a sostenere la richiesta di rigetto del suddetto decreto;

si chiede alla Commissione:

— non ritiene che sia doveroso rigettare il decreto interministeriale n. 2012/0534/I — C50A?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(16 gennaio 2013)

Nel quadro della direttiva 98/34/CE ([1]), il 18 settembre 2012 le autorità italiane hanno informato la Commissione riguardo al Decreto interministeriale che introduce il parametro «microcistina-LR» e il relativo valore di parametro nell'allegato I, parte B, del Decreto legislativo n. 31/2001 concernente la qualità delle acque destinate al consumo umano. Ciò è in linea con le disposizioni della direttiva sulle acque destinate al consumo umano (98/83/CE) ([2]) che prevede che gli Stati membri stabiliscano valori per i parametri non indicati nell'allegato I di tale direttiva se ciò è necessario per la protezione della salute umana nell'intero territorio o in parte di esso. La direttiva sulle acque destinate al consumo umano non fornisce dettagli sul modo in cui i parametri addizionali previsti nella legislazione nazionale devono essere valutati e monitorati.

Va osservato che la direttiva 98/34/CE non prevede la bocciatura del progetto di legge notificato, ma consente alla Commissione di valutarne la conformità con la legislazione dell'UE e i principi della libera circolazione delle merci. Nel quadro della procedura di notifica prevista dalla direttiva, la Commissione può reagire in tre modi diversi: può formulare osservazioni al fine di chiedere chiarimenti; può stilare un parere circostanziato se il progetto di legge sembra essere incompatibile con la legislazione dell'UE ed è suscettibile di creare ostacoli alla libera circolazione delle merci oppure, può bloccare il progetto di legge qualora sia in corso un'attività di armonizzazione a livello dell'UE sulla questione contemplata dal progetto stesso. Una volta completato il processo di notifica, viene resa pubblica una sintesi dei risultati ([3]).

([1]) Direttiva 98/34/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 22 giugno 1998, che prevede una procedura d'informazione nel settore delle norme e delle regolamentazioni tecniche e delle regole relative ai servizi della società dell'informazione, GU L 204 del 21.7.1998.
([2]) GU L 330 del 5.12.1998.
([3]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/pisa/app/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=pisa_notif_overview&iYear=2012&inum=534&sNLang=FR&lang=it.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010723/12
to the Commission
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Call for Inter-Ministerial Decree No 2012/0534/I — C50A to be rejected

Inter-Ministerial Decree No 2012/0534/I — C50A, amending Legislative Decree No 31/2001 on the quality of water intended for human consumption, is currently under consideration by the Commission's DG ENTR. This inter-ministerial decree permits contamination by cyanobacteria and their microcystins in water intended for human consumption.

Legislative Decree No 31/2011, implementing Council Directive 98/83/EC, cannot be amended in order to introduce looser criteria, but only to introduce more stringent conditions; this is clearly not the case in the change provided for by the inter-ministerial decree in question.

The proposed amendment is in stark contrast to scientific evidence, since the toxic potential of cyanobacteria and the epigenetic, genotoxic and oncogenic action of the various types of microcystins produced by them have been scientifically proven.

The adoption of this decree would result in a concrete and well-documented risk to human health, when, in fact, the precautionary principle should be respected in full.

The Italian ISDE (International Society of Doctors for the Environment — Italy) has sent to the person responsible for Directive 98/34/EC at the Commission a document setting out a range of observations in support of the call to reject this decree.

Does the Commission therefore not agree that Inter-Ministerial Decree No 2012/0534/I — C50A should be rejected?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(16 January 2013)

In the framework of Directive 98/34/EC ([1]), the Italian authorities notified the Commission on 18 September 2012 of the Inter-Ministerial Decree for the introduction of 'Microcystin-LR' as a parameter and related parameter value in Annex I part B of the Legislative Decree no 31/2001 on the quality of water intended for human consumption. This is consistent with the provisions of the Drinking Water Directive ([2]) (98/83/EC), which stipulates that a Member State shall set values for parameters not included in Annex I of this directive, where the protection of human health within the entire territory or part of it so requires. The Drinking Water Directive does not provide any details on the way in which additional parameters included in the national legislation should be assessed and monitored.

It should be pointed out that directive 98/34/EC does not provide for the rejection of notified draft legislation but allows the Commission to assess its compliance with EC law and the principles of free movement of goods. In the framework of the notification procedure established by the directive, the Commission can issue three types of reactions: comments in order to request clarifications, a detailed opinion if the draft legislation appears to be incompatible with EC law and may create obstacles to the free movement of goods or a blockage if it appears that there is a harmonisation work at EU level on the matter covered by the draft legislation. Once the notification process is completed, a summary of its outcome will be made public ([3]).

([1]) Directive 98/34/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 22 June 1998 laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations, OJ L 204, 21.7.1998.
([2]) OJ L330, 5.12.1998.
([3]) See http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/pisa/app/search/index.cfm?fuseaction=pisa_notif_overview&iYear=2012&inum=534&sNLang=FR&lang=en.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-010724/12
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: Definitieverzoek

Is de Commissie bekend met de term „ecosociale markteconomie"? Zo ja, kan de Commissie een definitie geven van deze term?

Antwoord van de heer Rehn namens de Commissie
(10 januari 2013)

Het begrip „ecosociale markteconomie" is een modernisering van het concept „sociale markteconomie". Het vindt zijn oorsprong in de discussies over de landbouwhervorming in de jaren tachtig en neemt ook milieuoverwegingen in aanmerking. Het drukt de dwingende notie uit dat economische efficiëntie, sociale rechtvaardigheid en milieuduurzaamheid nauw met elkaar zijn verweven.

Zoals in 2003 is opgemerkt door de Oostenrijkse politicus Joseph Riegler ([1]), een van de geestelijke vaders van dit concept en de bedenker van de term, komt dit begrip dicht in de buurt van de beginselen die aan de overkoepelende EU-strategie voor duurzame ontwikkeling ten grondslag liggen. In het kader van deze strategie wordt opgeroepen tot een geïntegreerde aanpak van de beleidsvorming en tot een geleidelijke verandering van onze huidige consumptie- en productiepatronen. Om dat doel te bereiken, staat de strategie in het teken van de volgende zeven uitdagingen: klimaatverandering en schone energie; duurzaam vervoer; duurzame productie en consumptie; een beter beheer van de natuurlijke hulpbronnen en van de bedreigingen voor de volksgezondheid; sociale inclusie, demografie en migratie; en bestrijding van de armoede in de wereld. Binnen de EU zijn deze uitdagingen grotendeels opgepakt door de Europa 2020-strategie voor een slimme, duurzame en inclusieve economie.

Veel van de instrumenten waarnaar de voorkeur van de voorstanders van een „ecosociale markteconomie" uitgaat — zoals een juiste prijszetting voor milieuvervuiling en voor het gebruik van hulpbronnen; een vergroening van de belastingstelsels, onder meer door over te stappen van belastingen op arbeid op milieubelastingen als bron van fiscale ontvangsten, en het laten uitdoven van subsidies die schadelijk zijn voor het milieu; het waarborgen van het recht van de consument op informatie; en het opstellen van adequate statistieken betreffende duurzame ontwikkeling die complementair zijn aan het bbp — zijn dan ook terug te vinden onder de concrete beleidsmaatregelen van de EU.

([1]) J. Riegler, „Eco-social market economy as a European innovation", Agricultural Economics (49:3), 2003, blz. 101-105.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010724/12
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Request for definition

Is the Commission familiar with the term 'ecosocial market economy'? If so, can the Commission provide a definition of the term?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(10 January 2013)

'Eco-social market economy' is a modernisation of the concept of 'social market economy' originating from debates on agricultural reform in the 1980s and incorporating environmental concerns. It expresses the imperative notion that economic efficiency, social fairness and environmental sustainability are deeply interdependent.

As noted in 2003 by Austrian politician Joseph Riegler ([1]), one of the intellectual fathers of this concept, and the one who coined the term, this concept comes close to the principles which underpin the EU's overarching Sustainable Development Strategy. This Strategy calls for an integrated approach to policy making and a gradual change in our current unsustainable consumption and production patters. To this end, the strategy identifies seven key challenges: climate change and clean energy; sustainable transport; sustainable production and consumption; better management of natural resources, public health threats; social inclusion, demography and migration; fighting global poverty. Within the EU, these challenges have been broadly taken up by the Europe 2020 strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

Hence, many of the instruments favoured by the proponents of an 'eco-social market economy' — such as getting the prices right for environmental pollution and resource use; greening of the tax systems including the shift from labour taxation towards environmental sources of fiscal revenues and the phasing out of environmental harmful subsidies; consumer rights on information; and adequate statistics on sustainable development complementary to GDP — are visible in the EU's concrete policymaking.

([1]) J. Riegler, 'Eco-social market economy as an European innovation', Agricultural Economics (49:3), 2003, pp.101-105.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010725/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(26 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Situación en Goma (Congo)

El 18 de noviembre, después de tres días de lucha, el movimiento M23 rompió la resistencia de las fuerzas de paz de las FARDC y trató de obligar al gobierno del presidente Joseph Kabila a negociar. El M23 había exigido la retirada de las FARDC y la desmilitarización de Goma y su aeropuerto. Finalmente, el 19 de noviembre, después de varios intentos infructuosos de conversaciones, la lucha estalló en el interior de Goma, ciudad defendida por las FARDC y las fuerzas de paz de la ONU (Monusco).

Después de intensos combates, avanzando por la carretera principal del este del Congo, el grupo rebelde M23 consiguió finalmente entrar en la ciudad de Goma, al este de la República Democrática del Congo dejando a su paso una gran cantidad de muertos y obligando a su vez a centenares de personas a desplazarse.

El Congo vive una situación crítica desde que en 1996 estalló la crisis en los Grandes Lagos. Millones de personas han muerto y otras tantas se han convertido en refugiadas o han sido víctimas de violencia sexual. La población del Congo vive en una situación de lucha constante y la nueva ofensiva recuerda a la amenaza de tomar Goma en 2008.

Ha habido declaraciones de la UE (PESC/12/333) instando al diálogo entre la República Democrática del Congo y Ruanda, tras haber solicitado a la RDC que asuma una mayor responsabilidad para adquirir mayor autoridad estatal y para atajar este problema. Pero ello no es suficiente.

Dado que la caída de Goma va a suponer graves violaciones de los derechos humanos contra la población civil, ejecuciones extrajudiciales contra autoridades y activistas civiles, ¿cómo piensa la UE implicarse en este problema? ¿Qué medidas va a llevar a cabo?

Algunos países de la Unión Europea, entre ellos Francia o el Reino Unido, participan y se lucran del conflicto. ¿Piensa la Unión Europea tomar medidas para sancionarlos? ¿Cuáles?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(28 de febrero de 2013)

La diplomacia de la UE en lo que respecta a la situación en la región oriental de la República Democrática del Congo (RDC) ha sido muy dinámica desde la reanudación de la crisis en abril de 2012. Se han enviado mensajes inequívocos a todas las partes interesadas. La UE ha seguido atentamente las negociaciones convocadas por la Conferencia Internacional sobre la Región de los Grandes Lagos (CIRGL) y se ha mantenido en contacto permanente con los gobiernos de la región, así como con las Naciones Unidas, la Unión Africana y otros miembros de la comunidad internacional, con el objetivo de encontrar una solución duradera al conflicto que trate la raíz de las causas de la crisis.

Para más información sobre este asunto, se invita a Su Señoría a consultar las respuestas a anteriores preguntas sobre el tema y, en particular, E-010886/2012 y E-010951/2012 ([1]).

En lo que respecta a las alegaciones sobre la participación y aprovechamiento por parte de los países de la UE de la crisis provocada por las actividades del movimiento M23, todos los Estados miembros han desempeñado un papel muy constructivo a la hora de contener el conflicto. Además, las últimas conclusiones del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores sobre la situación en el este de la RDC (junio, noviembre y diciembre de 2012) también ilustran los puntos de vista y el planteamiento equilibrado de los Estados miembros de cara a tratar y buscar una solución a la crisis.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010725/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Situation in Goma (Congo)

On 18 November, after three days of fighting, the M23 movement broke the resistance of the FARDC peacekeepers and tried to force the government of President Joseph Kabila to negotiate. The M23 had demanded the FARDC's withdrawal from, and the demilitarisation of, Goma and its airport. Finally, on 19 November, after several fruitless attempts at talks, fighting broke out in the city of Goma, which was being defended by the FARDC and by UN peacekeepers (Monusco).

After heavy fighting, the M23 rebel group advancing along the main road in eastern Congo, finally managed to enter Goma, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), leaving in its wake a huge number of casualties and forcing hundreds of people to leave.

Congo has been in a perilous situation ever since the crisis erupted in the Great Lakes in 1996. Millions of people have died and many others have become refugees or have been victims of sexual violence. Life is a constant struggle for the people of Congo and this new offensive is reminiscent of the threat to take Goma in 2008.

The EU has issued statements (PESC/12/333) calling urgently for dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda and has called on the DRC to take more responsibility so as to increase the authority of the state and get to grips with the problem. But that is not enough.

Given that the fall of Goma will involve serious human rights violations against civilians and the extrajudicial killing of officials and civil society activists, how does the EU plan intervene? What measures will it take?

Some EU countries, including France and the United Kingdom, are participating in and profiting from the conflict. Will the European Union take measures to punish them? What measures?

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

EU diplomacy regarding the situation in eastern DRC has been very proactive since the crisis re-erupted last April 2012. Strong messages have been passed to all stakeholders. The EU has closely followed the talks convened by the International Conference for the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and has remained in constant contact with the governments of the region as well as with the United Nations, African Union and other members of the international community, with the aim of finding a lasting solution to the conflict which tackles the root causes of the crisis.

For further information on the subject, the Honourable Member is invited to consult the replies to previous questions on the subject, and in particular E-010886/2012 and E-010951/2012 ([1]).

Regarding allegations on EU countries' participation/profiting in the crisis provoked by the activities of the M23 movement, all Member States have played a very constructive role in containing the conflict. Moreover, the most recent Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) conclusions on the situation in eastern DRC (June, November and December 2012) also illustrate the Member States' perspective and balanced approach in addressing and finding a solution to the crisis.

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010726/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(26. November 2012)

Betrifft: Umsetzung der Bonner Erklärung zu musikalischer Bildung

In Anlehnung an die von der Unesco verabschiedete „Seoul Agenda" zur Förderung der künstlerischen und kulturellen Bildung hat der Europäische Musikrat (EMC) im Jahr 2011 die Bonner Erklärung zu musikalischer Bildung verabschiedet. Mit einem Fokus auf die musikalische Erziehung nimmt sie die Argumente der „Seoul Agenda" auf und legt dar, wie die Agenda auch im musikalischen Bereich Anwendung finden kann.

Sieht die Kommission die Bonner Erklärung als hilfreiche Grundlage dafür an, den musikalischen Bereich in die Umsetzung der „Seoul Agenda" einzubeziehen?

Hat die Kommission auf der Grundlage der Bonner Erklärung ihre Strategie zur musikalischen Bildung angepasst?

Hat die Kommission eine eigene spezifische Strategie zu musikalischer Bildung in den Mitgliedstaaten?

Gibt es unabhängig von der „Seoul Agenda" konkrete Projekte, die zur Förderung musikalischer Erziehung beitragen?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(18. Januar 2013)

Die Kommission begrüßt die Bonner Erklärung, die tatsächlich ein hilfreiches Mittel ist, um die Ziele der Seoul Agenda über musische Bildung in praktische Leitlinien für die Musikerziehung umzusetzen.

In der 2006 abgegebenen Empfehlung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates für einen Referenzrahmen der Schlüsselkompetenzen für lebenslanges Lernen wird „Kulturbewusstsein und kulturelle Ausdrucksfähigkeit" als eine der acht Schlüsselkompetenzen bezeichnet, die für die kompetente Teilnahme an der heutigen Gesellschaft wichtig sind. Daher sind Kunst und Musik als wichtige Teile der Bildung zu betrachten. Ab 2013 wird eine Arbeitsgruppe aus von den Mitgliedstaaten benannten Sachverständigen im Rahmen der offenen Koordinierungsmethode im Bereich Kultur bewährte Verfahren für die Entwicklung dieser Schlüsselkompetenz und ihre Aufnahme in die Bildungspolitik ermitteln.

Dessen ungeachtet ist es wichtig, zu betonen, dass nach dem Vertrag über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union (Artikel 165) alle Zuständigkeiten für die Lehrinhalte und die Gestaltung der Bildungssysteme bei den Mitgliedstaaten liegen. Daher können Strategien für die Musikerziehung nur auf nationaler Ebene angenommen werden.

Aufgabe der EU ist es, die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten zu fördern, damit sie ihre Systeme verbessern können. Die EU-Förderprogramme in den Bereichen allgemeine und berufliche Bildung, Kultur und Jugend haben bereits eine große Zahl von Kooperationsprojekten gefördert, die für die Musikerziehung von Bedeutung sind. Einzelheiten zu diesen Projekten finden sich in der Datenbank EVE unter: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/index_de.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010726/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Implementation of the Bonn Declaration on Music Education

The European Music Council (EMC) adopted the Bonn Declaration on Music Education in 2011, following the adoption by Unesco of the Seoul Agenda for the development of arts education. Focusing on music education, the Declaration takes up the arguments of the Seoul Agenda and shows how the Agenda might also be applied in the field of music.

Does the Commission consider the Bonn Declaration to be a helpful basis for including the field of music in the implementation of the Seoul Agenda?

Has the Commission adapted its music education strategy in line with the Bonn Declaration?

Does the Commission have its own specific strategy for music education in the Member States?

Are there specific projects that contribute to music education independently of the Seoul Agenda?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission welcomes the Bonn Declaration which is indeed a useful instrument to translate the objectives of the Seoul Agenda on Arts education into operational guidance for music education.

The recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Reference framework on key competences for lifelong learning, adopted in 2006, recognises 'cultural awareness and expression' as one of the eight key competences that are necessary to be a competent actor in today's society. Thus, the arts — and music among them — should be seen as an important part of education. As from 2013, within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination on culture, a working group composed of experts appointed by Member States will identify good practices for the development of this key competence and its integration into education policies.

Nevertheless, it is important to underline that according to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (Article 165), all competences on the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems belong to the Member States. Strategies for music education can therefore only be adopted at national level.

The role for the EU is to support cooperation among Member States in order to help them improve their systems. The EU funding programmes in the field of education, training, culture and youth have indeed supported a large number of cooperation projects that are relevant to music education. Details of such projects can be found in the EVE database at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010727/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(26. November 2012)

Betrifft: Umsetzung der „Seoul Agenda" zur Entwicklung der künstlerischen und kulturellen Bildung

Die auf der zweiten Weltkonferenz der Unesco zu künstlerischer und kultureller Bildung beschlossene „Seoul Agenda" wurde 2011 einstimmig von den Unesco-Mitgliedern angenommen. Damit wurden die Unesco-Mitglieder aufgefordert, die in der Agenda enthaltenen Entwicklungsziele für künstlerische und kulturelle Bildung umzusetzen.

1. Hat die Kommission seit dem Beginn der Verhandlungen über die Seoul Agenda im Juli 2009 unabhängig von der Agenda eigene Initiativen gestartet, um Bildung in künstlerischen Bereichen zu fördern?

2. Wie beurteilt die Kommission den Fortschritt der EU-Mitgliedstaaten beim Erreichen der in der „Seoul Agenda" festgelegten Entwicklungsziele für künstlerische und kulturelle Bildung?

3. Betrachtet die Kommission die Ziele der EU-Kulturförderung als kompatibel mit denen der „Seoul Agenda", und erwartet sie Synergieeffekte?

Antwort von Frau Vassiliou im Namen der Kommission
(18. Januar 2013)

Gemäß dem Vertrag über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union (Artikel 165), fallen Inhalt und Organisation der Bildungssysteme in den Zuständigkeitsbereich der Mitgliedstaaten. Daher ist die Seoul-Agenda auf nationaler Ebene umzusetzen.

Die Kommission unterstützt jedoch die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten, und zwar indem sie transnationale Kooperationsprojekte finanziert (z. B. über das Programm für lebenslanges Lernen und das Programm Kultur) und den politik- und praxisbezogenen Austausch im Rahmen der offenen Methode der Koordinierung (OMK) fördert, um die nationalen Bildungssysteme zu verbessern.

Der Schwerpunkt der OMK im Kulturbereich lag seit ihrer Einführung im Jahr 2008 auf verschiedenen Gesichtspunkten künstlerischer und kultureller Bildung. Eine erste Arbeitsgruppe zum Thema „Kultur und Bildung", bestehend aus von den Mitgliedstaaten ernannten Expertinnen und Experten, veröffentlichte ihren Bericht im Jahr 2010 ([1]). 2011-2012 arbeitete eine weitere Expertengruppe am Thema „Zugang zur Kultur" und erläuterte Beispiele für die Zusammenarbeit zwischen Kultureinrichtungen und Schulen ([2]). Aktuell widmet sich eine Expertengruppe dem Thema „kreative Partnerschaften" (Zusammenarbeit zwischen Kreativschaffenden und anderen Sektoren), einschließlich Bildung. 2013 wird sich eine neue Expertengruppe auf den Aspekt „Kulturbewusstsein und kulturelle Ausdrucksfähigkeit" konzentrieren, eine der in der Empfehlung für einen europäischen Referenzrahmen der Schlüsselkompetenzen für lebenslanges Lernen (2006) genannten zentralen Kompetenzen.

Ein wichtiger Schwerpunkt im Vorschlag für das zukünftige Finanzierungsprogramm im Bereich der Kultur, „Kreatives Europa", ist der Auf- und Ausbau von Publikumsschichten. Damit ist gemeint, dass Kunst einem breiteren Publikum zugänglich gemacht wird und die Menschen in Kunst- und Kulturaktivitäten eingebunden werden. Junge Menschen sind ein ganz wesentlicher Teil dieser Bemühungen und ein wichtiger Weg zur Erschließung neuer Publikumsschichten führt über die künstlerische und kulturelle Bildung.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/MOCedu_final_report_en.pdf (englische Fassung).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/omc-access-to-culture.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010727/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Implementation of the Seoul Agenda for the development of arts education

The Seoul Agenda resulting from the Second Unesco World Conference on Arts Education was unanimously adopted by all the Unesco Member States in 2011. It calls for the Unesco Member States to take action to achieve the goals for the development of arts education contained in the Agenda.

1. Since the start of the negotiations regarding the Seoul Agenda in July 2009, has the Commission launched its own initiatives to promote arts education independently of the Agenda?

2. In the opinion of the Commission, how much progress has been made by the EU Member States in achieving the goals for the development of arts education laid down in the Seoul Agenda?

3. Does the Commission consider the EU goals in support of culture to be compatible with those of the Seoul Agenda, and does it expect synergies?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

According to the Treaty on the functioning of the EU (Article 165), competences on the content and the organisation of education belong to Member States. Therefore, the Seoul agenda needs to be implemented at national level.

Nevertheless, in order to improve national systems, the Commission supports cooperation between Member States by funding transnational cooperation projects (for instance via the Lifelong Learning and the Culture programmes), and by supporting exchange of policies and practices through the Open Method of Coordination (OMC).

Since its start in 2008, the OMC in the field of culture has focused on arts education from different perspectives. A first group of experts appointed by Member States working on culture and education published its report in 2010 ([1]). In 2011-2012, another expert group worked on access to culture, outlining examples of cooperation between cultural institutions and schools ([2]). Currently an expert group is working on creative partnerships (cooperation between creative professionals and other sectors), including education. In 2013, a new expert group will focus on 'cultural awareness and expression', one of the key competences identified by the 2006 Recommendation on a reference framework on key competences for lifelong learning.

The proposal for the future funding programme in the field of culture, Creative Europe, puts an important emphasis on audience development. Audience development means making the arts accessible to the wide public and engaging people with arts and culture. Young people are an essential part of this effort, and arts education is a key pathway to building new audiences.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/MOCedu_final_report_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/omc-access-to-culture.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010728/12
to the Commission
Phil Prendergast (S&D)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Rare diseases in Europe

The Council Recommendation of 8 June 2009 on an action in the field of rare diseases ([1]) establishes that Member States are to elaborate and adopt national plans or strategies on rare diseases by the end of 2013. The recommendation also invites the Commission to produce, by the end of 2013, an implementation report based on the information provided by Member States. The Commission has also expressed its support for tackling rare diseases in its communication 'Rare Diseases: Europe's challenges' ([2]).

Based on the information provided by the EUROPLAN project ([3]) and the 2012 EUCERD Report on the State of the Art of Rare Disease Activities in Europe ([4]), currently 8 Member States have adopted their national plans, with only 15 months until the agreed deadline for the adoption of national plans.

Could the Commission inform the Members of the European Parliament about planned activities to tackle rare diseases, following the publication of the implementation report scheduled for the end of 2013?

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

The Commission is planning to present a report on the Implementation of the Council Recommendation of 8 June 2009 ([5]), and the Commission Communication of 11 November 2008 ([6]) on action in the field of rare diseases taking stock of progress made so far. The Commission will also be considering possible future action on rare diseases taking into account progress made, the results of ongoing action on rare disease and the possibilities for action under the future Health Programme and Horizon 2020 Programme in the field of research.

The Commission has been in the lead in setting up the International Rare Diseases Research Consortium to foster collaboration in rare diseases research between public and private partners across Europe, North America and Australia aimed at delivering 200 new therapies for rare diseases and means to diagnose most rare diseases by the year 2020.

In addition, the Commission follows the transposition of Directive 2011/24/EU of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare ([7]), establishing the development of European reference networks on rare diseases between healthcare providers and centres of expertise in the Member States. The Commission also provides support to networks, such as the European Platform on Rare Diseases Registries ([8]) to promote European good practices on cooperation between rare diseases registers and the European Project for Rare Diseases National Plans Development ([9]).

([1]) 2009/C 151/02.
([2]) COM(2008)0679.
([3]) http://www.europlanproject.eu.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/rare_diseases/docs/eucerd2012_report_state_of_art_rare_diseases_activities_1.pdf
([5]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:151:0007:0010:EN:PDF.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/non_com/docs/rare_com_en.pdf
([7]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:088:0045:0065:EN:PDF.
([8]) http://www.epirare.eu/.
([9]) http://www.europlanproject.eu/_newsite_986987/index.html

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010729/12
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(26 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Progetto di autostrada «Valdastico A31 Nord», curiosamente inserita dalle autorità italiane nel corridoio 1 Berlino-Palermo della rete TEN-T

La Società «Autostrada Brescia Verona Vicenza Padova S.p.A.» ha provveduto, ai sensi del decreto legislativo n. 163 del 2006 e del decreto legislativo n. 152 del 2006, ad attivare la procedura di valutazione di impatto ambientale (VIA) relativa a un progetto di autostrada denominata «Autostrada Valdastico A31 Nord» pubblicando a mezzo stampa, in data 19 marzo 2012, sui quotidiani «Il Corriere della Sera», «Il Giornale di Vicenza» e «L'Adige», l'avviso della richiesta di pronuncia di compatibilità ambientale al Ministero dell'ambiente e della tutela del territorio e del mare, nonché di avvenuto deposito del progetto e dello studio di impatto ambientale, con il relativo riassunto non tecnico, presso gli enti interessati ([1]).

Il progetto riguarda la realizzazione di un'autostrada che collega Vicenza a Trento sviluppandosi, esattamente, tra i comuni di Piovene Rocchette (VI) e Besenello (TN) e completando un ramo autostradale già esistente denominato Valdastico Nord — A31.

I documenti di progetto, molto curiosamente, sostengono che la costruzione autostradale si inserisce nella rete di trasporto europea TEN-T e, più precisamente, nel corridoio 1 Berlino-Palermo ([2]), che risulta però essere un corridoio ferroviario, non autostradale ([3]) .

A tutt'oggi, nel sito dell'agenzia esecutiva TEN-T non figura alcun riferimento all'autostrada Valdastico A31 Nord ([4]) .

La Commissione può far sapere se il progetto di autostrada Valdastico A31 Nord, tratto Piovene Rocchette — Besenello, è inserito nella rete europea di trasporti TEN-T e se tale autostrada può essere considerata funzionale alla realizzazione del corridoio ferroviario 1 Berlino-Palermo?

Esistono documenti ufficiali dell'Unione europea dai quali si evince che il progetto di prolungamento dell'autostrada Valdastico A31 Nord fa parte della rete europea di trasporti TEN-T?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2013)

Il progetto per l'autostrada «Valdastico A31 Nord» non fa parte né dell'attuale rete transeuropea dei trasporti, quale definita nella decisione n. 661/2010 sugli orientamenti dell'Unione per lo sviluppo della rete transeuropea dei trasporti ([5]), né del progetto prioritario n. 1 relativo all'asse ferroviario Berlino-Palermo, quale definito nell'allegato III di detta decisione.

Tuttavia, è stato proposto di inserire il progetto nella rete globale TEN-T come «arteria stradale pianificata», nell'ambito della proposta di regolamento sugli orientamenti dell'Unione per lo sviluppo della rete transeuropea dei trasporti ([6]).

Va osservato che nella proposta della Commissione per la rete globale, redatta di concerto con gli Stati membri, il progetto di strada tra Vicenza e Trento non passa da Benello ma da Piovene Rocchette-Assierro-Vattaro.

Le mappe relative alla rete transeuropea rivista figurano all'allegato I della proposta della Commissione sugli orientamenti in materia di TEN-T.

([1]) http://www.va.minambiente.it/ricerca/dettaglioprogetto.aspx?ID_Progetto=656.
([2]) Relazione illustrativa doc 2505_010101001_0101.A0 par. «Effetto Rete» p 11 — http://www.va.minambiente.it/Ricerca/DettaglioDocumentoVIA.aspx?ID_Documento=54269&ID_Progetto=656.
([3]) http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/en/ten-t_projects/30_priority_projects/priority_project_1/priority_project_1.htm
([4]) http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/en/home/.
([5]) GU L 204 del 5.8.2010.
([6]) COM(2011)650 definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010729/12
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: 'Valdastico A31 Nord' motorway project, inexplicably included by the Italian authorities in corridor 1, Berlin-Palermo, of the TEN-T network

In keeping with legislative decrees Nos 163 and 152 of 2006, the company Autostrada Brescia Verona Vicenza Padova S.p.A. has initiated the environmental impact assessment procedure in respect of a motorway project entitled 'Autostrada Valdastico A31 Nord'. In that connection, on 19 March 2012 it published in the newspapers Corriere della Sera, *Il Giornale di Vicenza* and *L'Adige* a notice stating that it had asked the Ministry of the Environment to issue a certificate of compliance with environmental protection rules and that it had submitted the details of the project and the environmental impact study, with the relevant non-technical summary, to the competent bodies ([1]).

The project concerns the building of a motorway link between Vicenza and Trento, running more specifically between the communes of Piovene Rocchette and Besenello, completing a section of motorway known as Valdastico Nord — A31.

Inexplicably, the documents dealing with the project claim that it is part of the TEN-T European transport network and, more specifically, of corridor 1, Berlin-Palermo ([2]), even though this is a railway, and not a motorway, corridor ([3]).

The website of the TEN-T executive agency makes no reference whatsoever to the Valdastico A31 Nord motorway ([4]).

Can the Commission state whether the Piovene Rocchette-Besenello section of the Valdastico A31 Nord motorway project has been included in the TEN-T trans-European transport network and whether that motorway can be said to contribute to the establishment of rail corridor 1, linking Berlin and Palermo?

Are there any official EU documents which show that the project to extend the Valdastico A31 Nord motorway forms part of the TEN-T trans-European transport network?

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

The 'Valdastico A31 Nord' motorway project is neither part of the current trans-European transport network, as defined in Decision 661/2010 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European network ([5]), nor is it part of Priority Project 1 Railway axis Berlin-Palermo as defined in Annex III to the same Decision.

However, the project has been proposed to be included as 'planned road' in the TEN-T comprehensive network, as part of the proposal for a regulation on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European network ([6]).

It should be noted that in the Commission's proposal for the comprehensive network, which has been drafted in consultation with the Member States, the planned road between Vicenza and Trento does not pass via Benello, but via Piovene Rocchette-Assierro-Vattaro.

The maps of the revised trans-European network have been laid down in Annex I to the Commission's TEN-T guidelines proposal.

([1]) http://www.va.minambiente.it/ricerca/dettaglioprogetto.aspx?ID_Progetto=656.
([2]) Illustrative report doc 2505_010101001_0101.A0, 'Effeto Rete', p. 11 — http://www.va.minambiente.it/Ricerca/DettaglioDocumentoVIA.aspx?ID_Documento=54269&ID_Progetto=656.
([3]) http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/en/ten-t_projects/30_priority_projects/priority_project_1/priority_project_1.htm
([4]) http://tentea.ec.europa.eu/en/home/.
([5]) OJ L 204, 5.8.2010.
([6]) COM(2011) 650 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010730/12
à la Commission
Jean-Jacob Bicep (Verts/ALE)
(26 novembre 2012)

Objet: Interdiction de l'épandage aérien de pesticides

L'épandage aérien de pesticides est une technique nocive à la fois pour l'environnement et pour la santé publique.

La directive 2009/128/CE instaurant un cadre d'action communautaire pour parvenir à une utilisation des pesticides compatible avec le développement durable interdit cette technique (article 9, paragraphe 1), tout en fixant néanmoins des conditions strictes dans lesquelles les États membres peuvent accorder des dérogations (article 9, paragraphe 2).

Outre la notification de transposition de la directive, les États membres ne sont pas tenus de communiquer d'autres informations à la Commission concernant l'interdiction sur leur territoire de la pulvérisation aérienne de pesticides.

Si l'on peut contester, au vu des dangers de l'épandage aérien pour la santé publique et pour l'environnement, le bien-fondé de l'autorisation de dérogations, il est encore plus inquiétant de constater que la directive elle-même est régulièrement violée et que des dérogations abusives sont accordées dans les États membres.

En effet, force est de constater que de nombreuses dérogations sont accordées en violation, entre autres, de l'article 9, paragraphe 2, point a), de ladite directive, qui exige qu'aucune autre solution viable ne soit possible ou que la pulvérisation aérienne présente des avantages manifestes, du point de vue des incidences sur la santé humaine et l'environnement, par rapport à l'application terrestre de pesticides, et de l'article 9, paragraphe 2, point e), qui exige que des mesures garantissant l'absence d'effets nocifs pour la santé des passants soient appliquées.

De surcroît, certaines dérogations contreviennent à d'autres textes européens, tels que la directive «Habitats» 92/43/CEE et la directive «Oiseaux» 79/409/CEE, en raison des détériorations des sites, de la faune et de la flore que la pulvérisation aérienne de pesticides entraîne.

L'Office alimentaire et vétérinaire a déjà inscrit dans son programme d'inspection l'évaluation de la mise en œuvre de la directive dans les États membres.

La Commission peut-elle donner plus d'informations sur le calendrier de ce programme d'inspection?

La Commission envisage-t-elle de proposer une modification de la directive 2009/128/CE pour supprimer la possibilité de dérogation, ou à tout le moins, modifier son article 9 pour obliger les États à notifier les dérogations à la Commission afin que celle-ci puisse veiller au respect du droit?

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

Le programme de l'Office alimentaire et vétérinaire comporte une nouvelle série d'audits relatifs aux pesticides, qu'il est prévu de mener dans vingt État membres pendant la période 2012-2014. Ces audits portent entre autres sur la mise en œuvre de la directive 2009/128/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil instaurant un cadre d'action communautaire pour parvenir à une utilisation durable des pesticides ([1]). À ce jour, huit d'entre eux ont été menés. Les différents rapports d'audit sont publiés à mesure qu'ils deviennent disponibles et un rapport de synthèse sur la série d'audits devrait être publié au cours du second semestre de l'année 2014 ([2]).

À l'heure actuelle, la Commission estime qu'il est prématuré de proposer une modification des dispositions de la directive 2009/128/CE relatives à l'épandage aérien. Elle suit de près la transposition et la mise en œuvre de cette directive, et notamment l'ouverture de procédures d'infraction, dont sept sont encore en cours pour cause de non-transposition ou de transposition partielle. Les États membres devaient présenter au plus tard le 26 novembre 2012 leurs plans d'action nationaux, qui feront l'objet d'un examen attentif.

([1]) JO L 309 du 24.11.2009, p. 71.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.cfm.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010730/12
to the Commission
Jean-Jacob Bicep (Verts/ALE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Prohibition of aerial spraying of pesticides

Aerial spraying of pesticides is harmful to both the environment and public health.

Although Article 9(1) of Directive 2009/128/EC establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides prohibits the use of this technique, Article 9(2) of the directive sets out strict conditions which must be met for Member States to grant derogations.

Beyond notifying the Commission of the transposition of the directive, the Member States are not required to provide the Commission with any other information regarding the prohibition of aerial pesticide spraying on their territories.

Setting aside the issue of whether derogations should be allowed at all, in view of the dangers that aerial spraying poses to public health and the environment, the fact that the directive is regularly being breached and that unlawful derogations are being granted in the Member States is a matter of grave concern.

A large number of derogations are granted in violation, *inter alia*, of Article 9(2)(a) of the aforementioned directive, which states that, for a derogation to be granted, no viable alternatives may exist and aerial spraying must present clear advantages in terms of reduced impact on human health and the environment as compared with land-based application of pesticides, and of Article 9(2)(e), which requires measures to be put in place to ensure that there are no adverse effects on the health of bystanders.

Furthermore, some derogations breach other EC laws, such as Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats) and Directive 79/409/EEC (Birds), on account of the damage that aerial pesticide spraying causes to natural sites, flora and fauna.

The European Food and Veterinary Office has already scheduled an assessment of implementation of the directive in the Member States as part of its programme of inspections.

Can the Commission provide further information on the timetable for this programme?

Does the Commission intend to propose an amendment to Directive 2009/128/EC that would eliminate the possibility of granting derogations, or at least amend Article 9 to require Member States to notify the Commission of derogations so that it could ensure that the law is obeyed?

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

The programme of the Food and Veterinary Office includes a new series of audits related to pesticides for the period 2012-2014, to be carried out in 20 Member States. The audit scope includes the implementation of Directive 2009/128/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides ([1]). Until now, eight of these audits have been carried out. The individual audit reports have been published as they became available, and an overview report on the series is planned to be published in the second half of 2014 ([2]).

As of today, the Commission considers that it is too early to propose an amendment to the provisions on aerial spraying set by Directive 2009/128/EC. The Commission is currently following closely the transposition and implementation of the directive, including the launch of infringement procedures, for which seven cases are still ongoing due to lack of or partial transposition. Member States had to submit by 26 November 2012 their National Action Plans, which will be carefully analysed.

([1]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 71.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.cfm.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010731/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 novembre 2012)

Objet: Droits des passagers aériens: arrêts de la Cour de justice sur l'interprétation du «refus d'embarquement»

Dans deux arrêts récents (affaires C-22/11 et C-321/11) du 4 octobre 2012, la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne précise que la notion de «refus d'embarquement» définie dans le règlement n° 261/2004 sur les droits des passagers aériens ne peut en aucun cas se limiter à des situations de surréservation, mais couvre au contraire toutes les situations où les passagers sont abandonnés à leur sort pour d'autres raisons.

La Cour précise que les seuls cas de refus d'embarquement justifiés prévus par le règlement ne pouvant donner lieu à une indemnisation de la part de la compagnie aérienne sont des «raisons de santé, de sûreté, ou de documents de voyages inadéquats».

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir comment elle entend faire appliquer de manière stricte cette notion par les compagnies aériennes qui, jusqu'à présent, refusent d'indemniser les voyageurs dans ces situations?

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir comment elle entend informer les voyageurs de l'Union européenne de manière beaucoup plus précise et concrète qu'actuellement sur leurs droits et les moyens de les faire respecter?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(31 janvier 2013)

1) La Commission se félicite de la clarification apportée par ces arrêts de la Cour de justice. Elle en a informé les organismes nationaux chargés de faire appliquer le règlement (CE) n° 261/2004, auxquels elle fera un exposé, lors de leur prochaine réunion, afin que lesdits arrêts soient pris en considération dans l'application quotidienne de cette législation. Par ailleurs, la Commission procède actuellement à un réexamen du règlement en vue de présenter des propositions législatives début 2013. Elle envisage d'intégrer le contenu des arrêts de la Cour dans les propositions en question partout où cela sera pertinent.

2) La Commission a déjà entrepris plusieurs actions de sensibilisation et a notamment créé une application pour smartphones. Elle prévoit de relancer sa campagne d'information des passagers en 2013 afin de sensibiliser le public aux droits des passagers dans tous les modes de transport.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010731/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Rights of air passengers: Court of Justice judgments on the interpretation of the concept of 'denied boarding'

In two judgments (Case C-22/11 and Case C-321/11) handed down on 4 October 2012, the Court of Justice stated that the concept of 'denied boarding', as defined in Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 on the rights of air passengers, does not apply only to situations of overbooking, but must cover all situations in which passengers are abandoned to their fate for other reasons.

The Court specifies that the only legitimate grounds offered by the regulation to justify a decision by an airline to deny a passenger boarding without providing compensation are 'reasons of health, safety or security, or inadequate travel documentation'.

Can the Commision state how it intends to ensure that this concept is applied in accordance with the Court of Justice's judgments by airlines which have hitherto refused to provide compensation to passengers denied boarding?

Can it state how it intends to ensure that passengers in the EU are better informed about their rights and know how to assert them?

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

1. The Commission welcomes the clarification these judgments of the Court of Justice have provided. The Commission has informed the national enforcement bodies (NEBs) for Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 of these judgments and will present them at the next NEB meeting to ensure these rulings are integrated into the day-to-day enforcement of this legislation. In addition, the Commission is presently reviewing the regulation with the intention of putting forward legislative proposals in early 2013. The Commission plans where useful to incorporate the rulings of the Court of Justice into these proposals.

2. The Commission has already undertaken several activities to raise awareness including a smartphone application. It plans relaunching its passenger information campaign in 2013 in order to raise public awareness of passenger rights across all modes of transport.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010732/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 novembre 2012)

Objet: Allégations relatives aux effets bénéfiques des produits «naturels» ou biologiques

La Commission peut-elle faire savoir quand elle publiera l'évaluation des 1 500 allégations «botaniques» relatives aux effets des préparations à base de plantes dans les aliments ou les compléments alimentaires?

En effet, de nombreux produits naturels affichent des allégations relatives à l'effet bénéfique de substances telles que le gui, l'aubépine, l'ail ou les feuilles d'olivier, avec les mentions «bon pour la circulation», «bon pour le transit».

Or, les études menées sur les effets des principes actifs naturels sur l'hypertension ne sont ni fouillés, ni suffisants en termes de méthodologie et de durée.

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

La Commission a engagé une réflexion en vue de déterminer s'il convient ou non de laisser subsister les différences actuelles de législation concernant la prise en compte des éléments de preuve de l'«usage traditionnel» des substances botaniques. Les États membres ont été consultés en juillet 2012 sur deux scénarios envisageables pour remédier à ce problème. La Commission étudie à présent les positions des États membres et se prononcera sur la solution privilégiée dans un délai approprié. Il est toutefois impossible à ce jour de définir un calendrier précis pour le traitement des allégations portant sur les substances botaniques.

La qualité des études relatives aux différents effets sur la santé de ces substances sera évaluée par l'organisme scientifique compétent.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010732/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Claims about the health benefits of 'natural' or organic products

Can the Commission say when it will publish its assessment of the 1 500 'botanical' claims regarding the effects of herbal preparations in foods or food supplements?

Many natural products feature claims about the health benefits of substances such as mistletoe, hawthorn, garlic or olive leaves, stating that they 'promote healthy circulation' or 'aid digestion'.

Studies on the effects of natural active ingredients on hypertension have, however, not been sufficiently detailed or conducted over a long enough period, and unsatisfactory methodologies have been used.

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

The Commission launched a reflection on whether the difference in existing legislation with regard to the consideration given to evidence of 'traditional use' for botanicals should be maintained or not. Member States were consulted in July 2012 on two possible options that could be pursued in dealing with the issue. The Commission is now scrutinising the positions of Member States and will decide on the preferred option within the appropriate time frame. However, the exact timing for treating claims on botanicals cannot be estimated at this point of time.

The quality of the studies referring to the various effects on health of these substances will be evaluated by the responsible scientific body.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010733/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: Steun van de Europese Unie aan de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap

In zijn rapport „Steun van de Europese Unie aan de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap" beoordeelt de Europese Rekenkamer of de Commissie het instrument voor financiële steun aan de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap (in het noordelijk deel van Cyprus) in de periode van 2006 tot 2011 correct heeft uitgevoerd. Het gaat om een analyse van 97,5 miljoen euro besteed geld (een derde van de totale verleende financiële steun).

Als tegenslag noemt de Rekenkamer het feit dat het grootste project, de bouw van een zeewaterontziltingsinstallatie (27,5 miljoen euro), niet kon worden voltooid. Bovendien is volgens de Rekenkamer vaak de „duurzaamheid" van de projecten in het geding door de beperkte administratieve capaciteit en „onzekerheden" bij de autoriteiten van de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap over toekomstige financiering.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het rapport „Steun van de Europese Unie aan de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap" van de Europese Rekenkamer? ([1])

2. Wat vindt de Commissie ervan dat de Europese Rekenkamer bij de tenuitvoerlegging van de financiële ondersteuning aan de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap tekortkomingen constateert? Is de Commissie er om deze reden toe bereid de financiering dan ook stop te zetten? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Het uiteindelijke doel van de financiële ondersteuning is de hereniging van Cyprus. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de hereniging van Cyprus alleen verwezenlijkt kan worden als Turkije de illegale bezetting van het noordelijk deel van Cyprus opheft? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de financiële ondersteuning van de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap de illegale bezetting (indirect) mede in stand houdt en derhalve verwerpelijk is? Is de Commissie ook om deze reden bereid de financiering stop te zetten? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(1 februari 2013)

De Commissie is bekend met het rapport „Steun van de Europese Unie aan de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap". Het antwoord van de Commissie op de opmerkingen en aanbevelingen van de Europese Rekenkamer werd samen met het verslag van de Rekenkamer gepubliceerd. In dit antwoord stelde de Commissie dat momenteel niet is voorzien in de terugschroeving van de activiteiten.

Het doel van het bijstandsprogramma voor de Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschap is net, door de stimulering van haar economische ontwikkeling, bij te dragen tot de hereniging van Cyprus en deze voor te bereiden. De Commissie is het er dus niet mee eens dat het programma het status quo in stand houdt, vooral niet omdat dit ook talrijke elementen bevat die bijdragen tot de verzoening.

De Commissie blijft de onderhandelingen over een allesomvattende regeling tussen de leiders van de Grieks-Cypriotische en Turks-Cypriotische gemeenschappen ten volle ondersteunen. Zij heeft in haar recente mededeling over de uitbreidingsstrategie en de belangrijkste uitdagingen voor 2012-2013 herhaald dat de onderhandelingen nieuw leven moet worden ingeblazen en snel zouden moeten worden voltooid. Daarbij moet worden voortgebouwd op de vooruitgang tot nu toe. Voorts heeft zij erop aangedrongen dat Turkije zijn verbintenissen en zijn bijdrage aan de besprekingen in concrete termen uitbreidt.

([1]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/15542767. PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010733/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: EU assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community

In its report 'European Union Assistance to the Turkish Cypriot Community', the Court of Auditors assesses whether the Commission implemented the instrument for financial assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community (in the northern part of Cyprus) correctly in the period from 2006 to 2011. This entails an analysis of EUR 97.5 m worth of expenditure (one third of the total financial assistance).

The Court of Auditors describes it as a setback that it was not possible to complete the largest project, the construction of a desalination plant (EUR 27.5 m). Moreover, according to the Court of Auditors, the 'sustainability' of projects is often in doubt due to the limited administrative capacity and 'uncertainties' on the part of the authorities of the Turkish Cypriot community regarding future financing.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report 'European Union Assistance to the Turkish Cypriot Community'? ([1])

2. What view does the Commission take of the fact that the Court of Auditors has identified failings in the implementation of financial assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community? Will the Commission therefore terminate the financing? If not, why not?

3. The ultimate aim of the financial assistance is the reunification of Cyprus. Does the Commission agree that the reunification of Cyprus can only be achieved if Turkey ceases the illegal occupation of the northern part of Cyprus? Does the Commission agree that the financial assistance to the Turkish Cypriot community (indirectly) helps to perpetuate the illegal occupation and is therefore reprehensible? Will the Commission also terminate the financing for this reason? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the report 'European Union Assistance to the Turkish Cypriot Community'. The Commission's response to the observations and to the recommendations made by the Court of Auditors has been published together with the Court's Report. In its reply, the Commission stated that a phasing out of the operations is currently not planned.

The whole purpose of the assistance programme to the Turkish Cypriot community is to, by encouraging its economic development, contribute to and prepare for reunification of Cyprus. The Commission therefore does not agree that the programme perpetuates the status quo, not least since it also includes many elements contributing to reconciliation.

The Commission continues to fully support the negotiations on a comprehensive settlement between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot community. In its recently presented Communication on the Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013, the Commission underlined the necessity to re-launch the negotiations with the aim of reaching a swift conclusion to the talks, building on the progress achieved to date, and encouraged Turkey to increase in concrete terms its commitment and contribution to the talks.

([1]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/15542767.PDF

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010734/12
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: Batterijei komt terug

De Europese Unie heeft een verbod op legbatterijen ingevoerd. Tegelijkertijd bestaan er plannen om de invoerheffingen voor eieren van buiten de EU — waaronder die uit Oekraïne, de VS, India en Argentinië — te halveren. Het is merkwaardig dat eieren, afkomstig uit productiesystemen die in Europa verboden zijn, in de EU ingevoerd mogen worden.

Het verlagen of afschaffen van deze invoerheffingen is prima in het kader van de zo belangrijke vrije handel en het bestaan van zo weinig mogelijk handelsbarrières. Het neveneffect van de hoge invoerheffingen was echter wel de afwezigheid van massale import van (goedkope) dieronvriendelijke legbatterijeieren.

De plannen voor het halveren van de invoerheffing zijn funest voor de concurrentiepositie van de Nederlandse (resp. Europese) eierindustrie. Doordat legbatterijen in de EU niet meer zijn toegestaan, is de kostprijs per ei met enkele centen gestegen. Als eieren afkomstig uit landen waar dieronvriendelijke legbatterijen wel zijn toegestaan in de EU ingevoerd kunnen worden zonder het bestaan van een prijsbarrière, ontstaat er oneerlijke concurrentie.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Batterijei komt terug" ([1])?

2. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat het dierenwelzijn in legbatterijen in het geding is? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat dit niet strookt met artikel 13 VWEU, dat stelt dat „de Unie en de lidstaten ten volle rekening [dienen te houden] met hetgeen vereist is voor het welzijn van dieren als wezens met gevoel […]"?

3. Waarom wordt de invoerheffing voor eieren van buiten de EU gehalveerd? Heeft de Commissie bij de overwegingen het in het krantenartikel genoemde effect van oneerlijke concurrentie in het licht van het EU-beleid voor dierenwelzijn mee laten wegen?

4. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat eieren afkomstig uit legbatterijen uit oogpunt van dierenwelzijn niet ingevoerd zouden mogen worden in de EU?

5. Is de Commissie bereid vanuit oogpunt voor dierenwelzijn ervoor te zorgen dat voortaan enkel import naar de EU is toegestaan van eieren van productiesystemen waarvoor dezelfde dierenwelzijnseisen bestaan als voor eieren binnen de EU?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(4 februari 2013)

De Commissie kent de studie „Competitiveness of the EU egg industry" van onderzoeksbureau LEI Wageningen UR ([2]).

De beslissing niet-aangepaste kooien in de EU te verbieden steunt op overtuigend wetenschappelijk bewijs dat niet-aangepaste kooien niet voldoen aan de gedragsbehoeften van legkippen en een schadelijke invloed hebben op hun welzijn. Het standpunt van de EU om een einde te maken aan het gebruik van „traditionele batterijkooien" is dus duidelijk.

Behalve de autonome preferenties die aan ontwikkelingslanden ([3]) zijn toegekend, bestaat de enige tariefverlaging die in de sector eieren van toepassing is momenteel in een tarief voor een jaarlijks tariefcontingent van 135 000 ton eieren ([4]) dat in het kader van de WTO-verbintenissen van de EU met 50 % wordt verlaagd. Dit contingent is tot nu toe amper gebruikt. In het kader van een vrijhandelsovereenkomst die op dit ogenblik wordt geratificeerd, zullen naar verwachting twee aanvullende contingenten van telkens 3 000 ton worden geopend. De totale invoer van eieren en eiproducten in de EU in 2012 is in vergelijking met 2009 en 2010 niet gestegen en de invoer van tafeleieren is momenteel verwaarloosbaar.

([1]) http://www.telegraaf.nl/mijnbedrijf/21104191/__Batterij-ei_komt_terug__.html
([2]) http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/show/Lowering-of-import-levy-disastrous-for-competitive-position-of-Dutch-egg-industry.htm
([3]) Schema van algemene tariefpreferenties en tariefpreferenties voor de ACS-landen.
([4]) Verordening (EG) nr. 539/2007 van de Commissie van 15 mei 2007 houdende opening en vaststelling van de wijze van beheer van tariefcontingenten voor eieren en ovoalbumine, PB L 128 van 16.5.2007.

In overeenstemming met het huidige WTO-kader kunnen de EU-normen voor dierenwelzijn in landbouwbedrijven niet aan derde landen worden opgelegd. Indien er echter geen garanties geboden worden dat de voorschriften voor het in de handel brengen, het etiketteren en de houderijmethode gelijkwaardig zijn, moeten tafeleieren uit derde landen de vermelding „niet conform de EG-normen" dragen, die aangeeft dat zij niet geproduceerd zijn volgens een houderijmethode die gelijkwaardig is aan de methoden die in de EU gangbaar zijn ([5]).

([5]) Verordening (EG) nr. 589/2008 van de Commissie van 23 juni 2008 tot vaststelling van bepalingen ter uitvoering van Verordening (EG) nr. 1234/2007 van de Raad, wat betreft de handelsnormen voor eieren, PB L 163 van 24.6.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010734/12
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Return of battery eggs

The European Union has introduced a ban on chicken batteries. At the same time, there are plans to halve import duties on eggs from outside the EU, including Ukraine, the USA, India and Argentina. It is strange that it should be permitted to import into the EU eggs from production systems which are banned in Europe.

Reducing or abolishing these import duties is all well and good from the point of view of free trade and keeping trade barriers to a minimum, which are such important objectives. However, the high import duties did have the side-effect of preventing mass imports of (cheap) battery eggs, concerning which there are animal welfare issues.

The plans to halve the import duty are disastrous for the competitive position of the Dutch (and indeed European) egg industry. As chicken batteries are no longer permitted in the EU, the cost price per egg has risen by a few cents. If eggs can be imported from countries where batteries, with all the associated animal welfare problems, are permitted without any price barrier, this will generate unfair competition.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report 'Batterijei komt terug' [Return of battery eggs]? ([1])

2. Does the Commission agree that there are animal welfare problems associated with chicken batteries? Does the Commission agree that this does not accord with Article 13 TFEU, which stipulates that 'the Union and the Member States shall, since animals are sentient beings, pay full regard to the welfare requirements of animals'?

3. Why is the import duty on eggs from outside the EU to be halved? In considering this matter, did the Commission take into account the impact of unfair competition in the light of the EU's animal welfare policy, as referred to in the newspaper article?

4. Does the Commission agree that it should not be permitted to import battery eggs into the EU, on grounds of animal welfare?

5. In the interests of animal welfare, will the Commission ensure that in future the only eggs which may be imported into the EU are those from production systems to which the same animal welfare requirements apply as to eggs within the EU?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2013)

The Commission is aware of the LEI study 'Competitiveness of the egg industry' ([2]).

The decision to ban unenriched cages in the EU is based on strong scientific evidence that shows that unenriched cages do not satisfy laying hens' behavioural needs and have severe implications for their welfare. The EU position with regard to ending 'conventional battery cages' is thus clear.

At present, other than autonomous preferences given to developing countries ([3]), the only tariff reduction which applies in the egg sector consists of an in-quota tariff which is reduced by 50% for an annual tariff quota of 135 000 t of eggs ([4]) as part of the EU's WTO commitments This quota has almost not been used until now. Two additional quotas, each one of 3 000 tons, are expected to be opened in the framework of a free trade agreement currently under ratification. The total EU imports of eggs and egg products did not increase in 2012 compared to the years 2009 and 2010 and currently imports of table eggs are negligible.

([1]) http://www.telegraaf.nl/mijnbedrijf/21104191/__Batterij-ei_komt_terug__.html
([2]) http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/show/Lowering-of-import-levy-disastrous-for-competitive-position-of-Dutch-egg-industry.htm
([3]) Scheme of generalised tariff preferences as well as preferences for ACP countries.
([4]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 539/2007 of 15 May 2007 opening and providing for the administration of tariff quotas in the egg sector and for egg albumin, OJ L 128, 16.5.2007.

According to the current WTO framework, EU standards related to animal welfare on the farm cannot be imposed on third countries. However, where guarantees regarding the equivalency of rules on marketing, labelling and farming methods are not provided, table eggs imported from third countries shall bear the following indication: 'non-EC standard' demonstrating that they have not been produced with a farming method equivalent with that in use in the EU ([5]).

([5]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 589/2008 of 23 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards for eggs, OJ L 163, 24.6.2008.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010735/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: Erdogan pro-Hamas & anti-Israël

In het conflict tussen Israël en Hamas heeft de Turkse premier Erdogan zich zeer anti-Israël opgesteld: hij beschuldigt Israël van „etnische zuivering". Voorts noemt hij Israël een „piratenstaat" die zich schuldig zou maken aan „terrorisme in het Midden-Oosten".

Erdogan stelt dat Israël de Palestijnen stap voor stap hun „land" zou ontnemen: „Ooit zal Israël de prijs betalen voor haar onderdrukking en „marteling" van de Palestijnen."

De regering van Erdogan heeft diplomatieke banden met Hamas, een terroristische organisatie genoemd op de EU-terreurlijst.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Erdogan Anti-Israel Talk Negates Mediator Role in Gaza Conflict" ([1])?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie Erdogans „agressieve" anti-Israëlhouding — vooral gezien het feit dat Turkije een kandidaat-EU-lidstaat is? Veroordeelt de Commissie deze?

3. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat Erdogans uitlatingen aanzetten tot haat en geweld jegens Israël? Verwerpt de Commissie zijn uitlatingen aldus?

4. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de Turkse diplomatieke banden met Hamas? Concreet: wat vindt de Commissie ervan dat een kandidaat-EU-lidstaat diplomatieke banden heeft met een organisatie die op de EU-terreurlijst staat? Verwerpt de Commissie dit?

5. Is de Commissie ertoe bereid, het bovenstaande overwegende, de toetredingsonderhandelingen met én alle EU-geldstromen naar Turkije direct te beëindigen? Zo neen, hoe verantwoordt de Commissie het dat de EU over toetreding onderhandelt met én geld schenkt aan een land dat aanzet tot haat en geweld jegens Israël en diplomatieke banden heeft met een terroristische organisatie?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(7 februari 2013)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van de verklaringen van de Turkse premier wat Israël betreft.

Turkije en Israël zijn cruciale partners van de EU. Derhalve zijn dialoog en goede functionele banden tussen beide landen belangrijk voor de Unie bij het streven naar vrede en stabiliteit in de nabije regio, vooral gezien de moeilijkheden in de regio (bijvoorbeeld het moeizame vredesproces in het Midden-Oosten). De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter roept zowel Turkije als Israël op zich terughoudend op te stellen om een verdere verslechtering van de bilaterale relaties te voorkomen. Zij hecht groot belang aan een constructief toenaderingsproces op basis van dialoog en extra inspanningen om de banden te versterken. De EU staat klaar om hierbij te helpen indien beide partijen daarom verzoeken.

Turkije blijft actief betrokken bij de landen in zijn wijdere omgeving, waaronder ook het Midden-Oosten. De EU en Turkije bespreken het vredesproces in het Midden-Oosten in het kader van de ruimere politieke dialoog tussen hen. Tegelijkertijd wil Turkije verzoening tussen Fatah en Hamas en nationale eenheid blijven aanmoedigen. In de conclusies van de Raad Buitenlandse Zaken van 23 mei 2011 heeft de EU erop aangedrongen dat de verscheidene Palestijnse groeperingen zich verzoenen en zich achter president Mahmoud Abbas scharen als belangrijk element voor de eenheid van een toekomstige Palestijnse staat en voor het verwezenlijken van een tweestatenoplossing.

([1]) http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-11-21/erdogan-anti-israel-talk-negates-mediator-role-in-gaza-conflict.

Zoals was verklaard in de conclusies van de Raad van december 2012 heeft de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter de dialoog tussen de EU en Turkije over buitenlands beleid geïntensiveerd wat betreft vraagstukken van gemeenschappelijk belang. Zij heeft er vertrouwen in dat nauwere en regelmatigere contacten en overleg met Turkije op verschillende niveaus ertoe zullen bijdragen dat Turkije zich zal aansluiten bij de standpunten en verklaringen van de EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010735/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Erdogan pro-Hamas and anti-Israel

In the conflict between Israel and Hamas, Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey has adopted a very anti-Israeli position: he accuses Israel of 'ethnic cleansing'. He also calls Israel a 'pirate State', which he claims is guilty of 'terrorism in the Middle East'.

Erdogan claims that Israel is robbing the Palestinians of their 'land' step by step: 'One day, Israel will pay the price for its repression' and 'torture of the Palestinians'.

Erdogan's government has diplomatic relations with Hamas, a terrorist organisation which figures on the EU list of terrorist organisations.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report 'Erdogan Anti-Israel Talk Negates Mediator Role in Gaza Conflict' ([1])?

2. What view does the Commission take of Erdogan's 'aggressive' anti-Israeli position, particularly bearing in mind that Turkey is a candidate for accession to the EU? Does the Commission condemn it?

3. Does the Commission agree that Erdogan's statements comprise an incitement to hatred and violence against Israel? Does the Commission therefore reject his statements?

4. What view does the Commission take of Turkey's diplomatic relations with Hamas? More specifically, what view does it take of the fact that a candidate for membership of the EU has diplomatic relations with an organisation which figures on the EU's list of terrorist organisations? Does the Commission condemn this?

5. In view of the above, will the Commission immediately terminate the accession negotiations with Turkey and all EU funding of Turkey? If not, how does the Commission justify the EU's negotiating with — and giving money to — a country which is guilty of incitement to hatred and violence against Israel and has diplomatic relations with a terrorist organisation?

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

The Commission is aware of various statements made by the Turkish Prime Minister on the subject of Israel.

Turkey and Israel are crucial partners of the EU. Therefore, dialogue and good, functional relations between them are in the interest of the EU in the quest for peace and stability in our shared neighbourhood, especially when considering the difficult problems in the region, such as the Middle East Peace Process. The High Representative/Vice-President urges both Turkey and Israel to exercise restraint in order to avoid further deterioration of bilateral relations and places great importance on a constructive rapprochement process, dialogue and further efforts to improve ties. The EU stands ready to assist in this process if invited by both parties.

Turkey continues to be actively involved in its wider neighbourhood, including the Middle East. The EU and Turkey discuss the Middle East Peace Process in the framework of the EU-Turkey wider political dialogue. At the same time, Turkey sees a continuing role for itself in encouraging Fatah/Hamas reconciliation and national unity. The EU called in the Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of 23 May 2011 for intra-Palestinian reconciliation behind President Mahmud Abbas as an important element for the unity of a future Palestinian state and for reaching a two state solution.

The HR/VP has intensified EU foreign policy dialogue with Turkey on issues of common interest as stated in the Council conclusions of December 2012 and trusts that closer and more regular contacts and consultations with Turkey at various levels will help improve Turkey's alignment with EU positions and statements.

([1]) http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-11-21/erdogan-anti-israel-talk-negates-mediator-role-in-gaza-conflict.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010736/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: Anti-islamfilm verboden in Turkije (vervolgvraag)

De heer Füle heeft namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-008592/2012. Daarin schrijft hij onder andere: „De Commissie hecht veel belang aan de vrijheid van meningsuiting, met inbegrip van de vrijheid om kennis te nemen van informatie en ideeën zonder de tussenkomst van overheidsinstanties en ongeacht grenzen. Volgens het Europees Verdrag tot bescherming van de rechten van de mens kan de uitoefening van deze vrijheden onder bepaalde voorwaarden echter worden onderworpen aan beperkingen, die bij wet zijn voorzien en die in een democratische samenleving noodzakelijk zijn in het belang van de nationale of openbare veiligheid."

1. Kan de Commissie concretiseren onder *welke* voorwaarden de uitoefening van de vrijheid om kennis te nemen van informatie en ideeën zonder de tussenkomst van overheidsinstanties en ongeacht grenzen aan beperkingen, volgens het Europees Verdrag tot bescherming van de rechten van de mens, kan worden onderworpen? Wat vindt de Commissie überhaupt van deze mogelijke beperkingen? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat de vrijheid van meningsuiting en de vrijheid om kennis te nemen van informatie en ideeën *nimmer* ingeperkt zou moeten mogen worden?

2. Impliceert de Commissie dat het Turkse verbod op de anti-islamfilm *Innocence of Muslims conform* het Europees Verdrag tot bescherming van de rechten van de mens is? Zo ja, hoe rechtvaardigt de Commissie, ongeacht genoemd Europees Verdrag, deze ordinaire censuur? Zo neen, kan de Commissie zich luid en duidelijk *tegen* het Turkse verbod en *voor* de vrijheid van meningsuiting en de vrijheid om kennis te nemen van informatie en ideeën uitspreken?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(30 januari 2013)

Volgens het Europees Verdrag tot bescherming van de rechten van de mens kan de uitoefening van de vrijheid om kennis te nemen van informatie en ideeën zonder inmenging van enig openbaar gezag en ongeacht grenzen onder bepaalde voorwaarden aan beperkingen worden onderworpen. De bijzondere voorwaarden voor deze mogelijke beperkingen worden bepaald in de jurisprudentie van het Europees Hof voor de Rechten van de Mens die in de loop van de jaren is ontwikkeld.

De Commissie benadrukt in haar antwoord op vraag E-008592/2012 ([1]) het algemene probleem in Turkije van verboden op websites van disproportionele van omvang en duur, zoals ook wordt opgemerkt in het voortgangsverslag over Turkije ([2]) dat de Commissie in 2012 uitbracht.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010736/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Banning of anti-Islam film in Turkey (follow-up question)

Mr Füle has answered Written Question E-008592/2012 on behalf of the Commission. In his answer, he writes, *inter alia*: 'The Commission attaches the greatest importance to freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to receive information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. At the same time the Commission recalls that pursuant to the European Convention on Human Rights the exercise of these freedoms may under certain conditions be subject to restrictions as prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security or public safety.'

1. Can the Commission specify under *what* conditions the exercise of the freedom to receive information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers may be restricted according to the European Convention on Human Rights? What, in general, is the Commission's view of these possible restrictions? Does the Commission agree that freedom of expression and freedom to receive information and ideas should *never* be restricted?

2. Does the Commission mean to imply that Turkey's ban on the anti-Islam film *The Innocence of Muslims* is *in accordance with* the European Convention on Human Rights? If so, how does the Commission, irrespective of the European Convention, justify this crude censorship? If not, can the Commission speak out loud and clear *against* Turkey's ban and *in favour of* freedom of expression and freedom to receive information and ideas?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The European Convention on Human Rights provides for the possibility to restrict, under certain circumstances, the exercise of the freedom to receive information and ideas without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The specific conditions for these possible restrictions are defined in the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights that has developed over the years.

The Commission in its answer to Question E-008592/2012 ([1]) underlined the general problem in Turkey with website bans of disproportionate scope and duration mentioned also in the Commission's 2012 Progress Report on Turkey ([2]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/strategy-and-progress-report/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010737/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — „Arabische Lente" = Arabische winter (vervolgvraag)

Op 20 november 2012 heeft mevrouw Ashton antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-008155/2012. Daarin schrijft zij: „De EU en de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter hebben snel betrekkingen aangeknoopt met het nieuwe politieke leiderschap in die landen waar de verkiezingen nieuwe leiders aan de macht hebben gebracht. Onze steun is cruciaal."

1. Stellen de EU en de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter voorwaarden aan de aan te knopen betrekkingen met het nieuwe politieke leiderschap? Zo ja, welke?

2. Waarom is de steun van de EU en de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter in dezen „cruciaal"? Welke meerwaarde heeft hun steun?

Voorts schrijft mevrouw Ashton: „Het idee van een opkomende Arabische Winter doet geen recht aan de huidige situatie op het terrein. Hoewel de angst begrijpelijk kan zijn, zeker in het licht van de recente gebeurtenissen, is deze paniekzaaierij misplaatst. Binnen de beweging van de islamisten is er een breed ideologisch en politiek spectrum, maar toch vormen radicale salafisten een hele kleine minderheid in Tunesië en zelfs in Egypte zijn de meer gematigde islamisten talrijker."

3. Hoe verantwoordt de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter het dat zij — door te veronderstellen dat de groep van radicale salafisten in de minderheid zou zijn — *impliceert* dat de verwerpelijke ideologie en praktijken van de salafisten „incidenteel" en „aldus niet van belang" zouden zijn?

4. Waarop baseert de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter zich als zij stelt dat er meer „gematigde islamisten" dan salafisten zouden zijn en daarmee impliceert dat „gematigde islamisten" de overhand zouden krijgen, opdat vervolgens zogezegd „niets aan de hand" zou zijn?

5. Veroordeelt de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter de ideologie en praktijken van de salafisten? Zo ja, deelt de Commissie dan ook de mening dat *elke* salafist een bedreiging vormt?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(19 februari 2013)

Voor het Midden-Oosten en het noorden van Afrika vormen de ontwikkelingen van de afgelopen twee jaar een uitgelezen kans om een democratie op te bouwen. De burgers kwamen in opstand en eisen waardigheid, volkssoevereiniteit en sociale rechtvaardigheid. De EU heeft rechtstreeks belang bij het welslagen van de overgang en kan dus niet aan de zijlijn blijven toekijken. De EU is zich bewust van de moeilijkheden en heeft er tegelijk duidelijk voor gekozen de verwezenlijking van de beginselen en waarden inzake democratie en mensenrechten te ondersteunen.

In overeenstemming met deze strategische keuze heeft de EU betrekkingen aangeknoopt met de nieuwe politieke leiders die na democratische verkiezingen aan de macht kwamen. Betrekkingen aanknopen betekent niet stilzwijgend instemmen; in onze dialoog benadrukken wij dan ook hoe belangrijk het is om een democratie op te bouwen en de mensenrechten, de sociale rechtvaardigheid en het beginsel van goed bestuur te respecteren. Onze steun is gebaseerd op een gedifferentieerde aanpak waarmee wij meer steun verlenen aan die partners die aantonen dat zij deze waarden naleven. De EU en haar lidstaten hebben recent uitvoerig ervaring opgedaan met het begeleiden van de overgang naar democratie; zij kunnen op dit scharniermoment dan ook cruciale steun bieden bij de opbouw van democratische en verantwoordingsplichtige instellingen en bijdragen aan de ontwikkeling van een dynamische maatschappelijk middenveld.

Een diepgewortelde democratie ontstaat niet van de ene dag op de andere. De overgang is een van binnenuit gevoed proces waarin verschillende maatschappijvisies worden uitgedrukt en naast elkaar bestaan. Aan dit proces nemen uiteenlopende politieke krachten deel, ook de politieke islam, die een breed ideologisch spectrum heeft. De EU staat paraat om te werken met groepen die willen ijveren voor vreedzame deelname aan het democratische leven, maar laat geen twijfel bestaan over de waarden die zij ondersteunt, noch over de behoefte aan een pluralistische en verdraagzame samenleving.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010737/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — 'Arab Spring' = Arab Winter (follow-up question)

On 20 November 2012, Lady Ashton answered Written Question E-008155/2012. In her answer she wrote: 'The EU and HR/VP have been quick to engage the new political leadership in those countries where elections have brought to power new leaders. Our support is crucial.'

1. Do the EU and the VP/HR impose conditions on the relations to be established with the new political leaderships? If so, what?

2. Why is the support of the EU and the VP/HR 'crucial' in this context? What added value does their support possess?

Lady Ashton also wrote: 'The idea of an approaching "Arab Winter" does not do justice to the actual situation on the ground. While the fears may be understandable not least in light of recent events, this alarmism is misplaced. Islamists span a wide ideological and political spectrum, yet radical Salafists constitute a very small minority in Tunisia and even in Egypt they are outnumbered by the more moderate Islamists.'

3. How does the VP/HR justify the fact that — by suggesting that radical Salafists are in the minority — she *implies* that the reprehensible ideology and practices of the Salafists are a minor phenomenon and therefore not important?

4. On what does the VP/HR base her statement that there are more 'moderate Islamists' than Salafists, thus implying that 'moderate Islamists' will gain the upper hand, so that supposedly there is nothing to worry about?

5. Does the VP/HR condemn the ideology and practices of the Salafists? If so, does the Commission then agree that *every* Salafist presents a threat?

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

The developments in the Middle East and North Africa region in the past two years offer an historic opportunity for the region to root itself in democracy. The uprisings were driven by demands of citizens for dignity, popular sovereignty and social justice. The EU has a direct stake in the success of the transition and can not be a passive spectator. While acknowledging the difficulties, the EU has taken a clear and strategic option of supporting the quest for the principles and values of democracy and human rights.

In line with this strategic choice, it has engaged with the new leaderships that emerged from democratic elections. Engagement is not acquiescence and, in our dialogue, we stress the key importance of building democracy, the respect of human rights, social justice and good governance. Our support is based on a differentiated approach under which we provide more support to those partners demonstrating commitment to these values. The EU and its Members States have recent and extensive experience in fostering transition to democracy and can provide, at this pivotal moment, key assistance in building accountable and democratic institutions and contribute to the development of a dynamic civil society.

The emergence of deep democracy will not happen overnight. Transition is a home-grown process in which different visions of society are expressed and confronted. Diverse political forces are part of this process, including that of political Islam which spans a wide ideological spectrum. The EU is ready to work with groups committed to the peaceful participation in democratic life, but it is clear on the values it supports and the need for a pluralistic and tolerant society.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010738/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: „Genderevenwicht" in Parlement en Commissie

Franziska Brantner, Zita Gurmai, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Anneli Jäätteenmäki — Leden van het Europees Parlement — en de European Women's Lobby pleiten, in aanloop naar de Europese verkiezingen van 2014, voor „genderevenwicht" in het Europees Parlement en de Europese Commissie. Dat wil zeggen: zij willen 50 % mannelijke en 50 % vrouwelijke politici. Zo roepen zij de lidstaten ertoe op voor de Commissie zowel een mannelijke als een vrouwelijke kandidaat voor te dragen.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Call for gender-balanced Commission and EP ([1])"?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de oproep tot „genderevenwicht" in het Parlement en de Commissie (50 % vrouwelijke en 50 % mannelijke politici)? Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie de oproep aan de lidstaten om voor de Commissie zowel een mannelijke als een vrouwelijke kandidaat voor te dragen? Verwerpt de Commissie deze „positieve discriminatie" oftewel „voortrekkerij"? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat bij de aanstelling van een persoon in een zekere functie niet het gender maar louter de capaciteiten van de persoon in kwestie zouden moeten prevaleren? Zo neen, waarom niet?

4. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie het dat, bij voorbeeld, mevrouw Kroes louter op grond van haar geslacht is aangesteld? Hoe kan de Commissie, in dit geval, verzekeren dat zij (eveneens) over de juiste capaciteiten beschikt?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(23 januari 2013)

In de meeste lidstaten en in de instellingen van de EU ([2]) zijn vrouwen nog altijd ondervertegenwoordigd als politieke beslissingnemers. De Europese Commissie bevestigde haar steun voor gendergelijkheid bij de besluitvorming opnieuw in het Vrouwenhandvest ([3]) en in de Strategie voor de gelijkheid van vrouwen en mannen (2010-2015) ([4]).

De lidstaten moeten kandidaten voor de toekomstige Commissie voorstellen. De politieke partijen zijn verantwoordelijk voor het selecteren van kandidaten voor de kieslijsten. De bevolking van de EU bestaat voor meer dan de helft uit vrouwen en vrouwen zijn even getalenteerd als mannen. De Europese Commissie moedigt de lidstaten en de politieke partijen dan ook aan om het genderevenwicht in de politiek te verbeteren.

Volgens de Commissie zijn bekwaamheid, vaardigheden en werkervaring de doorslaggevende criteria voor elke post. Alleen als vrouwen en mannen even hoog scoren op deze criteria, wordt het ondervertegenwoordigde geslacht bevoordeeld. De Commissie heeft ook voor deze aanpak gekozen in haar recente voorstel voor een richtlijn inzake de verbetering van de man-vrouwverhouding bij niet-uitvoerende bestuurders van beursgenoteerde ondernemingen (COM(2012) 614).

([1]) http://www.europolitics.info//institutions/call-for-gender-balanced-commission-and-ep-art345501-34.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm
([3]) COM(2010) 78 definitief.
([4]) COM(2010) 491 definitief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010738/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: 'Gender balance' at Parliament and the Commission

In the run-up to the 2014 European elections, Franziska Brantner, Zita Gurmai, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Anneli Jäätteenmäki — Members of the European Parliament — and the European Women's Lobby are advocating 'gender balance' at the European Parliament and European Commission. This means that they want 50% of politicians to be male and 50% female. They are calling on the Member States to propose both a male and a female candidate for membership of the Commission.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report 'Call for gender-balanced Commission and EP' ([1])?

2. What view does the Commission take of the call for 'gender balance' at Parliament and the Commission (50% female and 50% male politicians)? What view does the Commission take of the call for Member States to propose both a male and a female candidate for membership of the Commission? Does the Commission reject this 'positive discrimination' or preferential treatment? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission agree that, when appointing a person to a particular post, it is not their gender but only their capacities that should determine the choice of candidate? If not, why not?

4. What view does the Commission take of the fact that, for example, Mrs Kroes was appointed purely on grounds of her gender? How can the Commission, in this case, ensure that it (likewise) has the right capacities at its disposal?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

Women continue to be under-represented in political decision-making posts in most EU Member States and in the EU institutions ([2]). The European Commission reaffirmed its support for gender equality in decision-making both in its Women's Charter ([3]) and in its Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) ([4]).

It is the responsibility of Member States to put forward the candidates for the future Commission. Political parties are responsible to select candidates to include on electoral lists. As women represent more than a half of EU population and are equally talented as men, the European Commission encourages Member States and political parties to improve gender balance in politics.

In the Commission's view, competence, skills and work experience are the decisive criteria for every post. It is only when women and men are on an equal level regarding these criteria that positive action in favour of the underrepresented sex takes place. This is also the approach the Commission has taken in its recent proposal for a directive improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges (COM(2012)614).

([1]) http://www.europolitics.info//institutions/call-for-gender-balanced-commission-and-ep-art345501-34.html
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm
([3]) COM(2010) 78 final.
([4]) COM(2010) 491 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011110/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(5 dicembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Proteste della stampa egiziana contro la nuova costituzione

Secondo quanto riportato da svariate fonti di informazione, in Egitto i giornalisti nutrono il timore che la nuova costituzione, la cui votazione è prevista per la prossima settimana, metta a rischio la libertà di stampa, dal momento che proibisce di insultare qualsiasi essere umano e tutti i «messaggeri religiosi e profeti».

Molte testate indipendenti hanno annunciato una giornata di «sciopero» in segno di protesta.

Sulle prime pagine di numerosi quotidiani è già comparso il messaggio «No alla dittatura». Almeno quindici giornali e tre stazioni televisive hanno accolto un invito del sindacato dei giornalisti e deciso di non andare in stampa o in onda.

Il progetto della nuova costituzione garantisce libertà di espressione e il diritto di fondare una testata, ma avverte altresì che non sarà tollerata «l'espressione di insulti o disprezzo nei confronti di qualsiasi persona» e l'espressione di insulti verso religiosi. La comunità dei giornalisti è solo uno dei numerosi gruppi che si oppongono alla costituzione.

1. Qual è la posizione del Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante nei confronti della crescente opposizione verso il presidente egiziano, Mohammed Morsi?

2. Quali azioni intende intraprendere il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante qualora il presidente Morsi continui ad adottare misure contrarie ai principi di democrazia?

3. Quali saranno, ad esempio, le conseguenze nei confronti della politica dell'UE «more for more» (maggiori aiuti a fronte di un maggiore impegno) con l'Egitto?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(28 febbraio 2013)

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente condivide le preoccupazioni per le decisioni della presidenza egiziana che, alla fine del 2012, hanno portato a una crisi tra i sostenitori del Presidente Mohamed Morsi e il Fronte di salvezza nazionale. Purtroppo, la situazione politica interna non è migliorata. In concomitanza con il secondo anniversario della rivoluzione egiziana e con la sentenza della Corte che ha condannato a morte 21 persone accusate di coinvolgimento nella tragedia dello stadio di Port Said del 2012, si è assistito allo scoppio di violenti scontri che hanno causato diverse vittime. È stato imposto lo stato di emergenza nei tre governatorati maggiormente colpiti (Port Said, Suez e Ismailia).

Durante l'intero periodo, l'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente, la delegazione dell'UE al Cairo e il rappresentante speciale dell'UE sono rimasti in contatto costante con i principali protagonisti, compresi l'Ufficio del Presidente, il ministro degli esteri Kamel Amr e l'opposizione, insistendo sulla necessità di un dialogo partecipativo e di un atteggiamento conciliatorio. A seguito dell'adozione della Costituzione, avvenuta il 25 dicembre 2012, l'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha rilasciato una dichiarazione nella quale ha ribadito i suoi precedenti inviti al dialogo, rivolti a tutte le parti coinvolte nel paese, al fine di compiere ulteriori progressi verso una democrazia sostenibile. Catherine Ashton ha esortato gli interessati, in particolare il Presidente egiziano Morsi, a intensificare gli sforzi in questo senso così da ripristinare la fiducia nella transizione politica del paese.

L'UE svolge un monitoraggio continuo della situazione sul campo, intrattenendo un dialogo con il governo egiziano, l'opposizione, la società civile e le altre parti interessate, al fine di intraprendere le misure necessarie in base al contesto politico. Se necessario, l'UE farà ricorso a misure appropriate per i programmi di cooperazione con l'Egitto.

I programmi dell'UE sostengono il popolo egiziano. Nel corso del 2012 l'UE ha fornito il suo appoggio in settori chiave che vanno dalla creazione di posti di lavoro, alla capacità d'inserimento e alla formazione professionale dei giovani (con un investimento pari a 50 milioni di EUR).

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010739/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(26 november 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Machtsgreep Morsi

President Morsi van Egypte heeft alle macht naar zich toe getrokken — volgens hem en zijn moslimbroeders om de „revolutie te redden".

Alle beslissingen die Morsi nu neemt, zijn onaantastbaar voor iedere Egyptische rechter.

1. Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger bekend met het bericht „De onverwachte machtsgreep van Morsi" ([1])?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de hoge vertegenwoordiger de machtsgreep van Morsi en zijn „onaantastbaarheid" die daarmee ontstaat? Verwerpt de hoge vertegenwoordiger dit?

3. Wat zijn de verwachtingen van de hoge vertegenwoordiger, nu Morsi alle macht naar zich toe heeft getrokken? Deelt de hoge vertegenwoordiger de verwachting dat de situatie in Egypte verder zal verslechteren — mogelijk met de invoering van de sharia tot gevolg, zoals de moslimbroeders wensen? Verwerpt de hoge vertegenwoordiger dit?

4. De door de EU aan Egypte toegekende financiële ondersteuning voor de periode 2011-2013 bedraagt maar liefst 449 miljoen euro. Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger ertoe bereid, gezien de machtsgreep van Morsi, alle financiële ondersteuning aan Egypte direct te beëindigen?

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-011013/12
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(3 december 2012)

Betreft: VP/HR — Nieuwe grondwet Egypte

Een grondwetgevende raad heeft vrijdag een ontwerp voor een nieuwe grondwet voor Egypte goedgekeurd. De wet schiet volgens Amnesty International tekort in de bescherming van de mensenrechten en negeert de rechten van de vrouw. Ook beperkt de wet de vrijheid van meningsuiting onder het mom van „bescherming van religie".

1. Is de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger bekend met het bericht „Felle kritiek op nieuwe grondwet Egypte" ?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de nieuwe grondwet van Egypte, die tekort schiet in de bescherming van de mensenrechten, de rechten van de vrouw negeert en de vrijheid van meningsuiting beperkt? Verwerpt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger dit?

3. Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de mening dat Egypte onder president Mursi steeds verder afglijdt? Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de conclusie dat het EU-beleid tot bevordering van de mensenrechten en democratie in derde landen, zeker in Egypte, geen vruchten heeft afgeworpen? Is de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger dan ook ertoe bereid hiermee te stoppen? Zo neen, waarom niet?

4. Is de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger ertoe bereid, als blijk van afschuw van de recente ontwikkelingen in Egypte, onmiddellijk alle diplomatieke betrekkingen tussen de EU en Egypte direct te verbreken? Zo neen, hoe kan de EU diplomatieke betrekkingen hebben met een land, waar de mensenrechten, de rechten van de vrouw en de vrijheid van meningsuiting in het geding zijn?

([1]) http://www.nd.nl/artikelen/2012/november/23/de-onverwachte-machtsgreep-van-morsi.

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(28 februari 2013)

De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter deelt de bezorgdheid over de beslissing van de Egyptische president die eind 2012 heeft geleid tot de crisis tussen de aanhangers van Morsi en het Front voor Nationale Redding. De binnenlandse politieke situatie is helaas niet verbeterd. Naar aanleiding van de tweede verjaardag van de Egyptische revolutie en de terdoodveroordeling door de rechtbank van 21 mensen die beschuldigd werden van betrokkenheid bij de ramp in het voetbalstadion in Port Said in 2012, braken gewelddadige confrontaties uit, waarbij veel doden vielen. In de drie meest getroffen gouvernementen (Port Said, Suez en Ismailia) werd de noodtoestand afgekondigd.

De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter, de EU-delegatie in Caïro en de speciale vertegenwoordiger van de EU hebben voortdurend contact gehouden met de belangrijkste partijen waaronder het kabinet van de president, minister van Buitenlandse Zaken Amr en de oppositie. Zij hebben daarbij aangedrongen op bemiddeling en een open dialoog. Na de goedkeuring van de Grondwet op 25 december 2012 heeft de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter een verklaring afgelegd waarin zij alle partijen in Egypte nogmaals oproept tot een dialoog om verder te werken aan een duurzame democratie. Zij riep alle betrokkenen, en in het bijzonder de president, op om meer te doen om het vertrouwen in de politieke transitie in Egypte te herstellen.

De EU volgt de situatie ter plekke nauwlettend en onderhoudt contacten met de Egyptische regering, de oppositie, het maatschappelijk middenveld en andere belanghebbenden om in het licht van de politieke context de juiste maatregelen te kunnen treffen. Indien nodig kan de EU passende maatregelen treffen met betrekking tot de samenwerkingsprogramma's met Egypte.

De EU-programma's ondersteunen de Egyptische bevolking. In 2012 heeft de EU onder meer steun verleend op belangrijke vlakken als het scheppen van werkgelegenheid, de inzetbaarheid van jongeren en beroepsopleidingen (50 miljoen euro).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010739/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Seizure of power by Morsi

President Morsi of Egypt has seized all power in the country for himself — his motivation, according to him and his Muslim Brotherhood, being a desire to 'save the revolution'.

All decisions which Morsi now takes are exempt from review by any Egyptian court.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the report 'De onverwachte machtsgreep van Morsi' [The unexpected seizure of power by Morsi] ([1])?

2. What view does the Vice-President/High Representative take of Morsi's seizure of power and his resultant 'inviolability'? Does the Vice-President/High Representative condemn it?

3. What are the Vice-President's/High Representative's expectations now that Morsi has seized all this power for himself? Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that the situation in Egypt is likely to deteriorate further — possibly leading to the introduction of Sharia law, as the Muslim Brotherhood would like? Does the Vice-President/High Representative condemn this?

4. The EU's financial assistance to Egypt for the period 2011-2013 comes to the princely sum of EUR 449 m. In view of Morsi's seizure of power, will the Vice-President/High Representative immediately terminate all financial support for Egypt?

Question for written answer E-011013/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(3 December 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Egypt's new Constitution

On Friday a Constitutional Council approved a draft of a new Constitution for Egypt. According to Amnesty International, the draft does not sufficiently protect human rights, and disregards women's rights. It also restricts freedom of expression under the pretext of 'protecting religion'.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of the report 'Felle kritiek op nieuwe grondwet Egypte' [Strong criticism of Egypt's new Constitution]? ([2])

2. What view does the Vice-President/High Representative take of Egypt's new Constitution, which does not sufficiently protect human rights, disregards women's rights and restricts freedom of expression? Does the Vice-President/High Representative condemn it?

3. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that, under President Morsi, Egypt is increasingly regressing? Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree with the conclusion that the EU's policy on promoting human rights and democracy in third countries has proved fruitless, particularly in Egypt? Will the Vice-President/High Representative therefore abandon it? If not, why not?

4. Will the Vice-President/High Representative indicate her abhorrence of the recent developments in Egypt by immediately breaking off all diplomatic relations between the EU and Egypt? If not, how can the EU maintain diplomatic relations with a country where human rights, women's rights and freedom of expression are endangered?

([1]) http://www.nd.nl/artikelen/2012/november/23/de-onverwachte-machtsgreep-van-morsi.
([2]) http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2664/Nieuws/article/detail/3356263/2012/11/30/Felle-kritiek-op-nieuwe-grondwet-Egypte.dhtml?utm_source=RSSReader&utm_medium=RSS.

Question for written answer E-011110/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(5 December 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Egyptian press protests against the new constitution

A number of media sources have reported that journalists in Egypt are worried that the new constitution which is due to be voted on next week puts free speech at risk because it bans insulting any human being and 'all religious messengers and prophets'.

Many independent newspapers have announced that they will stage a one-day 'strike' in protest.

A number of newspapers have already printed cartoons on their covers saying 'No to Dictatorship'. At least fifteen newspapers and three television stations have responded to a call from the journalists' union by deciding not to print and to go off-air, respectively.

The new draft constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the right to set up a newspaper, but includes the warning that 'insulting or showing contempt towards any human being' and insulting religious figures will not be tolerated. Journalists are just one of many groups opposed to the constitution.

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative vis-à-vis the growing opposition towards Egypt's President Mohammed Morsi?

2. What actions is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to take if President Morsi continues to adopt measures that are contrary to the principles of democracy?

3. What for example, will be the consequences as regards the EU's 'more for more' policy with Egypt?

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

The HR/VP shares concerns regarding the decision of the Egyptian Presidency leading to the crisis between pro-Morsi supporters and the National Salvation Front by end of 2012. Unfortunately, the domestic political situation has not improved. In connection with the two-year anniversary of the Egyptian revolution and the court sentencing 21 people to death accused of involvement in the 2012 Port Said stadium disaster, violent clashes erupted leading to many deaths. The State of Emergency has been imposed in the three governorates mostly concerned (Port Said, Suez and Ismailia).

All along, the HR/VP, the EU Delegation in Cairo and the EU Special Representative have been in continuous contact with the main protagonists, including the President's office, Foreign Minister Amr, as well as with the opposition insisting on the need for conciliation and inclusive dialogue. Following the adoption of the Constitution on 25 December 2012, the HR/VP issued a statement reiterating the previous calls for dialogue among all parties in Egypt to make further progress towards sustainable democracy. She urged those concerned, in particular the President, to intensify efforts in this regard to restore trust in Egypt's political transition.

The EU is continuously monitoring the situation on the ground in dialogue with the Egyptian Government, opposition, civil society and other key stakeholders in order to take the appropriate measures according to the political context. If necessary, appropriate measures can be taken by the EU with regard to the cooperation programs with Egypt.

The EU programmes support the Egyptian people. In 2012 the EU has provided support in key areas such as Job Creation, Youth Employability and Vocational Training (EUR 50 million).

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-010740/12
a la Comisión
Carmen Fraga Estévez (PPE)
(26 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Reiterados rechazos en la frontera de conservas de atún importadas de Tailandia

Durante este año 2012, la Unión Europea, en sus controles de entrada de productos de terceros países, ha procedido a rechazar de forma reiterada importaciones de conservas de atún procedentes de Tailandia, al detectar que no cumplían con la legislación higiénico-sanitaria. En la base de datos del Sistema de Alerta Rápida para Alimentos y Piensos de la Unión Europea (RASFF), aparecen desde enero de 2012 dieciocho notificaciones de alerta correspondientes a productos transformados de atún importados de Tailandia, debidas a un inadecuado tratamiento térmico, lo cual ha generado numerosos rechazos en frontera de dichos productos.

El tratamiento térmico confiere la esterilización a las conservas, ya que asegura la destrucción o inactivación bacteriana, en particular de la bacteria *Clostridium botulinum* (productora de la toxina botulínica causante del botulismo). Una deficiencia en este tratamiento pone en grave riesgo la estabilidad y salubridad de las conservas destinadas al consumo humano y, por tanto, la seguridad alimentaria del consumidor.

La gran concentración de alertas en un proceso que es clave en la transformación del atún para garantizar la seguridad alimentaria pone de manifiesto un grave fallo en los procedimientos de control de la industria tailandesa, pero también de la autoridad competente supervisora de Tailandia. Esto es especialmente preocupante si tenemos en cuenta que Tailandia es nada menos que el primer productor de conservas de atún a nivel mundial y controla un tercio del mercado de las conservas de atún de la UE.

Teniendo en cuenta estos hechos, ¿qué medidas ha tomado o piensa tomar la Comisión Europea para proteger al consumidor de la Unión de este grave problema de salubridad de las conservas de atún provenientes de Tailandia, y garantizar que dichas conservas entran en la Unión cumpliendo todos los requisitos establecidos en nuestra legislación alimentaria?

¿Cómo puede la Comisión asegurar que la autoridad competente tailandesa está capacitada para realizar los controles necesarios de los productos exportados cuando se constata que ha autorizado la salida reiterada de exportaciones de conservas de atún destinadas al mercado comunitario con deficiencias que pueden afectar a la seguridad alimentaria, situación que se ha venido repitiendo desde febrero hasta noviembre de 2012?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de diciembre de 2012)

Si los controles veterinarios de los productos de origen animal efectuados en las fronteras de la UE arrojan resultados negativos, las partidas del mismo origen han de someterse a controles reforzados y no se permite que prosigan su camino hasta que todos los controles adicionales hayan concluido con resultados favorables. Los controles reforzados se mantienen hasta que la Comisión disponga de datos que respalden su supresión o bien que aconsejen la adopción de una medida de salvaguardia, en caso de que el problema no haya sido objeto de la suficiente consideración. Este procedimiento impide que los establecimientos que no se ajusten a la legislación de la UE accedan al mercado de la UE.

En febrero de 2012, la Comisión sometió al establecimiento en cuestión a un programa de controles reforzados. Las autoridades tailandesas han sido informadas de la gravedad del problema desde que se detectaron por primera vez casos de incumplimiento, y se han emprendido acciones en relación con la identificación y la corrección de aquellos. Dichas autoridades han respondido en varias ocasiones y han informado regularmente a la Comisión de las medidas adoptadas a raíz de las notificaciones.

A pesar de las mencionadas correcciones, el problema se ha reproducido, y las autoridades tailandesas han decidido anular la autorización del establecimiento para exportar a la UE a partir del 12 de octubre de 2012.

El servicio de auditoría de la Comisión (la Oficina Alimentaria y Veterinaria) auditó en septiembre de 2011 las condiciones de producción de los productos de la pesca en Tailandia. Por su parte, las autoridades tailandesas competentes han presentado un plan de acción para corregir las deficiencias detectadas. Los auditores consideran que las acciones emprendidas por las autoridades tailandesas son satisfactorias. Su aplicación será verificada en una auditoría de seguimiento en una fecha que todavía no ha sido programada.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010740/12
to the Commission
Carmen Fraga Estévez (PPE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Repeated border rejections concerning canned tuna imported from Thailand

In 2012, during checks on products arriving from third countries, the EU has repeatedly rejected imports of canned tuna from Thailand after finding that they did not comply with hygiene and health regulations. 18 notifications concerning processed tuna products imported from Thailand have been transmitted through the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) since January 2012, due to these products having received inadequate heat treatment, which has led to many rejections at EU borders.

Heat treatment sterilises the canned products as it kills or inactivates bacteria, in particular the Clostridium botulinum bacterium (which produces the botulinum toxin that causes botulism). If the treatment is not carried out correctly, it poses a serious risk for the stability and safety of tinned food intended for human consumption and, therefore, consumer food safety.

The high number of notifications concerning an essential tuna processing procedure for guaranteeing food safety highlights serious failings in Thai industry checks, but also on the part of the competent supervisory body in Thailand. This is especially concerning given that Thailand is the world's leading producer of tinned tuna and commands a third of the EU's canned tuna market.

In the light of the above, what measures has the Commission taken, or what action does it intend to take, to protect EU consumers against this serious food safety problem posed by canned tuna from Thailand, and to ensure that these tinned products entering the EU meet all the requirements laid down in our food safety legislation?

How can the Commission verify whether the competent Thai authority is able to perform the necessary checks on exports when from February to November 2012 it has repeatedly authorised below standard tinned tuna, which could compromise food safety, for export to the EU?

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

In case of unfavourable veterinary checks of products of animal origin at the EU borders, consignments from the same origin are subject to reinforced checks. These consignments are not allowed to leave until all additional checks have been completed with favourable results. Reinforced checks remain until the Commission has data to support their lifting or if necessary, to move to a safeguard measure, where the problem has not been sufficiently addressed. This procedure prevents establishments not conforming to EU legislation from having access to the EU market.

The Commission placed the incriminated establishment under a reinforced checks programme in February 2012. The Thai authorities have been kept informed of the seriousness of the problem since the very first detection of the non-conformities and action was sought in connection with its identification and its correction. These authorities responded on various occasions and regularly informed the Commission of the actions taken following the notifications.

Despite these corrections, the problem reoccurred and the Thai authorities decided to remove the approval of the establishment for export to the EU as from 12 October 2012.

The Commission audit service (the Food and Veterinary Office) audited the conditions for the production of fishery products in Thailand in September 2011. The Thai competent authorities have provided an action plan to correct the shortcomings identified. The actions initiated by the Thai authorities have been satisfactorily considered by the auditors. Their enforcement will be subsequently verified in a follow up audit at a date which is still to be scheduled.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010741/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Journalistic freedom in Kazakhstan

Reports continue to indicate a growing crackdown on independent journalists in Kazakhstan. Despite press freedom being enshrined in Kazakhstan's constitution, monitors report that privately owned and opposition media have to navigate the risk of imprisonment, fines, interrogations and raids on editorial offices by the authorities.

One opposition newspaper, *Golos Respubliki*, has seen its publisher, Danuyar Moldhashew, pressurised and harassed by the authorities, leading to him having to hide in exile abroad in the past. His brother, Askar Moldhashew, a businessman, has recently been arrested by the authorities for drug possession, yet little evidence corroborating these accusations has been released. It appears to be designed to further harass independent publisher Danuyar Moldhashew.

1. Is the High Representative aware of the arrest and detention of Askar Moldhashew? If so, what representations have been made to the Kazakhstani authorities?

2. Given the increasing crackdown on independent journalists, what representations is the High Representative making to the Kazakhstani authorities on this issue?

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

The HR/VP and her services are closely following the ongoing clampdown of mass media in Kazakhstan. The HR/VP expressed EU's concerns about this issue during her visit to Kazakhstan at the end of November. The EU Delegation in Astana remains in contact with the authorities in Kazakhstan to address this issue. The EU Delegation is actively working with the OSCE, the USA, EU Member States, as well as international and local civil society representatives in the country to call for guaranteeing the freedom of expression. The EU has also issued a statement on the subject at the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna.

The HR/VP and her services are aware of the arrest and detention of Askar Moldashev. Askar Moldashew was arrested on 31 October on charges of 'illegal possession of drugs in large quantities' — Article 259 of Criminal Code, foreseeing 10-15 years prison sentence and confiscation of property by the Kazakh National Security Committee. The arrest warrant was issued by the court on 2 November. Currently, he is kept in a pre-trial detention centre in Almaty waiting for the court hearings. The pre-trial hearing took place in Almaty on 12 December. The EU Delegation is following up on his case with the local civil society and authorities.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010742/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Mayer (PPE)
(26. November 2012)

Betrifft: Durchführungsverordnung (EU) Nr. 505/2012 der Kommission — Lignozellulose

Die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 505/2012 dient der Änderung und Berichtigung der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 889/2008 mit Durchführungsvorschriften zu der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 834/2007 des Rates über die ökologische/biologische Produktion und die Kennzeichnung von ökologischen/biologischen Erzeugnissen hinsichtlich der ökologischen/biologischen Produktion, Kennzeichnung und Kontrolle.

Die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 505/2012 ändert den Artikel 22 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 834/2007 und den dazugehörigen Anhang V, so dass der Punkt „Pulver und Extrakte von Pflanzen" nicht explizit genannt wird, unter den die Lignozellulose sonst fiel.

In der neuen Fassung des Artikels 22 wird nun u. a. von nichtökologischen/nichtbiologischen Futtermittelausgangserzeugnissen pflanzlichen Ursprungs gesprochen, die, sofern sie ohne chemische Lösungsmittel produziert oder aufbereitet wurden, bei der Verarbeitung ökologischer/biologischer Futtermittel verwendet werden dürfen.

1. Ist Lignozellulose ein nichtökologisches/nichtbiologisches Futtermittelausgangserzeugnis pflanzlichen Ursprungs, das bei der Verarbeitung ökologischer/biologischer Futtermittel verwendet werden darf, sofern es ohne chemische Lösungsmittel produziert oder aufbereitet wurde?

2. Darf Lignozellulose weiterhin bei der Erzeugung von ökologischen/biologischen Futtermitteln verwendet werden, sofern bestehende Bestimmungen beachtet werden?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(22. Januar 2013)

Gemäß Artikel 22 Buchstabe a der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 889/2008 der Kommission [1] mit Durchführungsvorschriften zur Verordnung (EG) Nr. 834/2007 des Rates über die ökologische/biologische Produktion und die Kennzeichnung von ökologischen/biologischen Erzeugnissen hinsichtlich der ökologischen/biologischen Produktion, Kennzeichnung und Kontrolle [2] darf Lignozellulose als nichtökologisches/nichtbiologisches Futtermittelausgangserzeugnis pflanzlichen Ursprungs bei der Verarbeitung ökologischer/biologischer Futtermittel verwendet werden, sofern sie ohne chemische Lösungsmittel produziert oder aufbereitet werden und die in Artikel 43 bzw. Artikel 47 Buchstabe c festgelegten Beschränkungen eingehalten werden.

Die Antwort auf Ihre zweite Frage ist ja, allerdings nur unter der Voraussetzung, dass die bestehenden Bestimmungen beachtet werden.

[1] ABl. L 250 vom 18.9.2008.

[2] ABl. L 189 vom 20.7.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010742/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Mayer (PPE)
(26 November 2012)

Subject: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 505/2012 — lignocellulose

Regulation (EU) No 505/2012 amends and corrects Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control.

Regulation (EU) No 505/2012 amends Article 22 and the related Annex V in such a way as to no longer explicitly refer to 'Powders and extracts of plants', under which lignocellulose fell.

The new version of Article 22 refers, *inter alia*, to non-organic feed materials of plant origin, which may be used in the processing of organic feed provided that they have been produced or prepared without chemical solvents.

1. Does lignocellulose constitute a non-organic feed material of plant origin that may be used in the processing of organic feed provided that it has been produced or prepared without chemical solvents?

2. May lignocellulose continue to be used in the production of organic feed provided that the current provisions are complied with?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

In accordance with Articles 22(a) of Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 ([1]) laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 ([2]) on organic production and labelling of organic products with regard to organic production, labelling and control, lignocellulose, as non-organic feed material of plant origin, may be used in the processing of organic feed provided that it has been produced or prepared without chemical solvents and comply with the restrictions laid down in Article 43 or Article 47(c) thereof.

Regarding your second question, the answer is yes, providing that the current provisions are complied with.

([1]) OJ L 250, 18.9.2008.
([2]) OJ L 189, 20.7.2007.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-010743/12
до Комисията
Dimitar Stoyanov (NI)
(27 ноември 2012 г.)

Относно: Съмнения за умишлено ограничаване вноса на захар от държавите от АКТБ

На 13.11.2012 г. в Брюксел се състоя дискусия относно проблемите на захарния сектор, организирана от португалския член на Европейския парламент от ЕНП Мария Патрао Невеш (Maria do Céu Patrão Neves).

На проведената среща представителят на държавите от Африка, Карибите и Тихоокеанския басейн (АКТБ) открито заяви, че тези държави нямат интерес да задоволят напълно нуждите от захарна тръстика на европейските производители и поради тази причина умишлено допринасят с действията си за дефицита на тази суровина с цел да държат цената ѝ висока на европейския пазар. Това твърдение от своя страна може да бъде разглеждано и като една от причините за наблюдаваното повишение в цената на захарта за гражданите на ЕС през последната година. Следователно, като се вземат под внимание така изложените факти, би могло да се заключи, че страните от АКТБ на практика водят политика, противоречаща на интересите на ЕС, въпреки че получават преференциално третиране от страна на Съюза да внасят захарна тръстика без мито в ЕС.

Ето защо се обръщам към Вас със следните въпроси:

1. Възнамерява ли Комисията да проведе разследване във връзка с така направеното изказване на представителя на страните от АКТБ с цел да се установи дали действително умишлено не се ограничава вносът на захарна тръстика в ЕС от тези страни?

2. В случай че се установи подобна връзка, смята ли Комисията да преразгледа политиката си на внос на захарна тръстика при преференциални условия само от тези страни?

Отговор, даден от г-н Чолош от името на Комисията
(29 януари 2013 г.)

Комисията се отнася с внимание към това твърдение. Обективните факти показват, че от 2009 г., когато за най-слаборазвитите държави и за държавите, подписали споразумение за икономическо партньорство, бе въведен безмитен и безквотен достъп до пазара на ЕС с двустепенен защитен механизъм по отношение на обема на вноса, в броя на заявленията за лицензии за внос на захар се наблюдава възходяща тенденция (в сравнение с 2009/2010 г. увеличението през 2010/2011 г. и 2011/2012 г. бе съответно 21 % и 24 %). Тази тенденция се запази, дори когато през последните 3 години цените на захарта на световния пазар бяха сравнително високи и понякога надвишаваха цените в ЕС. В заключение следва да се отбележи, че макар и по-ниски от максималните прогнозни количества, което се дължеше и на високото вътрешно потребление в държавите от АКТБ, общите количества все пак бяха значими.

Пазарът на захар в ЕС се обслужва не само чрез внос от държавите от АКТБ. Съществена роля има и вътрешното производство. Във връзка с това е важно да се подчертае, че в пакета за ОСП за периода до 2020 г. Комисията не е предложила удължаване на квотния режим за захарта след 2015 г. Това ще направи доставките на захар на пазара на ЕС още по-плавни и ще благоприятства за засилване на конкуренцията.

Въпреки че държавите от АКТБ са против премахването на квотите за захар и предпочитат квотният режим да бъде удължен до 2020 г., Комисията е на мнение, че след интензивно преструктуриране както европейските участници във веригата за доставка на захар, така и тези от държавите от АКТБ, са добре подготвени да произвеждат в условията на нормативна уредба без квоти, и че това ще бъде от полза за европейските потребители.

Предвид гореизложеното, Комисията не смята за уместно преразглеждането на политиката на ЕС по отношение на вноса на захар от държавите от АКТБ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010743/12
to the Commission
Dimitar Stoyanov (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Suspicions of deliberate limiting of sugar imports from ACP countries

On 13 November 2012, a debate organised by the Portuguese MEP Maria do Céu Patrão Neves was held in Brussels on issues affecting the sugar sector.

At that meeting, the representative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries openly stated that it was not in the interests of those countries to meet the sugar cane needs of European producers in full and that they were hence deliberately contributing to the shortfall in that raw material in order to push up its price on the European market. This could be viewed as one of the reasons for the increase in sugar prices experienced by EU citizens in the past year. It could lead one to the conclusion that the ACP countries are in practice pursuing a policy that is contrary to the EU's interests, despite the fact that they enjoy preferential treatment from the Union in the form of zero-rate tariffs on sugar cane imports into the EU.

Can the Commission therefore indicate:

1. Whether it will conduct an enquiry in connection with the statement made by the representative of the ACP countries in order to establish whether those countries are deliberately limiting imports of sugar cane into the EU?

2. If such a link is established, will the Commission review its policy on the importation of sugar cane under which only those countries enjoy preferential conditions?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

The Commission takes careful note of this assertion. In terms of the objective facts, since 2009 when the duty- and quota-free access with a double-trigger volume safeguard was introduced to both Least Developing Countries and Economic Partnership Agreement signatory countries for the access to the EU market, an upward trend of application of import licenses for sugar is observed (an increase by 21% in 2010-2011 and by 24% in 2011-2012 as compared to 2009-2010). This trend persisted even when the world market prices for sugar have been relatively high over the last 3 years and from time to time exceeded the EU prices. In conclusion, while the overall volumes have been below the maximum projections, including as a result of high internal ACP consumption, they have nevertheless been important.

The EU sugar market is not serviced only by ACP imports, internal production is also important. In this context it is important to underline that the Commission has not proposed to prolong the sugar quota regime beyond 2015 in the CAP 2020 package. This will further fluidify supply of sugar onto the EU market and thereby foster a more competitive market situation.

Whilst ACP countries oppose putting an end to sugar quotas and would like to see an extension of the quota regime until 2020, the Commission considers that, after intensive restructuring, all operators in the sugar supply chain both in Europe and in the ACP countries are well prepared to produce in a regulatory environment without quota, and that this will be to the benefit of European consumers.

Given the above, the Commission considers that it would be inopportune to review the EU policy of imports of sugar from ACP countries.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010744/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(27. November 2012)

Betrifft: Förderung von Hochgeschwindigkeitszügen

Im April 2012 stellte die private italienische Transportgesellschaft Nuovo Transporto Viaggiatori (NTV) den Hochgeschwindigkeitszug „Italo“ vor, der mit über 300 km/h zwischen Mailand und Neapel verkehren soll. Im September 2012 stellte die staatliche italienische Bahngesellschaft Trenitalia den Hochgeschwindigkeitszug „Frecciarossa 1000“ vor, der bis zu 400 km/h erreichen und ab 2014 zwischen Rom und Mailand verkehren soll.

1. Sind NTV oder Trenitalia bei der Entwicklung oder beim Bau der Hochgeschwindigkeitszüge mit Geldern aus dem Budget der Europäischen Union unterstützt worden? Wenn ja, in welchem Umfang und aus welchen Fördertöpfen?

2. Wenn ja, an welche Bedingungen waren diese Förderungen geknüpft?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(30. Januar 2013)

Die Kommission kann dem Herrn Abgeordneten mitteilen, dass für die Hochgeschwindigkeitszüge „Italo“ und „Frecciarossa 1000“ keinerlei EU-Mittel geflossen sind. Hingegen wurden für die ERTMS/ETCS-Ausrüstung bestimmter Fahrzeuge von Trenitalia Mittel aus der Haushaltslinie des Programms TEN-V bereitgestellt:

— Maßnahme 2007-IT-60102-P „ERTMS/ECTS-Migration für Bordausrüstung Trenitalia“ (Januar 2007-Dezember 2011, Gesamtkosten der Maßnahme: 14 000 000 EUR, EU-Unterstützung: 7 000 000 EUR), Maßnahme betreffend die ERTMS/ETCS-Ausrüstung von 18 ETR500, 12 ETR600, 15 ETR485 und 24 E403,

— Maßnahme 2011-IT-60002-P „Aufrüstung des ERTMS-Systems der Trenitalia-Flotte auf Version 2.3.0.d“ (Januar 2011-Juni 2014, Gesamtkosten der Maßnahme: 9 186 000 EUR, EU- Unterstützung: 4 593 000 EUR), Die Maßnahme betrifft die ERTMS/ECTS-Ausrüstung von 12 ETR600, 15 ETR485, 60 ETR500 und 7 ETR610.

In beiden Fällen war die Hauptbedingung für die Gewährung des Zuschusses die Verbesserung der Interoperabilität der Bordausrüstung unterschiedlicher Hersteller.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010744/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Financial support for high-speed trains

In April 2012 the private Italian transport company Nuovo Transporto Viaggiatori (NTV) launched the 'Italo' high-speed train, which will run between Milan and Naples at speeds of over 300 km/h. In September 2012 Italy's state rail company Trenitalia launched the 'Frecciarossa 1000' high-speed train, which is to run between Rome and Milan from 2014 and will reach speeds of up to 400 km/h.

1. Did NTV or Trenitalia receive financial support from the EU budget in connection with the development or construction of these high-speed trains? If so, what amount and under what funding headings?

2. If so, what conditions were attached to the support?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that no EU financial support has been awarded to 'Italo' high speed train nor the 'Frecciarossa 1000'. However, EU support has been provided for the equipment of dedicated fleets of Trenitalia with ERTMS-ETCS from the TEN-T programme budget line:

— Action 2007-IT-60102-P 'Migration towards ERTMS/ECTS for Trenitalia on-board equipment' (January 2007-December 2011, total action cost EUR 14 000 000, EU support EUR 7 000 000). The Action concerned the ERTMS-ETCS equipment of 18 ETR500, 12 ETR600, 15 ETR485 and 24 E403;

— Action 2011-IT-60002-P 'Upgrading of ERTMS system on Trenitalia fleet to 2.3.0.d version' (January 2011-June 2014, total action cost EUR 9 186 000, EU support EUR 4 593 000). The Action concerns the ERTMS-ECTS equipment of 12 ETR600, 15 ETR485, 60 ETR500 and 7 ETR610.

In both cases, the main condition attached to the award of the grant was the reinforcement of interoperability among on board equipment from different suppliers.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010745/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Παρατηρητήριο Οργανισμών Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης (ΟΤΑ) στην Ελλάδα

Στο νέο Μεσοπρόθεσμο Πλαίσιο Δημοσιονομικής Στρατηγικής για την Ελλάδα, προβλέπεται η σύσταση του «Παρατηρητηρίου Οικονομικής Αυτοτέλειας των ΟΤΑ», αρμόδιου για τη συνεχή παρακολούθηση της εκτέλεσης των προϋπολογισμών των ΟΤΑ και την επιβολή, σε περιπτώσεις απόκλισης από τους τιθέμενους στόχους, προγράμματος εξυγίανσης. Ο τρόπος υλοποίησης του προγράμματος «συνεπάγεται την υποχρέωση εφαρμογής, κατά περίπτωση μέρους ή του συνόλου» καθορισμένων παρεμβάσεων, μεταξύ των οποίων και οι: α) «αύξηση των ιδίων εσόδων από φόρους, τέλη, δικαιώματα και εισφορές», β) αύξηση του ανώτατου συντελεστή επιβολής του Τέλους Ακίνητης Περιουσίας για τα ακίνητα, σε ποσοστό μέχρι και 3‰ και επιβολή του τέλους υποχρεωτικά από το δήμο σύμφωνα με το ποσοστό αυτό, μέχρι την οικονομική εξυγίανση του», και γ) «ομοίως αύξηση του συντελεστή επιβολής του τέλους επί των ακαθαρίστων εσόδων και παρεπιδημούντων από 0,5% μέχρι και 2%».

Βάσει των ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Σε περίπτωση Δήμου που παρουσιάζει ελλείμματα, μπορεί το Παρατηρητήριο ή άλλη δημόσια αρχή να υποχρεώσει κάποιο Δήμο να λάβει τα συγκεκριμένα, ως ανωτέρω (α, β, γ) μέτρα, ανεξάρτητα από τη γνώμη του Δημάρχου ή του Δημοτικού Συμβουλίου, που ενδεχομένως θα ήθελαν να αντιπροτείνουν «ισοδύναμα μέτρα»;

— Με ποιο τρόπο συμβιβάζονται οι προβλέψεις του ανωτέρω νόμου με το άρθρο 102 του Συντάγματος που προβλέπει ότι «υπέρ των οργανισμών τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης συντρέχει τεκμήριο αρμοδιότητας για τη διοίκηση των τοπικών υποθέσεων» και «οι οργανισμοί τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης έχουν διοικητική και οικονομική αυτοτέλεια»;

— Με δεδομένο ότι οι ελληνικοί ΟΤΑ είναι οι λιγότερο χρεωμένοι στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, με ποσοστό δανεισμού μόλις 0,9% επί του ΑΕΠ (σύμφωνα με απάντηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής στην ερώτηση μου E-008244/2012), σε ποιες άλλες χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης έχει θεσπιστεί Παρατηρητήριο ΟΤΑ με ανάλογες αρμοδιότητες;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Οι διατάξεις του άρθρου 3 παράγραφος 5 της Πράξης Νομοθετικού Περιεχομένου που δημοσιεύτηκε στο ΦΕΚ της 18ης Νοεμβρίου 2012 εξασφαλίζουν τη συμμετοχή των οργανισμών τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης στην εξεύρεση λύσεων για την αντιμετώπιση αποκλίσεων από τον κανόνα περί ισοσκελισμένου προϋπολογισμού. Όπως αναφέρεται στην παράγραφο 6 του εν λόγω άρθρου, η τοπική κρατική αρχή υπόκειται υποχρεωτικά σε πρόγραμμα δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης μόνο σε περίπτωση που διαπιστωθεί ότι δεν έχουν ληφθεί διορθωτικά μέτρα. Ως εκ τούτου, οι πρωτοβουλίες των οργανισμών τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης λαμβάνονται πάντα υπόψη στο πλαίσιο της διαδικασίας, υπό τον όρο ότι είναι αξιόπιστες και αποτελεσματικές για να θέσουν τέρμα στη δημοσιονομική διολίσθηση.

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 119 παράγραφος 3 της ΣΛΕΕ, οι δράσεις των κρατών μελών συνεπάγονται την τήρηση, μεταξύ άλλων, των κατευθυντήριων αρχών για υγιή δημόσια οικονομικά. Συνεπώς, η οικονομική αυτοτέλεια των οργανισμών τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης θα πρέπει να ενταχθεί στο πλαίσιο της γενικής αρχής της υγιούς φορολογικής πολιτικής.

Η απαίτηση σύμφωνα με την οποία θα πρέπει οι μη κεντρικές κυβερνήσεις, και ιδίως η τοπική αυτοδιοίκηση, να υιοθετούν και να εφαρμόζουν ισοσκελισμένους προϋπολογισμούς δεν είναι κάτι σπάνιο. Σύμφωνα με τη βάση δεδομένων της Επιτροπής ([1]) για τα δημοσιονομικά πλαίσια, όχι λιγότερα από 13 κράτη μέλη εφαρμόζουν δημοσιονομικούς κανόνες για ισοσκελισμένους προϋπολογισμούς σε τοπικό επίπεδο ([2]). Η παρακολούθηση και η επιβολή της νομοθεσίας μπορεί να διαφέρουν από κράτος μέλος σε κράτος μέλος, μπορεί να χρησιμοποιούνται διαφορετικές μέθοδοι (π.χ. εξέταση σχεδίων προϋπολογισμών, περιορισμοί στη φορολόγηση ή στον δανεισμό) και μπορεί να συμμετέχουν διαφορετικά εποπτικά όργανα, όπως τα περιφερειακά ελεγκτικά συνέδρια στη Γαλλία, οι περιφερειακές εποπτικές αρχές στη Γερμανία ή το Συμβούλιο δημοσιονομικής πολιτικής στη Σουηδία. Για παράδειγμα, στη Δανία ο έλεγχος των δαπανών των οργανισμών τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης και του επιπέδου φορολόγησης διενεργείται μέσω νομοθετικών διατάξεων που επιβάλλουν μείωση των επιχορηγήσεων από την κεντρική κυβέρνηση σε περίπτωση απόκλισης από τους συμφωνηθέντες στόχους.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp91_en.pdf
([2]) BE, DE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, PL, PT, RO, SE και SK.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010745/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Local Authorities Observatory in Greece

The new Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy for Greece provides for the establishment of a local authorities financial independence observatory which will be responsible for permanently monitoring the implementation of local authorities' budgets and, in the event of any departure from the established objectives, imposing a public finance consolidation programme. The programme is to be implemented in a way that 'involves the obligation to apply, on a case-by-case basis, either part or all of the stipulated measures, including: "a) an increase its own revenues from taxes, fees, charges and levies", "b) an increase in the maximum rate of property rate to properties up to 3% and the mandatory imposition of this rate of tax by the municipality until its finances have been restored" and "c) likewise, an increase the rate of tax on gross revenue and duty on the purchase of temporary residence in short-term accommodation from 0.5% up to 2%." (Quoted from the government local authorities' bill)'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

A. In the event that a municipality runs a deficit, can the observatory or any other public authority require it to take the specific measures referred to above (a, b and c), regardless of the opinion of the mayor or the municipal council, who may well wish to counter-propose 'equivalent measures'?

B. How can the provisions of the above law be squared with Article 102 of the Hellenic Constitution which provides that: 'For the administration of local affairs, the presumption of competence concurs in favour of local government agencies… Local government agencies shall enjoy administrative and financial independence.'?

C. Given that Greek local authorities are the least a indebted in the European Union, with a borrowing rate of only 0.9% of GDP (according to Commission's answer to my Question E-008244/2012), in which other countries of the Union has a local authorities observatory been established with comparable powers?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

The Provisions of Article 3 paragraph 5 of the Legislative Act published in the Official Gazette of 18 November 2012 ensure the involvement of the local authorities in identifying solutions to address deviations from a balanced budget rule. As stated in paragraph 6 of that Act, the local government authority shall be compulsorily subject to a consolidation programme only in case it is found that the corrective measures have not been taken. Therefore the local government initiatives are always taken into consideration by the process provided that they are credible and effective to put an end to the fiscal slippage.

According to Article 119(3) of the TFEU, activities of the Member States (MS) shall entail compliance *inter alia* with the guiding principles of sound public finances. Therefore, the financial independence of local governments has to be framed within a general principle of sound fiscal policy.

The requirement that sub-national governments, and in particular local authorities, adopt and enforce balanced budgets is not rare. According to the Commission database ([1]) on fiscal frameworks, no less than 13 Member States (MS) have in place balanced-budget fiscal rules at the local level ([2]). Monitoring and enforcement may vary from MS to MS, can involve different methods (e.g. vetting of draft budgets, restrictions on taxation or borrowing) and may involve different supervisory bodies such as regional courts of auditors in France, regional supervisory authorities in Germany, or the Fiscal Policy Council in Sweden. For instance, in Denmark control over local government expenditure and taxation level is enforced in Denmark through legislative provisions imposing cuts in grants from the central government in case of deviation from agreed targets.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2012/pdf/ocp91_en.pdf
([2]) BE, DE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, PL, PT, RO, SE and SK.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010746/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Έρευνα της Επιτροπής για τον ελληνικό νόμο 4021/2011

Στην ερώτησή μου E-008614/2012, σχετικά με την πώληση της Αγροτικής Τράπεζας της Ελλάδας και την παραβίαση του άρθρου 3 παράγραφος 1 της οδηγίας 98/50/ΕΚ, όπως τροποποιήθηκε από την οδηγία 2001/23/ΕΚ, μου απάντησε η Επιτροπή ότι, «Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 5 της εν λόγω οδηγίας, εκτός και εάν τα κράτη μέλη προβλέπουν άλλως, η αρχή αυτή δεν ισχύει για μεταβιβάσεις όπου ο εκχωρητής υπόκειται σε διαδικασία αφερεγγυότητας κινηθείσα με σκοπό την εκκαθάριση των περιουσιακών στοιχείων του εκχωρητή και η οποία διεξάγεται υπό την εποπτεία αρμόδιας δημόσιας αρχής. Επιπλέον, η προστασία των εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων των εργαζομένων παρέχεται μόνο στην περίπτωση όπου υπάρχει μεταβίβαση κατά την έννοια της εν λόγω οδηγίας» καθώς και ότι, «η Επιτροπή συγκεντρώνει επί του παρόντος πληροφορίες με σκοπό να εξακριβώσει αν οι διατάξεις του Ν. 4021/2011 συμμορφώνονται με την εν λόγω οδηγία και θα γνωστοποιήσει το συντομότερο τα αποτέλεσματά της».

Με βάση τα ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Ποιοι είναι οι λόγοι έρευνας του Ν. 4021/2011; Ποια είναι τα σημεία στα οποία επικεντρώνεται για τη «συμμόρφωση των διατάξεων του Ν. 4021/2011 με την οδηγία 2001/23/ΕΚ»; Με βάση ποια διαδικασία διεξάγεται η έρευνα; Πότε αναμένονται τα αποτελέσματα της έρευνας αυτής;

— Έχει ελέγξει εάν η Αγροτική Τράπεζα, κατά την πώλησή της, υπόκειτο σε διαδικασία αφερεγγυότητας; Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή πόσο στοίχισε στο ελληνικό δημόσιο η μεταβίβαση στο «κακό» τμήμα της ΑΤΕ, των υποχρεώσεων της Τράπεζας;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(30 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στην ερώτηση E-8614/2012 ([1]), στην οποία παρέχονται όλες τις απαιτούμενες πληροφορίες σχετικά με την εξέταση των σχετικών διατάξεων της ελληνικής νομοθεσίας. Παράλληλα, συγκεντρώνει στοιχεία από ανεξάρτητες πηγές με σκοπό να αξιολογήσει εάν ο νόμος 4021/2011 είναι σύμφωνος με την οδηγία 2001/23/ΕΚ ([2]) και θα αποστείλει μια ξεχωριστή έρευνα στις ελληνικές αρχές έως το τέλος του Ιανουαρίου 2013, προκειμένου να επιβεβαιώσει συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία. Θα κοινοποιήσει τα πορίσματά της το συντομότερο δυνατό.

Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να επισημάνει ξανά ότι οι εθνικές αρχές και πιθανώς και τα εθνικά δικαστήρια είναι αρμόδια να επιβεβαιώσουν, στηριζόμενα στο σύνολο των πραγματικών περιστατικών, εάν η μεταβίβαση πραγματοποιήθηκε κατά την έννοια της οδηγίας 2001/23/ΕΚ και εάν ο γενικός κανόνας που περιλαμβάνει την αυτόματη μεταβίβαση των συμβατικών δικαιωμάτων και υποχρεώσεων στον νέο εργοδότη πρέπει να εφαρμοστεί στην συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση. Τα εθνικά δικαστήρια είναι αρμόδια για την διεύρυνση της κατάστασης ώστε να καταλήξουν εάν, κατά την περίοδο της τεκμαιρόμενης μεταβίβασης, ο εκχωρητής υπόκειτο σε διαδικασία αφερεγγυότητας. Όσον αφορά το κόστος για το ελληνικό κράτος, η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στις αρμόδιες εθνικές αρχές, οι οποίες θα είναι σε θέση να παρέχουν τα αντίστοιχα δεδομένα.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) ΕΕ L 82 της 22.3.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010746/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Commission investigation into Greek Law 4021/2011

In its answer to my question QE-008614/2012 on the sale of the Agricultural Bank of Greece (ATEbank) and the violation of Article 3, paragraph 1, of Directive 98/50/EC, as amended by Directive 2001/23/EC, the Commission stated that: 'In accordance with Article 5 of the directive, unless Member States provide otherwise, this principle does not apply to transfers where the transferor is the subject of insolvency proceedings instituted with a view to the liquidation of the assets of the transferor and are under the supervision of a competent public authority. The protection is also only afforded to employees in case there is a transfer within the meaning of the directive…' and 'The Commission is currently collecting information in order to ascertain whether the provisions of Law 4021/2011 comply with the directive. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

a) What are its reasons for investigating Law 4021/2011? What are the points on which it is focusing to ascertain whether the provisions of Law 4021/2011 comply with Directive 2001/23/EC? What procedure is the investigation based on? When are the results of this investigation due?

b) Has it checked whether, at the time it was sold, ATEbank was subject to insolvency proceedings? Does it know how much the transfer to the 'bad' branch of the ATEbank's liabilities cost the Greek state?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Question E-8614/2012 ([1]), which provides the requisite information on its examination of the relevant provisions of Greek law. It has been collecting information from independent sources with a view to assessing the conformity of Law 4021/2011 with Directive 2001/23/EC ([2]), and will send a separate enquiry to the Greek authorities by the end of January 2013 in order to confirm certain particulars. It will communicate its findings as soon as possible.

The Commission would point out again that it is for the national authorities and possibly for the national courts to ascertain, on the basis of all the factual circumstances, whether a transfer within the meaning of Directive 2001/23/EC took place, and whether the general rule involving the automatic transfer of contractual rights and obligations to the new employer should apply in this particular case. The national courts are competent for investigating the situation with a view to concluding whether, at the time of the presumed transfer, the transferor was subject to insolvency proceedings. As regards the cost to the Greek State, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the competent national authorities, which should be able to provide the relevant data.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) OJ L 82, 22.3.2001.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010747/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE) και Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE)
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Πρόωροι τοκετοί στην Ευρώπη — ενίσχυση της ενημέρωσης για την πρόληψη του φαινομένου

Τα τελευταία είκοσι χρόνια παρουσιάζεται σημαντική αύξηση του αριθμού των πρόωρων τοκετών, με βασική αιτία αφενός το γεγονός ότι πλέον περισσότερα ζευγάρια καταφεύγουν στην υποβοηθούμενη αναπαραγωγή και αφετέρου το ότι παρατηρείται σοβαρό έλλειμμα ενημέρωσης για τους παράγοντες που μπορεί να οδηγήσουν σε πρόωρη γέννηση. Στην Ευρώπη σχεδόν μισό εκατομμύριο μωρά γεννιούνται πρόωρα — δηλαδή νωρίτερα από τις 37 εβδομάδες κύησης. Η πρόωρη γέννηση είναι μία από τις βασικές αιτίες που σχετίζεται με την παιδική θνησιμότητα και νοσηρότητα, τόσο στις αναπτυγμένες όσο και τις αναπτυσσόμενες χώρες, με τη διαφορά ότι είναι η μόνη που μπορεί να προληφθεί. Μπορεί η βασική αιτία του εν λόγω φαινομένου να παραμένει άγνωστη, ωστόσο, έχουν ταυτοποιηθεί παράγοντες κινδύνου που μπορεί λειτουργήσουν αρνητικά. Σύμφωνα με ειδικούς, φαίνεται να υπάρχει έντονο κενό στην ενημέρωση αναφορικά με τους παράγοντες κινδύνου, τα προειδοποιητικά σημεία ή τις αλλαγές του τρόπου ζωής προκειμένου να ενισχυθεί η πρόληψη και επομένως να μειωθεί το φαινόμενο.

Σύμφωνα με τα παραπάνω ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Ποιες χώρες διαθέτουν μια συνεκτική πολιτική ενημέρωσης και καθοδήγησης των γονέων για το ζήτημα του πρόωρου τοκετού;

— Ποια είναι τα ποσοστά επιπολασμού της πρόωρης γέννησης στα κράτη μέλη;

— Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία που διαθέτει η Επιτροπή υπάρχουν επαρκείς μονάδες νοσηλείας πρόωρων νεογνών στα κράτη μέλη; Παρατηρούνται αποκλίσεις μεταξύ αστικών κέντρων και περιφέρειας; Αν ναι, ποιες οι επιπτώσεις στην υγεία των νεογνών;

— Πρόκειται να υπάρξουν συστάσεις για μια ενιαία και αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση της στρατηγικής πρόληψης του εν λόγω φαινομένου προς τα κράτη μέλη; Διατίθενται ευρωπαϊκά κονδύλια προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει ολοκληρωμένες πληροφορίες σχετικά με τις εθνικές πολιτικές οι οποίες αφορούν το ζήτημα του πρόωρου τοκετού. Ωστόσο, μερικές πληροφορίες παρέχονται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Ίδρυμα για τη φροντίδα των νεογνών (EFCNI ([1])).

Τα κράτη μέλη χρησιμοποιούν διαφορετικούς ορισμούς ή δείκτες για να συγκεντρώσουν στοιχεία σχετικά με τα ποσοστά των πρόωρων τοκετών. Κατά συνέπεια, δεν υπάρχουν συνεπή στοιχεία όσον αφορά τα ποσοστά επιπολασμού της πρόωρης γέννησης σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο.

Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει προγράμματα (EURO-PERISTAT ([2]) και EuroNeoStat ([3])) στον τομέα της περιγεννητικής υγείας. Το πρόγραμμα EuroNeoStat στοχεύει στη βελτίωση των πολιτικών των κρατών μελών στο ζήτημα των πρόωρων τοκετών, για παράδειγμα μέσω του προσδιορισμού πρότυπων δεικτών, όπως ο χρόνος κύησης ή το βάρος γέννησης. Το πρόγραμμα EURO-PERISTAT στοχεύει στην παρακολούθηση και την εκτίμηση της υγείας της μητέρας και του παιδιού κατά την περιγεννητική περίοδο — κύηση, τοκετό και λοχεία — χρησιμοποιώντας έγκυρους και αξιόπιστους δείκτες.

Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 168(7) της Συνθήκης για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, η οργάνωση και η παροχή ιατροφαρμακευτικής περίθαλψης είναι αποκλειστική ευθύνη των κρατών μελών. Το ίδιο ισχύει και για την ιατροφαρμακευτική περίθαλψη των νεογνών που έχουν γεννηθεί πρόωρα. Επομένως, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει στη διάθεση της τις απαραίτητες πληροφορίες, ώστε να αξιολογήσει εάν υπάρχουν επαρκείς μονάδες νοσηλείας πρόωρων νεογνών, ούτε και θα ήταν σκόπιμο να προτείνει συστάσεις σε επίπεδο ΕΕ προκειμένου να αναπτυχθεί μια ενιαία προσέγγιση.

([1]) http://www.efcni.org/.
([2]) http://www.europeristat.com/.
([3]) http://www.euroneonet.eu/paginas/publicas/euroneo/euroNeoStat/index.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010747/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE) and Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Premature births in Europe — raising awareness to help prevention

The last twenty years have seen a significant increase in the number of premature births, one main reason being that more couples now resort to assisted reproduction and that there is a serious lack of information about the factors that can lead to premature births. In Europe, almost half a million babies are born prematurely — i.e. earlier than 37 weeks' pregnancy. Premature birth is one of the main causes of child mortality and morbidity in developed and developing countries alike, but it is the only cause that is preventable. Even if the root cause of this phenomenon is not yet known, a number of risk factors have been identified that may have an adverse effect. According to experts, there seems to be a serious lack of information regarding risk factors, warning signs or lifestyle changes that could assist prevention and hence reduce the number of premature babies being born.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Which countries have a coherent information policy offering advice to parents about premature birth?

— What are the prevalence rates for premature birth in the Member States?

— According to the information available to it, are there a sufficient number of premature baby units in Member States? Have any divergences been noted between urban and regional centres? If so, what is the impact on the health of newborn babies?

— Will recommendations be issued to the Member States to develop a uniform and effective approach to a premature birth prevention strategy? Are EU funds available for this purpose?

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

The Commission does not have comprehensive information on national policies concerning premature births. Some information is provided by the European Foundation for the care of new-born babies (EFCNI ([1])).

Member States are using different definitions or indicators to collect data on the rates of premature births. As a consequence, there is no consistent data on the prevalence of premature births at European level.

In this context, the Commission is supporting projects (EURO-PERISTAT ([2]) and EuroNeoStat ([3])) in the area of perinatal health. The EuroNeoStat project aims to improve Member States' policies in the area of premature birth, for example through defined standard indicators, such as degree of prematurity or birth weight. The EURO-PERISTAT project aims to monitor and evaluate maternal and child health in the perinatal period — pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum — using valid and reliable indicators.

According to Article 168(7) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the organisation and the delivery of healthcare is under the responsibility of Member States. This applies also to healthcare for premature babies. The Commission therefore does not have the necessary information to assess whether or not there are sufficient numbers of premature baby units, nor would it be appropriate to issue recommendations at EU level to develop a uniform approach.

([1]) http://www.efcni.org/.
([2]) http://www.europeristat.com/.
([3]) http://www.euroneonet.eu/paginas/publicas/euroneo/euroNeoStat/index.html

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-010748/12
до Комисията
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Renate Weber (ALDE), Françoise Castex (S&D), Véronique Mathieu (PPE), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) и Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(27 ноември 2012 г.)

Относно: Отказ за прекратяване на бременност

Според публикации в пресата г-жа Savita Halappanavar, 31-годишна, приета в Университетската болница Galway, Западна Ирландия, миналия месец, е починала от септицемия, седмица след като е направила спонтанен аборт в 17. седмица от бременността си. Неедноkратните ѝ искания за прекъсване на бременността са били отхвърлени заради наличието на сърдечна дейност на плода. Както се твърди, отговорните лекари са отказали да извършат аборта, защото това би било незаконно според ирландското законодателство относно прекъсването на бременността.

Би ли могла Комисията да потвърди дали решението да се постави животът на плода преди живота на г-жа Halappanavar представлява нарушение на правото ѝ на живот? Смята ли Комисията, че пълната забрана на абортите би могла да бъде пречка за прилагането на член 2 от Хартата на основните права на Европейския съюз, т.е. правото на живот? Би ли могла Комисията, като пазителка на договорите, да посочи как това ще гарантира пълното прилагане на член 2, правото на живот, за всички граждани на ЕС?

Смята ли Комисията, че когато съществуваща политика на държава — членка на ЕС, неизбежно води до нарушаването на член 2 от Хартата на основните права на Европейския съюз, тази практика следва да бъде прекратена?

Може ли Комисията да потвърди дали смята, че Ирландия правилно е приложила решение A, B и B с/у Ирландия [2010] ЕКПЧ 2032?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Рединг от името на Комисията
(6 февруари 2013 г.)

Уважаемите членове на Парламента се позовават на предполагаемия отказ на отговорните лекари да прекратят бременност заради националното законодателство относно абортите. Този случай попада извън приложното поле на правото на ЕС. Съгласно Договора за Европейския съюз и Договора за функционирането на Европейския съюз Европейският съюз няма правомощия в областта на политиката за абортите на национално ниво и поради това не може да се намесва в политиките на държавите членки в тази област.

В съответствие с член 51 от Хартата на основните права на Европейския съюз разпоредбите на Хартата се отнасят за институциите, органите, службите и агенциите на Съюза при зачитане на принципа на субсидиарност, както и за държавите членки единствено когато те прилагат правото на Съюза. По тези причини Комисията не е в състояние да се намеси в конкретния случай.

И накрая, надзорът на изпълнението на решенията на Европейския съд по правата на човека е от компетентността на Комитета на министрите на Съвета на Европа. Комисията няма за задача да дава оценка на последващите действия на държавите членки, свързани с тези съдебни решения.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010748/12
à la Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Renate Weber (ALDE), Françoise Castex (S&D), Véronique Mathieu (PPE), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) et Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(27 novembre 2012)

Objet: Refus de l'interruption de grossesse

D'après les médias, Mme Savita Halappanavar, âgée de 31 ans, admise le mois dernier à l'hôpital universitaire de Galway, dans l'ouest de l'Irlande, est décédée de septicémie une semaine après avoir fait une fausse couche, alors qu'elle était enceinte de 17 semaines. Elle avait demandé à plusieurs reprises aux médecins de mettre un terme à sa grossesse, ce qui lui avait été refusé en raison de la présence d'un rythme cardiaque fœtal. Les médecins responsables n'auraient pas voulu pratiquer l'avortement car il aurait été considéré comme illégal, en vertu de la loi irlandaise en la matière.

La Commission peut-elle indiquer si la décision de faire prévaloir la vie du fœtus sur celle de Mme Halappanavar constitue une violation de son droit à la vie? Estime-t-elle qu'une interdiction absolue de l'avortement peut empêcher la bonne application de l'article 2 de la Charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, c'est-à-dire le droit à la vie? La Commission peut-elle expliquer, en tant que gardienne des traités, comment veiller à la pleine application de l'article 2 — le droit à la vie — pour tous les citoyens européens?

La Commission est-elle d'avis qu'il y a lieu de rendre sans effet une politique en vigueur dans un État membre si celle-ci mène inévitablement à la violation de l'article 2 de la Charte précitée?

La Commission peut-elle préciser si elle estime que l'Irlande a correctement respecté l'arrêt A, B et C c/Irlande de la Cour européenne des Droits de l'homme, de 2010 (CEDH 2032)?

Réponse donnée par Mme Reding au nom de la Commission
(6 février 2013)

Les Honorables Parlementaires évoquent le refus allégué de la part d'autorités sanitaires d'interrompre une grossesse en raison de la législation d'un État membre relative à l'avortement. Une telle situation ne relève pas du droit de l'Union. Conformément au traité sur l'Union européenne et au traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, l'UE ne dispose d'aucune prérogative en matière de politique nationale relative à l'avortement et ne peut, par conséquent, pas intervenir dans les politiques des États membres dans ce domaine.

En vertu de l'article 51 de la charte des droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne, les dispositions de ladite charte s'adressent aux institutions, organes et organismes de l'Union dans le respect du principe de subsidiarité, ainsi qu'aux États membres uniquement lorsqu'ils mettent en œuvre le droit de l'Union. C'est pourquoi la Commission n'est pas en mesure d'intervenir dans le cas présent.

Enfin, la supervision de l'exécution des arrêts de la Cour européenne des Droits de l'homme relève de la compétence du comité des ministres du Conseil de l'Europe. Il ne revient pas à la Commission d'évaluer le respect de ces arrêts par les États membres.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010748/12
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Renate Weber (ALDE), Françoise Castex (S&D), Véronique Mathieu (PPE), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) en Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(27 november 2012)

Betreft: Weigering om zwangerschap te beëindigen

Volgens mediaberichten overleed Savita Halappanavar (31 jaar), die afgelopen in het universiteitsziekenhuis van Galway in West-Ierland werd opgenomen, door een bloedvergiftiging, een week nadat zij vroegtijdig van haar 17 weken oude baby was bevallen. Haar herhaalde verzoeken om beëindiging van haar zwangerschap werden afgewezen omdat het hart van de foetus nog klopte. De verantwoordelijke artsen hadden naar verluidt een abortus geweigerd, aangezien deze krachtens de Ierse wetgeving inzake de beëindiging van zwangerschappen onwettig had kunnen zijn.

Kan de Commissie verduidelijken of het besluit om het leven van de foetus boven het leven van Savita Halappanavar te stellen, een schending vormt van haar recht op leven? Is de Commissie van oordeel dat een absoluut verbod op abortus bijgevolg de toepassing van artikel 2 van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie, dat wil zeggen van het recht op leven, verhindert? Kan de Commissie aangeven hoe zij, als hoedster van de Verdragen, wil waarborgen dat artikel 2 inzake het recht op leven onverkort voor alle EU-burgers wordt toegepast?

Is de Commissie van oordeel dat, wanneer het gevestigde beleid van een EU-lidstaat onontkoombaar leidt tot de schending van artikel 2 van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie, dit beleid moet worden afgeschaft?

Kan de Commissie verduidelijken of zij van oordeel is dat Ierland het arrest A, B en C tegen Ierland [2010] EHRM 2032 naar behoren heeft uitgevoerd?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(6 februari 2013)

De geachte Parlementsleden verwijzen naar de vermeende weigering van de geneeskundige autoriteiten om op grond van de nationale wetgeving inzake abortus een zwangerschap te beëindigen. Deze situatie valt buiten het toepassingsgebied van het EU-recht. Volgens het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie en het Verdrag betreffende de werking van de Europese Unie heeft de EU geen bevoegdheden inzake het abortusbeleid op nationaal niveau en kan zij daarom niet tussenbeide komen in het beleid van de lidstaten op dit gebied.

Volgens artikel 51 van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie zijn de bepalingen in het Handvest gericht tot de instellingen, organen, instanties en agentschappen van de Unie met inachtneming van het subsidiariteitsbeginsel en tot de lidstaten, uitsluitend wanneer zij het recht van de Unie ten uitvoer brengen. Derhalve kan de Commissie in deze zaak niet tussenbeide komen.

Ten slotte, het toezicht op de tenuitvoerlegging van de uitspraken van het Europees Hof voor de rechten van de mens valt binnen de bevoegdheden van het Comité van ministers van de Raad van Europa. Het is niet aan de Commissie om de follow-up van dergelijke uitspraken door de lidstaten te beoordelen.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010748/12
adresată Comisiei
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Renate Weber (ALDE), Françoise Castex (S&D), Véronique Mathieu (PPE), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) şi Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(27 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Refuzul de a efectua o întrerupere de sarcină

Conform relatărilor din presă, dna Savita Halappanavar, de 31 de ani, admisă luna trecută la Spitalul Universitar Galway, din vestul Irlandei, a murit de septicemie după ce a pierdut o sarcină de 17 săptămâni. Cererile ei repetate de efectuare a unui chiuretaj au fost refuzate, din cauza prezenței ritmului cardiac la foetus. Se pare că doctorii responsabili au refuzat efectuarea chiuretajului, acesta fiind ilegal în temeiul legii privind întreruperea de sarcină.

Ar putea Comisia să clarifice dacă decizia de a pune viața foetusului mai presus de cea a dnei Halappanavar reprezintă o violare a dreptului ei la viață? Este de opinie Comisia că o interzicere absolută a avortului poate astfel, împiedica aplicarea articolului 2 din Carta Drepturilor Fundamentale a Uniunii Europene, adică dreptul la viață? Poate Comisia preciza în ce mod, în calitate de gardian al tratatelor, va asigura aplicarea deplină a articolului 2, pentru toți cetățenii UE?

Consideră Comisia că, în cazul în care o politică în vigoare a unui stat membru al UE conduce la violarea articolului 2 din Carta Drepturilor Fundamentale a Uniunii Europene, această practică trebuie eliminată?

Poate Comisia preciza dacă Irlanda a aplicat în mod corespunzător hotărârea A, B și C/Irlanda, Culegere 2010, p. 2032?

Răspuns dat de dna Reding în numele Comisiei
(6 februarie 2013)

Distinsele membre se referă la presupusul refuz al autorităților medicale de a întrerupe o sarcină, din cauza legislației naționale privind avortul. Această situație nu intră sub incidența legislației UE. În conformitate cu Tratatul privind Uniunea Europeană și cu Tratatul privind funcționarea Uniunii Europene, UE nu are competențe în ceea ce privește politica la nivel național în materie de avort și, prin urmare, nu poate interveni în politicile statelor membre în acest domeniu.

Articolul 51 din Carta drepturilor fundamentale a Uniunii Europene prevede că dispozițiile cartei se adresează instituțiilor, organelor, oficiilor și agențiilor Uniunii, cu respectarea principiului subsidiarității, precum și statelor membre numai în cazul în care acestea pun în aplicare dreptul Uniunii. Din aceste motive, Comisia nu este în măsură să intervină în cazul evocat.

În sfârșit, supravegherea executării hotărârilor Curții Europene a Drepturilor Omului ține de competența Comitetului Miniștrilor Consiliului Europei. Comisiei nu îi revine rolul de a evalua acțiunile pe care statele membre le întreprind ca urmare a acestor hotărâri.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-010748/12
komissiolle
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Renate Weber (ALDE), Françoise Castex (S&D), Véronique Mathieu (PPE), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) ja Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(27. marraskuuta 2012)

Aihe: Raskaudenkeskeytyksen kieltäminen

Tiedotusvälineiden mukaan 31-vuotia Savita Halappanavar otettiin viime kuussa Länsi-Irlannissa olevaan Galwayn yliopistolliseen sairaalaan, jossa hän kuoli verenmyrkytykseen viikko sen jälkeen, kun hänellä oli ollut keskenmeno 17. raskausviikolla. Hän oli pyytänyt toistuvasti raskaudenkeskeytystä, mutta pyyntöön ei suostuttu, koska sikiön sydänääniä kuului vielä. Päivystysvuorossa olleiden lääkäreiden kerrotaan kieltäytyneen abortin tekemisestä, koska se olisi saattanut olla raskaudenkeskeytystä koskevan Irlannin lain nojalla laitonta.

Voiko komissio kertoa, loukkasiko päätös sikiön elämän asettamisesta Halappanavarin elämän edelle tämän naisen oikeutta elämään? Katsooko komissio, että ehdoton aborttikielto saattaa siten estää soveltamasta Euroopan unionin perusoikeuskirjan 2 artiklaa, jossa taataan oikeus elämään? Voiko komissio ilmoittaa, miten se varmistaa perussopimusten täytäntöönpanon valvojana, että kyseistä 2 artiklaa (Oikeus elämään) sovelletaan EU:n kaikkiin kansalaisiin?

Onko komissio sitä mieltä, että jos jonkin EU:n jäsenvaltion harjoittama pysyvä politiikka johtaa vääjäämättä Euroopan unionin perusoikeuskirjan 2 artiklan rikkomiseen, kyseinen käytäntö on lopetettava?

Katsooko komissio, että Irlanti on pannut asianmukaisesti täytäntöön Euroopan ihmisoikeustuomioistuimen vuonna 2010 tekemän päätöksen asiassa A., B. ja C. vs. Irlanti (ECHR 2032)?

Viviane Redingin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(6. helmikuuta 2013)

Parlamentin jäsenet viittaavat väitettyyn tilanteeseen, jossa lääkintähenkilöstö kieltäytyi keskeyttämästä raskautta vedoten kansalliseen raskaudenkeskeytystä koskevaan lainsäädäntöön. Tilanne ei kuulu EU:n lainsäädännön piiriin. Euroopan unionista ja Euroopan unionin toiminnasta tehtyjen sopimusten mukaan EU:lla ei ole toimivaltaa raskaudenkeskeytystä koskevassa politiikassa kansallisella tasolla, joten se ei voi puuttua jäsenvaltioiden politiikkaan tällä alalla.

Euroopan unionin perusoikeuskirjan 51 artiklassa todetaan, että ”tämän perusoikeuskirjan määräykset koskevat unionin toimielimiä, elimiä ja laitoksia toissijaisuusperiaatteen mukaisesti sekä jäsenvaltioita ainoastaan silloin, kun viimeksi mainitut soveltavat unionin oikeutta”. Komissio ei näin ollen voi puuttua kyseessä olevaan tapaukseen.

Euroopan ihmisoikeustuomioistuimen tuomioiden täytäntöönpanon valvonta kuuluu Euroopan neuvoston ministerikomitean toimivaltaan. Komission tehtävänä ei ole arvioida kyseisten tuomioiden noudattamista jäsenvaltioissa.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010748/12
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Renate Weber (ALDE), Françoise Castex (S&D), Véronique Mathieu (PPE), Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE), Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) and Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Refusal to terminate a pregnancy

According to media reports, Ms Savita Halappanavar, 31, admitted to University Hospital Galway in the west of Ireland last month, died of septicaemia a week after miscarrying 17 weeks into her pregnancy. Her repeated requests for termination had been rejected because of the presence of a foetal heartbeat. The doctors in charge had allegedly refused to carry out an abortion because this might have been illegal under Irish law regarding the termination of pregnancies.

Can the Commission clarify whether the decision to put the life of the foetus over that of Ms Halappanavar constitutes a violation of her right to life? Does the Commission consider that an absolute ban on abortion might thus prevent the application of Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, i.e. the right to life? Can the Commission indicate how, as the custodian of the Treaties, it will ensure the full application of Article 2, the right to life, for all EU citizens?

Is the Commission of the opinion that, where a standing policy of an EU Member State inevitably leads to the violation of Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, this practice needs to be abolished?

Can the Commission clarify whether it considers that Ireland has properly implemented the ruling A, B and C v Ireland [2010] ECHR 2032?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2013)

The Honourable Members refer to the alleged refusal of medical authorities to terminate a pregnancy because of the national legislation on abortion. This situation falls outside the scope of EC law. According to the Treaty of the European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the EU has no competences on abortion policy at national level and can therefore not intervene in Member States' policies in this area.

According to Article 51 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity and to the Member States only when they are implementing Union law. For these reasons, the Commission is not in a position to intervene in the present case.

Finally, the supervision of execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights falls within the competences of the committee of ministers of the Council of Europe. It is not for the Commission to assess the follow-up of Member States of such judgments.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-010749/12
до Комисията
Slavi Binev (NI)
(27 ноември 2012 г.)

Относно: Значението на приноса на заинтересованите страни

Наскоро ГД „Съобщителни мрежи, съдържание и технологии“ предприе рядко срещан метод на конфронтация спрямо България, като инициира пилотни производства и дела за нарушение, без да се осведоми за приноса на съответните заинтересовани страни.

Известно ми е, че повечето информация относно пазара, от която се нуждае Комисията, във връзка с прилагането на правилата на ЕС за далекосъобщенията в България е или обществено или лесно достъпна чрез операторите.

Вместо това Комисията избира да се обърне към правителството, като го конфронтира за подобна информация по формалистичен начин със съответните крайни срокове. С други членове на ЕП Комисията се отнася по много по-прагматичен начин и поради тази причина вероятно постига по-голям успех.

Комисията ще осъзнае, че в настоящия икономически климат всички държави членки имат важни приоритетни въпроси, които стоят на дневен ред. Поради тази причина би било много по-ползотворно, ако Комисията използва наличните пазарни , вместо да харчи ресурсите, финансовите средства и времето на двете страни за маловажни въпроси относно прилагането на правилата на ЕС за далекосъобщенията.

1. Признава ли Комисията същественото значение на участието на заинтересованите страни във взимането на решения?

2. Съгласна ли е Комисията, че обменът на информация е съществен елемент в този процес?

3. Ако е така, защо Комисията не разчита на точната и навременна информация, която се предоставя от заинтересованите страни?

Отговор, даден от г-жа Крус от името на Комисията
(18 януари 2013 г.)

Комисията счита, че за наблюдението на законодателното и пазарното развитие в сектора на електронните комуникации във всички държави членки са важни както двустранните връзки с органите в съответната държава членка, така и диалогът със заинтересованите страни. Що се отнася до контактите с органите на държавите членки, разследвания се използват основно на един ранен етап за изясняване на въпроси, засягащи прилагането на законодателството на ЕС или съгласуваността на законодателството на дадена държава членка с това на ЕС. Този предпазен инструмент не бива да се бърка с процедурите за нарушение, предвидени в член 258 на ДФЕС.

Освен това, наред с редовните контакти и кореспонденция със заинтересованите страни през цялата година, по инициатива на Комисията се организират също срещи със съответните заинтересовани страни като част от мисиите, провеждани във всяка от държавите членки в рамките на изготвянето на ежегодните доклади за развитието на сектора по Програмата в областта на цифровите технологии. Всички тези контакти дават възможност на Комисията да взема информирани решения.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010749/12
to the Commission
Slavi Binev (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: The importance of stakeholder input

DG Connect has recently adopted a rather confrontational approach towards Bulgaria, initiating infringement proceedings in pilot cases without seeking the input of the relevant stakeholders.

Most of the market information the Commission needs on EU telecoms implementation in Bulgaria is either publicly available or easily available from the operators.

Instead, the Commission has chosen to confrontationally approach the Bulgarian Government for such information in a formalistic way, with deadlines for this. The Commission behaves in a far more pragmatic manner towards other EU Member States and is probably, therefore, far more successful.

The Commission will understand that in the current economic climate all Member States have important priority issues on their agenda. It would, therefore, be more fruitful if the Commission made use of the market sources available instead of wasting resources, money and time — on both sides — for minor telecoms implementation issues.

1. Does the Commission recognise the fundamental importance of stakeholder participation in decision making?

2. Does the Commission agree that the exchange of information is a crucial element in this process?

3. If so, why does the Commission not rely on the accurate and timely information supplied by stakeholders?

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

The Commission considers that both bilateral communications with Member State authorities and dialogue with stakeholders are important to monitor regulatory and market developments on the electronic communications sector in all Member States. As regards contacts with Member State authorities, investigations are generally used to clarify at an early stage issues concerning the application of EC law or the conformity of the law in a Member State with EC law. This prevention tool should not be confused with infringement proceedings launched under Article 258 TFEU.

In addition, besides its regular contacts and correspondence with stakeholders throughout the year, Commission services also take the initiative of meeting with relevant stakeholders as part of the missions conducted in each of the Member States in the framework of the annual reporting on the development of the sector under the Digital Agenda Scoreboard. All those contacts allow the Commission to take informed decisions.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010750/12
to the Commission
David Martin (S&D)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Humane killing of farmed fish

I refer to the Commission's answer E-008181/2012 to my written question. The answer refers to Article 27 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. Article 27 requires the Commission to submit a report no later than 8 December 2014 on the possibility of introducing certain requirements regarding the protection of fish at the time of killing.

My question, however, focused on Article 3(1) of Regulation 1099/2009, which comes into force on 1 January 2013. Article 1 makes it clear that Article 3(1) applies to farmed fish. Article 3(1) provides that animals must be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing.

My question pointed out that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) had concluded in scientific opinions in 2009 that certain commonly used methods of killing farmed rainbow trout in EU aquaculture, and all the common methods of killing farmed sea bass and sea bream, involved poor welfare practices and suffering.

In addition, Article 7.3.6(4) of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Aquatic Animal Health Code (Chapter 7.3: Welfare aspects of stunning and killing of farmed fish for human consumption) states that the following slaughter methods have been shown to result in poor fish welfare and therefore should not be used: chilling with ice in holding water, carbon dioxide (CO_2) in holding water, chilling with ice and CO_2 in holding water, salt or ammonia baths, asphyxiation by removal from water, and exsanguination without stunning. These methods are used in EU aquaculture.

It is clear from the EFSA opinions and the OIE recommendations that certain commonly used methods of killing farmed fish breach Article 3(1) of Regulation 1099/2009 as they cause avoidable pain, distress or suffering. What steps is the Commission taking to inform Member States and aquaculture operators that certain methods of slaughtering farmed fish will be in breach of EU legislation from 1 January 2013?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 ([1]) on the protection of animals at the time of killing does not provide a list of authorised methods for stunning fish. The Commission does not foresee any actions in this matter for the near future other than those already mentioned in its reply to Written Question E-008181/2012 by the Honourable Member ([2]).

([1]) OJL 303, 18.11.2009. p 1.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010751/12
à la Commission
Henri Weber (S&D)
(27 novembre 2012)

Objet: Birmanie et système de préférences généralisées

En 1997, l'Union européenne a décidé de retirer à la Birmanie le bénéfice de ses préférences commerciales au titre du système des préférences généralisées (SPG), pour cause de violations graves et systématiques des conventions internationales fondamentales sur le travail forcé. Depuis 2011, le gouvernement birman s'est engagé à entreprendre des mesures dans le sens d'un plus grand respect des Droits de l'homme. Une telle volonté de réformes, saluée par la communauté internationale, peut sembler marquer le début de la transition de la Birmanie vers l'état de droit. Prenant acte des changements en cours en Birmanie, la Commission européenne propose d'inclure à nouveau le pays dans la liste des États bénéficiaires du SPG.

La perspective de l'ouverture économique de la Birmanie suscite l'intérêt de nombreuses entreprises étrangères, au point que certains observateurs évoquent une «ruée vers l'or» pour réaliser des investissements dans ce pays.

Si les changements constatés en Birmanie depuis 2011 doivent être salués comme des étapes positives, il est primordial que l'Union européenne n'agisse pas de manière précipitée et veille à la cohérence de sa politique commerciale avec ses objectifs sociaux et ceux relevant des Droits de l'homme.

La Commission européenne s'engage-t-elle à évaluer scrupuleusement et à suivre l'évolution de la situation sur l'ensemble du territoire birman en ce qui concerne les réformes engagées par les autorités birmanes, en matière de démocratie et des Droits de l'homme, ainsi que dans les domaines du travail forcé et de la liberté d'association, avant d'inclure à nouveau la Birmanie dans la liste des pays bénéficiaires du SPG?

Quelles garanties la Commission compte-t-elle offrir pour veiller, avec l'implication des autorités birmanes, des acteurs concernés de la société civile et des syndicats, à ce que les entreprises transnationales menant des activités économiques en Birmanie ne se rendent pas complices des violations des droits fondamentaux des travailleurs?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(28 janvier 2013)

L'UE a suivi de près les changements historiques qui ont eu lieu en Birmanie/au Myanmar au cours de l'année passée et y a réagi en encourageant et en soutenant le processus de réforme.

En avril 2012, le Conseil «Affaires étrangères» a appelé au rétablissement du système des préférences généralisées (SPG) dès que possible, et à l'issue d'une évaluation positive de la situation par l'Organisation internationale du travail.

En juin, la conférence de l'OIT a reconnu les progrès significatifs réalisés dans le pays en ce qui concerne le travail forcé et a adopté une résolution levant ou, dans certains cas, suspendant les restrictions appliquées à l'encontre de la Birmanie/du Myanmar. À la lumière de cette décision de l'OIT, les conditions légales permettant le retrait des préférences généralisées ne sont plus réunies. En conséquence, la Commission a proposé, en septembre 2012, que les préférences soient rétablies sans conditions, conformément aux dispositions du règlement SPG.

Si la tendance actuellement constatée devait s'inverser, avec le retour de violations graves et systématiques des principes concernant le travail forcé ou de toute convention relative aux Droits de l'homme et libertés fondamentales ou au droit du travail, les préférences pourraient de nouveau être retirées. La Commission suivra attentivement l'évaluation des organes de surveillance compétents à cet égard.

Le processus de reprise des relations avec la Birmanie/le Myanmar comprendra un ensemble de mesures d'assistance liée au commerce dans lequel la Commission insistera sur l'importance d'une croissance économique diversifiée, équitable et durable, ainsi que d'investissements responsables et du recours aux bonnes pratiques par les entreprises européennes. La bonne gouvernance et le respect des Droits de l'homme feront partie d'un volet transversal essentiel du projet. La Commission envisagera également la possibilité de soutenir les initiatives de parties prenantes concernant la responsabilité sociale des entreprises (RSE), tout en évitant les doubles emplois avec l'action d'autres donateurs dans ce domaine.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010751/12
to the Commission
Henri Weber (S&D)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Burma and the Generalised System of Preferences

In 1997, the EU decided to withdraw the preferential trade status enjoyed by Burma under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) on the grounds of serious and systematic violations of fundamental international conventions on forced labour. Since 2011, the Burmese Government has committed itself to taking steps to ensure that human rights are better respected. This will to reform, which has been welcomed by the international community, could well mark the beginning of Burma's transition to a system based on the rule of law. In view of the changes that are taking place in Burma, the Commission is proposing that the country be included once again in the list of GSP beneficiary countries.

The prospect of Burma's economy opening up has aroused the interest of many foreign companies, to the extent that some observers are talking of a new 'gold rush' to invest in the country.

Although the changes that have occurred in Burma since 2011 must be welcomed as positive steps forward, it is vital that the EU does not act hastily and that it ensures that its trade policy remains consistent with its social and human-rights objectives.

Is the Commission resolved to scrupulously assess and monitor developments throughout Burma with regard to the Burmese authorities' reforms in the areas of democracy, human rights, forced labour and freedom of association before including Burma once again in the list of GSP beneficiary countries?

What guarantees can the Commission give to ensure, in conjunction with the Burmese authorities, civil-society stakeholders and trade unions, that transnational companies doing business in Burma do not collude in violations of workers' fundamental rights?

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

The EU has followed closely the historic changes in Burma/Myanmar over the past year and has responded with encouragement and support to the reform process.

In April 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council called for the reinstatement of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) as soon as possible, and following the positive assessment of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In June, the ILO Conference recognised the significant progress in the country regarding forced labour and adopted a resolution lifting or in some cases suspending restrictions taken against Burma/Myanmar. In the light of this ILO decision, the legal conditions for withdrawal of GSP preferences no longer exist. Therefore, the Commission proposed in September 2012 that preferences should be reinstated unconditionally, in the line with the provisions of the GSP Regulation.

Should the current trend of progress change, with the return to serious and systematic violations of the principles regarding the forced labour or any of the core human rights or labour rights conventions, preferences may be withdrawn again. The Commission will follow closely the assessment of the relevant monitoring bodies in this respect.

The process of reengagement with Burma/Myanmar will include a trade-related assistance package in which the Commission stresses the importance of a broad-based, equitable and sustainable economic growth, as well as of responsible investment and use of best practices by European companies. Good Governance and human rights will form part of a key cross-cutting component of the project. The Commission will also consider supporting stakeholders' initiatives on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) while avoiding overlap with other donors active in this area.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010752/12
à la Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(27 novembre 2012)

Objet: Pépinière à posidonies et cymodocées

La mer Méditerranée a été, à plusieurs reprises, reconnue comme patrimoine commun des rives Nord et Sud de son littoral. La dépollution et la lute contre la perte de biodiversité sont depuis longtemps des combats reconnus prioritaires dans les travaux au sein de l'Union pour la Méditerranée ainsi que dans les discussions communautaires.

À ce titre, il convient de favoriser et d'encadrer les initiatives allant dans ce sens. Ainsi, on peut constater avec satisfaction les projets visant à développer des pépinières à posidonie. Ces pépinières ont pour objectif de repeupler les fonds marins (à l'aide du bouturage de posidonies et de cymodocées ou de la germination de posidonies). Cet objectif permet ainsi de lutter naturellement contre l'érosion du littoral méditerranéen et de conserver et de recenser les différentes espèces marines. Le déroulement de ces opérations à travers les structures et les actions permet également la sensibilisation des professionnels et du grand public.

Peu connus, ces projets méritent d'être soutenus et développés. Des efforts de recherches (universitaire, publique et privée) semblent aussi s'imposer pour aider cette pratique.

La Commission européenne connait-elle précisément le nombre de ces structures autour du bassin méditerranéen? Souhaite-t-elle le développement de ces structures à l'aide des programmes communautaires ou de propositions législatives leur permettant d'exercer sereinement ces activités?

Réponse donnée par Mme Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(30 janvier 2013)

La Commission convient avec l'Honorable Parlementaire qu'il est important de soutenir les actions contribuant à l'amélioration de l'écosystème marin dans la Méditerranée.

Parmi les cinq espèces de magnoliophytes présentes dans la Méditerranée *(Cymodocea nodosa*, *Halophila stipulacea*, *Posidonia oceanica*, *Zostera marina* et *Zostera noltii),* les posidonies sont endémiques et jouent un rôle essentiel dans les écosystèmes marins ainsi que dans les nombreux services économiques et non économiques rendus par ces écosystèmes. Les prairies sous-marines de posidonies constituent un habitat prioritaire figurant à l'annexe I de la directive «Habitats» (92/43/CEE ([1])); compte tenu de ce statut d'espèce protégée, le règlement (CE) nº 1967/2006 ([2]) interdit la pêche à l'aide de chaluts, de dragues, de sennes coulissantes, de sennes de bateau, de sennes côtières ou d'autres filets similaires au-dessus des prairies de posidonies (ou d'autres phanérogames marins).

La Commission soutient depuis plusieurs années les travaux de recherche consacrés à cette espèce par l'intermédiaire des programmes-cadres de recherche. Le sixième programme-cadre a contribué à enrichir les connaissances sur les posidonies et les autres magnoliophytes. Dans le cadre de l'actuel septième programme-cadre, le projet intégré TEMPO fera progresser notre compréhension des incidences biologiques et écologiques des posidonies. Par ailleurs, le projet intégré EPOCA, lancé en 2008, nous permettra de mieux comprendre les incidences biologiques et écologiques de l'acidification des océans et les répercussions de ce phénomène sur la répartition des posidonies. Le soutien de la Commission par l'intermédiaire du projet Theseus est également envisagé afin d'aider à comprendre le rôle joué par les posidonies dans l'atténuation de l'hydrodynamisme en piégeant les sédiments dans le milieu marin. Enfin, les recherches menées dans le cadre du projet ODEMM ont en partie été concentrées sur le rôle des posidonies en tant qu'indicateur important des effets de l'activité humaine et en tant qu'hôte des services essentiels rendus par les écosystèmes.

([1]) JO L 176 du 20.7.1993.
([2]) JO L 409 du 30.12.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010752/12
to the Commission
Gaston Franco (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Posidonia and cymodocea nurseries

The Mediterranean Sea's importance as part of the shared heritage of the areas lying along its northern and southern shores has been reaffirmed on many occasions. Cleaning up the sea and fighting biodiversity loss have long been viewed as key priorities in the activities of the Union for the Mediterranean and in EU discussions.

Initiatives working towards these ends should therefore be promoted and coordinated. Projects aimed at developing posidonia nurseries are one example of the type of initiative being taken. The nurseries are intended to restock the seabed through the propagation of posidonia and cymodocea from cuttings and the germination of posidonia. This tackles the problem of coastal erosion in the Mediterranean in a natural way and facilitates the identification and conservation of various marine species. The projects also raise awareness among professionals and the wider public.

These projects, which currently have a very low profile, deserve support and development. Research backup from universities, public and private bodies is also important.

Does the Commission know how many projects of this kind there are around the Mediterranean? Will it provide support under relevant EU programmes or legislation that will enable organisations running such projects to work effectively?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member that it is important to support actions that contribute to improving the marine ecosystem in the Mediterranean.

Amongst the five species of magnoliophytes found in the Mediterranean (*Cymodocea nodosa*, *Halophila stipulacea*, *Posidonia oceanica*, *Zostera marina* and *Zostera noltii*), *Posidonia* is endemic and plays an essential role in marine ecosystems and the many economic and non-economic services which they provide. *Posidonia* underwater meadows are a priority habitat listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([1]); in accordance with this protected status, fishing above beds of *Posidonia* (or other marine phanerogams) with trawl nets, dredges, purse seines, boat seines, shore seines or similar nets is prohibited by Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 ([2]).

The Commission has supported research on this species for several years through the Research Framework Programmes (FP). The Sixth FP has contributed to the knowledge on *Posidonia* and the other magnoliophytes. Under the current Seventh FP, the Integrated Project TEMPO will advance our understanding of the biological and ecological implications of *Posidonia*. Furthermore, the Integrated Project EPOCA launched in 2008 will improve our understanding of the biological and ecological implications of ocean acidification and how this will affect the distribution of *Posidonia*. The Commission's support through the project THESEUS is also considered to understand the role of *Posidonia* in reducing hydrodynamism by trapping sediments in the marine environment. Finally, the project ODEMM has partially focused its research on *Posidonia* as important indicator of human impacts and as host of crucial ecosystem services.

([1]) OJ L 176, 20.7.1993.
([2]) OJ L 409, 30.12.2006.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010753/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 novembre 2012)

Objet: Partenariat et coopération entre l'Union européenne et le Kazakhstan

Concernant les recommandations du Parlement européen au Conseil, à la Commission et au Service européen pour l'action extérieure relatives aux négociations en vue d'un accord renforcé de partenariat et de coopération entre l'Union européenne et le Kazakhstan, et suite au projet de résolution A7-0355/2012 discuté lors de la session de Strasbourg du mois de novembre 2012, la Commission est invitée à répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. La Commission compte-t-elle inviter le Kazakhstan à adhérer à l'initiative sur la transparence des industries extractives (ITIE) dans la perspective d'une gestion des ressources plus durable, ce domaine étant essentiel pour garantir un accès permanent des industries européennes aux matières premières à un prix équitable, et à mettre en place un cadre réglementaire approprié et des dispositions fiscales transparentes pour les industries extractives?

2. La Commission a lancé une procédure antidumping contre les importations de phosphore blanc en provenance du Kazakhstan en décembre 2011. La Commission estime-t-elle que celle-ci est encore fondée? Si oui, où en est cette procédure?

3. La Commission estime-t-elle que des progrès en la matière ont été faits par le Kazakhstan lors de ces douze derniers mois?

4. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle garantir, lors des négociations, que les méthodes de dumping employées lors de la production et de l'exportation de phosphore sont effectivement exclues, dans la mesure où les importations dont il est allégué qu'elles font l'objet de dumping nuisent aux producteurs européens et qu'il est impossible de récupérer et de recycler du phosphore à partir de sources secondaires de phosphore?

5. La Commission compte-t-elle assurer une présence adéquate d'experts économiques et commerciaux dans la délégation de l'Union au Kazakhstan, ce qui serait sûrement une bonne chose?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(31 janvier 2013)

Depuis 2007, le Kazakhstan bénéficie du statut de pays candidat dans le cadre de l'initiative pour la transparence du secteur des industries extractives (ITIE) et a établi des rapports indiquant les revenus qu'il tire de ses activités extractives. L'UE soutient la candidature du Kazakhstan à l'ITIE et a bon espoir que, d'ici à août 2013, celui-ci aura satisfait à toutes les exigences et achevé les rapports nécessaires pour acquérir le statut de pays conforme. Sur le plan réglementaire, dans le contexte des négociations d'adhésion du Kazakhstan à l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC), la Commission a précisé que le Kazakhstan devait abolir les règles prévoyant une obligation de contenu local en ce qui concerne les acquisitions de biens et de services ainsi que le personnel employé par les entreprises exerçant des activités dans le secteur de l'exploitation minière et de l'énergie. Dans le même esprit, la Commission a demandé la suppression des droits à l'exportation applicables à certaines matières premières (dont le phosphore blanc), qui est essentielle pour garantir l'accès permanent des industries européennes à des matières premières au juste prix.

Le 17 décembre 2011, la Commission a ouvert une procédure antidumping à l'égard du phosphore blanc originaire du Kazakhstan. En septembre 2012, elle a décidé de poursuivre l'enquête sans instituer de mesures antidumping provisoires, car certains aspects nécessitaient une analyse approfondie. L'enquête est en cours et la détermination finale doit être établie au plus tard le 15 mars 2013.

Afin que la délégation de l'UE à Astana dispose de l'expertise nécessaire, un nouveau chef de la section «commerce» a été désigné au sein de ladite délégation; il prendra ses fonctions en janvier 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010753/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Partnership and cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan

In the light of Parliament's recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations for an EU-Kazakhstan enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement, and following the draft resolution (A7-0355/2012) discussed at the Strasbourg part-session of November 2012, the Commission is asked to answer the following questions:

1. Does it intend to call on Kazakhstan to support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) with a view to ensuring more sustainable resource management, which is key to guaranteeing European industries continuous access to fairly-priced raw materials, and to encourage Kazakhstan to establish an appropriate regulatory framework and transparent taxation arrangements for extractive industries?

2. In December 2011, the Commission launched anti-dumping proceedings against white phosphorous imports from Kazakhstan. Does it think that there is still a basis for the proceedings? If so, what stage has been reached?

3. Does it think that progress has been made by Kazakhstan in this regard over the last year?

4. How does it intend to ensure, in the negotiations, that the dumping practices carried out during production and export of phosphorous are ruled out, given the adverse effects on European producers of imports they claim have been dumped on the market, and the fact that it is impossible to extract and convert any phosphorus contained in secondary sources of the element?

5. Does the Commission agree that it would be a good idea to ensure that the Uniondelegation to Kazakhstan includes enough economists and trade experts?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

Since 2007, Kazakhstan has been a candidate country in the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) and has produced reports on its revenues from its extractive industries operations. The EU is supportive of Kazakhstan's candidacy to the EITI and is hopeful that, by August 2013, it will have fulfilled the requirements and completed the reports that are needed for the country to achieve EITI compliant status. As for the regulatory framework, in the context of Kazakhstan`s World Trade Organisation (WTO) accession negotiations, the Commission clarified that Kazakhstan must abolish the rules requiring local content in the purchased goods, services and employed persons by companies operating in the mining and energy sector. In the same context, the Commission requested the elimination of export duties on a number of raw materials, including white phosphorus, which is key to guaranteeing European industries' continuous access to fairly-priced raw materials.

The Commission initiated an anti-dumping proceeding on white phosphorus originating in Kazakhstan on 17 December 2011. In September 2012, it decided to continue the investigation without imposing provisional anti-dumping measures, as certain aspects required further analysis. The investigation is ongoing; the final determination is due by 15 March 2013.

To ensure the necessary expertise at the EU Delegation in Astana, a newly appointed Head of Trade Section of the EU Delegation will start working in January 2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010754/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(27 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Abuso di posizione dominante e pratiche discriminatorie nel mercato delle telecomunicazioni

Nel suo discorso alla conferenza FT-ETNO dello scorso ottobre, il Commissario Neelie Kroes ha annunciato ulteriori azioni per affrontare il problema delle pratiche discriminatorie nel mercato delle telecomunicazioni. Tali azioni si rivelano fondamentali anche per garantire un miglior rapporto qualità/prezzo a favore dei cittadini, soprattutto alla luce dell'attuale crisi economica.

Secondo recenti denunce degli operatori di telecomunicazione alternativi, vi sono ancora numerosi casi di abuso di posizione dominante e di pratiche discriminatorie da parte dell'operatore dominante.

In particolare, vengono segnalati vari casi in cui gli operatori alternativi possono accedere ai servizi di riparazione delle linee in ritardo rispetto all'operatore dominante. O ancora, casi in cui le richieste di attivazione di nuove linee degli operatori alternativi vengono trattate più lentamente e la fornitura di servizi di accesso alla rete risulta difficoltosa. Questa situazione si traduce in un danno alla concorrenzialità del mercato TLC, nonché in disagi e svantaggi per i consumatori.

Cosa intende fare la Commissione europea per affrontare tale problema in maniera incisiva e risolutoria?

Risposta di Joaquín Almunia a nome della Commissione
(6 febbraio 2013)

È importante, per garantire il corretto funzionamento dei mercati delle telecomunicazioni, che le procedure applicate dall'operatore dominante nell'ambito delle offerte all'ingrosso non impongano vincoli che penalizzano gli operatori alternativi. A seconda dei fatti in causa, tale comportamento potrebbe in particolare costituire abuso di posizione dominante ai sensi dell'articolo 102 del TFUE.

La Commissione non è però a conoscenza di alcun caso di presunto abuso di posizione dominante che riguardi le questioni riferite dall'onorevole deputato, né ha ricevuto alcuna denuncia in merito.

Per quanto concerne la regolamentazione ex ante, le autorità nazionali di regolamentazione possono esigere, tra le misure correttive imposte agli operatori aventi un significativo potere di mercato nei mercati regolamentati, il rispetto degli obblighi in materia di non discriminazione, se lo ritengono necessario per risolvere i problemi di concorrenza constatati. Si tratta di obblighi necessari per garantire che gli operatori regolamentati applichino agli operatori alternativi condizioni equivalenti a quelle applicate dagli operatori aventi un significativo potere di mercato alle proprie divisioni commerciali retail.

La Commissione affronta questo problema anche nella raccomandazione, di prossima pubblicazione, che invita alla coerenza in materia di obblighi di non discriminazione e metodi per la determinazione dei costi, onde promuovere la concorrenza e migliorare le condizioni per gli investimenti nella banda larga. La raccomandazione delineerà un approccio comune, per improntare alla coerenza le pratiche adottate dalle autorità nazionali di regolamentazione all'atto di imporre obblighi di non discriminazione nei mercati dell'accesso a banda larga all'ingrosso, in particolare per l'accesso disaggregato alla rete locale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010754/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Abuse of dominant position and discriminatory practices in the telecommunications market

In her speech at the FT ETNO Summit in October, Commissioner Kroes announced further action to tackle the problem of discriminatory practices in the telecommunications market. Such action is crucial not least to ensure better value for money for the public, especially given the current economic crisis.

According to recent allegations from alternative telecom operators, there are still numerous cases of abuse of dominant position and discriminatory practices by the dominant operator.

In particular, various cases have been notified in which alternative operators suffer a delay in accessing line repair services compared with the dominant operator. There are also cases in which requests to activate new alternative operator lines are processed more slowly and the provision of network access services is hampered. This situation distorts the competitiveness of the telecom market and creates hurdles and disadvantages for consumers.

What does the European Commission intend to do to tackle this problem incisively once and for all?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2013)

To ensure the proper functioning of telecoms markets, it is important that the processes applied by the incumbent operator in the context of its wholesale offers do not impose constraints on alternative operators that would penalize them. Depending on the facts of the case, such behavour could constitute in particular an abuse of a dominant position under Article 102 TFEU.

The Commission is however not aware of any cases of alleged abuse of dominant position concerning the matters referred to by the Honourable Member and has not received any complaint regarding those matters.

As regards *ex ante* regulation, national regulatory authorities (NRAs), when necessary in order to tackle the identified competition problems, may impose obligations of non-discrimination as part of the remedies imposed on operators having significant market power on regulated markets. These obligations are necessary to ensure that regulated operators apply to alternative operators conditions which are equivalent to the conditions that the operators having significant market power apply to their own retail arms.

The Commission will also adddress this issue in its forthcoming recommendation on consistent non-discrimination obligations and costing methodologies to promote competition and enhance the broadband investment environment. This recommendation will set out a common approach to promote consistency in the practices of the NRAs when imposing non-discrimination obligations on the wholesale broadband markets, particularly for the unbundling of the local loop.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010755/12
alla Commissione
Vincenzo Iovine (S&D) e Andrea Cozzolino (S&D)
(27 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Bonifica sito rifiuti «Ferrandelle» (CE)

— Considerato che il deposito di ecoballe di «Ferrandelle», sito in provincia di Caserta su terreni confiscati al boss della camorra Francesco Schiavone, era stato destinato a fini agricoli ma, con il tempo, è diventato un'enorme discarica a cielo aperto;

— considerato che «Ferrandelle» — realizzato come sito di trasferenza per far fronte alla grande crisi dei rifiuti napoletana e destinato a 18 mesi di operatività — ha protratto la propria attività, accogliendo quantitativi di rifiuti molto superiori a quelli previsti (ad oggi circa 550 000 tonnellate), determinando il collasso dei fondi delle piazzole di stoccaggio, con conseguente infiltrazione del percolato nelle falde acquifere;

— visto il documento di lavoro predisposto dalla commissione PETI (PE442.870v05-00 del 5 ottobre 2010) relativo alla missione d'inchiesta in Campania (28-30 aprile 2010), nel quale la delegazione che si era recata in loco aveva già riscontrato forti tensioni nella popolazione, preoccupata per l'inquinamento atmosferico e idrico e per il relativo impatto sulla salute, appurando, inoltre, che il potere calorifico delle ecoballe era già troppo elevato per consentirne l'incenerimento presso la struttura attualmente disponibile;

— considerato che in data 12 gennaio 2012 la Regione Campania — in risposta alla procedura di infrazione in materia di rifiuti 2007/2195 (Causa C-565/10, sentenza del 4 marzo 2010) — ha presentato un piano organico che prevede la bonifica di alcuni siti di stoccaggio particolarmente sovraccarichi e a rischio di danno ambientale;

— considerato che nel MEMO/12/794 del 24 ottobre 2012, la Commissione ha deferito l'Italia dinanzi alla Corte di giustizia ed ha chiesto che vengano inflitte ammende per la mancata bonifica di 255 discariche illegali e incontrollate di rifiuti;

si chiede alla Commissione se:

— ritiene che, dato il prolungarsi delle attività di stoccaggio, i fondi che ad oggi risultano stanziati possano considerarsi sufficienti;

— in caso contrario, quali misure reputa opportune per garantire un processo di bonifica, capace di annullare gli impatti negativi sul territorio e sulla salute dei cittadini;

— le risulta che il deposito di «Ferrandelle» contenga rifiuti pericolosi, se esso rientra nella lista delle 255 discariche di cui è stata richiesta la bonifica e se per tale sito è stato presentato un calendario dettagliato per l'ultimazione dei lavori;

— qualora tale deposito non fosse incluso tra quelli previsti nel MEMO/12/794, ritiene di dover intervenire affinché la regione Campania provveda al suo inserimento nel Piano regionale per le bonifiche.

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(23 gennaio 2013)

In base alle informazioni di cui dispone la Commissione, Ferrandelle non è uno dei siti della Campania in cui le autorità italiane hanno depositato le cosiddette «ecoballe» (vecchi rifiuti imballati). Infatti, oltre alle ecoballe, in Campania vi sono numerose tonnellate di vecchi rifiuti urbani che sono stati depositati nel sito di Ferrandelle e in alcuni impianti di trattamento meccanico-biologico.

Il sito non rientra nella procedura di infrazione 2003/2077, con la quale la Commissione ha recentemente deciso di deferire l'Italia alla Corte di giustizia per la seconda volta per la mancata bonifica di oltre 200 discariche abusive. Tuttavia, esso rientra nella procedura di infrazione 2007/2195 relativa alla gestione dei rifiuti in Campania. In questo contesto, le autorità italiane hanno riferito che le ecoballe verranno analizzate e successivamente bruciate in un inceneritore che verrà costruito ad hoc, mentre i vecchi rifiuti depositati a Ferrandelle verranno progressivamente inviati alla discarica di San Tammaro e all'inceneritore di Acerra in modo da svuotare il sito entro il 2014.

Spetta alle autorità competenti degli Stati membri stabilire quali siano le misure più idonee a garantire la bonifica di siti inquinati. La Commissione segue da vicino la situazione in Campania per valutare se le autorità italiane stiano adottando tutte le misure necessarie per creare, in tempo utile, un adeguato sistema regionale di gestione dei rifiuti al fine di proteggere la salute umana e l'ambiente.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010755/12
to the Commission
Vincenzo Iovine (S&D) and Andrea Cozzolino (S&D)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Clean-up of the Ferrandelle refuse dump, Caserta

— Whereas the site at Ferrandelle for depositing Ecobales, located in the province of Caserta on land confiscated from the Camorra boss Francesco Schiavone, was intended for farming but has, over time, become an enormous open-air refuse dump;

— Whereas operations have continued at Ferrandelle — set up as a transit site to tackle the serious refuse crisis in Naples, and intended to operate for 18 months — taking in far greater quantities of refuse than originally planned (some 550 000 tonnes to date), leading to the floor of the storage areas breaking up, with leachate filtering into groundwater;

— Having regard to the working document drawn up by the PETI Committee (PE442.870v05-00 of 5 October 2010) on the fact-finding mission to Campania (28-30 April 2010), in which the delegation reported it had found serious tensions within local communities, concerned at air and water pollution and its impact on their health, and also ascertained that the calorific content of the Ecobales was too high for them to be incinerated in the presently available incinerator;

— Whereas on 12 January 2012 the Campania Region — in response to infringement procedure 2007/2195 on waste management (Case C-565/10, judgment of 4 March 2010) — presented a comprehensive plan for cleaning up a number of particularly overloaded storage sites that present a risk of environmental damage;

— Whereas in MEMO/12/794 of 24 October 2012, the Commission referred Italy to the Court of Justice and called for fines to be imposed for the failure to clean up 255 illegal and uncontrolled waste dumps;

the Commission is asked:

— if it considers that, given the continuation of storage activity, the funds so far allocated can be deemed adequate;

— if not, what measures it considers appropriate in order to ensure that a clean-up takes place, removing the negative impact on the area and on the health of citizens;

— if it understands the Ferrandelle dump to contain dangerous waste, if this site is included in the list of 255 dumps for which a clean-up has been requested, and if a detailed calendar for the completion of such work has been provided for this site;

— in the event that this dump is not covered by MEMO/12/794, if it considers that it should intervene to ensure that the Campania Region includes it in the regional clean-up plan.

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

According to the information available to the Commission, the Ferrandelle site is not one of the Campania sites where the Italian authorities have deposited the so-called 'ecoballe' (old baled waste). In fact, beside the ecoballe, in Campania there are several tons of old municipal waste which were stored in the Ferrandelle site and in some mechanical-biological treatment plants.

This site is not covered by infringement procedure 2003/2077, within which the Commission has recently decided to refer Italy to the Court of Justice for the second time for failure to clean up over 200 illegal landfills. Instead, it is covered by infringement procedure 2007/2195, concerning waste management in Campania. In this context, the Italian authorities informed that the ecoballe will be analysed and then burnt in an incinerator which will be built for that purpose, while the old waste stored in Ferrandelle is being gradually sent to the San Tammaro landfill and to the Acerra incinerator so as to empty the site by 2014.

Establishing which measures are most appropriate to ensure the clean-up of polluted sites lies with the competent authorities of the Member States. The Commission is closely following the situation in Campania to assess whether the Italian authorities take all the measures necessary to establish in due time an adequate regional waste management system to protect human health and the environment.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010800/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE) y Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Homofobia en el ejército de Turquía

El Ejército de Turquía ha incluido la homosexualidad como un tipo de ofensa grave en el nuevo borrador de disciplina militar de las Fuerzas Armadas, equiparándola a un «crimen» definido como «intimidad antinatural» cuyo castigo será la expulsión del cuerpo.

Este hecho es discriminatorio y una violación de los derechos humanos. KaosGL, una organización con sede en Ankara, ya había indicado que la práctica no es nueva y declaró que «Cuando se trata del servicio militar obligatorio, una persona homosexual es considerada enferma y se le exime del servicio militar. El Ejército define la homosexualidad como un desorden psicosexual», y agregó que «si un miembro del Ejército es homosexual, se le considera culpable de un crimen disciplinario, lo que es una discriminación a doble escala».

El Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos (TEDH) ya se ha pronunciado en reiteradas ocasiones contra las prácticas discriminatorias de Turquía, remarcando que la orientación sexual de una persona no ha de ser considerada o tratada como un crimen.

Considerando el estatus de Turquía de candidato a Estado miembro de la UE y que en febrero de 2008 se firmó el Estatuto Avanzado de Asociación, donde entre las políticas contra la discriminación se le exige a Turquía que garantice «*en la legislación y en la práctica el pleno disfrute de los derechos humanos y las libertades fundamentales por todas las personas, sin discriminación por razón de lengua, opinión política, sexo, origen racial o étnico, religión o convicciones, discapacidad, edad u orientación sexual*»

¿Qué opinión tiene la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante al respecto? ¿Hará declaraciones públicas al respecto? ¿Qué medidas adoptará a fin de que Turquía cumpla con las sentencias del TEDH y el Estatuto Avanzado de Asociación?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de febrero de 2013)

La Comisión está siguiendo de cerca la cuestión planteada por Sus Señorías y tiene conocimiento del proyecto de ley sobre el sistema de sanciones disciplinarias en las Fuerzas Armadas, presentado al Parlamento el 19 de diciembre de 2012.

La Comisión condena todas las formas y manifestaciones de intolerancia que son incompatibles con los valores y principios en los que se fundamenta la Unión Europea. Como país que está negociando su adhesión a la UE, Turquía necesita garantizar los derechos humanos, incluida la prohibición de la discriminación, de conformidad con el Convenio Europeo de Derechos Humanos y la jurisprudencia del Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos.

La Comisión abordará estas cuestiones en sus contactos con las autoridades turcas, según proceda.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010800/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE) und Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Homophobie in den türkischen Streitkräften

Die türkische Armee hat Homosexualität als schwerwiegenden Verstoß in ihre Neufassung des militärischen Disziplinarrechts aufgenommen und sie einer als „unnatürliche Intimität" bezeichneten strafbaren Handlung gleichgestellt, die mit dem Ausschluss aus den Streitkräften geahndet wird.

Dies ist diskriminierend und verletzt die Menschenrechte. KaosGL, eine in Ankara ansässige Organisation, hat bereits darauf hingewiesen, dass diese Praxis nicht unüblich sei, und erklärt, dass homosexuelle Wehrpflichtige als krank gälten und vom Pflichtwehrdienst befreit würden. Die Armee definiere Homosexualität als psychosexuelle Störung, und wenn ein Angehöriger der Streitkräfte homosexuell sei, mache er sich eines Disziplinarvergehens schuldig, was einer doppelten Diskriminierung gleichkomme.

Der Europäische Gerichtshof für Menschenrechte (EGMR) hat sich bereits mehrfach gegen die diskriminierenden Praktiken der Türkei ausgesprochen und betont, dass die sexuelle Orientierung eines Menschen nicht als strafbare Handlung angesehen oder behandelt werden darf.

Die Türkei genießt den Status eines EU-Beitrittskandidaten, und im Februar 2008 wurde das Abkommen über den fortgeschrittenen Status der Assoziierung unterzeichnet wurde, in dem von der Türkei hinsichtlich antidiskriminierender Strategien die „rechtliche und tatsächliche Wahrung sämtlicher Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten für alle Bürger, ohne Diskriminierung und unabhängig von Sprache, politischer Meinung, Rasse, Geschlecht, rassischer oder ethnischer Herkunft, Religion oder Weltanschauung, Behinderung, Alter oder sexueller Orientierung" gefordert wird.

Welche Auffassung vertritt die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin diesbezüglich? Werden diesbezüglich öffentliche Erklärungen abgegeben? Welche Maßnahmen werden ergriffen, damit die Türkei die Urteile des EGMR befolgt und dem fortgeschrittenen Status der Assoziierung gemäß handelt?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Herrn Füle im Namen der Kommission
(4. Februar 2013)

Die Kommission verfolgt aufmerksam das von den Abgeordneten angesprochene Problem. Ihr ist der Gesetzentwurf für die Neufassung des militärischen Disziplinarrechts bekannt, der dem Parlament am 19. Dezember 2012 vorgelegt wurde.

Die Kommission verurteilt jegliche Form und Bekundung von Intoleranz, die mit den Werten und Grundsätzen, auf denen die Europäische Union beruht, unvereinbar sind. Als Land, das über seinen EU-Beitritt verhandelt, muss die Türkei die Achtung der Menschenrechte, einschließlich des Diskriminierungsverbots, im Einklang mit der Europäischen Menschenrechtskonvention und der Rechtsprechung des Europäischen Gerichtshofs für Menschenrechte gewährleisten.

Die Kommission wird diese Fragen in ihren Kontakten mit den türkischen Behörden bei nächster Gelegenheit ansprechen.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010756/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(27 november 2012)

Betreft: Homo's uit Turks leger ontslagen

İsmet Yılmaz, de Turkse minister van Defensie, komt een dezer dagen met een ontwerp van het militaire strafrecht, waarin homoseksualiteit wordt toegevoegd aan delicten als moord, fraude en omkoping, die tot ontslag uit het leger leiden. Homoseksualiteit zou een „onnatuurlijke levensstijl" zijn die niet in het leger zou passen.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Homo's uit Turks leger"? ([1])

2. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie het voornemen van minister Yılmaz om homoseksualiteit als delict aan het Turkse militaire strafrecht toe te voegen, opdat homoseksuelen — vanwege hun „onnatuurlijke levensstijl" — uit het Turkse leger ontslagen zullen worden? Verwerpt de Commissie dit? Zo ja, zal de Commissie zich hier dan ook luid en duidelijk tegen uitspreken? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat het voornemen van minister Yılmaz pure discriminatie van homoseksuelen is en indruist tegen de mensenrechten? Deelt de Commissie de mening dat dit de EU onwaardig is? Zo ja, heeft dit gevolgen voor de toetredingsonderhandelingen van de EU met Turkije? Zo neen, waarom niet?

4. Is de Commissie ertoe bereid alle toetredingsonderhandelingen met én alle EU-geldstromen naar Turkije onmiddellijk te beëindigen? Zo neen, hoe verantwoordt de Commissie het dat de EU over toetreding onderhandelt met een land waarin homoseksuelen worden gediscrimineerd?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(4 februari 2013)

De Commissie volgt de situatie waarnaar de geachte Parlementsleden verwijzen op de voet en is op de hoogte van het wetsontwerp voor het systeem van disciplinaire straffen in het leger dat op 19 december 2012 werd ingediend bij het Parlement.

De Commissie veroordeelt alle vormen en uitingen van onverdraagzaamheid die niet stroken met de waarden en beginselen waarop de Europese Unie gegrondvest is. Turkije, een land dat met de EU onderhandelt over toetreding, moet de mensenrechten garanderen, en discriminatie verbieden overeenkomstig het Europees Verdrag tot bescherming van de rechten van de mens en de jurisprudentie van het Europees Hof voor de rechten van de mens.

De Commissie zal deze problematiek in voorkomend geval bespreken tijdens haar contacten met de Turkse autoriteiten.

([1]) De Telegraaf, 27 november 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010756/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Dismissal of homosexuals from the Turkish army

İsmet Yılmaz, Turkey's Minister of Defence, will shortly be presenting a draft of the Military Penal Code in which homosexuality will be added to the list of offences, such as murder, fraud and bribery, for which offenders are dismissed from the army. Homosexuality is said to be an 'unnatural life style' for which there is no place in the army.

1. Is the Commission aware of the report 'Homo's uit Turks leger' [Homosexuals out of Turkish army]? ([1])

2. What view does the Commission take of Mr Yılmaz's intention to define homosexuality as an offence under Turkey's Military Penal Code so that homosexuals — because of their 'unnatural life style' — will be dismissed from the Turkish army? Does the Commission reject this? If so, will the Commission speak out loud and clear against it? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission agree that Mr Yılmaz's intention constitutes pure discrimination against homosexuals and breaches human rights? Does the Commission agree that this is not worthy of the EU? If so, will this have consequences for the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey? If not, why not?

4. Will the Commission immediately terminate all accession negotiations with and all EU funding of Turkey? If not, how does the Commission justify the fact that the EU is negotiating on accession with a country where homosexuals suffer discrimination?

Question for written answer E-010800/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE) and Franziska Keller (Verts/ALE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Homophobia in the Turkish Army

Homosexuality has been listed as a serious offence in the Turkish military's new disciplinary code. Referred to as 'unnatural intimacy', it has been labelled a 'crime', punishable by expulsion from the army.

This is discrimination and a breach of human rights. KaosGL, an organisation based in Ankara, had already pointed out that this approach was nothing new, stating that 'When it comes to compulsory military service, homosexuals are considered to be ill and are exempted from military service. The army defines homosexuality as a psycho-sexual disorder (…). A homosexual soldier is deemed to have committed a disciplinary offence, and this amounts to discrimination on two levels.'

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled against Turkey for discrimination on a number of occasions, pointing out that someone's sexual orientation must not be considered to be or treated as a crime.

Turkey is a candidate for membership of the EU. In February 2008 a revised decision on the accession partnership was adopted. Under the heading 'anti-discrimination policies', Turkey is called on to 'guarantee in law and in practice the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by all individuals, without discrimination and irrespective of language, political opinion, sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.'

What is the view of the Vice-President/High Representative on this issue? Will she be making any public statements on it? What steps will she be taking with a view to ensuring that Turkey complies with ECHR rulings and the decision on the accession partnership?

([1]) *De Telegraaf*, 27 November 2012.

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2013)

The Commission is following closely the issue raised by the Honourable Members and is aware of the draft law on the system of disciplinary punishments in the Armed Forces, submitted to Parliament on 19 December 2012.

The Commission condemns all forms and manifestations of intolerance which are incompatible with the values and principles upon which the European Union is founded. Turkey, as a country negotiating its accession to the EU, needs to guarantee human rights, including the prohibition of discrimination, in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

The Commission will address these issues in its contacts with the Turkish authorities as appropriate.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010757/12
a la Comisión
Gabriel Mato Adrover (PPE)
(27 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Control de las importaciones de tomates de Marruecos

El valor global de la importación de tomates procedentes de Marruecos se ha situado desde el día 1 de noviembre a niveles muy inferiores al precio de entrada convencional, coincidiendo con la llegada al mercado de grandes volúmenes desde este país que superan las 2 000 toneladas diarias, lo que está provocando fuertes distorsiones en el mercado comunitario. Los importadores deberían, por lo tanto, estar pagando los derechos arancelarios correspondientes.

Considerando que los aranceles percibidos constituyen fondos propios de la Unión Europea, ¿puede explicar la Comisión cómo controla la correcta aplicación de ese régimen de precios de entrada?

A la vista de la situación actual, ¿puede confirmar que se están pagando los derechos específicos correspondientes?

¿Qué medidas va a adoptar la Comisión para garantizar que se abonen los correspondientes derechos arancelarios?

Respuesta del Sr. Cioloş en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de enero de 2013)

La aplicación correcta de los precios de entrada y la percepción de los derechos de importación en el marco del mecanismo de precios de entrada competen a las autoridades aduaneras de los Estados miembros.

Con el fin de ayudar a las mencionadas autoridades a reforzar el control de las importaciones de productos sujetos al mecanismo de precios de entrada, el Reglamento de Ejecución (UE) n° 701/2012 de la Comisión ([1]) estableció un sistema de trazabilidad.

En el Consejo de Agricultura de 29 de noviembre de 2012, algunos Estados miembros instaron a la Comisión a controlar la correcta recaudación de los derechos de aduana y la aplicación efectiva de las disposiciones legales de la UE referidas al mecanismo de precios de entrada.

La Comisión envió una carta el 17 de diciembre de 2012 a los directores de las autoridades aduaneras nacionales en la que les solicitaba algunos datos esenciales, como el método de valoración utilizado, el valor en aduana de las mercancías importadas y los derechos *ad valorem* y específicos percibidos en cada declaración de despacho a libre práctica desde la campaña de importaciones de 2011. Cuando disponga de todos esos datos, los comunicará a los Estados miembros y al Parlamento Europeo.

([1]) DO L 203 de 31.7.2012, p. 60.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010757/12
to the Commission
Gabriel Mato Adrover (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Control of tomato imports from Morocco

Since 1 November 2012, the overall value of tomato imports from Morocco has been set at levels well below the usual entry price, coinciding with the arrival on the market of large volumes of produce from that country, in excess of 2 000 tonnes per day. This is giving rise to severe distortions in the Community market. The importers should, therefore, be paying the respective customs duties.

In view of the fact that amounts paid in customs duties make up the EU's own resources, can the Commission explain how it monitors the correct application of this entry price system?

In light of the current situation, can it confirm that the corresponding specific customs duties are being paid?

What steps will the Commission take to ensure that the corresponding import duties are paid?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The correct application of the entry prices and the levying of import duties linked to the entry price mechanism fall under the responsibility of the national Customs authorities.

To help national customs authorities to reinforce the control of imports of products subject to the Entry Price, a traceability system was put in place through Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 701/2012 ([1]).

During the Agriculture Council of 29 November 2012, several Member States asked the Commission to control the proper collection of customs duties and the effective implementation of the EU legal provisions related to the entry price mechanism.

The Commission sent a letter on 17 December 2012 to the directors of national customs requesting some essential elements such as the valuation method used, the customs value of the imported goods, the collected *ad valorem* and specific duties paid for each declaration of release into free circulation from the 2011 import campaign onwards. As soon as complete data will be available, Member States and the European Parliament will be informed on the outcome.

([1]) OJ L 203 of 31.7.2012, p. 60.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010758/12
a la Comisión
Gabriel Mato Adrover (PPE)
(27 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Denuncia por la que se inició el Asunto SA-35041 — Radio Televisión Pública de Canarias S.A.U.

¿En qué estado se encuentra la tramitación del expediente de la denuncia (Asunto SA-35041 — Public service brodcasting on Canary Islands) presentada ante la Comisión Europea en relación con los servicios públicos audiovisuales de la sociedad pública Radio Televisión Pública de Canarias?

Siendo sus presupuestos financiados en su mayor parte por los presupuestos de la Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias, ¿puede la Comisión informar si se cumplen las exigencias establecidas tanto en la normativa europea de ayudas estatales a los servicios públicos de radiodifusión, como en la legislación nacional (Ley 7/2010, de 31 de marzo, General de la Comunicación Audiovisual)?

¿En qué fecha se prevé la culminación de la tramitación del expediente de la denuncia (Asunto SA 35041 — Public service brodcasting on Canary Islands) presentada ante la Comisión Europea en relación con los servicios públicos audiovisuales de la sociedad pública Radio Televisión Pública de Canarias S.A.U.?

¿Pueden ser consideradas ayudas de Estado las transferencias que perciben dichos Servicios Públicos de Televisión, al no cumplir con la normativa europea de ayudas estatales a los servicios públicos? En tal caso, ¿cuáles son las medidas previstas por la Comisión? ¿Tales medidas, de articularse, se aplicarían al Estado español o a la administración responsable?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(23 de enero de 2013)

A finales de octubre, la Comisión recibió la respuesta de España a la solicitud de información remitida en agosto. El servicio responsable está analizando ahora esa respuesta y la información adjunta a la misma. Es demasiado pronto por el momento para especular sobre la compatibilidad de la financiación de Radio Televisión Pública de Canarias con las normas de la UE sobre ayudas estatales.

En general, las ayudas a los organismos públicos de radiodifusión deben notificarse a la Comisión y solo pueden concederse previa decisión de la Comisión aprobándolas. A la hora de evaluar su compatibilidad, la Comisión aplica los criterios de la Comunicación sobre radiodifusión ([1]).

El destinatario de las decisiones sobre ayudas estatales es el Estado miembro interesado, no la región.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:257:0001:0014:ES:PDF.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010758/12
to the Commission
Gabriel Mato Adrover (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Complaint giving rise to Case SA-35041- Public service brodcasting in the Canary Islands

What stage has been reached in processing the file relating to Case SA-35041- Public service broadcasting in the Canary Islands, which was brought before the Commission in connection with public broadcasting services provided by the state-owned company *Radio Televisión Pública de Canarias*?

Given that this company's budget is largely provided by the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, can the Commission say whether the requirements laid down in European legislation on state aid to rules to public service broadcasting and in the Spanish national general law on audiovisual communication (Law 7/2010 of 31 March) are being met?

What is the estimated completion date for processing the file relating to Case SA35041- Public service broadcasting in the Canary Islands, which was brought before the Commission in connection with public broadcasting services provided by the state-owned company *Radio Televisión Publica de Canarias*?

Can the funds transferred to these public television services be considered to be state aid, given that they do not comply with European legislation on state aid to public services? If so, what steps does the Commission intend to take? If such measures are taken, will they be applied to the Spanish state or to the regional authority responsible?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

At the end of October the Commission received Spain's reply to the request for information sent in August. This reply and the attached information is currently being analysed by the responsible service. At this stage it is too early to speculate about the compatibility of the financing of the Radio Televisión Publica de Canarias with EU State aid rules.

In general, aid to public service broadcasters must be notified to the Commission and may only be granted after a Commission decision approving such aid. In its assessment of compatibility, the Commission applies the criteria of the Broadcasting Communication ([1]).

State aid decisions are addressed to the Member State concerned, not to the region.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:257:0001:0014:EN:PDF.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010759/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Ακρίβεια στην Ελλάδα παρά τη δραματική πτώση της ζήτησης και του εργατικού κόστους

Είναι γνωστό πως στην Ελλάδα, την τελευταία διετία, λόγω της πολιτικής των μνημονίων, υπήρξε δραματική πτώση του εργατικού κόστους. Τα εισοδήματα των νοικοκυριών μειώθηκαν κατά 22%, ενώ προβλέπεται και περαιτέρω μείωσή τους κατά 6% επιπλέον το 2013. Σύμφωνα με έκθεση της Ελληνικής Στατιστικής Αρχής, κατά το δεύτερο τρίμηνο του 2012, το διαθέσιμο εισόδημα των ελληνικών νοικοκυριών συρρικνώθηκε σε 34,1 δις ευρώ, από 39,5 δις το αντίστοιχο διάστημα του 2011, υπέστη δηλαδή νέα μείωση κατά 13,6% η οποία αποδίδεται σε μείωση των μισθών, των επιδομάτων, των κοινωνικών παροχών, αλλά και σε αύξηση κατά 37,3% της φορολογίας που καλούνται να καταβάλουν.

Την ίδια ώρα, σε έκθεση της Εθνικής Τράπεζας της Ελλάδας, διαπιστώνεται ότι η ταχεία μείωση του κόστους εργασίας δεν είχε επίπτωση στις τιμές. Στην ίδια έκθεση διαπιστώνεται ότι η αύξηση του ΦΠΑ και των Ειδικών Φόρων Κατανάλωσης, η αύξηση της τιμής της ενέργειας, αλλά και η αύξηση στις τιμές των εισαγόμενων καταναλωτικών αγαθών πολυεθνικών εταιριών που δραστηριοποιούνται στην Ελλάδα σε συνδυασμό και με την περιορισμένη ελληνική παραγωγή, όχι μόνο έχουν διατηρήσει τις τιμές των βασικών αγαθών σε υψηλά επίπεδα, αλλά σε πολλές περιπτώσεις οι τιμές έχουν αυξηθεί.

Με βάση τα πιο πάνω στοιχεία, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Πώς εξηγεί το φαινόμενο, τη στιγμή που υπάρχει δραματική συρρίκνωση της ζήτησης καταναλωτικών αγαθών και ταυτόχρονα συρρίκνωση του εργατικού κόστους, την ίδια στιγμή οι τιμές βασικών καταναλωτικών αγαθών να παραμένουν στα ύψη και να αυξάνονται;

Πόσο πρέπει να μειωθεί το βιοτικό επίπεδο του ελληνικού λαού, για να παραδεχθεί επιτέλους ότι η πολιτική που του έχει επιβληθεί είναι όχι μόνο εξοντωτική αλλά και απολύτως αναποτελεσματική;

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

Δεδομένου του αντίκτυπού τους στην αγοραστική δύναμη των Ελλήνων πολιτών και στους όρους ανταγωνισμού στην οικονομία, η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά την εξέλιξη των τιμών στην Ελλάδα. Σύμφωνα με τα τελευταία στοιχεία της ΕΛΣΤΑΤ, το προηγούμενο έτος ο πληθωρισμός ΕνΔΤΚ στην Ελλάδα επιβραδύνθηκε αισθητά από 2,1% σε ετήσια βάση τον Ιανουάριο του 2012 σε 0,3% τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012, ενώ, κατά μέσο όρο, ο πληθωρισμός στη ζώνη του ευρώ (Δείκτης Τιμών Καταναλωτή της Νομισματικής Ένωσης, ΔΤΚΝΕ) παρέμεινε πάνω από το 2%. Τα στοιχεία αυτά επιβεβαιώνουν ότι, αν και με κάποια καθυστέρηση, οι τιμές στην Ελλάδα προσαρμόζονται στις μειώσεις των μισθών και των συντάξεων. Άλλος παράγοντας που συμβάλλει στον μειωμένο προϋπολογισμό είναι ο αντίκτυπος των διαρθρωτικών μεταρρυθμίσεων στην αγορά προϊόντων οι οποίες συντελέστηκαν στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα. Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις στοχεύουν, μεταξύ άλλων, στην ενίσχυση του εσωτερικού ανταγωνισμού και στη μείωση της τιμολογιακής ισχύος των επιχειρήσεων, εξαλείφοντας κατά συνέπεια αδικαιολόγητες αποδόσεις και υπερβολικά περιθώρια κέρδους, καθώς και τη μετακύλισή τους στους καταναλωτές.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010759/12
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: High cost of living in Greece despite dramatic decline in demand and fall in labour costs

It is no secret that over the last two years in Greece, as a result of measures introduced under the memorandum of understanding, there has been a dramatic fall in labour costs, accompanied by a 22% cut in household income, with a further 6% cut anticipated for 2013. According to a report by the Greek Statistical Office, in the second quarter of 2012 the disposable income of Greek households had fallen to EUR 34.1 billion from EUR 39.5 billion in the corresponding period of 2011, that is to say a reduction of 13.6% attributable to pay cuts and reductions in support and benefits, compounded by a 37.3% increase in taxation.

At the same time, the findings of the National Bank of Greece show that the steep fall in labour costs has not affected prices and that increases in VAT and special consumer taxes, energy prices and the price of consumer imports from multinationals operating in Greece, coupled with limited production in Greece itself, mean that the staple commodity prices have not only remained high but in many cases have actually risen.

In view of this:

How can the Commission explain the fact that, at a time when demand for consumer goods and the cost of labour are dramatically falling, staple commodity prices remain high or are on the increase?

How far must living standards in Greece fall for the Commission to accept finally that the policies being imposed on Greece are not only destructive but totally ineffective?

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

The Commission follows closely the price developments in Greece given their effects on the purchasing power of Greek citizens and competitive conditions of the economy. According to the latest ELSTAT data release, in the course of the last year, the HICP inflation in Greece visibly slowed down from 2.1% year-on-year in on January 2012 to 0.3% in December 2012, while on average the inflation for the euro area (monetary union index of consumer prices, MUICP) remained above 2%. This evidence confirms that the prices in Greece are adjusting to wage and pension reductions, to wage and pension developments although with some lag. Another factor contributing to the decreasing inflation is the effect of product market structural reforms undertaken within the Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece. The reforms are aimed at, among others, enhancing internal competition and reducing pricing power of enterprises, therefore eliminating unwarranted rents on excessive profits, and transferring them to consumers.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010760/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(27 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Ragazza cristiana attaccata nel metro del Cairo

L'11 novembre 2012, la fonte di notizie egiziana *Egypt Independent* ha riferito che due donne che indossavano il niqab, hanno aggredito una donna cristiana in metropolitana e le hanno tagliato i capelli con la forza. Questo è il terzo incidente del genere in due mesi. Si teme che stia sorgendo un movimento vigilante femminile.

L'Organizzazione egiziana per i diritti umani ha dichiarato che le autrici dell'aggressione hanno chiamato la donna cristiana «infedele» e l'hanno spinta fuori dal treno, rompendole un braccio.

In un attacco simile, un'altra donna con il niqab, ha tagliato i capelli di una 13enne cristiana sempre nella metropolitana. Un altro tribunale egiziano ha comminato una pena di sei mesi con la condizionale a una donna insegnante a Luxor per il taglio dei capelli di due ragazze 12enni che avevano rifiutato di coprirsi il capo.

Gli oppositori del presidente Mohamed Morsi affermano che ci possono essere tentativi da parte degli islamisti di imporre rigorosamente la legge della Sharia. Eminenti studiosi religiosi sostengono che indossare il velo è obbligatorio per le musulmane.

1. La Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante è a conoscenza di questi episodi, e qual è la sua posizione in merito?

2. Quali passi ha effettuato la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante per ottenere rassicurazioni dal presidente Mohamed Morsi che il «vigilantismo» religioso non sarà tollerato in Egitto? In particolare, quali passi sta effettuando il governo egiziano per fugare i timori dei cristiani copti?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è stata informata di questi episodi. Gli attacchi segnalati sono totalmente inaccettabili e i colpevoli dovrebbero essere consegnati alla giustizia, come del resto, sempre secondo le nostre fonti, è stato fatto.

La libertà di religione o di credo è una priorità assoluta della politica dei diritti dell'uomo dell'Unione europea. L'AR/VP ha condannato ripetutamente gli atti di violenza commessi contro le minoranze religiose e i relativi luoghi di culto in Egitto, esortando le autorità a garantire la libertà di religione o di credo.

L'UE adopera tutti gli strumenti diplomatici e di cooperazione disponibili per affrontare il problema della libertà di religione o di credo. Di conseguenza, la delegazione segue da vicino la situazione e tale questione è sollevata regolarmente in occasione dei dialoghi ai massimi livelli con le parti interessate.

Il processo controverso che alla fine dello scorso anno ha portato al referendum costituzionale e all'adozione della nuova costituzione ha creato una profonda divisione politica in Egitto tra i partiti islamisti e l'opposizione liberale e laica. Nella sua dichiarazione del 25 dicembre, l'AR/VP ha ribadito la necessità di instaurare un dialogo fra tutte le parti in Egitto al fine di compiere ulteriori progressi verso una democrazia profonda e sostenibile. Ha esortato le parti interessate, in particolare il Presidente, in qualità di rappresentante di tutti gli egiziani, ad intensificare gli sforzi in questa direzione poiché la restaurazione della fiducia del popolo egiziano in questo processo è di importanza fondamentale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010760/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Christian girl attacked in Cairo metro

On 11 November 2012, the Egyptian news source *Egypt Independent* reported that two niqab-wearing women had assaulted and forcefully cut the hair of a Christian woman on the metro. This is the third such incident to take place in two months. There are fears that a female vigilante movement is on the rise.

The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights stated that the women had called the Christian an 'infidel' and had pushed her off the train, breaking her arm.

In a similar attack, another niqab-wearing woman cut the hair of a 13-year-old Christian girl in the metro. Another Egyptian court gave a female teacher in Luxor a six-month suspended sentence for cutting the hair of two 12-year-old girls after they refused to cover their heads.

Opponents of President Mohamed Morsi say that there may be attempts by Islamists to impose strict Sharia laws. However, mainstream religious scholars say that wearing the veil is compulsory for Muslims.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of this news story, and what is her position?

2. What steps has the VP/HR taken to gain assurances from President Mohamed Morsi that religious vigilantism will not be tolerated in Egypt? In particular, what steps are being adopted by the Egyptian Government to allay the fears of Coptic Christians?

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

The HR/VP has been informed about these news stories. The reported attacks are completely unacceptable and the culprits should be brought to justice, which, according to our information also has happened.

Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is a high priority under EU's human rights policy. The HR/VP has condemned repeatedly the acts of violence committed against religious minorities and their places of worship in Egypt, calling on the authorities to ensure FoRB.

The EU is using the full range of its diplomatic and cooperation instruments to address FoRB. Accordingly, the Delegation closely monitors the situation of FoRB and the matter is raised regularly and at the highest level with relevant interlocutors.

The controversial process at the end of last year eventually leading up to the Constitutional referendum and its adoption created a deep political divide in Egypt between Islamist parties and the liberal/secular opposition. In her statement of 25 December, the HR/VP reiterated her call for dialogue among all parties in Egypt in order to make further progress toward deep and sustainable democracy. She urged those concerned, in particular the President — as the representative of all Egyptians — to intensify efforts in this regard since it is of is of the utmost importance that confidence and trust of all Egyptians in the process are restored.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010761/12
an die Kommission
Thomas Ulmer (PPE)
(27. November 2012)

Betrifft: Arzneimittelengpässe

In ihrer Antwort auf eine frühere Anfrage (E-011583 vom 8. Dezember 2011 zu Artikel 46 b Absatz 2 Buchstabe b der Richtlinie 2011/62/EU des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates zur Änderung der Richtlinie 2001/83/EG zur Schaffung eines Gemeinschaftskodexes für Humanarzneimittel hinsichtlich der Verhinderung des Eindringens von gefälschten Arzneimitteln in die legale Lieferkette) teilte die Kommission am 27. Januar 2012 mit, dass sie infolge der Umsetzung dieser Richtlinie keine Arzneimittelengpässe erwarte.

Es ist vorgesehen, dass die Importvorschriften in sieben Monaten in Kraft treten; die vorgezogenen Szenarien für die Importerlaubnis von Arzneimittelwirkstoffen aus Drittländern sind noch nicht funktionsfähig. In jüngsten Mitteilungen der britischen Aufsichtsbehörde für Medizinprodukte und Produkte der Gesundheitsfürsorge (MHRA) und vonseiten der Industrie werden erhebliche Bedenken geäußert, wobei darauf hingewiesen wird, dass der EU eine Krise im Gesundheitswesen unmittelbar bevorstehen könnte.

1. Welche Maßnahmen werden unternommen, um dem durch administrative Bestimmungen (das Fehlen schriftlicher Bestätigungen aus Drittländern, übermäßig langwierige Genehmigungsverfahren, usw.) verursachten Risiko von Arzneimittelengpässen entgegenzuwirken? Wird es in diesem Zusammenhang beschleunigte Verfahren beziehungsweise Übergangsregelungen geben?

2. Wie sind die Reaktionen der Drittländer auf diese Richtlinie ausgefallen?

3. Was wird unternommen, um die Tatsache auszugleichen, dass die EU hochgradig von Arzneimittellieferungen aus Drittländern abhängig ist und zur selben Zeit in Gesundheitssystemen der EU große Mengen an in der EU hergestellten Arzneimitteln verbraucht werden, die jedoch Wirkstoffe aus Drittländern enthalten?

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

1. Die erste Frage des Herrn Abgeordneten wurde von der Kommission in ihrer Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-011583/2011 ([1]) beantwortet, auf die die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten verweisen möchte.

Das Verfahren der Aufnahme eines Drittlandes in die Liste erfolgt so rasch wie möglich unter uneingeschränkter Beachtung der in den Rechtsvorschriften vorgesehenen Anforderungen. Gemäß Artikel 2 Absatz 2 Buchstabe a der Richtlinie 2011/62/EU beträgt die Übergangsfrist für die neuen Vorschriften über Wirkstoffe zwei Jahre ab Veröffentlichung dieser Richtlinie. Die Rechtsvorschriften sehen keine weitere Übergangsregelung vor.

2. Die Kommission hat eine Liste von Drittländern veröffentlicht, die ihre Aufnahme in die Liste gemäß Artikel 111b der Richtlinie 2001/83/EG ([2]) beantragt haben. Die Kommission steht mit allen Drittländern in Verbindung, die wichtige Wirkstoffexporteure sind, um sie bei der Vorbereitung der „schriftlichen Bestätigung" gemäß Artikel 46b Absatz 2 Buchstabe b der Richtlinie 2001/83/EG zu unterstützen.

3. Die dritte Frage des Herrn Abgeordneten wurde ebenfalls bereits in der Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-011583/2011 beantwortet, auf die die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten höflich verweisen möchte.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?action=0&tabType=wq&tabActif=tabLast.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/quality/index_en.htm#ias.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010761/12
to the Commission
Thomas Ulmer (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Shortages of medicinal products

In answer to an earlier question (E-011583, of 8 December 2011, on Article 46b(2)(b) of Directive 2011/62/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, as regards the prevention of the entry into the legal supply chain of falsified medicinal products), the Commission indicated on 27 January 2012 that it did not expect shortages of medicinal products as a result of the implementation of this directive.

The importation provisions are due to enter into force in seven months, and the anticipated scenarios for allowing non-EU active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) to be imported are not yet operational. Recent communications from the UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and industry indicate strong concerns and highlight the fact that the EU could be on the verge of a healthcare crisis.

1. What action will be taken to combat the risk of shortages of medicinal products caused by administrative provisions (absence of 'written confirmations' from third countries, excessively long authorisation procedures, etc.)? In this context, will there be accelerated procedures? Will there be transitional arrangements?

2. What response has there been from non-EU countries to this directive?

3. What will be done to offset the fact that the EU is highly dependent on supplies of medicinal products from non-EU countries and that, at the same time, EU healthcare systems consume large volumes of medicines manufactured in the EU which include active pharmaceutical ingredients from non-EU countries?

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

1. The first question of the Honourable Member was answered by the Commission in its response to Written Question E-011583/2011 ([1]) to which the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member.

The procedure to 'list' a third country is done as swiftly as possible, while fully respecting the requirements in the legislation. According to Article 2(2)(a) of Directive 2011/62/EU, the transitional arrangement for the new rules on active substances is two years as of publication of that directive. No additional transitional arrangement is foreseen in the legislation.

2. The Commission has published the list of third countries who have requested to be 'listed' in accordance with Article 111b of Directive 2001/83/EC ([2]). The Commission is in contact with all third countries who are major exporters of active substances in order to assist them in preparing for issuing the 'written confirmation' in accordance with Article 46b(2)(b) of Directive 2001/83/EC.

3. The third question of the Honourable Member was equally answered in response to Written Question E-011583/2011 to which the Commission would respectfully refer the Honourable Member.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?action=0&tabType=wq&tabActif=tabLast.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/quality/index_en.htm#ias.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010764/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(27 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Συσχετισμός απολύσεων με την αύξηση του κινδύνου καρδιακών επεισοδίων

Σύμφωνα με σχετική έρευνα του Πανεπιστημίου Ντιουκ (δημοσιεύθηκε στα Αρχεία Γενικής Ιατρικής), η απώλεια της εργασίας μέσω απόλυσης αυξάνει σημαντικά τον κίνδυνο καρδιακής ανακοπής στον απολυμένο. Συγκεκριμένα, μετά την πρώτη «βίαιη έξοδο» του εργαζόμενου στην ανεργία, η αύξηση του κινδύνου για καρδιακό επεισόδιο αυξάνεται κατά 22% σε σχέση με τους παραμένοντες στην εργασία ενώ η απειλή τριπλασιάζεται για αυτούς που δεν καταφέρνουν το επόμενο διάστημα να βρουν μια σταθερή δουλειά. Ιδιαίτερα ανησυχητικό είναι το συμπέρασμα περί σωρευτικής επίπτωσης των απολύσεων στην υγεία των εργαζομένων (π.χ. όσοι έχασαν την εργασία τους 4 φορές, ο κίνδυνος καρδιακού επεισοδίου φθάνει το 63%). Στους παράγοντες της αύξησης συμπεριλαμβάνονται, μεταξύ άλλων, το άγχος και ο φόβος της μακροχρόνιας ανεργίας, η εργασιακή ανασφάλεια, η εγκατάλειψη σωστών πρακτικών (π.χ. ακριβότερη υγιεινή διατροφή και οργανωμένη σωματική άσκηση), η αμέλεια της προσωπικής υγείας λόγω προσπάθειας ανεύρεσης εργασίας ή οικονομικής αδυναμίας κάλυψης του κόστους της ιατρικής μέριμνας. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο και με δεδομένο αφενός την ραγδαία αύξηση των απολύσεων στην ΕΕ και αφετέρου του μέσου χρόνου παραμονής εκτός αγοράς εργασίας (μακροχρόνια ανεργία) ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει λάβει γνώση των αποτελεσμάτων της εν λόγω έρευνας; Αν ναι, πως τα σχολιάζει;

2. Έχει διενεργήσει ή προτίθεται να διενεργήσει σε συνεργασία με Πανεπιστημιακά Ιδρύματα και Ερευνητικά Κέντρα ανάλογες έρευνες για τη συσχέτιση των δυσμενών μεταβολών στις εργασιακές σχέσεις με την υγεία των εργαζομένων;

3. Διαθέτει στατιστικά στοιχεία για την συσχέτιση καρδιακών επεισοδίων ή άλλων βλαπτικών επιπτώσεων στην υγεία των Ευρωπαίων πολιτών με τις απολύσεις και την αδυναμία επανένταξης στην αγορά εργασίας;

4. Προτίθεται να εκδώσει ειδικές οδηγίες προς τα κράτη μέλη για την πρόληψη των κινδύνων στην υγεία των απολυμένων;

5. Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα κονδύλια από τα Ευρωπαϊκά Διαρθρωτικά Ταμεία που μπορούν να χρησιμοποιηθούν από τα κράτη μέλη για δράσεις αγωγής υγείας στους ανέργους;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Η εργασιακή ανασφάλεια και η απώλεια της εργασίας μπορούν να έχουν αρνητικό αντίκτυπο στην υγεία των εργαζομένων. Το συμπέρασμα αυτό επιβεβαιώθηκε από δύο μελέτες που ανέθεσε η Επιτροπή με τίτλο «Η υγεία του ενεργού πληθυσμού» (2011) ([1]) και «Αναδιάρθρωση του συστήματος υγείας (HIRES): Καινοτόμες προσεγγίσεις και συστάσεις πολιτικής» (2009) ([2]). Στην τελευταία έκθεση αποδεικνύεται ότι η εργασιακή ανασφάλεια και η ανεργία προκαλούν άγχος, το οποίο μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε εξάντληση και καρδιαγγειακά προβλήματα. Κατά την υπουργική διάσκεψη τον Νοέμβριο του 2010 ([3]) συζητήθηκαν περαιτέρω οι κατευθυντήριες γραμμές και τα μέσα για τη μείωση του αντικτύπου της αναδιάρθρωσης στον τομέα της υγείας των ανθρώπων.

Τα στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τα αίτια θανάτου, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και εξαιτίας των καρδιαγγειακών παθήσεων, είναι διαθέσιμα και βάσει αυτών καθίσταται δυνατή η ανάλυση των πιθανών συσχετίσεων με τις τάσεις στον τομέα της απασχόλησης ([4]). Για παράδειγμα, κατά τη διάρκεια προηγούμενων περιόδων κρίσης στη Φινλανδία και τη Σουηδία τα ποσοστά θνησιμότητας εξαιτίας των καρδιαγγειακών παθήσεων αυξήθηκαν.

Η Επιτροπή σχεδιάζει την έγκριση της πρωτοβουλίας «Δέσμη για την κοινωνική επένδυση» τον Φεβρουάριο του 2013, μέσω της οποίας επιδιώκει να καθορίσει μια νέα διάταξη για τις κοινωνικές πολιτικές, ώστε να βοηθήσει τα κράτη μέλη να προβούν στις διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις που απαιτούνται προκειμένου να βγουν από την κρίση και να υλοποιήσουν τη στρατηγική «Ευρώπη 2020». Η σημασία των στρατηγικών ενεργούς ένταξης, καθώς και των επαρκών και προσιτών υγειονομικών και κοινωνικών υπηρεσιών, είναι πιθανό να επισημαίνονται σε αυτό το πλαίσιο.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/final_full_ecorys_web.pdf
([2]) https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/anticipedia/document/show.do?id=3429.
([3]) http://www.eutrio.be/investing-well-being-work-addressing-psychosocial-risks-times-change.
([4]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database.

Τόσο το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο όσο και το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης είναι διαθέσιμα κατά τις τρέχουσες και μελλοντικές περιόδους προγραμματισμού, με σκοπό να υποστηρίξουν τις αλλαγές των συστημάτων υγείας που οδηγούν στην προώθηση της υγείας και των προληπτικών δράσεων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010764/12
to the Commission
Konstantinos Poupakis (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Correlation between job losses and increased risk of heart attack

According to research by the American University of Duke published in the journal 'Archives of Internal Medicine', job losses resulting from dismissal significantly increase the risk of heart attacks among those concerned. After the first 'traumatic job loss', the risk of heart attack increases by 22% compared with those remaining in employment, while the risk triples for those who fail to find stable employment soon afterwards. The findings were particularly alarming in respect of the cumulative effect of repeated dismissals, with a 63% increase in the risk of heart attack following four dismissals. Factors increasing the risk include anxiety and fear of long-term unemployment, lack of job security, abandonment of healthy habits (for example, a healthy diet and regular exercise) and neglect of personal health in favour of attempts to find employment or because of the inability to afford medical care.

In view of this and given the spiralling increase in job losses in the EU on the one hand and the increase in the average amount of time spent outside the employment market (long-term unemployment) on the other:

1. Is the Commission aware of the above findings and, if so, what view does it take of them?

2. Has it launched similar studies in cooperation with academic and research institutes into the correlation between adverse employment trends and the health of workers, or does it intend to do so?

3. Does it have any statistical data regarding the correlation between heart attacks or other health problems affecting European citizens on the one hand and job losses and the inability to resume employment on the other?

4. Will it issue special guidelines to the Member States regarding measures to avert health risks to those made redundant?

5. Are European structural fund resources available to enable Member States to provide healthcare for the unemployed?

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

Job insecurity and job loss can have a negative impact on workers' health. This was confirmed by two studies ordered by the Commission 'Health of People of Working Age' (2011) ([1]) and 'Health in Restructuring (HIRES): Innovative Approaches and Policy Recommendations' (2009) ([2]). The latter found that job insecurity and unemployment cause stress which can lead to burnout and cardiovascular problems. A Ministerial Conference in November 2010 ([3]) further discussed guidelines and tools to reduce the impact of restructuring on people's health.

Statistical data on causes of death, including due to cardiovascular diseases, is available and can enable the analysis of possible correlations with employment trends ([4]). For example, during earlier crises in Finland and Sweden mortality rates due to cardiovascular disease increased.

The Commission is planning to adopt a 'Social Investment Package' in February 2013, which seeks to set out a new agenda for social policies to help Member States make the structural reforms needed to emerge from the crisis and to deliver on the Europe 2020 strategy. The importance of active inclusion strategies and adequate and affordable health and social services is likely to be highlighted in this framework.

Both the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund are available in the current and upcoming programming periods to support transformational changes of health systems towards health promotion and preventive actions.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/final_full_ecorys_web.pdf
([2]) https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/anticipedia/document/show.do?id=3429.
([3]) http://www.eutrio.be/investing-well-being-work-addressing-psychosocial-risks-times-change.
([4]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010765/12
au Conseil
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(27 novembre 2012)

Objet: Accords commerciaux de l'Union européenne avec des pays tiers

Depuis le début des années 1990, l'Association européenne de libre-échange (AELE), qui inclut aujourd'hui l'Islande, le Liechtenstein, la Norvège et la Suisse, a signé vingt-quatre accords de libre-échange (ALE) qui concernent trente-trois pays tiers.

À titre de comparaison, l'Union européenne n'a conclu que quatre accords de plein droit, tandis que sept sont en cours de négociation avec des pays tiers.

Cet écart résulte du fait que l'Union européenne s'applique à elle-même des règles beaucoup plus strictes par rapport à celles appliquées par les membres de l'AELE, avec des critères plus contraignants, avant la signature de tout accord commercial avec un pays tiers.

L'Union européenne avait également misé sur des accords avec des blocs régionaux tels le Mercosur en Amérique du Sud et l'Association des Nations d'Asie du Sud-Est (ANASE). Cette approche s'était révélée peu fructueuse en raison des écarts de développement entre certains pays au sein de ces blocs.

1. Sachant que les accords commerciaux avec des pays tiers peuvent apporter de l'innovation, favoriser le secteur des services ou renforcer les investissements en Europe, le Conseil prévoit-il de privilégier dorénavant des négociations bilatérales entre l'Union et des pays tiers, plutôt qu'avec des blocs régionaux de pays?

2. Dans l'affirmative, le Conseil prévoit-il d'assouplir ses exigences et de revoir ses critères de réciprocité avant la signature de futurs accords commerciaux avec des pays tiers négociés par la Commission par voie d'actes délégués?

Réponse
(18 février 2013)

Étant donné les estimations actuelles, la croissance économique mondiale future sera principalement stimulée par des pays extérieurs à l'UE. La création de nouveaux débouchés commerciaux pour les entreprises européennes par la négociation de nouveaux accords de libre-échange avec des régions et des pays clés constitue une priorité importante pour l'UE.

Selon les estimations de la Commission, l'aboutissement des négociations en cours et à venir en vue de la conclusion d'accords de libre-échange et de leur mise en œuvre, avec à la clé des résultats équilibrés et ambitieux découlant d'engagements substantiels en matière d'ouverture des marchés de la part de nos partenaires commerciaux, pourrait se traduire, à moyen et à long terme, par une augmentation cumulée du PIB de l'UE de plus de 250 milliards d'euros (à savoir environ 2 %).

En 2012, l'UE a signé avec l'Amérique centrale un accord d'association qui comprend une libéralisation substantielle des échanges. D'un point de vue commercial, cet accord est le premier réel accord de région à région et il permettra d'ouvrir des marchés de part et d'autre. Il contribuera également à établir un environnement stable pour les entreprises et les investissements et à renforcer l'intégration économique régionale. L'UE a également signé un accord commercial multipartite avec la Colombie et le Pérou.

Le 29 novembre 2012, le Conseil a adopté des directives de négociation en vue d'un accord de libre-échange avec le Japon et le 16 décembre 2012, la Commission a conclu les négociations relatives à un accord de libre-échange approfondi et complet avec Singapour. Il s'agit du premier accord de libre-échange conclu avec un membre de l'ASEAN. Dans la région de l'ASEAN, l'UE est en cours de négociations avec la Malaisie et le Viêt Nam, et d'autres négociations devraient être entamées sous peu avec d'autres partenaires de l'ASEAN, tels que l'Indonésie et la Thaïlande. L'UE espère qu'à l'avenir, ces accords bilatéraux seront complétés par un accord commercial de région à région.

Pour ce qui est des négociations commerciales avec le Mercosur, des travaux techniques ont commencé en vue d'un éventuel échange d'offres d'accès aux marchés afin de donner un nouvel élan aux négociations de région à région.

L'UE est également en cours de négociations avec un certain nombre de partenaires importants (Canada, Inde, pays du voisinage oriental et du sud de la Méditerranée, régions ACP et Conseil de coopération du Golfe) et coopère avec les États-Unis au sein d'un groupe de travail de haut niveau sur l'emploi et la croissance pour déterminer des moyens de mieux intégrer leurs relations commerciales et économiques, y compris par le lancement d'un accord de libre-échange.

Les résultats de ces travaux devraient être disponibles d'ici la fin de février 2013. L'UE a conclu avec la Corée du Sud un accord commercial ambitieux et complet qui est appliqué provisoirement depuis juillet 2011. Des accords commerciaux ont en outre été conclus entre l'UE et le Chili, le Mexique et l'Afrique du Sud. Des négociations relatives à des accords de partenariat économique (APE) combinant ouverture du commerce et aides sont en cours avec les pays d'Afrique et du Pacifique.

Le Conseil n'a pas traité les autres questions mentionnées par l'Honorable Parlementaire. En tout état de cause, le Conseil souhaite rappeler que les actes délégués ne sont pas utilisés dans le cadre de négociations en vue de la conclusion d'accords internationaux.

Le Conseil européen des 7 et 8 février 2013 devrait prendre la mesure de la position qu'occupe l'UE dans le commerce international, tant au niveau multilatéral que bilatéral, et fournir des orientations pour que de nouveaux progrès soient accomplis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010765/12
to the Council
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: EU trade agreements with third countries

Since the start of the 1990s, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), whose members include Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, has signed 24 free trade agreements (FTAs) involving 33 third countries.

This compares with the European Union, which has only signed four legally applicable agreements, while seven others are under negotiation with third countries.

This difference is due to the fact that the European Union imposes much stricter rules upon itself than those imposed by EFTA member countries, demanding that third countries meet more stringent criteria before signing any trade agreement.

The European Union also counted on reaching agreements with regional blocs such as Mercosur in Latin America and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Little success has been achieved with this approach due to the varying levels of development of some of the countries within these organisations.

1. Given that trade agreements with third countries can lead to innovation, promote service sector growth and strengthen investment in Europe, does the Council plan henceforth to favour bilateral negotiations between the EU and third countries, instead of with multi-country regional blocs?

2. If so, does the Council plan to relax its requirements and revise its criteria of reciprocity before signing future trade agreements with third countries negotiated by the Commission by means of delegated acts?

Reply
(18 February 2013)

Given current estimates, future world economic growth will be driven primarily by countries outside the EU. It is a key priority for the EU to generate new market opportunities for European businesses by negotiating new Free Trade Agreements with key regions and countries. According to the Commission's estimates, the successful conclusion of current and forthcoming negotiations on FTAs and their implementation, with balanced and ambitious outcomes reflecting substantial market opening commitments from our trading partners, could, in the medium and longer term, lead to a cumulative increase in the EU's GDP by over EUR 250 billion (about 2% of the EU's GDP).

In 2012, the EU signed an association agreement with Central America which includes substantial trade liberalisation. From a trade perspective, this agreement is the first genuine region-to-region agreement and will open up markets on both sides. It will also help establish a stable business and investment environment, as well as reinforce regional economic integration. The EU has also signed a multiparty trade agreement with Colombia and Peru.

On 29 November 2012, the Council adopted negotiating directives for a FTA with Japan and, on 16 December 2012, the Commission completed the negotiations of a deep and comprehensive FTA with Singapore. This is the first FTA to be concluded with an ASEAN member. In the ASEAN region, the EU is currently negotiating with Malaysia and Vietnam, and negotiations are expected to start soon with other ASEAN partners, such as Indonesia and Thailand. The EU hopes that in the future these bilateral agreements will be completed with a region-to-region trade agreement.

As regards trade negotiations with Mercosur, technical work is being undertaken with a view to the possible exchange of market access offers in order to give renewed impetus to region-to-region negotiations.

The EU is also currently negotiating with a number of important partners (Canada, India, Eastern neighbourhood and Southern Mediterranean countries, ACP regions and Gulf Cooperation Council), and is working together with the US in a High Level Group on jobs and growth on ways to further integrate their trade and economic relationship, including the option of launching a free trade agreement. The results of this work should be made available by February 2013. The EU has concluded an ambitious and comprehensive trade agreement with South Korea which has been provisionally applied since July 2011. Moreover, trade agreements have been concluded between the EU and Chile, Mexico, South Africa. Negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) combining trade opening and aid are underway with African and Pacific countries.

The Council has not addressed the other issues raised by the Honourable Member. In any event, the Council would recall that delegated acts are not used in the framework of negotiations on international agreements.

The European Council on 7 and 8 February 2013 is expected to take stock of the EU's position in international trade, both at multilateral and bilateral level, and provide guidance for further progress.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010766/12
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(27 novembre 2012)

Objet: Mesures antidumping et industrie de l'énergie solaire en Europe

Le 5 novembre dernier, la Chine a déposé une plainte auprès de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce contre l'Union européenne. Dans sa plainte, la Chine accuse l'Europe de subventionner de manière illégale son industrie de l'énergie solaire avec des subventions et des prêts préférentiels de la Banque européenne.

Le 1er novembre, la Chine avait déjà lancé une enquête pour déterminer si les produits de la filière solaire qu'elle achète en Europe ne bénéficiaient pas de subventions incompatibles avec les règles de l'OMC ou s'ils n'étaient pas vendus à perte. Il est à noter qu'une procédure similaire a été lancée par la Chine contre les États-Unis.

En septembre 2012, l'Union européenne avait également lancé une enquête antidumping contre plusieurs grands groupes chinois spécialisés dans les panneaux solaires, accusés de vendre à perte sur le vieux continent. Certaines voix au sein de l'Union assurent que les Chinois subventionnent leurs industries, ce qui nuirait fortement à la compétitivité de l'Union européenne.

Il est à noter que les prix du marché avaient baissé de 75 % depuis 2008 en raison d'un ralentissement de la demande, entraînant ainsi une surproduction de panneaux solaires en Chine puisque ce pays avait beaucoup investi dans ce secteur.

La Commission prévoit-elle de proposer des mesures législatives concernant la mise en œuvre de mesures antidumping au sein du marché intérieur afin de protéger l'économie européenne face à une concurrence parfois déloyale de certains pays tiers?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(17 janvier 2013)

La Commission a effectivement ouvert une procédure antidumping AD 590 (le 6 septembre 2012) et une procédure antisubventions AS 594 (le 8 novembre 2012) concernant les importations de panneaux solaires originaires de la République populaire de Chine. La décision d'ouvrir ces enquêtes a été fondée sur des plaintes déposées par l'industrie des panneaux solaires de l'UE, qui reposaient sur des éléments de preuve suffisants à première vue. Ces deux procédures sont menées en parallèle, concernent le même produit et couvrent la même période d'enquête (1er juillet 2011-30 juin 2012), ainsi que la même période de référence (janvier 2009-juin 2012).

Des conclusions provisoires devront être livrées pour juin 2013 en ce qui concerne la procédure antidumping et pour août 2013 en ce qui concerne la procédure antisubventions. Les conclusions définitives sont attendues pour début décembre 2013. Étant donné que ces procédures n'en sont qu'à leurs débuts, il est trop tôt pour dire si des mesures seront instituées et à quel niveau.

La Chine a initié deux types d'action concernant l'industrie de l'énergie solaire de l'UE. La première, lancée le 1er novembre 2012, est une enquête antidumping et antisubventions à l'encontre des exportations de polysilicium de l'UE vers la Chine. La seconde se rapporte à une demande de consultations, dans le cadre du mécanisme de règlement des différends de l'OMC, au sujet de certaines mesures visant à promouvoir l'utilisation de l'énergie produite à partir de sources renouvelables dans l'UE (en particulier en Italie et en Grèce).

La Commission prend une part active dans ces deux procédures afin de veiller à ce que les intérêts des industries de l'UE concernées bénéficient d'une protection adéquate.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010766/12
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Anti-dumping measures and the EU solar energy industry

On 5 November 2012, China lodged a complaint with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against the European Union. In the complaint, China accuses Europe of illegally subsidising its solar energy industry through grants and preferential loans from the European Investment Bank.

China had already launched an inquiry, on 1 November 2012, to establish whether the products it buys from the European solar energy sector received subsidies in breach of WTO rules or whether they were sold at a loss. It should be noted that China has also initiated similar proceedings against the United States.

In September 2012, the European Union also launched an anti-dumping inquiry into several major Chinese companies specialising in solar panels and accused of selling at a loss in Europe. Some in the European Union are certain that the Chinese subsidise their industries, seriously harming the EU's competitiveness.

It should be noted that, due to a slowdown in demand, market prices have fallen by 75% since 2008. This has led to overproduction of solar panels in China since the country has invested heavily in the sector.

Does the Commission plan to propose legislative measures for the implementation of anti-dumping measures within the internal market to protect the EU economy against sometimes unfair competition from certain third countries?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

The Commission has indeed initiated an anti-dumping proceeding AD 590 (on 6 September 2012) and an anti-subsidy proceeding AS 594 (on 8 November 2012) concerning imports of solar panels originating in the People's Republic of China. The decision to open these investigations was based on complaints with sufficient *prima facie* evidence which were lodged by the EU solar panel industry. These two proceedings run in parallel and concern the same product and cover the same investigation period (1 July 2011- 30 June 2012) as well as the same period of reference (from January 2009 to June 2012).

Provisional findings will have to be issued by June 2013 on the anti-dumping proceeding and by August 2013 on the anti-subsidy proceeding. The definitive findings are due in early December 2013. Given that these proceedings are at an early stage, it is premature to foresee whether there will be any measures and what would be their level.

China has initiated two different kinds of actions which relate to the EU solar energy industry. The first, initiated on 1 November 2012, concerns an anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigation against imports of EU polysilicon into China. The second relates to a request for consultations within the framework of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism concerning certain measures for the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources in the EU (in particular in Italy and Greece).

The Commission is actively involved in both proceedings in order to ensure that the interests of the EU industries concerned are properly protected.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-010767/12
til Kommissionen
Emilie Turunen (Verts/ALE)
(27. november 2012)

Om: Muligt skattesnyd for flypersonale

Ifølge artikler i Berlingske Tidende den 22.11.2012 er op mod tre fjerdedele af de ansatte på et typisk Ryanair-fly ikke ansat i selskabet, men ansat i et vikarbureau med hjemsted i et lavskatteland eller selvstændige erhvervsdrivende med eget enmandsfirma. Ifølge anonyme Ryanair-piloter tvinger virksomheden dem til at oprette deres egne enkeltmandsvirksomheder, som så igen lejes ud til Ryanair via et vikarbureau registreret i England. Det betyder nul skatter og arbejdsgiverafgifter for Ryanair, ingen løn under sygdom og ingen pension og forsikring til piloten, da denne teknisk set ikke er ansat, samt risiko for en skattesag mod den enkelte pilot. Lignende »ansættelsesprocedurer« med brug af »falske selvstændige« foregår tilsyneladende i både Danmark og Sverige, og skattemyndighederne er her i gang med at undersøge sagen nærmere. Tilsvarende har anklagemyndigheden i Bergamo, Italien, i sidste måned sigtet Ryanairs øverste chef, Michael O'Leary, for skatteunddragelse. Ifølge Berlingske Tidende den 26/11 ([1]), er flyselskabet Norwegian i søgelyset for lignende skattesnyd i forbindelse med ansættelser. I forlængelse af de fremkomne oplysninger bedes Kommissionen svare på følgende:

1) I april i år vedtog Rådet og Europa-Parlamentet en opdatering af forordning 883/2004 og 987/2009, der gør det umuligt at anvende sociale sikringsordninger, der er mindre fordelagtige for de ansatte, samt sikre, at det er den ansattes opholdssted, der er afgørende for, hvilken social sikringsordning der betales til. Ryanair har imidlertid fastslået, at man kun vil overholde irsk lovgivning, samt at man vil trække beløbet fra de ansattes løn, hvis selskabet skal betale social sikring. Kommissionen har fastslået, at det er en omgåelse af reglerne, men at det er op til medlemslandene at lægge sag an mod selskaberne. Fastholder Kommissionen, at den ikke vil gå ind i sagen, selvom Ryanair og andre selskaber tilsyneladende bevidst bryder EU-lovgivningen?

2) Kan Kommissionen give et bud på, i hvor mange EU-lande Ryanair omgår reglerne for indbetaling af social sikring? kender Kommissionen til andre flyselskaber med samme praksis? (Hvilke, og hvordan omgås reglerne?)

3) Forventer Kommissionen at fremsætte lovforslag eller tage andre initiativer for at imødegå, at EU-lovgivningen på området systematisk bliver systematisk overtrådt, som tilfældet synes at være her?

4) Planlægger Kommissionen en særlig indsats mod såkaldt »falske selvstændige«?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(15. januar 2013)

Det er op til de ansvarlige nationale sociale sikringsinstitutioner at fastlægge, hvilken lovgivning om social sikring der skal anvendes, i overensstemmelse med national ret og EU-ret ([2]). For personer, der arbejder i to eller flere medlemsstater, er det bopælslandet, der træffer afgørelsen. Alle andre stater, hvor den pågældende person udøver aktiviteter, inddrages i fastlæggelsen af, hvilken lovgivning den pågældende skal være omfattet af. Særlige procedurer i forordning 883/2004 og 987/2009 skal følges, hvis de kompetente institutioner ikke kan blive enige. Det er derfor ikke Ryanair, der skal fastlægge, hvilken lovgivning der skal gælde for dets personale. En praktisk vejledning, der er til rådighed på Kommissionens websted ([3]), beskriver, hvordan det fastlægges, hvilken lovgivning der skal anvendes.

De indberettede problemer med den gældende lovgivning om social sikring i luftfartssektoren blev korrigeret ved forordning 465/2012 ([4]). Kommissionen henviser det ærede parlamentsmedlem for nærmere oplysninger til sit svar på skriftlig forespørgsel E-9491/2012 ([5]).

Kommissionen har ikke de tal og oplysninger, der anmodes om i spørgsmål nr. 2.

([1]) http://www.business.dk/transport/norwegian-i-soegelyset-hos-skat-0.
([2]) Artikel 16 i Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 987/2009 af 16. september 2009 om de nærmere regler til gennemførelse af forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004 om koordinering af de sociale sikringsordninger. EUT L 284 af 30.10.2009, s. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=da&catId=868.
([4]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EU) nr. 465/2012, EUT L 149 af 8.6.2012, s. 4, om ændring af forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004 og forordning (EF) nr. 987/2009.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

I grønbogen »Modernisering af arbejdsretten med henblik på tackling af det 21. århundredes udfordringer« ([6]) angives det, at proformaselvstændige eller camoufleret beskæftigelse går ud på at klassificere en ansat som andet end ansat for at skjule hans eller hendes reelle juridiske status og for at undgå udgifter såsom skat og bidrag til sociale sikringsordninger. Målet med traktatens bestemmelser på det sociale område er imidlertid at beskytte de ansatte, mens problemet med, at visse personer bliver proformaselvstændige, bør behandles primært af medlemsstaterne.

Arbejdstagere, der er ansat af et vikarbureau og overdrages til brugervirksomheder for midlertidigt at udføre arbejdsopgaver under disses tilsyn og ledelse, er beskyttet af direktiv 2008/104/EF ([7]).

([6]) KOM(2006)0708 endelig af 22. november 2006.
([7]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets direktiv 2008/104/EF af 19. november 2008 om vikararbejde. EUT L 327 af 5.12.2008, s. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010767/12
to the Commission
Emilie Turunen (Verts/ALE)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Possible tax evasion for aircrew

According to articles in the *Berlingske Tidende* of 22 November 2012, up to three-quarters of those working on a typical Ryanair flight are not employed by the company, but are employed by a temporary employment agency based in a low-tax country or are self-employed with their own one-man company. According to anonymous Ryanair pilots, the company is forcing them to set up their own one-man businesses, which in turn work for Ryanair via a temporary employment agency registered in England. This means no taxes and no employer's contributions for Ryanair, and no sick pay, no pension and no insurance for the pilot who is not technically employed, as well as the risk of tax cases against individual pilots. Similar 'recruitment procedures' using 'pseudo self-employed' workers are apparently employed in both Denmark and Sweden, and the tax authorities in these countries are currently investigating the practice. In a similar vein, last month the Public Prosecutor's Office in Bergamo, Italy, charged Ryanair chief executive, Michael O'Leary, with tax evasion, and according to the Berlingske Tidende of 26 November 2012, the 'Norwegian' airline is in the spotlight for similar tax evasion relating to employment ([1]).

1. In April this year, the Council and the European Parliament updated Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009, making it impossible to use social security systems that are less favourable for employees, and ensuring that it is the employee's place of residence that determines where social security contributions are paid. Ryanair has, however, stated that it will only comply with Irish law, and that it will deduct the amount from the employee's salary if the company has to pay social security contributions. The Commission has determined that this is circumventing the rules, but that it is up to Member States to take legal action against companies. Will the Commission still not intervene, even though it seems that Ryanair and other companies are deliberately breaking EC law?

2. Can the Commission put a figure on the number of EU Member States in which Ryanair is circumventing the rules on social security payments? Does the Commission know of other airlines that adopt the same practice? (Which, and how do they circumvent the rules?)

3. Does the Commission intend to propose legislation or take other action to combat the systematic violation of EU legislation in this field, as seems to be the case here?

4. Does the Commission have plans for special measures to tackle 'pseudo self-employment'?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(15 January 2013)

It is for the competent national social security institutions to determine the applicable social security legislation in accordance with national and EC law ([2]). For persons working in two or more Member States, the State of residence takes in principle the decision. All other States where the person concerned pursues its activity are involved in the determination of the applicable legislation. Special procedures in Regulations 883/2004 and 987/2009 must be followed if the competent institutions cannot agree. Consequently, it is not for Ryanair to determine the applicable legislation for its staff. A Practical guide available on Commission's website ([3]) describes how the applicable legislation is determined.

The reported problems with the applicable social security legislation in the aviation sector were rectified by Regulation 465/2012 ([4]). The Commission refers the Honourable Member for details to its answer to Written Question E-9491/2012 ([5]).

The Commission does not have the figures and information requested in question no 2.

([1]) http://www.business.dk/transport/norwegian-i-soegelyset-hos-skat-0.
([2]) Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 laying down the procedure for implementing Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems, OJ L 284, 30.10.2009, p. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=868.
([4]) Regulation (EU) No 465/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 149, 8.6.2012, p. 4, amending Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 987/2009.
([5]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

As the Green Paper 'Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century' ([6]) notes, bogus self-employment or disguised employment involves classifying an employee as other than an employee so as to conceal his or her true legal status and avoid costs, which may include taxes and social security contributions. However, the aim of the Treaty's social provisions is to protect employees, while the problem of persons posing falsely as self-employed workers should be dealt with primarily by the Member States.

Workers who are employed by a temporary-work agency and assigned to user undertakings to work temporarily under their supervision and direction are protected under Directive 2008/104/EC ([7]).

([6]) COM(2006) 708 final of 22 November 2006.

([7]) Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work, OJ L 327, 5.12.2008, p. 9.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010768/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(27. November 2012)

Betrifft: Basel III — Offenlegung stiller Reserven

Traditionell nehmen die meisten Sparkassen — v. a. in strukturschwachen Regionen — mehr Spareinlagen an, als sie in Form von Krediten vergeben können. Diesen strukturellen Liquiditätsüberschuss legen sie bei Landesbanken, aber auch in Staatsanleihen an, die indes derzeit kaum noch Zinsen abwerfen. Mittlerweile bedrohen die lang anhaltende Phase niedriger Zinsen und die wieder steigende Risikovorsorge die Erträge der noch vergleichsweise stabilen Institute. Denn die Niedrigzinsphase, in der die Spanne zwischen kurz- und langfristigen Zinsen zuletzt deutlich kleiner geworden ist, macht vielen Sparkassen zu schaffen. Und so werden die Sparkassen wohl auch 2012 wieder massiv ihre Kapitalrücklagen stärken, anstatt den Kommunen einen größeren Teil ihrer Gewinne auszuschütten.

Die neuen Eigenkapitalvorschriften Basel III verlangen von den Sparkassen, stille Reserven aufzudecken, die sie bislang als Ergänzungskapital in der Bilanz versteckt haben. Diese Geheimniskrämerei brachte den Sparkassen bislang den Vorteil, in schlechten Zeiten die Reserven heben zu können, um trotzdem noch Gewinn auszuweisen. Aus heutiger Sicht stellen die strengeren Eigenkapitalnormen für die Sparkassen in Deutschland aufgrund des bilanziellen Reichtums prinzipiell kein Problem dar. Die mit Basel III einhergehende Sichtbarwerdung des bisher verborgenen Kapitalschatzes könnte angesichts klammer Kassen jedoch dazu führen, dass die Kommunen als Träger der Sparkassen eine höhere Gewinnausschüttung verlangen.

1. Gibt es Studien darüber, welche Auswirkungen für kleinere Finanzinstitute generell durch die Basel-III-Vorschriften zu erwarten sind?

2. Nun stehen nicht in allen Mitgliedstaaten die Sparkassen so gut da wie jene in Deutschland. Die spanischen Sparkassen, die etwa die Hälfte des gesamten spanischen Bankensektors stellen, haben ja den europäischen Bankenstresstest nicht bestanden. Erwartet die Kommission, dass sich durch die Anwendung der Basel-III-Vorgaben die spanische Bankenkrise noch verschärfen wird?

3. Falls ja, mit welcher Erhöhung des Finanzbedarfs aus EU-Rettungsfonds wird gerechnet?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(1. Februar 2013)

Der Baseler Ausschuss für Bankenaufsicht (BCBS) hat eine Reihe quantitativer Folgenabschätzungsstudien (QIS) durchgeführt, deren Schwerpunkt auf großen internationalen Banken lag, die im jeweiligen Zuständigkeitsbereich der BCBS-Mitglieder tätig sind. Darüber hinaus hat die EBA eigene QIS zum europäischen Markt vorgenommen, in denen die Auswirkungen von Basel III auf EU-Banken mit einem aggregierten Marktanteil von mindestens 50 % auf den Märkten der Mitgliedstaaten untersucht wurden. Dem Legislativvorschlag der Kommission zu CRR/CRD4 wurde außerdem eine umfassende Folgenabschätzung beigefügt, die Banken aller Größen abdeckt.

Aus den der Kommission vorliegenden Informationen geht hervor, dass nicht alle spanischen Sparkassen bei den EBA-Stresstests im Jahr 2011 schlecht abgeschnitten haben. Während die Kernkapitalquote einiger spanischer Sparkassen im ungünstigen Stressszenario bei unter 5 % lag, hielten andere Sparkassen eine Quote oberhalb dieser Schwelle ein. Noch wichtiger ist, dass nach den Tests der EBA die Solvenz der spanischen Banken und Sparkassen zunächst im Rahmen des Finanzsektor-Evaluierungsprogramms (FSAP) vom IWF und dann von verschiedenen unabhängigen Sachverständigen bewertet wurde, die äußerst strenge Top-Down- und Bottom-Up-Tests durchführten. Diese Stresstests wurden unter Aufsicht der Europäischen Kommission, der EBA, der EZB und des IWF vorgenommen. Die Rekapitalisierung der spanischen Sparkassen erfolgte auf der Grundlage der in diesen strengen Prüfungen ermittelten Kapitallücke. Darüber hinaus sind sämtliche Kreditinstitute in Spanien, einschließlich Sparkassen, seit Januar 2013 verpflichtet, eine Kernkapitalquote von 9 % einzuhalten, was über die Anforderungen von Basel III hinausgeht. Somit ist nicht davon auszugehen, dass die Anwendung der Basel-III-Vorgaben die spanische Bankenkrise verschärft oder eine Erhöhung des Finanzbedarfs aus EU-Rettungsfonds erfordert.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010768/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Basel III — Disclosure of secret reserves

Most savings banks, especially in structurally weak regions, traditionally take in more savings deposits than they are able to lend. They invest this structural surplus liquidity with *Landesbanken* (regional publicly-owned banks) and also in government securities, which are currently producing barely any yield. Meanwhile, the lengthy period of low interest rates and risk provisioning, which is once again on the rise, are threatening the earnings of those institutions which are still comparatively stable, because the period of low interest rates, in which the margin between short- and long-term interest rates has recently become markedly smaller, is a headache for many savings banks. As a result, in 2012 the savings banks are once again likely to boost their capital reserves, instead of distributing a greater proportion of their profits to the municipalities.

The new Basel III regulatory framework for capital requires the savings banks to disclose their secret reserves, which they have previously hidden in their balance sheets as Tier 2 capital. This secretive approach previously brought the savings banks the advantage of being able to increase their reserves in difficult times and despite this still return a profit. From today's perspective the more stringent capital requirements for savings banks in Germany do not pose a fundamental problem, on account of their well-stocked balance sheets. However, the disclosure of their previously hidden riches might prompt cash-strapped municipalities, as their owners, to demand that they increase their profit distribution.

1. Are there any studies of the expected effect on smaller financial institutions of the Basel III regulatory framework as a whole?

2. The situation of the savings banks is not as healthy in all the Member States as it is in Germany. The Spanish savings banks, which account for around half of the entire banking sector in Spain, have not passed the European banking stress test. Does the Commission expect the Spanish banking crisis to become even worse as a result of the application of the Basel III requirements?

3. If so, what increase in the need for finance from EU rescue funds is expected?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) has carried out a number of quantitative impact studies (QIS) which focus on large international banks, active in the jurisdiction of the BCBS members. In addition, the EBA has carried out its own QIS focusing on the European market, which looked at the effect of Basel III on EU banks representing an aggregated market share of at least 50% of Member States' markets. Furthemore, the Commissions legislative proposal on CRR/CRD4 was accompanied by and in-depth impact assessment which covered banks of all sizes.

From the information available to the Commission, not all Spanish savings banks have failed the EBA stress test in 2011. While some Spanish savings banks CT1 ratio fell below 5% in the adverse stress scenario, others displayed capital ratios above this threshold. More importantly, after the EBA exercise, the solvency of Spanish banks and savings banks has been evaluated by the IMF, in its FSAP and subsequently by different independent experts which carried out very rigorous top down exercise and then bottom up stress test exercises. These stress testing exercises have been carried out under the monitoring of the European Commission, EBA, ECB and IMF. The recapitalisation of the Spanish saving banks was done on the basis of the capital shortfall identified in these rigorous exercises. Furthermore, as from January 2013, all credit institutions in Spain, including saving banks, are required to comply with core tier 1 ratio of 9%, which is above Basel III requirements. In conclusion, no banking crisis in Spain or need for increasing the finance from EU rescue funds is expected from the application of Basel III rules.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010769/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(27. November 2012)

Betrifft: Lockerung der Kapitalregeln für britische Banken

Mit der Entscheidung der britischen Finanzaufsicht im Oktober des Jahres, dass Banken neue Mittelstandskredite in der Rezession nicht mit Eigenkapital unterlegen müssen, konterkariert London nach Meinung von Kritikern die global und in der EU getroffenen Vereinbarungen zu Basel III. Diese Kehrtwende ist jedenfalls umso erstaunlicher, als die Briten in Brüssel immer für möglichst strikte Kapital- und Liquiditätsvorgaben gekämpft haben und Deutschland wiederholt vorwarfen, Basel III im Interesse der heimischen Banken aufweichen zu wollen. Grund für die geänderte Haltung des Vereinigten Königreichs dürfte sein, dass dort der Mittelstand kaum noch Finanzierung bekommt.

1. Hat diese Entscheidung der Briten zu einer Annäherung an die europäische Basel-III-Position mit Kapitalquoten von sieben bis acht Prozent statt wie bislang geplant zehn Prozent geführt?

2. In welchen EU-Ländern gestaltet sich die Finanzierung für den Mittelstand derzeit besonders schwierig?

3. Was wird auf EU-Ebene konkret unternommen, um den Klein- und Mittelbetrieben in den Krisenzeiten zu helfen, bzw. welche der diesbezüglich angekündigten Initiativen konnten bisher erfolgreich umgesetzt werden?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(1. Februar 2013)

Vor dem „Funding for Lending Scheme“ und den im September 2012 eingeführten Änderungen bei den Liquiditäts- und Eigenkapitalvorschriften der Financial Services Authority für Banken und Bausparkassen hatte das Vereinigte Königreich die Eigenkapitalanforderungen für Banken über die Vorgaben der EU-Bankenrichtlinie 2006/48/EG (CRD) und die von der Kommission in ihrem Vorschlag für eine Eigenkapitalverordnung (CRR) zur Umsetzung von Basel III vorgesehenen Werte hinaus angehoben. Dies stand im Einklang mit der Richtlinie, mit der eine Mindestharmonisierung angestrebt wurde und die den Mitgliedstaaten daher erlaubt, strengere Regeln, d. h. höhere Kapitalanforderungen, einzuführen. Die derzeitige Lockerung der Vorschriften verringert die Differenz zwischen der im Vereinigten Königreich geforderten Höhe des Eigenkapitals und den EU-Mindestanforderungen und nähert das Vereinigte Königreich somit den CRR-Anforderungen an.

Im Rahmen der Verhandlungen über die Eigenkapitalrichtlinie und -verordnung (CRD IV/CRR) zur Umsetzung der Basel-III-Vereinbarung werden im Parlament und im Rat mögliche Ansätze erörtert, um angesichts des derzeit schwierigen Wirtschaftsklimas die Kreditkonditionen für KMU zu lockern.

Die Kommission unterstützt KMU durch verschiedene Programme ([1]) und hat einen umfassenden politischen Rahmen zur Stärkung von KMU auf den Weg gebracht ([2]). So nahm sie am 9. Januar 2013 den Aktionsplan „Unternehmertum 2020“ und am 7. Dezember 2011 den EU-Aktionsplan zur Verbesserung des Finanzierungszugangs für KMU ([3]) an ([4]).

Schließlich sind Daten über den Finanzierungszugang für KMU in der EU auf der Website der GD Unternehmen und Industrie ([5]) und in den Übersichten über die Kreditvergabe der Banken der Europäischen Zentralbank ([6]) verfügbar.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=5778&tpa=0&tk=&lang=de.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0078:FIN:de:PDF.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0870:FIN:de:PDF.
([4]) Weitere Informationen siehe E-003663/2012.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/data.
([6]) http://www.ecb.int/stats/money/surveys/lend/html/index.en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010769/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Relaxation of capital rules for British banks

The decision in October by the British Financial Services Authority, whereby banks do not have to have equity capital backing for new lending to small businesses during the recession, means that according to critics London is cutting across the agreements on Basel III which have been reached internationally and in the European Union. In any case, this about-turn is all the more astonishing given that the British have always fought in Brussels for the tightest possible capital and liquidity requirements, and have repeatedly accused Germany of wanting to weaken Basel III in the interest of German banks. The reason for the United Kingdom's change of tack is probably the fact that small businesses there are barely able to access lending any more.

1. Has this decision by the British led to them getting closer to the European position on Basel III, in favour of capital adequacy rates of 7-8%, instead of the 10% planned hitherto?

2. In which EU Member States do small and medium-sized businesses currently find it particularly difficult to secure financing?

3. What practical steps are being taken at EU level to help small and medium-sized firms in times of crisis, and which of the initiatives announced in this connection have been implemented successfully to date?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

Prior to the 'Funding for Lending' scheme and the adjustments to the Financial Services Authority's liquidity and capital regime for banks and building societies introduced in September 2012, the UK had elevated banks' capital adequacy requirement above the level of requirements set by EU banking Directive 2006/48/EC (CRD) and of those envisaged by the Commission proposal for a Capital Requirements Regulation (CRR) implementing Basel III. Those elevated requirements were in line with the directive, which is a minimum harmonisation instrument, therefore allowing Member States to establish more stringent rules, i.e. higher capital. The current relaxation of requirements is calculated only from the capital requirement exceeding the EU-minimum level and it brings the UK closer to the CRR requirements.

In the framework of the negotiations on the Capital Requirements Directive and Regulation (CRDIV/CRR) for the implementation of the Basel III agreement, possible approaches are being discussed by Parliament and Council to ease lending conditions for SMEs in the current difficult economic climate.

The Commission supports SMEs with a variety of programmes ([1]) and has put in place a comprehensive policy framework aimed at strengthening SMEs. ([2]) The Commission adopted the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan on 9 January 2013 and the EU Action Plan to improve access to finance for SMEs on 7 December 2011 ([3]) ([4]).

Finally data on the access to finance of EU SMEs can be found in the website of DG Enterprise ([5]) and in the bank lending surveys of the European Central Bank ([6]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=5778.
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0078:FIN:en:PDF.
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0870:FIN:EN:PDF.
([4]) For further information, see E-003663/2012.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/finance/data.
([6]) http://www.ecb.int/stats/money/surveys/lend/html/index.en.html

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010770/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(27. November 2012)

Betrifft: Vereinfachung der Bankenregulierung

Im Versuch, mit dem immer komplizierter werdenden Finanzwesen Schritt zu halten, werden die Regeln der Finanzaufsicht immer komplexer. In einem derartigen Wettlauf können die Regulierungsbehörden kaum mit der Privatwirtschaft mithalten. Bereits in den 1990er Jahren sollen Regulierungsbeamte laut Bericht der Financial Times Deutschland über die Schwierigkeiten geklagt haben, Personal zu halten, das die sich rasant entwickelnden Derivatemärkte versteht. So sollen etwa Forschungsassistenten mit einem Jahr Berufserfahrung im Derivatebereich von der Privatwirtschaft mit dem Fünffachen dessen abgeworben worden sein, was die Regierung ihnen zahlen konnte.

Einige Experten sehen anscheinend als klarste und effektivste Methode zur Vereinfachung der Regulierung, dass Finanzunternehmen dazu gezwungen werden sollten, sich nicht so sehr auf Kreditfinanzierung zu verlassen. Eigenkapitalfinanzierung sollte ihrer Meinung nach entweder über Gewinnrücklagen oder im Fall von Aktiengesellschaften über Aktienemission erfolgen.

1. Ist der Kommission dieses Problem bekannt?

2. Was wird in den EU-Staaten bezüglich der Abwerbung von Mitarbeitern der Regulierungsbehörden seitens der Privatwirtschaft unternommen?

3. Wird auf EU-Ebene über eine Vereinfachung der Bankenregulierung diskutiert?

4. Inwieweit sind derartige Überlegungen in die Basel-III-Vorschriften eingeflossen?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(21. Januar 2013)

1. Der Finanzsektor zeigt sich seit jeher kreativ, um Kunden und Anlegern maßgeschneiderte Produkte anzubieten. Üblicherweise sind ausgefeilte Finanzprodukte jedoch mit höheren Renditen für die Banken und auch mit höheren Risiken verbunden. Die Kommission ist sich dieses langfristigen Trends und der zugrundeliegenden Risiken durchaus bewusst. Sie hat Initiativen zur Stärkung der Regulierung ergriffen, um im Rahmen der CRD III den Marktrisiken und im Rahmen der EMIR den spezifischen Risiken von Derivaten besser Rechnung zu tragen.

2. Die Kommission teilt die Auffassung, dass die Vergütungs- und Anreizstrukturen im Finanzsektor ein ganz zentraler Faktor sind. Aus diesem Grund hat sie in die CRD III auch Bestimmungen zur Vergütungspolitik aufgenommen und arbeitet zusammen mit ihren G20-Partnern darauf hin, hierfür auch auf internationaler Ebene einen Rahmen abzustecken. Außerdem werden mit der bevorstehenden CRD IV/CRR verschärfte Grundsätze für die Vergütungspraxis im Bankensektor eingeführt.

3. Der Basler Ausschuss führt derzeit einen „Trading Book Review" durch, um die Regulierung zu vereinfachen. Ganz allgemein werden die Einrichtung eines einheitlichen Aufsichtsmechanismus in der EU und die Entwicklung eines einheitlichen Regelwerks für europäische Institute dazu beitragen, die Regeln in allen Mitgliedstaaten zu vereinfachen.

4. Was den Vorschlag angeht, die Wirtschaftsteilnehmer zu weniger Kredit- und mehr Eigenkapitalfinanzierung zu verpflichten, so gehört dies zu den maßgeblichen Fortschritten, die Basel III ermöglicht hat. Tatsächlich werden die Banken ihre Eigenkapitalausstattung künftig sowohl quantitativ als auch qualitativ verbessern müssen. Außerdem werden die Aufsichtsbehörden die Verschuldungsquoten (Leverage Ratios) der Banken genauestens überwachen. Um die Fristentransformation im Bankensektor einzudämmen, werden darüber hinaus Liquiditätsmaße eingeführt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010770/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(27 November 2012)

Subject: Simplification of banking regulation

The rules on banking supervision are becoming increasingly complex in order to keep pace with the increasingly complicated world of finance. The regulatory authorities are barely able to keep up with the private sector in this race. According to a report in the *Financial Times Deutschland*, as long ago as the 1990s regulators were complaining about the difficulties of retaining staff who understand the booming derivatives markets. For instance, research assistants with one year's experience in derivatives are said to have been lured away by the private sector with salaries five times higher than those that the government was able to pay.

Some experts apparently consider that the clearest and most effective way to simplify regulation is for financial operators to be forced to rely far less on debt financing. They take the view that equity financing, provided either through retained earnings or, in the case of public limited companies, by the issue of shares, should be used.

1. Is the Commission aware of this problem?

2. What action are the EU Member States taking with regard to the private sector poaching staff from the regulatory authorities?

3. Is a simplification of banking regulation being discussed at EU level?

4. To what extent have such ideas played a part in the Basel III regulatory framework?

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

1. The financial sector has always been creative so as to offer clients and investors products tailored to their needs. However, sophistication of financial products usually offers higher return for banks and implies increased levels of risk. The Commission is well aware of this long-term trend and of the underlying risks. The Commission has taken initiatives to strengthen regulation in order to better capture market risks in the CRD3 and the specific risks linked to derivatives products (EMIR).

2. The Commission shares the view that remuneration and incentives structures are key factors in the financial sector. Therefore the Commission has introduced in the CRD III provisions to structure remuneration policies and has worked with its G20 partners to frame these practices at international level. In addition, the forthcoming CRD4/CRR will introduce enhanced principles on remuneration practices in the banking sector.

3. The Basel Committee is currently performing a 'trading book review' with a view to simplifying regulation. More generally, the setting-up of a single supervisory mechanism in the EU and the development of a single rulebook for European institutions will help to simplify rules across Member States.

4. Concerning the proposal to require economic agents to rely less on debts and more on equity, this is one of the major evolutions permitted by the Basel III framework. Indeed banks will have to raise their capital levels both in terms of quantity and quality. Besides, supervisors will closely monitor the banks' leverage ratios and liquidity metrics will be introduced to constrain maturity transformation in the banking sector.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010771/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Asesinato de abogados defensores de los derechos humanos en Honduras

Entre los pasados días 23 y 24 de septiembre fueron asesinados en Honduras dos abogados defensores de los derechos de los campesinos. Dichos abogados defendían los derechos de los campesinos en un antiguo litigo con varios terratenientes del Valle del Aguán.

Los abogados eran dos conocidos defensores de los derechos humanos: Antonio Trejo Cabrera, abogado de los campesinos en el litigio, que recientemente había solicitado medidas de protección para él y su familia, y el fiscal encargado de derechos humanos en la ciudad de Choluteca, ambos asesinados acribillados a balazos. Antes de su muerte, Trejo envió una carta a los EE.UU. responsabilizando claramente al terrateniente Miguel Facussé, acusado en el citado litigio, de amenazas.

Numerosas ONG y diferentes colectivos civiles y políticos llevan denunciando el impune asesinato de decenas de profesionales de diferentes categorías que denuncian la degradación del cumplimiento de los derechos humanos en el país desde el pasado golpe de Estado contra Manuel Zelaya el 28 de junio de 2009. Durante el mandato del nuevo Presidente Porfirio Lobo, el número de asesinatos se ha disparado, llegando a la escandalosa tasa de 82,1 por cada 100 000 habitantes. Según estas, los asesinatos se están produciendo para eliminar las resistencias a este Gobierno y entre las víctimas hay sindicalistas, líderes campesinos, periodistas, políticos y, como en el caso presente, abogados.

El cumplimiento y garantía de los derechos humanos por parte del Gobierno del Presidente Lobo es una cuestión relegada a un segundo plano, habiéndose dificultado enormemente la labor de los que luchan por la defensa del cumplimiento de los derechos y libertades fundamentales de los hondureños.

¿Ha expresado la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante su preocupación por los asesinatos de estos y otros muchos defensores de los derechos humanos en Honduras?

¿Ha exigido la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que el Gobierno hondureño garantice el respeto a los derechos humanos y que ponga fin a la impunidad actual?

¿Considera que se deba suspender el proceso de ratificación del Acuerdo de Asociación con la región centroamericana, que incluye Honduras, hasta que dicho Gobierno pueda garantizar el eficaz cumplimiento de los derechos humanos?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de febrero de 2013)

La UE está preocupada por la situación de los derechos humanos en Honduras y la está observando con atención mientras alienta y apoya los esfuerzos del Gobierno para mejorar su protección.

La seguridad, la justicia y los derechos humanos están en el centro del diálogo político y son un objetivo de la cooperación con Honduras. La estrategia local sobre derechos humanos y protección de los defensores puesta en práctica a través de un diálogo abierto con organizaciones de derechos humanos, de reuniones con defensores en riesgo, de visitas a sus instalaciones y de declaraciones públicas de la UE constituye un esfuerzo constante para la UE. En el caso de los asesinatos del fiscal Díaz y del abogado Trejo, la UE los condenó públicamente y apeló a las autoridades hondureñas para que investigaran y castigaran los crímenes y adoptaran medidas para salvaguardar la integridad física de los defensores de los derechos humanos en situación de riesgo.

El proyecto «Programa de Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos» refleja el compromiso de la UE en pro de la promoción y protección de los derechos humanos. Su objetivo es contribuir a la aplicación de la recién aprobada Política Nacional de Derechos Humanos que hace de la protección de los derechos humanos un principio básico de las políticas gubernamentales.

El diálogo con la sociedad civil y la financiación de las ONG ([1]) hondureñas a través del Instrumento Europeo para la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos es una piedra angular del compromiso de la UE para promover los derechos humanos y reforzar la sociedad civil en el ámbito de la defensa de los derechos humanos.

([1]) ONG = organización no gubernamental.

Uno de los objetivos del Acuerdo de Asociación UE-América Central es profundizar en el diálogo sobre los valores fundamentales de la UE, como los derechos humanos. En caso de que alguna de las Partes incumpla una obligación, el Acuerdo prevé la aplicación de medidas apropiadas, incluida su suspensión en caso de vulneración de un elemento esencial como el respeto de los derechos humanos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010771/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — killing of human rights defence lawyers in Honduras

Between 23 and 24 September 2012, two lawyers engaged in defending peasants' rights were killed in Honduras. They were defending the rights of peasants in a longstanding legal case with a number of landowners in the Aguán Valley.

The two lawyers were both known for their work defending human rights. Antonio Trejo Cabrera, who was acting for the peasants in the case and had recently asked for protection to be provided for himself and his family, and the prosecutor for human rights from the town of Choluteca both died after being gunned down. Before his death, Trejo sent a letter to the United States in which he directly pointed to landowner Miguel Facussé, one of those accused in the case, as responsible for threats made against him.

Numerous NGOs and various civil and political groups have repeatedly denounced the murder with impunity of dozens of professionals from different fields who have drawn attention to the decline in respect for human rights in Honduras since the coup against Manuel Zelaya in 2009. Under the subsequent presidency of Porfirio Lobo, the number of killings has sharply increased, reaching the outrageous level of 82.1 for every 100 000 members of the population. According to these groups, these murders are being carried out in order to eliminate resistance to the present government, with the victims including trade unionists, peasant leaders, journalists, politicians and, in this case, lawyers.

The extent to which President Lobo's government respects and guarantees human rights has been treated as matter of secondary importance, while huge obstacles have been placed in the way of those working to uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms of Hondurans.

Has the Vice-President/High Representative expressed her concern at the killings of these and other human rights defenders in Honduras?

Has the VP/HR called on the Honduran government to respect human rights and put an end to the current state of impunity?

Does she consider that the process leading to the ratification of the Association Agreement with the countries of Central America, which includes Honduras, should be suspended until the Honduran Government is able to guarantee that human rights are effectively upheld?

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

The EU is concerned with the human rights situation in Honduras and is monitoring it with care while encouraging and supporting government efforts to improve its protection.

Security, Justice and Human Rights are at the core of the political dialogue and a target of cooperation with Honduras. The local strategy on human rights and protection of defenders implemented through an open dialogue with human rights organisations, meetings with defenders at risk, visits to their premises and EU statements issued constitutes a constant effort for the EU. In the case of the murders of prosecutor Díaz and lawyer Trejo, the EU condemned it publicly and called on the Honduran authorities to investigate and punish the crimes and to adopt measures to safeguard the physical integrity of human rights defenders at risk.

The project *Programa de Apoyo a los Derechos Humanos* reflects the EU commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights. It aims at contributing to the implementation of the recently approved National Human Rights Policy which places human rights protection as a core principle of the Government's policies.

The dialogue with civil society and the funding of Honduran NGOs ([1]) through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights is a cornerstone of the EU's commitment to promote human rights and to strengthen civil society in human rights defence.

([1]) NGO = Non-governmental organisation.

One of the EU-Central America Association Agreement's objectives is to deepen dialogue on EU fundamental values like human rights. In case any of the Parties fails to fulfill an obligation, the Agreement foresees the recourse to appropriate measures including its suspension in case of violation of one essential element such as respect of human rights.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-010772/12
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(28. november 2012)

Om: Gennemførelse af forordning om udvikling af landdistrikter

Kommissionen fremlagde den 12. oktober 2011 sit forslag til fremtidens fælles landbrugspolitik for 2014-2020, herunder Kommissionens forslag til forordning om støtte til udvikling af landdistrikterne fra Den Europæiske Landbrugsfond for Udvikling af Landdistrikterne (ELFUL) ([1]).

I takt med at forhandlingerne i såvel Europa-Parlamentet som i Rådet om den fælles landbrugspolitik trækker ud, og eftersom der endnu ikke er indgået en aftale om den flerårige finansielle ramme for 2014-2020, er der usikkerhed om, hvorvidt planen om implementering af landbrugsreformen pr. 1. januar 2014 kan holde.

I denne forbindelse er det usikkert, hvordan projekter, der modtager støtte under ELFUL, og som vil ansøge om støtte i fremtiden, er stillet, hvis forordningen ikke kan nå at træde i kraft den 1. januar 2014.

Derfor vil jeg stille følgende spørgsmål:

— Hvilke overgangsordninger eller midlertidige ordninger vil Kommissionen foreslå i tilfælde af, at ikrafttrædelsesdatoen ikke kan overholdes?

— Hvordan vil Kommissionen undgå, at miljø- og naturprojekter, der er delvist støttet gennem ELFUL, og som vil søge støtte i fremtiden, ikke lider skade af en eventuel udskydelse af ikrafttrædelsesdatoen?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Dacian Cioloş
(30. januar 2013)

Kommissionen har foretaget en analyse af overgangen mellem programmeringsperioderne 2007-2013 og 2014-2020. På baggrund af analysen er det fundet hensigtsmæssigt at fastlægge overgangsregler i to faser: den første på grundlag af artikel 91 i forordning (EF) nr. 1698/2005 ([2]) og den anden på grundlag af artikel 95 eller forslaget om landdistriktsudvikling for den næste periode. Den første fase, dvs. fastlæggelsen af regler for, hvordan de nuværende foranstaltninger vil kunne anvendes i 2014 og 2015 til at indgå nye retligt bindende forpligtelser, blev iværksat tidligere i år, og vedtagelsen heraf er nært forestående. Hvad angår den anden fase, dvs. fastlæggelsen af regler for, hvordan den nye finansieringsramme vil kunne anvendes til at medfinansiere forpligtelser, der stammer fra den igangværende programmeringsperiode, skal retsgrundlaget, dvs. grundretsakten om udvikling af landdistrikter, vedtages før reglerne fastlægges.

Selvom det er meget vanskeligt at foregribe forsinkelser i vedtagelsen af den retlige ramme på dette stadium, har Kommissionen forpligtet sig til at foreslå de nødvendige foranstaltninger til at sikre, at der er kontinuitet i gennemførelsen af politikken for landdistriktsudvikling i 2014.

([1]) KOM(2011)0627 endelig.
([2]) EUT L 277 af 21.10.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010772/12
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Implementation of the Rural Development Regulation

On 12 October 2011, the Commission presented its proposal for the future CAP for 2014-2020, including the proposal for a regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) ([1]).

As negotiations on the common agricultural policy drag on in both the European Parliament and the Council, and with no agreement having yet been reached on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, there is uncertainty as to whether the agricultural reforms can be implemented as planned from 1 January 2014.

In this context, there is uncertainty about how projects funded under the EAFRD that intend to apply for future aid are placed if the regulation does not enter into force on 1 January 2014.

— What transitional or interim arrangements will the Commission propose in the event that the date of entry into force cannot be met?

— How will the Commission ensure that environment and nature projects that are partly funded by the EAFRD and seek future support do not suffer from the possible postponement of the date of entry into force?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission has analysed the transition between the programming periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. On the basis of this analysis, it is being envisaged to establish transitional rules in two steps: first step based on Article 91 of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 ([2]) and second step based on Article 95 or the rural development proposal for the next period. The first step, laying down rules for how the current measures could be used in 2014 and 2015 to undertake new legally binding commitments, was launched earlier this year and is now in the pipeline to be adopted. The second step, laying down rules for how the new financial envelope may be used to co-finance commitments originating from the current programming period, needs to have its legal basis, i.e. the basic act on rural development, adopted before establishing the rules.

However, even if delays in the adoption of the legal framework are very difficult to anticipate at this stage, the Commission is committed to propose the necessary measures to ensure the continuity of the implementation of rural development policy in 2014.

([1]) COM(2011)0627 final.
([2]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-010773/12
til Kommissionen
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(28. november 2012)

Om: Unfair konkurrence i luftfartssektoren

Flere europæiske lavprisselskaber er i søgelyset for skattesnyd med ansættelsesmetoderne. Disse praksisser kan ske gennem vikarbureauer, der er registreret i udlandet eller i skattely. Lavprisselskaberne sørger for at have armslængde til situationen, men der er immervæk tale om en skadelig praksis for den enkelte vikar og for branchen som helhed. Den kreative løndumping gør det svært for ærlige selskaber at konkurrere. Dertil kommer, at vikaren ikke har nogen social sikring på grund af manglende indbetalinger fra flyselskabets side.

Det er derfor ønskeligt, at luftfartssektoren — som i sagens natur er en grænseoverskridende branche — reguleres af EU, så man sikrer fair konkurrence på markedet.

Hvad vil Kommissionen foretage sig for at bringe unfair konkurrence i den europæiske luftfartssektor til ende?

Vil Kommissionen være villig til at foreslå en model, der betyder, at transporttilladelser kan inddrages, hvis flyselskabet foretager sig ting, der kan være til hinder for den frie konkurrence såsom at være registreret i skattely?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Siim Kallas
(19. februar 2013)

1. De nye regler for fastlæggelse af lovgivning om social sikring af flyvebesætningsmedlemmer, der er indarbejdet i forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004 ved forordning (EU) nr. 465/2012, indfører begrebet hjemmebase. Dette betyder, at flyvebesætningsmedlemmer er berettiget til adgang til sociale sikringsydelser i det land, hvor de normalt påbegynder og afslutter deres tjenesteperiode. Formålet med forordningen er at sikre, at besætningsmedlemmer, der enten er ansat direkte af flyselskaberne eller gennem vikarbureauer, drager nytte af den sociale sikring, de er berettiget til, og at sikre, at der ikke forekommer »shopping« mellem sociale sikringssystemer til skade for besætningsmedlemmerne eller for den fair konkurrence blandt flyselskaberne i EU.

Beskatning af luftfartsmedarbejdere hører normalt under de bilaterale dobbeltbeskatningsaftaler, der er indgået mellem de pågældende medlemsstater. I henhold til artikel 15 i OECD's modelkonvention, som mange bilaterale dobbeltbeskatningsaftaler er baseret på, bliver indkomst som regel beskattet i arbejdstagerens bopælsstat, som indkomst for arbejde ombord på et luftfartøj kan beskattes i den stat, hvor luftfartsselskabets ledelse reelt har sæde.

2. Den gældende EU-lovgivning kræver kun, at transportselskaber skal have en transporttilladelse, hvis de har deres vedtægtsmæssige hjemsted, dvs. hvis de har deres hovedforretningssted ([1]) i den medlemsstat, der udsteder transporttilladelsen. Desuden skal den samme medlemsstat, der udsteder transporttilladelsen, udstede air operator certificate, som en forudsætning for transporttilladelsen. Dette skal garantere, at den medlemsstat, der udsteder transporttilladelsen, er i stand til at varetage sine forpligtelser i forbindelse med forskriftsmæssige tilsyn.

([1]) Et EU-luftfarsselskabs hovedkontor eller vedtægtsmæssige hjemsted i den medlemsstat, hvor luftfartsselskabets vigtigste økonomiske funktioner og den operationelle kontrol udøves, herunder styring af fortsat luftdygtighed.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010773/12
to the Commission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Unfair competition in the air transport sector

Several European low-cost airlines have come under scrutiny for tax evasion owing to their recruitment methods, which include the practice of recruiting through temporary employment agencies registered abroad or in tax havens. The low-cost airlines make sure they keep these operations at arm's length, but this is still a harmful practice both for the individual agency worker and for the industry as a whole. Creative wage dumping makes it hard for honest airlines to compete. Furthermore, agency workers have no social security owing to the lack of any contributions paid by the airline.

It is therefore desirable that the air transport sector — which is by its very nature a cross-border industry — should be regulated by the EU so as to ensure fair competition on the market.

What will the Commission do to end unfair competition in the European airline sector?

Would the Commission be prepared to propose a model whereby transport licences can be withdrawn if the airline takes actions constituting a potential obstacle to free competition, such as being registered in tax havens?

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

1. The new rules for determining social security legislation applicable for flight crew, incorporated into Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 by Regulation (EU) No 465/2010, introduces the concept of home base. This means that flight crew are entitled to have access to security social benefits in the country from which they normally start and end their duty period. It aims to ensure that air crew employed directly by airlines or through temporary employment agencies benefit from the social protection to which they are entitled, and to ensure that no 'forum-shopping' occurs to the detriment of crew members and of fair competition amongst EU airlines.

The tax treatment of airline workers is usually governed by bilateral double taxation treaties between the Member States concerned. The OECD Model Convention, on which many bilateral tax treaties are based, provides in Article 15 that employment income is generally taxed in the recipient's state of residence, but that remuneration derived from employment exercised aboard an aircraft may be taxed in the country where the airline company has its effective place of management.

2. The EU legislation currently in force requires air carriers to be licensed only if they are registered (they have their principal place of business ([1])) in the Member State issuing the licence. Furthermore, the same Member State that issues the licence has to issue the Air Operator Certificate (as a pre-condition to the licence). This is to guarantee that the Member State issuing the operating licence is in a position to discharge its obligations in matters of regulatory oversight.

([1]) Head office or registered office of a Community air carrier in the Member State within which the principal financial functions and operational control of the Community air carrier, including continued airworthiness management, are exercised.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010774/12
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(28. November 2012)

Betrifft: Gentechnikinsekten in der EU

Die Freisetzung von gentechnisch veränderten Insekten ist in der EU grundsätzlich verboten. Dennoch plant die britische Firma Oxytec Medienberichten zufolge in Europa mit diesbezüglichen Pilotprojekten zu starten. In Brasilien und Malaysia wurden bereits Testreihen durchgeführt, zumal in diesen Ländern „die gesetzlichen Regelungen nicht eindeutig sind". Laut dem Schweizer Ökologen Wolfgang Nentwig (Uni Bern) gibt es keinen Nachweis dafür, dass die Schädlingsbekämpfung durch genmanipulierte Insekten, die Gemüse wie Kohl, Tomaten oder Oliven befallen, funktioniert. Nentwig kritisiert zudem, dass es Pläne gebe, in Europa gentechnisch manipulierte Insekten massenhaft auszusetzen, damit sich diese mit nicht manipulierten Artgenossen paaren. Dies habe angeblich zur Folge, dass die Nachkommenschaft bereits im Larvenstadium stirbt.

1. Sind der Kommission die Pläne von Oxytec bekannt? Medienberichten zufolge wird seitens Oxytec bereits massives Lobbying bei der Lebensmittelschutz-Behörde EFSA betrieben. Ist das der Kommission bekannt und wie steht sie dazu?

2. Wie steht die Kommission zur Sinnhaftigkeit der Freisetzung von „Gensekten" zur Schädlingsbekämpfung? Gibt es seitens der Kommission/EFSA diesbezügliche wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse? Wenn ja, welche?

3. Gibt es Pläne das derzeitige EU-weite Freisetzungsverbot aufzuheben? Wenn ja, würden die Mitgliedstaaten dennoch selbst über ein Verbot in ihrem Land entscheiden können? Wäre dies nicht unzweckmäßig, zumal Insekten bekanntlich keine Grenzen kennen? Würde die Kommission eine Kontrollinstanz auf EU-Ebene einrichten, um die Freisetzung zu beobachten?

4. Welche potenziellen Gefahren sieht die Kommission in der Freisetzung von „Gensekten"?

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

Der Kommission ist kein Antrag des Unternehmens Oxytec auf Genehmigung einer experimentellen Freisetzung von GV-Insekten in der EU bekannt ([1]). In der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 178/2002 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates ([2]), mit der die EFSA als unabhängige EU-Agentur eingerichtet wurde, wurden an die Behörde strenge Anforderungen in Sachen Unabhängigkeit und Interessenkonflikte festgelegt, die für ihre gesamte Tätigkeit gelten.

Das Inverkehrbringen von GV-Insekten ist Gegenstand der Richtlinie 2001/18/EG ([3]), die in jedem Einzelfall eine sorgfältige Bewertung der möglichen Risiken für die Gesundheit von Mensch und Tier und die Umwelt verlangt. Bislang ist bei der Kommission kein derartiger Antrag eingegangen. Die Genehmigung experimenteller Freisetzungen von GV-Insekten fällt gemäß Teil B und Anhang II und III der Richtlinie 2001/18/EG in die Verantwortung der Mitgliedstaaten.

Sollte eine Genehmigung für das Inverkehrbringen eines GV-Insekts gewährt werden, so kann diese bestimmten Verwendungsbedingungen unterworfen werden, und ihre möglichen unbeabsichtigten Auswirkungen auf die Umwelt sind einer sorgfältigen Überwachung durch den Antragsteller zu unterziehen, der der Kommission und den Mitgliedstaaten einen Bericht über diese Überwachung vorlegen muss, die dann geeignete Maßnahmen ergreifen können, falls sie dies für notwendig erachten. Gemäß Artikel 23 der Richtlinie 2001/18/EG können die Mitgliedstaaten Schutzklauseln erlassen, wenn neue oder zusätzliche Daten zeigen, dass ein zugelassener GVO eine ernste Gefahr für die Umwelt darstellt.

([1]) Quelle: GVO-Register, Liste der Zusammenfassungen der gemäß der Richtlinie 2001/18/EG an die zuständigen Behörden der Mitgliedstaaten gerichteten Anmeldungen (SNIF) absichtlicher Freisetzungen nicht pflanzlicher GVO zu anderen Zwecken als dem Inverkehrbringen (experimentelle Freisetzungen); http://gmoinfo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/gmo_browse.aspx.

([2]) ABl. L 31 vom 1.2.2002, S. 1.

([3]) ABl. L 106 vom 17.4.2001, S. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010774/12
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Genetically-modified insects in the EU

The release of genetically-modified insects is banned in the EU as a matter of principle. And yet, according to media reports, the UK firm Oxytec plans to launch pilot projects of this kind in Europe. Series of tests have already been carried out in Brazil and Malaysia, especially since 'the legislation is not clear' in those countries. According to the Swiss ecologist, Wolfgang Nentwig (from Bern University), there is no proof that genetically-modified insects can be used successfully to control pests that attack crops such as cabbage, tomatoes or olives. Nentwig also criticises the alleged plans to release huge numbers of genetically-modified insects in Europe so that they mate with non-genetically-modified insects of the same species. He claims that this results in the progeny dying at the larva stage.

1. Is the Commission aware of Oxytec's plans? According to media reports, Oxytec is already intensively lobbying the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Is the Commission aware of that and what does it think of it?

2. Does the Commission consider it sensible to release genetically-modified insects for pest control? Does the Commission/EFSA have any scientific evidence on this issue? If so, what evidence?

3. Are there any plans to lift the current EU-wide ban on releasing such insects? If so, would Member States still have the possibility of introducing national bans? Would it not be advisable to permit such national bans, especially since insects do not stay within national borders? Would the Commission set up a control body at EU level in order to monitor the release of such insects?

4. What potential hazards does the Commission see in the release of genetically-modified insects?

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

The Commission is not aware of a request by the firm Oxytec for authorisation of an experimental release of GM insects in the EU ([1]). Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 ([2]) of the European Parliament and of the Council which established EFSA as an independent EU agency imposes strict requirements on the Authority in respect of independence and conflicts of interest which apply across all its activities.

The placing on the market of GM insects is covered by Directive 2001/18/EC ([3]) which requires a thorough case-by-case assessment of the possible risks for human and animal health and the environment. To date, the Commission has not received any such application. The authorisation of experimental releases of GM insects is the responsibility of Member States pursuant to Part B and Annex II and III of Directive 2001/18/EC.

Should an authorisation for placing on the market of a GM insect be granted, it may be subject to conditions of use, and its possible unintended effects on the environment shall be closely monitored by the notifier, who must report on this monitoring to the Commission and the Member States, who can take appropriate actions if deemed necessary. Article 23 of Directive 2001/18/EC allows Member States to adopt safeguard clauses if new or additional data demonstrate that an authorised GMO causes severe risks for the environment.

([1]) Source; GMO Register — list of Summary Notification Information Format (SNIF) submitted to the Member State's Competent Authorities under Directive 2001/18/EC regarding the Deliberate release into the environment of other than plants GMOs for any other purposes than placing on the market (experimental releases); http://gmoinfo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/gmo_browse.aspx.
([2]) OJ L31, 1.2.2002, p. 1.
([3]) OJ L 106, 17.4.2001.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010775/12
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(28 november 2012)

Betreft: Navigatiesystemen en vervoer van dieren

Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2005 van de Raad schrijft voor dat vanaf 1 januari 2009 bij dierenvervoer in al zijn vormen dat langer duurt dan acht uur (in geval van eenhoevigen, runderen, schapen, geiten en varkens) een navigatiesysteem wordt toegepast dat informatie geeft over de bewegingen van een transport met de bijbehorende datum en tijden en dat deze gegevens en informatie over het openen en sluiten van de laadklep (Bijlage I, hoofdstuk VI, punt 4), registreert.

Dit navigatiesysteem kan worden gezien als een bruikbaar middel om voor verbeterde handhaving te zorgen van Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2005 van de Raad inzake de bescherming van dieren tijdens het vervoer. Het wordt dikwijls genoemd als een bijzonder goed middel om te controleren of alle regels al dan niet worden nageleefd.

1. Verschaft het navigatiesysteem, zoals voorgeschreven door Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2005 van de Raad, voldoende informatie om te controleren of tijdens het vervoer de volgende bepalingen zijn nageleefd:

— beladingsdichtheid;

— voldoende dekhoogte zodat de dieren in een natuurlijke houding kunnen staan;

— functionerend watervoorzieningssysteem;

— functionerend ventilatiesysteem;

— drenken en voederen van vee en schapen na een maximale transporttijd van 14 uur; drenken en voederen van paarden na elke acht uur;

— voortdurend toegang tot water voor varkens?

2. Kan het voormelde navigatiesysteem voldoende informatie verschaffen om te kunnen bepalen of dieren daadwerkelijk zijn uitgeladen als het openen van de laadklep is geregistreerd?

3 Indien een of beide voorgaande vragen ontkennend wordt beantwoord, welke maatregelen is de Commissie voornemens te treffen om het functioneren van het navigatiesysteem te verbeteren?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(29 januari 2013)

1. Ingevolge artikel 6, lid 9, en bijlage I, hoofdstuk VI, punt 4, van Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2005 ([1]) dienen de navigatiesystemen gegevens te verschaffen die gelijkwaardig zijn aan die bedoeld in bijlage II, hoofdstuk 4, bij die verordening. Dat betekent: het feitelijk gevolgde traject. Bovendien moeten de systemen in staat zijn gegevens betreffende het openen en sluiten van de laadklep te registreren. De verordening vereist echter niet dat de systemen in staat moeten zijn om gegevens te registreren met betrekking tot beladingsdichtheid, watervoorziening, ventilatie en de andere aspecten die het geachte Parlementslid in haar vraag noemt.

2. De registratie van het openen en sluiten van de laadklep geeft slechts een indicatie van het mogelijke inladen of uitladen van dieren in of uit de vrachtwagen. Of er daadwerkelijk dieren uitgeladen zijn, wordt niet vastgelegd.

3. De Commissie is momenteel niet van plan aanvullende functies voor de systemen voor te stellen. Zij analyseert welke maatregelen genomen zouden kunnen worden om betere naleving van de bestaande wetgeving te waarborgen door middel van meer en beter gebruik van de navigatiesystemen.

([1]) Verordening (EG) nr. 1/2005 van de Raad van 22 december 2004 inzake de bescherming van dieren tijdens het vervoer en daarmee samenhangende activiteiten, PB L 3 van 5.1.2005, blz. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010775/12
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Navigation systems and animal transport

Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 requires that from 1 January 2009 all forms of animal transport exceeding 8 hours (for Equidae and animals of bovine, ovine, caprine and porcine species) must be equipped with a navigation system that records and provides information on the positioning of the forms of transport and the corresponding date and time of the journey, as well as information concerning the opening/closing of the loading flap (Annex I, Chapter VI, point 4).

This navigation system could be considered as a useful means to guarantee better enforcement of Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport. It is often cited as being a very good means to check whether the rules are being complied with or not.

1. Does the navigation system, as required by Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005, provide enough information to verify whether during transport the following provisions have been complied with:

— loading density

— sufficient deck height to allow the animals to stand in a natural position

— functioning water system

— functioning ventilation system

— watering/feeding of cattle and sheep after a maximum of 14 hours of transport; watering/feeding of horses every 8 hours

— constant access to water for pigs?

2. Can the aforementioned navigation system provide enough information to determine whether animals were really unloaded, once an opening of the loading flap is registered?

3. If the answer is no to either or both of the preceding questions, what measures does the Commission envisage to make improvements to the functioning of the navigation system?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

1. According to Article 6(9) and Annex I, Chapter VI, paragraph 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 ([1]), the navigation systems shall provide information equivalent to that of Section 4 of Annex II to the regulation. In short, this is the actual itinerary of the journey. In addition, the systems shall be able to register information on opening and closing of the loading flap. The regulation does not require that the systems are able to register stocking density, functioning of the water, ventilation systems and the rest of the aspects mentioned in the Honourable Member's question.

2. The registration of the opening and closing of the loading flap can only give an indication on whether animals may have been loaded to, or un-loaded from, the truck. No information is recorded on whether animals are really unloaded.

3. The Commission does not consider proposing additional functions to the systems. The Commission is currently analysing which measures could be taken to facilitate an increased and improved use of the navigation systems to ensure better enforcement of the legislation.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations; OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-010776/12
Komisi
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(28. listopadu 2012)

Předmět: Plány a projekty větrných elektráren v přírodním parku Železná vrata

Enel Green Power, divize italské skupiny Enel pro obnovitelné zdroje energie, buduje od roku 2011 v obcích Svatá Helena a Coronini v rumunské župě Karaš-Severin projekty větrných elektráren. Další projekty se připravují nedaleko vesnic Gerník a Rovensko a v okolí města Nová Moldava.

Mechanismy zavedené v rámci stávajících právních předpisů EU v oblasti životního prostředí by měly zajistit, aby se větrná energie rozvíjela udržitelným způsobem a zároveň se minimalizoval její dopad na přírodní prostředí a místní obyvatele. V tomto konkrétním případě ovšem nárůst počtu projektů na výstavbu turbín v této oblasti není v rovnováze s obecnějšími sociálními, ekonomickými a environmentálními zájmy, aby byl zajištěn udržitelný růst a kladný postoj veřejnosti. Jsme si plně vědomi skutečnosti, že za řádné provádění ustanovení právních předpisů EU v oblasti životního prostředí jsou odpovědné příslušné orgány v jednotlivých členských státech. Pokud ovšem existuje jasný důkaz, že tyto předpisy řádně prováděny nejsou, měla by Komise podniknout právní kroky, aby dodržování práva EU zajistila, a výstavbu uvedených větrných elektráren okamžitě zastavit.

Směrnice o stanovištích hospodářské využití oblastí sítě Natura 2000, včetně instalace větrných elektráren, nezakazuje. Nicméně v případě projektů, které pravděpodobně budou mít, ať samotné nebo ve spojení s jinými plány či projekty, na tyto oblasti výrazně negativní dopad, je nutné vypracovat posouzení. Pokud jde o větrné elektrárny a životní prostředí, musí být každý projekt posouzen jednotlivě. Řádné posouzení je v případě oblastí sítě Natura 2000 klíčovým nástrojem, který umožní vyhodnotit dopad daného projektu na chráněné živočichy a rostliny a určit nezbytná zmírňující opatření s cílem možné negativní dopady snížit.

— Bylo provedeno posouzení v souladu s čl. 6 odst. 3 a 4 směrnice o stanovištích 92/43/EHS? Posoudila Komise, zda není venkovská oblast, jež je součástí sítě Natura 2000, nepříznivě ovlivňována?

— Vzhledem ke skutečnosti, že je tato oblast pro větrné elektrárny velmi nevhodná, a to ze sociálního hlediska i z hlediska životního prostředí, byly prověřeny možné alternativy k výstavbě větrných elektráren?

— Jak je odškodněno místní obyvatelstvo?

— Financuje projekty větrných elektráren v obcích Svatá Helena a Coronini Evropská unie?

Odpověď pana Potočnika jménem Komise
(30. ledna 2013)

O projektech společnosti ENEL Green Power v rumunské župě Karaš-Severin nebyla Komise informována. Komise nicméně na základě stížnosti z roku 2011 prošetřila projekt větrných elektráren budovaný společností SC Cozmircom Blue SA Baia Sprie v blízkosti obce Svatá Helena v komuně Corinini, okres Karaš-Severin. Pokud jde o použití čl. 6 odst. 3 a čl. 6 odst. 4 směrnice o ochraně přírodních stanovišť ([1]), jsou za posouzení projektů, které pravděpodobně budou mít závažný negativní dopad, pokud jde o cíle ochrany lokalit zařazených do oblastí sítě Natura 2000, skutečně odpovědné členské státy. Příslušné posouzení, které má Komise k dispozici, došlo k závěru, že projekt významným způsobem neovlivní stanoviště ani druhy oblastí ROSPA0080 Munţii Almăjului-Lovei či ROSCI206 Porţile de Fier. Příslušné posouzení zkoumaného projektu vzalo v úvahu tři alternativní lokality nacházející se v síti Natura 2000 se stejným počtem větrných turbín.

Komise nezjistila žádné důkazy o porušení právních předpisů EU a případ uzavřela.

Komise nemá k dispozici informace o odškodnění pro místní komunity, neboť se ně nevztahují právní předpisy EU.

([1]) Směrnice 92/43/EHS (Úř. věst. L 206, 22.7.1992).

Program „Zvýšení hospodářské konkurenceschopnosti v Rumunsku“, který spolufinancuje Evropský fond pro regionální rozvoj, podporuje investice do nových elektráren, které podporují obnovitelné zdroje energie v Rumunsku. Podle údajů zveřejněných na internetových stránkách řídícího orgánu ministerstva hospodářství nejsou v rámci zmíněného programu dané dva projekty budované společností ENEL Green Power na seznamu projektů, které byly vybrány pro spolufinancování ze strukturálních fondů.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010776/12
to the Commission
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Wind farm plans and projects in Iron Gates Natural Park

Enel Green Power, the renewable energy division of Italian group Enel, has been developing wind farm projects in the municipalities of Sfanta Elena and Coronini, in the county of Caraș-Severin, Romania, since 2011. Other projects are being prepared near the villages of Gerník and Rovensko and around the town of Moldova Nouă.

The mechanisms established through the EU's existing environmental legislation should ensure that wind energy is developed in a way that is both sustainable and minimises its impact on the natural environment and local communities. However, in this specific case, the expansion of turbine construction projects in the area is not in balance with other broader social, economic and environmental concerns to ensure growth in a sustainable manner and public acceptance. We are fully aware of the fact that it is the responsibility of the competent authorities in each Member State to ensure that the provisions of EU environmental legislation are correctly implemented. However, if there is clear evidence of failure, the Commission should take legal action to ensure compliance with EC law and immediately stop the construction of the wind farms in question.

The Habitats Directive does not prohibit development, including wind farms, on Natura 2000 sites. However, for projects likely to have a significant negative impact on such sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, an assessment is necessary. With regard to wind farms and the environment, each project has to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. With regard to Natura 2000 areas, the appropriate assessment is the key tool for assessing the project's impact on protected fauna and flora and for identifying the requisite mitigation measures to reduce potential negative effects.

— Has an assessment in accordance with Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the 92/43/EEC Habitats Directive been carried out? Has the Commission assessed whether the rural area belonging to the Natura 2000 network is being adversely affected?

— Given the fact, that the area is such an unsuitable place for wind farms, from both an environmental and a social point of view, were the possible alternatives to the construction of wind turbines evaluated?

— What are the compensations for the local communities?

— Are the wind farm projects in the municipalities of Sfanta Elena and Coronini EU-funded?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission has not been informed about projects developed by ENEL Green Power in the county Caraș-Severin Romania. The Commission however investigated a windfarm project developed by SC Cozmircom Blue SA Baia Sprie near the Sfânta Elena village, Corinini commune, district Caraș Severin on a basis of a complaint received in 2011. As concerns the application of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive ([1]) it is the responsibility of the Member States to assess projects that are probably to have a significant negative effect on Natura 2000 sites in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Appropriate Assessment available to the Commission concluded that the project would not significantly affect habitats and species of ROSPA0080 Munții Almăjului-Lovei or ROSCI206 Porțile de Fier. The Appropriate Assessment of the studied project considered 3 alternative locations inside the Natura 2000 sites with the same amount of wind-turbines.

The Commission did not find any evidence for a break of EU legislation and closed the case.

The Commission does not possess information about compensations for the local communities as these are not subject to EU legislation.

([1]) Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

The programme 'Increasing the economic competitiveness in Romania', co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, supports investments in new power plants which valorise the renewable energy sources in Romania. According to the data published on the website of the managing authority from the Ministry of Economy, the two projects developed by ENEL Green Power are not on the list of projects selected to be co-financed by Structural Funds, under the mentioned programme.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-010778/12
till kommissionen
Marita Ulvskog (S&D), Åsa Westlund (S&D) och Anna Hedh (S&D)
(28 november 2012)

Angående: Kommissionens interna skyddsmekanismer mot kommissionär Borgs värderingar

Efter John Dallis plötsliga avgång, vars orsaker inte närmare redovisats av kommissionsordförande Barosso, har Malta nu föreslagit Tonio Borg som ny EU-kommissionär. Tonio Borg har gjort sig känd för att hysa djupt konservativa värderingar och för att motarbeta kvinnors och HBT-personers rättigheter.

I den utfrågning som arrangerades av Europaparlamentet den 13 november 2012 fick Tonio Borg möjlighet att närmare redovisa sina ställningstaganden. Borg menade att hans personliga åsikter inte kommer vara ett problem eftersom han avser följa Europakonventionen och EU-fördraget. Därför menade han, behöver ingen oroa sig för att han inte kommer att kunna sköta uppdraget.

Men svaret imponerar inte eftersom en EU-kommissionär inte bara ska följa den lagstiftning och det regelverk som finns. En kommissionär ska också aktivt driva på utvecklingen av nya lagar och direktiv. Då är kommissionärens egen värdegrund och det egna engagemanget i frågorna helt avgörande. Det finns ingen kompetens som är fri från värderingar.

Det finns en uppenbar risk för att Tonio Borg denna vecka godkänns som EU-kommissionär. Om så blir fallet har EU-kommissionen ett stort ansvar för att säkerställa att hans värderingar inte påverkar lagstiftning och andra EU-initiativ med bäring på kvinnors och HBT-personers rättigheter.

Med anledning av detta vill vi ställa följande frågor till kommissionen:

— Kan kommissionen redogöra för vilka interna skyddsmekanismer den avser inrätta för att säkerställa att Borg inte tillåts påverka frågor som rör kvinnors och HBT-personers rättigheter?

— Vilka åtgärder tänker kommissionen vidta för att kompensera för Borgs förlegade syn på kvinnor och HBT-personer?

Svar från José Manuel Barroso på kommissionens vägnar
(13 februari 2013)

Tonio Borgs utnämning har bekräftats av Europeiska rådet sedan han den 21 november 2012 fick Europaparlamentets stöd, med en absolut majoritet av parlamentsledamöterna.

Som parlamentsledamöterna mycket riktigt påpekar framhöll Tonio Borg under utfrågningen i Europaparlamentet den 13 november 2012 att han under uppdraget som ledamot av Europeiska kommissionen kommer att följa de grundläggande rättigheter som stadfästs i EU-rätten, i synnerhet i artikel 2 i fördraget om Europeiska unionen och i Europeiska unionens stadga om de grundläggande rättigheterna.

Det faktum att Europaparlamentet klart och tydligt godkände utnämningen, och att den därefter bekräftades av Europeiska rådet gör, tillsammans med Tonio Borgs offentliga uttalanden, att det inte behövs några sådana åtgärder som parlamentsledamöterna föreslår.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010778/12
to the Commission
Marita Ulvskog (S&D), Åsa Westlund (S&D) and Anna Hedh (S&D)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: The Commission's internal safeguards against Commissioner Borg's values

After John Dalli's sudden departure, the reasons for which have not been explained in detail by the Commission President Mr Barroso, Malta has now nominated Tonio Borg as its new Commissioner. Tonio Borg is known for his deeply conservative values and for his opposition to the rights of women and LGBT people.

At the hearing held by the European Parliament on 13 November 2012 Tonio Borg had the opportunity to explain his views in more detail. Borg said that his personal opinions would not be a problem because he intends to follow the European Convention and the Treaty on European Union. Therefore he thought no one should be worried that he would not be able to fulfil the role.

However, the answer is not convincing because an EU Commissioner will not only follow the existing legislation and *acquis*. A Commissioner will also actively pursue the development of new laws and directives. The Commissioner's own values and commitment are crucial in this connection. Values come into play in any competence.

There is a clear risk that this week Tonio Borg will be confirmed as Commissioner. If this is the case, the Commission has a substantial responsibility to ensure that his values do not influence legislation and other EU initiatives that have a bearing on the rights of women and LGBT people.

— Can the Commission say what internal safeguards it intends to introduce to ensure that Borg is not allowed to have an influence in issues that affect the rights of women and LGBT people?

— What measures does the Commission intend to take to compensate for Borg's antiquated views on women and LGBT people?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2013)

Mr Borg's nomination was confirmed by the European Council after he received the approval by the European Parliament, supported by an absolute majority of MEPs, on the 21st November 2012.

As the Honorable Members rightly recall, Mr Borg clearly reaffirmed during his hearing with the European Parliament, on 13 November 2012, that the respect of fundamental rights, such as guaranteed in Union Law and in particular in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, will guide him while accomplishing his mandate as Member of the European Commission.

The clear approval by Parliament, his confirmation by the European Council, along with the commitments which he publically gave, indicate that this is no need for any measure as suggested by the Honourable Members

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-010779/12
aan de Commissie
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(28 november 2012)

Betreft: Impact van een belasting op financiële transacties voor pensioenfondsen

Het Europees Parlement heeft vanwege de negatieve economische effecten in zijn resolutie van 23 mei 2012 gevraagd om een uitzondering van pensioenfondsen van een belasting op financiële transacties ([1]). Het Nederlandse Regeerakkoord stelt het vrijwaren van pensioenfondsen als één van de voorwaarden voor deelname aan de versterkte samenwerking voor een gemeenschappelijk stelsel van belasting op financiële transacties ([2]).

1. Wat vindt de Commissie van het veelgehoorde bezwaar dat een financiële transactiebelasting financiële producten en instrumenten duurder maakt en dat het niet de banken zijn die de rekening dragen, maar de burgers als (indirecte) afnemers van financiële producten en de pensioendeelnemers die in Nederland verplicht deelnemen aan een pensioenfonds?

2. Is de Commissie van mening dat het technisch uitvoerbaar is om pensioenfondsen geheel te vrijwaren van een financiële transactiebelasting op enkelvoudige transacties? Zo nee, waarom niet?

3. Is de Commissie van mening dat het technisch uitvoerbaar is om pensioenfondsen geheel te vrijwaren van een financiële transactiebelasting op samengestelde transacties, waarbij door een aaneenschakeling van transacties (cascade effect) pensioenfondsen ook indirect belast worden. Zo nee, waarom niet?

4. De Commissie heeft in een technisch memorandum aangegeven dat de potentiële impact van een financiële transactiebelasting beperkt zal blijven tot alleen de eerste pijler van het pensioen ([3]). Onderschrijft de Commissie dat een financiële transactiebelasting voor pensioenfondsen het Nederlandse kapitaalgedekte pensioenstelsel veel harder raakt dan het omslagstelsel dat de meeste andere lidstaten hebben? Zo ja, op welke wijze past een belasting op financiële transacties voor pensioenfondsen binnen de groeiagenda van de Commissie?

5. De Commissie impliceert in het technisch memorandum dat pensioenfondsen hun investeringsstrategie kunnen aanpassen naar een meer conservatieve („buy and hold") strategie of dat pensioenfondsen hun handel kunnen verleggen naar financiële instrumenten die buiten het toepassingsbereik van de financiële transactiebelasting vallen.

6. Is de Commissie van mening dat dit verstandig is vanuit het perspectief van risicomanagement, met name voor pensioenfondsen die financiële producten zoals derivaten gebruiken om risico's af te dekken? Is de Commissie van mening dat een financiële transactiebelasting een geschikt instrument is om de beleggingsstrategie van pensioenfondsen te sturen?

Antwoord van de heer Šemeta namens de Commissie
(15 januari 2013)

De Commissie heeft gekozen voor een breed opgezet gemeenschappelijk stelsel van belasting op financiële transacties (FTT). Dit houdt in dat ook een groot aantal financiële instellingen dat bij financiële transacties betrokken is, binnen de subjectieve werkingssfeer van de FTT valt. Logischerwijs omvat deze ook op kapitaaldekking gebaseerde pensioenfondsen.

Deze aanpak garandeert fiscale neutraliteit ten opzichte van soortgelijke instellingen. De gevolgen van de belasting op pensioenfondsen zullen voor een groot deel afhankelijk zijn van de structuur van de activa en de gevolgde beleggingsstrategieën (bijvoorbeeld meer versus minder frequente handel).

De Commissie is het er daarom niet mee eens dat een gemeenschappelijk stelsel van belasting op financiële transacties (FTT) financiële producten automatisch duurder maakt en dat het niet de banken maar de burgers zijn die de lasten van de belasting moeten dragen.

De Commissie is niet van mening dat het vrijstellen van een volledige keten van transacties met een of meer „spread internalisers" (zoals market makers of handelaars voor eigen rekening) economisch zinvol of politiek wenselijk is.

([1]) Wetgevingsresolutie van het Europees Parlement van 23 mei 2012 over het voorstel voor een richtlijn van de Raad betreffende een gemeenschappelijk stelsel van belasting op financiele transacties (P7_TA-PROV(2012)0217).
([2]) http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/regering/regeerakkoord.
([3]) Europese Commissie (2012), „Technical fiche: Pension funds in the context of the FTT proposal", http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/other_taxes/financial_sector/fact_sheet/pension-funds.pdf

De Commissie erkent dat de FTT de frequente afdekking van kleine risico's tot op zekere hoogte ontmoedigt, maar zij is niet van mening dat deze belasting op doorslaggevende wijze de reguliere afdekking van aanzienlijke risico's ontmoedigt. Daarbij deelt de Commissie de zorgen van het geachte Parlementslid niet dat de FTT stelselmatig negatieve gevolgen heeft voor pensioenfondsen met volledige kapitaaldekking.

De Commissie verwijst hierbij naar de ter onderbouwing van het wetgevingsvoorstel van de Commissie betreffende een gemeenschappelijk stelsel van belasting op financiële transacties (FTT) in de EU verrichte effectbeoordeling en de nadere analyse, onder andere van de effecten op groei en pensioenfondsen, die te vinden zijn op de website van de Commissie ([4]). Er zijn in het bijzonder geen significante gevolgen voor de economische groei geconstateerd.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/other_taxes/financial_sector/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010779/12
to the Commission
Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Impact of a financial transaction tax on pension funds

1. In its resolution of 23 May 2012, the European Parliament called for pension funds to be exempted from a financial transaction tax because of the adverse economic impact it would have. The coalition policy agreement adopted by the Netherlands Government on taking office states that exempting pension funds is one of the conditions for participation in enhanced cooperation on a common system of taxation of financial transactions .

2. What view does the Commission take of the frequently raised criticism that a financial transaction tax will make financial products and instruments more expensive and that it will not be the banks that bear the cost but ordinary people, in their capacity as indirect purchasers of financial products, and people affiliated to pension schemes who in the Netherlands are required by law to contribute to those schemes?

3. Does the Commission consider it to be technically feasible to entirely exempt pension funds from a financial transaction tax on simple transactions? If not, why not?

4. Does the Commission consider it to be technically feasible to entirely exempt pension funds from a financial transaction tax on complex transactions, in the case of which a chain of transactions can result in pension funds also being taxed indirectly (cascade effect)? If not, why not?

5. In a technical memorandum, the Commission has indicated that the potential impact of a financial transaction tax will be confined to the first pillar of the pension system ([1]). Does the Commission accept that a financial transaction tax for pension funds will affect the capitalised pension system used in the Netherlands far more than the pay-as-you-go system operated by most other Member States? If so, how can a financial transaction tax on the transactions of pension funds be reconciled with the Commission's growth agenda?

6. In the technical memorandum, the Commission implies that pension funds can adjust their investment strategies so as to adopt a more conservative approach ('buy and hold') or that pension funds can switch their trading to financial instruments which fall outside the scope of the financial transaction tax. Does the Commission consider this wise from the point of view of risk management, particularly for pension funds which use financial products such as derivatives to cover risks? Does the Commission consider a financial transaction tax to be an appropriate instrument by means of which to influence the investment strategies of pension funds?

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

The Commission opted for a common system of financial transaction tax (FTT) on a broad base, which also implies that a wide range of financial institutions involved into financial transactions are included into the personal scope of the FTT. This logically extends to pension funds operating on a funded basis.

This approach guarantees tax neutrality towards similar institutions. The impact of taxation on pension funds will largely depend on the structure of the assets and investment strategies used (more frequent trading versus less frequent trading; for example).

The Commission therefore does not share the view that a common system of financial transaction tax (FTT) will automatically make financial products more expensive and that it will not be the banks but only ordinary people that have to shoulder the tax incidence.

The Commission does not consider that exempting a complete transaction chain involving one or more 'spread internalisers' (such as market makers or proprietary traders) is an economically sensible or politically desirable option.

While the Commission acknowledges that an FTT might to a certain extent discourage the frequent hedging of tiny risks it is not of the opinion that it would also decisively discourage the regular hedging of significant risks. Moreover, the Commission does not share the concerns expressed by the Honourable Member about an FTT having systematically negative effects on fully-funded pension funds.

([1]) European Commission fact sheet (2012): Pension funds in the context of the FTT proposal, http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/other_taxes/financial_sector/fact_sheet/pension-funds.pdf

Reference is made to the comprehensive impact assessment and further analysis, including on growth impacts and pension funds, which was presented on the Commission's website ([2]) and which underpins the Commission's legislative proposal on a common financial transaction tax (FTT) system in the EU. Notably, no significant effects on economic growth are found.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/taxation/other_taxes/financial_sector/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010780/12
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(28. November 2012)

Betrifft: Verschiebung von Basel III

Knapp vor dem Start der neuen Bankenrichtlinien Basel III am 1. Jänner 2013 wachsen die Zweifel, ob alle Staaten und die EU die Vorschriften rechtzeitig und vollständig umsetzen. Banken fordern schon seit längerem eine Verschiebung der Basel-III-Einführung, da sie nach eigenen Angaben mehr Zeit brauchen, um die Änderungsflut in ihren Büchern zu bewältigen.

Bereits in der Vergangenheit stellte sich das Problem, dass die US-Behörden wenig Interesse an einer Verschärfung der Eigenkapitalvorschriften für Banken, etwa an der Umsetzung von Basel 2.5, zeigten. Und nun, bei Basel III, sind die USA vom Jänner 2013 als Startdatum abgerückt. Eine strikte Einhaltung des Fahrplans für eine Verschärfung der Eigenkapitalvorschriften bedeutet für die heimischen Banken somit einen massiven Wettbewerbsvorteil.

1. Versteht die Kommission unter dem angekündigten „abgestimmten Vorgehen", dass die Basel-III-Vorschriften in der EU nicht früher als in den USA geltendes Recht werden, um Wettbewerbsnachteile zu verhindern?

2. Welche Pläne gibt es auf EU-Ebene für den Fall, dass die USA gänzlich davon abgehen, zu einem stärker risikobasierten System überzugehen?

3. In welchen EU-Staaten wäre ein fristgerechter Start nach derzeitigem Stand überhaupt möglich und in welchen Mitgliedsländern würde sich die Einführung verzögern?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(6. Februar 2013)

Die in der Basel-III-Vereinbarung vorgesehene Umsetzung verschärfter Eigenkapitalanforderungen ist ein zentrales Element, um die wiederhergestellte Belastbarkeit europäischer Banken dauerhaft zu sichern. Die von der Kommission hierzu vorgeschlagenen Maßnahmen sind als solche unerlässlich, wie dies auch das Engagement unserer internationalen G20-Partner weit über die USA hinaus bestätigt. In zahlreichen G20-Rechtsräumen sind bereits endgültige Rechtsvorschriften veröffentlicht worden, und die Kommission arbeitet gemeinsam mit dem Parlament und dem Rat aktiv daran, dass möglichst bald in der ersten Jahreshälfte eine endgültige politische Einigung erzielt wird.

1. Zwar können wir mit der Stärkung unseres Regelungsrahmens nicht warten, bis die USA ihre diesbezüglichen Rechtsvorschriften erlassen haben, aber es wäre natürlich inakzeptabel, dass ein großer G20-Rechtsraum die Basel-III-Vereinbarung nicht umsetzt, vor allem im Hinblick auf die möglichen konkreten Auswirkungen auf die globale Finanzstabilität und die Gewährleistung gleicher Wettbewerbsbedingungen auf den internationalen Finanzmärkten.

2. Die amerikanischen Behörden haben jedoch ihre Entschlossenheit bekräftigt, ihren Regelungsrahmen zum Abschluss zu bringen, und der Binnenmarktkommissar hat die Verantwortlichen der zuständigen US-Stellen persönlich aufgefordert, sich auf einen genauen Termin festzulegen.

3. Nach der förmlichen Annahme sollten die neuen Vorschriften so bald wie möglich zur Anwendung gelangen; dabei ist allerdings der nötige Raum für die Anpassung nationaler Gesetze und die Vorbereitungen der Banken und Aufsichtsbehörden zu lassen. Die Kommission verweist darauf, dass durch die Wahl des betreffenden Rechtsinstruments in jedem Fall eine unionsweit synchrone Anwendung sichergestellt wird.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010780/12
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Deferral of Basel III

Just before the launch of the new Basel III banking guidelines on 1 January 2013, doubts are arising as to whether all States and the EU will implement all the requirements in time. Banks started calling for the introduction of Basel III to be postponed some time ago, since they claim to need more time to incorporate all the changes in their books.

The problem of the US authorities showing little interest in making capital requirements more stringent for banks arose some time ago, for example when Basel 2.5 was implemented. Now the USA has distanced itself from placing the start date for Basel III in January 2013. Strict observance of the schedule for making capital requirements more stringent will therefore place domestic banks at a huge competitive advantage.

1. Does the Commission consider the announced 'concerted approach' to mean that the Basel III requirements will not become law in the EU before they become law in the USA, in order to prevent competitive disadvantages?

2. What plans are there at EU level to cater for the eventuality that the USA wholly refrains from changing over to a more risk-based system?

3. Which EU Member States could start to comply with the new requirements on schedule, and in which Member States would their introduction be deferred?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2013)

The implementation of reinforced capital requirements as set out in the international Basel III agreement constitutes a key measure to ensuring the durability of the restored resilience of European banks. The measures the Commission has proposed to this end are indispensable in their own right and the commitment of our international partners at G20 level, far beyond the US, confirms this. Many G20 jurisdictions have already released final legislation and the Commission is working actively with the Parliament and the Council to promote a final political agreement as soon as possible in the first part of this year.

1. While this important strengthening of our regulatory framework cannot wait for the finalisation of the corresponding legislation in the US, it would of course be unacceptable if a large G20 jurisdiction did not implement the Basel III agreement, with potentially material consequences for the sustainability of global financial stability and the level playing field in international financial markets.

2. The US authorities have however stated their firm commitment to finalising their rules and the internal market Commissioner has already personally urged the heads of the responsible US authorities to commit to a clear date.

3. Following formal adoption, the application of the new rules should follow as soon as possible, leaving however the necessary room for changes in national laws and preparations by banks and supervisory authorities. The Commission notes that the choice of legislative instrument will in any case ensure a synchronic application across the Union.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-010781/12
Komisi
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(28. listopadu 2012)

Předmět: Vypracování kritérií pro endokrinní disruptory

Nařízení č. 1107/2009 ukládá Komisi povinnost, aby předložila návrh kritérií pro endokrinní disruptory. Na základě meziútvarových jednání Komise v roce 2011 bylo vypracováním kritérií pověřeno GŘ pro životní prostředí ve spolupráci se Společným výzkumným střediskem. Za účelem přípravy kritérií se uskutečnilo několik setkání s národními odborníky a zájmovými skupinami. Podkladem pro jednání se stala zpráva profesora Andrease Kortenkampa o aktuálním stavu poruch endokrinních systémů a v červnu 2012 se v Bruselu konala konference. 1. srpna 2012 ovšem GŘ SANCO rozhodlo, že o stanovisko týkající se rizik endokrinních disruptorů pro lidské zdraví a životní prostředí požádá Vědecký výbor Evropského úřadu pro bezpečnost potravin. Vypracováním stanoviska byla pověřena pracovní skupina Evropského úřadu pro bezpečnost potravin.

Vznášíme proto tyto dotazy:

1. Souhlasilo v roce 2011 GŘ SANCO s tím, že za vypracování kritérií pro endokrinní disruptory a za projednání jejich rizik pro lidské zdraví a životní prostředí s odborníky a vědci by mělo být odpovědné GŘ pro životní prostředí a Společné výzkumné středisko?

2. Co vedlo GŘ SANCO k tomu, že v roce 2012 změnilo názor na tento postup pro vypracování kritérií a vědeckou debatu?

3. GŘ SANCO se zprávou profesora Kortenkampa nesouhlasilo nebo ji nepovažovalo za dostatečně vědecky kvalitní?

4. Jaké další důvody mělo GŘ SANCO k tomu, aby si vyžádalo stanovisko? Byl do této záležitosti zapojen kabinet SANCO?

5. Proč se GŘ SANCO domnívá, že Společné výzkumné středisko není vhodným útvarem pro vědeckou diskusi, a proč si místo něj vybralo Evropský úřad pro bezpečnost potravin?

6. Vzhledem k tomu, že pokud jde o problematiku poruch endokrinních systémů, nevykázal Evropský úřad pro bezpečnost potravin dosud žádné výsledky, je podle Komise v této oblasti dostatečně odborně způsobilý?

7. Jelikož je třeba vytvořit kritéria (nařízení č. 1107/2009) pro lidské zdraví, zapojí Evropský úřad pro bezpečnost potravin specializované odborníky v oblasti lidského zdraví (endokrinology / klinické lékaře)?

Odpověď pana Borga jménem Komise
(5. února 2013)

Komise pracuje na stanovení kritérií pro endokrinní disruptory, která musí být stanovena do prosince 2013, jak to vyžadují nařízení (ES) č. 1107/2009 ([1]) a nařízení (ES) č. 528/2012 ([2]).

Komise si dala za cíl zajistit, aby byla výše zmíněná kritéria založena na co možná nejlepších vědeckých poznatcích, a proto zahájila dvě vzájemně se doplňující akce:

— požádala poradní skupinu odborníků, aby vypracovala zprávu o strategii EU týkající se endokrinních disruptorů;

— konzultovala v souladu s požadavky obecného potravinového práva ([3]) úřad EFSA, který v únoru 2010 vytvořil pracovní skupinu pro endokrinní disruptory a v listopadu 2010 zveřejnil vědeckou zprávu týkající se této problematiky ([4]). Pokud je Komisi známo, působí v pracovní skupině zřízené úřadem EFSA celá řada různých odborníků (viz internetové stránky úřadu EFSA ([5])).

([1]) Úř. věst. L 309, 24.11.2009.
([2]) Úř. věst. L 167, 27.6.2012.
([3]) Nařízení (ES) č. 178/2002. Úř. věst. L 31, 1.2.2002.
([4]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/1932.pdf
([5]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/sc/scwgs.htm

Obě tyto zprávy a rovněž zpráva profesora Andrease Kortenkampa týkající se narušení činnosti žláz s vnitřní sekrecí ([6]) a závěry konference, která se uskutečnila v červnu 2012 v Bruselu, budou Komisi sloužit jako vědecký základ k tomu, aby v souladu s požadavky nařízení č. 1107/2009 navrhla výše uvedená kritéria.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/endocrine/documents/studies_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010781/12
to the Commission
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Development of criteria for endocrine disrupting chemicals

Regulation 1107/2009 requires the Commission to come up with draft criteria for endocrine disrupting chemicals. Commission interservice talks in 2011 resulted in DG Environment together with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) organising the development of criteria. Several meetings were convened with national experts and interest groups to prepare the criteria. A state-of-the-art report on endocrine disruption by Professor Andreas Kortenkamp was used as an input to the discussions and a conference was organised in June 2012 in Brussels. On August 1 2012, however, DG SANCO decided to ask the Scientific Committee of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to deliver an opinion on the human health and environmental risks of endocrine disruptors (EDs). An EFSA working group has been mandated to draw up the opinion.

We therefore have the following questions:

1. Did DG SANCO agree in 2011 that DG Environment and the JRC should be made responsible for drafting the criteria for EDs and for discussing the human health and environmental risks of endocrine disruptors with experts and scientists?

2. What made DG SANCO change its mind in 2012 on the drafting process of the criteria and the scientific discussion?

3. Did DG SANCO not agree with the state-of-the art report by Professor Kortenkamp or did it consider it of insufficient scientific quality?

4. What other reasons made DG SANCO request an opinion? Was the SANCO cabinet involved?

5. Why does DG SANCO feel the JRC is not the appropriate agency with which to hold a scientific debate and why did it chose EFSA instead?

6. Given that EFSA has no track record on endocrine disruption, does the Commission feel that EFSA has enough expertise in this field?

7. Since the criteria (Reg. 1107/2009) need to be developed for human health, will EFSA include specialised expertise on human health (endocrinologists/clinicians)?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 February 2013)

The Commission is working towards the establishment of the criteria for endocrine disruptors (EDs), which have to be set by December 2013 as required by Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 ([1]) and Regulation (EC) 528/2012 ([2]).

The Commission is committed to ensure that the above-referred criteria will be based on the best possible scientific advice and therefore it has launched two complementary actions:

— An advisory expert group has been asked to report on the EU strategy on Endocrine Disrupters;

— EFSA was consulted in accordance with the requirements of the General Food Law ([3]). It established a task force on EDs in February 2010 and published a scientific report on the issue in November 2010 ([4]). The Commission understands that EFSA has included the full range of expertise in the Working Group which may be consulted on the EFSA Internet site ([5]).

([1]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009.
([2]) OJ L 167, 27.6.2012,.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 178/2002. OJ L 31, 1.2.2002.
([4]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/1932.pdf
([5]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/sc/scwgs.htm

Both reports, together with the report on endocrine disruption by Professor Andreas Kortenkamp ([6]) and the conclusions of a conference that was organised in June 2012 in Brussels will be the scientific basis for the Commission to propose criteria in line with the requirements of Regulation 1107/2009.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/endocrine/documents/studies_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010782/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Sugar reform: evidence of 'joined-up' thinking

What evidence is there, if any, of 'joined-up' thinking between DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG Trade and DG Competition about sugar market reform? Does the Commission not agree that such 'joined-up' thinking with a common timetable and programme for reform across all 3 DGs is essential if the sugar market reform is to make market and economic sense?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

Any legislative proposal by the Commission, including the one on reforming the common market organisation in the sugar sector in 2005, goes through an inter-service consultation whereby all Commission Directorates General (DG) concerned are included in the procedure. The latter is then adopted by the College of Commissioners which bears a joint responsibility for the proposal, on behalf of the Commission.

The Commission proposal was scrutinised within the European Council and after thorough discussions and eventual amendments the reform was subsequently agreed by the Agricultural Ministers of the Member States in the Council meeting of November 2005.

On 12 October 2011 the Commission made a proposal for a new common agricultural policy after 2013, by which it confirmed the decision of the aforementioned reform to maintain sugar quotas until the end of the 2014/2015 marketing year and no further.

According to the Commission, the end of the sugar quota makes economic sense and is consistent with the overall CAP orientation, but the final decision is in the hands of the Council and the European Parliament.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010783/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Sugar reform, DG AGRI and DG Competition

Has the Commission's DG for Agriculture and Rural Development liaised with its DG for Competition to assess the sugar reform, given that 1) DG Competition has responsibility for the competitive functioning of the sugar market, with its impact on availability and consumer prices, and that 2) in a recent decision DG Competition expressed concern about the oligopolistic concentration of production within the EU sugar sector?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The reply to Question E-010782 answered your concern regarding consultations of other Directorates General (DG) for new regulatory proposals. Regarding impact assessments, similar consultations are held. Other DGs, including DG Competition, were consulted on the impact assessment of the proposals for the CAP 2020, including the sugar market organisation. The subsequent legislative proposal was adopted by the College of Commissioners which bears a joint responsibility for the proposal, on behalf of the Commission.

The other way around DG Agriculture is consulted if DG Competition investigates competition cases which may affect relevant agricultural markets, including the sugar market.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010784/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Sugar sector profitability

To what extent is the profitability of companies in the sugar sector a function of market regulation rather than commercial judgment?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

Profitability of a company is the difference between the costs and revenues as a result of its own decisions.

The objectives of EU agricultural market regulation are based on the objectives set out in Article 39 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union: (a) to increase agricultural productivity; (b) to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture; (c) to stabilise markets; (d) to assure the availability of supplies; (e) to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

On the basis of these objectives the EU legislation on sugar has been decided by the Council, setting the framework under which commercial decisions are taken.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010785/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Sugar reform, DG AGRI and DG Trade

Has the Commission's DG for Agriculture and Rural Development liaised with the DG for Trade to assess the sugar reform, given that DG Trade has responsibility for both preferential trade agreements and free-trade agreements, which include sugar? What is DG Trade's contribution to thinking on the planned sugar reform?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(10 January 2013)

As a rule, and before adoption, Commission legislative proposals go through an inter-service consultation which includes all relevant Commission Directorates General (DG).

The Commission believes that the end of the sugar quota is the best option for providing the sugar sector with a long-term perspective.

Quotas put up rigidities and prevent the sugar industry from responding rapidly to market changes. Furthermore, the diverging trends in EU and world market prices observed since the third quarter of 2011, illustrate the malfunctioning of the current quota regime.

This proposal is now with the Council and the European Parliament for decision.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010786/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: A free market in sugar

Would the Commission agree — in the context of the sugar market reform — that a free market which retains either quotas or import duties of any kind is an oxymoron?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The EU sugar market is not a free market. After the reform in 2005 the sugar market has been almost completely opened to imports from more than 80 (developing) countries. In that sense the EU sugar market became a 'freer' market than before 2006. Furthermore, the Commission has proposed that in 2015 the quotas can indeed expire as foreseen in Council Regulation (EC) 1234/2007 (single CMO Regulation) ([1]). This will eliminate yet another constraint of the sugar market organisation. However regulatory mechanisms like import tariffs and possible market management measures in times of crises will remain in place.

([1]) OJ L 299, 16.11.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010787/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Sugar data consistency

Will the Commission explain why it reports different figures for sugar exports to the World Trade Organisation from those it uses in its own sugar market assessments? What is the impact of this?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The EU notification to the WTO on the export of sugar is based on the tariff lines as defined under the product category 'sugar' in the EU WTO Schedule of Concessions. The EU internal sugar market assessments include also other tariff lines, which contain sugar in whichever form. The Commission cannot see any impact, as the two issues are of different nature.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010788/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Sugar market and pricing

Will the Commission assess the market impact, particularly on consumer prices, of the difference between its estimates and Member State estimates of the available sugar stock in the EU, starting in 2008?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

As indicated in the answer to Question E-010789/2012 ([1]) the reason for the change in methodology to establish the sugar balance is a zero sum exercise that has no impact whatsoever on the sugar quantities available on the market.

The figure for stocks indicates clearly the stocks in the silos of the sugar producers, while consumption, or disappearance, indicates the sugar that is in the sugar supply chain beyond the sugar producers.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010789/12
to the Commission
John Stuart Agnew (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Realities of the sugar market

Will the Commission explain why it chose to ignore sugar stock data, collected at great expense by Member States, in arriving at its estimates of EU sugar market supply and demand between 2008 and 2011?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

From the 2009/2010 till 2011/12 marketing year, total sugar stocks in the EU balance sheet were calculated as the residual of consumption, production, imports and exports. The difference between these calculated stocks and stocks reported by the sugar producers and communicated to the Commission via the Member States increased in recent years. This indicated an increasing quantity of sugar in the sugar supply chain between the sugar producer and the consumer. On this basis it was decided to report stocks on the basis of stocks available at the sugar producers and to make the consumption the residual variable. Instead of 'consumption' the new residual figure rather represents 'disappearance.'

Hence, the Commission never ignored sugar stock data provided by the Member States.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010790/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(28 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Impedito il conio della moneta da due euro per il Giubileo in Slovacchia

Nel 2013 la Slovacchia celebrerà il Giubileo per i 1 150 anni dalla predicazione di Cirillo e Metodio che, il 31 dicembre 1980, Papa Giovanni Paolo II ha proclamato con la lettera apostolica «Egregiae virtutis» compatroni d'Europa insieme a San Benedetto per la loro opera di evangelizzazione dei popoli slavi e della parte orientale del vecchio continente.

Per il Giubileo la Slovacchia aveva intenzione di emettere una moneta celebrativa da due euro con i due Santi con croce e aureola, ma la Commissione e alcuni Stati membri hanno impedito tale coniatura, rivendicando l'applicazione del «principio di neutralità religiosa».

Secondo quanto riportato dalla stampa, fra le motivazioni al diniego dell'emissione di tale moneta commemorativa figura la considerazione che una moneta che potrebbe circolare in tutta l'Unione europea deve essere «neutrale» dal punto di vista religioso mentre Cirillo e Metodio non sono figure neutrali, essendo santi cristiani, e la croce e l'aureola dei Santi sono simboli troppo cristiani per essere ammessi nel consesso europeo.

La Commissione conferma questa decisione di impedire a uno Stato membro dell'UE di coniare la moneta celebrativa per il Giubileo?

Può specificare in quale trattato o in qualsiasi altro documento ufficiale dell'Unione si parli chiaramente del «principio di neutralità religiosa»?

Quali sono gli Stati membri che hanno impedito tale emissione?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010844/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Tutela della comune memoria storica europea e dei suoi simboli

Nel 2013 la Slovacchia celebrerà il giubileo per i 1 150 anni dall'inizio della missione evangelizzatrice dei santi Costantino-Cirillo e Metodio. In previsione di questa ricorrenza la Banca centrale slovacca desiderava mettere in circolazione una moneta celebrativa, del valore di due euro. Il disegno proposto per la faccia della moneta intendeva raffigurare i due santi seguendo la tradizione iconografica, con la croce sui paramenti liturgici e l'aureola attorno al capo. La Commissione europea ha bloccato questa iniziativa sollevando obiezioni sull'opportunità di raffigurare i due santi con l'aureola e la croce sui paramenti, ritenendo che tale raffigurazione avrebbe potuto arrecare un pregiudizio al rispetto del principio di neutralità religiosa. Secondo la Commissione i due simboli in questione, l'aureola e la croce, producono un riferimento troppo esplicito al cristianesimo e pertanto sono suscettibili di ingenerare violazioni del principio di laicità delle istituzioni comunitarie. La Banca nazionale slovacca è stata quindi costretta a modificare la bozza del disegno della moneta e a procedere alla raffigurazione dei due santi senza i simboli ritenuti inadeguati dalla Commissione. Si tratta di una decisione difficile da comprendere alla luce della storia del nostro continente, della comune tradizione religiosa e, soprattutto, della straordinaria importanza che le opere di Cirillo e Metodio, compatroni d'Europa assieme a San Benedetto da Norcia, hanno avuto nell'unificazione culturale dei popoli dell'est Europa con quelli dell'ovest. Premesso ciò, si chiede alla Commissione se:

1. ritiene importante la salvaguardia di una comune identità storica europea, comprendente anche la tutela dei suoi simboli religiosi?

2. Considera che la cancellazione dei simboli cristiani da una moneta commemorativa sia un modo efficace di preservare la comune identità storica dei popoli europei?

3. Non ritiene che adottando un approccio di questo genere corra il rischio di veicolare una visione storica falsata perché privata del suo reale contesto simbolico?

4. Al fine di avvicinare i popoli europei alla comune causa dell'integrazione europea non sia più avveduto, da parte della Commissione, valorizzare le specificità culturali e religiose anziché distorcerle o addirittura negarle?

5. Se nel nome del principio di neutralità religiosa è intenzionata in futuro a proporre agli Stati membri di cancellare anche le croci raffigurate nelle rispettive bandiere nazionali e/o le croci che campeggiano sui campanili e sulle cattedrali di tutta Europa?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010923/12
alla Commissione
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(30 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Motivazioni della rimozione dei simboli religiosi dalla moneta da 2 euro slovacca dedicata ai Santi Cirillo e Metodio

Recentemente la Banca nazionale slovacca ha reso noto di aver dovuto modificare la bozza iniziale della moneta da 2 Euro prevista per il 2013 in occasione del 1150° anniversario della missione dei Santi Cirillo e Metodio. La bozza prevedeva l'effige dei monaci, simbolo dell'Europa slava cristiana, con le aureole e l'abito talare ricoperto da grandi croci; tali simboli religiosi sono stati poi fatti rimuovere in quanto ritenuti in contrasto con l'articolo 22 della carta sui diritti fondamentali dell'UE.

Considerando:

— il ruolo svolto dal cristianesimo nella storia del continente europeo e nella fattispecie l'importanza della missione dei due Santi per l'Europa orientale, che sembra rispettare a pieno titolo quanto espresso nel considerando 10 («È opportuno che le emissioni di monete commemorative in euro destinate alla circolazione commemorino unicamente eventi della massima rilevanza nazionale o europea, giacché tali monete circoleranno in tutta l'area dell'euro») della raccomandazione della Commissione, del 19 dicembre 2008, sugli orientamenti comuni per l'emissione di monete in euro destinate alla circolazione e loro relativa faccia nazionale, pubblicata nella Gazzetta Ufficiale dell'Unione europea, serie L, numero 9, del 14 gennaio 2009;

— che nel 1980 fu proprio il pontefice Giovanni Paolo II a dichiarare i due santi copatroni dell'Europa, elevandoli ad Apostoli degli slavi;

— il diverso metro di giudizio utilizzato nei confronti della moneta slovena, raffigurante il partigiano comunista Rozman, come già segnalato dal sottoscritto nella precedente interrogazione «Ritiro dalla circolazione di una moneta commemorativa slovena anti-italiana» dello scorso 18 aprile;

si interroga la Commissione:

— per conoscere i motivi che hanno portato a tale scelta;

— per sapere se intende cancellare, in nome del politicamente corretto e della «neutralità religiosa», le radici cristiane, ovvero ciò che per secoli ha costituito e continua a costituire, nelle sue varie forme, un elemento comune dal punto di vista culturale, storico e sociale per tutta l'Unione;

— per sapere se ritiene circostanze come quelle succitate il modo migliore di far rispettare quanto indicato dall'articolo 22 del Trattato sui diritti fondamentali dell'Ue «L'Unione rispetta la diversità culturale, religiosa e linguistica».

Risposta congiunta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(20 febbraio 2013)

In linea con i trattati, l'Unione e le sue istituzioni contribuiscono al pieno sviluppo delle culture degli Stati membri nel rispetto delle loro diversità nazionali e regionali, mettendo al contempo in rilievo il patrimonio culturale comune. In questo contesto, l'importanza storica dei vescovi Cirillo e Metodio è fuori discussione.

Tuttavia, a norma del regolamento (UE) n. 566/2012 ([1]) del Consiglio, nel definire i disegni da riportare sulla faccia nazionale di una moneta metallica in euro gli Stati membri devono tenere conto del fatto che le monete circoleranno in tutta la zona euro. Alla luce di ciò, le bozze dei disegni vengono preventivamente mostrate agli altri Stai membri in modo che questi possano formulare le osservazioni che ritengono opportune. La Commissione è al corrente dell'obiezione sollevata da alcuni Stati membri sulla proposta slovacca relativa a una moneta commemorativa in euro motivata dalla neutralità dell'Unione europea rispetto alle convinzioni religiose.

Nel frattempo la Slovacchia ha presentato nuovamente la sua bozza di disegno e le obiezioni iniziali sono state ritirate. Il disegno è stato approvato dal Consiglio.

([1]) Regolamento (UE) n. 566/2012 del Consiglio, del 18 giugno 2012, che modifica il regolamento (CE) n. 975/98 riguardante i valori unitari e le specificazioni tecniche delle monete metalliche in euro destinate alla circolazione, GU L 169 del 29.6.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010790/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Ban on issue of 2 euro coins for the Jubilee in Slovakia

In 2013, Slovakia will celebrate the 1150th anniversary of the mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius. On 31 December 1980 Pope John Paul II, through the apostolic letter 'Egregiae virtutis', proclaimed Cyril and Methodius patron saints of Europe alongside Saint Benedict for their mission work among the Slavic peoples and in Eastern Europe.

Slovakia had intended to mark this anniversary by issuing a commemorative 2 euro coin picturing the two saints with cross and halo, but the Commission and several Member States have prevented this, calling for the application of the 'principle of religious neutrality'.

As reported in the press, the reasons given for the refusal to allow this commemorative coin to be issued include the argument that a coin which could circulate throughout the European Union should be 'neutral' in terms of religion; Cyril and Methodius are not neutral figures, being Christian saints, and the saints' cross and halo are overly Christian symbols to be acceptable in Europe.

Will the Commission say whether it upholds this decision to prevent an EU Member State from issuing the commemorative coin for the Jubilee?

Could it specify which treaty or other official EU document refers explicitly to the 'principle of religious neutrality'?

Which Member States have prevented the issuing of this coin?

Question for written answer E-010844/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Protection of Europe's common historical memory and its symbols

In 2013, Slovakia will celebrate the Jubilee marking the 1150th anniversary of the beginning of the mission of Saints Constantine-Cyril and Methodius. In anticipation of this, Slovakia's Central Bank wished to issue a commemorative 2 euro coin. The design proposed for this coin represented the two saints in accordance with traditional iconography, with the cross on the liturgical vestments and a halo surrounding the head. The European Commission has blocked this initiative on the grounds that the representation of the saints (with the halo and cross on the vestments) is not appropriate and could be detrimental to compliance with the principle of religious neutrality. According to the Commission, these two symbols (the halo and the cross) constitute an overly explicit reference to Christianity and could thus violate the principle of secular EU institutions. Slovakia's National Bank has been obliged to amend the proposed design for the coin and to change the representation of the two saints, removing the symbols which the Commission considers inappropriate. It is difficult to understand this decision, in light of Europe's history, common religious tradition and, first and foremost, the overweening importance of the work performed by Saints Cyril and Methodius (patron saints of Europe alongside Saint Benedict of Norcia) in culturally unifying the people of east and west Europe. The Commission is therefore asked to say:

1. Whether it attaches importance to safeguarding a common European historical memory, including the protection of its religious symbols?

2. Whether it considers that removing Christian symbols from a commemorative coin is an effective way to preserve the common historical identity of the peoples of Europe?

3. Whether it does not feel that by taking such an approach, it runs the risk of conveying a falsified view of history, stripped of its real symbolic context?

4. In pursuit of the goal of bringing Europeans closer to the common cause of European integration, would the Commission not be wiser to emphasise cultural and religious characteristics, rather than distorting or even denying them?

5. Whether, in the name of religious neutrality, it intends in future to propose that Member States should also remove the crosses on their national flags and/or on the church towers and cathedrals throughout Europe?

Question for written answer E-010923/12
to the Commission
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(30 November 2012)

Subject: Reasons for the removal of religious symbols from the Slovakian two-euro coin dedicated to Saints Cyril and Methodius

Recently, the National Bank of Slovakia announced that it had had to change the initial proof of the two-euro coin due for 2013, marking the 1150th anniversary of the arrival of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The proof featured the image of the monks, symbols of a Slavic, Christian Europe, with halos and cassocks covered with large crosses; such religious symbols were then removed as they went against Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Considering:

— the role played by Christianity in European history and in this case the importance of the arrival of these two saints for Eastern Europe, which seem to fully respect the terms of clause 10 of the Commission Recommendation of 19 December 2008, on common guidelines for the national symbols and the issuance of euro coins intended for circulation ('issues of commemorative euro coins intended for circulation should only commemorate subjects of major national or European relevance, since such coins are intended for circulation throughout the euro area'), published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, L009, Volume 52, on 14 January 2009;

— that in 1980 it was Pope John Paul II himself who proclaimed these two saints to be Co-Patrons of Europe, elevating them to Apostles of the Slavs;

— the different assessment criteria used for Slovenian coins, depicting the Communist party member Franc Rozman-Stane, as already reported by the undersigned in a previous question, 'Withdrawal from circulation of a Slovenian anti-Italian commemorative coin', on 18 April 2012.

Could the Commission please state:

— the reasons for its decision;

— whether, in the name of political correctness and 'religious neutrality', it intends to erase the Christian roots which for centuries have constituted and continue to constitute, in their various forms, a common cultural, historical and social element for the entire European Union;

— whether it considers a situation such as the one mentioned above to be the best way to uphold that which is stated in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, 'the Union respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity'.

Joint answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(20 February 2013)

In line with the Treaties, the Union and its institutions contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. Against this background, the historic importance of Bishops Cyril and Methodius is uncontested.

However, under Council Regulation (EU) No 566/2012 ([1]), when designing the national side of a euro coin, Member States have to take into account the fact that the coins will circulate throughout the whole Eurozone. In that context, proposed designs are shared in advance with other Member States so that they can provide any comments they consider appropriate. The Commission is aware of the objection made by some Member States on the proposed Slovakian commemorative euro coin on the grounds that the European Union is neutral with regard to religious beliefs.

([1]) Council Regulation (EU) No 566/2012 of 18 June 2012 amending Regulation (EC) No 975/98 on denominations and technical specifications of euro coins intended for circulation, OJ L 169, 29.6.2012.

Slovakia re-submitted meanwhile the proposed design and the original objections were withdrawn. The design has now been approved by the Council.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010791/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(28 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Chiarezza sul fondo di 140 milioni di euro all'Albania

L'Unione europea ha stanziato un fondo di 140 milioni di euro per le politiche di sviluppo e innovazione delle imprese nei Balcani occidentali.

Il ministero albanese per l'Economia e l'energia ha presentato recentemente il programma «Western Balkans Enterprise and Innovation Facility», che definisce le riforme prioritarie in queste politiche di sviluppo del settore privato.

Il programma costituisce un'iniziativa comune portata avanti dal Consiglio d'Europa, dalla BEI, dall'EFI e dalla BERS nel contesto degli investimenti destinati ai paesi dell'area dei Balcani occidentali.

Nella comunicazione «Strategia di allargamento e sfide principali per il periodo 2012-2013» (COM(2012)0600), la Commissione afferma che «la maggior parte delle economie dei Balcani occidentali ha conosciuto una nuova contrazione nel 2012, sulla scia degli sviluppi negativi all'interno dell'Unione. Croazia, Bosnia-Erzegovina e Serbia sono di nuovo in una fase di recessione».

1. Non ritiene che sarebbe stato più utile stanziare questi fondi a Stati già membri dell'UE che sono in difficoltà economiche vista la crisi finanziaria in atto?

2. Quali sono le riforme prioritarie nella politica di sviluppo del settore privato alle quali si riferisce il ministro albanese?

3. È in grado di fornire la cifra stanziata da ogni organismo sopra citato relativamente a ogni Stato dei Balcani occidentali?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(1º febbraio 2013)

Lo strumento per lo sviluppo e l'innovazione delle imprese nei Balcani occidentali (EDIF) è volto a migliorare l'accesso delle piccole e medie imprese (PMI) ai finanziamenti nei Balcani occidentali e a promuovere lo sviluppo economico della regione agevolando lo stabilimento di imprese innovative e ad alto potenziale di sviluppo. L'EDIF contribuisce agli obiettivi della politica di allargamento dell'UE in quanto aiuta i beneficiari dello strumento a soddisfare i criteri di Copenaghen stimolando lo sviluppo del settore privato. Gli allargamenti precedenti si sono tradotti in evidenti vantaggi per l'economia nell'Unione europea e in tutti gli Stati membri in termini di aumento degli scambi, degli investimenti e della concorrenza.

L'EDIF si rivolge ai beneficiari impegnati in riforme prioritarie connesse alla popolazione delle PMI. L'Albania si è concentrata sul miglioramento del quadro normativo per i progetti che implicano un capitale di rischio: sostegno agli investitori, aumento delle capacità e della preparazione all'innovazione, attuazione di politiche e programmi innovativi.

La Commissione ha stanziato 65,6 milioni di EUR del totale iniziale di 144,8 milioni di EUR raccolto dai beneficiari, dalle istituzioni finanziarie internazionali e dai donatori bilaterali. L'EDIF non assegna stanziamenti specifici per paese e fornisce sostegno alle PMI su basi puramente commerciali, attraverso una partecipazione azionaria o operazioni di prestito, secondo l'afflusso di opportunità commerciali interessanti. (Per ulteriori informazioni, si veda la pagina web del quadro per gli investimenti nei Balcani occidentali http://www.wbif.eu/.)

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010791/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Clarity regarding the EUR 140 million fund for Albania

The European Union has appropriated a fund of EUR 140 million for enterprise development and innovation policies in the western Balkans.

The Albanian Ministry of the Economy and Energy has recently presented the western Balkans Enterprise and Innovation Facility, which sets out the priority reforms in these private-sector development policies.

The programme is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe, the EIB, the EIF and the EBRD in the area of investments in the countries of the western Balkans.

In the communication Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2012-2013 (COM(2012) 0600), the Commission states that 'the majority of economies of the western Balkans contracted again in 2012, following negative developments in the European Union. Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia are back in recession'.

1. Does the Commission not believe that it would be more useful to allocate these funds to Member States already part of the EU which are in economic difficulties, given the current financial crisis?

2. To which priority reforms in private-sector development policy is the Albanian minister referring?

3. Can the Commission state the figure appropriated by each body mentioned above for each Western Balkan country?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (EDIF) aims at improving access to finance for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the western Balkans and to foster economic development in the region through facilitating the establishment and growth of innovative and high-potential companies. The EDIF contributes towards the objectives of the EU Enlargement Policy, by helping the beneficiaries to meet the Copenhagen criteria by stimulating the development of the private sector. Past enlargements have resulted in clear benefits for the economy of the European Union and all its Member States in terms of enhanced trade, investment and competitiveness.

All EDIF beneficiaries committed to priority reforms related to the population of SMEs are targeted by the Facility. Albania focused on improving the regulatory framework for venture capital schemes, providing support to investors, increasing the capacity and readiness for innovation, and implementing innovation-related policies and programmes.

The Commission has allocated EUR 65.6 million to the total initial EUR 144.8 million pulled together by the beneficiaries, International Financial Institutions and bilateral donors. The EDIF will not make any country-specific allocations and will provide support to SMEs on purely commercial grounds depending on the inflow of good business deals, be it through its equity investment or lending operations. (Further details can be obtained through the Western Balkan Investment Framework website www.wbif.eu).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010792/12
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(28 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: L'UE chiarisca quali saranno le ripercussioni delle semplificazioni nel rilascio dei visti

La Commissione, nella sua comunicazione dal titolo «Attuazione e sviluppo della politica comune in materia di visti per stimolare la crescita nell'Unione europea» (COM(2012)0649), del 7 novembre 2012, considera l'impatto della politica dei visti sull'economia dell'UE, in particolare sul turismo, e si prefigge di facilitare le procedure di rilascio dei visti. Nella comunicazione, la Commissione ha solo accennato al fattore dell'immigrazione illegale che potrebbe svilupparsi a seguito della facilitazione che auspica.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione fa sapere se non ritiene che le semplificazioni nel rilascio dei visti possano portare alla medesima situazione che si è creata nei mesi scorsi con i paesi dei Balcani, ovvero a un abuso irragionevole e falso di richieste di visti?

Con quali mezzi intende valutare se una richiesta di visto (in particolare se proveniente da cittadini di paesi terzi), per esempio nei casi di ricongiungimento familiare, è effettivamente tale o è fittizia?

Come intende intervenire per prevenire le situazioni sopra descritte?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(21 gennaio 2013)

Nella comunicazione menzionata dall'onorevole parlamentare, la Commissione afferma che «una politica dei visti intelligente deve continuare a garantire la sicurezza delle nostre frontiere esterne e il buon funzionamento dello spazio Schengen e nel contempo facilitare i movimenti legittimi delle persone».

La Commissione non ritiene che l'introduzione di determinate facilitazioni dei visti per i viaggiatori in regola possa rappresentare una minaccia per la sicurezza dell'UE, né aumentare il rischio di immigrazione illegale. I richiedenti devono dimostrare di soddisfare le condizioni necessarie per l'ingresso nel paese, la cui verifica, ad esempio mediante il controllo dei documenti giustificativi presentati dai richiedenti o un colloquio personale, spetta ai consolati degli Stati membri, secondo una modalità che verrà mantenuta anche in futuro. Il sistema d'informazione visti sosterrà il lavoro dei consolati di tutto il mondo per garantire che non vi siano abusi delle procedure di domanda del visto.

La situazione dei paesi dei Balcani occidentali è del tutto diversa, poiché, a parte i titolari di un passaporto rilasciato dal Kosovo, i cittadini non sono soggetti all'obbligo del visto di breve durata per i paesi Schengen. Pertanto, il problema delle domande di visto ingiustificate o false non si pone. Negli ultimi due anni la Commissione ha seguito il processo successivo alla liberalizzazione dei visti nella regione: i problemi riscontrati sono stati sottoposti direttamente alle autorità dei paesi interessati, affinché provvedano a risolverli. Il Parlamento europeo e il Consiglio stanno attualmente esaminando una proposta della Commissione relativa all'istituzione di un meccanismo per sospendere l'esenzione dal visto per i paesi terzi, da applicare in casi di emergenza in cui sia necessario reagire prontamente per risolvere le difficoltà incontrate dagli Stati membri.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010792/12
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (EFD)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: EU clarification of the impact of simplifying visa procedures

In its communication entitled Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth in the EU (COM(2012) 649), of 7 November 2012, the Commission considers the impact of visa policy on the EU economy, particularly on tourism, and seeks to facilitate visa issuing procedures. In the communication, the Commission only touched on the aspect of the illegal immigration that could develop as a result of the facilitation it is calling for.

Against this backdrop, will the Commission say if it considers that the simplified procedures for issuing visas could lead to the same situation that has arisen in recent months with the Balkan countries, i.e. exorbitant abuse and falsifying of visa applications?

With what means does it intend to assess whether a visa application (particularly one coming from a third-country national), for example in cases of family reunification, is actually valid or if it is fictitious?

What action does it intend to take to prevent the aforementioned situations?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(21 January 2013)

The Commission stated in the communication mentioned by the Honourable Member that 'a smarter visa policy should continue to provide security to our external borders and the good functioning of the Schengen area whilst at the same time facilitate travel opportunities for legitimate travellers'.

The Commission does not believe that the introduction of certain visa facilitations for legitimate travellers will threaten the EU's security or increase the risks of irregular migration. Visa applicants need to demonstrate that they fulfil the entry conditions. Member States' consulates are responsible for verifying this using, for example, the supporting documents submitted by applicants or a personal interview. This general practice will continue in the future. The Visa Information System will support the work of consulates around the world to ensure that the visa application process is not abused.

The situation regarding the Western Balkan countries is entirely different, since, apart from holders of passports issued by Kosovo, their citizens are not subject to a Schengen short stay visa requirement. The issue of abusive or falsified visa applications therefore does not arise. Over the last two years the Commission has been monitoring the post visa liberalisation process in this region. Where problems have arisen, these have been raised directly with the authorities of the countries concerned so that they can take action to resolve them. The European Parliament and the Council are currently negotiating on a Commission proposal to set up a mechanism for suspension of the visa waiver for a third country in case of an emergency situation, where an urgent response needs to be given to solve the difficulties faced by Member States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-010793/12
an den Rat
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(28. November 2012)

Betrifft: Beschäftigung einer maltesischen Anwältin beim Rat?

Im Zusammenhang mit dem Rücktritt des Kommissars John Dalli wurde in der Presse von einem Treffen des Kommissars mit einer von der Tabakindustrie bezahlten maltesischen Anwältin (G.K.) berichtet, die in einem Beschäftigungsverhältnis zum Rat stehe.

In welchem Anstellungsverhältnis stand bzw. steht G.K. im Ratssekretariat? Von wann bis wann?

Falls ein Anstellungsverhältnis bestand bzw. besteht: Hat die maltesische Anwältin eine Genehmigung vom Rat für ihre Tätigkeit für die Tabakindustrie erhalten?

In der maltesischen Presse wird zudem berichtet, dass dieselbe Person bis Juni 2012 einer Tätigkeit bei der maltesischen Lottery and Gaming Authority (LGA) nachging. Hat der Rat die Tätigkeit der maltesischen Anwältin bei der LGA genehmigt?

Welche Konsequenzen zieht der Rat aus diesem Fall?

Antwort
(4. Februar 2013)

Die von der Frau Abgeordneten genannte Person, die seit dem 1. Dezember 2004 Beamte des Generalsekretariats des Rates ist, befindet sich seit dem 1. Januar 2011 im unbezahlten Urlaub.

Die anderen Fragen der Frau Abgeordneten betreffen sensible personenbezogene Daten, die der Rat nicht weitergeben kann.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010793/12
to the Council
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Allegations concerning a Maltese lawyer employed at the Council

In connection with the resignation of Commissioner John Dalli, there have been reports in the press about a meeting between the Commissioner and a Maltese lawyer (Ms G.K.) who was receiving payment from the tobacco industry while employed at the Council.

What was or is the employment position of Ms G.K. at the Council? Between what dates?

If she was or is a staff member, did the Maltese lawyer receive authorisation from the Council to carry out her work for the tobacco industry?

It is also reported in the Maltese press that the same person was working until June 2012 for the Maltese Lottery and Gaming Authority (LGA). Did the Council authorise her employment at the LGA?

What action will the Council be taking as a result of this case?

Reply
(4 February 2013)

The person to whom the Honourable Member refers, an official of the General Secretariat of the Council since 1 December 2004, has been on unpaid leave since 1 January 2011.

The other questions asked by the Honourable Member relate to sensitive personal data which the Council is not able to divulge.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-010794/12
an die Kommission
Kerstin Westphal (S&D)
(28. November 2012)

Betrifft: Regionalbeihilfen ab 2014

Zurzeit arbeitet die Kommission an der Neugestaltung der Regionalbeihilfen ab 2014. Offenbar wird es Änderungen an der Fördergebietskulisse geben — einige Regionen werden womöglich aus der Förderung herausfallen. In der Diskussion ist ein sogenannter „Sondergebietsplafond" für jene Regionen, die aus der Förderung herausfallen könnten und die gleichzeitig an Höchstfördergebiete in benachbarten Mitgliedstaaten angrenzen. Begründet wird dies mit der Befürchtung, dass Unternehmen abwandern könnten, um sich wenige Kilometer weiter (in einem Höchstfördergebiet) neu anzusiedeln und dort Fördergelder zu erhalten.

1. Teilt die Kommission die Einschätzung, dass ein wachsendes Fördergefälle zwischen angrenzenden Regionen problematisch für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung der Region ist, die nicht mehr förderfähig ist?

2. Was hält die Kommission von Ideen wie einem „Sondergebietsplafond", um ein wachsendes Fördergefälle zwischen Grenzregionen (von denen die eine Region aus der Förderung herauszufallen droht, während die andere Höchstfördergebiet ist) zu vermeiden?

3. Welche anderen Möglichkeiten sieht die Kommission, um ein wachsendes Fördergefälle zwischen Höchstförderregionen und Regionen, die aus der Förderung herauszufallen drohen, zu verhindern?

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(23. Januar 2013)

1. Mit den Leitlinien für Regionalbeihilfen für 2007-2013 hat die Kommission bereits eigene Vorschriften festgelegt, mit denen die möglichen negativen Auswirkungen von Standortverlagerungen zwischen Grenzregionen abgemildert werden sollen. Die weniger benachteiligten Grenzregionen werden bevorzugt als Fördergebiete ausgewiesen, und die möglichen Unterschiede der Förderintensität sind begrenzt. Im Zeitraum 2007-2013 haben neun Mitgliedstaaten beschlossen, von dieser Möglichkeit Gebrauch zu machen. Bei der laufenden Überprüfung der Leitlinien hat die Kommission vor, diese Vorgehensweise beizubehalten.

2. Die allgemeinen Bevölkerungshöchstgrenzen, die den Mitgliedstaaten zugewiesen werden sollen, werden es ihnen ermöglichen, Grenzregionen in ihre Verzeichnisse förderfähiger Gebiete aufzunehmen. Es liegt in der Zuständigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten zu entscheiden, welche ihrer Regionen in diese Verzeichnisse aufzunehmen sind. Die Kommission hat nicht die Absicht, dem internen Entscheidungsprozess von Mitgliedstaaten vorzugreifen, indem sie die Förderfähigkeit von Grenzregionen zum Nachteil anderer Regionen einschränkt, deren Bedarf an regionaler Förderung angesichts ihrer sozioökonomischen Entwicklung möglicherweise höher ist.

3. Die Kommission begrüßt alle konstruktiven Vorschläge dazu, wie den Problemen der Grenzregionen begegnet werden kann. Unterschiede zwischen Grenzregionen sollten durch allgemeine Fördermaßnahmen und Kooperationsprogramme zwischen Regionen benachbarter Mitgliedstaaten behoben werden. Der Schwerpunkt der Förderung von Grenzregionen sollte dabei auf Programmen zur aktiven Unterstützung der regionalen Zusammenarbeit und den daraus entstehenden Synergieeffekten liegen, nicht aber auf reaktiven Maßnahmen zur Verhinderung der Standortverlagerung von Unternehmen. Die Kommission erinnert in diesem Zusammenhang an ihre Vorschläge zur europäischen territorialen Zusammenarbeit.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010794/12
to the Commission
Kerstin Westphal (S&D)
(28 November 2012)

Subject: Regional assistance from 2014

The Commission is currently working on restructuring regional assistance starting from 2014. There are likely to be changes in the areas assisted, with some regions possibly being omitted from funding. A 'special area ceiling' for those regions which might be excluded from funding and which border on areas eligible for maximum support in neighbouring Member States is under discussion. The reason given for this is the fear that companies might relocate to an area eligible for maximum support a few kilometres away so that they can receive funding.

1. Does the Commission share the view that an increasing disparity in assistance between neighbouring regions poses a problem for the economic development of the region which is no longer eligible for funding?

2. What is the Commission's opinion of ideas such as the 'special area ceiling', which aims to prevent a growing disparity in assistance between border regions where one of the regions is in danger of being excluded from funding and the other is an area eligible for maximum support?

3. What other possible ways can the Commission propose of preventing a growing disparity between areas eligible for maximum support and areas threatened with exclusion from funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

1. Under the Guidelines on regional aid for 2007-2013, the Commission has already established specific rules designed to mitigate the possible negative effects that could result from local relocations of activities between border regions. The less disadvantaged border regions have preferential access to the status of assisted areas, and the possible differential in aid intensities is limited. In the 2007-2013 period, nine Member States have decided to use this possibility. In its ongoing review of the Guidelines, the Commission envisages to maintain this approach.

2. The overall population ceilings to be allocated to Member States will allow them to include border regions on their lists of eligible regions. It is the responsibility of the Member State to decide which of its regions should be included on that list. The Commission does not intend to prejudge the internal decision-making process of Member States, by ringfencing the eligibility of border regions to the disadvantage of other regions that in the light of their socioeconomic situation might be in more need of regional aid.

3. The Commission welcomes all constructive proposals on how the difficulties of border regions may be addressed. Disparities between border regions should be tackled through general support measures and cooperation programmes between regions in neighbouring Member States. The main focus of the support to border regions should lie on active support programmes of regional cooperation and on the resulting synergies, and not on reactive measures preventing the local migration of companies. The Commission recalls in this context its proposals regarding European Territorial Cooperation.

(Latviešu valodas versija)

Jautājums, uz kuru jāatbild rakstiski, P-010795/12
Komisijai
Inese Vaidere (PPE)
(2012. gada 29. novembris)

Temats: Komisijas priekšsēdētāja Žozē Manuela Barrozu gaidāmā vizīte Armēnijā

Saistībā ar priekšsēdētāja Barrozu gaidāmo vizīti Armēnijā no 30. novembra līdz 1. decembrim ir šādi jautājumi.

1. Vai Komisija ir apsvērusi to, ka tās priekšsēdētāja vizīte Armēnijā tikai trīs mēnešus pirms prezidenta vēlēšanām minētajā valstī varētu tikt plaši interpretēta kā atbalsts pašreizējam Armēnijas prezidentam?

2. Vai Ž. M. Barrozu apspriedīs Armēnijas valdības pienākumu atbrīvot Kalnu Karabahu un tos septiņus apkārtējos Azerbaidžānas reģionus, kurus Armēnija ir okupējusi pēdējos 20 gadus, un nodrošināt, ka vairāk nekā 700 000 Azerbaidžānas iekšzemē pārvietotu personu var atgriezties savās mājās un ka tiek ievērotas viņu tiesības? Vai priekšsēdētājs ir paredzējis apspriest jautājumu par Azerbaidžānas tiesībām uz teritoriālo integritāti, kā paredzēts starptautiskajos tiesību aktos un Eiropas Parlamenta rezolūcijās?

3. Vai Komisijas priekšsēdētājs ir paredzējis apmeklēt Azerbaidžānu īsi pirms 2013. gada oktobrī paredzētajām prezidenta vēlēšanām?

4. Vai priekšsēdētājs ir paredzējis īsumā informēt Eiropas Parlamenta Ārlietu komiteju par savas vizītes Armēnijā rezultātiem?

Atbildi Komisijas vārdā sniedza Augstā pārstāve/Komisijas priekšsēdētāja vietniece Ketrina Eštone
(2013. gada 1. februāris)

1. Priekšsēdētāja Barrozu vizīte Moldovā un Armēnijā iekļāvās virknē plānotu vizīšu Austrumu partnerības valstīs. Vizītes laikā Armēnijā vēl nebija sākusies oficiālā prezidenta vēlēšanu kampaņa. ES vadošās amatpersonas un ierēdņi regulāri tiekas ar partnervalstu amatpersonām, opozīcijas partijām un pilsonisko sabiedrību, tādējādi paužot ES atbalstu atvērtai un iekļaujošai politiskajai sistēmai partnervalstīs; šāda prakse nenozīmē, ka tiek sniegts atbalsts kādam noteiktam politiskajam spēkam. Vizītes laikā priekšsēdētājs Barrozu uzrunāja pilsonisko sabiedrību un tikās ar visām politiskajām partijām, kuras ir pārstāvētas Armēnijas Nacionālajā asamblejā, tostarp ar opozīciju. Turklāt dažas dienas pēc priekšsēdētāja Barrozu vizītes Erevānā Briselē notika komisāra Files īpaša tikšanās ar opozīcijas partiju "Pārtikusi Armēnija" (Prosperous Armenia).

2. ES pilnībā atbalsta un apstiprina EDSO[1] Minskas grupas darbību, tostarp Madrides principus. *Status quo* nav pieņemams vairāku, jo īpaši humānu, iemeslu dēļ. ES ir gatava veicināt konflikta risināšanu Minskas grupas ietvaros, veicot uzticības veicināšanas pasākumus, ja puses to vēlas.

3. Priekšsēdētājs Barrozu Azerbaidžānu apmeklēja 2011. gada janvārī un Briselē un citos starptautiskos pasākumos tikās ar prezidentu Alijevu. 2013. gadā viņiem abiem būs iespēja satikties Viļņā, kur notiks Austrumu partnerības augstākā līmeņa sanāksme. 2012. gadā notika vairākas citas augsta līmeņa vizītes Azerbaidžānā.

4. Komisija vēlas Parlamentu pienācīgi informēt par ES ārējo darbību, izmantojot parastos informācijas un konsultāciju mehānismus. Arī priekšsēdētāja birojs ir gatavs sniegt papildu informāciju, ja cienījamā Parlamenta deputāte to vēlas.

([1]) EDSO = Eiropas Drošības un sadarbības organizācija.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010795/12
to the Commission
Inese Vaidere (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Upcoming visit by Commission President José Manuel Barroso to Armenia

In view of the upcoming visit by President Barroso to Armenia from 30 November to 1 December:

1. Has the Commission considered that the Commission President's visit to Armenia only three months before the presidential elections in that country could be widely interpreted as support for the current President of Armenia?

2. Will Mr Barroso address the Armenian government's responsibility to liberate Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven surrounding regions of Azerbaijan that Armenia has been occupying for the last 20 years and to ensure that the more than 700 000 Azerbaijani IDPs can return home and that their rights are respected? Is the President planning to address the question of Azerbaijan's right to territorial integrity, as stated in international law and European Parliament resolutions?

3. Is the Commission President planning a visit to Azerbaijan shortly before the presidential elections scheduled for October 2013?

4. Does the President intend to brief the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs on the results of his visit to Armenia?

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

1. The visit by President Barroso to Moldova and Armenia took place as part of a planned series of visits to the countries of the Eastern Partnership. The official presidential campaign in Armenia had not started at the moment of the visit. EU leaders and officials meet on a regular basis with government officials, opposition parties and civil society as part of the EU's support for an open and inclusive political framework in the partner countries — this does not imply support for any political force. During his visit, President Barroso made a speech to civil society and met all political parties represented in the National Assembly of Armenia, including opposition. Moreover, Commissioner Füle had a dedicated meeting in Brussels with opposition Prosperous Armenia Party a few days after President Barroso's visit to Yerevan.

2. The EU fully supports and endorses the activity of the OSCE ([1]) Minsk Group, including the Madrid principles. The status quo is unacceptable for a number of reasons, in particular humanitarian ones. The EU stands ready to contribute to the resolution of the conflict, in the framework of the Minsk group, through confidence building measures, should the parties so wish.

3. President Barroso visited Azerbaijan in January 2011 and and has met President Alyev in Brussels and in other international events. In 2013 they will have the occasion to meet in the famework of the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius. A number of other high-level visits to Azerbaijan have taken place during 2012.

4. It is the Commission's wish to keep Parliament duly informed about the external activities of the EU, through the regular mechanisms of information and consultation. The President's Cabinet also stands ready to provide additional information should the Honourable Member so wish.

([1]) OSCE = Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010796/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE) y Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Huracán Sandy en Cuba

El huracán Sandy, tras su paso por Cuba, ha dejado casi 3 millones de personas afectadas, de los cuales 11 han resultado muertas, y unas pérdidas de alrededor de 70 millones de euros, aunque se cree van a aumentar cuando acaben de contabilizarse las pérdidas en los sectores del azúcar, el turismo y la construcción.

Las provincias más afectadas han sido Santiago de Cuba, Holguín y Guantánamo. Miles de personas han sido desplazadas de sus hogares, hasta 73 000 personas han debido refugiarse en casa de vecinos y amigos durante el paso del huracán. Además, centenares de hectáreas destinadas a cultivos y cosechas se han visto anegadas por las fuertes lluvias, despertando el temor a la escasez de alimentos y a la transmisión de enfermedades. Puede considerarse al huracán Sandy como el más devastador de los últimos 50 años.

La Vicepresidenta/Alta representante, Sra. Ashton, ha expresado sus condolencias y dijo que *«la Unión Europea está preparada para ofrecer apoyo a los esfuerzos de reconstrucción»* (http://www.europapress.es/latam/sociedad/noticia-clima-ue-ofrece-apoyo-paises-caribe-muestra-solidaridad-muerte-devastacion-huracan-sandy-20121028133706.html). A su vez, la Unión Europea cuenta, desde hace poco, con una embajada en Cuba.

La UE tiene previsto contribuir con 2 millones de euros a la reconstrucción de Cuba vía ECHO. Sin embargo, la ONU ha evaluado que la necesidad de reconstrucción es de unos 50 millones de dólares.

Después de este anuncio, ¿de qué manera se está involucrando la UE en la reconstrucción de Cuba? ¿Coordina su actuación con el apoyo de Naciones Unidas y la Cruz Roja Internacional? ¿Cuál es el presupuesto de emergencia total destinado a la ayuda a la reconstrucción de Cuba, incluyendo la contribución de ECHO? ¿Lo considera suficiente para hacer frente a los daños causados por Sandy? Vista la consideración de la ONU, ¿por qué no aumenta su contribución? ¿Qué programas ha propuesto o propondrá la Comisión para la distribución de comida, la reconstrucción de casas afectadas, escuelas y hospitales? ¿Cómo tiene pensado organizarse?

Respuesta de la Sra. Georgieva en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de febrero de 2013)

El huracán Sandy ha tenido un impacto directo en la región del Caribe, y, en particular, en Haití y Cuba, al haber provocado graves daños en el sector agrícola, los medios de subsistencia, los refugios y la infraestructura básica.

La Comisión reaccionó con rapidez a las acuciantes necesidades humanitarias destinando inmediatamente dos millones de euros para hacer frente a la creciente inseguridad alimentaria, así como a las necesidades urgentes de refugio, agua y saneamiento en Cuba.

Habida cuenta de la gravedad de la situación y tras una nueva evaluación de las necesidades, se utilizaron dos millones de euros más de la reserva para ayudas de emergencia, con lo que el total de la contribución de la UE a la intervención de emergencia en Cuba ascendió a cuatro millones de euros.

La Comisión ha coordinado sus esfuerzos con el sistema de las Naciones Unidas y la Cruz Roja cubana desde el mismo comienzo de la crisis. Un alto porcentaje de los fondos se canalizará a través del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD), en coordinación con el Programa de las Naciones Unidas para los Asentamientos Humanos y el Fondo de las Naciones Unidas para la Infancia (Unicef). También se financiarán actuaciones a través de la Cruz Roja noruega, en colaboración con la Cruz Roja española y la alemana.

Puede encontrarse más información en la página web de la Comisión en la dirección siguiente: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/decisions/2012/HIPs/cuba_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010796/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE), Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE) and Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Hurricane Sandy in Cuba

Hurricane Sandy's landfall in Cuba has affected almost 3 million people, leaving 11 people dead. It has led to losses of around EUR 70 million, although it is believed that this figure will increase once losses in the sugar, tourism and construction industries are taken into account.

The worst affected provinces have been Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Guantánamo. Thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes and up to 73 000 people have had to take refuge in neighbours' and friends' homes in the wake of the hurricane. In addition, hundreds of hectares devoted to crops have been flooded by heavy rains, raising fears of food shortages and disease transmission. Sandy can be considered the most devastating hurricane of the last 50 years.

The Vice-President/High Representative Baroness Ashton has expressed her condolences and said that 'the European Union stands ready to provide support in the recovery efforts'

(http://www.europapress.es/latam/sociedad/noticia-clima-ue-ofrece-apoyo-paises-caribe-muestra-solidaridad-muerte-devastacion-huracan-sandy-20121028133706.html).

In turn, the European Union has recently established an embassy in Cuba.

The EU plans to contribute EUR 2 million to the recovery efforts in Cuba via the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). However, the UN has evaluated the recovery requirements at around USD 50 million.

Following this announcement, how is the EU getting involved in the recovery efforts in Cuba? Is it coordinating its activities with aid from the United Nations and the International Red Cross? What is the total emergency aid budget for the recovery efforts in Cuba, including the ECHO contribution? Is it enough to address the damage caused by Sandy? Given the UN's evaluation, why does the EU not increase its contribution? What programmes has the Commission proposed or will it propose to distribute food and to rebuild damaged homes, schools and hospitals? How will it organise them?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

Hurricane Sandy had a direct impact on the Caribbean region, and in particular on Haiti and Cuba, causing significant damage to the agricultural sector and livelihoods, shelters and basic infrastructure.

The Commission reacted swiftly to the acute humanitarian needs by immediately releasing EUR 2 million to respond to growing food insecurity, shelter, water and sanitation emergency needs in Cuba.

Considering the severity of the situation, and after further needs assessment, an additional EUR 2 million were made available from the Emergency Aid Reserve bringing the total of the EU contribution to the emergency response in Cuba to EUR 4 million.

The Commission has coordinated its efforts with the United Nations (UN) system and the Red Cross movement in Cuba from the early beginning of the crisis. A substantial share of the funds will be channelled through the UN Development Programme (UNDP), working in coordination with UN Habitat and the UN Children's Fund (Unicef). Actions will also be financed through Norwegian Red Cross, working in cooperation with the German and Spanish Red Cross Societies.

Further information can be found on the Commission's website at the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/decisions/2012/HIPs/cuba_en.pdf.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010797/12
al Consejo
Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Seguridad marítima en el Golfo de Guinea

Los asaltos a barcos pesqueros y mercantes se han reducido considerablemente en el último año. El efecto disuasorio de la misión Atalanta de la UE con la presencia de navíos de guerra en la zona y la misión civil EUCAP NESTOR, junto con la presencia a bordo de los barcos pesqueros y mercantes de agentes armados está dando resultados.

Si por un lado disminuye la actividad en esa zona, por el otro los actos de piratería se disparan en el Golfo de Guinea. El informe de la Oficina Marítima Internacional alerta del aumento de asaltos a petroleros, mercantes y pesqueros, muchos de ellos de bandera europea, como el ocurrido a finales de agosto de 2012 con el petrolero de bandera griega *Energy Centurion*, que fue asaltado y parte de cuya carga fue robada por piratas frente a las costas de Togo.

— ¿Qué medidas se plantea el Consejo para defender los intereses europeos en la zona?

— ¿Contempla el Consejo la creación de una fuerza naval al estilo de la misión Atalanta o civil como la EUCAP NESTOR para defender a los barcos pesqueros, mercantes y petroleros europeos que navegan por esas aguas?

Respuesta
(25 de febrero de 2013)

El Consejo está al corriente de las cuestiones planteadas por Su Señoría y sigue de cerca la situación. Sin embargo, todavía no se plantea dar una respuesta al estilo de la misión Atalanta.

De momento el Consejo se ha comprometido a apoyar una estrategia regional en el Golfo de Guinea por parte de la Comunidad Europea de los Estados de África Central, la Comunidad Europea de los Estados de África Occidental y la Comisión del Golfo de Guinea bajo los auspicios de la Unión Africana, que será objeto de debate en marzo de 2013 en Cotonú.

Dicha estrategia, que se centrará en la lucha contra la piratería y el tráfico y la pesca ilegales, deberá estar lista para su aprobación por los Jefes de Estado de la región el próximo mes de abril en Yaundé.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010797/12
to the Council
Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Safety at sea in the Gulf of Guinea

The number of attacks on fishing boats and merchant vessels has fallen drastically over the past year. The deterrent posed by the EU's Atalanta operation, with warships in the area, the civilian EUCAP NESTOR mission and the presence of armed guards on board fishing and merchant vessels is having an effect.

But although there is less activity in that area, piracy is moving out into the Gulf of Guinea. A report by the International Maritime Bureau warns of increasing numbers of attacks on oil tankers, merchant vessels and fishing boats, many flying European flags. One such attack occurred off the coast of Togo in late August 2012, when pirates stole part of the cargo from the Greek-registered oil tanker *Energy Centurion*.

— What steps does the Council intend to take to defend European interests in the area?

— Is the Council considering setting up a naval force along the lines of the Atalanta operation, or a civilian mission like EUCAP NESTOR, to protect European fishing boats, merchant vessels and oil tankers sailing in these waters?

Reply
(25 February 2013)

The Council is aware of the issues raised by the Honourable Member and is monitoring closely the situation but does not consider it warrants an Atalanta style response yet.

At present the Council is committed to supporting a regional strategy on the Gulf of Guinea by the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, under the auspices of the African Union, which is to be discussed in Cotonou in March 2013.

The strategy will focus on tackling piracy as well as trafficking and illegal fishing, and should be ready for approval by regional heads of state in Yaoundé next April.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010798/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Política pesquera común

Muchos pescadores están viviendo una situación dramática, debido a que en su día constituyeron hipotecas para la compra de nuevas embarcaciones, tal como se fomentaba en Europa, también por parte de los gobiernos europeos. Como consecuencia, entre otros muchos factores, de la reducción de las capturas, la contaminación en la zona, el aumento del precio de los carburantes y la falta de ayudas al sector, la actividad pesquera se ha convertido en antieconómica, y los pescadores ni siquiera pueden hacer frente a las hipotecas que en su día constituyeron, con lo que los bancos amenazan gravemente su patrimonio. Habida cuenta de que la pesca artesanal tradicional está sólidamente enraizada en la vida de muchos pueblos y ciudades no solo de Cataluña, sino de España y de Europa, nos dirigimos a las instituciones europeas en búsqueda de una solución a este acuciante problema y con miras a conocer qué actuaciones están previstas por la Unión para garantizar la supervivencia de este preciado e histórico sector de la actividad económica.

El 80 % del pescado que se consume en Cataluña (España) proviene del extranjero y no cumple los requisitos legales que se exigen en la Unión Europea.

¿Qué medidas concretas se pueden implementar desde la Unión Europea para hacer cumplir la normativa europea en relación con el pescado que proviene de fuera de la Unión, así como para promocionar el pescado local europeo?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de febrero de 2013)

La nueva propuesta de política pesquera común (PPC) se marca como objetivo sentar las bases de unas pesquerías sostenibles que respeten el ecosistema, proporcionen a los ciudadanos europeos productos de la pesca saludables y de alta calidad y contribuyan a la prosperidad de las comunidades costeras. Situar la pesca en niveles capaces de producir rendimientos máximos sostenibles en toda Europa y eliminar la despilfarradora práctica de los descartes mejorará el rendimiento de las flotas de la Unión.

La Comisión es consciente de las características específicas de la pesca artesanal, de la vulnerabilidad de estas empresas y de los vínculos particulares con las comunidades costeras. Al asignar las posibilidades de pesca, los Estados miembros deben tener en cuenta estas especificidades.

La Comisión propone que el futuro Fondo Europeo Marítimo y de Pesca ofrezca ayuda a las flotas artesanales, en particular a través de medidas de interés específico para las pequeñas empresas, y mayores porcentajes de subvención. En lo que respecta a la comercialización de los productos, la futura política de mercado prevé disposiciones en materia de etiquetado que otorgan ventaja competitiva a la pesca artesanal, y contempla organizaciones basadas en iniciativas de interés común, que también pueden beneficiar a la pesca costera artesanal.

En lo que atañe a la conformidad de los productos importados con la normativa de la UE, además de la normativa aduanera y la normativa de la UE en materia de higiene alimentaria, existen requisitos específicos de trazabilidad de los productos de la pesca en virtud de la legislación alimentaria general, el control de la política pesquera común y los reglamentos en materia de pesca ilegal, no declarada, no reglamentada. Incumbe, en primer lugar, a los Estados miembros aplicar y hacer cumplir estas normas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010798/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Common Fisheries Policy

Numerous fishermen who previously took out mortgages to purchase new fishing boats, having been encouraged to do so by the EU and the Member State governments, now find themselves in extremely serious difficulties. As a result of numerous other factors such as reduced catches, local pollution, rising fuel prices and lack of support for the sector, fishing has become uneconomical, and fishermen are now unable even to pay their mortgages, leaving their assets at serious risk of repossession by the banks. Given that traditional, small-scale fishing has solid roots in the lives of many towns and cities, not only in Catalonia, but throughout Spain and Europe, we are now turning to the European institutions for a solution to this pressing problem. We would also like to know what action is being envisaged by the EU to ensure the survival of this valuable and traditional economic sector.

80% of the fish consumed in Catalonia (Spain) comes from overseas and does not meet EU legal requirements.

What specific measures can the European Union take to ensure that fish from outside the EU complies with EU regulations and to promote local European fish?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The proposed new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) aims to deliver the building blocks for sustainable fisheries that respects the ecosystem, provides high-quality, healthy fish products for European citizens and thriving coastal communities. Bringing fisheries to levels that are capable of producing maximum sustainable yields throughout Europe, and doing away with the wasteful practice of discarding will improve the Union's fleets' performance.

The Commission is aware of the specific characteristics of small-scale fisheries, the vulnerability of these enterprises and the particular links to coastal communities. When allocating fishing opportunities Member States should take account of these particularities.

The Commission proposes that the future European Maritime Fisheries Fund provides support for small-scale fleets, in particular through measures that are of specific interest to small-scale enterprises, and with higher subsidy rates. Regarding the marketing of products, the future market policy envisages labelling provisions that give competitive advantage to small-scale fisheries, and it envisages organisations based on initiatives of common interest, which may also benefit small-scale coastal fisheries.

Concerning compliance of imported products with EU legislation, in addition to the customs rules and the EU food hygiene legislation, specific traceability requirements exist for fishery products under the general food law and the Common fisheries policies control and IUU Regulations. It is primarily for Member States to implement and enforce these rules.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010799/12
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Ropa tóxica

Greenpeace está realizando una campaña «Detox» donde reclama a varias empresas europeas, entre ellas Inditex, que acepte un compromiso para eliminar el uso y vertido de sustancias químicas peligrosas en todo su proceso productivo para el año 2020. El informe Puntadas Tòxicas analiza 141 prendas de ropa de 20 marcas de moda internacionales diferentes y muestra que las prendas de Zara contienen sustancias químicas que, tras verterse al agua, se transforman en otras que pueden provocar alteraciones en el sistema hormonal o, incluso, causar cáncer. Inditex contribuye así a la contaminación del agua tanto en los países donde produce como en los que vende. El desafío Detox comenzó en 2011 y siete empresas (Nike, Adidas, Puma y Lining, H&M, C&A y Mark & Spencer) ya se han comprometido a «descontaminar» su cadena de suministro para 2020. La UE debe adoptar un compromiso político de vertido cero de cualquier sustancia química peligrosa en el plazo de una generación, sobre la base del principio de precaución e incluir un enfoque preventivo que evite la producción, el uso y, por lo tanto, la exposición a sustancias químicas peligrosas.

¿Conoce la Comisión la denuncia que está llevando a cabo Greenpeace? ¿Tiene estimado el coste social y medioambiental de los productos de dichas marcas en Europa? Dado el mercado único europeo, ¿qué medidas adoptará para garantizar que no entran a Europa productos contaminantes? Considerando el principio de responsabilidad social corporativa de las empresas multinacionales europeas, ¿qué sanciones aplicará la Comisión a estas empresas? ¿Cómo piensan recompensar las multinacionales europeas a los países del sur donde contaminaron sus aguas?

¿Considera necesario una modificación del Reglamento relativo al establecimiento de un registro europeo de emisiones y transferencias de contaminantes y por el que se modifican las Directivas 91/689/CEE y 96/61/CE del Consejo para que este sea más estricto con los productos mencionados?

¿Qué otros incentivos dará a la industria para demostrar que las sustancias químicas tóxicas no tienen lugar en Europa y que la innovación debe realizarse hacia prácticas sostenibles medioambientalmente?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(29 de enero de 2013)

La Comisión está al corriente de la campaña a que se refiere Su Señoría. No dispone, sin embargo, de información detallada sobre el carácter, los niveles o los costes sociales y medioambientales estimados de las sustancias químicas encontradas en prendas en el mercado de la UE.

La legislación de la UE combina varios enfoques para limitar la sustancias peligrosas en los textiles. En virtud del Reglamento REACH ([1]), se han adoptado a escala de la UE diversas restricciones, como la que afecta a la utilización de nonilfenol en los procesos de tratamiento de textiles y artículos de cuero. El nonilfenol figura en la Directiva Marco del Agua ([2]) en la lista de sustancias peligrosas prioritatias cuyas emisiones al medio acuático han de reducirse progresivamente para cumplir la norma de calidad medioambiental establecida y, en último término, acabar eliminándolas completamente.

El control de las importaciones de productos en Europa compete a las autoridades aduanera de los Estados miembros, que pueden paralizar temporalmente las importaciones y, en caso de riesgo, adoptar medidas para impedir la importación de productos peligrosos no alimentarios y notificarlo a la UE a través del sistema RAPEX (sistema de de alerta rápida para ese tipo de productos) ([3]). La imposición de sanciones a las empresas que incumplen la normativa también compete a los Estados miembros.

([1]) Reglamento (CE) n° 1907/2006 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 18 de diciembre de 2006, relativo al registro, la evaluación, la autorización y la restricción de las sustancias y preparados químicos (DO L 396 de 30.12.2006, p. 1).
([2]) Directiva 2000/60/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de octubre de 2000, por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000, p. 1).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm

El registro europeo de emisiones y transferencias de contaminantes recoge las emisiones de diversas sustancias al medio acuático, entre las que figuran las sustancias prioritarias enumeradas en la Directiva Marco del Agua. La Directiva relativa a la prevención y al control integrados de la contaminación ([4]) fija valores límite de emisión para las sustancias prioritarias, que se revisan periódicamente. Las «mejores técnicas disponibles» para la producción textil publicadas en 2003 en virtud de esa Directiva se revisarán en 2014.

La Comisión no sabe de la existencia de ningún plan de compensación en el que participen las multinacionales europeas.

([4]) Directiva 96/61/CE del Consejo, de 24 de septiembre de 1996, relativa a la prevención y al control integrados de la contaminación (DO L 257 de 10.10.1996, p. 26), derogada por la Directiva 2008/1/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 15 de enero de 2008, relativa a la prevención y al control integrados de la contaminación (DO L 24 de 29.1.2008, p. 8).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010799/12
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Toxic clothes

Greenpeace's 'Detox' campaign calls on a number of European companies — including Inditex, the owner of the Zara brand — to make a commitment to ensure that, by 2020, no hazardous chemicals are used or discharged at any stage in the manufacturing process. Some 141 items of clothing representing 20 different international fashion brands were tested for the 'Toxic Threads' report, which found that items from Zara contained chemicals which, once released into water, broke down into other substances that could cause hormonal changes or even cancer. Inditex is therefore contributing to water pollution in the countries in which it manufactures clothes and the countries in which it sells them. The Detox campaign began in 2011. Seven companies (Nike, Adidas, Puma, Li Ning, H&M, C&A and Marks and Spencer) have already promised to 'detox' their supply chains by 2020. The EU ought to make a political commitment to zero discharge of hazardous chemicals within a generation, on the basis of the precautionary principle. This should include a preventive approach to prevent the production or use of, or exposure to, hazardous chemicals.

Is the Commission aware of the concerns being expressed by Greenpeace? Does it have an estimate of the social and environmental cost of products from these brands in Europe? Given that there is a single market in the EU, what steps will it take to ensure that polluting products do not enter Europe? Given that European multinationals are subject to the principle of corporate social responsibility, what penalties will the Commission impose on them? How are Europe's multinationals intending to compensate the countries in the southern hemisphere whose waters they have polluted?

Is there a need to amend Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and amending Council Directives 91/689/EEC and 96/61/EC with a view to tightening the restrictions on the products concerned?

What other incentives will it give to the industry to drive home the message that toxic chemicals are unwelcome in Europe and that innovation needs to be geared towards the use of environmentally sustainable practices?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(29 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of the campaign the Honourable Member refers to. It has however no detailed information about the nature, levels or estimated social and environmental costs of chemicals found in textiles on the EU market.

EU legislation includes several approaches to limiting dangerous substances in textiles. Some restrictions have been adopted at EU level under the REACH Regulation ([1]) as in relation to the use of nonylphenol in the processing of textiles and leather articles. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) ([2]) lists nonylphenol as a priority hazardous substance whose emissions to the aquatic environment have to be progressively reduced to meet the established environmental quality standard, with the aim of eventually phasing them out completely.

Controlling the import of products into Europe is the responsibility of Member States' customs authorities. They can temporarily halt imports and, in cases of risk, take measures to prevent the import and notify the EU rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products RAPEX ([3]). Member States are also responsible for deciding on penalties for non-compliant companies.

The European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register records the emissions to water of several substances including the priority substances under the WFD. The IPPC Directive ([4]) sets emission limit values for priority substances which are regularly reviewed. The 'Best Available Techniques' for the production of textiles published under this directive in 2003 will be reviewed in 2014.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals; OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, p. 1.
([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy; OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/index_en.htm
([4]) Council Directive 96/61/EC of 24 September 1996 concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (OJ L 257, 10.10.1996, p. 26.), repealed by Directive 2008/1/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008 concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (OJ L 24, 29.1.2008, p. 8.).

The Commission is not aware of any relevant compensation plans involving European multinationals.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-010801/12
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(29. november 2012)

Om: Minimumsstandarder for bagagehåndtering i lufthavne

I en tilfredsundersøgelse blandt flypassagerer, som omtaltes i Danmarks Radio (dr.dk) den 27. november 2012, fremgår det, at Københavns Lufthavn ligger meget dårligt i vurderingen af ventetid på bagage.

Ifølge Københavns Lufthavn, hvilket også fremgår af ovennævnte artikel, står EU-regler i vejen for, at lufthavnene kan sætte konkrete mål for tid på bagagehåndteringen. Lufthavnen fortolker reglerne således, at lufthavnen ikke selv må sætte tidskrav, fordi det ikke er private firmaer, der udfører bagagehåndteringen.

På denne baggrund jeg vil gerne spørge om følgende:

— Det bør være muligt for flyselskaber som groundhandlingagenter at sætte maksimumstid på håndteringen, så længe dette krav gælder for alle aktører. Findes der i dette lys EU-regler og europæisk lovgivning, der forhindrer europæiske lufthavne i at stille krav til alle aktører i den pågældende lufthavn?

— Deler Kommissionen Københavns Lufthavns udlægning og fortolkning af reglerne om bagagehåndtering i europæiske lufthavne — dvs. at EU-regler forhindrer Københavns Lufthavn i at stille konkrete maksimumskrav til ventetiden på flybagage?

— Mener Kommissionen, at det bør være muligt for lufthavne at fastsætte og garantere passagerer en fastsat maksimumsventetid for bagagehåndtering, og i så fald vil Kommissionen aktivt arbejde for dette?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Siim Kallas
(31. januar 2013)

Det gældende direktiv fra 1996 om ground handling i EU's lufthavne ([1]), som også gælder for bagagehåndtering, indeholder ingen specifikke tidskrav til bagagehåndteringen. Direktivet fastsætter derimod for 11 kategorier af ground handling-ydelser de betingelser, som en ground handler skal opfylde for at få adgang til markedet for ground handling i EU's lufthavne.

Det er som regel luftfartsselskaberne og deres ground handlere, der i fællesskab fastlægger betingelserne for bagagehåndteringen i specifikke handelskontrakter, som er baseret på en modelkontrakt udarbejdet af Den Internationale Luftfartssammenslutning (IATA's standard ground handling-kontrakt). Lufthavnene og lufthavnssammenslutningerne arbejder på at fastlægge præstationsindikatorer for ventetider, især ventetiderne ved bagageudleveringen.

Den 1. december 2011 forelagde Kommissionen et forslag til en ny forordning om ground handling-ydelser, som i øjeblikket er under behandling i Europa-Parlamentet og Rådet ([2]). Denne forordning fastsætter udtrykkeligt minimumskvalitetsstandarder, som leverandører af ground handling-ydelser eller egen-handling-brugere skal overholde (artikel 32). Den indeholder desuden krav om, at lufthavnens forvaltningsorgan varetager en koordinerende rolle. Formålet med forslaget er at forbedre kvaliteten af ground handling-ydelserne i EU's lufthavne — og dermed også bagagehåndteringen — og gøre dem mere effektive.

Kommissionen agter fortsat at arbejde tæt sammen med Europa-Parlamentet og Rådet om at stramme lovgivningen op, navnlig med henblik på at afkorte ventetiderne ved bagageudleveringen.

([1]) Rådets direktiv 96/67/EF af 15. oktober 1996 om adgang til ground handling-markedet i Fællesskabets lufthavne: http://eurlex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=31996L0067&model=guichett.

([2]) Forslag til Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning om groundhandling-ydelser i EU's lufthavne og om ophævelse af Rådets direktiv 96/67/EF ((KOM)2011)0824 endelig — 2011/0397(COD)): http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011PC0824:EN:NOT.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010801/12
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Minimum standards for baggage handling at airports

According to an air passenger satisfaction survey mentioned on Danish radio (dr.dk) on 27 November 2012, Copenhagen airport fares very poorly in the assessment of baggage waiting time.

According to the Copenhagen airport authorities — and this point was also made in the aforementioned article — EU rules stand in the way of airports setting specific targets for baggage handling time. The airport interprets the rules to mean that it may not set time requirements itself because it is not private companies that handle the baggage.

— It should be possible for airlines as ground handling agents to indicate maximum times for baggage handling, as long as this requirement applies to all operators. In this respect, are there EU rules and European legislation to prevent European airports imposing requirements on all operators at an airport?

— Does the Commission agree with the Copenhagen airport authority's interpretation of the rules on baggage handling at European airports — i.e. that EU rules prevent Copenhagen airport setting specific maximum requirements for baggage waiting times?

— Does the Commission consider that it should be possible for airports to establish and guarantee passengers a fixed maximum waiting time for baggage handling and, if so, will the Commission actively pursue such efforts?

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

The current Directive of 1996 on ground handling services at EU airports ([1]), that encompass the baggage handling category, does not specifically regulate baggage handling times. It regulates the conditions under which ground handlers can access markets at EU airports for 11 categories of services.

The conditions on how baggage handling is operated are generally agreed by airlines and their ground handlers in specific commercial contracts, based on an industry model contract developed by the International Air Transport Association ('IATA Standard Ground Handling Agreement'). Airports and airports associations are developing key performance indicators in relation to waiting times, notably on baggage waiting times.

The European Commission has tabled a proposal for a new Regulation on ground handling services on 1st December 2011 which is currently examined by the European Parliament and the Council. ([2]) It explicitly provides for the setting of minimum quality standards for the performance of ground handling services to be met by all suppliers of ground handling services and self-handling airport users (see Article 32) and a role of 'ground coordinator' for airport managers. The aim is to improve the quality and efficiency of ground handling services at EU airports, including baggage handling services.

The European Commission is committed to work with the European Parliament and the Council in order to upgrade the current legislative framework, notably in relation to improved baggage handling time.

([1]) Council Directive 96/67/EC of 15 October 1996 on access to the ground handling market at Community airports: http://eurlex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=31996L0067&model=guichett.

([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on ground handling services at Union airports and repealing Council Directive 96/67/EC. COM/2011/0824 final — 2011/0397 (COD) , available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52011PC0824:EN:NOT.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010802/12
an die Kommission
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D), Evelyn Regner (S&D) und Birgit Sippel (S&D)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Almax-Schaufensterpuppen mit Gesichtserkennung in Europa

Die italienische Firma Almax vertreibt Schaufensterpuppen mit einer Software zur Gesichtserkennung. Bei den sogenannten „EyeSee-Mannequins" der Herstellerfirma Almax sind in den Puppenaugen Videokameras mit einer Software zur Gesichtserkennung installiert, welche wesentliche persönliche Merkmale wie Geschlecht, Herkunft und Alter der Kundinnen und Kunden feststellen können. Die Software für die Schaufensterpuppen wurde zusammen mit der Polytechnik-Universität in Mailand entwickelt. Laut Herstellerangaben wurden die Puppen auch bereits in mehreren europäischen Ländern vertrieben.

1. Ist die Kommission sich dieser Vorgehensweise mancher Modeketten bewusst und hat sie jene Unternehmen identifiziert, die Schaufensterpuppen mit Gesichtserkennungssoftware der italienischen Herstellerfirma Almax einsetzen?

2. Hat sich die Kommission mit den Datenschutzbehörden in den Mitgliedstaaten in Verbindung gesetzt, um festzulegen, welche Maßnahmen ergriffen werden sollen, und um festzustellen, inwieweit möglicherweise gegen die Datenschutzvorschriften in den jeweiligen Ländern verstoßen wurde? Wenn nicht, wird sie das tun?

3. Wird die Kommission Maßnahmen ergreifen, um die Datenschutzbehörden der Mitgliedstaaten bei der eingehenden Untersuchung dieser Angelegenheit zu unterstützen und dafür zu sorgen, dass die europäischen Datenschutzvorschriften durchgesetzt und die europäischen BürgerInnen geschützt werden?

4. Inwiefern ist der Einsatz von solchen Schaufensterpuppen — nach Einschätzung der Kommission — zulässig und mit den derzeit geltenden europäischen Datenschutzbestimmungen vereinbar?

5. Wie würde sich die Situation mit den neuen europäischen Datenschutzregeln (Datenschutzgrundverordnung) ändern?

6. Welche Schritte wird die Kommission einleiten, wenn sich herausstellen sollte, dass durch die Verwendung der „EyeSee-Mannequins" gegen die europäischen Datenschutzvorschriften verstoßen wurde?

7. Wie bewertet die Kommission diese Anwendung im Lichte des Vertrags von Lissabon und der Charta der Grundrechte?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(6. Februar 2013)

Gesichtserkennung ist mit der Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten, insbesondere biometrischer Daten, verbunden. Gemäß der Artikel-29-Datenschutzgruppe kann sich die Verarbeitung biometrischer Daten „erheblich auf die Privatsphäre und auf das Recht des Einzelnen auf Datenschutz auswirken" ([1]).

Wie die Datenschutzgruppe hervorhebt, werden bei der Gesichtserkennung automatisch digitale Bilder verarbeitet, die Gesichter von natürlichen Personen enthalten, um bei diesen eine Identifizierung, Authentifizierung/Verifizierung oder Kategorisierung durchzuführen. Wenn ein digitales Bild es ermöglicht, die abgebildete Person zu identifizieren, gehört das Bild in die Gruppe der personenbezogenen Daten.

Es ist nicht so, dass die Gesichtserkennung mit dem EU-Recht unvereinbar wäre. Allerdings muss sie im Einklang mit den in der Richtlinie 95/46/EG festgelegten Anforderungen erfolgen, d. h. die Verarbeitung muss einem rechtmäßigen Zweck dienen und dem angestrebten Ziel angemessen sein.

Unbeschadet der Zuständigkeiten der Kommission als Hüterin des Vertrags sind die nationalen Datenschutzbehörden dafür zuständig, die Anwendung der nationalen Maßnahmen zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie 95/46/EG zu überwachen. Auch die Kommission wird die Entwicklung derartiger Technologien aufmerksam verfolgen, insbesondere im Hinblick auf ihre Auswirkungen auf das Grundrecht auf Datenschutz.

([1]) Stellungnahme 2/2012 der Artikel-29-Datenschutzgruppe, Einleitung S. 1 sowie Querverweis auf die Stellungnahme 3/2012, S. 3.

Darüber hinaus hat die Europäische Kommission im Januar 2012 den Vorschlag für eine neue Datenschutzverordnung veröffentlicht. Zwei Bestimmungen sind in Bezug auf den von Ihnen geschilderten Fall von besonderer Bedeutung. Erstens legt die vorgeschlagene Verordnung strengere Regeln zur Erhebung von Daten fest, insbesondere durch den Begriff der „ausdrücklichen“ Einwilligung. Zweitens sieht die vorgeschlagene Verordnung für die Profilerstellung anhand gesammelter Daten einen restriktiveren Profiling-Ansatz vor.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010802/12
to the Commission
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D), Evelyn Regner (S&D) and Birgit Sippel (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Almax display mannequins with facial recognition in Europe

The Italian firm Almax markets display mannequins with facial recognition software. The 'EyeSee-Mannequins' produced by Almax have video cameras installed in their eyes with software for facial recognition, which can identify essential personal characteristics, such as the sex, origin and age of customers. The software for the display mannequins was developed jointly with the Polytechnic University in Milan. According to the manufacturer, the mannequins have already been marketed in several European countries.

1. Is the Commission aware that some chains of fashion shops are using this approach and has it identified the enterprises that use the display mannequins with facial recognition software produced by the Italian firm Almax?

2. Has the Commission contacted the data protection authorities in the Member States in order to decide what steps should be taken and to ascertain whether the data protection rules in the countries concerned have been infringed and, if so, to what extent? If not, will it do so?

3. Will the Commission take steps to support the data protection authorities in the Member States in carrying out a thorough study of this matter and to ensure that the European data protection rules are enforced and European citizens protected?

4. In the Commission's view, to what extent is the use of such display mannequins permissible and compatible with the currently applicable provisions of EC law on data protection?

5. How would the situation change with the new European data protection rules (General Data Protection Regulation)?

6. What steps will the Commission take if it transpires that the European data protection rules have been infringed by the use of 'EyeSee-Mannequins'?

7. What is the Commission's view of the use of these mannequins in the light of the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2013)

Facial recognition involves the processing of personal data, in particular biometric data. As the article 29 Working Party has stated, in the case of processing of biometric data, the 'potential impact on the privacy and the right to data protection of individuals is high' ([1]).

As highlighted by the article 29 Working Party, the aim of facial recognition is the automatic processing of digital images which contain the faces of individuals for the purpose of identification, authentication/verification or categorisation of those individuals. A digital image allowing that individual to be identified is to be considered personal data.

Facial recognition is not irreconcilable with EC law but needs to be carried out in line with the requirements laid down in Directive 95/46/EC and therefore processed on legitimate grounds, for a specific purpose and proportionate to the aim pursued.

Without prejudice to the powers of the Commission as guardian of the Treaty it is the national data protection supervisory authorities which are competent to monitor the application of the national measures implementing Directive 95/46/EC. The Commission will also closely follow the development of such technologies particularly in view of their impact on the fundamental right to data protection.

([1]) Opinion 2/2012 of the article 29 Working Party, Introduction page 1 and cross-reference to Opinion 3/2012, page 3.

Furthermore in January 2012, the European Commission published a proposal for the new Data Protection Regulation. Two provisions are of particular importance in relation to the case to which you refer. First, the proposed Regulation imposes stricter rules on the collection of data, in particular through the notion of explicit consent. Second, in so far as profiles are created based on the data collected, the proposed Regulation foresees a more rigorous approach to profiling.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010803/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Müllabgabe auf europäischer Ebene für Fastfood

In einigen Städten Europas, wie zum Beispiel jüngst in Berlin, wird bereits eine Müllabgabe für Müll, der beim „to-go"-Verzehr anfällt, diskutiert, da Papierbecher, Plastikgeschirr etc. nach Verzehr auf der Straße landen.

Um dieser Art von Müllberg entgegenzuwirken, will man hier lenkend eingreifen.

In Bozen sind Glas und Flaschen das Problem, und 2010 wurde eine Verordnung erlassen, der zufolge zwischen 22 und 6 Uhr in der Innenstadt vor Lokalen keine Getränke aus Glasbehältern konsumiert werden dürfen.

1. Ist der Kommission dieses Problem der individuellen Vermüllung einzelner Städte in Europa bekannt?

2. Gedenkt die Kommission, hier auf europäischer Ebene zum Beispiel durch entsprechende Empfehlungen für solche „Sonderumstände" an die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten tätig zu werden?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(23. Januar 2013)

Die Kommission ist über eine Reihe von Initiativen auf kommunaler und regionaler Ebene zur Verringerung der Abfallmengen unterrichtet. Sie begrüßt Initiativen, die zur Abfallvermeidung im Einklang mit der Abfallhierarchie gemäß Artikel 4 der Richtlinie 2008/98/EG über Abfälle ([1]) beitragen.

Außerdem sind die Mitgliedstaaten gemäß Artikel 29 gehalten, spätestens bis 12. Dezember 2013 Abfallvermeidungsprogramme zu erstellen. Abfallvermeidungsprogramme können Maßnahmen umfassen, wie sie die Frau Abgeordnete beschreibt.

Die Kommission hat Leitlinien ausgearbeitet, die die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Vorbereitung der Abfallvermeidungsprogramme unterstützen sollen.

Sie können unter folgender Internetadresse abgerufen werden:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Waste%20prevention%20guidelines.pdf

([1]) ABl. L 312 vom 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010803/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Waste prevention tax at European level for fast food

In some European cities, such as Berlin most recently, consideration is being given to imposing a waste prevention tax on the sale of takeaway food in view of the quantity of waste — paper cups, plastic cutlery, etc. — that ends up on the streets after its consumption.

Regulatory intervention is seen as the way to prevent accumulation of this kind of waste mountain.

In the case of Bolzano, glass and bottles are seen as the problem and a regulation was issued locally in 2010 banning the consumption of drinks in glass containers in front of bars in the city centre between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

1. Is the Commission aware of this issue of individual cities in Europe taking special measures to deal with waste?

2. Does the Commission intend to make recommendations at European level to the Member States in respect of action to deal with such 'special circumstances'?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

The Commission is aware of a number of initiatives at municipal and regional level to reduce the amount of waste. The Commission welcomes initiatives which contribute to waste prevention in line with the waste hierarchy introduced by Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC on waste ([1]).

Moreover, Article 29 stipulates that Member States have to draft waste prevention programmes not later than 12 December 2013. Waste prevention programmes may contain measures as described by the Honourable Member.

The Commission has developed guidelines in order to assist the Member States in the preparation of prevention programmes. The guidelines can be found under:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/prevention/pdf/Waste%20prevention%20guidelines.pdf.

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010804/12
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Afrika könnte Afrika selbst ernähren

Der Schweizer Soziologe Jean Ziegler sieht die an Hungertod sterbenden Menschen als Opfer eines von ultraliberalen Kräften organisierten Völkermordes an.

Einer Studie der Weltbank zufolge könnten Afrikas Landwirte den Kontinent ohne große Schwierigkeiten mit Nahrung versorgen („Africa can help feed Africa") — wenn man sie denn ließe. Diese Studie kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Afrika den Hunger bekämpfen könnte, würde man die Handelshemmnisse wie zum Beispiel die Zölle und die hochsubventionierte Überproduktion der europäischen Bauern abbauen.

Wie beurteilt die Hohe Vertreterin die Ergebnisse dieser Studie?

Wenn diese Studie zu einem solchen Ergebnis kommt, warum können die europäischen Bauern ihre hochsubventionierte Überproduktion überhaupt noch exportieren?

Antwort von Herrn Piebalgs im Namen der Kommission
(7. Februar 2013)

In dieser Studie der Weltbank wird argumentiert, dass der Abbau bestehender Hindernisse für den regionalen Handel in Afrika zu beträchtlichen Verbesserungen im Bereich der Ernährungssicherheit in Afrika führen würde. Die Kommission und die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin sind ebenfalls der Ansicht, dass die Ernährungsunsicherheit von Millionen von Afrikanern potenziell beseitigt werden könnte, wenn afrikanische Agrarerzeugnisse einfacher, schneller und kostengünstiger in Verkehr gebracht würden. Die Kommission ist schon seit langem eine überzeugte Verfechterin regionaler Handelsabkommen in Afrika im Allgemeinen und regionaler Handelserleichterungen im Besonderen. Durch diese Studie wird lediglich das bestätigt, wofür sich die EU und die regionalen Organisationen Afrikas in ihrer Arbeit bereits seit vielen Jahren einsetzen. Alle regionalen afrikanischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaften (z. B. COMESA, SADC und Ecowas ([1])) haben von der EU beträchtliche finanzielle Unterstützung für die Umsetzung ihrer Freihandelszonen, Zollunionen und anderer Bemühungen um regionale Integration erhalten. Im Laufe dieser Jahre wurden hier Erfolge und ganz konkrete Fortschritte erzielt, aber es gibt — wie in der Studie hervorgehoben wurde — weiterhin nicht unbeträchtliche Hindernisse, die von den betreffenden afrikanischen Regierungen dringend abgebaut werden sollten. Die EU wird ihre Unterstützung für diese Länder und Organisationen im Zeitraum 2014-2020 mit Mitteln aus dem 11. Europäischen Entwicklungsfonds (EEF) fortsetzen.

In der Weltbankstudie wird auf verschiedene Hemmnisse eingegangen, die den Handel auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent beeinträchtigen, von unfairen Handelspraktiken in Europa ist dort nicht die Rede. Hingegen wird in der Studie erwähnt, dass die Produktion in und die Ausfuhr aus Mitgliedsländern der Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (OECD) bei der Erklärung der Ursachen des Anstiegs der Nettoeinfuhren von Nahrungsmitteln in Afrika eine geringere Rolle spielen als inländische Faktoren.

([1]) Gemeinsamer Markt für das Östliche und Südliche Afrika, Entwicklungsgemeinschaft Südliches Afrika, Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft der westafrikanischen Staaten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010804/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Africa could feed itself

The Swiss sociologist, Jean Ziegler, considers that the people who are dying of starvation are the victims of a genocide organised by ultraliberal forces.

According to a study by the World Bank, Africa's farmers could supply the continent with food without any great difficulty ('Africa can help feed Africa') if they were only allowed to do so. The study comes to the conclusion that Africa could combat famine if trade barriers, such as customs duties and the highly subsidised excess production of European farmers, were reduced.

What is the High Representative's assessment of this study's findings?

If this study comes to such a conclusion, how is it possible for European farmers to continue to export their highly subsidised excess production of food?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2013)

The study argues that breaking down existing barriers to regional trade in Africa would result in major improvements in African food security. The Commission and the HR/VP fully agree that easier, faster and cheaper circulation of African agricultural products can potentially lift millions of Africans out of food insecurity. For many years, and well before the Bank's present study, the Commission has been a staunch supporter of regional trade agreements in Africa in general and regional trade facilitation in particular. The study merely confirms what the EU and African regional organisations have been working on for many years. All African Regional Economic Communities (e.g. COMESA, SADC, Ecowas ([1]), etc.) have received considerable financial assistance from the EU for the implementation of their free trade areas, customs unions and other regional integration efforts. There have been successes over these years and progress has indeed been made but as pointed out by the study major obstacles of various natures remain and should be removed as a matter of urgency by the African governments concerned. The EU intends to continue helping these countries and organisations with funds from the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) during the period 2014-2020.

The study is about various impediments to trade on the African continent and not about unfair trade practices in Europe. It does indeed mention that the role of production in and export from Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries has a lesser role than domestic factors in explaining the underlying causes of the increase in net imports of staples in Africa.

([1]) Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Southern African Development Community, Economic Community Of West African States.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010805/12
an die Kommission
Markus Pieper (PPE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Beihilfenkontrolle — Förderung des Exports von in Polen hergestellten Türen und Fenstern

Das polnische Wirtschaftsministerium fördert mithilfedes Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (operationelles Programm „Innovative Wirtschaft“) den Export von in Polen hergestellten Türen und Fenstern in andere Mitgliedstaaten. Als Zielmärkte nennt das Ministerium explizit Deutschland, Frankreich, Italien und Tschechien.

Es besteht die Sorge, dass diese Unterstützung der polnischen Türen- und Fensterindustrie zu einem Wettbewerbsnachteil von Marktteilnehmern aus anderen Mitgliedstaaten führt und ein Verstoß gegen Art. 107 EUV (Untersagung der Begünstigung bestimmter Unternehmen oder Wirtschaftszweige) vorliegt.

1. Welche Maßnahmen hat die Kommission bereits ergriffen, um das Vorliegen unzulässiger Beihilfen zu überprüfen?

2. Wurde die polische Regierung bereits aufgefordert, den Sachverhalt zu erläutern?

3. Welche weiteren Schritte beabsichtigt die Kommission einzuleiten, um eine Marktverzerrung zugunsten der polnischen Türen- und Fensterindustrie zu vermeiden? Inwieweit kann die Kommission einen Zeitrahmen für diese Untersuchungen vorlegen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010830/12
an die Kommission
Nadja Hirsch (ALDE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Beihilfen zur Förderung des Exports von in Polen hergestellten Fenstern und Türen

Polen fördert den Export von in Polen hergestellten Fenstern und Türen durch Exportbeihilfen, die sowohl von Polen selbst als auch aus Mitteln des Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung bestritten werden. Die Förderung hierfür beläuft sich auf etwa 1,5 Mio. EUR, womit unter anderem die Bildung eines Konsortiums der polnischen Türen- und Fensterhersteller wie auch Messeauftritte finanziert werden.

Ziel der Exportbeihilfen scheint nicht die Erschließung neuer Märkte außerhalb der Europäischen Union, sondern die Wettbewerbssteigerung innerhalb des europäischen Binnenmarkts zu sein. Die Exportbeihilfen zielen insbesondere auf die Vermarktung in den Absatzmärkten Deutschland, Tschechien, Schweden und Frankreich ab. So hat auch das gebildete Konsortium die Aufgabe, die polnischen Erzeugnisse innerhalb anderer Mitgliedstaaten, beispielsweise durch Messeauftritte in Deutschland und Frankreich, zu bewerben.

1. Ist der Kommission dieser Sachverhalt bekannt? Wenn ja, verstoßen die Verwendung des Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung und die Förderung durch Polen in dieser Situation nicht gegen die Regularien des Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung und gegen europäisches Recht? Wenn nein, was wird die Kommission unternehmen, um diesen Sachverhalt aufzuklären?

2. Sieht die Kommission in der vorliegenden Förderung polnischer Unternehmen eine Verzerrung des Wettbewerbs im europäischen Binnenmarkt?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011184/12
an die Kommission
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D)
(7. Dezember 2012)

Betrifft: Mögliche Wettbewerbsverzerrung durch polnisches Wirtschaftsförderungsprogramm

Mit einem Wirtschaftsförderungsprogramm unterstützt das polnische Wirtschaftsministerium gezielt den Export von in Polen produzierten Fenstern und Türen. Meinen Informationen zufolge wird dieses Programm durch den Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung (EFRE) gefördert. Das Programm zielt unter anderem auf die Vermarktung von in Polen hergestellten Fenstern und Türen in den Absatzmärkten anderer Mitgliedstaaten ab.

Zwar ist es das berechtigte Ziel des EFRE Unterschiede im Entwicklungsstand der Regionen und den Rückstand der am stärksten benachteiligten Gebiete der Europäischen Union zu verringern, allerdings darf dies nicht durch die gezielte Begünstigung bestimmter Unternehmen oder Wirtschaftszweige erfolgen.

1. Ist es richtig, dass das vom polnischen Wirtschaftsministerium aufgelegte Programm zur Förderung des Fenster und Türen produzierenden Gewerbes durch den EFRE gefördert wird?

2. Wenn ja, welche Maßnahmen des polnischen Programms werden aus EFRE-Mitteln finanziert?

3. Gedenkt die Kommission zu prüfen, ob das durch den EFRE mitfinanzierte Wirtschaftsförderungsprogramm im Bereich des Fenster- und Türenbaus eventuell einen Verstoß gegen Artikel 107 Absatz 1 des Vertrages über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union darstellt?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011525/12
an die Kommission
Axel Voss (PPE)
(18. Dezember 2012)

Betrifft: Beihilfen zur Förderung des Exports in Polen hergestellter Fenstern und Türen

Ein deutscher Hersteller von Fenstern hat mitgeteilt, dass Polen den Export in Polen hergestellter Fenster und Türen durch staatliche Beihilfen fördere, die teilweise auch aus Mitteln des Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung stammten. Die Mittel beliefen sich auf insgesamt 1,5 Mio. EUR und seien unter anderem für die Bildung eines Konsortiums der polnischen Türen- und Fensterhersteller sowie die Finanzierung von Messeauftritten, u. a. außerhalb Polens, vorgesehen.

Der Verband Fenster und Fassade (VFF) hat unter dem Aktenzeichen SA. 35500 (2012/CP) (Registration: 2012/103471) Beschwerde bei der EU-Kommission eingelegt.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Hat die Kommission Kenntnis von polnischen Beihilfen für die Hersteller von Türen und Fenstern?

2. Trifft es zu, dass die Beihilfen teilweise aus Geldern aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung stammen? Wenn ja, in welcher Höhe?

3. Trifft es zu, dass die Exportbeihilfen insbesondere auf die Vermarktung von Fenstern und Türen auf den Absatzmärkten der Mitgliedstaaten Deutschland, Tschechien, Schweden sowie Frankreich ausgerichtet sind?

4. Ist die Kommission der Meinung, dass die Förderung zu wirtschaftlichen Einbußen bei Herstellern aus den zuvor genannten Mitgliedstaaten führen kann?

5. Teilt die Kommission die Ansicht, dass die Fördergelder des Fonds für regionale Entwicklung besser in Projekten angelegt sind, die keine anderen europäischen Unternehmen direkt benachteiligen können, als in direkten Fördermaßmahmen für einzelne Wirtschaftszweige?

6. Hat die Kommission bereits auf die Beschwerde des VFF reagiert? Wenn ja, wie hat die Kommission geantwortet? Wenn nein, wann ist mit einer Reaktion zu rechnen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-011533/12
an die Kommission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(18. Dezember 2012)

Betrifft: Beihilferecht in Polen/Subventionierung von Fenstern und Türen

Ob die Exportförderung in Polen für Fenster und Türen durch Mittel aus dem Europäischen Fonds für Regionale Entwicklung zur Steigerung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit innerhalb der EU beiträgt, ist unklar und umstritten. Der Kommission liegt eine Beschwerde mit der Ziffer SA.35500 (2012/CP) Registration 2012/103471 vor.

Kann die Kommission daher folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Von wem und wann wurde bei der Kommission eine Beschwerde wegen der Förderung der polnischen Fenster- und Türenhersteller eingereicht?

2. Gibt es Informationen darüber, ob die Förderung mit den europäischen Vorschriften vereinbar ist?

3. Prüft die Kommission derzeit einen Verstoß gegen das europäische Wettbewerbsrecht durch die Förderung aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung in Polen?

4. Wann ist mit einer Entscheidung zu rechnen?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(11. Februar 2013)

Die Kommission hat die Fragen der Damen und Herren Abgeordneten betreffend die Förderung des Exports von in Polen hergestellten Türen und Fenstern erhalten.

Der Kommission liegt eine offizielle Beschwerde über die angebliche staatliche Beihilfe vor, die Polen zugunsten von in Polen niedergelassenen Herstellern von Fenstern und Türen zur Förderung ihrer Exporttätigkeit gewährt. Die Kommissionsdienststellen prüfen zurzeit diese Beschwerde und sind sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass sich die fragliche Maßnahme auf die Unterstützung aus dem EFRE zur Förderung der regionalen Entwicklung stützt.

Im Rahmen der Prüfung forderte die Kommission Informationen von den polnischen Behörden an, die kürzlich eingegangen sind. Diese Informationen sowie die vom Beschwerdeführer vorgelegten Daten sollten es den Kommissionsdienststellen ermöglichen, die Maßnahmen vor dem Hintergrund der Artikel 107 und 108 AEUV zu bewerten.

Die Kommission kann in diesem Stadium der Untersuchungen keinen Zeitrahmen vorlegen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010805/12
to the Commission
Markus Pieper (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: State aid control — export subsidies for doors and windows manufactured in Poland

The Polish Ministry for Economic Affairs, with assistance from the European Regional Development Fund ('Innovative Economy' Operational Programme), subsidises the export to other Member States of doors and windows manufactured in Poland. Target markets explicitly referred to by the Ministry are Germany, France, Italy and the Czech Republic.

There is concern that this support given to the Polish door and window industry puts manufacturers in other Member States at a competitive disadvantage and constitutes a breach of Article 107 TEU (ban on measures favouring certain undertakings or certain economic activities).

1. What action has the Commission already taken to verify whether inadmissible state aid is in fact involved in this case?

2. Has the Polish Government already been asked to clarify the circumstances of this case?

3. What further action does the Commission intend to take in order to prevent distortion of competition in favour of Polish door and window manufacturers? Can the Commission provide a timeframe for its investigation of this matter?

Question for written answer E-010830/12
to the Commission
Nadja Hirsch (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Subsidies to promote exports of Polish-made windows and doors

Poland promotes exports of windows and doors made by its domestic firms by granting export subsidies which are paid both from the national budget and from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This support amounts to some EUR 1.5 million and is being used, in particular, to finance the establishment of a consortium of Polish door and window manufacturers and special events at trade fairs.

It would appear that the purpose of the export subsidies is not to open up new markets outside the European Union, but rather to increase competition on the EU internal market. They are designed in particular to improve sales on the German, Czech, Swedish and French markets. The consortium also has the task of promoting Polish products in other Member States, for example by attending trade fairs in Germany and France.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation? If so, does this use of ERDF resources, and Poland's provision of support to its domestic industry, not represent a breach of ERDF rules and, therefore, of European law? If not, what will the Commission do to resolve this matter?

2. Does the Commission not view the support provided to Polish firms as a distortion of competition on the EU internal market?

Question for written answer E-011184/12
to the Commission
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D)
(7 December 2012)

Subject: Possible distortion of competition by Polish economic promotion programme

The Polish Ministry of the Economy is running an economic promotion programme that specifically supports the export of Polish-produced windows and doors. According to my information, this programme is sponsored by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). One of the aims of this programme is to market windows and doors manufactured in Poland in other Member States.

Although it is the legitimate aim of the ERDF to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions of the European Union, this may not be achieved by favouring specific enterprises or business sectors.

1. Is it true that the programme initiated by the Polish Ministry of the Economy to help the window and door production industry receives ERDF support?

2. If this is the case, which measures of the Polish programme are funded from ERDF resources?

3. Is the Commission considering investigating whether the economic promotion programme in the area of window and door production co-funded by the ERDF constitutes a violation of Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union?

Question for written answer E-011525/12
to the Commission
Axel Voss (PPE)
(18 December 2012)

Subject: State aid to support exports of Polish-made windows and doors

A German manufacturer of windows has reported that Poland is subsidising the export of Polish-made windows and doors with state aid, some of which is said to come from the European Regional Development Fund. The funding is said to amount to EUR 1.5 million in total and to be set aside for the establishment of a consortium of Polish door and window manufacturers and for funding exhibits at trade fairs, some of them outside Poland.

The *Verband Fenster und Fassade* (Windows and Facades Association — VFF) has filed a complaint with the Commission under reference number SA. 35500 (2012/CP) (Registration: 2012/103471).

Can the Commission answer the following questions on the subject:

1. Is the Commission aware of Polish state aid to window and door manufacturers?

2. Is it true that this aid was partly funded from the European Regional Development Fund? If so, to what extent?

3. Is it true that the export subsidies were aimed in particular at marketing windows and doors in the export markets of EU Member States Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden and France?

4. Does the Commission believe that the subsidies could cause economic harm to manufacturers in the abovementioned Member States?

5. Does the Commission share the view that money from the European Regional Development Fund would be better spent on projects that cannot have a direct negative impact on other European businesses than on direct subsidies to particular industries?

6. Has the Commission already responded to the VFF's complaint? If so, how has the Commission replied? If not, when can a response be expected?

Question for written answer E-011533/12
to the Commission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(18 December 2012)

Subject: State aid law in Poland/Subsidies for windows and doors

It is unclear and controversial whether export subsidies in Poland for windows and doors, paid for out of European Regional Development Fund money, contribute to improving competitiveness within the European Union. The Commission has received a complaint, reference SA.35500 (2012/CP) Registration 2012/103471.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. When and by whom was a complaint submitted to the Commission about subsidies for Polish window and door manufacturers?

2. Is there any information as to whether the subsidies are compatible with European rules?

3. Is the Commission currently investigating a violation of European competition law by subsidies from the European Regional Development Fund in Poland?

4. When can a decision be expected?

Joint answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2013)

The Commission has received the questions of the Honourable Members concerning export subsidies for doors and windows manufactured in Poland.

The Commission has received an official complaint about the alleged state aid granted by Poland in favour of window and door producers located in Poland to promote their export activities. The Commission services are currently analysing this complaint and are aware of the fact that the measure in question is based on ERDF support to promote regional development.

As part of the assessment, the Commission services requested information from the Polish authorities, which it recently received. This information together with the data provided by the complainant should allow the Commission services to assess the measures in the light of Articles 107 and 108 TFEU.

The Commission cannot provide any timeframe at this stage of the investigation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010806/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Rifornimento di carburante in Sudan da parte di navi iraniane

Il 26 novembre 2012 l'agenzia Reuters riferisce di un previsto attracco due navi iraniane in Sudan per un rifornimento di carburante da effettuare il 30 novembre 2012. Si tratta del secondo arrivo in un mese di navi iraniane nel paese nordafricano.

Israele ha accusato il Sudan di essere responsabile della spedizione di armi ad Hamas nella striscia di Gaza attraverso il deserto egiziano del Sinai. Il Sudan intrattiene stretti legami sia con l'Iran che con Hamas. Nel frattempo il Sudan ha accusato Israele di aver bombardato una fabbrica di armi a Yarmouk, nei pressi di Khartum.

Un portavoce militare del Sudan ha riferito all'agenzia stampa statale del paese che è previsto l'attracco due navi iraniane a Port Sudan sul Mar Rosso per un rifornimento di carburante e per imbarcare «materiale logistico». Nell'ottobre 2012 sono giunti a Port Sudan un cacciatorpediniere e un elicottero iraniani. Nell'estate, stando all'agenzia Reuters, l'Iran aveva espresso l'intenzione di voler costruire più navi da guerra e intensificare la sua presenza nelle acque internazionali.

1. È il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante a conoscenza del fatto che le navi iraniane utilizzano i porti sudanesi per il rifornimento di carburante?

2. Come valuta il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante il bombardamento di una fabbrica di armi a Khartum?

3. Come valutano i funzionari dell'UE il sostegno fornito dal Sudan fungendo da paese di transito per le armi iraniane verso Gaza?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente è a conoscenza dei fatti menzionati nell'interrogazione, citati dalla stampa. Tuttavia, non ha ricevuto ulteriori informazioni determinanti da altre fonti, in particolare per quanto riguarda l'esplosione nella fabbrica di armi a Yarmouk, nei pressi di Khartoum. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente esprime preoccupazione anche in merito alle notizie riguardanti il ruolo svolto dal Sudan come paese di transito per le armi iraniane verso Gaza. Tale flusso di armi, se confermato, potrebbe destabilizzare ulteriormente la regione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010806/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Iranian ships refuelling in Sudan

On 26 November 2012 Reuters reported that two Iranian ships were expected to dock in Sudan to refuel on 30 November 2012. This was the second visit by Iranian ships in a month to the North African state.

Israel has accused Sudan of being responsible for sending weapons via the Egyptian Sinai desert to Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Sudan maintains close links with both Iran and Hamas. Meanwhile, Sudan has accused Israel of bombing an arms factory at Yarmouk in Khartoum.

A Sudanese military spokesman told the country's state news agency that two Iranian ships would be docking at the Red Sea port of Port Sudan to refuel and take 'logistical provisions' on board. In October 2012, an Iranian destroyer and helicopter docked at Port Sudan. During the summer, according to Reuters, Iran said it had plans to build more warships and increase its presence in international waters.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of Iranian ships using Sudanese ports to refuel?

2. What is the assessment of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the bombing of an arms factory in Khartoum?

3. What is the assessment of EU officials regarding the support given by Sudan as a transit country for Iranian arms to Gaza?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President is aware of the events mentioned in the question as they have been reported in the press. However, she has not received additional conclusive information from other sources in particular with regard to the explosion in the Al Yarmouk arms factory near Khartoum. The HR/VP is also concerned about reports regarding support given by Sudan for the transit of Iranian arms to Gaza. If confirmed, this flow of arms could further destabilise the region.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010807/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Scotland and the MFF 2007-2013

Under the current multiannual financial framework 2007-2013, can the Commission comprehensively list:

— all of the EU funding programmes from which Scotland has benefited as a region of the EU;

— the actual level of funding which has been (a) committed and (b) paid to the EU region of Scotland according to the Commission's most recent figures (November 2012)?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

Regional data concerning Scotland is only available for the following programmes:

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):

— The 'Lowlands and Uplands of Scotland programme' under the Competitiveness and Employment Objective with an ERDF contribution of EUR 376 million which covers east, west and south Scotland. Payments amount to EUR 138 million so far.

— The 'Highlands and Islands' programme under the Convergence Objective. The ERDF contribution is EUR 122 million, payments amount to EUR 65 million so far.

Scotland also has access to support under the Territorial Cooperation Objective. Areas in western Scotland participate in a cross-border programme with Ireland and Northern Ireland and parts of Scotland also participate in four transnational programmes. Since these are cooperation programmes there is no subdivision of funds between the participating countries.

Scotland also benefits from two European Social Fund (ESF) programmes with the same regional coverage as the ERDF. The Lowlands and Uplands of Scotland receive an ESF contribution of EUR 270 million of which EUR 107 million has been paid. The Highlands and Islands ESF contribution is EUR 52 million and payments stand at EUR 28 million.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) allocation amounts to EUR 679 million under the Scotland Rural Development Programme, of which EUR 431 million has been paid.

There is one European Fisheries Fund (EFF) programme for the UK. Scotland's allocation from this programme is EUR 55 million out of a total budget of EUR 138 million. Since payment claims are submitted for the whole UK there is no indication of the regional distribution of spending. A total of EUR 60 million has been paid to the UK so far.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010808/12
to the Commission
George Lyon (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Scotland and the MFF 2014-2020

Under the Commission proposal for the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020 and all the accompanying legislative proposals, will the Commission comprehensively list:

— all the EU funding programmes from which Scotland would benefit as a region of the EU;

— the actual level of funding which would be available to Scotland as a region of the EU?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

According to the Commission's proposal for the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial framework, the Highlands and Islands would qualify for support as a Transition Region, whereas the other Scottish NUTS2 regions would be entitled to receive support as More Developed Regions. The actual level of funding available for 2014-2020 will be determined at the outcome of the MFF negotiations in the Council and the European Parliament.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010809/12
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Psychische Gesundheit und Obdachlosigkeit

Es wurde geschätzt, dass in der Europäischen Union etwa 600 000 Menschen obdachlos sind. Nach einer weiteren Schätzung leidet — im Vergleich zur allgemeinen Bevölkerung — ein sehr hoher Anteil obdachloser Menschen unter psychischen Problemen, die entweder Folge oder Ursache der Obdachlosigkeit sind.

Während obdachlose Menschen im Hinblick auf die Gesundheitspflege im Allgemeinen ohnehin besondere Probleme haben (um nur ein Beispiel zu nennen: 20 % der obdachlosen Menschen im Alter von 15 bis 34 Jahren haben nur noch weniger als 20 Zähne), ist es um ihre psychische Verfassung noch schlechter bestellt.

1. Sind der Kommission diese Situation und die Lebensumstände dieser Gruppe europäischer Bürger bewusst? (Es wird um eine ausführliche Darstellung gebeten.)

2. Welche Schritte kann die Kommission unternehmen und/oder wie können die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten unterstützt werden, die Not dieser Bevölkerungsgruppe zu lindern?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(31. Januar 2013)

Der Kommission ist bewusst, dass viele Obdachlose unter psychischen Problemen leiden. Auch eine kurze Phase der Obdachlosigkeit kann zu einer raschen Verschlechterung der psychischen Gesundheit führen, genauso wie ehemalige Patienten nach ihrer Entlassung aus einer psychiatrischen Einrichtung besonders von Obdachlosigkeit gefährdet sind.

Leider gibt es keine vergleichbaren Daten zu den Obdachlosenzahlen und den Ursachen für ihre Situation. Eine flächendeckende Anwendung der ETHOS-Definition, die auf der Konsenskonferenz 2010 ([1]) gebilligt wurde, könnte zur Verbesserung der Datenlage beitragen. Der irische Ratsvorsitz veranstaltet am 1. März 2013 eine informelle Ministertagung zum Thema Obdachlosigkeit. Die Kommission wird in Kürze ihr Sozialinvestitionspaket vorstellen, das auch ein Arbeitspapier der Kommissionsdienststellen über Obdachlosigkeit umfasst.

Obwohl in erster Linie die Mitgliedstaaten für die Hilfe für Obdachlose zuständig sind, kofinanziert die Europäische Union eine Reihe von Maßnahmen. Die Europäischen Strukturfonds unterstützen ein breites Spektrum von Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung des Zugangs zu Wohnraum und der sozialen Inklusion.

Im Oktober letzten Jahres schlug die Kommission die Einrichtung des Europäischen Hilfsfonds für die am stärksten von Armut betroffenen Personen vor, mit dem vor allem nationale Programme zur Verteilung von Lebensmitteln oder Produkten des täglichen Bedarfs an Obdachlose sowie begleitende Maßnahmen zur sozialen Inklusion unterstützt werden sollen.

NRO, die die Interessen von Obdachlosen auf EU-Ebene vertreten, erhielten Unterstützung aus dem Programm Progress, außerdem wurden grenzüberschreitende Projekte sozialpolitischer Experimente für Obdachlose gefördert ([2]). Das vorgeschlagene Folgeprogramm, das EU-Programm für sozialen Wandel und soziale Innovation, wird auf den Ergebnissen von Progress aufbauen.

Eine gemeinsame Aktion der Mitgliedstaaten zu psychischer Gesundheit und psychischem Wohlbefinden soll Anfang 2013 mit finanzieller Unterstützung des EU-Gesundheitsprogramms beginnen ([3]).

([1]) http://feantsa.horus.be/code/en/pg.asp? page = 1301.

([2]) Hope in stations“ (http://www.socialinnovationeurope.eu/Directory/Organisation/agence-nouvelle-des-solidarit% C3 % a9s-actives-ansa) und „Housing First“ (http://www.servicestyrelsen.dk/housingfirsteurope).

([3]) Im Rahmen desselben Programms wurde im Zeitraum 2007-2010 das Projekt „ Best Practice in Promoting Mental Health in Socially Marginalized Groups in Europe (PROMO)” (http://www.promostudy.org/index.html) gefördert.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010809/12
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Mental health and homelessness

It has been estimated that about 600 000 people are homeless in the European Union. It has also been estimated that, compared with the general population, a very high proportion of homeless people suffer from mental health problems, either as a consequence of homelessness or vice versa.

While homeless people experience particular difficulties when it comes to healthcare in general (20% of homeless people between 15 and 34 years of age have fewer than 20 teeth left, to mention but one example), their mental health situation is even worse.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation and of the circumstances of this group of European citizens? (Please give a detailed explanation.)

2. What steps can the Commission take, and/or how can it provide individual Member States with guidance, to improve the plight of this population group?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The Commission is aware that many homeless persons suffer from mental health problems. Even a short spell of homelessness can lead to a rapid deterioration in mental health, while former patients run a high risk of becoming homeless after they are discharged from mental-health institutions.

Unfortunately, there are no comparable data on the number and causes of homeless. A wide application of the ETHOS definition, endorsed at the 2010 Consensus Conference ([1]), may improve the situation. The Irish Presidency is organising on the 1st March 2013 an informal ministerial meeting on homelessness. The Commission will soon present its Social Investment Package, which will contain a staff working document on homelessness.

Although competence for the homeless lies primarily with the Member States, the European Union co-finances a number of measures. The European Structural Funds support a wide range of measures in the area of access to housing and social inclusion.

Last October the Commission proposed the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, which would in particular support national schemes to provide food or basic goods to homeless people and accompanying measures for their social inclusion.

The PROGRESS programme has provided financial support to EU-level NGOs that defend the interests of the homeless. It has also supported transnational policy experimentation projects for the homeless ([2]). The proposed successor, the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation, will continue to build on these results.

A Joint Action between Member States on Mental Health and Well-being will start in early 2013 with financial support from the EU Health Programme ([3]).

([1]) http://feantsa.horus.be/code/EN/pg.asp?Page=1301.
([2]) HOPE in stations http://www.socialinnovationeurope.eu/directory/organisation/agence-nouvelle-des-solidarit%C3%A9s-actives-ansa, or Housing First and http://www.servicestyrelsen.dk/housingfirsteurope.
([3]) The same programme funded between 2007 and 2010, the project 'Best Practice in Promoting Mental Health in Socially Marginalized Groups in Europe (PROMO)', http://www.promostudy.org/index.html

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-010810/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Novembru 2012)

Suġġett: Għajnuna fil-każ ta' diżastru fil-Karibew

Riċentament l-UE allokat EUR 6 miljun lill-pajjiżi tal-Karibew b'reazzjoni għall-ħsara li kkawża l-Urugan Sandy.

Minbarra li tipprovdi għajnuna fil-każ tad-diżastru, l-UE għandha l-għan ukoll li ttejjeb l-istat ta' preparazzjoni għal diżastru billi tappoġġa l-programm DIPECHO għall-preparazzjoni għal diżastru f'dawk ir-reġjuni l-iktar vulnerabbli għal diżastri naturali, inkluż il-Karibew.

Il-Kummissjoni, fid-dawl tad-diżastru riċenti kkawżat bl-Urugan Sandy, għandha xi indikazzjonijiet dwar jekk l-isforzi li saru taħt il-programm il-DIPECHO rnexxielhomx jimmitigaw il-ħsara kkawżata mill-urugan fil-Karibew?

L-esperti umanitarji tal-Kummissjoni qed jivvalutaw il-ħsara fir-reġjuni affettwati mill-uragan? Hemm xi lezzjonijiet essenzjali li wieħed jista' jislet mill-każ tal-Urugan Sandy li jistgħu jkunu ta' kontribut għall-isforzi biex titjieb il-preparazzjoni għal diżastru fir-reġjun?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Georgieva f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(25 ta' Jannar 2013)

Fil-Ġamajka, it-Timijiet Komunitarji għar-Rispons għad-Diżastri (CDRTs), imħarrġa taħt proġett ta' DIPECHO, attivaw b'suċċess il-pjanijiet Komunitarji għad-diżastri waqt l-uragan Sandy. Is-CDRTs wettqu attivitajiet preparatorji bħas-sistemi ta' twissija bikrija (EWS). Ma ntilfu l-ebda ħajjiet f'dawk il-komunitajiet u l-ħsara tnaqqset.

F'Kuba, il-ħażniet ġew prepożizzjonati qabel l-istaġun tal-uragani permezz ta' proġett ieħor ta' DIPECHO. Meta wasal l-uragan Sandy, dawk il-ħażniet ikkontribwew għall-ewwel rispons u taffew it-tbatija tan-nies l-iktar milquta.

Fir-Repubblika Dominikana, in-netwerks Komunitarji għad-diżastri mibnija permezz ta' DIPECHO ġew attivati wara d-dikjarazzjoni ta' allarm. Iċ-Ċentru ta' Emerġenza tal-Operazzjonijiet għaraf pubblikament l-importanza ta' DIPECHO fit-tnaqqis tal-impatt ta' Sandy f'termini ta' ħajjiet u ħsarat.

F'Ħaiti, permezz xogħlijiet ta' mitigazzjoni fiżika li saru fil-widien dojoq ġie evitat u/jew mitigat l-impatt tal-għargħar rapidu ta' Sandy, tħarsu d-djar u l-assi u tnaqqas it-telf tal-ħajjiet.

F'termini ta' tagħlimiet miksuba f'Ħaiti, l-uragan Sandy wera li l-EWS teħtieġ iktar tisħiħ u appoġġ biex il-gvern u l-awtoritajiet lokali jkunu jistgħu jirreaġixxu iktar malajr f'dawn il-każijiet.

Tul l-aħħar konferenza tas-CDMA, sħab id-DIPECHO ħarġu t-tagħlimiet miksuba minn SANDY. Dawn kienu jinkludu l-importanza li l-ħażniet ikunu prepożizzjonati u li l-komunitajiet jitħarrġu għar-rispons fl-ewwel sigħat/jiem ta' emerġenza, partikolarment fil-kuntest speċifiku tal-Karibew tal-gżejjer remoti. Il-kampanja Sptar Sikur weriet ir-rilevanza tagħha. Tempesti tropikali jwasslu għat-tfaqqigħ ta' mard li jittieħed, u għalhekk hemm bżonn ta' viġilanza wara diżastri ta' dan it-tip.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010810/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Disaster relief in the Caribbean

The EU recently allocated EUR 6 million to Caribbean countries in response to damage caused by Hurricane Sandy.

Besides providing disaster relief, the EU also aims to improve disaster preparedness by supporting the DIPECHO disaster preparedness programme in regions that are most vulnerable to natural disasters, including the Caribbean.

In view of the recent disaster caused by Hurricane Sandy, does the Commission have any indications whether efforts made under the DIPECHO programme were able to mitigate the damage that the hurricane caused in the Caribbean?

The Commission's humanitarian experts are assessing the damage in the regions affected by the hurricane. Are there any key lessons to be learned from the case of Hurricane Sandy that could feed into efforts to improve disaster preparedness in the region?

Answer given by Ms Georgieva on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

In Jamaica, the Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs), trained under a DIPECHO project, successfully activated their community disaster plans during hurricane Sandy. The CDRTs undertook preparatory activities such as early warnings systems (EWS). No lives were lost in those communities and damage was reduced.

In Cuba, stocks were prepositioned ahead of the hurricane season through another DIPECHO project. When Sandy struck, these stocks contributed to the first response and alleviated the suffering of the most affected people.

In the Dominican Republic, all community disaster networks built through DIPECHO were activated following the declaration of alert. The Operations Emergency Centre publically acknowledged the importance of DIPECHO in reducing the impact of Sandy in terms of lives and damage.

In Haiti, physical mitigation works carried out in ravines allowed to avoid and/or mitigate the impact of Sandy flash floods, protecting houses and assets and reducing loss of lives.

In terms of lessons learned in Haiti, Sandy hurricane showed that EWS requires further strengthening and support to enable the government and local authorities to be timelier in such cases.

During the last CDMA conference, DIPECHO partners drew lessons learned from SANDY. These include the importance of prepositioning stocks and training communities for the response on the first hours/days of an emergency, particularly in the specific context of the Caribbean of remote islands. The Safe Hospital campaign proved relevant. Tropical storms provoke outbreaks of infectious diseases, and so vigilance is needed after such disasters.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-010811/12
lill-Kummissjoni (Viċi President / Rappreżentant Għoli)
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Novembru 2012)

Suġġett: VP/HR — koalizzjoni ta' oppożizzjoni ġdida għas-Sirja

Fid-19 ta' Novembru 2012, il-Ministri tal-Affarijiet Barranin tal-Unjoni Ewropea sostnew il-Koalizzjoni Nazzjonali tal-Forzi Sirjani tar-Rivoluzzjoni u tal-Oppożizzjoni u ħeġġuha ssir "alternattiva kredibbli għar-reġim attwali".

B'liema mod il-Viċi President/Rappreżentant Għoli biħsiebha ssostni din il-koalizzjoni l-ġdida bil-għan li tiggarantixxi li din tal-aħħar tkun tista' tikber f'oppożizzjoni b'saħħitha u magħquda li l-mexxejja tal-Unjoni Ewropea qegħdin jittamaw li jaraw?

Tweġiba mogħtija mingħand ir-Rappreżentant Għoli/Viċi President Ashton f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(5 ta' Frar 2013)

Il-Kunsill Affarijiet Barranin tal-10 ta' Diċembru kellu l-opportunità jaqsam l-opinjonijiet tiegħu ma' Moaz Al-Khatib, il-President tal-Koalizzjoni Nazzjonali għall-Forzi Sirjani Rivoluzzjonarji u tal-Oppożizzjoni, li l-UE taċċetta bħala r-rappreżentanti leġittmi tal-poplu Sirjan. L-UE laqgħet l-isforzi li għamlet il-Koalizzjoni matul il-laqgħa tagħha fil-Kajr fit-28 u fid-29 ta' Novembru biex tistabbilixxi l-istrutturi tagħha u biex issir iktar operattiva u inklużiva. Ir-RGħ/VP inkoraġġixxiet b'mod regolari lill-Koalizzjoni biex tkompli taħdem fuq dawn l-għanijiet u biex iżżomm l-impenn tagħha li tirrispetta l-prinċipji tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem, l-inklużività, id-demokrazija u tinvolvi lilha nnifisha mal-gruppi kollha tal-oppożizzjoni u mas-sezzjonijiet kollha tas-soċjetà ċivili Sirjana.

Koalizzjoni tal-oppożizzjoni koerenti ferm hija essenzjali sabiex tinħoloq alternattiva kredibbli għar-reġim attwali. L-UE għandha l-impenn li tipprovdi l-appoġġ f'dan ir-rigward. Il-koalizzjoni għamlet progress fir-rigward tal-istabbiliment tal-istrutturi interni tagħha, inkluż permezz tat-twaqqif ta' Unità għall-Koordinazzjoni tal-Assistenza (ACU) li esprimiet il-ħtiġijiet tagħha f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam kemm mal-bini ta' kapaċità kif ukoll mal-finanzjament għall-operazzjonijiet tagħha. Is-SEAE u s-servizzi tal-Kummissjoni, kif ukoll l-Unità tal-Koalizzjoni għall-Koordinazzjoni tal-Assistenza, qed jikkunsidraw kif l-UE tista' tassistihom bl-aħjar mod possibbli.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010811/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Casa (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — New opposition coalition for Syria

On 19 November 2012, EU Foreign Ministers endorsed the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, urging it to become a 'credible alternative to the current regime'.

In what way does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to support this new coalition in order to ensure that it can grow into the strong and united opposition that EU leaders are hoping to see?

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

The Foreign Affairs Council on 10 December had the opportunity to exchange views with Moaz Al-Khatib, President of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces which the EU accepts as legitimate representatives of the Syrian people. The EU welcomed the efforts made by the Coalition in its meeting in Cairo on 28-29 November to set up its structures and to become more operational and inclusive. The HR/VP has regularly encouraged the Coalition to continue working on these goals and to remain committed to the respect of the principles of human rights, inclusivity, democracy and engaging with all opposition groups and all sections of Syrian civil society.

A well articulated opposition coalition is essential to create a credible alternative to the current regime. The EU is committed to provide support in this respect. The coalition has made progress in terms of setting up its internal structures, including through the establishment of an Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) which has expressed its needs both in terms of capacity building and funding for its operations. The EEAS and the Commission services are considering also with the Coalition's Assistance Coordination Unit how best the EU could assist.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-010812/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Novembru 2012)

Suġġett: Ajru Uniku Ewropew

Matul konferenza reċenti intitolata "Ajru Uniku Ewropew: wasal iż-żmien għal azzjoni," ġew diskussi l-effikaċja u l-effiċjenza tal-Ajru Uniku Ewropew. Brian Simpson, President tal-Kumitat għat-Trasport u t-Turiżmu tkellem dwar l-importanza li "jinħoloq settur tal-avjazzjoni aktar sostenibbli," filwaqt li ddikjara li l-akbar sfida li qed tiffaċċja l-Unjoni Ewropea hija "in-nuqqas ta' rieda politika". Aktar tard waqt il-konferenza, Kay Kratky tal-Lufthansa argumenta f'isem il-linji tal-ajru, u qal li l-UE kienet teħtieġ "miżuri ta' sanzjoni xierqa għall-futur".

Minn meta saret din il-laqgħa tal-11 ta' Ottubru, il-Kummissjoni qiegħda f'pożizzjoni li tirraporta dwar xi progress fir-rigward ta' pjanijiet futuri biex l-Ajru Uniku Ewropew isir aktar effiċjenti u effikaċi għall-passiġġieri, għall-linji tal-ajru u għal dawk responsabbli mill-politika?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Kallas f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(1 ta' Frar 2013)

Minn meta ltaqgħet il-Konferenza dwar l-Ajru Uniku Ewropew (SES) f' Limassol fil-11 ta' Ottubru 2012, il-Kummissjoni għamlet progress f'diversi oqsma bil-għan li tħaffef il-proċess ta' implimentazzjoni:

— għaddejja l-preparazzjoni ta' proposta leġiżlattiva ġdida bil-għan li tiġi riveduta l-leġiżlazzjoni SES eżistenti (SES 2+) ; konsultazzjoni pubblika baqgħet sejra sat-13 ta' Diċembru 2012. L-għan huwa l-adozzjoni mill-Kummissjoni fir-rebbiegħa 2013.

— il-kumitat regolatorju tal-Ajru Uniku iltaqa' darbtejn u seħħew diskussjonijiet dettaljati dwar ir-reviżjoni taż-żewġ regolamenti li jindirizzaw l-iskemi tal-prestazzjoni u tal-pagament. Huwa mistenni li l-kumitat jagħti l-opinjoni tiegħu fi Frar 2013, b'hekk iħalli lix-xogħol preparatorju relatat mal-iskemi tal-prestazzjoni għall-perjodu 2015-2019 jibda;

— proċeduri ta' ksur relatati man-nuqqas ta' konformità fl-implimentazzjoni tal-Blokok tal-Ispazju tal-Ajru Funzjonali (FAB) qegħdin jiġu mħejjija;

— abbozz ta' Regolament ta' Implimentazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni dwar materjal ta' gwida għal proġetti komuni li jsostnu l-implimentazzjoni ta' SESAR kien propost lill-kumitat tal-Ajru Uniku f'Novembru 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010812/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Single European Sky

At a recent conference entitled 'Single European Sky: the time for action', the effectiveness and efficiency of the Single European Sky were discussed. Brian Simpson, chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism talked about the importance of 'creating a more sustainable aviation sector', stating that the biggest challenge facing the European Union was a 'lack of political will'. Later in the conference, Kay Kratky of Lufthansa argued on behalf of the airlines, stating that the EU needed 'appropriate sanction measures for the future'.

Since this meeting on 11 October, does the Commission have any progress to report on future plans for making the Single European Sky more efficient and effective for passengers, airlines, and policymakers?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

Since the Conference on Single European Sky (SES) in Limassol on 11 October 2012, the Commission has made progress in various areas with the aim to speeding up the implementation process:

— the preparation of a new legislative proposal aiming at revisiting the existing SES legislation (SES 2+) is going on; a public consultation has taken place until 13 December 2012. The objective is an adoption by the Commission in spring 2013.

— the Single Sky regulatory committee met twice and in-depth discussions on the revision of the two regulations dealing with the performance and charging schemes took place. It is now expected that the committee will give its opinion in February 2013, allowing the preparatory work related to the performance scheme for the period 2015-2019 to start;

— infringement procedures related to non-compliance in the implementation of Functional Airspace Blocks (FABs) are being prepared;

— a draft Commission Implementing Regulation on guidance material for common projects supporting the implementation of SESAR was proposed to the Single Sky committee in November 2012.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-010813/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Novembru 2012)

Suġġett: Bombi magħmula d-dar

L-Unjoni Ewropea reċentement adottat l-abbozz ta' leġiżlazzjoni li jirrestrinġi x-xiri u l-bejgħ ta' ċerti sustanzi kimiċi li jistgħu jservu biex isiru bombi fid-djar. Dan kien pass "il quddiem li jirrestrinġi l-aċċess pubbliku għal aġenti komuni tat-tindif u fertilizzanti li kienu marbuta mat-theijija ta" splussivi fid-djar f'attakki terroristiċi reċenti. Attwalment l-Istati Membri għandhom restrizzjonijiet individwali, u b'hekk jeżistu diskrepanzi transkonfinali li jistgħu jikkawżaw problemi għaliex ċertu sustanzi kimiċi jistgħu jinxtraw u jinbiegħu f'pajjiżi differenti.

Skont l-abbozz ta' leġiżlazzjoni, il-konsumaturi xorta jistgħu jixtru perossidu tal-idroġenu, aċidu nitriku u nitrometanu; madankollu, sustanzi kimiċi oħra jistgħu jinbiegħu biss jekk il-konsumatur ikollu liċenzja li juża l-prodott. Essenzjalment, dan isaħħaħ ir-restrizzjonijiet u jgħin biex ikun sorveljat aktar mill-qrib it-trasferiment ta' dawn il-prodotti potenzjalment perikoluż.

Fl-applikazzjoni ta' restrizzjonijiet u regoli aktar koeżivi fl-Unjoni Ewropea, xi pjanijiet għandha l-Kummissjoni biex tarmonizza l-proċess tal-għoti ta' liċenzji? Barra minn hekk, il-Kummissjoni għandha l-ħsieb li tintroduċi miżuri li jsaħħu l-konverġenza f'termini ta' penali għal ksur ta' din il-politika ġdida?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Malmström f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(30 ta' Jannar 2013)

Il-Parlament Ewropew approva l-leġiżlazzjoni fl-20 ta' Novembru 2012 u l-Kunsill fil-5 ta' Diċembru 2012. Hija mistennija li tiġi ppubblikata u tidħol fis-seħħ kmieni fl-2013.

Ir-restrizzjonijiet japplikaw għal għadd limitat ta' sustanzi kimiċi b'konċentrazzjonijiet "l fuq minn ċerti limiti, li se jkunu suġġetti għal proċess ta" liċenzjar. Il-leġiżlazzjoni tipprovdi għal għarfien reċiproku tas-sistemi ta' liċenzjar kif stabbiliti mill-Istati Membri (abbażi tal-prinċipji mfissra fl-Artikolu 7(6)). Sabiex jiġi ffaċilitat l-għarfien reċiproku, il-Kummissjoni se tiżviluppa gwida għall-awtoritajiet tal-Istati Membri.

Fil-fatt, il-Kummissjoni se tiżviluppa linji ta' gwida dwar l-implimentazzjoni tal-leġiżlazzjoni kollha kemm hi, f'kooperazzjoni mal-Kumitat Permanenti dwar Prekursuri u mal-Istati Membri, fi sforz biex ikun hemm interpretazzjoni komuni tar-regoli. Il-Kummissjoni se tirrevedi perjodikament l-implimentazzjoni tal-leġiżlazzjoni, inkluż kwalunkwe ksur minħabba nuqqas ta' konformità, u tressaq suġġerimenti għal titjib fejn ikun xieraq.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010813/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Homemade bombs

The European Union recently adopted draft legislation that restricts the purchase and sale of certain chemicals that can serve as potent precursors to homemade bombs. This is a step forward in restricting the public's access to common cleaning agents and fertilisers that have been linked with the at-home assembly of explosives in recent terrorist attacks. Currently Member States have individual restrictions, and thus discrepancies across borders can cause problems when certain chemicals can be purchased and sold in different countries.

Under the draft legislation, consumers will still be able to purchase hydrogen peroxide, nitric acid and nitromethane; however, other chemicals can only be sold if the consumer has a licence to use the product. Essentially, this will tighten restrictions and help to monitor the transfer of these potentially dangerous products more closely.

In applying more cohesive restrictions and rules across the European Union, what plans does the Commission have to harmonise the licensing process? In addition, does the Commission intend to introduce measures to enhance convergence in terms of penalties for violations of this new policy?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The European Parliament approved the legislation on 20 November 2012 and the Council on 5 December 2012. It is expected to be published and enter into force in early 2013.

The restrictions apply to limited number of chemicals with concentrations above certain limits, which will be subject of a licencing process. The legislation provides for mutual recognition of the licensing systems established by Member States (based on principles set out in Article 7(6)). In order to facilitate mutual recognition, the Commission will develop guidance for Member States' authorities.

In fact, the Commission will develop guidelines on implementation of the legislation as a whole, in cooperation with Standing Committee on Precursors and Member States, to help ensure a common interpretation of rules. The Commission will review periodically the implementation of the legislation, including any non-compliance violations, and make suggestions for improvements where appropriate.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-010814/12
lill-Kummissjoni
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Novembru 2012)

Suġġett: Skema tal-Frott għall-Iskejjel

Fl-2007, il-Kummissjoni varat qafas li wara sar l-Iskema tal-Frott għall-Iskejjel, programm maħsub biex iħeġġeġ il-konsum ta' aktar frott min-naħa tal-istudenti bħala mod kif tiġi miġġielda r-rata dejjem ogħla ta' obeżità fl-Istati Membri kollha. Is-sena skolastika 2009-2010 kienet l-ewwel sena li dan il-programm ġie implimentat. Fl-ewwel sena, tnefqu għall-programm EUR 33 miljun biss mid-EUR 90 miljun allokati, u ftit kienu r-riżorsi disponibbli biex jgħinu jorjentaw lill-istituti edukattivi u jivvalutaw is-suċċess tal-programm. Barra minn hekk, bosta istituti edukattivi kienu ffrustrati bix-xogħol amministrattiv addizzjonali li l-proċessi ta' applikazzjoni u eżekuzzjoni tal-programm kienu jinvolvu.

Madankollu, sa Ottubru 2012 sar progress konsiderevoli. Fil-valutazzjoni tal-Iskema tal-Frott għall-Iskejjel, il-programm ġie vvalutat bħala "tajjeb ħafna" jew "eċċellenti"; titjib enormi meta mqabbel mas-sena preċedenti.

Fid-dawl ta' dawn l-iżviluppi, il-Kummissjoni qiegħda tqis li tagħmel xi modifiki lill-programm bil-għan li tkompli tippromwovi drawwiet tajbin fil-konsum tal-ikel, u bil-għan li ttejjeb l-effikaċja ta' din l-inizjattiva relattivament ġdida fis-sena skolastika li jmiss?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Cioloș f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(30 ta' Jannar 2013)

Fil-qafas tal-PAK 2020, il-Kummissjoni pproponiet xi bidliet fl-Iskema tal-Frott għall-Iskejjel, jiġifieri ż-żieda tal-baġit minn EUR 90 miljun għal EUR 150 miljun, iż-żieda tal-għajnuna tal-UE minn 75 għal 90 % għar-reġjuni anqas żviluppati u l-aktar mbiegħda u minn 50 għal 75 % għar-reġjuni l-oħra, u l-eliġibbiltà tal-miżuri ta' akkumpanjament għall-għajnuna tal-UE.

Barra minn hekk, dan l-aħħar, il-Kummissjoni adottat ir-rapport ta' evalwazzjoni tagħha dwar l-Iskema ([1]) u nediet proċess ta' valutazzjoni tal-impatt sabiex tivvaluta l-iskemi eżistenti tal-iskejjel (l-Iskema tal-Frott għall-Iskejjel u l-Iskema tal-Ħalib għall-Iskejjel) u tanalizza jekk u kif għandhom jevolvu fil-futur billi jitqiesu alternattivi differenti, inkluża l-possibbiltà ta' skema ġdida u aktar mifruxa.

Barra dan, se teżamina wkoll l-irwol u t-tfassil tal-miżuri ta' akkumpanjament li huma għodda importanti biex jinfurmaw u jedukaw lit-tfal dwar l-importanza tal-prodotti agrikoli, l-agrikoltura u l-biedja, kif ukoll dwar id-drawwiet tajba tal-ikel u tal-istil ta' ħajja.

([1]) COM(2012)768 tat-18.12.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010814/12
to the Commission
David Casa (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: School Fruit Scheme

In 2007, the Commission launched the framework for what later became the School Fruit Scheme, a programme designed to encourage students to consume more fruit at school as a way to combat the rising obesity rates across the Member States. The 2009-2010 school year was the first year that this programme was implemented. In that first year, only EUR 33 million of the EUR 90 million allocated were spent on the programme, and there were few resources available to help guide educational institutions and evaluate the programme's success. In addition, many educational institutions were frustrated by the additional administrative work that the application and execution processes for the programme entailed.

Nevertheless, by October 2012 significant progress had been made. In the evaluation of the School Fruit Scheme, the programme was rated as being 'very good' or 'excellent' — a dramatic improvement compared with the year before.

In light of these developments, is the Commission considering making any changes to the programme in order to continue to promote healthy eating habits, and in order to improve the effectiveness of this relatively new initiative in the next school year?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

In the framework of CAP 2020, the Commission has proposed some changes for the School Fruit Scheme, namely the raise of the budget from EUR 90 million to EUR 150 million, the increase of the EU share of the aid from 75 to 90% for less developed and outermost regions and from 50 to 75% for the other regions, and the eligibility of accompanying measures to the EU aid.

Moreover, the Commission has recently adopted its evaluation report on the Scheme ([1]) and launched an impact assessment process in order to assess the existing school schemes (School Fruit Scheme and School Milk Scheme) and analyse if and how they should evolve in the future by considering different options, including a possibility of a new wider scheme.

Furthermore, it will also examine the role and design of accompanying measures which are an important tool for informing and educating children about the importance of agricultural products, agriculture and farming, as well as about healthy eating habits and lifestyle.

([1]) COM(2012)768 of 18.12.2012.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-010815/12
lill-Kummissjoni (Viċi President / Rappreżentant Għoli)
David Casa (PPE)
(29 ta' Novembru 2012)

Suġġett: VP/HR — Il-faqar fiċ-Ċilì

F'indirizz reċenti lill-Parlament Ewropew, il-President taċ-Ċilì Sebastián Piñera informa lill-Membri bil-pjan tiegħu li "jelimina l-faqar sal-2020". Fid-dawl tat-tkabbir ekonomiku tal-pajjiż ta' 6%, Piñera qal li hu fittex li jirdoppja l-investiment fit-teknoloġija matul is-snin li ġejjin, filwaqt li semma l-integrazzjoni bħala pass ewlieni "l quddiem.

Minkejja dawn l-objettivi, iċ-Ċilì għadu għaddej minn konflitt intern mal-Indjani Mapuche, li attwalment huma esklużi kemm ekonomikament kif ukoll soċjalment. Hekk kif il-fondi tal-UE ta" EUR 41 miljun għall-2007-2013 qed jersqu lejn tmiemhom, ir-Rappreżentant Għoli kif għandha l-ħsieb li tappoġġa l-isforzi tal-Gvern Ċilen li jnaqqas il-faqar u li bl-istess mod jiżgura li jiġu indirizzati l-każi ta' ksur tad-drittijiet tal-bniedem kontra l-Indjani Mapuche?

Tweġiba mogħtija mir-Rappreżentant Għoli/il-Viċi President Ashton f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(31 ta' Jannar 2013)

Id-dejta ta' stħarriġ fid-djar maħruġa fl-2012 jindika li r-rata ta' faqar estrem fiċ-Ċili naqas minn 3.7% fl-2009 għal 2.7% fl-2011 u il-faqar globali naqas minn 15.1% għal 14%. Għalkemm ir-rati tal-faqar naqsu matul l-istess perjodu għaċ-ċittadini indiġeni taċ-Ċili inklużi l-Mapuches, dawn jibqgħu affettwati b'mod sproporzjonat kemm minn faqar estrem (4.3%) kif ukoll mill-faqar (19.2%). L-awtoritajiet Ċileni huma konxji ta' din is-sitwazzjoni u huma mħassba dwarha, u qed jippruvaw jimplimentaw politiki u programmi li jnaqqsu din "id-differenza etnika tal-faqar".

Iċ-Ċili, membru tal-OECD, m'għadx għandu bżonn finanzjament tal-UE permezz tal-Istrument tal-Kooperazzjoni għall-Iżvilupp, biex jappoġġja l-politiki tiegħu u l-programmi mmirati lejn il-ġlieda kontra l-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali. Il-pajjiż jibqa' eliġibbli, madankollu, għal kooperazzjoni taħt programmi tematiċi ta' kooperazzjoni reġjonali u sub-reġjonali. Barra minn hekk, iċ-Ċili u l-UE ikollhom djalogi politiċi u ta' politika regolari fil-qafas tal-Ftehim ta' Assoċjazzjoni UE-Ċili, dwar varjetà ta' kwistjonijiet inklużi l-impjiegi u l-politiki soċjali, u d-drittijiet tal-bniedem inklużi d-drittijiet tal-Mapuche u Ċileni indiġeni oħra. Ir-Rappreżentant Għoli/Viċi President tikkonferma li hi se tkompli twettaq dawn l-iskambji ta' fehmiet mal-awtoritajiet Ċileni, iċ-ċittadini Ċileni, inklużi l-Mapuche u r-rappreżentanti tagħhom, l-organizzazzjonijiet mhux governattivi u partijiet interessati oħra dwar it-tnaqqis tal-faqar u l-protezzjoni u l-promozzjoni tad-drittijiet tal-Mapuche.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010815/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Casa (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Poverty in Chile

In a recent address to the European Parliament, President Sebastián Piñera of Chile informed Members of his plan to 'eliminate poverty by 2020'. In light of the country's 6% economic growth in 2011, Piñera said that he sought to double investment in technology over the next several years, citing integration as a key step forward.

Despite these goals, though, Chile still faces internal conflict with the Mapuche Indians, who are currently excluded both economically and socially. As the EUR 41 million 2007-2013 EU funding comes to an end, how does the High Representative intend to support the efforts of the Chilean Government to reduce poverty and to likewise ensure that human rights violations against the Mapuche Indians are tackled?

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

Household survey data released in 2012 indicates that the rate of extreme poverty in Chile decreased from 3.7% in 2009 to 2.7% in 2011 and overall poverty fell from 15.1% to 14%. Although poverty rates decreased during the same period for Chile's indigenous citizens, including Mapuches, they remain disproportionately affected both by extreme poverty (4.3%) and by poverty (19.2%). The Chilean authorities are aware of and concerned by this situation, and are seeking to implement policies and programmes that will reduce this 'ethnic poverty gap.'

Chile, a member of the OECD, no longer needs EU funding through the Development Cooperation Instrument to support its policies and programmes aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion. The country remains eligible, nevertheless, for cooperation under thematic, regional and sub-regional cooperation programmes. Moreover, Chile and the EU hold regular political and policy dialogues in the framework of the EU-Chile Association Agreement, on a range of issues including employment and social policies, and human rights including the rights of Mapuche and other indigenous Chileans. The High Representative/Vice-President confirms that she will continue to engage in such exchanges of views with the Chilean authorities, Chilean citizens, including Mapuche and their representatives, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders concerning poverty reduction and protection and promotion of the rights of the Mapuche.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010816/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(29 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 6/2012 και πιθανές συνέπειες της μη έγκρισης

Το σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 6/2012 αποτελεί αναπόσπαστο τμήμα των διαπραγματεύσεων για τον προϋπολογισμό της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για το δημοσιονομικό έτος 2013. Σε περίπτωση που δεν επέλθει συμφωνία για το σχέδιο διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 6/2012, ελλοχεύει ο κίνδυνος η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να έχει έλλειμμα 9 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ στο τέλος του έτους.

Υπό το πρίσμα των ανωτέρω, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να υποβάλει έναν διεξοδικό πίνακα των προγραμμάτων ανά κράτος μέλος, τα οποία θα επηρεαστούν περισσότερο από ενδεχόμενη μη έγκριση του σχεδίου διορθωτικού προϋπολογισμού αριθ. 6/2012;

Απάντηση του κ. Lewandowski εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Ιανουαρίου 2013)

Στον προσφάτως εγκριθέντα διορθωτικό προϋπολογισμό 6/2012 έχουν αυξηθεί οι πιστώσεις πληρωμών κατά 6 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ, γεγονός το οποίο θα επιτρέψει στην Επιτροπή να πληρώσει πριν από το τέλος του 2012 όλες τις αιτήσεις στα πλαίσια του ταμείου συνοχής που παρελήφθησαν πριν από τις 31 Οκτωβρίου ([1]), καθώς και τις αιτήσεις στα πλαίσια του ταμείου αγροτικής ανάπτυξης που παρελήφθησαν έως τις 10 Νοεμβρίου. Ο διορθωτικός προϋπολογισμός θα καλύψει επίσης όλες τις ανάγκες του τομέα 1Α «Ανταγωνιστικότητα για την ανάπτυξη και την απασχόληση», του τομέα 3Α «Ελευθερία, ασφάλεια και δικαιοσύνη» και του τομέα 4 «Η ΕΕ ως παγκόσμια δύναμη», όπως προτάθηκε από την Επιτροπή.

([1]) Εκτός από τα προγράμματα δυνάμει της διαδικασίας «αναστολή των πληρωμών».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010816/12
to the Commission
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Draft Amending Budget No 6/2012 and the potential effects of non-adoption

Draft Amending Budget (DAB) No 6/2012 constitutes an integral part of the negotiations for the European Union's budget for the financial year 2013. In the event that there is no agreement on DAB No 6/2012, the European Union runs the risk of having an end-of-year deficit of EUR 9 billion.

In view of the above, could the Commission provide a detailed table of the programmes, broken down by Member State, which will be most affected by a failure to adopt DAB No 6/2012?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

The recently adopted amending budget 6/2012 has increased the 2012 payment appropriations by EUR 6 billion which should allow the Commission to pay before the end of 2012 all the Cohesion claims received before October 31 ([1]) as well Rural Development claims received by November 10. The amending budget will also cover all the needs of Heading 1A 'Competitiveness for growth and employment', Heading 3A 'Freedom, security and justice' and Heading 4 'EU as global player' as proposed by the Commission.

([1]) Except for the programmes under the 'suspension of payments' procedure.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010817/12
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Sortie du statut de déchet: projet de règlement sur les déchets biodégradables

La Commission européenne a entamé avec l'aide de son centre de recherche (JRC) une démarche visant à définir les conditions dans lesquelles les composts et les digestats provenant du traitement des déchets biodégradables pourraient avoir accès au statut de produit.

La lecture de la dernière version du rapport émis par le JRC met en évidence que la quasi-totalité des États membres ont déjà mis en place des réglementations pour encadrer le retour au sol des composts et que plus de la moitié d'entre eux ont défini leurs conditions d'accès au statut de produit. Sur ce dernier point des consensus nationaux ont pu être trouvés en tenant compte de spécificités locales et de la sensibilité des différentes parties prenantes.

Il en résulte une certaine diversité dans les critères de qualité retenus qu'il ne semble pas souhaitable de remettre en cause, notamment si l'on tient compte du fait que les échanges de composts entre États membres sont quasi inexistants (moins de 1 % des tonnages produits). En conséquence, sur cette problématique, le principe de subsidiarité apparaît tout à fait pertinent.

— Dans quelle mesure la Commission européenne prévoit-elle de prendre en compte dans son projet de règlement la nécessité de la subsidiarité? Comment expliquer que l'option faisant prévaloir la subsidiarité sur une législation européenne n'ait pas été envisagée par le JRC dans son étude?

— La Commission peut-elle communiquer sur les prochaines échéances et sur la publication du règlement susmentionné?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(23 janvier 2013)

Le groupe de travail technique prépare actuellement un document de travail qui en est toujours au stade de l'élaboration. Il convient que le rapport final évalue l'incidence de l'adoption de critères applicables dans l'ensemble de l'Union en ce qui concerne la fin de vie des déchets sur le marché européen des composts et détermine si l'introduction de ces critères se justifie également du point de vue de la subsidiarité.

Le rapport du groupe de travail technique devrait être publié d'ici la fin du premier semestre de 2013. Ensuite, la Commission décidera s'il est nécessaire de prendre des mesures législatives. Comme à l'accoutumée, ce type de décision reposerait sur une analyse d'impact qui tiendrait compte de l'application du principe de subsidiarité.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010817/12
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: End-of-waste status: draft regulation on biodegradable waste

With the help of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Commission has taken a step aimed at establishing criteria so that compost and digestates from the processing of biodegradable waste can be given product status.

Reading the latest version of the report issued by the JRC highlights the fact that nearly all Member States have already put in place legislation to regulate the return to soil of compost, and that more than half of them have established their criteria for claiming product status. On this last point, it has been possible to reach national agreements by taking into account specific local characteristics and the sensitivity of the various stakeholders.

The result is that there is a rather diverse range of quality criteria, which seemingly should not be called into question, particularly if we take into account the fact that compost exchanges between Member States are almost non-existent (less than 1% of the tonnage produced). Consequently, the principle of subsidiarity seems entirely relevant to this issue.

— To what extent does the Commission intend to take into account the need for subsidiarity in its draft regulation? How can it explain the fact that, in its study, the JRC did not take into account the option of having subsidiarity take precedence over a piece of European legislation?

— Can the Commission indicate the upcoming deadlines and the publication of the abovementioned regulation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

The Working Document being prepared by the Technical Working Group is still in the drafting phase. The final report should assess the impact of the adoption of EU-wide end-of-waste criteria on the European compost market, and determine if the introduction of such criteria is justified also from the point of view of subsidiarity.

The report from the Technical Working Group is expected by the end of the first half of 2013. Then, the Commission will decide whether legislative measures are needed. As usual, such a decision would be informed by an impact assessment which would take into account the application of the subsidiarity principle.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010818/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Gaz de schiste

Suite aux débats tenus lors de la session parlementaire à Strasbourg, en novembre 2012, sur le thème du gaz de schiste, je demande à la Commission

1. Si elle compte tracer de nouvelles options pour renforcer les normes relatives aux sociétés transnationales en matière de droits sociaux et environnementaux, ainsi que d'éventuels moyens de mise en œuvre?

2. Comment va-t-elle contribuer à évaluer le potentiel des réserves de gaz et de schiste bitumeux dans l'Union européenne en rassemblant les résultats des évaluations des États membres et ceux des projets d'exploration, et ce en analysant et en évaluant les aspects économiques, énergétiques, environnementaux et sanitaires de la production intérieure de gaz de schiste?

3. Compte-t-elle aborder lors de la prochaine réunion du Conseil de l'énergie UE-États-Unis, étant donné l'évolution du marché du gaz et de la croissance de la tarification basée sur des plateformes de négoce en Europe, l'impact potentiel du développement mondial du gaz de schiste sur le marché du GNL et la levée d'éventuelles restrictions au commerce mondial de GNL?

4. Ne serait-il pas nécessaire qu'elle propose, dans les prochaines semaines, une analyse de l'avenir du marché gazier mondial et européen, y compris une évaluation des incidences des projets d'infrastructures gazières déjà planifiés (par exemple ceux qui ont été développés dans le cadre du corridor Sud)?

5. La Commission compte-t-elle faire quelque chose de précis pour assurer la transposition et l'application harmonieuses des exigences du troisième paquet sur le marché intérieur de l'énergie de l'UE et des propositions du paquet sur l'infrastructure énergétique en vue d'harmoniser et de libéraliser pleinement les marchés européens de gros de l'énergie d'ici à 2014?

6. Étant donné l'absence de données européennes complètes sur l'empreinte carbone du gaz de schiste, quand, précisément, le Centre commun de recherche de la Commission compte-t-il finaliser son analyse des émissions de gaz à effet de serre tout au long du cycle de vie en ce qui concerne l'extraction et la production du gaz de schiste afin de faire en sorte que ces émissions soient correctement calculées à l'avenir?

7. Quelle est sa position sur l'aspect économique du captage et du stockage du carbone (CSC) pour le gaz?

8. A-t-elle déjà examiné les incidences probables de la technologie du CSC sur la flexibilité de la production d'énergie au gaz et, par conséquent, sur son rôle de soutien aux sources d'énergie renouvelables?

Réponse donnée par M. Oettinger au nom de la Commission
(30 janvier 2013)

1. Des orientations relatives aux Droits de l'homme à l'intention des entreprises pétrolières et gazières, englobant également certains aspects sociaux et environnementaux pertinents, sont en cours d'élaboration pour le compte de la Commission. Un projet a été récemment publié pour consultation ([1]).

2. La Commission s'attend à ce que de plus amples informations sur les réserves potentielles deviennent disponibles lorsque davantage de projets d'exploration seront achevés. Les points pertinents seront abordés dans le cadre de la prochaine initiative de la Commission intitulée «Cadre d'évaluation des questions liées à l'environnement, au climat et à l'énergie visant à permettre une extraction sûre et sécurisée des hydrocarbures non conventionnels».

3. Lors de la réunion du Conseil de l'énergie UE-États-Unis qui s'est tenue à Bruxelles, le 5 décembre 2012, les deux parties ont souligné la qualité de leur coopération actuelle sur les marchés mondiaux du pétrole et du gaz, notamment en ce qui concerne le rôle des ressources gazières non conventionnelles et la promotion de marchés mondiaux de l'énergie concurrentiels ([2]).

([1]) http://www.ihrb.org/project/eu-sector-guidance/draft-guidance-consultation.html
([2]) http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134058.pdf

4. La Commission surveille en permanence l'évolution du marché du gaz dans l'UE et au niveau mondial ([3]). Dans le cadre de la sélection des projets d'intérêt commun, prévue dans la proposition de règlement sur des lignes directrices relatives aux infrastructures énergétiques transeuropéennes ([4]), les incidences éventuelles des projets proposés dans les différents corridors prioritaires — y compris le corridor gazier sud-européen — sont en cours d'évaluation.

5. La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se reporter à sa récente communication intitulée «Pour un bon fonctionnement du marché intérieur de l'énergie» ([5]).

6. Une analyse du cycle de vie a déjà été menée dans le cadre de l'étude intitulée «Incidence climatique d'une éventuelle production de gaz de schiste dans l'UE», publiée le 7 septembre 2012 ([6]). Aucune autre étude n'est actuellement réalisée par la Commission ou pour son compte sur ce point particulier.

7./8. Les sujets concernés pourront, entre autres, être abordés par la Commission dans un document d'orientation sur le captage et le stockage du carbone en 2013.

([3]) Voir http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/gas_fr.htm
([4]) COM(2011) 658 final du 19.10.2011.
([5]) COM(2012) 663 final du 15.11.2012.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eccp/docs/120815_final_report_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010818/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Shale gas

Following the debates on the issue of shale gas held during the parliamentary part-session in Strasbourg in November 2012:

1. Does the Commission intend to outline new options for raising standards concerning transnational companies as regards social and environmental rights, as well as any implementation measures?

2. How will it contribute to assessing the potential of shale gas and shale oil reserves in the EU by assembling results from Member States' assessments and available results from exploration projects, as well as by analysing and evaluating the economic, energy, environmental and health aspects of domestic shale gas production?

3. In view of gas market evolution and the growth of hub-based pricing in Europe, does it intend to address, at the next meeting of the EU-US Energy Council, the potential impact of worldwide shale gas development on the liquefied natural gas (LNG) market and the lifting of possible restrictions on global LNG trade?

4. Should it not put forward, in the coming weeks, an analysis of the future of the global and EU gas market, including the impact of the gas infrastructure projects already planned (such as those developed in the context of the Southern Corridor)?

5. Does the Commission intend to take specific steps to ensure the harmonious transposition and application of the requirements of the EU's third internal energy market package and the proposals of the energy infrastructure package, with a view to harmonising and fully liberalising the European wholesale energy markets by 2014?

6. Given the lack of comprehensive European data on the carbon footprint of shale gas, when exactly does the Commission's Joint Research Centre envisage finalising its full life-cycle analysis of greenhouse gas emissions from shale gas extraction and production, with a view to ensuring that they are correctly accounted for in future?

7. What is its position on the economics of carbon capture and storage (CCS) for gas?

8. Has it already examined the likely impact of CCS technology on the flexibility of gas power generation, and therefore on its role as back-up for renewable energy sources?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

1. Human rights guidance for oil and gas companies, which also encompasses relevant social and environmental aspects, is currently being developed on behalf of the Commission. A draft was recently published for consultation ([1]).

2. The Commission expects more information on potential reserves to become available once more exploration projects have been finalised. Relevant issues will be addressed in the context of the upcoming Commission initiative 'Environmental, climate and energy assessment framework to enable safe and secure unconventional hydrocarbon extraction'.

3. At the EU-U.S. Energy Council in Brussels on 5.12.2012 both sides stressed their ongoing good cooperation on global oil and gas markets, including concerning the role of unconventional gas and the promotion of competitive global energy markets ([2]).

([1]) http://www.ihrb.org/project/eu-sector-guidance/draft-guidance-consultation.html .
([2]) http://consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134058.pdf

4. The Commission constantly monitors the evolution of the gas market in the EU and globally ([3]). In the context of the identification of Projects of Common Interest as foreseen in the proposal for a regulation on Guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure ([4]), the potential impacts of projects proposed in the different priority corridors-including the Southern Gas Corridor-are currently being assessed.

5. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its recent Communication 'Making the internal energy market work' ([5]).

6. A life-cycle assessment was already done in the study, 'Climate impact of potential shale gas production in the EU', published on 7.9.2012 ([6]). No further studies are currently underway in or on behalf of the Commission on this specific issue.

7./8. The matters in question may, among others, be addressed by the Commission in a policy paper on CCS in 2013.

([3]) See http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/gas/gas_en.htm
([4]) COM(2011) 658 final, 19.10.2011.
([5]) COM(2012)663 final, 15.11.2012.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eccp/docs/120815_final_report_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010819/12
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Lutte contre l'obésité notamment infantile: «fat tax» ou prévention?

En général, on estime qu'en Europe, la population compte 10 % d'obèses et 40 % de personnes en surpoids.

Pour lutter contre l'obésité, le Danemark avait introduit en octobre 2011 une «*fat tax*» sur les graisses saturées dans les aliments — taxe unique au monde. Compte tenu des conséquences négatives de cette taxe sur la compétitivité des petites entreprises et le prix des denrées alimentaires, le gouvernement danois vient d'annoncer sa suppression, ce qui pourrait dissuader d'autres États membres, tels que le Royaume-Uni et la France, à mettre en place une telle législation.

En ce sens, la Commission européenne soutient-elle ce type d'initiative visant à réduire la courbe de croissance de l'obésité en Europe ou estime-t-elle que la prévention par les campagnes d'information est plus efficace?

Le livre blanc de la Commission européenne du 30 mai 2007 intitulé «Une stratégie européenne pour les problèmes de santé liés à la nutrition, la surcharge pondérale et l'obésité» est la dernière communication en date de la Commission européenne.

Aussi, quelles mesures la Commission européenne compte-t-elle prendre pour lutter contre le fléau de l'obésité infantile — phénomène récemment révélé?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(22 janvier 2013)

La Commission a connaissance du fait que certains États membres, notamment le Danemark, ont mis en place des taxes intérieures non harmonisées sur les aliments riches en graisses, en sel ou en sucre.

La Commission facilite l'échange d'expériences entre les États membres de l'Union européenne concernant leurs initiatives actuelles en matière de taxes sur les aliments, dans le contexte du groupe de haut niveau sur la nutrition et l'activité physique, l'un des instruments fondamentaux de la stratégie européenne pour les problèmes de santé liés à la nutrition, la surcharge pondérale et l'obésité ([1]).

Cette stratégie globale cible six domaines d'action prioritaires: mieux informer les consommateurs; faire en sorte que l'option pour une alimentation saine soit accessible; encourager l'activité physique; développer la base de connaissances pour appuyer la formulation de politiques; développer des systèmes de suivi; et faire des enfants et des groupes défavorisés une priorité.

La Commission a lancé une évaluation de cette stratégie. Son rapport est attendu pour le printemps 2013.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010819/12
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Combating obesity, in particular among children: 'fat tax' or prevention

It is estimated that 10% of Europe's population is obese and another 40% is overweight.

In October 2011, in an attempt to combat obesity, Denmark introduced a 'fat tax' — the only tax of its kind in the world — on saturated fats in foods. In the light of the negative impact this tax has had on the competitiveness of small businesses and on food prices, the Danish Government have just announced that this tax is to be abolished. This decision might discourage other Member States, such as the United Kingdom and France, from introducing similar legislation.

With this in mind, does the Commission support initiatives of this kind to stem the rise in obesity in Europe or does it think that information campaigns are more effective?

The last Commission Communication on this subject was the White Paper of 30 May 2007 entitled 'A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues'.

Given that it was brought to light only recently, how does the Commission intend to tackle the problem of childhood obesity?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

The Commission is aware that some EU Member States, including Denmark, have introduced non-harmonised internal taxes on food products high in fat, salt or sugar.

The Commission is facilitating the exchange of experiences between the EU Member States on their current food tax initiatives in the context of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity, one of the core instruments of the strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues ([1]).

This comprehensive Strategy prioritises six areas for action: better informed consumers; making the healthy option available; encouraging physical activity; developing the evidence base to support policy making; developing monitoring systems, and putting children and low socioeconomic groups as a priority.

The Commission has launched an evaluation of this Strategy and the report is expected in spring 2013.

([1]) COM(2007) 279.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010820/12
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Radars aux feux de signalisation pour les poids lourds

L'uniformité internationale des signaux, symboles et marques de la circulation routière est réglementée par la convention internationale sur la signalisation routière de 1968 et par les accords européens du 1er mai 1971.

Cependant, les chauffeurs routiers font les frais d'une spécificité française concernant les feux tricolores, munis de radars.

En effet, le système de détection des radars n'est pas adapté à la spécificité des camions car il y a une rupture de détection entre le camion et la remorque. Ainsi, ce problème peut occasionner les situations suivantes: si le feu passe à l'orange durant le passage de la remorque du camion (le feu étant vert lors du passage du camion), le camion sera flashé, alors même que le chauffeur avait respecté la signalisation. Le radar détecte ainsi deux véhicules, qui ne sont cependant conduits que par un seul conducteur.

Les feux tricolores français n'étant pas munis de comptes à rebours (comme en Autriche et en Allemagne), il est impossible, pour les chauffeurs routiers, d'estimer le temps qu'il leur reste pour faire passer l'intégralité de leur véhicule devant le feu. Dès lors, le flash engendre une amende de 90 euros et un retrait de 4 points sur le permis de conduire, ce qui est très dommageable pour les professionnels de la route, nationaux et communautaires, qui risquent de perdre rapidement leur permis de conduire, et en particulier pour les jeunes professionnels de la route qui ne disposent que de six points sur leur permis probatoire.

De prime abord, ce préjudice subi par les chauffeurs routiers circulant en France ne constitue-t-il pas, pour la Commission européenne, une entrave à la liberté de circulation?

Compte-tenu de la réponse de la Commission européenne à notre question E-008004/2012 relative aux éthylotests, est-il prévu que le coordinateur de la sécurité routière de l'UE en 2014 soit en charge de ce type de litige?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(30 janvier 2013)

La Commission n'a pas connaissance du fait qu'un dysfonctionnement des radars automatiques aux feux de signalisation, que ce soit en France ou dans tout autre État membre, cause un problème pour les chauffeurs routiers. Même si ces systèmes devaient présenter un dysfonctionnement, la Commission ne considère pas que celui-ci se traduirait par une entrave à la liberté de circulation puisqu'il affecterait tous les chauffeurs routiers, quel que soit l'État membre d'immatriculation de leur véhicule.

La Commission ne prévoit pas de coordonner les mesures prises par les États membres en ce qui concerne les radars automatiques aux feux de signalisation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010820/12
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Traffic light radar systems for heavy goods vehicles

The international uniformity of traffic lights, road signs and road markings is regulated by the 1968 international Convention on Road Signs and Signals and by the European agreements of 1 May 1971.

However, drivers are paying the price for a system that is specific to France with regard to traffic lights equipped with radars.

The radar detection system is not adapted to the specific characteristics of lorries as it does not detect connections between lorries and trailers. This problem can therefore give rise to the following situations: if the lights turn amber while the lorry's trailer is passing through (the lights being green when the lorry passed through), the lorry will be flashed, even though the driver respected the signals. The radar therefore detects two vehicles, which are nonetheless being driven by a single driver.

As French traffic lights are not equipped with countdown timers (as they are in Austria and Germany), it is impossible for drivers to estimate how much time they have left for their whole vehicle go through the lights. As a result, drivers who are flashed must pay a fine of EUR 90 and lose four points from their driving licence, which is very damaging for professional drivers, both nationally and throughout the EU, who could quickly lose their driving licence, and in particular young professional drivers who only have six points on their probational licence.

First of all, does the Commission believe that this issue, which is detrimental to drivers in France, represents an obstacle to freedom of movement?

Taking into account the Commission's answer to our Question E-008004/2012 on breathalyser kits, are there plans for such cases to come under the remit of the EU Road Safety Coordinator in 2014?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission is not aware that the malfunctioning of automatic traffic light enforcement systems, be it in France or in any other Member State, creates a problem for trucks drivers. In the event of a malfunctioning of such systems, the Commission does not consider that this malfunctioning would result in a limitation of the freedom of movement, since it would affect all truck drivers regardless of the vehicle's Member State of registration.

The Commission has no plans to coordinate Member States' measures concerning automatic traffic light enforcement systems.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010821/12
à la Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Réforme des aides publiques décentralisées au budget et au tournage des films

En France, les aides régionales pour le cinéma financent actuellement 80 % du budget d'un film dès lors que cette part est dépensée sur le territoire qui finance, selon le principe de territorialité.

Cependant, dans son projet de nouvelle directive débattu lundi 26 novembre lors d'un conseil des ministres européens de l'éducation, de la culture et de la jeunesse, la Commission souhaite que l'aide publique des territoires soit inférieure à 50 % du budget du film, et à 60 % en cas de coproduction.

Les professionnels du cinéma français s'inquiètent d'une menace sur la filière de 30 % en termes d'emploi et de production. De plus, l'effet de levier antérieur serait amoindri pour les collectivités, car le poids des dépenses de tournage serait strictement équivalent à celui des aides qu'elles apportent. Les régions s'inquiètent également d'une menace de délocalisation des tournages dans des pays où le coût de la main d'œuvre est plus faible.

Dans une volonté de libéraliser l'origine des biens et des services pendant le tournage des films, la Commission peut mettre en péril un modèle de subvention qui a fait ses preuves dans le soutien à la production culturelle et artistique française.

De nombreuses récompenses internationales dont les Oscars viennent prouver la qualité et l'attrait du cinéma français et européen en général.

Quelles contreparties la Commission compte-t-elle proposer à la filière cinématographique et aux régions françaises, compte tenu du manque à gagner que provoquera l'application de cette nouvelle directive?

Comment la Commission envisage-t-elle, d'une part, de soutenir la production culturelle et artistique européenne et de dynamiser l'attractivité des régions vers ce secteur, et d'autre part, de réduire fortement les aides publiques décentralisées au budget et au tournage des films?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(1er février 2013)

La Commission procède actuellement à la révision des règles régissant les aides octroyées par les États membres à la production audiovisuelle. En vertu des dispositions existantes, fixées par la communication de la Commission concernant certains aspects juridiques liés aux œuvres cinématographiques et autres œuvres audiovisuelles ([1]), il est possible d'accorder des aides dont l'intensité peut atteindre 50 % du budget de production, et davantage pour les films difficiles ou à petit budget. La Commission n'a pas l'intention de baisser ces seuils ni de réduire la marge dont disposent les États membres ou les régions pour financer la production cinématographique.

Toutefois, comme cela a été examiné lors de la réunion du Conseil à laquelle l'Honorable Parlementaire fait référence et rendu public au cours de deux cycles de consultation publique, la Commission est en train d'évaluer le niveau de ce que l'on appelle les obligations de territorialisation des dépenses. En vertu des règles actuelles, un État membre qui accorde une aide peut exiger qu'un producteur dépense 80 % du budget de production sur son territoire, quelle que soit l'intensité de l'aide effectivement fournie. Cette évaluation doit également être replacée dans le contexte des principes généraux du traité, dont l'objectif est de supprimer les restrictions à la libre circulation des marchandises et à la libre prestation de services en Europe.

Il convient de noter que la Commission envisage également d'élargir le champ des activités pour lesquelles une aide est susceptible d'être accordée, depuis l'écriture de scénarios jusqu'à la présentation au public, ce qui est dans l'intérêt de l'industrie cinématographique de tous les États membres.

Compte tenu de l'importance des aides d'État à la production cinématographique, le membre de la Commission chargé des questions de concurrence a décidé qu'un nouveau cycle de consultations publiques sur les nouvelles règles aurait lieu au début de l'année 2013.

([1]) JO C 43 du 16.2.2002.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010821/12
to the Commission
Philippe Boulland (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Reform of decentralised state aid for film budgets and production

In France, regional film funding currently finances 80% of a film's budget as long as that proportion of the budget is spent within the region providing the funding, under the territoriality principle.

The Commission, however, in its new draft directive debated at a session of the EU Council of Ministers for Education, Youth and Culture on Monday 26 November 2012, wants to limit regional state aid to 50% of a film's budget, and 60% where the film is a co-production.

French cinema professionals are concerned that this 30% reduction will pose an equivalent threat to the industry in terms of jobs and production. Moreover, regional authorities will have less leverage than before, since film production expenditure is strictly equivalent to the amount of funding provided. Regional authorities are also concerned about the risk of film production being relocated to countries where cheaper labour is available.

The Commission, through a desire to liberalise the origin of goods and services during film production, could jeopardise a funding model which has been successful in supporting French cultural and artistic output.

Numerous international awards, including Oscars, prove the quality and appeal of French and European cinema in general.

What compensation does the Commission intend to propose for the French cinema industry and French regional authorities, considering the loss of potential income which will be caused by the implementation of this new directive?

How does the Commission plan, on the one hand, to support European cultural and artistic output and boost the attractiveness of regions for film-making, while, on the other hand, substantially reducing decentralised state aid for film budgets and production?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission is reviewing its rules regarding aid provided by Member States to audiovisual production. The current rules, the communication from the Commission on certain legal aspects relating to cinematographic and other audiovisual works ([1]), allow aid intensities of 50% of the production budget, and a higher intensity in case of difficult or low budget films. It is not the intention of the Commission to lower these thresholds and to reduce the room that Member States or regions have for film funding.

However, as discussed in the Council meeting to which the Honourable Member refers and as published during two rounds of public consultation, the Commission is indeed assessing the appropriate level of so-called territorial spending obligations. Under the current rules, an aid-granting Member State may require the film producer to spend 80% of the film production budget in its territory, regardless of the intensity of aid actually provided. This assessment also has to be seen in the context of the general principles of the Treaty, which have the objective of abolishing restriction on the free circulation of goods and the free provision of services in Europe.

It should be noted that the Commission also envisages enlarging the scope of activities that can be aided, from script writing to delivery to the audience, which is in the interest of the cinema industry in all Member States.

In light of the importance of state aid for film production, the Member of the Commission responsible for Competition decided that a new round of public consultation on the new rules will take place in early 2013.

([1]) OJ C 43, 16.02.2002.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010823/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Eroina in aumento

I dati del Dipartimento per le politiche antidroga in Italia lo confermano: ora l'eroina prende di mira soprattutto i giovanissimi. Nei primi sei mesi dell'anno l'avrebbero provata almeno 15 mila ragazzi tra i 15 e i 19 anni, e anche di più se si considerano quelli che proseguono negli studi. In tutta Italia il numero delle persone in cura nei Sert, i centri per il recupero dalle tossicodipendenze, sono 193 mila, secondo i dati del ministero della Salute. Ciò che preoccupa di più è la rapidità della diffusione e la previsione di aumento di almeno un terzo dei consumatori nei prossimi due anni. Anche i sequestri di questa droga confermano l'aumento del suo consumo. Tra gennaio e giugno 2012 sono stati sequestrati in Italia 515 kg. di eroina, il 63 % in più rispetto al primo semestre del 2011. Da notare, tra l'altro, che l'investigazione riesce a bloccare solo una minima parte del traffico, che oltre alle tradizionali rotte dell'Estremo Oriente, ora è alimentato dal boom delle coltivazioni di papaveri da oppio in Afghanistan. All'aumento esponenziale dei consumi contribuisce anche la diffusione via Internet, che ha il pregio di eliminare lo spacciatore singolo. Di fronte a questa realtà tragica per la salute dei minori e per la qualità della vita di tutti,

la Commissione:

1. può dirci se lo stesso fenomeno si registra anche negli altri Stati membri?

2. In caso affermativo, ha proposte da avanzare per combattere questa tragica situazione?

3. È in grado di esercitare pressioni sui Paesi coltivatori di papaveri da oppio per impedire la loro produzione?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(1º febbraio 2013)

Nell'insieme il mercato europeo dell'eroina è considerato in calo nel lungo periodo ([1]), sebbene secondo le stime nel 2011 la produzione di oppio in Afghanistan sia aumentata. Si riscontra maggiormente che in alcune parti dell'Europa le nuove iniziazioni al consumo di eroina sono diminuite, la disponibilità della sostanza stupefacente è diminuita e, recentemente, alcuni paesi d'Europa ne hanno sperimentato l'acuta scarsità ([2]). In diversi paesi l'eroina è stata sostituita da altre sostanze stupefacenti, inclusi gli oppioidi e altri stimolanti sintetici.

La produzione e l'offerta di eroina, salvo su licenza per finalità specifiche, è illegale in tutta l'UE ([3]). Gli Stati membri hanno competenza per elaborare e attuare politiche intese a ridurre la domanda di droga, compresa la prevenzione del consumo di droghe tra i giovani adolescenti. La Commissione sostiene e integra tali azioni: Il programma di prevenzione e informazione in materia di droga ([4]) e il programma relativo alla sanità pubblica ([5]), entrambi finanziati dall'UE, promuovono lo sviluppo di approcci efficaci e innovativi per la prevenzione del consumo di droghe e la condivisione delle migliori pratiche.

La Commissione coopera attivamente con i paesi produttori di eroina in termini sia di riduzione dell'offerta di droga sia di aiuto agli agricoltori che abbandonano la coltura degli stupefacenti per una produzione legale, affinché riescano ad ottenere un reddito sostenibile (sviluppo alternativo). Circa il 30 % della cooperazione allo sviluppo tra il 2002 e il 2013 è stato dedicato alla lotta contro gli stupefacenti. L'UE sostiene l'Afghanistan con una strategia che combina programmi di governance, sanità pubblica e sviluppo rurale volti a promuovere lo stato di diritto e uno sviluppo inclusivo e sostenibile. Inoltre, l'UE fornisce finanziamenti alla cooperazione regionale tra l'Afghanistan e i vicini settentrionali per combattere le minacce transnazionali quali la produzione e il traffico di stupefacenti.

([1]) 2012 World Drug Report, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Ufficio delle Nazioni Unite contro la droga e il crimine), Vienna 2012.
([2]) Relazione annuale 2012: evoluzione del fenomeno della droga in Europa, Osservatorio europeo delle droghe e delle tossicodipendenze, Lisbona, 2012.
([3]) L'eroina figura nella tabella I della convenzione unica delle Nazioni Unite sugli stupefacenti del 1961.
([4]) Decisione n. 1150/2007/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 25 settembre 2007, che istituisce per il periodo 2007-2013 il programma specifico Prevenzione e informazione in materia di droga nell'ambito del programma generale Diritti fondamentali e giustizia, GU L 257 del 3.10.2007, pag. 23-29.
([5]) Decisione n. 1350/2007/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 23 ottobre 2007, che istituisce un secondo programma d'azione comunitaria in materia di salute (2008-2013), GU L 301 del 20.11.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010823/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Rise in heroin use

Figures from Italy's Department for Anti-Drug Policies are proof that heroin use is affecting young people in particular. In the first six months of this year, at least 15 000 young people aged between 15 and 19 are believed to have tried the drug, and the figures are even higher when older students are included. According to Health Ministry data, 193 000 people are currently in the care of drug rehabilitation centres known as 'SERTs'. What is most worrying is the speed with which heroin use is spreading and the prediction that the number of users will increase by at least one third over the next two years. Drug seizures also confirm the increase in heroin abuse. Between January and June 2012, 515 kg of heroin were seized in Italy, 63% more than in the first half of 2011. It should also be noted that only a small proportion of the drugs trafficked is blocked as result of criminal investigation and that supplies are now fed by the boom in opium poppy production in Afghanistan, in addition to the traditional channels from the Far East. Another factor in the exponential rise in consumption is the fact that the drug is now disseminated via the Internet, doing away with individual dealers. In the face of this situation with its tragic impact on young people's health and quality of life in general,

Could the Commission:

1. Tell us if this phenomenon is also being registered in other Member States?

2. If so, does it have proposals to put forward in order to combat this tragic situation?

3. Is it able to put pressure on opium-producing countries to stop opium-poppy production?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The overall European heroin market is generally considered to be in long-term decline ([1]), even though the opium production in Afghanistan is estimated to have increased in 2011. Increasingly in parts of Europe new recruitment into heroin use has fallen, the availability of drugs has declined and recently, in some EU countries acute shortages have been reported ([2]). Heroin in several countries is being replaced by other drugs, including synthetic opioids and stimulants.

Heroin production and supply, except under license for specific purposes, is illegal across the EU ([3]). Member States are competent for developing and implementing policies on drug-demand reduction, including prevention of substance use among young adolescents. The Commission supports and complements those actions. The EU financed Drug Prevention and Information Programme ([4]) and the Public Health Programme ([5]) promote the development of effective and innovative approaches to drug prevention and best practice sharing.

The Commission cooperates actively with the heroin producing countries both in drug supply reduction and helping farmers that switch from drug crops to licit ones make a sustainable living (alternative development). About 30% of development cooperation in 2002-2013 has been dedicated to the fight against illicit drugs. The EU supports Afghanistan with a strategy that joins up governance, public health and rural development programmes promoting rule of law and inclusive sustainable development. Equally, the EU provides financing for regional cooperation between Afghanistan and its northern neighbours addressing transnational threats such as narcotics production and trafficking.

([1]) 2012 World Drug Report, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna 2012 .
([2]) 2012 Annual Report: the state of the drugs problem in Europe, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, Lisbon, 2012.
([3]) Heroin is listed in Schedule I of the United Nations 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs.
([4]) Decision No 1150/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 September 2007 establishing for the period 2007-2013 the Specific Programme Drug prevention and information as part of the General Programme Fundamental Rights and Justice, OJ L 257, 3.10.2007, p. 23-29.
([5]) Decision No 1350/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 establishing a second programme of Community action in the field of health (2008-2013), OJ L 301, 20.11.2007.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010824/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Tutela del patrimonio geologico

L'Italia è un Paese cosparso di tesori a rischio, minacciati dall'erosione e dalla cementificazione. Talvolta sono luoghi celebri, come le Cinque Terre, dove il 24 settembre scorso una frana ha invaso il Sentiero dell'amore, un percorso roccioso sul mare fra Manarola e Riomaggiore. Spesso sono invece siti non sconosciuti, che nascondono però delle sorprese eccezionali, come orme di dinosauri, frammenti di meteoriti, lastre di roccia risalenti a centinaia di milioni di anni fa; tutte meraviglie che potrebbero sparire in poco tempo, col solo rimpianto di qualche scienziato. Si chiamano «geositi» e sono d'importanza fondamentale per la storia naturale del Paese in cui si trovano. L'Istituto superiore italiano per la ricerca e la protezione ambientale ne ha censiti 3 500. La cava di Altamura in Puglia, il fossile di Pietraroja in Campania, Esperia in provincia di Frosinone, Sezze, sempre nel Lazio, la Gola del Bottaccione in Umbria con ampie tracce di iridio, un elemento rarissimo a cui è stata attribuita un'origine extraterrestre: una testimonianza, insomma, di quel meteorite che 65 milioni di anni fa avrebbe sconvolto il pianeta e causato l'estinzione dei dinosauri, le cui impronte ad Altamura, in Campania, nel Lazio e in Umbria proverebbero che i dinosauri hanno vissuto anche in Italia, smentendo la credenza che la Penisola fosse interamente sott'acqua. Tantissimi altri siti, come Punta delle Pietre nere a Lesina sul Gargano, includono materiali e testimoniano segni risalenti a 210 milioni di anni fa (vaporiti del Paleocene e rocce nere del Triassico minore). È un patrimonio geologico studiato da scienziati di tutto il mondo, che rischia però di sgretolarsi per sempre e scomparire per la naturale erosione a cui s'aggiunge l'incuria.

Potrebbe la Commissione rispondere a quanto segue:

1. se non andiamo errati, la Commissione ha accennato in più occasioni alla necessità di aggiornare i piani geologici nazionali, al fine di monitorare le zone a rischio d'alluvione o di altri fenomeni naturali. Può confermare questa affermazione?

2. In caso affermativo, non riterrebbe necessario aggiungere a questa azione d'aggiornamento anche il rilevamento dei «geositi», che hanno un'importanza rilevante per la storia naturale del pianeta?

3. Potrebbe proporre anche lo stanziamento di un fondo ad hoc per la tutela di questi siti?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(6 febbraio 2013)

La direttiva 2007/60/CE relativa alla valutazione e alla gestione dei rischi di alluvioni ([1]) istituisce un quadro per la riduzione dei rischi di alluvione che comprendono le potenziali conseguenze negative per gli ambiti più a rischio come il patrimonio culturale e l'ambiente. La direttiva impone l'individuazione dei potenziali rischi significativi di alluvioni, la produzione e la pubblicazione di mappe della pericolosità e di mappe del rischio di alluvione così come l'adozione di piani di gestione del rischio di alluvione. Questi piani devono sia fissare obiettivi per quanto riguarda la diminuzione del rischio di alluvioni che proporre misure per raggiungere tali scopi, tra i quali la tutela del patrimonio culturale dalle alluvioni.

Nessun'altra disposizione della direttiva riguarda in modo specifico siti del patrimonio naturale.

Generalmente le misure di gestione del rischio di alluvione sono ammissibili ai fondi UE nel quadro della politica di coesione, ma la preparazione, la selezione e l'attuazione di tali misure sono di competenza degli Stati membri sulla base delle loro priorità.

([1]) GU L 288 del 6.11.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010824/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Protection of geological heritage

Italy has many treasures which are at risk, threatened by erosion and building. Sometimes the areas are famous, such as Cinque Terre where on 24 September a landslide covered the Sentiero dell'amore, a rocky pathway overlooking the sea between Manarola and Riomaggiore. Often, however, the sites are not unknown yet they hide remarkable surprises such as dinosaur tracks, meteor fragments, slabs of rock dating back hundreds of millions of years — marvels which could disappear overnight, with only a few scientists to mourn their loss. They are called 'geosites' and they are of crucial importance to the natural history of the country in which they are located. The Italian institute for research and environmental protection has recorded 3 500 such sites. These include the Altamura quarry in Puglia; the Pietraroja fossil site in Campania; Esperia in the province of Frosinone; Sezze, also in Lazio; and the Bottaccione gorge in Umbria which contains plentiful traces of iridium, an extremely rare element thought to come from outer space — proof of the meteorite which 65 million years ago is said to have shaken the planet and caused the dinosaurs to become extinct. The tracks found in Altamura, Campania, Lazio and Umbria demonstrate that dinosaurs were also present in Italy, thus disproving the theory that the peninsula was entirely underwater. Many other sites, such as Punta delle Pietre nere in Lesina, overlooking the Gargano, hold proof of events which occurred up to 210 million years ago (Paleocene vaporites and black rocks from the Lower Triassic). This geological heritage, studied by scientists from across the world, is at risk of crumbling away and disappearing as a result of erosion and lack of attention.

Could the Commission say,

1. If we are not mistaken, the Commission has on several occasions highlighted the need to update national geological plans in order to monitor areas at risk of flooding or other natural events. Could the Commission confirm this?

2. If so, does the Commission not feel that this updating should go hand in hand with recording 'geosites' which are of key importance for the Earth's natural history?

3. Could the Commission also propose an ad hoc fund for the protection of these sites?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(6 February 2013)

Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk ([1]) establishes a framework for the reduction of flood risk, including potential adverse consequences for key risk receptors such as cultural heritage and the environment. The directive requires the identification of potential significant flood risks, the production and publication of flood hazard maps and flood risk maps as well as the adoption of flood risk management plans. These plans shall include objectives for the reduction of flood risk, as well as measures to achieve those including, among other things, the protection of cultural heritage from floods.

There is no further provision in the directive that specifically targets natural heritage sites.

Flood risk management measures are in general eligible for EU funds under Cohesion Policy, but the preparation, selection and implementation of such measures is the responsibility of the Member States on the basis of their programming priorities.

([1]) OJ L 288, 6.11.2007.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010825/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Patto di stabilità e cambiamenti climatici

L'Italia subisce, dagli anni ottanta, ingenti danni alle infrastrutture nazionali dovuti agli effetti dei cambiamenti climatici. Secondo i dati del ministero dell'Ambiente, circa il 10 % della superficie nazionale è a rischio frane, mentre l'89 % è a rischio alluvioni.

Queste calamità, negli anni, hanno contribuito all'aumento della spesa pubblica nazionale in seguito ad interventi di prevenzione, di messa in sicurezza del territorio nazionale e di ripristino infrastrutturale.

La Commissione ha da poco adottato misure in deroga rispetto al «Patto di stabilità», omettendo, tra quelle infrastrutturali, le misure dovute ai cambiamenti climatici e ai conseguenti problemi idrogeologici.

Si chiede alla Commissione:

1. Non ritiene di dover ottemperare a questa mancanza?

2. Non ritiene che misure infrastrutturali dovute a calamità naturali o agli effetti dei cambiamenti climatici debbano poter esser sostenute da investimenti pubblici, provvisoriamente fuori dal Patto di stabilità, ed entro i limiti dei quadri di bilancio nazionali e dell'UE?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(30 gennaio 2013)

Il patto di stabilità e crescita prevede una clausola per il verificarsi di eventi imprevisti con un impatto considerevole sulle finanze pubbliche. È però dubbio che eventi ricorrenti e i costi della manutenzione periodica rientrino nel campo di applicazione di tale clausola.

La Commissione è consapevole sia della necessità di investire, sia delle difficoltà di attuare progetti di questo tipo in un periodo di forti vincoli di bilancio. Il quadro dell'UE per la sorveglianza delle politiche di bilancio, il patto di stabilità e crescita, prevede che gli investimenti pubblici siano uno dei fattori pertinenti di cui tenere debito conto nella relazione che la Commissione è tenuta a preparare prima che si prenda la decisione di avviare una procedura per i disavanzi eccessivi nei confronti di uno Stato membro. Tuttavia, ciò non impedisce che uno Stato membro con un debito superiore al 60 % del PIL sia sottoposto alla procedura per i disavanzi eccessivi, a meno che il superamento del valore di riferimento del 3 % del PIL per il disavanzo sia temporaneo e il disavanzo stesso non si discosti di molto dal valore di riferimento.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010825/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Stability Pact and climate change

Since the 1980s, Italy has suffered serious damage to national infrastructure as a result of climate change. According to Ministry of the Environment figures, around 10% of the country's surface is at risk of landslide and 89% at risk of flooding.

Over the years, such disasters have contributed to increased public spending in the form of prevention measures, making areas safe and restoring infrastructure.

The Commission has recently adopted derogation measures in respect of the Stability Pact. Those related to infrastructure do not cover measures due to climate change and ensuing hydrogeological problems.

Does the Commission:

1. Not feel it should redress this lacuna?

2. Not think that it should be possible for infrastructure measures resulting from natural disasters or the impact of climate change to be supported by public investment, provisionally outside the Stability Pact, and within the limits of national and EU fiscal frameworks?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Stability and Growth Pact foresees a clause that provides for the occurrence of unexpected events with a sizable impact on government finances, although it is doubtful that a recurrent event and costs which are related to regular maintenance qualify for the application of such a clause.

The Commission is mindful of both the need for investment and the difficulties in implementing such projects amid tight fiscal constraints. The EU framework for surveillance of budgetary policies, the Stability and Growth Pact, foresees that public investments are one of the relevant factors that have to be duly taken into account in the report, which the Commission has to prepare before a decision can be taken to place a Member State in Excessive Deficit Procedure (EDP). This cannot however prevent a Member State with debt in excess of 60% of GDP from being placed in EDP, unless the breach of the 3% of GDP deficit reference value is not temporary and the deficit does not remain close to the reference value.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010826/12
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Vino fai da te e contraffazione

Vino Frascati fai da te, con tanto di kit di preparazione e istruzioni per l'uso, da destinare agli amanti del «buon bere» di Polonia e Gran Bretagna. Del vino laziale, però, non c'è traccia. Il «wine kit» smascherato dalla nota trasmissione televisiva italiana «Striscia la Notizia», infatti, arriva dalla Svezia, ed è l'ultima contraffazione di un pregiato prodotto made in Italy, il vino Frascati, il cui consorzio raccoglie 33 aziende. Il prodotto contraffatto venduto in Polonia e Gran Bretagna può essere stato venduto anche in altri Paesi europei ed extra europei aumentando il grave danno per i consumatori, per i produttori e per il brand dei prodotti tipici italiani. E per questo il consorzio Frascati si è ora rivolto alla Commissione europea.

Si chiede alla Commissione:

1. Come si sta muovendo per arginare questo nuovo fenomeno di contraffazione e, soprattutto, come intende tutelare il mercato e i consumatori quando il falso è prodotto o è distribuito da uno dei Paesi dell'UE?

2. Intende indagare su chi produce e distribuisce questa polverina per appurare quali altri prodotti alimentari siano stati contraffatti in modo simile e in quali Paesi europei siano stati venduti?

3. Non crede che siano sempre più urgenti regole comuni ed efficaci contro la contraffazione e norme comuni per colpire i responsabili e tutelare i consumatori e i produttori onesti?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-011074/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(4 dicembre 2012)

Oggetto: Contraffazione di miscele fraudolente: «vino italiano in Kit» pronto all'uso

Come è stato denunciato recentemente da una famosa trasmissione televisiva di inchiesta, sul web è in atto un'autentica frode che spaccia e vende per vini italiani dei kit all'interno dei quali vi sono mosto da fermentare, additivi, lieviti e solfiti. La miscelazione di questi componenti permette di ottenere un composto che nulla ha a che vedere con il vino, ma che viene fraudolentemente presentato come vino italiano, con tanto di etichetta che riporta marchi di famose denominazioni di origine quali Chianti, Barolo, Nero d'Avola, Sangiovese, Montepulciano e altri. Le sostanze chimiche in questione sono prodotte negli Stati Uniti o in Canada.

Oltre alla dubbia sicurezza alimentare di queste miscele, la vendita online dei kit danneggia direttamente i produttori italiani del settore che rispettano seriamente tutti i regolamenti europei e nazionali. Le associazioni di categoria italiane, infatti, da alcune settimane sono impegnate in una campagna mediatica per denunciare la vendita di prodotti alimentari — come appunto il vino — che indicano sulle etichette una falsa origine italiana.

A tal proposito può la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

1. È essa a conoscenza dei fatti e ritiene che la commercializzazione di tali kit rappresenti una palese violazione del regolamento (CE) n. 607/2009 riguardante le denominazioni di origine e le indicazioni geografiche protette, l'etichettatura e la presentazione di determinati prodotti, laddove sono indicate norme specifiche per la registrazione di dette denominazioni?

2. In quale modo intende sanzionare e bloccare la vendita online di questi kit di falsi vini, proteggendo il consumatore e garantendo eque condizioni di concorrenza tra i produttori?

3. Con quali modalità intende consolidare la reputazione dei vini europei e riconquistare quote di mercato nell'Unione europea e nel resto del mondo?

4. Quali azioni intende intraprendere affinché si eviti che situazioni simili possano riprodursi in futuro danneggiando le migliori tradizioni della produzione vitivinicola europea?

Risposta congiunta data da Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(30 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione è stata informata delle pratiche commerciali descritte nell'interrogazione e sa che alcune società europee sono coinvolte nella commercializzazione dei prodotti in questione. Durante l'ultima riunione del Comitato di gestione dell'OCM unica le delegazioni degli Stati membri sono state informate del fatto che pratiche quali la produzione o la commercializzazione di wine kit che recano la dicitura europea DOP/IGP nella presentazione e descrizione di tali prodotti violano le norme in materia di etichettatura nel settore vitivinicolo stabilite dalla legislazione europea.

La Commissione ha precisato che gli Stati membri devono adottare tutti i provvedimenti necessari a prevenire l'uso illecito di questi prodotti ritirandoli dal mercato.

In particolare, sono stati presi contatti con le autorità italiane e britanniche al fine di vietare la commercializzazione dei prodotti in questione. Per quanto riguarda i potenziali rischi per la salute, la Commissione ha anche invitato gli Stati membri ad adottare le misure necessarie nel quadro delle loro indagini, e ad informare la Commissione in merito ai provvedimenti adottati dalle competenti autorità nazionali per proteggere la reputazione dei vini europei di fronte a questo tipo di pratiche commerciali vietate.

La Commissione porta inoltre avanti la sua azione con i paesi terzi per garantire la massima protezione possibile delle DOP/IGP europee sui mercati d'esportazione, in particolare contro la contraffazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010826/12
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Make-your-own wine and counterfeiting

Make-your-own Frascati wine, coming even with a wine-making kit and instructions, targets wine lovers in Poland and the United Kingdom. However, it does not contain one drop of the wine from Lazio. The 'wine kit' exposed by the Italian television programme 'Striscia la Notizia' actually comes from Sweden, and it is the latest fake version of a highly-reputed product made in Italy — Frascati wine, made by a consortium of 33 wine producers. The counterfeit product sold in Poland and the United Kingdom may have been sold in other European and non-European countries as well, increasing the serious danger for consumers, producers and the brand of typical Italian products. That is why the Frascati consortium has now turned to the European Commission.

1. What is the Commission doing to curb this new counterfeiting phenomenon and, most importantly, how does it intend to protect the market and consumers when fake products are made and distributed by one of the EU Member States?

2. Does it intend to carry out an inquiry into those producing and distributing this chemical mix in order to ascertain what other foodstuffs have been counterfeited in a similar way and in which European countries they have been sold?

3. Does it not see an increasingly urgent need for effective common rules to combat counterfeiting and common rules to punish those responsible and protect consumers and honest producers?

Question for written answer E-011074/12
to the Commission
Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)
(4 December 2012)

Subject: Counterfeiting of fraudulent blends — ready-to-use 'Italian wine kits'

As was revealed recently in a well-known TV current affairs programme, a full-scale fraud is being carried out over the Internet involving the misrepresentation and sale as Italian wine of kits containing grape must for fermentation, additives, yeast and sulphites. By blending these ingredients it is possible to produce a compound which has nothing in common with wine, but which is fraudulently advertised as Italian wine, complete with labels carrying such famous designations of origin as Chianti, Barolo, Nero d'Avola, Sangiovese, Montepulciano and others. The chemical components concerned are produced in the United States and Canada.

In addition to the doubtful food safety credentials of these blends, the online sale of kits directly harms Italian producers in the sector, who strictly abide by all the European and national regulations. In recent weeks, Italian industry associations have been engaged in a media campaign protesting against the sale of food products (such as wine) falsely labelled as being of Italian origin.

In view of this, can the Commission specify the following:

1. Whether it is aware of the facts and whether it considers that the sale of such kits constitutes a clear infringement of Regulation (EC) No 607/2009 on protected designations of origin and geographical indications, labelling and presentation of certain wine sector products, wherein specific rules are laid down concerning the registration of such designations?

2. In what way it plans to punish and halt the online sale of these kits of false wine to protect the consumer and ensure fair competition among producers?

3. In what way it plans to strengthen the reputation of European wines and regain market share within the European Union and in the rest of the world?

4. What action it plans to take to prevent similar situations arising in the future and damaging the best traditions of European wine production?

Joint answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission was informed of the commercial practices referred to in the question and is aware of some European companies involved in the marketing of the concerned products. The delegations of the Member States were informed during the last meeting of the Management Committee of the single CMO that practices like producing or marketing wine kits bearing on the presentation and the description of such products EU PDO/PGI were in infringement with the rules of labelling laid down in the wine sector by the European legislation.

The Commission specified that the Member States must take the necessary measures to prevent the illicit use of these products by withdrawing them from the market.

Contacts were in particular established with the Italian and United Kingdom's authorities in order to prohibit the marketing of the products concerned. Concerning the possible health risks, the Commission also required the Member States to take the necessary measures within the framework of their investigations and to inform the Commission of the measures that have been taken by their competent authorities to protect the reputation of European wines against this kind of prohibited marketing practices.

The Commission continues in addition its action with Third Countries for guaranteeing the highest possible protection of the EU PDO/PGI on the export markets, in particular against counterfeiting.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010827/12
aan de Commissie
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Hormoonverstorende stoffen in klaslokalen met veel plastic

Uit onderzoek van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel onder leiding van professor Willy Baeyens is gebleken dat er erg veel hormoonverstorende stoffen in de lucht zitten in klasjes met veel plastic. Er is een sterke relatie tussen de hoeveelheid hormoonverstorende stoffen en de gebruikte materialen in de klaslokalen. In klassen met veel houten meubilair en natuurlijke materialen werden immers zeer weinig schadelijke deeltjes gemeten. In klassen met veel plastic meubilair, vloerbedekking en speelgoed waren de concentraties schadelijke stoffen tot twintig keer hoger. Ook verpakkingen van voedsel zouden veel hormoonverstorende stoffen kunnen bevatten.

Het zou onder meer gaan over de stoffen bisfenol-F en bisfenol-S, die erg lijken op bisfenol-A, een stof die in bepaalde gevallen — zoals het gebruik bij babyflesjes — reeds is verboden.

Op termijn zou de blootstelling aan de schadelijke stoffen kunnen leiden tot meer gevallen van baarmoeder- en borstkanker, onvruchtbaarheid en diabetes.

Welke beleidsvoorstellen overweegt de Commissie om de blootstelling aan hormoonverstorende stoffen bij kinderen te voorkomen?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(5 februari 2013)

De Commissie is momenteel bezig haar communautaire strategie voor hormoonontregelaars (COM(1999) 706) te herzien om rekening te houden met de vooruitgang in de wetenschap en wijzigingen in de wetgeving. Bij de herziening zal rekening worden gehouden met de bescherming van kinderen tegen blootstelling aan hormoonontregelaars.

Bovendien voorziet de Reach-verordening ([1]), een de gehele EU omvattend instrument voor de beoordeling en beheersing van aan chemische stoffen verbonden risico's, reeds in hulpmiddelen om de blootstelling van de mens en het milieu aan schadelijke chemische stoffen tot een minimum terug te brengen of geheel weg te nemen. Met name kan de Commissie of een lidstaat, wanneer een chemische stof een risico voor de gezondheid van de mens of voor het milieu met zich meebrengt dat niet afdoende wordt beheerst en moet worden aangepakt, een beperkingsprocedure volgens titel VIII inleiden om de meest passende en evenredige maatregelen ter bestrijding van dat risico vast te stellen. Bovendien zijn de nationale overheden verantwoordelijk voor markttoezicht en kunnen zij passende maatregelen nemen, met inbegrip van verwijdering van de markt, in geval van producten die een risico vormen voor de gezondheid van de mens.

Het beleid van de Commissie inzake de aanpak van risico's als gevolg van de blootstelling aan meerdere chemische stoffen uit verschillende bronnen en routes wordt uiteengezet in de mededeling van de Commissie aan de Raad over combinatie-effecten van chemische stoffen (COM(2012) 252).

([1]) Verordening (EG) nr. 1907/2006 inzake de registratie en beoordeling van en de autorisatie en beperkingen ten aanzien van chemische stoffen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010827/12
to the Commission
Ivo Belet (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Endocrine disruptors in classrooms containing large quantities of plastic

Research at the Free University of Brussels by a team headed by Professor Willy Baeyens has shown that, where classrooms contain much plastic, there are large quantities of endocrine disruptors in the air. There is a strong relationship between the quantity of endocrine disruptors and the materials used in the classrooms. In classrooms with much wooden furniture and natural materials, very few harmful particles were found. In classrooms where furniture, floor coverings and toys contained much plastic, the concentrations of harmful substances were up to 20 times higher. Food packagings can also contain large amounts of endocrine disruptors, they report.

The substances involved are said to include bisphenol-F and bisphenol-S, which are very similar to bisphenol-A, a substance whose use is already banned in certain cases, for example in babies' bottles.

Ultimately, exposure to the harmful substances could cause more cases of cancer of the womb and breast cancer, infertility and diabetes.

What policy proposals is the Commission considering in order to prevent children from being exposed to endocrine disruptors?

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

The Commission is currently reviewing its Community Strategy for Endocrine Disruptors COM(1999) 706 to reflect the progress achieved in science and changes in legislation. The review will take into account the protection of children from exposure to endocrine disruptors.

In addition, the REACH regulation ([1]) which is an EU-wide instrument to assess and manage risks related to chemicals already provides tools to minimise or eliminate the exposure of humans and the environment to chemicals that are harmful. Notably, when a chemical substance poses a risk to human health or environment which is not adequately controlled and needs to be addressed, the Commission or a Member State can initiate a restriction process according to Title VIII in order to adopt the most appropriate and proportionate measures to control that risk.. Moreover, national authorities are responsible for market surveillance and can take appropriate measures, including removal from the market, in case of products that pose a risk to human health.

The Commission policy describing how to address risks from exposure to multiple chemicals from different sources and pathways is set forth in the communication from the Commission to the Council COM(2012) 252 on the combination effects of chemicals.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of chemicals.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010828/12
adresată Comisiei
Adrian Severin (NI)
(29 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: A doua cerere de clarificare a răspunsului Comisiei privind blocarea exercitării unora dintre atribuțiile președintelui interimar al României

În data de 26 noiembrie am primit o a doua scrisoare din partea Președintelui Comisiei, Jose Manuel Barroso, cu privire la întrebările cu solicitare de răspuns scris depuse de mine pe 9 septembrie, respectiv pe 11 octombrie.

Noul text urmează în mod fidel linia celui precedent și evită un răspuns concret întrebărilor mele, care urmăreau definirea exactă a rațiunii politice și a bazei legale specifice din spatele cererii ca președintele interimar al României să nu își exercite unele dintre atribuțiile sale constituționale. Întrebările mele au plecat de la poziția Comisiei, care era bine cunoscută, dar controversată în ceea ce privește temeinicia și legalitatea. De aceea eu am cerut argumentația în fapt și în drept a acestei poziții, și nu reconfirmarea ei.

Răspunsul primit susține faptul că, atunci când a cerut președintelui interimar al României să nu își îndeplinească unele atribuții, Comisia Europeană a urmărit apărarea statului de drept, a Curții Constituționale și a independenței sistemului judiciar.

Aceasta presupune fie că legea română conferă președintelui atribuții periculoase pentru statul de drept și independența justiției, fie că președintele interimar abuză de prerogativele sale. În ipoteza din urmă, soluția legală era încetarea abuzului, nu împiedicarea exercitării atribuțiilor aferente funcției.

Rugăm deci pentru a treia oară Comisia Europeană să furnizeze un răspuns exact, sincer și concret următoarelor întrebări:

1. Care au fost acțiunile concrete ale președintelui interimar prin care acesta a subminat statul de drept, rolul Curții Constituționale și independența sistemului judiciar?

2. Care a fost perioada exactă în care echilibrul democratic a fost întrerupt în România și care sunt dovezile concrete (decizii politice, articole de legi încălcate) care atestă ruperea acestui echilibru și periclitarea independenței justiției?

3. Care a fost baza legală (textele pertinente din tratatele europene) care a permis Comisiei să ceară imperativ președintelui interimar al României să nu își exercite prerogativele constituționale?

În ipoteza că nici de această dată nu mi se va oferi un răspuns clar, voi considera că astfel Comisia Europeană recunoaște că nu a avut niciun temei de fapt și/sau de drept pentru poziția adoptată.

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(18 ianuarie 2013)

Comisia a prezentat o serie de recomandări în raportul său din 18 iulie 2012 privind progresele realizate de România în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și verificare ([1]). Recomandările Comisiei au reflectat angajamentele asumate de prim-ministrul Ponta în scrisoarea din 16 iulie 2012 adresată Președintelui Comisiei. Atât măsurile concrete recomandate de Comisie, cât și perioada de timp cuprinsă de analiza Comisiei sunt detaliate în acest raport.

Ar trebui remarcat faptul că recomandările Comisiei au fost aprobate de Consiliul de miniștri și sunt susținute de avizul recent al Comisiei de la Veneția a Consiliului Europei ([2]).

([1]) COM(2012) 410 final.
([2]) http://www.venice.coe.int//docs/2012/CDL-AD(2012)026-e.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010828/12
to the Commission
Adrian Severin (NI)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Second request for clarification of the Commission's answer concerning the blocking of certain prerogatives of the interim President of Romania

On 26 November, I received a second letter from the President of the Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, concerning the questions for written answer I had submitted on 9 September and 11 October 2012 respectively.

This new letter faithfully follows the line adopted in the previous one, and steers clear of giving a firm answer to my questions, which sought a clear definition of the political reasoning and specific legal basis for requesting the interim President of Romania not to exercise certain of his constitutional prerogatives. My questions took as their starting point the position adopted by the Commission, which was well known but controversial in terms of grounds and legality. I was hence asking the Commission to justify its position in fact and in law, rather than to confirm it.

The answer received maintains that in requesting the interim President of Romania not to exercise certain of his prerogatives, the Commission was seeking to preserve the rule of law, the role of the Constitutional Court and the independence of Romania's judicial system.

This presupposes either that Romanian law grants the President prerogatives that threaten the rule of law and independence of the judiciary, or abuse by the interim President of his prerogatives. If the latter were the case, the correct legal response would be to end that abuse, rather than to prevent the President exercising the prerogatives attached to his post.

I would therefore ask the Commission, for a third time, to provide precise, honest and firm answers to the following questions:

1. What actual actions was it that the interim President took that undermined the rule of law, the role of the Constitutional Court and the independence of the judicial system?

2. In which exact period was it that the democratic balance was lost in Romania and what hard evidence is there (political decisions, violations of legal provisions) to show that this balance was broken and the independence of the judiciary imperilled?

3. What was the legal basis (relevant clauses of EU treaties) that allowed the Commission to call imperatively on the interim President of Romania not to exercise his constitutional prerogatives?

Should I again not receive a clear answer, I will take it that the Commission acknowledges that it had no grounds in fact or in law to adopt the position it did.

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(18 January 2013)

The Commission set out a series of recommendations in its report of 18 July 2012 on Romania's progress under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism ([1]). The Commission's recommendations reflected the commitments made by Prime Minister Ponta in his letter to the President of the Commission of 16 July 2012. Both the concrete steps recommended by the Commission and the period covered by the analysis of the Commission are detailed in this report.

It should be noted that the Commission's recommendations have been endorsed by the Council of Ministers and finds support in the recent opinion of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe ([2]).

([1]) COM(2012)410 final.
([2]) http://www.venice.coe.int//docs/2012/CDL-AD(2012)026-e.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010829/12
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Incendio en Bangladesh y responsabilidad social corporativa

La federación sindical internacional IndustriALL Global Union informó el pasado 26 de noviembre de 2012 sobre un terrible incendio en una fábrica de la confección de Bangladesh, Tazreen Fashion, ocurrido el día anterior. Las primeras informaciones señalaban más de cien trabajadores muertos y cientos de heridos. Las últimas daban ya la cifra de 137 fallecidos, la mayoría mujeres, muchas de ellas muy jóvenes. Podría haber más. Bangladesh es el segundo país del mundo exportador de prendas textiles, después de China, fabricando ropa de las principales marcas del mundo. Trabajan en su industria de confección textil más de dos millones de trabajadores, la mayoría mujeres. Su salario mínimo es de 36 euros al mes y desde hace años se vienen repitiendo gravísimos accidentes como ahora en Tazreen Fashion. Tazreen Fashion estaba produciendo para diversas marcas y multinacionales de la confección y distribución, entre ellas Wallmart, Carrefour, C&A, Casino, International Direct Group Inc.

¿Exigirá y contribuirá la UE a realizar una seria investigación de las causas de este incendio por parte del Gobierno de Bangladesh y de las multinacionales cuyos productos se fabricaban en esta empresa, para deducir de ella las oportunas responsabilidades?

¿Qué medidas inmediatas de apoyo e indemnización exigirá a las multinacionales europeas para recompensar a las víctimas, fallecidos y heridos, así como al conjunto de trabajadores de esta empresa (más de mil) que han quedado sin trabajo?

¿Qué medidas de sanción por falta de responsabilidad social corporativa adoptará frente a las multinacionales europeas a causa de esta desgracia? ¿Qué medidas adoptará para prevenir futuras catástrofes como esta?

Respuesta del Sr. Tajani en nombre de la Comisión
(1 de febrero de 2013)

La UE apoya activamente los esfuerzos para mejorar la seguridad de las fábricas en Bangladesh y financia desde hace años proyectos con este objetivo. Desde el incendio en Ashulia, el Embajador de la UE en Bangladesh se ha reunido con los fabricantes de dicho país para discutir nuevas formas de mejorar la seguridad. Un proyecto cofinanciado por la UE ha proporcionado asistencia a las víctimas y a las familias afectadas.

Los organismos oficiales han puesto en marcha cinco investigaciones sobre el incendio. Las ONG y los medios de comunicación también han hecho investigaciones. Aunque los resultados varían, está claro que las normas básicas de seguridad se incumplían sistemáticamente.

En vista de lo anterior, no sería de utilidad para la UE proponer otra investigación más. Sin embargo, para centrar la atención sobre lo que se debe hacer con más urgencia para evitar tales incendios, los Jefes de las representaciones diplomáticas en Daca organizarán en 2013 un debate con los compradores de la UE sobre la seguridad de las fábricas.

Las expectativas de la Comisión sobre la responsabilidad social de las empresas se basan en orientaciones reconocidas internacionalmente, entre las que cabe mencionar las Líneas Directrices de la OCDE para Empresas Multinacionales y los Principios Rectores sobre las Empresas y los Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas. Los Gobiernos que se adhieren a las Directrices de la OCDE deben investigar las denuncias de incumplimiento y mediar entre las partes interesadas.

La Comisión no tiene el mandato ni los recursos para investigar el cumplimiento, por parte de empresas concretas, de las orientaciones relativas a la responsabilidad social de las empresas y no tiene ningún medio legal para obligar a que las empresas que se abastecen de prendas de la fábrica en cuestión indemnicen las muertes y lesiones.

La Comisión señala que al menos dos de las empresas mencionadas en la pregunta, Casino y Carrefour, declaran que no se abastecían de prendas de la fábrica afectadas por el incendio. El sector privado también está financiando proyectos para mejorar las condiciones en las fábricas de Bangladesh.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010829/12
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Fire in Bangladesh and corporate social responsibility

The international trade union federation IndustriALL Global Union published information on 26 November 2012 on a horrific fire that had occurred the previous day at Tazreen Fashion, a garment factory in Bangladesh. Initial reports indicated that more than 100 workers had died with hundreds injured. Latest reports now put the figure at 137 dead, mainly women, and many of them very young women. There could be more. Bangladesh is the second exporter of textile garments worldwide, after China, producing clothing for the world's best known brands. Over two million people, the majority of them women, work in its textile clothing industry. Their minimum wage is EUR 36 per month and extremely serious accidents like this one at Tazreen Fashion have been occurring for years now. Tazreen Fashion manufactured garments for various clothing and distribution brands and multinationals, including Wallmart, Carrefour, C&A, Casino and International Direct Group Inc.

Will the EU demand and assist in a serious investigation by the Bangladeshi Government, and by the multinationals whose goods this factory manufactured, into the causes of this fire in order to determine where responsibility lies?

What immediate measures will the EU insist European multinationals take to support and compensate victims for the deaths and injuries, as well as the more than 1 000 workers employed at this firm who now have no work?

What steps will be taken as a result of this terrible tragedy to penalise European multinationals for their lack of corporate social responsibility? What steps will be taken to prevent another disaster like this in the future?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The EU actively supports efforts to improve factory safety in Bangladesh, and for several years has been funding projects with that objective. Since the fire in Ashulia, the EU Ambassador to Bangladesh has met with Bangladeshi manufacturers to discuss new ways of improving safety. A project co-funded by the EU has provided assistance to victims and affected families.

Government bodies have launched 5 investigations into the fire. NGOs and the media have also made investigations. While the findings vary, it is clear that basic safety rules were being routinely broken.

In view of the above, it would not seem useful for the EU to propose another investigation. However, to focus attention on what more needs to be done to avoid such fires, the Heads of EU diplomatic missions in Dhaka will host a discussion on factory safety in 2013 with EU buyers.

The Commission's expectations of enterprises regarding CSR are based on internationally recognised guidelines, including the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Governments that adhere to the OECD Guidelines should investigate allegations of non-respect and mediate between concerned parties.

The Commission does not have the mandate or the resources to investigate compliance with CSR guidelines by individual enterprises, and has no legal means of obliging companies that sourced garments from the factory in question to provide compensation for deaths and injuries.

The Commission notes that at least two of the companies mentioned in the question, Casino and Carrefour, state that they did not source garments from the factory affected by the fire. The private sector is also funding projects to improve conditions in factories in Bangladesh.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010831/12
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Fahrverbot für österreichische Güterwagen in Italien

Anfang Juni 2012 kam es bei Brixen in Italien zur Entgleisung eines Güterzuges der Rail Cargo Austria (RCA), der Güterzugsparte der Österreichischen Bundesbahn (ÖBB), bei der zwei Menschen verletzt wurden. Der Prüfbericht stellte eine verschobene Radscheibe als Unfallursache fest, woraufhin die staatliche italienische Eisenbahnsicherheitsbehörde ANSF ab Oktober 2012 ein Fahrverbot für rund 2 000 baugleiche Güterwagen der RCA verhängte. Das Fahrverbot gilt, bis der Betreiber der Züge nachweisen kann, dass die Zugachsen den internationalen Normen (UIC) entsprechen.

1. Sieht die Kommission in dem von der italienischen Bahnsicherheitsbehörde verhängten Fahrverbot einen Verstoß gegen die Grundlagen des Europäischen Binnenmarktes? Wenn ja, wird die Kommission Italien auffordern das Fahrverbot aufzuheben?

2. Wird die Kommission versuchen in diesem Fall zwischen Österreich und Italien zu vermitteln, da das Fahrverbot den europäischen Güterzugverkehr und damit auch den Handel der Mitgliedstaaten beeinträchtigt?

3. Widerspricht das Fahrverbot für österreichische Güterwaggons in Italien nach Einschätzung der Kommission den Grundsätzen des freien Warenverkehrs in Europa?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(11. Februar 2013)

In Übereinstimmung mit der Richtlinie 2004/49/EG über Eisenbahnsicherheit müssen die Mitgliedstaaten dafür sorgen, dass die Eisenbahnsicherheit allgemein aufrechterhalten wird, wobei die Verhütung schwerer Unfälle Vorrang hat. Andererseits müssen die Mitgliedstaaten dafür sorgen, dass Sicherheitsvorschriften auf offene und nicht diskriminierende Weise festgelegt, angewandt und durchgesetzt werden.

Auf dieser Grundlage ist es durchaus möglich, dass das Fahrverbot für österreichische Güterwagen an sich nicht gegen europäisches Recht verstößt, sofern es aus Sicherheitsgründen verhängt wurde. Die Kommission hat die Absicht, die Europäische Eisenbahnagentur um eine Überprüfung der Zulässigkeit der vorläufigen Maßnahmen zu bitten, die Italien infolge des Unfalls bei Brixen getroffen hat, um festzustellen, ob durch ein solches Fahrverbot ein ungerechtfertigtes technisches Hindernis für den freien Waren- und Dienstleistungsverkehr geschaffen wird.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010831/12
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Ban on the use of Austrian freight wagons in Italy

A freight train operated by Rail Cargo Austria (RCA), the freight train operator within Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB), was derailed in Brixen, Italy at the beginning of June 2012, injuring two people. The accident inspectors' report found that the accident was caused by a displaced wheel disc, whereupon the Italian national railway safety authority, the ANSF, imposed a ban, effective from October 2012, on around 2 000 freight wagons of the same design owned by RCA. This ban applies until the train operator can demonstrate that the train axles meet the international standards (UIC).

1. In the Commission's view, is the ban imposed by the Italian railway safety authority an infringement of the principles of the European internal market? If so, will the Commission call on Italy to lift the ban?

2. In this case will the Commission try to mediate between Austria and Italy, as the ban is impeding European freight train traffic and thus also trade between Member States?

3. In the Commission's view, does the ban on Austrian freight wagons in Italy violate the principles of the free movement of goods in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2013)

In accordance with Directive 2004/49 on rail safety, Member States shall ensure that railway safety is generally maintained, giving priority to the prevention of serious accidents. On the other hand, Member States shall ensure that safety rules are laid down, applied and enforced in an open and non-discriminatory manner.

On this basis, it is possible that the ban on the use of Austrian freight does not constitute 'per se' an infringement of European law, if justified on safety grounds. The Commission intends to ask the European Railway Agency to check the acceptability of the provisional measures introduced by Italy following the Brixen accident in order to determine whether such ban introduces an unjustified technical barrier to the free movement of goods and services.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010832/12
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Freizügigkeit des Personen- und Güterverkehrs auf dem Öresund

Die von dem staatlichen Unternehmen „Øresundsbro Konsortiet" betriebene Öresundbrücke zwischen Malmö und Kopenhagen steht in direktem Wettbewerb zur privaten Fährlinie zwischen Helsingborg und Helsingør. Die Öresundbrücke wurde von der EU mit 127 Millionen EUR gefördert.

Nach dem dritten Punkt des ersten Anhangs zum Regierungsübereinkommen zwischen Dänemark und Schweden über den Bau einer festen Querung über den Öresund aus dem Jahr 1991 sind sich Dänemark und Schweden einig, dass die Fährpreise auf der Route Helsingborg-Helsingør der Ausgangspunkt bei der Feststellung der Gebühren für die Brückennutzung sein sollen, um Wettbewerbsverzerrungen zu vermeiden. Aktuell liegt die niedrigste Brückennutzungsgebühr für LKW bis zu 40 % unter der niedrigsten Fährennutzungsgebühr für LKW auf der Fährroute Helsingborg-Helsingør.

Vor diesem Hintergrund bitten wir die Kommission um die separate Beantwortung folgender Fragen:

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die Preisgestaltung des Øresundsbro Konsortiet hinsichtlich der Freizügigkeit des Personen- und Güterverkehrs sowie des fairen Wettbewerbs, insbesondere zwischen staatlichen und privaten Marktteilnehmern, im europäischen Binnenmarkt?

2. Wer kontrolliert, dass sich die Preisgestaltung der Öresundbrücke an dem Regierungsbeschluss von 1991 orientiert?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(30. Januar 2013)

1. Die Richtlinie 1999/62/EG („Eurovignetten-Richtlinie") () und ihre Änderungsrichtlinien regeln die Erhebung von Gebühren für die Nutzung bestimmter Infrastrukturen durch Schwerlastfahrzeuge in der EU. Was die Gebührenerhebung für die Nutzung der Öresundbrücke angeht, werden die Bestimmungen der Richtlinie nach Kenntnis der Kommission eingehalten. Zu erwähnen ist auch, dass die Infrastrukturgebühren gemäß der Richtlinie 1999/62/EG unter anderem zur Optimierung der Infrastrukturnutzung differenziert werden können (Artikel 7g). Zudem können nach der Richtlinie Ermäßigungen von bis zu 13 % gegenüber gleichwertigen, nicht ermäßigungsberechtigten Fahrzeugen gewährt werden (Artikel 7i Absatz 2 Buchstabe c). In bestimmten Fällen, nämlich bei Vorhaben von europäischem Interesse, sind auch andere Formen der Gebührendifferenzierung zulässig, wenn sie dazu dienen, die Wirtschaftlichkeit von Vorhaben sicherzustellen, die im direkten Wettbewerb mit anderen Verkehrsträgern stehen (Artikel 7i Absatz 3).

Der Kommission liegen keine Hinweise auf einen Missbrauch einer beherrschenden Stellung im Sinne des Artikels 102 AEUV vor. Selbst unter der Annahme, dass die Öresundbrücke über eine beherrschende Stellung verfügt, ist der Umstand, dass für ihre Nutzung geringere Gebühren erhoben werden als für die konkurrierenden Fährverbindungen, noch kein Anzeichen für eine unlautere Preisgestaltung.

2. Die Geschäftsführung des Öresund-Konsortiums ist für die Verwaltung der 1991 geschlossenen Regierungsvereinbarung zwischen Dänemark und Schweden verantwortlich. Sie ist damit auch für die Einhaltung der Bestimmungen der Vereinbarung sowie der Eurovignetten-Richtlinie zuständig.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010832/12
à la Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE) et Georges Bach (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Libre circulation des personnes et des marchandises dans le détroit de l'Øresund

Le pont de l'Øresund, exploité par l'entreprise publique «Øresundsbro Konsortiet» entre Malmö et Copenhague, est en concurrence directe avec la ligne de ferry reliant Helsingborg à Helsingør. La construction du pont de l'Øresund a été soutenue par l'Union européenne à hauteur de 127 millions d'euros.

Conformément au troisième point de la première annexe de l'accord intergouvernemental de 1991 entre le Danemark et la Suède sur la construction de ce pont, ces deux pays étaient d'accord pour que les prix de la liaison ferry entre Helsingborg et Helsingør soient pris comme point de départ pour déterminer les taxes d'utilisation du pont, afin d'éviter toute distorsion de la concurrence. Actuellement, la taxe d'utilisation du pont la plus basse pour les poids lourds est jusqu'à 40 % inférieure à la taxe d'utilisation du ferry pour les poids lourds sur la liaison Helsingborg-Helsingør.

Dans ce contexte, la Commission pourrait-elle répondre aux deux questions suivantes:

1. Quelle est l'appréciation de la Commission en ce qui concerne la tarification de l'entreprise «Øresundsbro Konsortiet» eu égard à la libre circulation des personnes et des marchandises ainsi qu'à la concurrence loyale, notamment entre participants publics et privés au sein du marché intérieur européen?

2. Qui contrôle que la tarification relative à l'utilisation du pont de l'Øresund respecte la décision intergouvernementale de 1991?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(30 janvier 2013)

1. La directive 1999/62/CE (dite «directive Eurovignette») ([1]), telle que modifiée, régit la taxation des poids lourds pour l'utilisation de certaines infrastructures dans l'UE. Selon les informations en possession de la Commission, les dispositions de ladite directive sont respectées en ce qui concerne la taxation des poids lourds qui utilisent le pont de l'Øresund. Il convient de préciser, dans ce cadre, que la directive 1999/62/CE autorise les États membres à faire varier la redevance d'infrastructure d'utilisation afin, notamment, d'optimiser l'utilisation des infrastructures concernées (article 7 *octies*). Par ailleurs, ladite directive autorise les États membres à prévoir des abattements n'excédant pas 13 % de la redevance d'infrastructure appliquée à des véhicules équivalents [article 7 *decies*, paragraphe 2, point c)] et, dans des cas spécifiques, à savoir pour des projets d'intérêt européen, à soumettre les taux des péages à d'autres formes de variations en vue de garantir la viabilité commerciale de ces projets, lorsque ceux-ci doivent faire face à la concurrence directe d'autres modes de transport de véhicules (article 7 *decies*, paragraphe 3).

Sur la base des informations dont dispose la Commission, rien ne permet de conclure à l'existence d'un abus de position dominante au sens de l'article 102 du TFUE. À supposer même que le pont de l'Øresund détienne une position dominante, le fait que les tarifs appliqués soient inférieurs à ceux des services concurrents de transport par ferry ne constitue pas une indication de pratiques tarifaires déloyales.

2. Le conseil d'administration de l'entreprise «Øresundsbro Konsortiet» est chargé de l'administration de l'accord intergouvernemental de 1991 entre le Danemark et la Suède. À ce titre, le conseil d'administration est responsable du respect des dispositions de l'accord et de celles de la directive Eurovignette.

([1]) Directive 1999/62/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 17 juin 1999 relative à la taxation des poids lourds pour l'utilisation de certaines infrastructures (JO L 187 du 20.7.1999, p. 42).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010832/12
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE) and Georges Bach (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Free movement of passenger and freight transport across the Øresund Strait

The Øresund Bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen, operated by the public concern 'Øresundsbro Konsortiet', competes directly with private ferry lines between Helsingborg and Helsingør. The Øresund bridge received EU subsidies of EUR 127 million.

In Point 3 of Annex I to the 1991 Agreement between the governments of Denmark and Sweden on the construction of a fixed link over the Øresund Strait, Denmark and Sweden agreed that the ferry prices on the Helsingborg-Helsingør route should be taken as the starting point when setting tolls for the bridge, so as not to distort competition. Currently the lowest bridge toll for lorries stands at 40% less than the lowest price for lorries crossing by ferry on the Helsingborg-Helsingør route.

With the above in mind, can the Commission answer each of the following separately:

1. Bearing in mind the principles of free movement of passenger and freight transport and fair competition, in particular between public and private operators in the EU's internal market, what is the Commission's opinion of the prices charged by Øresundsbro Konsortiet?

2. Who checks that the prices for the Øresund bridge are in keeping with the 1991 Government Agreeement?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

1. Directive 1999/62/EC (the so-called 'Eurovignette Directive') ([1]), as amended, governs the charging of Heavy Goods Vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures in the EU. According to the information available to the Commission, the provisions of this directive are respected as far as the charging of heavy goods vehicles using the Oresund Bridge are concerned. In this context it is worth mentioning that directive 1999/62/EC allows variations of infrastructure charges for the purpose of, among others, optimising the use of infrastructure (Art 7g). Moreover, this directive allows rebates of up to 13% of the infrastructure charge paid by equivalent vehicles (Art 7i (c)), and in specific cases, namely for projects of European interest, it allows other forms of variations of charges in order to secure commercial viability (Art 7i 3) where such project are exposed to direct competition with other modes of transport.

On the basis of the information available to the Commission, there is no indication of an abuse of dominant position within the meaning of Article 102 TFEU. Even assuming that the Oresund Bridge would hold a dominant position, the circumstance that it charges lower fares than competing ferry services is not an indication of predatory pricing.

2. The Board of the Oresund Bridge Consortia is responsible for the administration of the intergovernmental Agreement of 1991 between Denmark and Sweden. As such, the Board is responsible for respecting the detailed provisions of the Agreement as well as the provisions of the Eurovignette Directive.

([1]) Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the charging of heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures, OJ L 187, 20.7.1999.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010833/12
an die Kommission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Öffentliche Förderung von Lärmminderung im Schienengüterverkehr

Die Reduzierung des durch den Schienengüterverkehr verursachten Lärms ist ein vordringliches Anliegen, um die Akzeptanz des umweltfreundlichen Verkehrsträgers Schiene zu sichern. Maßnahmen am rollenden Material weisen dabei die höchste Effizienz auf. Aus diesem Grund hat die Europäische Kommission im Rahmen ihres Vorschlags für die „Connecting Europe Facility" die Ko-Finanzierung von Lärmminderungsmaßnahmen am rollenden Material vorgesehen.

Eine signifikante Reduzierung des Lärms kann jedoch nur erfolgen, wenn die Mitgliedstaaten ergänzend zusätzliche Maßnahmen ergreifen. Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland hat vorgesehen, von Dezember 2012 an über die Einführung lärmabhängiger Trassenpreise Anreize zur Nachrüstung von Güterwaggons zu geben. Dabei sind bis 2020 insgesamt 300 Mio. EUR vorgesehen, die zur Hälfte aus umgewidmeten Lärmschutzmitteln und zur Hälfte aus Trassenpreiszuschlägen für laute Güterzüge finanziert werden sollen.

Unserer Kenntnis nach hat die Kommission sich jedoch gegen dieses Vorhaben ausgesprochen und die Auszahlung von Mitteln an die Wagenhalter teilweise für wettbewerbswidrig erklärt. Wir fragen die Kommission, mit Bitte um einzelne Beantwortung:

1. Welche Entscheidung hat die Kommission bezüglich des von der Bundesrepublik Deutschland vorgeschlagenen Maßnahmenpakets im Umfang von 300 Mio. EUR getroffen?

2. Wie begründet sie diese Entscheidung?

3. Wie gedenkt die Kommission den Mitgliedstaaten in Zukunft Anreize für Maßnahmen zur Reduzierung des Schienengüterlärms an der Quelle zu setzen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(31. Januar 2013)

1. Am 19. Dezember 2012 hat die Kommission einer Regelung Deutschlands zugestimmt, die durch den Schienengüterverkehr verursachte Lärmemissionen verringern helfen soll. Im Rahmen der Regelung können bis zu 50 % der Kosten für die Umrüstung in Deutschland verkehrender Güterwagen auf geräuschärmere Verbundstoffbremssohlen erstattet werden. Die Maßnahme läuft von Dezember 2012 bis Dezember 2017 und umfasst ein Budget von 152 Mio. EUR. Die Beihilfe erfolgt in Form direkter Zuschüsse durch den Bund und wird an die Eigner von Güterwagen ausgezahlt, die ihre Fahrzeuge nach dem 9. Dezember 2012 umrüsten (siehe Pressemitteilung http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1415_en.htm?locale=en).

Sobald alle Fragen im Zusammenhang mit dem Schutz vertraulicher Daten geklärt sind, wird die nicht vertrauliche Fassung des Beschlusses der Kommission über die Genehmigung der Regelung auf der Website der GD Wettbewerb im Register der staatlichen Beihilfen unter der Nummer SA.34156 zugänglich gemacht.

Die Möglichkeit der deutschen Behörden, nach den Lärmemissionen der Wagen/Züge gestaffelte Trassenpreise einzuführen, bleibt von diesem Beschluss unberührt.

2. In dem vorgenannten Beschluss vom 19. Dezember 2012 gelangte die Kommission zu dem Schluss, dass die Regelung mit den gemeinschaftlichen Leitlinien für staatliche Beihilfen an Eisenbahnunternehmen ([1]) im Einklang steht und nach Artikel 93 AEUV mit dem Binnenmarkt vereinbar ist.

([1]) ABl. C 184 vom 22.7.2008, S. 13.

3. Das Ziel einer Umrüstung aller Güterwagen mit geräuscharmen Bremssohlen bis 2020 ohne Beeinträchtigung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Eisenbahnsektors wird von der Kommission unterstützt. Sie will 2013 in einer Studie Möglichkeiten zur „wirksamen Verringerung des durch Güterwagen verursachten Schienenlärms in der Europäischen Union" untersuchen. Eine der Möglichkeiten wird darin bestehen, die in der technischen Spezifikation für die Interoperabilität (TSI) „Lärm" festgelegten Lärmgrenzwerte auch für die bereits vorhandenen Güterwagen vorzuschreiben.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010833/12
à la Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Soutien public de la réduction du bruit occasionné par le transport ferroviaire de marchandises

La réduction du bruit occasionné par le transport ferroviaire de marchandises est extrêmement importante pour garantir l'acceptation de la voie ferrée comme mode de transport écologique. Les mesures sur le matériel roulant s'avèrent les plus efficaces. C'est pourquoi la Commission a prévu, dans le cadre de sa proposition relative à un mécanisme pour l'interconnexion en Europe, le cofinancement de mesures de réduction du bruit portant sur le matériel roulant.

Une réduction significative du bruit ne peut toutefois intervenir que si les États membres prennent des mesures supplémentaires en complément. À compter de décembre 2012, la République fédérale d'Allemagne a prévu de créer des incitations à la modernisation des wagons en mettant en place un système de redevances ferroviaires modulées en fonction du bruit. À cet effet, 300 millions d'euros ont été prévus au total d'ici à 2020, devant être financés pour une moitié par la réaffectation de crédits pour la protection contre le bruit et pour l'autre par des suppléments pour les trains de marchandises bruyants.

Selon nos informations, la Commission s'est toutefois prononcée contre ce projet et a déclaré que le versement de fonds aux détenteurs de wagons était en partie anticoncurrentiel. La Commission pourrait-elle répondre aux questions suivantes:

1. Quelle décision la Commission a-t-elle prise en ce qui concerne le paquet de mesures proposé par la République fédérale d'Allemagne, à hauteur de 300 millions d'euros?

2. Comment justifie-t-elle cette décision?

3. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle inciter à l'avenir les États membres à prendre des mesures pour réduire le bruit occasionné par le transport ferroviaire de marchandises à la source?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(31 janvier 2013)

1. Le 19 décembre 2012, la Commission a approuvé un régime d'aides mis en place par l'Allemagne pour réduire les nuisances sonores générées par le transport ferroviaire de marchandises. Ce régime prévoit le remboursement, jusqu'à 50 %, des frais engagés pour équiper les wagons de fret circulant en Allemagne de sabots de frein en matériau composite moins bruyants. Son budget prévu est de 152 millions d'euros pour la période allant de décembre 2012 à décembre 2017. Le régime consiste en l'octroi de subventions directes du budget de l'État fédéral qui seront versées aux propriétaires qui procéderont à la modernisation de leurs wagons de fret après le 9 décembre 2012. Communiqué de presse: (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1415_fr.htm).

La version non confidentielle de la décision de la Commission portant approbation du régime sera publiée sous le numéro SA.34156 dans le registre des aides d'État figurant sur le site internet de la DG Concurrence, dès que tous les problèmes de confidentialité auront été résolus.

Cette décision ne préjuge pas de la possibilité pour les autorités allemandes d'instaurer la modulation des redevances d'utilisation des voies en fonction du niveau des émissions sonores produites par les wagons/trains.

2. Dans sa décision du 19 décembre 2012 susmentionnée, la Commission conclut que le régime respecte les règles énoncées dans les lignes directrices communautaires sur les aides d'État aux entreprises ferroviaires ([1]) et qu'il est compatible avec le marché intérieur sur la base de l'article 93 du TFUE.

([1]) JO C 184 du 22.7.2008, p. 13.

3. La Commission soutient l'objectif consistant à équiper tous les wagons de fret de sabots de frein silencieux d'ici à 2020, sans affaiblir la position concurrentielle du secteur ferroviaire. En 2013, la Commission lancera une étude pour analyser la réduction effective des nuisances sonores générées par les wagons de transport ferroviaire de marchandises en circulation dans l'Union européenne. L'une des options envisagées sera de définir, dans la spécification technique d'interopérabilité concernant le bruit (STI «bruit»), des limites maximales de nuisance sonore applicables aux wagons existants.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010833/12
to the Commission
Michael Cramer (Verts/ALE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Public funding for rail freight transport noise reduction

Reducing the noise generated by rail freight transport is crucial to securing public acceptance of environmentally friendly rail transport. Measures to make rolling stock quieter have shown themselves to be the most effective way of doing this. For this reason, the Commission's proposal for the Connecting Europe Facility provides for the co-financing of noise reduction measures for rolling stock.

A significant reduction is only possible, however, if Member States also take action. Germany plans to introduce noise-related charges for track use which would act as an incentive to retrofit freight wagons. A total of EUR 300 million has been set aside for the period to 2020, half in the form of reallocated noise reduction funding and half in the form of increases in track use fees for noisy freight trains.

The Commission has apparently come down against this scheme and declared the some aspects of it, involving payments to operators of rolling stock, are not consistent with competition rules. We would appreciate it if the Commission would answer each of the following questions separately:

1. What decision has the Commission taken in respect of Germany's proposed EUR 300-million package of noise reduction measures?

2. What were the grounds for this decision?

3. How does the Commission intend to encourage Member States to take measures to reduce rail freight transport noise at source?

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

1. On 19 December 2012, the Commission approved a German scheme to support the reduction of noise generated by rail freight traffic. Under the scheme, up to 50% of the cost of equipping existing freight wagons used in Germany with less noisy composite brake blocks can be reimbursed. The scheme has a budget of EUR 152 million for the period from December 2012 to December 2017. The aid takes the form of direct grants from the federal state budget and will be paid to owners who retrofit their freight wagons after 9 December 2012. Press release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1415_en.htm?locale=en

The non-confidential version of the Commission decision approving the scheme will be made available under case number SA.34156 in the State Aid Register on the DG Competition website once any confidentiality issues have been resolved.

This decision is without prejudice to the possibility for the German authorities to introduce modulation of track access charges in relation to the level of noise produced by wagons/trains.

2. In the abovementioned decision of 19 December 2012, the Commission concluded that the scheme complies with the rules laid out in the Community Guidelines on state aid for railway undertakings ([1]) and that the scheme is compatible with the internal market on the basis of Article 93 of the TFEU.

3. 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. In 2013, the Commission will launch a study to analyse the 'Effective reduction of noise generated by railway freight wagons in use in the European Union'. The possible application of maximum noise levels specified in the technical specifications for interoperability Noise (TSI Noise) to existing wagons will be one of the options.

([1]) OJ C 184, 22.7.2008, p. 13.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010834/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Undici morti per lo scoppio di due bombe terroristiche in una chiesa all'interno di una caserma a Kaduna in Nigeria

Ancora una volta fedeli cristiani sono stati vittime di un doppio attentato suicida in Nigeria, questa volta all'interno di un compound militare. Le due esplosioni presso la chiesa della caserma di Kaduna hanno fatto 11 morti e 30 feriti. I cristiani e le chiese sono stati spesso oggetto di attacchi terroristici in Nigeria quest'anno, e questo specifico attentato in un compound militare è particolarmente preoccupante in quanto solleva interrogativi circa il livello di sicurezza che i militari sono in grado di fornire alla popolazione. In risposta ad una precedente interrogazione sul terrorismo contro i cristiani in Nigeria nel 2012 (E-005635/2012), la Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante, Ashton, asseriva che «la cooperazione tra la Nigeria e l'UE negli ultimi cinque mesi è stata ampliata ad includere un dialogo formalizzato sulla sicurezza in aggiunta alla cooperazione allo sviluppo». Alla luce di quanto sopra, la Commissione può far sapere se:

— è a conoscenza di quest'ultimo attentato suicida nella chiesa della caserma di Kaduna? Quale analisi ha fatto di questo evento, e qual è la sua posizione in merito?

— Può fornire aggiornamenti sullo stato di avanzamento del dialogo sulla sicurezza appena formalizzato? È soddisfatta dei progressi fatti fino ad ora?

— Può anticipare che siffatto più ampio dialogo contribuirà a proteggere i cristiani e gli altri da questo tipo di attentati in Nigeria, che sembrano essere in aumento nel 2012?

Risposta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Ashton a nome della Commissione
(1º febbraio 2013)

L'inasprirsi delle violenze in alcune zone della Nigeria settentrionale è fonte di crescenti preoccupazioni per chi si trova all'interno e all'esterno del paese. I recenti attentati da parte di militanti islamici in Nigeria hanno preso di mira, oltre alle chiese, edifici governativi e dei servizi di sicurezza, mercati, scuole e civili innocenti, sia musulmani che cristiani. L'Unione europea collabora con la Nigeria per sostenerla nel difficile tentativo di creare condizioni di sicurezza durature e di agire sui fattori che conducono alla radicalizzazione, sia mediante un costante dialogo politico sulle strategie più idonee ad affrontare i problemi, sia con interventi di aiuto mirati. Di recente, una missione inviata in Nigeria ha esaminato forme specifiche di sostegno alla lotta al terrorismo.

L'UE ha già avviato una serie di programmi di assistenza sociale, ad esempio nel settore della maternità e in materia di risorse idriche nel nord del paese. Essa sta tuttavia prendendo in considerazione la possibilità di concentrarsi maggiormente, nell'ambito dell'11° Fondo europeo di sviluppo (FES), su programmi integrati che affrontino l'insieme delle questioni economiche e sociali all'origine della violenza.

Inoltre, nel luglio 2012, l'Unione europea ha appoggiato lo sviluppo delle capacità di mediazione in una delle aree più a rischio avvalendosi dei fondi provenienti da un'iniziativa speciale del Parlamento europeo (EEAS BL 2238). L'UE sta inoltre preparando un altro progetto incentrato sulla prevenzione dei conflitti e sull'occupazione giovanile nella regione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010834/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Eleven dead as terror blasts strike Kaduna barracks church in Nigeria

Christian churchgoers have again been the victims of a double suicide bomb attack in Nigeria, this time within a military compound. The dual blasts at the Kaduna barracks church left 11 people dead and 30 injured. Christians and churches have frequently been the target of terrorist attacks in Nigeria this year, and this specific attack in a military compound is especially worrying as it raises questions about the level of security that the military is able to provide for the people. In response to a previous Written Question about terrorism against Christians in Nigeria in 2012 (E-005635/2012), Vice-President/High Representative Ashton said that 'the cooperation between Nigeria and the EU has in the past five months been expanded to include a formalised security dialogue, in addition to development cooperation'. In light of the above, can the Commission please answer the following:

— Is it aware of this latest suicide attack at Kaduna barracks church? What analysis has it made of this event, and what is its position with regard to it?

— Can it provide any update on the progress of the newly formalised security dialogue? Is it happy with the progress made so far?

— Does it anticipate that this increased dialogue will help protect Christians and others from these kinds of attacks in Nigeria, which seem to have been on the increase in 2012?

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

The escalating violence in parts of northern Nigeria are a growing cause of concern for those inside and outside the country. The recent attacks by militant islamists in Nigeria have targeted government and security buildings, markets, schools and innocent civilians, both Muslims and Christians, as well as churches. The EU is working with Nigeria to help it tackle the challenges of creating durable security and dealing with the factors conducive to radicalisation, through both continuous political dialogue on appropriate approaches to the problems, as well as targeted aid interventions. A mission was recently in Nigeria to examine specific forms of support to fight terrorism.

The EU already undertakes a number of programmes providing social assistance, e.g. through maternal care, and water resources in the North. The EU is considering, however, focusing more attention under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) on integrated programmes that tackle the full range of economic and social challenges that give impetus to the violence.

In addition, in July 2012 the EU provided capacity building for mediation in one of the most fragile areas, using funds from a special initiative by Parliament (EEAS BL 2238). The EU is also preparing another project focusing on conflict prevention and youth employment for this area.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010835/12
aan de Commissie
Bastiaan Belder (EFD)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Deïnstitutionalisering van de kinderopvang in Bulgarije — kwaliteit

1. In het kader van de deïnstitutionalisering van de kinderopvang in Bulgarije, waaraan de EU financiële steun toekent, moeten de kinderopvangfaciliteiten worden verkleind én moet tegelijkertijd gewerkt worden aan de totstandbrenging van in de gemeenschap gewortelde diensten, met inbegrip van revalidatie- en integratiecentra en centra voor dagopvang. In welke mate zijn dit soort diensten op dit moment beschikbaar en van voldoende gekwalificeerd personeel voorzien om van een passende kinderopvang te kunnen spreken, gezien de doelstelling van sluiting (op korte termijn) van tehuizen voor kinderen met een handicap? Hoeveel kinderen met een handicap ontvangen op dit moment intramurale, respectievelijk thuiszorg in een in de gemeenschap gewortelde omgeving, en voor hoeveel komt dit soort zorg beschikbaar in 2013 en 2014? Hoeveel kinderen met een handicap telt Bulgarije?

2. Beschikt Bulgarije over een adequaat systeem voor het opleiden en kwalificeren van maatschappelijk werkers en ander personeel (m.a.w. een systeem dat waarborgen biedt voor de kwaliteit van het maatschappelijk werk)? Zo ja, welke normen worden hierbij toegepast?

Zou het niet logisch zijn te eisen dat eerst een programma wordt ontwikkeld dat in de behoeften van deze kinderen voorziet en pas daarna financiële steun wordt toegekend voor de gebouwen waarin zij worden gehuisvest? Zijn er richtsnoeren die moeten garanderen dat de gebouwen aansluiten bij de behoeften van kinderen met een handicap? Hoe gaat ervoor gezorgd worden dat kinderen met een handicap in de samenleving als zodanig en in onderwijsinstellingen worden geïntegreerd?

Bij het ontwerp en de bouw van dagopvangcentra moet het gebruiksdoel daarvan centraal staan. Is dit gegarandeerd indien de verantwoordelijkheid voor de bouw van dit soort centra bij gemeenten ligt? Wie controleert of het ontwerp van de gebouwen geschikt is voor het gebruiksdoel en de doelgroep? Is gegarandeerd dat de gebouwen en de in kleinschalige centra geboden zorg bijdragen aan de reïntegratie van kinderen met een handicap in hun biologische families? Zal er gezorgd worden voor ruimten waar de families deze kinderen kunnen ontmoeten en tijd met ze kunnen doorbrengen?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(31 januari 2013)

De Commissie en de Bulgaarse autoriteiten voeren een permanente beleidsdialoog over de hervorming van het systeem van institutionele kinderopvang. De Commissie stelt vast dat de Bulgaarse autoriteiten hebben gekozen voor een globale strategie waarbij over een periode van vijftien jaar speciale woonvoorzieningen worden gesloten en geleidelijk worden omgevormd tot in de gemeenschap gewortelde voorzieningen. Een gedetailleerd actieplan stelt de belangrijkste noden vast, waarbij rekening wordt gehouden met de duurzaamheid van het proces. Het is gesteund op een volledige samenwerking tussen de vakdepartementen en een geïntegreerd gebruik van de beschikbare EU-fondsen (ESF, EFRO en Elfpo) om de noodzakelijke hervormingen te stimuleren.

Momenteel beoogt een aantal activiteiten van ESF een nieuw netwerk van op kinderen met een handicap gerichte diensten op te zetten, onder meer ter voorkoming dat kinderen in de steek worden gelaten. Terzelfdertijd ondersteunt het ESF een voortdurende capaciteitsopbouw, onder meer door maatschappelijk werkers op te leiden. Die activiteiten lopen parallel met de infrastructuurwerken die de gemeenten met medefinanciering van het EFRO en het Elfpo hebben uitgevoerd.

De Commissie zal de ontwikkeling van dit proces blijven opvolgen, waarbij zij zich laat leiden door het VN-Verdrag inzake de rechten van het kind en het VN-Verdrag inzake de rechten van personen met een handicap. Zij zal ook instaan voor de duurzaamheid ervan tijdens de onderhandelingen voor de volgende programmeringsperiode, waarin deïnstitutionalisering één van de voornaamste investeringsprioriteiten blijft. Daarbij houdt zij rekening met de onlangs ontwikkelde gemeenschappelijke richtsnoeren en een „Toolkit” voor het gebruik van EU-fondsen op dat vlak.

De Commissie verwijst het geachte Parlementslid naar het Staatsbureau voor kinderbescherming, dat onlangs een tweede monitoringverslag uitbracht met gedetailleerde informatie over de stand van zaken in verband met de lopende activiteiten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010835/12
to the Commission
Bastiaan Belder (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Deinstitutionalisation of Bulgarian childcare — quality

1. As part of the deinstitutionalisation of Bulgarian childcare, supported by EU funding, the downsizing of childcare facilities should be accompanied by the development of community-based services, including rehabilitation and integration centres and day care centres. To what extent are these services available and sufficiently staffed with qualified personnel so as to provide childcare of appropriate quality, given that the objective is the imminent closure of homes for children with disabilities? How many children with disabilities are currently provided with, respectively, residential and day care services in community-based settings, and how many are expected to be provided with such services in 2013 and 2014? How many children with disabilities are there in Bulgaria?

2. Is a proper system in place for the training and qualification of social workers and other staff in order to ensure the provision of quality social services? If so, what standards are applied?

Would it not be reasonable to require that a programme meeting the needs of these children be developed before financial support is spent on the buildings to house them? Are there guidelines to ensure that the buildings meet the requirements for children with disabilities? How is the integration of disabled children into mainstream society, and their enrolment in educational institutions, going to be achieved?

The buildings for the day care centres must be designed and built with their specific purpose in mind. If municipalities are responsible for their construction, will the day care centre buildings be designed and built with that purpose in mind? Who is checking whether the design is appropriate for the intended use, and for the users? Will buildings and care provided for disabled children in small group homes support their reintegration into their biological families? Will there be space for families to meet and spend time with their children?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The Commission and the Bulgarian authorities maintain a constant policy dialogue on the reform of the institutional care for children. The Commission understands that the Bulgarian authorities have chosen an approach based on a comprehensive strategy for the closure of residential institutions and their gradual transition to community-based services over a period of fifteen years. A detailed Action Plan prioritises the needs taking into account the sustainability of the process. It is based on a full cooperation between line ministries and the integrated use of available EU funds (ESF, ERDF and EAFRD) to drive forward the necessary reforms.

Currently there are a number of ESF operations which strive to develop a new network of services targeting children with disabilities, including prevention of child abandonment. At the same time, the ESF supports the continuous capacity-building, including training of social workers. These activities go in parallel with the infrastructure works implemented by the municipalities with ERDF and EAFRD co-funding.

Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Commission will continue to monitor the development of the process. It will also ensure its sustainability during the negotiation phase for the next programming period where deinstitutionalisation will remain one of the key investment priorities, taking into consideration the recently developed Common Guidance and a Toolkit on the use of EU funds in this area

The Commission would refer the honourable MEP to the State Agency for Child Protection which issued recently a Second Monitoring Report containing detailed information on the state of play of ongoing activities.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010836/12
aan de Commissie
Bastiaan Belder (EFD)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Deïnstitutionalisering van de Bulgaarse jeugdzorg — begroting, verslaglegging en criminaliteit

1. Zijn de door de Bulgaarse autoriteiten en de Commissie verstrekte kredieten toereikend om de doelstelling van deïnstitutionalisering te halen en zo kwalitatief hoogstaande jeugdzorg te verwezenlijken? Wordt de begroting efficiënt beheerd en besteed?

Zal de Commissie verslag uitbrengen over het effect van deïnstitutionalisering op de leefomstandigheden van kinderen in het kader van kredieten die verstrekt zijn uit het cohesiebeleid en het Europees Sociaal Fonds (waarvan de begroting voorschrijft dat een deel van dit krediet bedoeld is om verbeteringen in jeugdzorg te ondersteunen zodat kinderen in een omgeving terecht kunnen komen die in de buurt komt van een gezinssituatie), waarbij vooral wordt ingegaan op kwaliteitsnormen, de toepassing daarvan en de resultaten die bij de kinderen worden geboekt?

2. Worden in het geval van misdaden tegen kinderen, zoals seksueel misbruik, illegale huwelijken met minderjarige meisjes en de handel in kinderen en vrouwen uit de Roma-gemeenschap, rechtszaken aangespannen? Zo ja, zijn de aanklagers en de rechters voldoende gespecialiseerd en opgeleid om kinderzaken te behandelen, en zijn de kinderen in staat vrijuit te spreken zodat er een eerlijk proces kan plaatsvinden? Kunt u bewijs leveren voor de maatregelen die getroffen zijn tegen kindermisbruikers? Welke diensten zijn er om de re-integratie van kinderen te ondersteunen?

Antwoord van J. Hahn namens de Commissie
(1 februari 2013)

1. De deïnstitutionalisering die in Bulgarije wordt uitgevoerd, is op dit moment in Europa de meest systematische poging om grootschalige instellingen voor kinderen te ontmantelen. De nationale autoriteiten hebben een globale strategie aangevat waarbij tehuizen over een periode van vijftien jaar worden gesloten en geleidelijk worden omgevormd tot in de gemeenschap gewortelde voorzieningen. Daarvoor wordt meer dan 100 miljoen euro uit de EU-fondsen beschikbaar gesteld.

Het project wordt gemonitord aan de hand van regelmatig door het Staatsagentschap voor kinderbescherming uitgebrachte verslagen. Het tweede monitoringverslag werd uitgebracht in oktober 2012 en is beschikbaar voor het publiek. De vorderingen tot dusver bevestigen dat het proces onomkeerbaar is en dat deïnstitutionalisering in de periode 2014-2020 een belangrijke prioriteit zal blijven voor het land.

2. Specifiek inzake de handel in kinderen en vrouwen van de Roma-gemeenschappen wordt in Richtlijn 2011/36/EU en in de nieuwe EU-strategie voor de uitroeiing van mensenhandel een oproep gedaan om het onderzoek naar en de vervolging van mensenhandelaars op te voeren en om bijzondere maatregelen te nemen voor preventie, bijstand, ondersteuning en bescherming van kinderen in een slachtofferpositie. Het betreft onder meer de opleiding van de betrokken ambtenaren en de ontwikkeling van kinderbeschermingssystemen waarin het belang van het kind vooropstaat. Daarnaast is de richtlijn ter bestrijding van seksueel misbruik, seksuele uitbuiting van kinderen en kinderpornografie een veelomvattende wetgeving, die betrekking heeft op de vervolging van daders, de bescherming van kinderen in een slachtoffersituatie en het voorkomen van het misdrijf. De Commissie blijft nauw samenwerken met de Bulgaarse autoriteiten en volgt de ontwikkelingen in dit verband.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010836/12
to the Commission
Bastiaan Belder (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Deinstitutionalisation in Bulgarian childcare — budget, reporting and crimes

1. Are the appropriations granted by the Bulgarian authorities and the Commission enough to meet the objective of deinstitutionalisation leading to quality childcare? Is the budget managed and spent efficiently?

Will the Commission report on the impact that deinstitutionalisation has on living conditions at child level in the context of the appropriations granted under the cohesion policy and the European Social Fund (the budget for which stipulates that part of this appropriation is intended to support improvements in childcare in order to enable children to live in a family-type setting), specifically touching on quality standards, their implementation and the results for children?

2. In the case of crimes against children, such as sexual abuse, illegal marriages involving minor girls, and the trafficking of children and women from the Roma community, are these crimes being followed up by court proceedings? If so, are the prosecutors and judges sufficiently specialised and trained to deal with children, and are the children able to speak out and express themselves freely so that a fair trial can take place? Could you please provide evidence as to the action taken against child abusers? What services are in place to support child rehabilitation?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

1. The Bulgarian deinstitutionalisation exercise is currently the most systematic effort in Europe to dismantle large scale children's institutions. National authorities have embarked on a comprehensive strategy for the closure of residential institutions and their gradual transition to community-based services within a 15-year horizon. More than EUR 100 million of EU funds is available to this end.

The monitoring of the exercise is performed through regular reports issued by the State Agency for Child Protection. The second Monitoring Report was issued in October 2012 and is publicly available ([1]). The progress so far has confirmed that the process is irreversible and that deinstitutionalisation will remain a key priority for the country in the 2014-2020 period.

2. Pertaining specifically to trafficking of children and women from the Roma communities, Directive 2011/36/EU and the new EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings call for increased investigations and prosecutions against traffickers, special measures for prevention, assistance, support and protection of child victims, including training of relevant officials and the development of child protection systems having the best interest of the child as a primary consideration. Additionally, the directive on combating the sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography is a comprehensive piece of legislation, covering prosecution of offenders, protection of child victims and prevention of the crime. The Commission continues to work closely with the Bulgarian authorities and follows developments in this context.

([1]) http://sacp.government.bg/deinosti/deinstitucionalizacia/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010837/12
to the Commission
Edward McMillan-Scott (ALDE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: UK Government changes to housing benefits in relation to the European Convention on Human Rights

The UK Government is planning on making changes to housing benefits effective from April 2013. Benefits will be reduced if a property contains a spare bedroom; this new regulation will be applicable to people aged between 16-61 years old and to those who only receive a small amount of housing benefits, e.g. if that person is working and even if the person is sick or disabled. If a property has a spare bedroom, the tenant's housing benefit will be cut by 14% of the rent they pay every week. If the property has two or more spare bedrooms, the tenant will lose 25%. If the tenant's benefit is cut, they will have to pay the government the difference between their housing benefit and their rent (agenda item 4 of the proposals).

With particular focus on the implications for sick and disabled people, could the Commission please advise whether the UK Government's proposals contravene the European Convention on Human Rights or any European legislation?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 February 2013)

The awarding of any entitlements to benefits, including for housing, corresponding to a recognised disability or a chronic disease is a matter of the Member States' national, regional or local authorities' competence. In exercising this competence the concerned authorities must respect all relevant national and international law by which they are bound.

In this case it is firstly important to note that the UK ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which i.a. recognises the right of persons with disabilities to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate housing. Under the UNCRPD States Parties must take appropriate steps to safeguard and promote the realisation of this right without discrimination on the basis of disability.

The EU is also a Party to the UNCRPD and is bound by it to the extent of its competences. Only where member states are implementing EC law can the Commission assess whether a national law or measure complies with the UNCRPD and with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Compliance with the UNCRPD by the UK will be examined by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the basis of the report submitted by the UK on the implementation of the Convention.

The EU legal framework on protection against discrimination on the ground of disability is currently limited to the fields of employment, occupation and vocation training ([1]).

([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).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010838/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Groupe d'experts des «paris en ligne»

1. Sur quelles bases ces experts sont-ils choisis? Doivent-ils, hormis leur nationalité, répondre à certains critères? Si oui, quels sont-ils?

2. Est-ce ce groupe d'experts qui va définir l'agenda de ses propres travaux ou est-ce la Commission?

3. Qui encadrera ce groupe d'experts et qui le pilotera?

4. Quelles seront ses attributions?

5. Quels sont les objectifs visés par la Commission en créant ce groupe d'expertise et quels sont les résultats escomptés?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(1er février 2013)

Le 5 décembre 2012, la Commission a adopté une décision portant création d'un groupe d'experts sur les services de jeux de hasard. Une version provisoire de cette décision peut être consultée sur le site web de la Commission ([1]).

1. Les membres de ce groupe d'experts sont les autorités de réglementation des services de jeux de hasard des États membres. Les autorités des États membres désignent leurs représentants au sein du groupe, au maximum deux par État membre. Le statut d'observateur sera accordé aux autorités de réglementation des jeux de hasard des pays de l'EEE non-membres de l'UE et à celles des pays candidats à l'adhésion.

2.-3. Le groupe agit à la demande de la Commission. La Commission assure le secrétariat du groupe (préparation des documents et des ordres du jour, organisation des réunions, rédaction des procès-verbaux, etc.) et préside les réunions.

4. Le groupe a pour mission:

— d'établir une coopération entre les autorités des États membres et la Commission sur des questions en rapport avec les services de jeux de hasard;

— de conseiller et d'assister la Commission dans la préparation et la mise en œuvre des initiatives politiques en rapport avec les services de jeux de hasard;

— de suivre l'évolution des politiques et les questions émergentes dans le domaine des services de jeux de hasard;

— d'assurer l'échange d'expériences et de bonnes pratiques dans le domaine des services de jeux de hasard, y compris dans sa dimension internationale.

5. Concrètement, le groupe d'experts conseillera la Commission et lui apportera son expertise pour préparer des initiatives politiques. Il facilitera par ailleurs l'échange, entre États membres, d'expériences et de bonnes pratiques en matière de réglementation.

La première réunion du groupe d'experts a eu lieu le 5 décembre 2012; quatre autres réunions sont prévues en 2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/gambling_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010838/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Expert group on online betting

The Commission plans to establish an expert group to consider the development of online betting.

1. On what basis will these experts be chosen? Aside from nationality, what other criteria will they be required to meet?

2. Who will set the agenda for their work, the Commission or the expert group itself?

3. Who will supervise the expert group and to whom will it report?

4. What powers will it have?

5. What is the Commission hoping to achieve by setting up this expert group?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

On 5 December 2012 the Commission adopted a decision setting up the group of experts on gambling services. A provisional version of the decision is available on the Commission's website ([1]).

1. Members of the Group are Member States' authorities regulating gambling services. Member States' authorities shall appoint their representatives in the Group, without exceeding two representatives per Member State. The status of observers will be granted to gambling authorities of EEA countries other than EU countries and of States that are candidate for EU membership.

2- 3. The Group acts at the request of the Commission. The Commission manages the group's secretariat (prepares documents and agendas, organises meetings, drafts minutes, etc.) and chairs the meetings.

4. The Group's tasks are:

— establish cooperation between Member States' authorities and the Commission on matters relating to gambling services;

— advise and assist the Commission in the preparation and implementation of policy initiatives relating to gambling services;

— monitor the development of policies and emerging issues in the area of gambling services;

— bring about an exchange of experience and good practice in the area of gambling services, including its international dimension.

5. In essence, the expert group shall provide the Commission with advice and expertise in relation to the preparation of policy initiatives. It shall also facilitate the exchange of regulatory experience and good practices between Member States.

The first meeting of the expert group took place on 5 December 2012; four further meetings are scheduled for 2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/gambling_en.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010839/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Mesure anti dumping sur les briquets taïwanais et chinois

La Commission européenne a instauré en 1991 et 1995 des taxes antidumping sur les briquets à pierre rechargeables et non rechargeables originaires de Chine ou de Taïwan. Cette mesure a été renouvelée plusieurs fois. Cependant la Commission européenne serait sur le point de supprimer cette mesure très prochainement.

1. Cette allégation est-elle exacte?

2. Quelles sont/seraient/pourraient être les raisons de ce changement de cap?

3. La Commission ne craint-elle pas que la compétitivité des entreprises européennes dans ce secteur précis ou dans d'autres secteurs connexes n'en soit faussée, si les pratiques de dumping auxquelles elles font face ne sont pas fermement combattues par la Commission européenne?

4. La Commission a-t-elle évalué les conséquences d'une telle mesure sur l'emploi en Europe?

5. La Commission a-t-elle évalué les conséquences d'une telle mesure sur un plan strictement économique en Europe?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(31 janvier 2013)

L'importation de briquets à pierre non rechargeables en provenance de la République populaire de Chine a fait l'objet d'une mesure antidumping en 1991. Depuis, la Commission a mené plusieurs enquêtes afin de s'assurer de l'efficacité de cette mesure, enquêtes qui ont conduit à l'adaptation de la forme du droit appliqué (en 1995) et à son extension aux importations en provenance de Taïwan et à certains briquets rechargeables, à la suite de pratiques de contournement (en 1999). En juin 2012, la Commission a entamé une enquête à la suite d'un risque de contournement par le Viêt Nam. La mesure antidumping aurait dû normalement expirer après cinq ans, mais elle a été reconduite à trois reprises, les conditions juridiques ayant à chaque fois été réunies.

Le 11 décembre 2012, la Commission a adopté une décision rejetant la demande de la société BIC d'un quatrième réexamen de cette mesure, qui arrivait à expiration; la mesure a donc expiré le 13 décembre 2012.

Ce rejet n'est pas un changement de cap. L'antidumping est un instrument technique utilisé par la Commission en vertu des règles applicables de l'Union européenne et de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce. Cette démarche est conforme aux obligations internationales de l'Union européenne et garantit l'efficacité des instruments de défense commerciale en ce qu'elle évite aux producteurs européens de subir la concurrence faussée de producteurs étrangers.

Pour être acceptée, une demande de réexamen d'une mesure arrivant à expiration doit contenir suffisamment d'éléments attestant que l'expiration de la mesure devrait avoir pour effet de faire perdurer ou réapparaître le dumping et le préjudice. La Commission a évalué attentivement le bien-fondé de la demande, notamment la tendance suivie par les indicateurs de préjudice (y compris sur l'emploi). Les conditions juridiques d'un réexamen de la mesure n'étaient cette fois pas réunies.

Ce rejet ne préjuge pas de la position de la Commission sur les autres plaintes antidumping qu'elle pourrait recevoir à propos de cet article.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010839/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Anti-dumping measures on Taiwanese and Chinese lighters

In 1991 and 1995, the Commission introduced anti-dumping duties for refillable and non-refillable flint lighters from China or Taiwan. The period of validity of these measures has been extended many times since then. However, it would now appear the Commission intends to do away with these measures in the very near future.

1. Is this true?

2. What could possibly be the reason for this change in direction?

3. Is the Commission not concerned that the competitiveness of European businesses in this sector and ancillary sectors would suffer if the Commission fails to take resolute action to combat the dumping to which they are exposed?

4. Has the Commission looked into the likely impact of such a measure on jobs in Europe?

5. Has the Commission looked into the economic impact it could have?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

An anti-dumping measure was imposed in 1991 on imports of non-refillable flint lighters originating in the People's Republic of China. Since then the Commission has initiated several investigations in order to ensure the effectiveness of that measure leading to the adaptation of the form of the duty (1995) and its extension to imports from Taiwan and to certain refillable lighters, following circumvention practices (1999). In June 2012, the Commission initiated an investigation concerning possible circumvention via Vietnam. While this measure would normally have expired after 5 years, it was extended 3 times, legal conditions being met.

On 11 December 2012, the Commission adopted a decision rejecting Société BIC's request for the initiation of a fourth expiry review of this measure, which thus expired on 13 December 2012.

This rejection is not a change in direction. Anti-dumping is a technical instrument applied by the Commission in accordance with the relevant rules of the European Union and of the World Trade Organisation. This approach is in line with the international obligations of the EU and ensures the effectiveness of Trade Defence Instruments in defending EU producers against international competitive distortions.

An expiry review can be initiated only where the request contains sufficient evidence that the expiry of the measure would be likely to result in a continuation or recurrence of dumping and injury. The Commission carefully assessed the merits of the request, notably the trend of injury indicators (including employment). Legal conditions for the initiation of an expiry review were not met this time.

This rejection does not prejudge the Commission's position on any future anti-dumping complaint concerning this product.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-010840/12
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 novembre 2012)

Objet: Violation des Droits de l'homme en Guinée-Bissau

Depuis l'attaque avortée menée par des militaires contre la caserne d'une unité d'élite le 21 octobre 2012, des éléments de l'armée sont responsables de mauvais traitements infligés à des dirigeants de partis politiques et de graves menaces dirigées contre des journalistes et représentants de la société civile. Des informations font également état d'exécutions sommaires.

Le 22 octobre, deux dirigeants politiques, connus pour leurs critiques envers la gouvernance, le président du Parti de la solidarité et du travail, qui est aussi le leader du Front national anti-coup d'État, et le président du Parti mouvement démocratique, ont été enlevés et brutalement battus par un groupe de militaires.

La société civile guinéenne dénonçait déjà à l'époque les violations répétées des droits humains et civiques, et le caractère arbitraire du pouvoir en place. Elle demandait le rétablissement urgent de la légalité et la fin de l'impunité afin de garantir la paix et la sécurité de la population.

1. La Commission compte-t-elle ordonner une enquête?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle se positionner officiellement et user de son influence pour tenter de faire arrêter les violences sur les civils sans défense?

Réponse donnée par Mme Ashton, Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante au nom de la Commission
(21 janvier 2013)

Ces derniers mois, la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a exprimé à plusieurs occasions son inquiétude concernant la situation en Guinée-Bissau, et plus particulièrement les atteintes graves et répétées aux Droits de l'homme. Ces atteintes aux Droits de l'homme ne sont pas tolérables et leurs auteurs doivent répondre de leurs actes.

Les informations disponibles au sujet des personnes détenues par les militaires à la suite de l'assaut de la caserne sont limitées, en dépit de tous les efforts déployés par la délégation de l'UE et la communauté internationale pour obtenir des précisions; un compte rendu des Nations unies et de la Croix-Rouge est attendu prochainement.

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a exhorté les autorités de fait à garantir la sécurité de tous les citoyens, conformément au droit national et international. Des sanctions consistant en des mesures de gel d'actifs et d'interdiction de visa ont également été infligées à 21 dirigeants militaires.

L'UE a suspendu sa coopération officielle avec la Guinée-Bissau (à l'exception de l'aide directe destinée à la population) depuis 2011. Elle est résolue, en coopération avec d'autres partenaires internationaux, à garantir le rétablissement d'une situation dans laquelle les citoyens du pays seront libres d'élire les dirigeants de leur choix et les forces armées seront subordonnées aux autorités civiles légitimes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010840/12
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Breach of human rights in Guinea-Bissau

Following the failed military assault on the barracks of an elite unit on 21 October 2012, members of the armed forces have been responsible for carrying out physical attacks on political party leaders and for issuing serious threats against journalists and representatives of civil society. There have also been reports of summary executions.

On 22 October 2012, two political leaders known for their criticism of the regime in power, the President of the Party of Work and Solidarity, who is also the leader of the National anti-coup d'état Front, and the President of the Democratic Movement Party, were abducted and brutally beaten by a group of soldiers.

At that time Guinean civil society was already vocal in its condemnation of the repeated violations of human and civil rights and the undemocratic nature of the ruling regime. It was calling for the re-establishment of the rule of law as a matter of urgency and the ending of impunity in order to ensure peace and public safety.

1. Does the Commission intend to order an inquiry?

2. Does the Commission intend to adopt an official stance and use its influence to try and halt the violence against defenceless civilians?

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

The HR/VP has expressed on several occasions in recent months her concern about the situation in Guinea-Bissau including the serious and repeated violations of Human Rights. Human Rights violations are not acceptable and perpetrators must be held responsible.

The information available in respect of persons detained by the military following the assault is limited despite the best efforts of the EU Delegation and the International Community to obtain details; a report by the UN/Red Cross is expected soon.

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 has suspended its official cooperation with Guinea-Bissau (except for direct aid to the people) since 2011. It is determined, in cooperation with other international partners, 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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010841/12
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Approvazione di una nuova deroga alla direttiva 2009/12/CE da parte dello Stato italiano

Nel 2011 la Commissione ha avviato la procedura d'infrazione n. 2011/0608 a carico dello Stato italiano per la mancata attuazione della direttiva 2009/12/CE. Quest'ultima è volta a stabilire principi comuni per la riscossione dei diritti aeroportuali negli aeroporti aperti al traffico aereo commerciale il cui volume di traffico annuale superi la soglia di 5 milioni di movimenti passeggeri.

La procedura n. 2011/0608 è stata comunque archiviata dopo che lo Stato italiano ha finalmente recepito la direttiva in questione con il decreto legislativo 1/2012. Tuttavia, due mesi dopo il recepimento, è stata approvata una nuova deroga in favore dei grandi aeroporti con il decreto legislativo 5/2012, il quale ai paragrafi 2 e 3 dell'articolo 22 stabilisce che:

2. Il recepimento della direttiva 2009/12/CE in materia di diritti aeroportuali, di cui al Capo II, articolo da 71 a 82, del decreto legge 24 gennaio 2012, n. 1, fa comunque salvo il completamento delle procedure in corso volte alla stipula dei contratti di programma con le società di gestione aeroportuali, ai sensi degli articoli 11— nonies del decreto legge 30 settembre 2005 […] Tali procedure devono concludersi entro e non oltre il 31 dicembre 2012 […].

3. La misura dei diritti aeroportuali stabilita nei contratti di programma stipulati anteriormente all'entrata in vigore del decreto-legge 24 gennaio 2012, n. 1, può essere determinata secondo le modalità di cui al capo II del decreto medesimo alla scadenza dei contratti stessi.

I paragrafi 2 e 3 risultano quindi incompatibili con la normativa comunitaria. L'Autorità garante della concorrenza e del mercato ha già segnalato al Parlamento italiano i paragrafi in questione chiedendone l'abrogazione, ma finora non è stata intrapresa alcuna azione in questa direzione.

La Commissione è al corrente dei fatti sopra descritti? Ritiene essa che i paragrafi 2 e 3 dell'articolo 22 del decreto legislativo 5/2012 costituiscano effettivamente una violazione della direttiva 2009/12? In caso di risposta affermativa sì, intende essa richiedere l'apertura di una nuova procedura d'infrazione nei confronti dello Stato italiano?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2013)

Il 18 maggio 2011 la Commissione ha avviato la procedura d'infrazione 2011/0608 con lettera di costituzione in mora alle autorità italiane per omessa comunicazione delle misure di recepimento della direttiva entro il termine stabilito del 15 marzo 2011.

Poiché le autorità italiane non hanno risposto alla lettera, il 24 novembre 2011 è stato inviato un parere motivato. Il 27 gennaio 2012 è pervenuta una risposta contenente informazioni sul decreto legge del 24 gennaio 2012 in merito al pieno recepimento della direttiva, confermato da un'ulteriore notifica dell'Italia in data 3 febbraio 2012. In seguito ad un primo controllo, il decreto legge è risultato riguardare il recepimento della direttiva. La procedura d'infrazione per omessa comunicazione è stata pertanto archiviata il 22 marzo 2012.

Successivamente, la Commissione ha avuto notizia da terzi di ulteriori misure prese dalle autorità italiane in ordine al recepimento della direttiva in questione. Ma dall'Italia non ha ricevuto informazioni sulle suddette misure. Resta pertanto in attesa di ulteriori informazioni in materia dall'Italia. L'archiviazione della procedura d'infrazione 2011/0608 non pregiudica i risultati dell'esame di tali misure da parte della Commissione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010841/12
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Adoption by the Italian Government of a further exemption to Directive 2009/12/EC

In 2011, the Commission initiated infringement procedure No 2011/0608 against the Italian Government for non-implementation of Directive 2009/12/EC. The aim of this directive is to establish common principles for the levying of airport charges at airports that are open to commercial air traffic and whose annual traffic is over five million passenger movements.

Procedure No 2011/0608 was, however, closed after the Italian Government finally transposed the directive through Legislative Decree 1/2012. However, two months after it was transposed, a further exemption was approved for large airports, through Legislative Decree 5/2012. Article 22(2)and (3) of that decree stipulate the following.

'2. The transposition of Directive 2009/12/EC on airport charges, referred to in Chapter II, Articles 71 to 82, of Decree-Law No 1 of 24 January 2012, is still subject to the completion of the ongoing procedures to draw up programme contracts with the airport management companies, in accordance with Article 11h of the Decree Law of 30 September 2005 […]. These procedures shall be completed no later than 31 December 2012 […]

3. The level of the airport charges established in the programme contracts drawn up prior to the entry into force of Decree-Law No 1 of 24 January 2012 may be determined in accordance with the arrangements set out in Chapter II of that same decree, when those contracts expire'.

Paragraphs 2 and 3 are therefore incompatible with Community law. The Italian Antitrust Authority has already reported the paragraphs in question to the Italian Parliament, calling for their repeal, but so far no action has been taken.

Is the Commission aware of these facts? Does it agree that Article 22(2) and (3) of Legislative Decree 5/2012 are indeed in breach of Directive 2009/12? If so, will it open a new infringement procedure against the Italian Government?

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

The Commission opened infringement procedure 2011/0608 on May 18 2011 with the sending of a letter of formal notice to the Italian authorities regarding the failure to communicate measures transposing the directive by the deadline of 15 March 2011.

In the absence of a reply from the Italian authorities to this letter, a reasoned opinion was sent on 24 November 2011. A reply was received on 27 January 2012, providing details of a decree law of 24 January 2012 and indicating full transposition of the directive, confirmed by a further notification from Italy dated 3 February 2012. A subsequent 'prima facie' check of the decree law confirmed that it concerned the transposition of the directive. The infringement for non-communication was therefore closed on 22 March 2012.

The Commission has since been informed by third parties that further measures have been implemented by the Italian authorities regarding the transposition of this directive. But it has not been informed of any such measures by Italy. It is therefore seeking further information on the matter from Italy. The closure of infringement 2011/0608 is without prejudice to the outcome of the analysis by the Commission of any such measures.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010842/12
alla Commissione
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Chiusura dello stabilimento Schneider-Electric S.p.A. di Guardamiglio

Diversi mesi fa, la società *Schneider-Electric S.p.A.* ha annunciato la chiusura dello stabilimento sito nel comune di Guardamiglio dove lavorano circa 160 lavoratori. Venerdì 23 novembre 2012 presso la sede del ministero dello Sviluppo economico a Roma è stata tenuta una riunione tra le parti sociali. Attualmente non si è ancora arrivati ad una soluzione definitiva. La chiusura dello stabilimento in questione porterebbe a un impoverimento della realtà sociale locale.

Vista la continua chiusura di stabilimenti manifatturieri localizzati in Lombardia; visto il numero sempre crescente di lavoratori messi in mobilità; considerato che la Lombardia è una delle regioni che contribuisce maggiormente al bilancio dell'Unione europea, può la Commissione comunicare quali azioni intende intraprendere e in particolare se ritiene possibile modificare la legislazione dell'Unione al fine di indirizzare direttamente fondi ai governi regionali per accelerare la ridistribuzione degli aiuti?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2013)

Sono disponibili finanziamenti per le regioni europee, Lombardia compresa, in provenienza dal Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) e dal Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) sulla base delle strategie e dei criteri delineati nei programmi operativi in questione che coprono il periodo 2007-13. In linea con il principio della gestione condivisa, la responsabilità dell'implementazione dei programmi operativi rientra nelle competenze delle autorità nazionali e regionali. Di concerto con la Commissione e conformemente alle regole in vigore, le autorità nazionali e regionali possono modificare i programmi operativi per rispondere a cambiamenti socioeconomici intervenuti nei territori in questione.

Per ulteriori informazioni la Commissione suggerisce all'onorevole deputato di mettersi in contatto con le autorità di gestione interessate:

Autorità di gestione PO FESR Lombardia:
Regione Lombardia
Direzione Generale Industria, Artigianato, Edilizia e Cooperazione
UO Programmazione comunitaria
Via Pola 12/14
20124 Milano
E-mail: Adg_fesr@regione.lombardia.it

Autorità di gestione PO FSE Lombardia:
Regione Lombardia
Direzione Generale Istruzione, Formazione e Lavoro
Via Gioia 37
20124 Milano
E-mail: renato.pirola@regione.lombardia.it

A certe condizioni uno Stato membro può anche ricevere un sostegno dal Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione per aiutare i lavoratori licenziati in seguito a trasformazioni della struttura del commercio mondiale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010842/12
to the Commission
Matteo Salvini (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Closure of the Schneider-Electric S.p.A. factory in Guardamiglio

Several months ago, the company *Schneider-Electric SpA* announced the closure of its factory in the municipality of Guardamiglio, which employs some 160 workers. On Friday 23 November 2012, a meeting was held between the social partners at the Ministry of Economic Development in Rome. A definitive solution has not yet been found. The closure of the factory in question would lead to the impoverishment of local society.

Given the continuing closures of factories in Lombardy, the growing number of workers being laid off and the fact that the Lombardy is one of the regions that contributes the most to the EU budget, can the Commission say what action it intends to take and, in particular, whether EU legislation might be modified in order to send funds directly to regional governments in order to speed up the redistribution of aid?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

Funding is available to European regions, including Lombardy, from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) on the basis of strategies and criteria set out in the operational programmes concerned covering the 2007-13 period. In line with the shared management principle, the responsibility for the implementation of the operational programmes falls within the remit of the national and regional authorities. In agreement with the Commission and in compliance with the rules in force, national and regional authorities may modify the operational programmes in order to respond to socioeconomic change in the territories in question.

For any further information, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact the managing authorities concerned:

Managing Authority OP ERDF Lombardia:
Regione Lombardia
Direzione Generale Industria , Artigianato, Edilizia e Cooperazione
UO Programmazione comunitaria
Via Pola 12/14
20124 Milano
E-mail: Adg_fesr@regione.lombardia.it

Managing Authority OP ESF Lombardia:
Regione Lombardia
Direzione Generale Istruzione, Formazione e Lavoro
Via Gioia 37
20124 Milano
E-mail: renato.pirola@regione.lombardia.it

Under certain conditions, a Member State may also receive support from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to help workers who have been made redundant as a result of changes in world trade patterns.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010843/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Dazi sull'importazione di stoviglie cinesi

La Commissione europea, al termine di una procedura d'indagine durata circa nove mesi, ha deciso di introdurre dazi antidumping provvisori nei confronti delle importazioni di porcellana e ceramica da tavola dalla Cina. La norma, entrata in vigore lo scorso 16 novembre, applica un'aliquota dal 17,6 % al 31,2 % per tutte le aziende cinesi che hanno collaborato all'indagine e del 58,8 % per tutte le altre imprese esportatrici.

L'introduzione dei suddetti dazi compensativi, miranti a contenere gli effetti negativi di una pratica di vendita sleale, garantisce alle imprese europee una tutela più adeguata nei rapporti commerciali UE-Cina.

Ad oggi l'industria europea della porcellana e ceramica da tavola fornisce occupazione ad oltre 25 000 addetti, ma un'attenta analisi dei consumi mette in luce un dato allarmante: oltre il 65 % del totale di questo genere di prodotti proviene dalla Cina, una situazione che nel corso degli ultimi dieci anni si è rapidamente aggravata considerando che nel 2004 le importazioni cinesi rappresentavano solo il 22 % del consumo totale. La diffusa pratica di vendita sottocosto (dumping) di prodotti provenienti dalla Cina sta mettendo seriamente a rischio la sopravvivenza stessa delle imprese europee di questo settore già fortemente penalizzate dalla difficile congiuntura economica.

Premesso ciò, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. visto il carattere provvisorio di tale norma, qualora si riscontrasse nuovamente la persistenza della pratica di dumping, è intenzionata la Commissione a chiedere agli Stati membri di confermare i dazi?

2. Intende la Commissione adottare una strategia più ampia al fine di tutelare più efficacemente le aziende europee colpite dalla concorrenza sleale di alcune imprese cinesi? In che modo e con quale tempistica?

3. Intende la Commissione introdurre anche l'obbligatorietà dell'indicazione del marchio di origine relativamente ai prodotti di porcellana e ceramica per consentire al consumatore di fare acquisti con maggiore consapevolezza?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2013)

1. A seguito dell'imposizione di dazi provvisori anti-dumping sulle stoviglie cinesi per un periodo di sei mesi, si porterà avanti l'indagine della Commissione e a tutte le parti interessate verrà offerta l'opportunità di formulare commenti sui risultati provvisori. Sulla base della relazione d'indagine integrale la Commissione formulerà entro il 16 maggio 2013 al Consiglio una proposta appropriata se imporre o meno misure definitive anti-dumping.

2. La normativa dell'Unione europea contiene un certo numero di strumenti, come ad esempio il regolamento anti-dumping, per contrastare gli effetti delle pratiche commerciali sleali sul mercato UE. L'industria ceramica europea ha in effetti presentato una denuncia anti-dumping e la Commissione ha di recente imposto dazi provvisori anti-dumping sulle importazioni dalla Cina.

3. La questione della marcatura d'origine di certe categorie di prodotti industriali è stata discussa in particolare in relazione alla proposta del 2005 di un regolamento relativo all'indicazione del paese d'origine di certi prodotti importati da paesi terzi. Da quando è stata presentata la proposta non si è cristallizzato un consenso in seno al Consiglio del ministri quanto al principio di imporre tale marchio di origine. Il programma di lavoro della Commissione per il 2013 prevede il ritiro della proposta.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010843/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Import duties on Chinese tableware

At the end of an investigation procedure lasting about nine months, the Commission decided to impose provisional anti-dumping duties on imports of porcelain and ceramic tableware from China. The rule, which came into effect on 16 November, applies a rate ranging from 17.6% to 31.2% for all the Chinese companies that cooperated with the investigation and 58.8% for all other exporters.

The introduction of these countervailing duties, which aim to curb the negative effects of unfair sales practices, gives European companies better protection in terms of EU-China trade relations.

The European porcelain and ceramic tableware industry currently employs over 25 000 people, but careful analysis of consumption has revealed an alarming figure: over 65% of the total amount of these products comes from China and it is a situation that has rapidly deteriorated over the last 10 years, considering that in 2004, Chinese imports accounted for only 22% of total consumption. The widespread practice of selling products from China at below cost (dumping) is seriously threatening the very survival of European companies in this sector, which are already being heavily penalised by the difficult economic situation.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Given the provisional nature of this rule, should the practice of dumping persist, will the Commission ask the Member States to confirm the duties?

2. Will the Commission adopt a broader strategy in order better to protect European companies being affected by unfair competition from some Chinese companies? How will it do this and within what time-frame?

3. Will the Commission also introduce a mandatory indication of origin for porcelain and ceramic products, to enable consumers to make purchases with greater awareness?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

1. Following the imposition of provisional anti-dumping duties on Chinese tableware for a period of 6 months, the Commission's investigation will continue and all interested parties will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the provisional findings. On the basis of the full investigation report, the Commission will then make the appropriate proposal to the Council on whether or not to impose definitive anti-dumping measures not later than 16 May 2013.

2. European Union law contains a number of instruments, such as the anti-dumping Regulation, to address the effects of unfair trade practices on the EU market. The European ceramic industry indeed lodged an anti-dumping complaint and the Commission has recently imposed provisional anti-dumping duties on imports from China.

3. The issue of origin-marking on some categories of industrial products has been discussed in particular in relation with the Commission's proposal for a regulation on the indication of the country of origin of certain products imported from third countries of 2005. Since the proposal was tabled, there has been no consensus within the Council of Ministers on the principle of imposing such origin-marking. The Commission's work programme for 2013 includes the withdrawal of the proposal.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010845/12
alla Commissione
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Problematica dell'ILVA di Taranto e numerose decine di migliaia di posti di lavoro a rischio

L'attuale proprietà dell'ILVA ha rilevato l'azienda dallo Stato quando i bilanci di questa azienda riportavano voragini sotto il profilo finanziario e i suoi stabilimenti versavano in condizioni ben peggiori di quelle attuali, sia sotto il profilo della tutela ambientale che della salvaguardia della salute dei lavoratori e delle altre persone che vivono in quell'area.

L'ILVA rappresenta la più importante industria italiana ed una delle più importanti a livello europeo.

L'ILVA è collegata a numerosi stabilimenti in Italia e all'estero e molte altre realtà dell'indotto rappresentano una insostituibile realtà sotto il profilo occupazionale che garantisce lavoro a numerose decine di migliaia di persone, lavoro dal quale dipende un'esistenza dignitosa per altrettante famiglie.

L'industria dell'acciaio in Italia deve essere considerata parte di un settore strategico per l'economia nazionale e lo Stato italiano non può permettersi il lusso di vederla cancellare per l'inefficienza della politica, che non riesce a trovare una soluzione adeguata che possa conciliare il graduale risanamento ambientale dell'area con il mantenimento delle decine di migliaia di posti di lavoro.

Le iniziative dell'attuale governo italiano sembrano non aver ancora trovato adeguate soluzioni per evitare che dalla chiusura degli stabilimenti italiani derivi un insperato regalo alla concorrenza proveniente da altri paesi europei o da paesi emergenti, dove si privilegia l'occupazione e l'interesse nazionale alla pur importante tutela ambientale.

In considerazione del fatto che il governo italiano è stato sollecitato ad attivarsi quanto prima per emanare urgenti provvedimenti atti a rendere compatibile la tutela ambientale con la salvaguardia dei posti di lavoro, e prevedendo che per realizzare gli interventi di risanamento ambientale saranno necessarie importanti quantità di risorse finanziarie che non possono essere reperite nella loro interezza dal governo italiano vista la gravità dell'attuale crisi economica che sta investendo l'Italia, può la Commissione far sapere se intende attivare, su richiesta del governo italiano, l'apposito Fondo comunitario, in modo da affrontare con tempestività ed efficacia la grave crisi che sta investendo l'industria italiana, le cui conseguenze per l'ambiente e l'occupazione paiono assumere dimensioni sempre più preoccupanti?

Risposta di Laszlo Andor a nome della Commissione
(31 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole dell'importanza strategica del settore siderurgico e proporrà pertanto un piano d'azione entro il giugno 2013. Il Vicepresidente Tajani ha già convocato a due riprese, nel settembre e nel dicembre 2012, una tavola rotonda di alto livello sul futuro dell'industria siderurgica europea per discutere le misure atte ad aiutare l'industria a superare la crisi attuale e per emanare raccomandazioni concrete al fine di mantenerne la competitività.

La Commissione non dispone dei poteri per interferire nelle decisioni di imprese specifiche che sfociano nella chiusura di impianti in Europa.

La Commissione può fornire un sostegno alle imprese che attraversano una fase di grandi ristrutturazioni e ai loro lavoratori per il tramite del Fondo sociale europeo nonché del Fondo europeo di adeguamento alla globalizzazione, conformemente alle regole che disciplinano questi strumenti finanziari dell'UE. Il sostegno del Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale e del Gruppo Banca europea per gli investimenti può essere anch'esso mobilitato a condizione che siano soddisfatti i requisiti pertinenti.

In tutti i casi la Commissione sollecita le imprese e tutti gli stakeholder a gestire nella misura del possibile le ristrutturazioni in modo proattivo e socialmente responsabile. A tal fine, e dando seguito al Libro verde del gennaio 2012 «Ristrutturare e anticipare i mutamenti», la Commissione esamina il modo per meglio incoraggiare l'applicazione e il rispetto delle migliori pratiche in questo ambito.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010845/12
to the Commission
Sergio Berlato (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Issue of the Taranto ILVA and the tens of thousands of jobs at risk

When the current ILVA site was a State company, there were holes in the company accounts and the plant was in a far worse state than it is now, in terms of both environmental protection and the health of workers and other people living in the area.

ILVA is Italy's largest industrial company and one of the biggest in Europe.

ILVA is linked to a number of establishments in Italy and abroad and to many other companies further down the production chain that are irreplaceable in terms of employment, providing tens of thousands of people with work, and as many families with a decent standard of living.

Italy's steel industry should be considered to be of strategic importance to the national economy and the Italian Government cannot afford to let it go to the wall as a result of political inefficiency and the failure to find an adequate solution that can secure the gradual environmental rehabilitation of the area while also holding on to the tens of thousands of jobs.

The current Italian Government does not yet appear to have found the right way to prevent the closure of the Italian plants from becoming a boon to the competition in other European countries or emerging economies, where employment and the national interest take precedence over environmental protection, however important.

Given that the Italian Government has been called upon to act now to take urgent measures to secure environmental protection while also saving jobs; and allowing for the fact that the environmental recovery measures will require massive financial resources that cannot all be provided by the Italian Government given the seriousness of the current economic crisis affecting Italy, could the Commission say whether it intends to activate the appropriate Community Fund at the request of the Italian Government, so as to move quickly and effectively to address the grave crisis that is undermining Italian industry and whose consequences for the environment and employment appear to be taking on increasingly worrying dimensions?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The Commission is well aware of the strategic importance of the steel sector and will therefore propose an action plan by June 2013. A High-level Roundtable on the future of the European steel industry has been convened by Vice-President Tajani already twice, in September and December 2012, in order to discuss measures to help the industry survive the current crisis and to issue concrete recommendations to maintain its competitiveness.

The Commission has no powers to interfere in specific companies' decisions leading to closure of plants in Europe.

The Commission can provide support to those enterprises going through important restructuring and their workers through the European Social Fund, as well as though the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, in accordance with the rules governing these EU financial instruments. Support from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Investment Bank group can also be mobilised it the required conditions are met.

In any case, the Commission urges companies and all stakeholders to anticipate restructuring as far as possible and to manage it in a socially responsible way. For that purpose, and following the January 2012 Green Paper on Restructuring and anticipation of change, the Commission is considering on how to best encourage and ensure wide observance of the best practices in that field.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010846/12
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Verwerking van vast stedelijk afval (R1/D10): Europees guidance-document en het R1-statuut

Hoeveel landen passen het Europees guidance-document toe voor de berekening van de energiestatus van WtE-plants specifiek bestemd voor de verwerking van vast stedelijk afval (R1/D10)?

Welke landen passen een eigen formule toe of interpreteren de bestaande formule op een andere manier?

Hoeveel procent van de Europese installaties heeft het R1-statuut verkregen?

Voor hoeveel hiervan is de berekening gebaseerd op het Europees guidance-document?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(25 januari 2013)

De Commissie beschikt niet over de door de geachte parlementsleden gevraagde informatie, aangezien de meest recente statistieken ([1]) van ESTAT betrekking hebben op het jaar 2010, terwijl de R1-formule de facto pas op 12 december 2010 voor de lidstaten is gaan gelden, met het verstrijken van de omzettingstermijn voor Richtlijn 2008/98/EG ([2]) betreffende afvalstoffen. Daarnaast werden de richtsnoeren van de Commissie aangaande de interpretatie van de R1-formule pas vrij recent gepubliceerd, namelijk in juni 2011.

De bovenvermelde statistieken bevatten gegevens over het aantal installaties per lidstaat die voldoen aan de R1-formule. Dergelijke gegevens zijn echter onvolledig en moeten nog door ESTAT gevalideerd worden. Bovendien is het mogelijk dat nog meer installaties zullen voldoen aan de R1-formule vanaf het moment dat er overeenstemming is bereikt over de factor plaatselijke klimaatomstandigheden, zoals bedoeld in artikel 38 van bovenvermelde richtlijn.

Aanvullende informatie is beschikbaar uit andere bronnen dan de Commissie. Zo bevestigt met name een recent rapport ([3]) van de Confederatie van Europese Afval-tot-Energie Installaties (CEWEP) dat het aantal installaties die voldoen aan de R1-formule toeneemt. Het rapport geeft ook aan dat de R1-formule afval-tot-energiebedrijven een impuls heeft gegeven om hun energie-efficiëntie te verbeteren door hun systemen te optimaliseren.

([1]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=env_wasfac & lang=en.
([2]) 2] PB L 312 van 22.11.2008.
([3]) http://cewep.eu/m_1069.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010846/12
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Processing of municipal solid waste (R1/D10): European guidance document and the R1 statute

How many countries apply the European guidance document when calculating the energy status of waste-to-energy plants specifically intended for the processing of municipal solid waste (R1/D10)?

Which countries apply their own formula or interpret the existing formula in another way?

What percentage of the European plants have obtained the R1 statute?

In how many of these cases is the calculation based on the European guidance document?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

The Commission does not have the information requested by the Honourable Members since the latest statistics ([1]) published by ESTAT refer to 2010 and the R1 formula became effectively applicable in Member States only on 12 December 2010, with the expiry of the deadline for the transposition of Directive 2008/98/EC ([2]) on waste. Moreover, the Commission guidelines on the interpretation of the R1 formula were published relatively recently, in June 2011.

The abovementioned statistics include some data on the number of R1-compliant facilities per Member State. However, such data are incomplete and still in the process of validation by ESTAT. In addition, more facilities may become R1-compliant once the local climatic conditions factor is agreed as provided in Article 38 of the aforementioned Directive.

Additional information is available from non-Commission sources. In particular, a recent report ([3]) released by the Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plants operators (CEWEP) confirms that the number of facilities complying with the R1 formula is increasing. The report also suggests that the R1 formula has proved to be an incentive for WtE plants to improve their energy efficiency through the optimisation of their systems.

([1]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=env_wasfac&lang=en.
([2]) OJ L 312 of 22.11.2008.
([3]) http://cewep.eu/m_1069.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010847/12
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Identieke afvalverbrandingsinstallaties halen, afhankelijk van eigen of extern beheer, toch een verschillende energetische efficiëntie

Hoe kan het dat twee identieke afvalverbrandingsinstallaties een verschillende energetische efficiëntie hebben volgens de formule-interpretatie van het Europese guidance-document over het R1/D10-statuut, doordat bij de ene installatie de turbine in eigendom is van een derde (dus stroomlevering extern) en bij de andere installatie eenzelfde turbine in eigen beheer is (dus elektriciteitslevering)?

Voor de installatie met turbine in eigen beheer blijkt het veel moeilijker om de R1-drempel te halen dan voor een installatie die de turbine in beheer van een derde heeft gegeven, ondanks het feit dat de installaties in feite technisch niet van elkaar verschillen. Daarenboven laat de guidance vandaag toe dat enkel nieuwe installaties ervoor kunnen kiezen hun turbine niet in eigen beheer te houden, en zo een betere score te halen. Bestaande installaties kunnen dit niet en worden zo gediscrimineerd indien de guidance naar de letter wordt toegepast. Wat is het standpunt van de Commissie hierover?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(23 januari 2013)

Volgens de R1-formulerichtsnoeren ([1]) is de eigendom van de turbine op zich niet relevant voor de toepassing van de R1-formule. Enkel de fysieke aansluiting op de rest van de verbrandingsinstallatie zoals die in de relevante vergunning is gedefinieerd, is van tel.

De richtsnoeren voorzien dat het R1-formulesysteem niet buiten de „verbrandingsinstallatie" en evenmin buiten de „installatie" zoals die gedefinieerd zijn in de vergunning mogen worden toegepast en dat het R1-systeem niet van toepassing mag zijn op installaties die niet tot de verantwoordelijkheid van de exploitant behoren, met name omdat de exploitant er niet bevoegd is. Turbines die de grenzen van de vergunning overschrijden, worden daarom uitgesloten uit het „R1-formulesysteem".

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/pdf/guidance.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010847/12
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Identical waste incineration plants provide different energy efficiency depending on in-house or external management

How is it possible for two identical waste incineration plants to have different energy efficiency according to the interpretation of the formula of the European guidance document on the R1/D10 statute as a result of the turbine being owned by a third party at one plant (therefore external current supply) and the same turbine being privately owned (therefore mains electricity supply) at the other plant?

For the plant with the privately-owned turbine it is much harder to reach the R1 threshold than for a plant which has put the turbine under the management of a third party, despite the fact that there is no actual technical difference between the plants. In addition, the current guidance permits individual new plants to choose not to keep their turbine under their own management, and thus to attain a better score. Existing plants cannot do this and are therefore discriminated against if the guidance is applied to the letter. What is the position of the Commission in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

According to the R1-formula guidelines ([1]) the ownership of the turbine is as such irrelevant in the application of the R1 formula. Only its physical connection with the rest of the incineration plant as defined in the relevant permit matters.

The guidelines provide that the R1-formula system cannot be extended outside the 'incineration facility' nor the 'installation' as defined by the permit, and that installations outside the responsibility of the operator are to be excluded from the R1 system boundaries, in particular because the operator has no authority there. Hence, turbines set outside the boundary limits of the permit are excluded from the 'R1-formula system'.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/pdf/guidance.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010848/12
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Het zelfvoorzieningsprincipe en het gemengd stedelijk afval van bedrijven

Het zelfvoorzieningsprincipe kan niet zomaar toegepast worden op het gemengd stedelijk afval (GSA) van bedrijven dat apart wordt ingezameld (= opgehaald, overgeslagen en/of uitgesorteerd). Dit GSA is in aard en samenstelling vaak vergelijkbaar met huishoudelijk GSA en wordt in dezelfde installaties verwerkt.

Is het niet logischer dat elke lidstaat ook voor apart ingezameld GSA van bedrijven zijn verantwoordelijkheid neemt en zelfvoorzienend wordt?

Waarom bepaalt de inzamelwijze of GSA al dan niet onder het zelfvoorzieningsprincipe valt of niet? Dit zorgt namelijk voor een ongelijk speelveld: lidstaten waar alle GSA van huishoudens samen met GSA van bedrijven wordt ingezameld, dienen voor meer afval zelfvoorzienend te zijn dan lidstaten waar de inzameling zoveel mogelijk gescheiden verloopt.

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(21 januari 2013)

De bevoegde autoriteiten van de lidstaten zijn verantwoordelijk voor het ontwerp en de werking van stedelijke afvalbeheersystemen waarin bedrijfsafval gedeeltelijk of volledig is opgenomen. In elk geval moeten de bevoegde autoriteiten ervoor zorgen dat alle afvalstromen, bedrijfsafval inbegrepen, voldoen aan de algemene voorschriften van Richtlijn 2008/98/EG ([1]) voor afval. Deze houden onder meer de verplichting in ervoor te zorgen dat afvalbeheer en -verwerking worden uitgevoerd door de oorspronkelijke afvalstoffenproducenten of door andere houders; of in hun naam verricht door anderen; of verzorgd door een publieke of private inzamelaar van afvalstoffen, met inachtneming van de afvalhiërarchie en zonder de menselijke gezondheid en/of het milieu in gevaar brengen. Ook moeten in de afvalbeheerplannen van de bevoegde autoriteiten alle afvalstromen binnen het nationale grondgebied opgenomen zijn.

([1]) PB L 312 van 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010848/12
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: The self-sufficiency principle and commercial mixed municipal waste

The self-sufficiency principle cannot simply be applied to commercial mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) that is collected separately (= picked up, transferred and/or sorted). The nature and composition of this MSW is often comparable to household MSW and is processed in the same plants.

Is it not more logical that each Member State also takes responsibility for separately collected commercial MSW and is self-sufficient?

Why does the collection mode determine whether MSW falls under the self-sufficiency principle or not? The fact is that this makes for an uneven playing field: Member States where all household MSW is collected together with commercial MSW must be self-sufficient with regard to more waste than Member States where as far as possible collection takes place separately.

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

The Member States' competent authorities are responsible for the design and operation of municipal waste management systems which may partially or wholly comprise commercial waste. In any case, competent authorities have to ensure compliance of all waste streams, including commercial waste, with the general requirements set out in Directive 2008/98/EC ([1]) on waste. This entails, *inter alia*, the obligation to ensure that waste management and treatment is carried out by original waste producers or other holders; or handled by others on their behalf; or arranged by a private or public waste collector, in accordance with the waste hierarchy and without endangering human health and/or the environment. Also, waste management plans adopted by the competent authorities need to cover all waste streams generated within the national territory.

([1]) OJ L 312 of 22.11.2008.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010849/12
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Transport/export van GSA naar een andere lidstaat

Hoeveel ton gemengd stedelijk afval (GSA) werd sinds de invoering van de WFD (en omzetting in lokale wetgeving) over landsgrenzen heen getransporteerd naar een buitenlandse R1-waste-to-energy-installatie?

In welke mate kwam dit GSA uit landen die zelf niet voldoende verbrandingscapaciteit hadden?

In welke mate kwam dit GSA uit landen die zelf over voldoende verbrandingscapaciteit beschikken?

Wat is de gemiddelde afstand van deze grensoverschrijdende transporten?

Heeft de Commissie zicht op de hoeveelheden afval die zo weg zijn gehouden van stortplaatsen om te worden verbrand in een andere lidstaat, of vond er eerder een substitutie plaats van verbranding in één land naar verbranding in een ander land?

Zou de wetgeving niet van dien aard moeten zijn dat export van afval voor afvalverbranding van één lidstaat naar een andere enkel kan als daarmee dat afval van een D10-behandeling verschuift naar een R1-behandeling (en niet van R1 naar R1 omdat dit enkel overbodig transport zonder milieuwinst betekent)?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(28 januari 2013)

1.2.3. De relevante verslagen van de Commissie en van het Europees Milieuagentschap (EEA) [12] bevatten geen gegevens over de grensoverschrijdende overbrenging van vast gemengd stedelijk afval (GSA) bestemd voor verbranding met energieterugwinning, omdat gemengd GSA in de classificatie van afvalstoffen in het kader van het Verdrag van Bazel en in de EU-wetgeving niet is ingedeeld onder een afzonderlijke code om te rapporteren over overbrenging van dergelijk afval.

Toch blijkt uit niet-officiële informatie waarover de Commissie beschikt, dat deze hoeveelheden staan voor een klein percentage (tussen 2,4 en 3 %) van al het stedelijk afval dat in de EU wordt verbrand; en dat de meeste overbrengingen plaatsvinden tussen lidstaten die over een relatief hoge verbrandingscapaciteit beschikken.

4. De beschikbare gegevens geven geen informatie over de gemiddelde afstand van de grensoverschrijdende transporten.

5. De Commissie kan hierover op basis van de bestaande gegevens geen betrouwbare schattingen maken.

6. Deze vraag is beantwoord in het kader van de schriftelijke vragen E-010850/2012 en E-010851/2012.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0448:FIN:NL:PDF
([2]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/movements-of-waste-EU-2012

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010849/12
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Transport/export of MSW to another Member State

How many tonnes of mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) have been transported across national borders to a foreign R1 waste-to-energy plant since the introduction of the WFD (and its transposition into local legislation)?

To what extent did this MSW come from countries which did not have sufficient incineration capacity themselves?

To what extent did this MSW come from countries which have sufficient incineration capacity themselves?

What is the average distance of these cross-border transport operations?

Does the Commission have sight of the quantities of waste which have been kept away from landfill in this way in order to be incinerated in another Member State, or was there rather a substitution of incineration in one country for incineration in another country?

Should legislation not be such that the export of waste for waste incineration from one Member State to another can only take place if waste from D10 treatment shifts to R1 treatment (and not from R1 to R1 because this only means unnecessary transport without environmental gains)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2013)

1.2.3. The Commission and the EEA relevant reports ([1])([2]) do not include information on the trans-boundary shipment of mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) destined to incineration with energy recovery as there is no single code for mixed MSW under the Basel Convention waste classification and the EU legislation to report on such movements.

However, non-official information available to the Commission reveals that these amounts represent a low percentage (between 2.4% and 3%) of all municipal waste incinerated in the EU; and that the majority of shipments are amongst Member States which have relatively high incineration capacity available.

4. The available data does not include the average distance of the cross-border transport operations.

5. The Commission cannot make reliable estimates based on the existing data.

6. This question has been replied in written questions E-010850/2012 and E-010851/2012.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0448:FIN:EN:PDF.
([2]) http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/movements-of-waste-EU-2012.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010850/12
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: De nieuwe kaderrichtlijn afval (RL 2008/98/EG) moedigt export van GSA aan, terwijl het hoofddoel een nabije verwerking van niet recycleerbaar afval moet zijn

Met de nieuwe kaderrichtlijn afval zijn meer exportmogelijkheden gecreëerd voor de verbranding van gemengd stedelijk afval niet afkomstig van particuliere huishoudens, in verbrandingsinstallaties met het R1-statuut. De invoering van dat statuut had tot doel het investeren in de noodzakelijke verwerkingscapaciteit te vereenvoudigen door de beeldvorming rond de installaties te verbeteren, en tegelijk in het algemeen hun energieprestaties te versterken. De toegenomen mogelijkheden voor export lijken echter net het omgekeerde effect te hebben op de publieke opinie. Deze stelt zich in sommige gevallen zo op dat ze de bouw van installaties in vraag stelt en de verwerking van afval in andere lidstaten als mogelijk alternatief naar voor schuift. Daarmee werkt men een nabije duurzame oplossing voor de eindverwerking van het eigen afval soms tegen.

Moet, in het kader van de evaluatie van de kaderrichtlijn afval, daarom niet nagedacht worden over een versterkte planning van de noodzakelijke afvalverwerkingscapaciteit, waarbij de lidstaten dwingender verplicht worden in te staan voor de nabije verwerking van niet recycleerbaar afval?

Verdient het geen aanbeveling om lidstaten met marktverstorende overcapaciteit die overigens ook de recyclage bemoeilijken te verplichten een phase out-planning te maken voor de overschotten aan capaciteiten waarover ze beschikken?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(30 januari 2013)

De Commissie meent dat de huidige EU-voorschriften betreffende de beginselen van nabijheid en zelfvoorziening van afvalbeheer passend zijn. Het beginsel van nabijheid zoals bedoeld in artikel 16 van Richtlijn 2008/98/EG ([1]) betreffende afvalstoffen (kaderrichtlijn afval) betekent niet dat een lidstaat verplicht is om op zijn grondgebied over alle faciliteiten voor definitieve nuttige toepassing te beschikken. Overbrengingen van afval zijn immers toegestaan onder bepaalde omstandigheden en met inachtneming van de betrokken voorwaarden zoals vastgesteld in Verordening nr. 1013/2006 ([2]) betreffende de overbrenging van afvalstoffen.

Volgens het subsidiariteitsbeginsel zijn de lidstaten verantwoordelijk voor het ontwerp en de ontwikkeling van afvalbeheersplannen. De Commissie gaat na of de afvalbeheersplannen van de lidstaten met name voldoen aan het volgende: artikel 28, lid 3, onder b) en d), van de kaderrichtlijn afval betreffende de capaciteit van respectievelijk bestaande en toekomstige afvalverwijderingsinstallaties, de afvalhiërarchie, en de beginselen van nabijheid en zelfvoorziening.

([1]) PB L 312 van 22.11.2008.
([2]) PB L 190 van 12.7.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010850/12
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: The new Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) encourages the export of MSW, while the principal objective must be the local processing of non-recyclable waste

The new Waste Framework Directive has created more export opportunities for the incineration of mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) not originating from private households in incineration plants with the R1 statute. The aim of introducing that statute was to simplify investment in the necessary processing capacity by improving imaging around the plants, and at the same time reinforcing their energy performance in general. However, the increased opportunities for export seem to have just the opposite effect on public opinion. In some cases this manifests itself in people questioning the construction of plants and favouring the processing of waste in other Member States as a possible alternative. As a result, a local sustainable solution for the final processing of one's own waste is sometimes contested.

Must consideration not therefore be given, within the framework of the evaluation of the Waste Framework Directive, to more robust planning of the necessary waste processing capacity, as a result of which the Member States are obliged to guarantee the local processing of non-recyclable waste?

Should it not be recommended that Member States with market-distorting spare capacity, which moreover also makes recycling harder, be obliged to make an out-planning phase for the surplus capacity they have?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 January 2013)

The Commission believes that current EU rules concerning the principle of proximity and self-sufficiency on waste management are appropriate. The proximity principle as set out in Article 16 of Directive 2008/98/EC ([1]) on waste (Waste Framework Directive -WFD) does not mean that a Member State is obliged to possess the full range of final recovery facilities within its territory. In fact, shipments of waste are allowed under certain circumstances and following the relevant requirements laid down in Regulation 1013/2006 ([2]) on the shipment of waste.

Pursuant to the subsidiarity principle, Member States are responsible for the design and development of waste management plans. The Commission will check whether Member States' waste management plans comply in particular with: Article 28.3 b) and d) of the WFD regarding existing and future waste treatment installations capacities, respectively; the waste hierarchy; and the principles of proximity and self-sufficiency.

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([2]) OJ L 190, 12.7.2006.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010851/12
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) en Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Maatregelen om overcapaciteit in afvalverbrandingsinstallaties tegen te gaan zodat dumpingtarieven vermeden kunnen worden

Overcapaciteit in afvalverbrandingsinstallaties heeft in de landen waar dit voorkomt de afgelopen jaren geleid tot het hanteren van dumpingtarieven. Deze zijn dermate laag dat de verbranding van afval plots concurrentieel werd met de selectieve inzameling en recyclage van bepaalde materialen. Het is verre van denkbeeldig dat deze financiële evoluties ervoor zorgen dat afval minder aan de bron wordt gesorteerd dan mogelijk en wenselijk, gelet op de Europese ambities inzake efficiënt materialenbeheer.

Een instrument om overcapaciteit tegen te gaan is het goed plannen van de noodzakelijke afvalverwerkingscapaciteit binnen een land, in combinatie met het hanteren van het zelfvoorzieningsprincipe. Nu het belemmeren van export van gemengd stedelijk afval niet afkomstig van particulieren, naar landen met overcapaciteit met de nieuwe kaderrichtlijn afval moeilijk is geworden, is het instrument van de capaciteitsplanning vrij machteloos. Afval kan aan een land ontglippen, waardoor ook daar vrije capaciteit kan ontstaan, wat opnieuw aanleiding kan geven tot verstorende dumpingtarieven in de afvalverwerking. Andere, alternatieve beleidsinstrumenten, zoals heffingen op verbranden of sorteerverplichtingen, blijken niet in staat die lacune op te vullen.

Welke flankerende maatregelen wil de Commissie bieden aan de lidstaten om op te treden tegen het ontstaan van overcapaciteit en de ongewenste neveneffecten ervan?

Hoe kan een land zich wapenen tegen de verstorende overcapaciteit in een andere lidstaat, met een mogelijk aanzuigend effect op zowel recycleerbaar als niet recycleerbaar afval?

Antwoord van de heer Potočnik namens de Commissie
(28 januari 2013)

Het probleem van overcapaciteit in afvalverbrandingsinstallaties is in de EU niet wijdverspreid. Volgens de recentste statistieken van de Commissie[1] met betrekking tot het beheer van stedelijk afval bedroeg het gemiddelde verbrandingscijfer van de EU 22 % in 2010. In 17 lidstaten ligt het verbrandingscijfer lager dan het EU-gemiddelde; in tien daarvan ligt het lager dan 1 %.

De Commissie is van mening dat de bestaande voorzorgsmaatregelen volstaan om te waarborgen dat overbrengingen van afval bestemd voor installaties voor de terugwinning van energie geen ongewenste effecten hebben. Artikel 16 van Richtlijn 2008/98/EG[2] betreffende afvalstoffen (kaderrichtlijn afval) laat de lidstaten toe afval over te brengen naar andere lidstaten. Toch kunnen de lidstaten binnenkomende overbrengingen van afval bestemd voor installaties voor de terugwinning van energie beperken, indien vaststaat dat die overbrengingen ertoe zouden leiden dat in het eigen land ontstaan afval moet worden verwijderd of dat afval moet worden verwerkt op een wijze die niet consistent is met hun afvalbeheerplannen. De lidstaten kunnen tevens transport naar het buitenland van afval om milieuredenen beperken, zoals bepaald in Verordening nr. 1013/2006[3] betreffende de overbrenging van afvalstoffen.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/8-27032012-AP/EN/8-27032012-AP-EN.PDF
([2]) PB L 312 van 22.11.2008.
([3]) PB L 190 van 12.7.2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010851/12
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) and Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Measures to combat waste incineration overcapacity in order to prevent dumping tariffs

In recent years, waste incineration overcapacity has led to the use of dumping tariffs in a number of countries. These are so low that the incineration of waste has suddenly become competitive with the selective collection and recycling of certain materials. It is far from inconceivable that these financial developments will mean that less waste will be sorted at source than is possible and desirable in view of European ambitions for efficient materials management.

A tool which can help combat overcapacity is the proper planning of the necessary waste processing capacity within a country, together with the application of the self-sufficiency principle. Since the introduction of the new Waste Framework Directive has made it difficult to prevent the export of mixed municipal waste (excluding household waste) to countries with overcapacity, the capacity planning tool has been rendered powerless. Waste can evade a country, thus creating spare capacity there, which in turn can lead to distorting dumping tariffs in the waste processing industry. Other alternative policy tools, such as levies on incineration or compulsory sorting, seem unable to fill that gap.

Which supporting measures does the Commission want to offer the Member States to combat the development of overcapacity and the unwanted side effects?

How can a country protect itself against the distorting overcapacity in another Member State, with a possible accumulating effect on both recyclable and non-recyclable waste?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2013)

The issue of overcapacity in incineration is not widespread in the EU. According to the latest Commission's statistics ([1]) on municipal waste management, the EU average incineration rate in 2010 was 22%. Seventeen Member States have incineration rates below the EU average of which ten have rates not exceeding 1%.

The Commission believes that existing safeguards are sufficient to ensure that waste shipments destined to energy recovery facilities do not have undesirable effects. Article 16 of Directive 2008/98/EC ([2]) on waste (Waste Framework Directive -WFD) allows Member States to ship waste to other Member States. Notwithstanding, Member States may limit incoming shipments of waste destined to energy recovery facilities where it has been established that such shipments would result in national waste having to be disposed of or waste having to be treated in a way that is not consistent with their waste management plans. Also, Member States may also limit outgoing shipments of waste on environmental grounds as set out in Regulation 1013/2006 ([3]) on shipment of waste.

([1]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/8-27032012-AP/EN/8-27032012-AP-EN.PDF
([2]) OJ L 312 of 22.11.2008.
([3]) OJ L 190 of 12.7.2006.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-010852/12
adresată Comisiei
Adrian Severin (NI)
(29 noiembrie 2012)

Subiect: Cerere de clarificare a presupusei utilizări a MCV în dejucarea „loviturii de stat" din România

În data de 30 octombrie 2012, am primit din partea Comisiei Europene o scrisoare referitoare la întrebarea scrisă depusă de mine pe data de 6 septembrie 2012.

În textul acestei scrisori Comisia evită răspunsul. În loc de răspuns, se face trimitere la recomandările din raportul privind progresul României în MCV, precum și la poziția CE prezentată în plenul Parlamentului.

Ceea ce se cerea erau argumentele care să justifice afirmația dnei Reding din ziarul Le Monde referitoare la evenimentele din România, potrivit căreia utilizarea MCV a ajutat la dejucarea acțiunii violente (puci) de demitere a președintelui României.

Refuzul repetat al CE de a răspunde clar unei întrebări clare reprezintă o încălcare a obligațiilor sale față de PE. El trădează lipsa argumentelor care ar putea justifica intervenția CE în politica internă a unui stat membru.

În consecință, reiterăm cererea anterioară și rugăm Comisia să ofere răspunsuri exacte întrebărilor concrete de mai jos:

1. În ce fel a fost folosit MCV și instituțiile create de acesta (DNA, ANI, CSM) în a opri „acțiunile violente" îndreptate împotriva conducerii legitime a statului sau ce alte misiuni concrete li s-au încredințat spre a împiedica îndepărtarea prin „puci" a președintelui României?

2. În cazul în care MCV a fost folosit pentru reprimarea unui puci, cum explicați faptul că instituțiile competente în combaterea violenței nu au fost utilizate?

3. De ce comisarul Reding a considerat acțiunea de demitere a președintelui României drept un puci, deci o acțiune violentă și ilegală?

În ipoteza că nici de această dată nu ni se vor oferi argumentele cerute, considerăm că astfel CE recunoaște lipsa oricărui temei de fapt și de drept pentru poziția adoptată.

Răspuns dat de dl Barroso în numele Comisiei
(8 februarie 2013)

Comisia nu acceptă ideea care se află la baza întrebării distinsului deputat și modul în care acesta interpretează observațiile vicepreședintelui Comisiei responsabil pentru justiție, drepturi fundamentale și cetățenie.

Comisia este pe deplin convinsă că măsurile luate în iulie 2012 și conținutul raportului adoptat în cadrul mecanismului de cooperare și de verificare au avut o contribuție pozitivă în ceea ce privește situația din România. Acest lucru este în conformitate cu angajamentul Guvernului României de a fi un membru deplin și activ al Uniunii Europene.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010852/12
to the Commission
Adrian Severin (NI)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Request for clarification regarding claims that the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) was used to avert 'coup' in Romania

On 30 October 2012, I received from the Commission a letter referring to my written question of 6 September 2012.

The Commission's letter is in fact evasive. Instead of answering my question, it simply refers to the recommendations of the report concerning progress in Romania with regard to CVM and the stance adopted by the Commission in plenary.

I was actually asking what arguments justified Ms Reding's claim concerning events in Romania, which was published in *Le Monde*, to the effect that the CVM had helped avert acts of violence (an attempted putsch) seeking to remove the President of Romania from office.

The Commission's repeated refusal to give a clear answer to a clear question is an infringement of its obligations to the EP and clearly shows that no justification can be given for Commission interference in the internal affairs of a Member State.

I accordingly reiterate my previous question and ask the Commission to provide precise answers to the following specific questions:

1. What use was made of the CVM and the institutions created by virtue thereof (the Anti-Corruption Directorate — DNA, the National Integrity Agency — ANI, and the Supreme Judicial Council — CSM) to halt acts of violence against the legitimate government of the country, or what other specific tasks were they given to prevent a 'putsch' intended to remove the President of Romania from office?

2. If the CVM was used to prevent a putsch, how does the Commission explain the fact that the forces responsible for containing acts of violence were not deployed?

3. Why did Commissioner Reding consider the removal from office of the President of Romania to be a putsch, i.e. a violent and illegal action?

If the requested information is once again not provided, we will consider this to be an acknowledgement by the Commission that the position adopted by it has no factual or legal basis.

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2013)

The Commission does not accept the premise behind the Honourable Member's question and his interpretation of the comments of the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship.

The Commission is fully convinced that the steps taken in July 2012 and the contents of the report adopted under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism made a positive contribution to the situation in Romania. This is in line with the Romanian government's commitment to be a full and active member of the European Union.

(Eestikeelne versioon)

Kirjalikult vastatav küsimus E-010853/12
komisjonile
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) ja Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE)
(29. november 2012)

Teema: Kas tööstuspargi rajamine Saaremaa süvasadama juurde on vastuolus Eesti Natura kohustustega?

Tallinna sadam on ehitanud Saaremaale Ninase külla Saaremaa süvasadama. Nüüd kavandatakse sadama vahetusse lähedusse selle teenindamiseks ulatuslikku tööstusprojekti, et muuta sadam tiheda liiklusega kaubasadamaks.

Kõnealune uus sadama tööstusprojekt piirneb Natura alaga: kogu Tagaranna poolsaar on Natura ala. Kavandatav tööstusprojekt on suur. See hõlmab enam kui 20 hektarit ja sisaldab muu hulgas 44 veoauto parkimiskohta.

Tallinna sadam ja Mustjala vald on üheskoos kaardistanud loodusrikka ala ning koostanud kava, mille kohaselt sadama tööstusparki võidakse rajada hulk erinevaid tööstusettevõtteid, sh nt kivimurd ja bituumenitehas. Laienev tegevus tooks muu hulgas kaasa ka õlilekke ohu.

Kas nii suur projekt Natura ala vahetus läheduses ei ole vastuolus Eesti Natura kohustustega?

Komisjoni nimel vastanud Volinik Potočniki
(31. jaanuar 2013)

Elupaikade direktiivi sätete kohaselt ([1]) tuleb iga kava või projekti, mis tõenäoliselt avaldab Natura 2000 alale olulist mõju, asjakohaselt hinnata seoses tagajärgedega, mida see ala kaitse-eesmärkidele avaldab.

Selline hinnang sõltub muu hulgas kava või projekti eeldatavast mõjust liikidele ja elupaigatüüpidele, mille kaitseks Natura 2000 ala on määratud, ning samuti kõnealuste liikide ja elupaigatüüpide ökoloogilistest vajadustest ja tundlikkusest. Kuna sellisel hindamisel tuleb iga juhtumit eraldi vaadelda, ei ole võimalik teha projekti võimaliku mõju kohta esialgseid järeldusi, lähtudes ainult projekti ulatusest või selles käsitletava ala paiknemisest mõne Natura 2000 ala lähedal.

Seoses tööstuspargi kavandatava laiendamisega Saaremaa süvasadama läheduses ei ole komisjoni talitustel praegu põhjust kahtlustada nõukogu direktiivi 92/43/EMÜ sätete võimalikku rikkumist.

([1]) Nõukogu direktiivi 92/43/EMÜ (looduslike elupaikade ning loodusliku loomastiku ja taimestiku kaitse kohta) artikli 6 lõiked 3 ja 4, EÜT L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-010853/12
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) ja Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE)
(29. marraskuuta 2012)

Aihe: Rikkooko teollisuusalueen rakentaminen Saarenmaan syvämerisataman yhteyteen Viron Natura-velvoitteita?

Tallinnan satama on rakentanut Saarenmaalle, Ninasen kylään, Saarenmaan syvämerisataman. Nyt sataman välittömään läheisyyteen, satamaa palvelemaan, on kaavoitettu laajamittainen teollisuushanke tukemaan sataman muuttamista vilkkaaksi kauppasatamaksi.

Kyseinen uusi sataman teollisuusaluehanke rajoittuu Natura-alueeseen: itse asiassa koko Tagarannan niemi on Natura-aluetta. Suunniteltu teollisuusaluehanke on suuri ja käsittää reilut 20 hehtaaria ja mm. 44 rekan parkkipaikan.

Tallinnan satama ja Mustjalan kunta ovat nyt yhdessä kaavoittaneet luontorikkaan alueen ja laatineet suunnitelman, jonka mukaan teollisuusalueelle sataman yhteyteen voidaan rakentaa laaja valikoima erilaista teollisuustoimintaa, kuten kivilouhimo tai bitumitehdas. Laajentuva toiminta toisi mukanaan myös mm. uhan öljyvahingon sattumisesta alueella.

Eikö näin suurimittainen hanke Natura-alueen välittömässä läheisyydessä ole vastoin Viron Natura-velvoitteita?

Janez Potočnikin komission puolesta esittämä vastaus
(31. tammikuuta 2013)

Luontodirektiivin ([1]) oikeudellisten säännösten mukaan suunnitelmat tai ohjelmat, jotka ovat omiaan vaikuttamaan merkittävästi Natura 2000 -alueeseen, on arvioitava asianmukaisesti sen kannalta, miten ne vaikuttavat alueen suojelutavoitteisiin.

Tällaisen arvioinnin päätelmät riippuvat muun muassa suunnitelman tai ohjelman odotettavissa olevista vaikutuksista niihin lajeihin tai luontotyyppeihin, joita varten kyseinen Natura 2000 -alue on osoitettu, sekä näiden lajien ja luontotyyppien erityisistä ekologisista vaatimuksista ja herkkyyksistä. Koska arvioinnin tulos on erittäin suuressa määrin tapauskohtainen, hankkeen mahdollisista vaikutuksista ei ole mahdollista tehdä alustavia päätelmiä pelkästään sen laajuuden pohjalta tai sen mukaan, miten se sijaitsee suhteessa Natura 2000 -alueeseen.

Mitä tulee teollisuusalueen suunniteltuun laajentamiseen Saarenmaan nykyisen syvämerisataman läheisyyteen, komission yksiköillä ei tätä nykyä ole tiedossa, että tämä suunnitelma rikkoisi neuvoston direktiivin 92/43/ETY säännöksiä.

([1]) Luontotyyppien sekä luonnonvaraisen eläimistön ja kasviston suojelusta annetun neuvoston direktiivin 92/43/ETY 6 artiklan 3 ja 4 kohta, EYVL L 206, 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010853/12
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE) and Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Building of an industrial estate for the Saaremaa deep-water port: possible breach of Estonia's Natura obligations

The Port of Tallinn has built the Saaremaa deep-water port in the village of Ninanen. Plans have now been made for a large-scale industrial project in the immediate vicinity to serve the deep-water port and help turn it into a busy commercial port.

This projected new port industrial estate borders on a Natura area: the entire Tagaranna peninsula, in fact, lies within a Natura area. The projected industrial estate is large, extending over more than 20 hectares, and will also have a 44-space car park.

The Port of Tallinn and the municipality of Mustjala have together mapped out an area rich in natural resources, and the plan which they have drawn up will allow a wide range of industries, including for example a stone quarry and a bitumen factory, to be set up on the port industrial estate. Expanding activities would bring their own dangers, not least oil spillage.

Given its large scale and its immediate proximity to a Natura area, does not this project run counter to Estonia's Natura obligations?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

According to the legal provisions of the Habitat Directive ([1]), any plan or project likely to have a significant effect upon a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site's conservation objectives.

The conclusions of such an assessment will depend, *inter alia*, on the expected impacts of the plan or project on the species and habitat types for which the Natura 2000 site has been designated, as well as on the particular ecological requirements and sensitivities of these species and habitat types. As the outcome of the assessment is very much case-specific, it is not possible to draw preliminary conclusions on the potential impact of a project solely from its scale or its location in relation to a Natura 2000 site.

In the case of the planned extension of industrial facilities next to the existing Saarema deep-water port, the Commission services currently have no indication of a potential breach of the provisions of Council Directive 92/43/EEC.

([1]) Article 6(3) and (4) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-010854/12
komissiolle
Sari Essayah (PPE)
(29. marraskuuta 2012)

Aihe: Konserniavustuksen rajoittaminen kotimaisiin emoyhtiöihin

Suomessa on useita tapauksia, joissa ulkomaisen yrityksen Suomessa toimiva tytäryhtiö on tehnyt erittäin voitollista tulosta, mutta on maksanut veroja Suomeen erittäin vähän. Konserniavustusten avulla voitot on siirretty ulkomaiseen emoyhtiöön, joka on siirtänyt voitot verotettaviksi verosuunnittelijoiden suosimiin paikkoihin eli niin kutsuttuihin veroparatiiseihin.

Suomessa on laki konserniavustuksista, ja se on järkevä laki puhtaasti kotimaista käyttöä varten, sillä näin voidaan saman konsernin tappiollisista osista siirtää tappioita voitollisiin osiin ja näin konsernin osille ei synny epäreilua verotaakkaa kotimaassa. Lakia ei ole suunniteltu tapauksiin, joissa on ulkomainen emoyhtiö. Nyt kuitenkin lakia tulkitaan Suomessa siten, että verosopimuksiin sisältyvien syrjintäkieltosäännösten ja SEUT:n mukaisen sijoittautumisvapauden nojalla ulkomaisen yhtiön on katsottu olevan oikeutettu vähennyskelpoisen konserniavustuksen antamiseen ja saamiseen silloin, kun yhtiöllä on kiinteä toimipaikka Suomessa. Saatu konserniavustus on ulkomaisen yhtiön kiinteän toimipaikan veronalaista tuloa Suomessa. Jos kiinteään toimipaikkaan kohdistuu riittävä määrä kuluja, kuten korkokuluja, ei kiinteälle toimipaikalle jää verotettavaa tuloa Suomeen. Vaikuttaa veroparatiisien hyödyntämiseltä ja aggressiiviselta verosuunnittelulta, jos emoyhtiöstä siirretään kuluja, kuten korkokuluja, yhtiön kiinteään toimipaikkaan Suomessa.

Mitkä keinot ovat komission mielestä mahdollisia, jotta voidaan torjua tällainen epäaito kulujen siirto? Jos tehokkaita toimia epäaidon kulujen siirron torjumiseksi ei ole mahdollista esittää, olisiko kuitenkin mahdollista rajoittaa Suomen konserniavustuksia koskevan lain ulkopuolelle ulkomaiset yhtiöt, joilla on kiinteä toimipaikka Suomessa? Tällöin lain alkuperäinen tarkoitus täyttyisi, sillä ulkomaisen emoyhtiön tytäryhtiötä verotettaisiin sen tekemän aidon tuloksen perusteella ja mahdollisuudet verottamattomien voittojen siirtämiseen veroparatiiseihin vähenisivät merkittävästi.

Algirdas Šemetan komission puolesta antama vastaus
(23. tammikuuta 2013)

Komissio on huolestunut aggressiivisesta verosuunnittelusta ja veroparatiisien käytöstä, joka vaikuttaa sisämarkkinoiden toimintaan ja jäsenvaltioiden tuloihin. Komissio on hiljattain esittänyt toimintasuunnitelman [1] sekä kaksi suositusta [2], joiden tavoitteena on ratkaista kyseiset ongelmat ja niistä johtuva veropohjan kaventuminen, jota arvoisa parlamentin jäsen kuvasi. Mainitussa asiassa näyttäisi olevan kysymys verovelvollisen, jonka kotipaikka on Suomessa, voittojen siirtämisestä konserniavustuksia koskevan Suomen järjestelmän mukaisesti verovelvolliselle, jonka kotipaikka on muualla kuin Suomessa [3]. Tämän jälkeen tämän muualla kuin Suomessa sijaitsevan verovelvollisen voittoa supistettiin keinotekoisesti yritysten välisillä korko- ja muilla vähennyskelpoisilla kuluilla. Todellinen ongelma vaikuttaa olevan veropohjan kaventuminen, ei Suomen konserniavustuksia koskeva järjestelmä (konsernin sisäinen tappiontasaus).

Asianmukainen ratkaisu ei olisi Suomen konserniavustuksia koskevan lain soveltamisalan rajoittaminen niin, että sen ulkopuolelle suljettaisiin ulkomaiset yritykset, joilla on kiinteä toimipaikka Suomessa. Tällainen ulkomailla verotuksellista kotipaikkaa pitävien verovelvollisten syrjintä olisi selvästi ristiriidassa EU:n lainsäädännön kanssa [4]. Ratkaisu ongelmaan voisi olla pikemminkin se, että Suomi soveltaa väärinkäytösten estämiseksi tehokkaita sääntöjä, joiden avulla puututaan oikeasuhteisella tavalla veropohjan keinotekoisen kaventamisen ongelmaan. Tällaisia voisivat olla joko erityissäännöt esimerkiksi alikapitalisoinnin estämiseksi tai äskettäin annetun aggressiivista verosuunnittelua koskevan komission suosituksen mukainen yleinen väärinkäytöksiä estävä säännöstö. Lopuksi todettakoon, että komission vuonna 2011 esittämä EU:n tasolla käyttöön otettava yhteinen yhtenäistetty yhtiöveropohja (CCCTB) [5] ratkaisisi merkittävimmät ongelmat siihen osallistuvien yritysten osalta.

([1]) COM(2012) 722 final ("Toimintasuunnitelma veropetosten ja veronkierron torjunnan tehostamiseksi"), 6.12.2012.
([2]) COM(2012) 8805 lopullinen (komission suositus toimenpiteistä, joilla kannustetaan kolmansia maita soveltamaan hyvän hallintotavan vähimmäisvaatimuksia verotusalalla) ja C(2012) 8806 final (aggressiivista verosuunnittelua koskeva komission suositus).
([3]) Tämä järjestelmä oli kohteena asiassa C-231/05 (Oy AA), joka koski Suomessa sijaitsevan verovelvollisen voittojen rajatylittävää siirtoa yritykseen, joka ei ole verovelvollinen Suomessa.
([4]) Lisätietoja ks. asia C-18/11, Philips Electronics.
([5]) KOM(2011) 121 lopullinen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010854/12
to the Commission
Sari Essayah (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Restricting group relief to domestic parent companies

In Finland there are several cases in which the Finnish subsidiary of a foreign company has made very high profits but paid very little tax in Finland. By means of intra-group transfers, the profits were moved to the foreign parent company, which in turn moved them on to be taxed in the places favoured by tax planners, in other words tax havens.

Finland has a law on intra-group transfers, and for purely domestic purposes this makes sense, as it enables losses to be shifted from loss-making parts of a given group to profitable parts, thus saving group companies from an unfair tax burden on their home market. The law, however, was not designed for cases in which the parent company is foreign, but is now being interpreted in Finland in such a way that, by virtue of the non-discrimination clauses of tax agreements and freedom of establishment under the TFEU, a foreign company is considered to be entitled to surrender and claim tax-deductible group relief so long as it has a fixed place of business in Finland. The taxable income from the foreign company's permanent Finnish establishment constitutes a contribution to the group. If a sufficient volume of expenditure — interest charges, for example — is channelled towards the Finnish establishment, there will be no income left to tax in Finland. What the parent company appears to be doing, by transferring interest and other costs to its permanent Finnish establishment, is exploiting tax havens and engaging in aggressive tax planning.

How does the Commission think that bogus cost transfers of this kind could be prevented? If no effective means of prevention can be proposed, would it at least be possible to limit the scope of the Finnish law on intra-group transfers so as to exclude foreign companies with a fixed place of business in Finland? This would fulfil the original purpose of the law, since subsidiaries of foreign companies would be taxed on the basis of their real performance and the possibilities for transferring untaxed profits to tax havens would be greatly reduced.

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

The Commission is concerned by aggressive tax planning and the use of tax havens that affect the functioning of the Internal market and Member States' revenues. It recently presented an Action Plan ([1]) and two Recommendations ([2]) to address these problems and resulting tax base erosion such as described by the Honourable Member. The specific case mentioned seems to concern a transfer of profits from a resident Finnish tax payer to a non-resident Finnish tax payer under the Finnish system for intra-group transfers ([3]). The profit of this non-resident Finnish tax payer is then artificially eroded via intercompany interest charges and other deductible expenses. This tax base erosion seems to be the real problem rather than the Finnish system for intra-group transfers (intra-group loss relief).

The appropriate solution to this would not be a limitation of the scope of the Finnish law on intra-group transfers so as to exclude foreign companies with a fixed place of business in Finland. Such discrimination against non-resident taxpayers would clearly be contrary to EC law. ([4]) Rather this problem could be addressed by Finland operating efficient anti-abuse rules that in a proportionate manner tackle the problem of artificial tax base erosion. These could either be specific rules, e.g. to prevent thin capitalisation, or a General Anti-Abuse Rule in line with the recent Commission Recommendation on aggressive tax planning. Finally, the introduction at EU level of a Common Consolidated Corporate tax base (CCCTB) as proposed by the Commission in 2011 ([5]) would address the main issues for companies that opted into it.

([1]) COM(2012)722 final (An Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion) of 6/12/2012.
([2]) C(2012)8805 final (Commission Recommendation regarding measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters) and C(2012)8806 final (Commission Recommendation on aggressive tax planning).
([3]) This system was the subject of Case C-231/05 (Oy AA) concerning a cross border transfer of profits from a Finnish resident taxpayer to an entity that was not subject to tax in Finland.
([4]) For details, cf. Case C-18/11, Philips Electronics.
([5]) COM(2011)121 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010855/12
an die Kommission
Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Haft von Thongpaseuth Keuakoun, Seng-Aloun Phengphanh und Bouavanh Chanmanivong, Demokratische Volksrepublik Laos

Thongpaseuth Keuakoun, Seng-Aloun Phengphanh und Bouavanh Chanmanivong, drei zentrale Figuren der studentischen Demokratiebewegung in Laos, werden seit über 13 Jahren wegen der Organisation einer friedlichen Demonstration in Vientiane (Laos) in Haft gehalten. In ihrer Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-007545/2011 erklärte die Kommission, dass Seng-Aloun Phengphanh und Bouavanh Chanhmanivong voraussichtlich 2012 aus der Haft entlassen werden. Dies ist bisher nicht geschehen.

— Gibt es Informationen über den Verbleib und den Gesundheitszustand der drei Gefangenen?

— Wurden bezüglich der genannten laotischen Gefangenen auf dem ASEM-Treffen am 5./6. November 2012 von der Kommission Gespräche mit den laotischen Behörden über die Situation und die Zukunft der Häftlinge geführt, und wenn ja, mit welchem Ergebnis?

— Wie wird sich die Kommission in Zukunft für die Freilassung der drei Gefangenen einsetzen?

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

Die Delegation in Vientiane ersuchte die laotischen Behörden kürzlich um aktuelle Informationen über die Situation von Herrn Thongpaseuth Keuakoun und Herrn Seng-Aloun Phengphanh. Beide befinden sich nach wie vor im Gefängnis Zamke in Vientiane und sind, so wurde der Delegation mitgeteilt, in einem guten gesundheitlichen Zustand. Sie wurden zu einer Freiheitsstrafe von 20 Jahren verurteilt und wurden noch nicht vom Präsidenten begnadigt. Herr Bouavanh Chanmanivong, der zu einer Freiheitsstrafe von 12 Jahren verurteilt worden war, wurde bereits entlassen. Ohne vorzeitige Entlassung werden diese Personen noch bis 2019 in Haft bleiben.

Diese beiden Fälle wurden beim letzten Treffen im Rahmen des Menschenrechtsdialogs EU-Laos im Februar 2011 zur Sprache gebracht und werden auch beim nächsten Treffen im Februar 2013 thematisiert werden. In Verbindung mit dem diesjährigen Treffen wird die laotische Regierung möglicherweise einen Besuch in zwei Gefängnissen organisieren. Während seines Treffens mit dem Premierminister von Laos am Rande des ASEM-Gipfels sprach Präsident van Rompuy auch Fragen der Menschenrechte an.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010855/12
to the Commission
Jan Philipp Albrecht (Verts/ALE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Imprisonment of Thongpaseuth Keuakoun, Seng-Aloun Phengphanh and Bouavanh Chanmanivong in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Thongpaseuth Keuakoun, Seng-Aloun Phengphanh and Bouavanh Chanmanivong, three key figures in the student movement for democracy in Laos, have been held in prison for over 13 years for organising a peaceful demonstration in Vientiane (Laos). In its answer to Written Question E-007545/2011, the Commission said that Seng-Aloun Phengphanh and Bouavanh Chanhmanivong were due to be released in 2012. This has not happened so far.

— Is there any information on the whereabouts of the three prisoners and their state of health?

— Did the Commission discuss with the Lao authorities the current and future situation of these Laotian prisoners during the ASEM meeting on 5 to 6 November 2012? If so, what was the outcome?

— How does the Commission plan to campaign for the release of these three prisoners in the future?

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

The Delegation in Vientiane has recently asked the Lao authorities for an update on the situation of Mr Thongpaseuth Keuakoun and Mr Seng-Aloun Phengphanh. Both are still in the Zamke prison Vientiane Laos, and the Delegation has been told that they are in good health. They were sentenced to 20 years and have not benefitted yet from a Presidential pardon. Mr Bouavanh Chanmanivong, sentenced to 12 years, has already been released. The term of imprisonment of these persons would last until 2019, if they are not released earlier.

These two cases have been referred to during the last EU Laos Human Rights Dialogue in February 2011 and will be raised again at the forthcoming Human Rights Dialogue in February 2013. During the upcoming dialogue in 2013, a visit to two prisons could be organised by the Lao Government. During his meeting with the Lao Prime Minister in the margins of the ASEM Summit, President Van Rompuy also raised human rights issues.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010856/12
an die Kommission
Axel Voss (PPE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Unverhältnismäßige Kontrollen an der Grenze zu Gibraltar

Deutsche Bürger, die sich am 14. Oktober 2012 als Touristen in Gibraltar aufhielten, haben von unverhältnismäßigen Zollkontrollen der spanischen Behörden bei der Ausreise berichtet; jeder PKW sei intensiv kontrolliert worden, und am Grenzübergang sei es zu Wartezeiten von über acht Stunden gekommen.

Einwohner von Gibraltar sollen bei dieser Gelegenheit mit Flugblättern mitgeteilt haben, dass es sich um eine wiederholte willkürliche Aktion der spanischen Behörden gehandelt haben soll. Auch wenn Gibraltar nicht zum Schengen-Raum und zur Zollunion der EU gehört, scheinen die geschilderten Maßnahmen nicht angemessen zu sein.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Ist der Kommission bekannt, dass die spanischen Behörden ihre Zollkontrollen an der Grenze zu Gibraltar in einer unverhältnismäßigen Art und Weise verschärft haben? Wenn ja, hat die Kommission dieses gegenüber der spanischen Regierung kritisch angesprochen? Wenn nein, wird die EU-Kommission die spanische Regierung um eine Stellungnahme ersuchen?

2. Wie bewertet die Kommission generell Grenzkontrollen an einer EU-Außengrenze, bei denen nicht nur stichprobenartig, sondern jeder PKW kontrolliert wird?

3. Welche Möglichkeiten sieht die Kommission, eine Verbesserung der Situation zu erreichen?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(8. Februar 2013)

Gibraltar gehört — wie der Herr Abgeordnete festgestellt hat — nicht zum Raum ohne Kontrollen an den Binnengrenzen der Europäischen Union. Daher werden an den Grenzen zwischen Gibraltar und Spanien Personenkontrollen vorgenommen. Gemäß dem Schengener Grenzkodex sollten alle Personen, einschließlich derjenigen, die in der EU das Recht auf Freizügigkeit genießen, bei der Ein- oder Ausreise in den bzw. aus dem Schengen-Raum einer Mindestkontrolle unterzogen werden, bei der anhand der Reisedokumente ihre Identität festgestellt wird. Drittstaatsangehörige müssen einer eingehenden Kontrolle unterzogen werden, bei der zusätzlich geprüft wird, ob sie alle Einreisevoraussetzungen erfüllen.

Gibraltar gehört auch nicht dem Zollgebiet der Union an und wird daher für Zollzwecke als Drittland behandelt. Durch die Zollkontrollen, die die nationalen Zollbehörden vornehmen, soll die ordnungsgemäße Anwendung des Zollrechts gewährleistet werden. Die Modalitäten für diese Kontrollen werden von den betreffenden Mitgliedstaaten festgelegt und können auch die Kontrolle der Beförderungsmittel, des Gepäcks und sonstiger von oder an Personen mitgeführter Gegenstände umfassen.

Die Kommission überprüft nicht routinemäßig die Kontrollen, die von den nationalen Behörden an den Außengrenzen der Union durchgeführt werden. Sie geht davon aus, dass die Mitgliedstaaten die notwendigen Maßnahmen treffen, um die ordnungsgemäße Anwendung der EU-Vorschriften zu gewährleisten.

Die Kommission wird jedoch die betreffenden Behörden kontaktieren und um weitere Informationen ersuchen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010856/12
to the Commission
Axel Voss (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Disproportionate checks at the Gibraltar border

German citizens who were staying in Gibraltar as tourists on 14 October 2012 reported that they had been subject to disproportionate customs checks by the Spanish authorities as they were leaving the territory. Each car was thoroughly inspected and there are reports of people having to wait for more than eight hours at the border crossing.

It appears that Gibraltar residents took this opportunity to distribute flyers saying that this was a repeated arbitrary action taken by the Spanish authorities. Even though Gibraltar is not part of the Schengen area or the EU customs union, these measures appear to be unreasonable.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the fact that the Spanish authorities have stepped up customs checks at the Gibraltar border in a disproportionate manner? If so, has the Commission expressed its criticism to the Spanish government? If not, will the Commission ask the Spanish Government to issue a statement on this matter?

2. In general, what is the Commission's view on border checks at an external border of the EU where every car is inspected rather than spot checks being carried out?

3. What opportunities does the Commission see for improving the situation?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(8 February 2013)

As correctly stated by the Honourable Member, Gibraltar is not part of the area without internal border controls of the European Union. Checks on persons 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. Third-country nationals should be subject to thorough checks, involving a detailed examination verifying that they fulfil all entry conditions.

In addition, Gibraltar is not part of the customs territory of the Union and is thus treated as a third country for customs purposes. Customs controls are performed by the national customs authorities in order to ensure the correct application of customs legislation. The modalities for these controls are determined by the Member States and may include inspecting means of transport, luggage and other goods carried by or on persons.

The Commission does not routinely monitor the checks performed by the national authorities at the Union's external borders and starts from the assumption that Member States take the necessary measures to ensure that EU rules are correctly applied.

The Commission will nevertheless contact the relevant authorities to get further clarifications.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010857/12
an die Kommission
Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Nach 18 Jahren Verhandlungen: der Beitritt Russlands zur WTO

Nach 18 Jahren Verhandlungen ist Russland endlich der Welthandelsorganisation beigetreten. Russland ist als einer der wichtigsten Exporteure von Erdöl und Erdgas der drittgrößte Handelspartner der Europäischen Union und die Europäische Union ist Russlands größter Handelspartner. Der russische Markt ist riesig und erstreckt sich über ein enormes Staatsgebiet. Der Beitritt Russlands zur WTO kann sich positiv auf die EU-Russland-Investitionen sowie den Handel auswirken.

Der Beitritt Russlands zur WTO bedeutet allerdings auch, dass Russland Reformen in Bereichen wie Eingangs- und Ausfuhrabgaben, Marktzugang für Dienstleistungen und Investitionen, Rechte am geistigen Eigentum, technische Standards und bei der Einhaltung der Voraussetzungen über Gesundheits- und Hygienemaßnahmen durchzuführen hat, die sich als schwierig erweisen können. Für Russland gelten nun die WTO-Bestimmungen für die vorgenannten Themen und Bereiche.

1. Für Russland ist es eine entscheidende Aufgabe, seine neuen WTO-Anforderungen zu erfüllen. Welche Schritte beabsichtigt die Europäische Kommission angesichts dieser Tatsache um sicherzustellen, dass Russland seinen Verpflichtungen auch tatsächlich nachkommt?

2. Welche Maßnahmen wird die Kommission ergreifen, wenn Russland seine Verpflichtungen vernachlässigt?

3. Kraftfahrzeuge zählen zu den Hauptausfuhrgütern der EU nach Russland: Wie wird die Kommission reagieren, wenn Russland dem Aufruf der nationalen Automobilindustrie folgt und auf Rechtsvorschriften zurückgreift, um die Einfuhr von Fahrzeugen diskriminierend zu lenken?

4. Wird sich die Kommission der Frage annehmen, dass das Gerichtswesen in Russland immer mehr an Unabhängigkeit verliert und falls ja, wie beabsichtigt sie sicherzustellen, dass EU-Investitionen in Russland rechtlich ausreichend geschützt werden?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(31. Januar 2013)

Russland hatte zum Zeitpunkt seines Beitritts im August 2012 seine im Rahmen der WTO entstehenden Verpflichtungen in vielen Bereichen bereits erfüllt. In manchen Branchen allerdings (wie z. B. in der Automobilindustrie) geben handelsbeschränkende Maßnahmen, die möglicherweise nicht mit den WTO-Regeln vereinbar sind, Anlass zur Sorge. Die Kommission hat bereits bilaterale Konsultationen mit Russland aufgenommen, um die offenstehenden Fragen im Zusammenhang mit der Umsetzung des WTO-Rechts zu klären. Zudem hat sie diese Fragen auf dem EU-Russland-Gipfel im Dezember angesprochen. Wenn die Gespräche ergebnislos bleiben, ist die Kommission bereit, auf sämtliche ihr zur Verfügung stehenden Mittel zurückzugreifen, so auch auf den multilateralen Streitbeilegungsmechanismus.

Die Rechtsstaatlichkeit und die Unabhängigkeit der Justiz sind für die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Russland von höchster Bedeutung. Die Bedenken hinsichtlich der fehlenden Unabhängigkeit der Justiz und der weit verbreiteten Korruption in Russland sind einem stabilen wirtschaftlichen Umfeld nicht zuträglich. Auf sie muss eingegangen werden, um das Klima für Investitionen aus der EU in Russland zu verbessern. Zwischen bestimmten EU-Mitgliedstaaten und Russland bestehen bereits einige Verträge zum Schutz von Investitionen. Da ausländische Direktinvestitionen durch den Vertrag von Lissabon jetzt in der Zuständigkeit der EU liegen, könnten Überlegungen über ein neues Rahmenwerk für den Investitionsschutz zwischen der EU und Russland angestellt werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010857/12
to the Commission
Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Russia's WTO accession after 18 years of negotiations

After 18 years of negotiations, Russia has finally joined the World Trade Organisation. As an major exporter of oil and gas, Russia is the European Union's third-largest trading partner, while the European Union is Russia's first. Russia represents a huge market, and an enormous territory; Russia's entry into the WTO has the potential to positively impact EU-Russian investment and trade realities.

However, joining the WTO also means that Russia will be required to undertake reforms that may be tough to institute, in fields such as import and export duties, market access for services and investment, intellectual property rights, technical standards and compliance with the regulations on health and sanitary measures. Russia will now become subject to WTO rules regarding the aforementioned themes and sectors.

1. Given that it will be a substantial task for Russia to meet its new WTO-derived requirements, what will the European Commission do to ensure that Russia stays true to its commitments?

2. What action will the Commission take if Russia begins to stray from its commitments?

3. Given that one of the main EU exports to Russia is automobiles, what will the Commission's reaction be if Russia begins to heed the calls of its domestic automobile industry and to use legislation to discriminate against imported vehicles?

4. Does the Commission take issue with the continuing degradation of an independent judiciary in Russia and, if so, how does it plan to ensure that EU investments in Russia have sufficient legal protection?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

Russia had implemented its WTO commitments in many areas by the time of its accession in August 2012. However, in some sectors, such as automobiles, there are concerns regarding trade restrictive measures that may be contrary to WTO rules. The Commission has already started bilateral consultations with Russia with a view to solving the outstanding issues linked to WTO implementation and raised them at the EU-Russia summit in December 2012. If consultations do not produce results then the Commission is ready to use all other instruments at its disposal, including the multilateral dispute settlement mechanism.

The rule of law and the independence of the judiciary are of paramount importance to the EU-Russia relationship. Concerns about the independence of the judiciary and widespread corruption in Russia are not conducive to a stable economic environment and need to be addressed in order to improve the climate for EU investments in Russia. Some international treaties concerning investment protection already exist between certain EU Member States and Russia. Given that foreign direct investment is now an EU level competence as a consequence of the Lisbon treaty, a new framework for investment protection between the EU and Russia could be reflected upon.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-010858/12
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(29 Νοεμβρίου 2012)

Θέμα: Τουρκία και βία κατά των γυναικών

Στο πλαίσιο της Διεθνούς Ημέρας για την εξάλειψη της βίας κατά των γυναικών, στις 25 Νοεμβρίου 2012, επισημαίνεται ότι η βία κατά των γυναικών εξακολουθεί να αποτελεί τεράστιο πρόβλημα στην Τουρκία, όπου μια γυναίκα σκοτώνεται κάθε δύο μέρες και το 73% των γυναικών που ζητούν προστασία από το κράτος τελικά δολοφονούνται. Ο πρωθυπουργός της χώρας Ρετζέπ Ταγίπ Ερντογάν έχει δεσμευτεί να προβεί σε μεταρρυθμίσεις αλλά μέχρι σήμερα αυτό δεν έχει συμβεί. Το ζήτημα αυτό τίθεται κάθε χρόνο διότι συγκαταλέγεται στα σημαντικότερα ζητήματα που πρέπει να επιλύσει η Τουρκία ως χώρα υποψήφια για ένταξη στην ΕΕ. Ωστόσο, δεν έχει σημειωθεί καμία πρόοδος και καμία μεταρρύθμιση. Επιπλέον, τούτο έρχεται σε αντίθεση με το γεγονός ότι η Τουρκία έχει επικυρώσει τη σύμβαση για την πρόληψη και την καταπολέμηση της βίας κατά των γυναικών και της ενδοοικογενειακής βίας.

Ερωτάται, επομένως, η Επιτροπή:

1. Για πόσο ακόμα μπορεί η ΕΕ να περιμένει τις αλλαγές αυτές χωρίς να λαμβάνει ισχυρότερη στάση απέναντι στην Τουρκία;

2. Μήπως θα έπρεπε η ΕΕ να ασκήσει πίεση στην Τουρκία για την τήρηση της σύμβασης που η τελευταία έχει επικυρώσει; Εάν ναι, μήπως θα έπρεπε να επιβληθούν κυρώσεις στην Τουρκία για τη μη εφαρμογή της σύμβασης που υποστηρίζει τα δικαιώματα και την προστασία των γυναικών από τη βία;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(1 Φεβρουαρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή αποδίδει μεγάλη σημασία στα θέματα της ισότητας των φύλων και των δικαιωμάτων των γυναικών.

Στην έκθεση του 2012, η Επιτροπή τονίζει ότι ο «νόμος για την προστασία της οικογένειας και την πρόληψη της βίας σε βάρος των γυναικών», που εκδόθηκε τον Μάρτιο του 2012, έχει ως στόχο να προστατέψει από τη βία τα μέλη της οικογένειας και τα άτομα που διατηρούν εξωγαμικές σχέσεις ([1]). Οι διαδικασίες για επείγουσες περιπτώσεις κρίνονται γενικά θετικές, όπως χαρακτηρίστηκαν και οι χωρίς αποκλεισμούς διαδικασίες διαβούλευσης που πραγματοποίησαν οι αρχές με την κοινωνία των πολιτών. Το Υπουργείο για την Οικογένεια και τις Κοινωνικές Πολιτικές εξέδωσε σχέδιο καταπολέμησης της βίας κατά των γυναικών (2012-2015). Το σχέδιο εστιάζεται σε πέντε τομείς: νομοθεσία, ευαισθητοποίηση και αλλαγή νοοτροπίας, χειραφέτηση των γυναικών και υπηρεσίες πρόληψης, υγειονομική περίθαλψη και συνεργασία μεταξύ των ενδιαφερομένων φορέων. Το Υπουργείο για την Οικογένεια και τις Κοινωνικές Πολιτικές και η Χωροφυλακή υπέγραψαν πρωτόκολλο που προβλέπει την κατάρτιση του προσωπικού της Χωροφυλακής σε θέματα πρόληψης της βίας κατά των γυναικών και ισότητας των φύλων, με στόχο τη στήριξη των θυμάτων της βίας.

Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή αναγνωρίζει ότι απαιτούνται ουσιαστικές προσπάθειες ούτως ώστε η εν λόγω νέα και η προγενέστερη νομοθεσία να μετατραπούν σε πολιτική, κοινωνική και οικονομική πραγματικότητα. Η Επιτροπή θα εξακολουθήσει να θέτει τα ζητήματα αυτά στις τουρκικές αρχές σε κάθε ευκαιρία.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010858/12
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Turkey and violence against women

In the context of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which was marked on 25 November 2012, violence against women still remains a huge problem in Turkey. A woman is killed every other day in Turkey, and 73% of women seeking state protection are eventually murdered. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is promising to carry out reforms, but has failed to do so as yet. Every year we raise this issue concerning Turkey, as it is one of the most important factors it must deal with as a candidate country for EU membership. Yet we see no improvements and no reforms taking place. Furthermore, this contradicts Turkey's ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

We therefore ask the Commission:

1. For how much longer can the EU stand by and wait for these changes without taking a stronger stance against Turkey?

2. Should the EU not put pressure on Turkey to legally abide by the convention it has signed? And if so, should Turkey not be penalised for failing to implement the convention which supports the rights and protection of women against violence?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 February 2013)

The Commission attaches great importance to the issues of gender equality and women's rights.

In the 2012 Progress Report ([1]), the Commission stresses that 'the Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women' adopted in March 2012 aims to protect family members and those in relationships outside marriage from violence. The procedures for urgent cases are generally positive, as was the inclusive consultation exercise undertaken by the authorities with civil society. A National Action Plan to combat Violence against Women (2012-2015) was adopted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. The plan focuses on five areas: legislation, awareness raising and change of attitudes, empowerment of women and preventive services, healthcare and cooperation among stakeholders. The Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Gendarmerie signed a protocol providing for Gendarmerie staff to be trained in the prevention of violence against women and gender equality issues with a view to supporting victims of violence.

However, the Commission also acknowledges that substantial efforts are needed to turn this new and earlier legislation into political, social and economic reality. The Commission will continue to raise such issues with the Turkish authorities on all appropriate occasions.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/tr_rapport_2012_en.pdf

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-010859/12
do Komisji
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)
(29 listopada 2012 r.)

Przedmiot: Stanowisko Komisji w sprawie wyroku sądu orzekającego ograniczenie wolności dla twórcy portalu Antykomor.pl

W piątek, 14 września 2012 r., Sąd Okręgowy w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim orzekł karę roku i trzech miesięcy ograniczenia wolności dla Roberta Frycza, twórcy krytykującego prezydenta Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej portalu Antykomor.pl. Wyrok sądu został skrytykowany przez przedstawicielkę OBWE ds. wolności mediów, Dunję Mijatović, która stwierdziła, iż ze względu na rodzaj wykonywanej pracy osoby pełniące funkcje publiczne powinny tolerować większą dozę krytycyzmu oraz satyrycznych uwag niż zwykli obywatele.

Komisja Europejska nie zajęła stanowiska w tej sprawie, jednak 31 października 2012 r. odniosła się do innej decyzji polskiego sądu, stając w obronie Adama Darskiego, który podczas koncertu swojego zespołu podarł na scenie Biblię. Komisja stwierdziła w swoim oświadczeniu, że „oskarżanie zespołu muzycznego o obrazę uczuć religijnych jest niezgodne z wartościami Unii Europejskiej".

W związku z tym chciałbym zapytać:

1. Jaki jest stosunek Komisji Europejskiej wobec wyroku sądu w sprawie Roberta Frycza, który zgodnie z przysługującym mu prawem wyrażał krytyczne opinie w sprawie urzędującego prezydenta?

2. Jak – w kontekście niedawnego stanowiska Komisji Europejskiej, broniącej Adama Darskiego, który publicznie podarł Biblię – rozumieć brak reakcji KE na wyrok w sprawie portalu Antykomor.pl, krytycznie oceniony m.in. przez OBWE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(24 stycznia 2013 r.)

Komisja nie zamierza wypowiadać się na temat przypadku, o którym pisze Szanowny Pan Poseł, ponieważ wydaje się on nie dotyczyć wdrażania prawa unijnego.

Co do pytania związanego z przypadkiem Adama Darskiego Komisja odsyła do swojej odpowiedzi na pytanie P-010071/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010859/12
to the Commission
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: The Commission's stance on the community service sentence handed down by a court to the author of the Antykomor.pl website

On Friday, 14 September 2012, a district court in Piotrków Trybunalski sentenced Robert Frycz, the author of Antykomor.pl, a website critical of Poland's president, to 15 months' community service. The sentence has been criticised by Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, who pointed out that given the nature of their jobs, people holding public office should be expected to put up with a greater level of criticism and satirical comment than ordinary members of the public.

The Commission has not expressed its views on this case, but on 31 October 2012, it reacted to another Polish court ruling by defending Adam Darski, who tore up a copy of the Bible onstage during a concert given by his band. In its statement, the Commission pointed out that 'charging a band with offending religious sensibilities goes against the values of the European Union'.

With this in mind:

1. What is the Commission's view of the sentence the court handed down to Robert Frycz, who — as he was legally entitled to do — had criticised Poland's current president?

2. The Commission recently issued a statement in defence of Adam Darski, who publicly tore up a copy of the Bible. In the light of this, what conclusion can be drawn from the Commission's failure to react to the case involving the Antykomor.pl website, which has been criticised by the OSCE and others?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(24 January 2013)

The Commission does not intend to comment on the case to which the Honourable Member refers to as it does not appear to involve implementation of EC law.

As regard the question relating to the case of Adam Darski, reference is made to the response already provided by the Commission to the Question P-010071/2012.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010860/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Água

Os mares e os rios, como todas as fontes de água doce, acolhem regularmente a água tratada em centrais de tratamento. No entanto, os químicos, os antibióticos e as hormonas não são retirados da água tratada que todos os cidadãos europeus ingerem.

A Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento das consequências em termos de saúde pública do consumo continuado de água que comporta os referidos antibióticos e hormonas? Que estudos científicos existem sobre esta matéria?

— Pensa alterar as normas europeias para que também estes elementos sejam retirados da água nas centrais de tratamento? Em que estudos científicos sustenta a sua posição?

Resposta dada pelo Comissário Janez Potočnik em nome da Comissão
(12 de fevereiro de 2013)

A Comissão tem conhecimento dos estudos e relatórios sobre este assunto. A OMS conclui que «não é atualmente considerado necessário o desenvolvimento de valores-guia formais baseados nos efeitos para a saúde relativos aos produtos farmacêuticos … aplicáveis à qualidade da água potável» ([1]).

No que diz respeito à qualidade da água, aos seus efeitos no ambiente aquático e consequentemente na saúde humana, a Comissão apoia projetos de investigação ([2]) no âmbito do 7.° Programa-Quadro. Com base nos dados existentes relativos aos riscos para as populações de peixes, corroborados por uma Avaliação de Impacto ([3]), a Comissão propôs a inclusão de três substâncias farmacêuticas na lista de substâncias prioritárias ([4]) do anexo X da Diretiva-Quadro Água ([5]). A proposta, se e quando for adotada, poderia induzir ação local para um melhor tratamento das águas residuais nos casos em que não podem ser cumpridas as normas de qualidade aplicáveis a essas substâncias nas águas de superfície.

Por último, a Comissão está atualmente a examinar o significado dos vários problemas associados à presença de produtos farmacêuticos no ambiente e tenciona apresentar um relatório sobre a matéria em 2013. Está em curso um estudo para fundamentar o relatório.

([1]) «Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water», WHO Report, 2012, http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2011/pharmaceuticals/en/index.html
([2]) Projetos Pharmas e Cytothreat: http://www.pharmas-eu.org/home2.
([3]) SEC(2011) 1547.
([4]) COM(2012) 876 final http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-dangersub/pri_substances.htm # prop_2011.
([5]) JO L 327 de 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010860/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Water

Water that has been treated in wastewater plants regularly flows into seas and rivers and all sources of fresh water. However, chemicals, antibiotics and hormones are not removed from the treated water that all European citizens drink.

— Is the Commission aware of the consequences in public health terms of constantly drinking water that contains these antibiotics and hormones? What scientific studies are there on this subject?

— Does the Commission intend to amend European legislation so that these elements are also removed from the water in wastewater treatment plants? What scientific studies support its position?

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

The Commission is aware of studies and reports on this subject. The WHO concludes that '*development of formal health-based guideline values for pharmaceuticals … for drinking-water quality is currently not considered to be necessary* ([1])'.

As for water quality, its effects on the aquatic environment and consequently on human health, the Commission supports research projects ([2]) under the 7th Framework Programme. On the basis of existing data regarding the risks posed to fish populations, and supported by an Impact Assessment ([3]), the Commission has proposed to include three pharmaceutical substances in the list of priority substances ([4]) in Annex X of the Water Framework Directive ([5]). The proposal, if and when adopted, could prompt local action for improved waste water treatment where quality standards for those substances in surface waters cannot otherwise be met. However, where necessary and possible, source-control measures should be prioritised as more cost-effective solutions.

Finally, the Commission is currently examining the significance of various problems related to the presence of pharmaceuticals in the environment and intends to report on the matter in 2013. A study to underpin the report is underway.

([1]) 'Pharmaceuticals in Drinking Water', WHO Report, 2012, http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2011/pharmaceuticals/en/index.html
([2]) PHARMAS and CYTOTHREAT projects : http://www.pharmas-eu.org/home2.
([3]) SEC(2011)1547.
([4]) COM(2012) 876 final (http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-dangersub/pri_substances.htm#prop_2011).
([5]) OJ L 327, 22.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010861/12
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Court of Auditors report: detection of errors by Member States

In the Court of Auditors report presented to Parliament in Strasbourg at the November part-session, it was stated that 60% of errors could have been detected by the Member States.

Could the Commission advise me of the UK's performance compared to that of other Member States in this respect?

What percentage of errors could have been detected by the UK Government?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(9 January 2013)

In the framework of DAS 2011, the Court of Auditors audited a sample of 168 transactions for the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund, as reported by the Court in Annex A.1 to its Annual report published on 6 November 2012. As reported by the Court, 98 of these 168 transactions were affected by one of more errors, being purely compliance errors or errors with financial impact and for 62% of these transactions affected by error, the errors could have been detected and corrected by the Member States authorities before certification to the Commission (paragraph 5.29).

The Commission is not in a position to provide any information on the European Court of Auditors' 2011 audit sample other than that which was published in its annual report.

The Court indicated in the past that partial figures from their samples, at Member State or programme level, do not have any conclusive statistical value.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse P-010862/12
til Kommissionen
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(29. november 2012)

Om: Mafiaens mulige adgang til EU's landbrugsfonde

Den 23. november 2012 berettede den italienske revisionsret, at der var blevet udbetalt i hundredtusindvis af EUR til mafiaen fra EU's landbrugsfonde.

Ifølge den italienske revisionsret udgør udbetalingerne til mafiaen mere end 2 mio. EUR, hvoraf en del er blevet udbetalt til fængslede mafia-medlemmer.

I 1997 blev der f.eks. udbetalt 42 000 EUR til Gaetano Riina, som er bror til den sicilianske mafia-leder, og som på indeværende tidspunkt er fængslet, medens Antonio Piromalli — et medlem af »Ndrangheta«-organisationen — i 2005, 2008 og 2009 modtog 25 750 EUR.

Kan Kommissionen redegøre for, hvorledes mafiaen fik fingre i EU-midler?

Kan den give garanti for, at der ikke blev udbetalt midler til den italienske mafia i 2010, 2011 eller 2012?

Med hvilken begrundelse hævder den, at den italienske stat er eneansvarlig for kontroller?

Udfører Kommissionen selv kontroller med anvendelsen af EU's midler? I benægtende fald, hvorfor ikke?

Hvilke foranstaltninger agter den at træffe for at sikre, at organiseret kriminalitet ikke har adgang til EU-midler?

Har Kommissionen til hensigt at standse alle betalinger til Italien, indtil den italienske stat har afgivet en omfattende forklaring på, hvorledes og hvorfor der blev udbetalt EU-midler til mafiaen?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Dacian Cioloş
(14. januar 2013)

Ud fra princippet om delt forvaltning af EU-midler ([1]) er det medlemsstaterne, som er ansvarlige for udbetalingen af EU-landbrugsstøtte til støttemodtagerne, herunder de tilknyttede kontrolforanstaltninger.

Ud fra de foreliggende oplysninger ser det ud til, at der blev foretaget udbetalinger til personer, som udøver landbrugsvirksomhed, og som muligvis også tilhører mafiaen. Den italienske lovgivning kræver kun, at der fremlægges attester, som beviser, at der ikke er sket domsfældelse for mafiarelateret kriminalitet, for visse bestemte investeringsforanstaltninger til udvikling af landdistrikterne, men den kræver ikke sådanne attester for alle andre typer landbrugsstøtte, særligt hvad angår bistand indenfor første søjle. EU-lovgivningen rummer for indeværende ingen begrænsninger på udbetalinger til personer, som muligvis er involveret i kriminelle organisationer ([2]). Det kan derfor ikke udelukkes, at udbetalingerne var helt og aldeles lovlige. Det efterforskes nu.

I kraft af sin rolle i forvaltningen af den fælles landbrugspolitik har Kommissionen ansvaret for at revidere de administrations- og kontrolsystemer, som medlemsstaterne har oprettet, med det formål at kontrollere, at de overholder EU-reglerne. Enkeltstående transaktioner, som giver anledning til mistanke om svig eller uregelmæssigheder, bliver efterforsket af OLAF, Det Europæiske Kontor for Bekæmpelse af Svig. OLAF arbejder tæt sammen med det italienske politi og retsvæsen i kampen mod organiseret kriminalitet, hvor der er mistanke om — eller bevis for — misbrug af EU-midler.

Under alle omstændigheder vil Kommissionen følge op på spørgsmålet, som det ærede medlem har rejst, med de kompetente italienske myndigheder.

På grund af de forskellige ansvarsområder i forvaltningen af EU-midler ser Kommissionen ingen anledning til at afbryde udbetalinger til Italien i det foreliggende tilfælde.

([1]) Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 1290/2005, EUT L 209 af 11.8.2005, s. 1-25.
([2]) Se forordning (EF) nr. 2988/1995, EFT L 312 af 23.12.1995, s. 1-4.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010862/12
to the Commission
Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Possible access by the mafia to EU agricultural funds

On 23 November 2012, the Italian Court of Auditors reported that hundreds of thousands of euros had been paid to the mafia from European agricultural funds.

According to the Court, payments to the mafia amount to more than EUR 2 million, part of which has been paid to mafiosi in prison.

In 1997, for instance, EUR 42 000 were paid to Gaetano Riina, who is the brother of the boss of the Sicilian mafia and is presently in jail, while in 2005, 2008 and 2009 Antonio Piromalli — a member of the 'Ndrangheta' — received EUR 25 750.

Can the Commission explain how EU funds ended up in the hands of the mafia?

Can it guarantee that no EU funds were paid to the Italian mafia in 2010, 2011 or 2012?

On what grounds does it assert that the Italian state is solely responsible for controls?

Does the Commission carry out its own controls on the use of EU funds? If not, why not?

What action will it take to make sure that organised crime does not have access to EU funds?

Will the Commission stop all payments to Italy until the Italian state has given a comprehensive explanation of how and why EU funds were paid to the mafia?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(14 January 2013)

Under the principle of shared management of EU funds ([1]) it is the Member States which are responsible for the payment of EU agricultural funds to the beneficiaries, including for the related controls.

From the information available it appears that payments were made not made to individuals who perform agricultural activities and might also belong to the mafia. The Italian legislation requires the submission of certificates testifying to the non-existence of convictions for mafia-related delinquency only for certain investment measures in rural development; but it does not require any such certificate for all other CAP subsidies, especially concerning first pillar aid. EU legislation as it stands now contains no restrictions for payments to individuals who might be involved in criminal organisations ([2]). It cannot therefore be excluded that payments made were perfectly legal. This is now being investigated.

The Commission, given its role in the management of the Common Agriculture Policy, has the responsibility to audit the management and control systems put in place by the Member States in order to verify their compliance with EU rules. Individual transactions which give rise to suspicion of fraud or irregularity are investigated by OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office. OLAF cooperates closely with the Italian police and judicial authorities in the fight against organised crime where misuse of EU funds is established or suspected.

In any case, the Commission will follow up on the issue raised by the Honourable Member with the competent Italian authorities.

Given the different responsibilities for the management of EU funds, the Commission has therefore no ground to interrupt payments to Italy in the context of the present case.

([1]) Council Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005, OJ L 209, 11.8.2005, p. 1-25.
([2]) see Regulation (EC)2988/1995, OJ L 312, 23.12.1995, p. 1-4.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-010863/12
alla Commissione
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: Dichiarazioni del leader partito ungherese Jobbik sugli ebrei

Il leader del terzo partito ungherese, la formazione di estrema destra Jobbik, ha invitato il governo a stilare una lista degli ebrei che pongono «un rischio per la sicurezza nazionale».

Marton Gyongyosi, leader del partito, ha detto che la lista è necessaria a causa delle tensioni conseguenti al conflitto a Gaza e che potrebbe includere anche membri del Parlamento. La dichiarazione arriva dopo che il sottosegretario agli Esteri Zsolt Nemeth ha detto che Budapest è favorevole a una soluzione pacifica del conflitto tra israeliani e palestinesi, a beneficio degli israeliani che hanno antenati ungheresi, degli ebrei ungheresi e dei palestinesi che vivono in Ungheria.

Inoltre, in un video postato ieri in serata sul sito web del partito, Gyongyosi ha detto: «Penso che un conflitto del genere segni il momento di elencare le persone con origini ebraiche che vivono qui, specialmente nel governo e nel parlamento ungherese, le quali pongono un rischio di sicurezza nazionale per l'Ungheria ([1])».

Nonostante il governo abbia condannato l'episodio e Marton Gyongyosi abbia minimizzato le dichiarazioni, affermando che si riferiva alle persone con doppia cittadinanza israeliana e ungherese, la Commissione europea non crede che si configuri una violazione dell'articolo 7 del trattato UE, usato in caso di una chiara minaccia dei comuni valori europei?

Se cosi fosse, quali azioni intende prendere la Commissione per proteggere i valori fondamentali europei?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(17 gennaio 2013)

La Commissione condanna duramente tutte le manifestazioni di antisemitismo, comprese le dichiarazioni pubbliche quale quella cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare. Stando alle informazioni disponibili, il governo ungherese ha criticato con forza la suddetta dichiarazione.

In forza della decisione quadro 2008/913/GAI del Consiglio ([2]), gli Stati membri rendono punibile l'istigazione pubblica e intenzionale alla violenza o all'odio nei confronti di un gruppo di persone, o di un suo membro, definito in riferimento alla razza, al colore, alla religione, all'ascendenza o all'origine nazionale o etnica. La Commissione, che controlla attentamente l'attuazione della decisione, presenterà una valutazione nel 2013. È responsabilità delle autorità nazionali indagare sui casi concreti di dichiarazioni antisemitiche e perseguire gli autori di questi reati.

L'articolo 7 del TUE mette a disposizione dell'Unione, come ultima ratio, un meccanismo correttivo e preventivo che interviene in situazioni generali e strutturate consistenti in una violazione grave e persistente dei valori di cui all'articolo 2 del trattato o che costituiscono un rischio evidente di una tale violazione. Questo meccanismo non può essere utilizzato in situazioni individuali, quale quella cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare ([3]).

([1]) www.reuters.it.
([2]) Decisione quadro 2008/913/GAI del Consiglio, del 28 novembre 2008, sulla lotta contro talune forme ed espressioni di razzismo e xenofobia mediante il diritto penale, GU L 328 del 6.12.2008.
([3]) Comunicazione della Commissione al Consiglio e al Parlamento europeo in merito all'articolo 7 del trattato sull'Unione europea, COM(2003)606 definitivo del 15.10.2003.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-010863/12
to the Commission
Debora Serracchiani (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Statements on Jews by the leader of the Hungarian Jobbik party

The leader of the third Hungarian party, the far-right Jobbik, has called on the government to draw up a list of Jews who pose 'a risk to national security.'

Marton Gyongyosi, party leader, said that the list was necessary because of the tensions resulting from the conflict in Gaza and that it might even include members of Parliament. This statement comes after the Deputy Foreign Minister, Zsolt Nemeth, said that Budapest favoured a peaceful solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, to the benefit of Israelis with Hungarian ancestry, Hungarian Jews and Palestinians living in Hungary.

Moreover, in a video posted yesterday evening on the party website, Gyongyosi said: 'I think such a conflict makes it timely to tally up people of Jewish ancestry who live here, especially in the Hungarian Parliament and the Hungarian government, who, indeed, pose a national security risk to Hungary.' ([1])

Although the government has condemned the incident and Marton Gyongyosi downplayed his statements, saying that he was referring to people with dual Israeli and Hungarian citizenship, does the Commission not agree that this constitutes a breach of Article 7 of the EU Treaty, which is used in case of a clear threat to our common European values?

If this is indeed the case, what action will the Commission take to protect fundamental European values?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(17 January 2013)

The Commission strongly condemns all manifestations of antisemitism, including public statements like the one referred to by the Honourable Member. According to the information available, the Hungarian Government has expressed its strong disapproval of this statement.

The framework Decision 2008/913/JHA ([2]) obliges the Member States to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence or hatred against groups or individuals defined by reference to their race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. The Commission monitors closely its correct transposition and will present its assessment in 2013. It is for national authorities to investigate any concrete case of antisemitic speech and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences.

Article 7 TEU provides, as a last resort, the Union with a remedial and preventive mechanism aimed to cover global and structured situations which either constitute a serious and persistent breach by a Member State of the values laid down in Article 2 of the Treaty or create a clear risk of a serious breach of such values. This mechanism cannot be used in individual situations like the one referred to by the Honourable Member ([3]).

([1]) www.reuters.com.
([2]) Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, OJ L 328, 6.12.2008.
([3]) COM(2003) 606 final, 15.10.2003. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010864/12
a la Comisión
Andres Perello Rodriguez (S&D)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: Exclusión del acceso a la atención sanitaria de los grupos vulnerables de la sociedad como consecuencia de los recortes en los sistemas públicos de salud

La crisis económica y las políticas de austeridad emprendidas por numerosos gobiernos europeos están debilitando la protección social de los ciudadanos y reduciendo la inversión en salud pública. El sistema sanitario público español era, hasta hace poco tiempo, pionero en Europa, asegurando el derecho de todas las personas que se encontraran en su territorio a acceder a una tarjeta sanitaria, con independencia de su situación administrativa. Sin embargo, el Real Decreto Ley 16/2012, aprobado en abril de 2012, excluye del ámbito de cobertura de la sanidad pública gratuita a los inmigrantes en situación administrativa irregular. Aunque existe una excepción respecto a las mujeres embarazadas y a los niños, esta reforma cuestiona la universalidad y la igualdad del sistema público de salud en España. El informe presentado recientemente por Médicos del Mundo sobre la aplicación del Real Decreto señala las graves violaciones del derecho fundamental a la protección de la salud que se están produciendo en España.

En Grecia, el acceso a los hospitales y centros médicos ha quedado restringido a las personas que puedan pagar cada atención médica que reciban. En los centros policlínicos gestionados por distintas ONG como Médicos del Mundo, que otorgan asistencia médica a los grupos más vulnerables de la sociedad, el número de ciudadanos que necesitan atención se ha doblado durante el año 2011.

La Comisión Europea tiene un papel importante y una clara responsabilidad en materia de reforma de los sistemas nacionales de salud y de gasto sanitario público, como demuestra el memorándum *One Year of Task Force for Greece*. La Comisión no puede ser neutral ante la exclusión del acceso a la protección de la salud de los grupos de la sociedad más vulnerables.

¿En qué medida está aplicando la Comisión —al formular recomendaciones a los Estados miembros en el procedimiento de déficit excesivo— las recomendaciones de la OMS y los compromisos de los Estados miembros suscritos en la Carta de Tallin y en la Declaración Política de Río sobre Determinantes Sociales de la Salud, que recuerdan que las desigualdades en el acceso a la sanidad son política, social y económicamente inaceptables?

¿Hasta que punto tiene en cuenta la Comisión, antes de formular sus recomendaciones económicas, el impacto económico y social de estas sobre los sistemas públicos de salud a largo plazo?

¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión para asegurar que en las reformas de los sistemas de salud pública de los Estados miembros inmersos en un procedimiento de déficit excesivo, se proteja el acceso a la sanidad de los grupos más vulnerables de la sociedad, como recomienda la OMS?

Respuesta del Sr. Borg en nombre de la Comisión
(22 de enero de 2013)

1. En los procedimientos de déficit excesivo, la Comisión recomienda al Consejo que adopte recomendaciones específicas a fin de que los Estados miembros afectados incluyan objetivos globales y plazos para adoptar medidas efectivas. En estos procesos no suele hacerse ninguna referencia explícita a las recomendaciones de la OMS, la Carta de Tallin o la Declaración Política de Río.

2. La Comisión prepara regularmente previsiones del gasto público para estimar su evolución, que incluyen los gastos por asistencia sanitaria. Estas estimaciones se publican en el Informe sobre el envejecimiento de la población ([1]), y se actualizan en los documentos de trabajo que elaboran anualmente los servicios de la Comisión para evaluar los programas nacionales de reformas dentro del Semestre Europeo ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/convergence/programmes/2012_en.htm

3. En el marco del Semestre Europeo, la Comisión reconoce expresamente la necesidad de desarrollar estrategias de inclusión activa para garantizar un amplio acceso a servicios sanitarios de alta calidad ([3]). La adopción de medidas específicas destinadas a los grupos más vulnerables de la sociedad en relación con el acceso a la asistencia sanitaria es competencia de los Estados miembros, puesto que, de conformidad con el artículo 168, apartado 7, del TFUE, los Estados miembros son responsables de la organización y prestación de servicios sanitarios y atención médica.

([3]) Véase el Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el Crecimiento 2013, sección 4:http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_es.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010864/12
to the Commission
Andres Perello Rodriguez (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Vulnerable groups denied access to healthcare following cutbacks in public health spending

The economic crisis and the austerity measures implemented by many European governments are undermining social protection for citizens and leading to cutbacks in public health spending. Until recently, the Spanish public health system was regarded as a pioneer in Europe, guaranteeing everybody in Spain access to a health card, regardless of their administrative status. Now, immigrants who do not have proper residence permits will no longer have access to free public healthcare, in accordance with Royal Decree No 16/2012, which was adopted in April 2012. Whilst care will still be available for pregnant women and children, the reform calls into question the principles of universal access and equality on which Spain's public health system is based. A recent report by Doctors of the World on the application of the decree states that there have been serious violations in Spain of people's fundamental right to healthcare.

In Greece, access to hospitals and medical centres has been restricted to those who are able to pay for the medical care they receive. Since 2011, the number of people attending clinics run by NGOs such as Doctors of the World has doubled. These clinics provide medical care to the most vulnerable members of society.

The Commission has an important role and clear responsibilities when it comes to reform of national health systems and public health expenditure, as demonstrated by the *One Year of Task Force for Greece* memo. The Commission cannot adopt a neutral stance when the most vulnerable groups in society are being denied access to healthcare.

In drawing up recommendations for Member States as part of the excessive deficit procedure, to what extent is the Commission applying the recommendations of the WHO and taking account of the commitments made by signatory Member States in the Tallinn Charter and the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health, which state that unequal access to healthcare is politically, socially and economically unacceptable?

Before drawing up economic recommendations, to what extent does the Commission take account of the long-term economic and social impact of its recommendations on public health systems?

In the context of public health-care reform in Member States undergoing an excessive deficit procedure, what measures does the Commission intend to take to ensure that the most vulnerable groups in society continue to have access to healthcare, in line with the recommendations of the WHO?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(22 January 2013)

1. Within the excessive deficit procedure, the Commission recommends the Council to adopt specific recommendations to the Member State concerned, which include overall targets and deadlines for effective actions to be taken. In this process no explicit reference is usually made to WHO recommendations, the Tallin Charter, or the Rio Political Declaration.

2. The Commission regularly carries out projection exercises in order to estimate the future evolution of public expenditure, including healthcare expenditure. These estimates are published in the Ageing Report ([1]), and updated in the Commission Staff Working Documents prepared annually to assess the National Reform Programmes within the European Semester ([2]).

3. Within the European Semester the Commission explicitly recognises the need to develop active inclusion strategies to ensure broad access to high-quality health services ([3]). The issue of specific measures aimed at the most vulnerable groups in society with respect to access to healthcare is the competence of the Member States since according to Article 168(7) TFEU, Member States are responsible for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2012/2012-ageing-report_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/economic_governance/sgp/convergence/programmes/2012_en.htm
([3]) See Annual Growth Survey 2013, Section 4: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010865/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Reforma del fuero penal militar en Colombia

El Gobierno del Presidente José Manuel Santos está desarrollando una reforma de la legislación militar del país que puede resultar una ampliación sin precedentes del fuero penal militar. El proyecto de reforma trató de introducirse como reforma de la Constitución, pero al resultar jurídicamente imposible dicha reforma, el Gobierno está introduciendo la misma normativa a través de la reforma de jurisdicción militar.

Según once expertos en derechos humanos de las Naciones Unidas «de aprobarse esta reforma, se perjudicaría seriamente la administración de la justicia para casos de presuntas violaciones de los derechos humanos y del derecho internacional humanitario, incluidos los crímenes graves, por parte de las fuerzas militares o de la policía». Los cambios propuestos ampliarán las competencias de los tribunales militares a ciertas esferas que deberían estar bajo las cortes ordinarias de la justicia penal.

Según el Ministro de Defensa de Colombia, la reforma dará más seguridad jurídica a los agentes del Estado en el marco del conflicto armado y las acciones contra el narcotráfico. Esta propuesta sale a la luz cuando existen en Colombia más de 12 000 causas abiertas contra militares por graves violaciones de los derechos humanos, además de la existencia de gravísimos casos de falsificación de pruebas por parte del ejército como los famosos casos de «falsos positivos».

La historia de América Latina muestra que la justicia penal militar es el instrumento que han utilizado muchos gobiernos para encubrir claras responsabilidades en la violación de los derechos humanos. A este respecto, la Alta Comisionada para los DDHH en Colombia ha declarado que «esta reforma representaría un retroceso histórico en los avances del Estado colombiano en la lucha contra la impunidad y el respeto y garantía de los derechos humanos».

¿Piensa la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que dicha reforma del fuero militar colombiano puede resultar en un incremento de la impunidad militar ante el elevado número de violaciones de los derechos humanos que se producen en el país a manos de su ejército?

¿Piensa la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante exigir el cese de esta reforma y el cumplimiento efectivo de los derechos humanos al Gobierno colombiano a través del aplazamiento de la ratificación del Acuerdo Comercial Multipartes entre la UE y Colombia y Perú?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(31 de enero de 2013)

La Alta Representante/vicepresidenta ha tomado nota de la reforma constitucional sobre la jurisdicción militar en Colombia, que aprobó el Congreso colombiano a mediados de diciembre de 2012.

Durante el proceso legislativo, la UE expresó una serie de inquietudes en relación con este tema delicado. Como respuesta, las autoridades colombianas han dado garantías de que esta reforma no dará lugar a la impunidad de los autores de violaciones de los derechos humanos en Colombia, en consonancia con sus compromisos internacionales.

En su declaración de 29 de diciembre de 2012 ([1]), la AR/VP manifestó su esperanza de que se abordaran las preocupaciones restantes en la legislación de aplicación subsiguiente. También señaló que la aplicación de las nuevas normas, especialmente en lo que respecta al tratamiento de las investigaciones pendientes acerca de supuestas ejecuciones extrajudiciales cometidas por agentes estatales, es esencial para demostrar que son infundadas las inquietudes manifestadas hasta ahora.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134562.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010865/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Reform of military jurisdiction in Colombia

President José Manuel Santos's government is undertaking a reform of Colombia's military legislation which may lead to an unprecedented expansion in the jurisdiction of military courts. The reform proposals first attempted to have this introduced via constitutional reform, but this proved to be legally impossible so the government is now trying to pass the same legislative proposal by making reforms to military criminal law.

An open letter from 11 United Nations human rights experts states that '[s]hould this reform be approved, it could seriously undermine the administration of justice in cases of alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including serious crimes, by military or police forces'. The proposed changes would expand the powers of military courts to encompass some areas that should be under the jurisdiction of the ordinary criminal justice courts.

Colombia's Defence Minister has claimed that the reform will provide greater legal certainty to government agents engaged in Colombia's armed conflict and in combating drug trafficking. This is against a backdrop of over 12 000 unresolved cases of serious human rights abuses perpetrated by the military in Colombia, as well as extremely serious cases of falsification of evidence by the army, such as the infamous 'false positives'.

The history of Latin America is littered with cases of governments using the military justice system to cover up human rights violations. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Colombia has stated that 'such a reform would represent a historic setback to the progress achieved by the State of Colombia in the fight against impunity and respect and guarantee of human rights'.

Does the Vice-President/High Representative consider that this reform may lead to greater military impunity in respect of the high number of human rights violations perpetrated by the army in Colombia?

Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to urge the Colombian Government to scrap this reform and respect human rights by postponing ratification of the Multi-Party Trade Agreement between the EU and Colombia and Peru?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President has taken note of the constitutional reform regarding the military jurisdiction in Colombia, which was adopted by the Colombian Congress in mid-December 2012.

During the legislative process, the EU had expressed a number of concerns on this sensitive issue. In response, the Colombian authorities have provided reassurances that this reform will not lead to impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations, in line with Colombia's international commitments.

In her Statement ([1]) of 29 December 2012 the HR/VP has expressed the expectation that remaining concerns will be assuaged by the forthcoming implementing legislation. She has also pointed out that the application of the new rules — in particular with regard to the treatment of the pending investigations of alleged extrajudicial executions by state agents — will be crucial to demonstrate that the worries expressed so far are unfounded.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134562.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-010866/12
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(29 de noviembre de 2012)

Asunto: VP/HR — Alto el fuego propuesto por las FARC

El pasado lunes 19 de noviembre, Iván Márquez, representante encargado de las negociaciones y número dos de la Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), anunció el alto el fuego de forma unilateral entre el 20 de noviembre y el 20 de enero del año próximo con el que las FARC quieren mostrar su verdadera voluntad en el proceso de paz.

Ante este anuncio, el Presidente de Colombia ha declarado, durante su visita a la cumbre iberoamericana de Cádiz, que «la propuesta ha sido clara. No hay ni tregua ni cese el fuego si quieren adelantar el cese del fuego o humanizar el conflicto. Lo que queremos nosotros es finalizarlo y no humanizarlo». Esta frase demuestra la beligerante posición que mantiene un Gobierno colombiano que ha sido acusado de miles de violaciones de los derechos humanos. El conflicto Colombiano, uno de los conflictos más temporalmente dilatados del siglo XX, es producto de una compleja situación política y económica que continua alimentando la violencia en el país. Ante esto, el Presidente es incapaz de ofrecer una vía para la reconstrucción de la paz, sino que continúa pensando el conflicto en términos de «victoria» militar sobre la guerrilla.

Las FARC han dado un paso adelante para que el proceso de negociación iniciado pueda conducir al desarrollo de un verdadero cambio en el conflicto. Considerando que se trata de uno de los países con mayor número de violaciones de los derechos humanos la posición bloqueadora de Santos deja clara de cuál de las partes procede la voluntad para llegar a una salida negociada al conflicto.

La propia Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante declaró que «la Unión Europea siempre ha estado convencida de que sólo una solución negociada puede proporcionar la base para una paz duradera en Colombia». Pero pese a la histórica oportunidad que se presenta, el Presidente del Gobierno colombiano continúa manifestando su total falta de reciprocidad ante el pacífico gesto de las FARC.

¿Qué medidas piensa emplear la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante para garantizar que el Gobierno de Colombia no boicotee el proceso de negociación y apueste claramente por el mismo? ¿Considera la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que el Gobierno colombiano debe responder proporcionalmente con algún gesto pacífico frente al anuncio de la tregua de las FARC para garantizar el proceso de negociación? ¿Qué papel piensa la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante que debe jugar la UE en el proceso de paz?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Sra. Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de enero de 2013)

La Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta ha tomado nota de la declaración de las FARC de suspender sus operaciones militares y actos de sabotaje. Como se indica en la declaración de 20 de noviembre del portavoz de la AR/VP, hay que congratularse de cualquier iniciativa que las FARC, un grupo incluido en la lista de la UE de organizaciones terroristas, pueda adoptar para liberar al pueblo colombiano de la violencia que sufre desde hace demasiado tiempo.

No puede haber ninguna duda sobre el compromiso del Presidente Santos y su Administración con el proceso de paz, que el Gobierno colombiano preparó y puso en marcha de forma sistemática. Ambas partes han acordado el orden del día de las negociaciones. Constituye la principal preocupación de la Alta Representante/Vicepresidenta que las negociaciones en La Habana permitan avanzar en todos los puntos del orden del día, de modo que pueda alcanzarse rápidamente un acuerdo final por el que Colombia pueda entrar en una fase de plena consolidación de la paz.

La UE ha manifestado reiteradamente su disposición a ayudar al Gobierno, las instituciones del Estado y la sociedad civil de Colombia en apoyo de las actuaciones de fomento de la paz, la verdad, la justicia, la reparación y la reconciliación.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010866/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Ceasefire proposed by FARC

On 19 November 2012, Iván Márquez, FARC's second-in-command who is heading up negotiations, announced a unilateral ceasefire between 20 November 2012 and 20 January 2013 as a sign by FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) of their genuine commitment to the peace process.

In response to this announcement Colombia's President Santos declared, during his visit to the Ibero-American Summit in Cadiz, that, 'The proposal was clear. There can be no truce, no ceasefire if they just want to bring the ceasefire forward or make the conflict more human. What we want is to end it, not make it more human'. These words demonstrate the belligerent stand taken by a Colombian Government which has itself been accused of thousands of breaches of human rights. The conflict in Colombia, one of the most protracted in the 20th century, arose out of a complex political and economic situation which is still fuelling violence in the country, and the President is incapable of proposing a path to rebuilding peace, continuing instead to think of the conflict in terms of a military 'victory' over the guerrillas.

FARC have taken a step forward so that the current negotiations can bring about a genuine change in the conflict. Colombia is one of the countries where human rights are most frequently violated: Mr Santos' obstructive stance makes it very clear which party is really willing to find a negotiated way out of the conflict.

The Vice-President/High Representative herself has said that, 'It has always been the conviction of the European Union that only a negotiated solution can provide the basis for lasting peace in Colombia'. But despite this historic opportunity, the Head of the Colombian Government still refuses to make any moves towards reciprocating FARC's gesture of peace.

What steps will the Vice-President/High Representative take to ensure that the Colombian Government does not boycott the negotiation process but clearly commits to it? Does the Vice-President/High Representative believe that the Colombian Government should respond to FARC's announcement of a truce with an appropriate gesture of peace of its own, in order to secure the negotiation process? What role does the Vice-President/High Representative believe the EU can play in the peace process?

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

The High Representative/Vice-President has taken note of the FARC's announcement to suspend their 'military operations and acts of sabotage'. As indicated in the 20 November statement by the HR/VP's spokesperson, any step that the FARC — a group which has been included in the EU's list of terrorist organisations — may take to spare the Colombian people the violence that has been afflicting it for too long is welcome.

There can be no doubt about the commitment of President Santos and his administration to the peace process, which was systematically prepared and initiated by the Colombian government. Both sides have agreed on an agenda for the talks. It is the key concern of the High Representative/Vice-President that the negotiations in Havana allow for progress to be made on the entirety of the agenda, so that a final agreement can be reached quickly, allowing Colombia can enter into a full-fledged peace-building phase.

The EU has repeatedly declared its readiness to assist the Colombian government, state institutions and civil society in providing support for activities that promote peace, truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010867/12
an die Kommission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Quecksilber in Energiesparlampen

Im Hinblick auf die Energiesparlampenthematik ist bereits am 31.8.2011 eine schriftliche Anfrage an die Kommission gerichtet worden. Hauptaugenmerk wurde seinerzeit auf das Verbot der 60-Watt-Glühbirne ab 1. September 2011, den Preisanstieg bei Energiesparlampen sowie den gesundheitlichen Aspekt im Hinblick auf den Quecksilbergehalt in den Kompaktleuchtstofflampen und dessen Gefährlichkeit für die VerbraucherInnen gelegt. Die Antwort vom 29.9.2011 der Kommission war leider wenig zufriedenstellend, was die Gefährlichkeit des Quecksilbers betrifft. Die Kommission hat jedoch erklärt, den SCHER in dieser Angelegenheit zu befassen und bis spätestens Dezember 2011 eine Stellungnahme abzugeben.

1. Ist die Stellungnahme des SCHER bereits eingetroffen, und was ist die Kernaussage?

2. Hat das neue Mitglied der Kommission mit Zuständigkeit für Gesundheit, Tonio Borg, die Absicht, etwas am sogenannten „Glühbirnenverbot" zu ändern?

3. Wenn ja, welche Vorhaben bzw. Vorgänge sind geplant?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(25. Januar 2013)

1. Der Herr Abgeordnete wird auf die Antwort der Kommission auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-6340/2012 von Frau Werthmann verwiesen.

2. Die Kommission beabsichtigt nicht, die Verordnung (EG) Nr. 244/2009 ([1]) der Kommission aufgrund der Stellungnahme des Wissenschaftlichen Ausschusses „Gesundheits- und Umweltrisiken (SCHER)" ([2]) zu ändern.

3. Für das Frühjahr 2014 ist eine Überprüfung dieser Verordnung vorgesehen. Dabei wird es auch um die Folgen der stufenweisen Abschaffung von Glühlampen gehen.

([1]) Verordnung (EG) Nr. 244/2009 der Kommission vom 18. März 2009 zur Durchführung der Richtlinie 2005/32/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates im Hinblick auf die Festlegung von Anforderungen an die umweltgerechte Gestaltung von Haushaltslampen mit ungebündeltem Licht, ABl. L 76 vom 24.3.2009.

([2]) Mercury in certain Energy-saving Light Bulbs — Exposure of Children, 2012 (Quecksilber in bestimmten Energiesparlampen – Exposition von Kindern) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_159.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010867/12
to the Commission
Jörg Leichtfried (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Mercury in energy-saving light bulbs

A written question on the issue of energy-saving light bulbs was already addressed to the Commission on 31 August 2011. The focus then was on the ban on 60-watt light bulbs that came into force on 1 September 2011, the price rise for energy-saving light bulbs and the health and safety issue of the mercury content of compact fluorescent lamps and its potential risks for consumers. The Commission's answer of 29 September 2011 was regrettably unsatisfactory as far as the mercury risk was concerned. But the Commission did state that it was issuing a mandate to SCHER to look into this matter and that an opinion was to be delivered to it by December 2011.

1. Has the SCHER opinion been delivered and if so, what are its key findings?

2. Does the new Commissioner for health policy, Tonio Borg, intend to make any changes as far as the ban on incandescent light bulbs is concerned?

3. If so, what proposals or actions are planned?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(25 January 2013)

1. The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to written question E-6340/2012 by Ms Werthmann.

2. The Commission does not intend to amend Commission Regulation (EU) No 244/2009 ([1]) as a result of the opinion of the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks ([2]).

3. The regulation is to be reviewed in spring 2014. The review will look into the impact of the phase-out of incandescent lamps.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 244/2009 of 18 March 2009 implementing Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to ecodesign requirements for non-directional household lamps, OJ L 76, 24.3.2009.
([2]) Mercury in certain Energy-saving Light Bulbs — Exposure of Children, 2012 http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/environmental_risks/docs/scher_o_159.pdf.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010868/12
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Mindeststandards in der Textilindustrie

Die Brandkatastrophe in einer Textilfabrik in Bangladesch mit mehr als 100 Toten führt uns eindringlich vor Augen, wie notwendig weltweite Mindeststandards für Arbeitsbedingungen sind. Es kann nicht sein, dass Konsumgüter wie Kleidung, die in Europa verkauft werden, zu menschenunwürdigen und in diesem Fall sogar tödlichen Bedingungen hergestellt werden.

In Europa sollten Unternehmen sich dieser Verantwortung bewusst sein und sich verpflichten, ihre Produktionsbedingungen transparent zu machen. Eine solche Verpflichtung ist ein erster Schritt für ein stärkeres Bewusstsein für die sozialen Arbeitsbedingungen in anderen Ländern.

Darüber hinaus wird schon lange diskutiert, ein Zertifizierungs- und Auditierungssystem für Kleidung einzuführen, mit dem die Arbeitsbedingungen auch außerhalb Europas erfasst und dokumentiert werden.

Ich frage die Kommission:

1. Gibt es auf europäischer Ebene derzeit ein System der Überprüfung von Arbeitsbedingungen in der Herstellung von Kleidung oder Textilien?

2. Plant die Kommission eine Erarbeitung solcher Standards zur Verbesserung der weltweiten Arbeitsbedingungen in Produktionsstätten europäischer Firmen?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(31. Januar 2013)

Die Kommission unterhält kein System zur Überprüfung von Arbeitsbedingungen in der Herstellung von Kleidung oder Textilien; es gibt allerdings private Initiativen in diesem Bereich.

Die Kommission plant keine Erarbeitung von Standards auf EU-Ebene zur Verbesserung der weltweiten Arbeitsbedingungen in Produktionsstätten europäischer Firmen. Die Kommission hält jedoch die europäischen Unternehmen in ihrer Mitteilung „Die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen“ (Corporate Social Responsibility — CSR) ([1]) dazu an, sich bestimmten weltweit anerkannten CSR-Leitlinien zu Arbeitsbedingungen anzuschließen. Dazu gehören die dreigliedrige Grundsatzerklärung der ILO zu multinationalen Unternehmen und zur Sozialpolitik, die OECD-Leitsätze für multinationale Unternehmen, die ISO-Norm 26000 und die „Global Compact“-Initiative der Vereinten Nationen.

Außerdem beabsichtigt die Kommission, 2013 einen Legislativvorschlag zur Offenlegung nicht-finanzieller Informationen vorzulegen, mit dem eine größere Transparenz in Bezug auf die Initiativen von Unternehmen zur Wahrnehmung ihrer sozialen Verantwortung gewährleistet werden soll.

([1]) „Eine neue EU-Strategie (2011-14) für die soziale Verantwortung der Unternehmen“ (KOM(2011)681 endg. vom 25. Oktober 2011).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010868/12
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Minimum standards in the textile industry

The fire in a textile factory in Bangladesh in which more than 100 people lost their lives is a sharp reminder of the need for minimum global standards on working conditions. We cannot have a situation in which consumer goods sold in Europe, such as clothing, are produced in conditions that are inhumane and, in this case, actually fatal.

Enterprises in Europe should be conscious of this responsibility and should commit to making their production conditions transparent. Such a commitment is a first step towards greater awareness of social working conditions in other countries.

In addition, the introduction of a certification and auditing system for clothing has been under discussion for a long time as a way of recording and documenting working conditions outside of Europe.

I would like to ask the Commission:

1. Is there currently a system at European level for inspecting working conditions in the manufacture of clothing or textiles?

2. Is the Commission planning to introduce such standards to improve global working conditions at production facilities operated by European enterprises?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

Although private initiatives do exist, the Commission does not host a system for inspecting working conditions in the manufacture of clothing or textiles.

The Commission does not intend to promote a standard at European level to improve global working conditions at production facilities operated by European enterprises. Instead, through its 2011 Communication on corporate social responsibility (CSR) ([1]), it encourages European enterprises to sign up to a number of global CSR guidelines that deal with working conditions. These include the ILO Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the ISO26000 standard, and the UN Global Compact.

In addition, the Commission plans to propose legislation on non-financial disclosure in 2013 to ensure greater transparency in companies' CSR activities.

([1]) 'A renewed EU strategy 2011-14 for Corporate Social Responsibility' (COM(2011) 681 final of 25 October 2011).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010869/12
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Leaseback properties in Member States

It has come to my attention that many UK citizens are being duped by leaseback schemes in other EU countries and then held responsible for the losses. Leaseback properties are when the investor buys a freehold property on a touristic development, which is then 'leased back' to a management company which pays a guaranteed rental. In some cases these properties are guaranteed by the national government. All of the purchase transactions are conducted through reputable agencies in the UK and in the country of the property. These properties are being used by many as a way to add to their retirement funds. In many cases management companies have stopped paying the rental fee or the management companies were sold to another company which does not pay. Investors have suddenly found themselves with large mortgages and no way to pay for them.

Is the Commission aware that these leaseback properties are still being sold as safe, guaranteed investments by property agents?

Surely the Commission can agree that this problem should be addressed in order to prevent other investors from falling into this disastrous situation?

While the Commission has no legal competence in property law, could the EU's partial competence in the area of consumer protection compel the Commission to prevent other consumers from being subjected to the same fate?

What is the Commission doing to protect consumers from this unfair treatment?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2013)

There is EU legislation which applies to the real estate sector and prevents real estate agents, builders and any other relevant commercial operators from engaging in unfair practices towards consumers.

Directive 2005/29/EC ([1]) requires traders to operate in accordance with professional diligence and not to distort the economic behaviour of consumers by inducing them to enter transactions they would not have entered otherwise. Furthermore under Directive 93/13/EEC ([2]), a contract term causing a significant imbalance between the parties to the detriment of the consumer shall be regarded as unfair and as such shall not be binding.

It is however the primary competence of the national authorities and courts to investigate any potentially misleading practices of individual companies operating on their territory. This being said, experience has shown a need for improving coordinated enforcement, in particular where a recurring problem arises in different Member States.

The Honourable Member should know that the Commission will present a report on the application of Directive 2005/29/EC early 2013 which will, in particular, outline key priorities for action, including stepped up enforcement.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market, OJ L 149, 11.06.2005, p.22-39.
([2]) Directive 93/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts, OJ L 095, 21.4.1993, p. 29.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-010870/12
an die Kommission
Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE) und Christian Ehler (PPE)
(29. November 2012)

Betrifft: Rechtswidrige Beihilfen der USA im Streit um den Flugzeughandel

Obwohl die USA angeben, die Nichteinhaltung ihrer WTO-Verpflichtungen bezüglich ihrer angeblich rechtswidrigen Beihilfen für Boeing beendet zu haben, hat das für den Handel zuständige Mitglied der Kommission darauf hingewiesen, dass die USA weiterhin gegen die WTO-Vorschriften verstoßen und dass der Markt durch diese Weigerung, den Regeln zu folgen, weiter verzerrt wird, wodurch der Luftverkehrsbranche in der EU Verluste in Milliardenhöhe entstehen.

Aus diesem Grund hat die EU die Einsetzung eines WTO-Gremiums zur Überwachung der Einhaltung der Vorschriften („Compliance Panel") gefordert, um die Nichteinhaltung von WTO-Verpflichtungen durch die USA sowohl anzugehen als auch zu bestätigen und um Fortschritte hin zur Schaffung eines freieren internationalen Marktes zu erzielen, auf dem für die Luftverkehrsunternehmen beider Seiten faire Wettbewerbsbedingungen herrschen.

1. Welche Maßnahmen ergreift die Kommission als Nächstes, wenn das Compliance Panel die USA illegaler Beihilfen an Boeing für schuldig befindet?

2. Wie hat die Kommission ihre Bedenken direkt gegenüber der US-Regierung vorgebracht?

3. Welche Strategie wird die Kommission verfolgen, um gegen die ungleichen Wettbewerbsbedingungen vorzugehen, die derzeit in unserem Luftverkehrssektor herrschen, wenn das Compliance Panel der WTO zu dem Ergebnis kommt, dass sich die USA nicht der Nichteinhaltung wichtiger WTO-Handelsverpflichtungen schuldig gemacht haben?

4. Wie plant die Kommission, dieses Thema im Rahmen möglicher Handelsgespräche in der Zukunft anzugehen?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(23. Januar 2013)

1. Die EU hat bei der Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) bereits die Genehmigung beantragt, Gegenmaßnahmen gegen die weiterhin von den USA vergebenen rechtswidrigen Subventionen ergreifen zu dürfen. Die Vereinigten Staaten haben Einspruch gegen diesen Antrag eingelegt, woraufhin im Einklang mit den WTO-Regeln ein Schiedsverfahren zu dieser Frage eingeleitet wurde. Da die Europäische Union und die Vereinigten Staaten im Vorhinein vereinbart hatten, das Schiedsverfahren in einem solchen Fall auszusetzen, bis die Feststellung des WTO-Panels zur Überwachung der Umsetzung der WTO-Verpflichtungen („Compliance-Panel") vorliegt, würde die EU als nächsten Schritt die Wideraufnahme des Schiedsverfahrens beantragen.

2. Die EU war stets bereit, gemeinsam mit den USA zu erörtern, ob sich die Differenzen nicht auch auf anderem Wege ausräumen ließen als durch das Streitbeilegungssystem. Da sich die Vereinigten Staaten jedoch für den Pfad des Streitverfahrens entschieden haben, war die EU gezwungen, in gleicher Weise zu reagieren, um die Interessen der Union, der Mitgliedstaaten und der Industrie zu schützen.

3. In dem unwahrscheinlichen Fall, dass die Feststellung des Compliance-Panels nicht zuungunsten der USA ausfällt, müsste die EU die Sachlage, auch unter Berücksichtigung des Ausgangs des parallelen Verfahrens, das die USA gegen die Umsetzungsmaßnahmen zur Erfüllung der WTO-Verpflichtungen der Union eingeleitet hat, neu beurteilen, um zu entscheiden, wie sie die Interessen der EU-Industrie, einschließlich der Luftfahrt, am besten schützen kann. Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt nähere Aussagen darüber treffen zu wollen, wie eine mögliche Antwort der EU aussehen könnte, wäre reine Spekulation.

4. Die EU und die USA führen derzeit Gespräche im Rahmen der hochrangigen Arbeitsgruppe. Ein Bericht über eine mögliche Vertiefung der Handelsbeziehungen mit den USA soll in Kürze vorgelegt werden. Die bei der WTO in Genf anhängigen Streitsachen sind Teil eines rechtlichen Verfahrens mit vertraglich vereinbarten Verfahrensregeln und Fristen und werden nicht Gegenstand möglicher zukünftiger Verhandlungen sein.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010870/12
to the Commission
Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE) and Christian Ehler (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: US illegal subsidies in the aircraft trade dispute

Although the US has claimed to have rectified its failure to meet its World Trade Organisation commitments regarding its allegedly illegal subsidies for Boeing, the European Trade Commissioner has stated that the US is still in breach of WTO rules, and that this refusal to comply with the rules continues to distort the market, costing the EU aviation industries billions of euros.

The EU has therefore requested the establishment of a WTO compliance panel in order to both address and confirm America's failure to heed WTO commitments, and to make progress towards establishing a freer international market in which both sides' aviation industries can fairly compete.

1. If the WTO compliance panel does find the US guilty of illegally subsidising Boeing, what will the Commission's next steps be?

2. How has the Commission addressed its concerns to the US Administration directly?

3. In the event that the WTO compliance panel finds the US not guilty of failing to meet important WTO trade commitments, what will the Commission's strategy be in addressing the uneven playing field in which our aviation sector is competing on unfair terms?

4. How is the Commission planning to target this issue in possible future trade talks?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(23 January 2013)

1. The EU has already asked the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for authorisation to impose countermeasures against the US for the continued provision of illegal subsidies. The US objected to this request and the matter was subsequently referred to arbitration in accordance with WTO rules. Since the EU and the US had agreed in advance that in such a case the arbitration procedure would be suspended, the EU would, upon the completion of the compliance panel, request, as a next step, to reactivate these proceedings.

2. The EU has always been open to exploring with the US whether there could be avenues to resolve the differences other than through the dispute settlement system. However, since the US decided to pursue the litigation track, the EU had to respond in kind to protect the EU's, the Member States' and the industry's interests.

3. In the unlikley event that the compliance panel would not rule against the US, the EU would have to assess the situation taking into account also the outcome of the parallel case that the US launched against the EU's compliance measures, with the aim to identifying the best options to protect the EU's industry' interests, including the aviation sector. At this stage, it would be speculative to anticipate in more detail any possible EU response.

4. The EU and the US are engaged in discussions in the context of the High-Level Working Group. A report on a possible deepening of trade relations with the US is expected soon. Current WTO disputes are part of a legal process under statutory rules and timelines in Geneva and they will not be part of any possible future negotiation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-010871/12
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(29 novembre 2012)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Ricorso alla pena di morte in Afghanistan

In soli due giorni, tra lunedì e martedì, in Afghanistan sono avvenute ben 14 esecuzioni per impiccagione di detenuti accusati di crimini contro la popolazione. Tuttavia, un comunicato diffuso da fonti talebane, rivolto alle Nazioni Unite, alla Conferenza Islamica e alla Croce Rossa, afferma che molti dei giustiziati erano «prigionieri di guerra».

Pochi giorni fa, il 19 novembre, il Terzo Comitato dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite ha adottato un testo della risoluzione (la quarta dal 2007) per una moratoria sulle esecuzioni. A differenza dell'ultima votazione, in cui aveva votato contro, in questa occasione l'Afghanistan si è astenuto.

Alla luce dei vari comunicati ufficiali in cui l'Alto Rappresentante, Catherine Ashton, esprime il suo sdegno riguardo a tale pratica che viola il diritto umano fondamentale alla vita e alla dignità, in considerazione della presenza in loco di un numero elevato di soldati provenienti dagli eserciti degli Stati membri e della recente attribuzione all'Unione europea del Premio Nobel per la Pace, e considerando che queste esecuzioni, unite alle due avvenute nel 2011, hanno messo fine alla moratoria virtuale di quattro anni sulla pena di morte, può il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— quali iniziative sono previste per porre fine a queste esecuzioni che violano i diritti umani più fondamentali e si pongono in contrasto con le leggi internazionali?

— Sono previste azioni atte ad esercitare pressioni politiche e/o economiche per indurre l'Afghanistan e, più in generale, gli Stati che ancora applicano tale pratica, a sottoscrivere la moratoria contro la pena di morte avanzata dalle Nazioni Unite?

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

L'Unione europea persevera nell'intento di convincere i paesi partner ad abolire la pena di morte, una posizione di principio ulteriormente confortata dai recenti progressi compiuti a New York, e continuerà la sua campagna di lunga data contro la pena capitale, in linea con i suoi orientamenti in materia.

Subito dopo l'annuncio del governo afghano riguardo alla decisione di abbandonare la moratoria, l'Unione, con il sostegno della Norvegia e della Svizzera, ha lanciato un appello, seguito da un'iniziativa del rappresentante speciale dell'UE a Kabul, chiedendo di commutare tutte le condanne a morte e reintrodurre la moratoria sulle esecuzioni come primo passo verso l'abolizione definitiva della pena capitale.

L'UE intende proseguire la propria azione in materia, trattando quindi la questione nel dialogo politico con le autorità afghane. Al contempo, nell'ambito dei lavori sulla riforma del settore della giustizia, l'UE collaborerà attivamente con i partner afghani per difendere i diritti umani e promuovere l'abolizione della pena di morte.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010871/12
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: VP/HR — Use of the death penalty in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, in the space of just two days, between Monday and Tuesday, there have been as many as 14 executions by hanging of prisoners accused of crimes against the population. However, a statement released by the Taliban, addressed to the United Nations, the Islamic Conference and the Red Cross, said that many of those executed were 'prisoners of war'.

A few days ago, on 19 November, the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly adopted the text of a resolution (the fourth since 2007) in favour of a moratorium on executions. Unlike the last time, when it voted against, this time Afghanistan abstained.

In the light of various official statements in which the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, has expressed her outrage with regard to this practice, which violates the fundamental human right to life and dignity, and given: the local presence of a large number of soldiers from the armies of the Member States; the fact that the European Union has recently been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and that these executions, together with the two which took place in 2011, have put an end to the four-year virtual moratorium on the death penalty, can the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following questions:

— What measures have been planned in order to put an end to these executions that violate the most basic human rights and are contrary to international law?

— Are there any plans for measures to exert political and/or economic pressure to persuade Afghanistan and, more generally, those countries that still follow such practices, to sign the moratorium on the death penalty put forward by the United Nations?

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

The EU continues to pursue the objective of convincing partner countries to abolish the death penalty. The recent progress achieved in New York is further encouragment for this principled position. The EU will continue its longstanding campaign against the death penalty, in line with the EU Guidelines on Death Penalty.

As soon as the decision to abandon the moratorium was announced by the Government of Afghanistan, the EU , with the support of Norway and Switzerland, launched an appeal, followed-up by a demarche by the EU Special Representative in Kabul, to commute all further death sentences and reintroduce the moratorium on executions as a first step towards a definitive abolition of capital punishment.

The EU intends to pursue the matter by consistently including it in the political dialogue with the Afghan authorities. At the same time, as part of the work on the reform of the justice sector, the EU will actively work with the Afghan partners to defend human rights and promote the abolition of the death penalty.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-010872/12
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(29 november 2012)

Betreft: Erdoğan wil Ottomaans rijk

De Turkse premier Erdoğan wil gebiedsuitbreiding: hij zint op een nieuw Ottomaans rijk.

Erdoğan heeft gezegd dat Turkije louter contacten onderhoudt met landen „in de regio", omdat deze tot het voormalige Ottomaanse rijk behoorden. Erdoğan wil zijn invloed in de Balkan uitbreiden, onder andere door het stichten van Turkse scholen.

In het kader van zijn neo-Ottomaanse retoriek herinnert Erdoğan maar al te graag aan militaire overwinningen op christelijke machten. Verder wil Erdoğan stappen ondernemen tegen een Turkse televisieserie waarin Süleyman de Grote wordt afgebeeld; deze sultan, die Servië en Hongarije veroverde, wordt volgens Erdoğan in de serie „oneervol" afgebeeld.

1. Is de Commissie bekend met het bericht „Erdogan träumt vom Reich der Osmanen" ([1])?

2. Hoe beoordeelt de Commissie het dat Erdoğan zint op een nieuw Ottomaans rijk? Verwerpt de Commissie zijn beangstigende retoriek?

3. Hebben Erdoğans uitspraken — nu hij gesteld heeft dat hij zijn land wil „uitbreiden" — gevolgen voor de toetredingsonderhandelingen tussen de EU en Turkije? Is de Commissie ertoe bereid alle toetredingsonderhandelingen met én alle EU-geldstromen naar Turkije onmiddellijk te beëindigen? Zo neen, hoe kan de EU nog over toetreding onderhandelen met een land dat op gebiedsuitbreiding zint?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(7 februari 2013)

De Commissie is niet voornemens commentaar te geven bij elke verklaring die door de pers wordt toegeschreven aan Turkse regeringsleden.

Wat de toetredingsonderhandelingen betreft, wenst de Commissie het geachte Parlementslid attent te maken op de bepalingen die duidelijk zijn uiteengezet in het onderhandelingskader, waarmee alle lidstaten in 2005 hebben ingestemd en waarin de voorwaarden voor een opschorting van de toetredingsonderhandelingen worden vastgesteld. De Commissie is niet van oordeel dat aan deze voorwaarden is voldaan.

([1]) http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/politik/article111533601/Erdogan-traeumt-vom-Reich-der-Osmanen.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010872/12
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Erdoğan wants Ottoman Empire

Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan wants enlargement: he is intent on a new Ottoman Empire.

Erdoğan has said that Turkey only maintains contact with countries 'in the region' because they belonged to the former Ottoman Empire. Erdoğan wants to extend his influence in the Balkans, among other things by establishing Turkish schools.

Within the framework of his neo-Ottoman rhetoric, however, Erdoğan all too eagerly recalls military victories over Christian forces. Furthermore, Erdoğan wants to take action against a Turkish television series in which Suleiman the Magnificent is depicted; this sultan, who conquered Serbia and Hungary, is depicted 'dishonourably' in the series, according to Erdoğan.

1. Is the Commission familiar with the report 'Erdogan träumt vom Reich der Osmanen' ([1])?

2. What is the view of the Commission with regard to Erdoğan being intent on a new Ottoman Empire? Does the Commission reject his alarming rhetoric?

3. Now that he has said that he wants to 'enlarge' his country — do Erdoğan's statements have consequences for the accession negotiations between the EU and Turkey? Is the Commission prepared to stop all accession negotiations with, and all EU monetary flows to, Turkey at once? If not, how can the EU still negotiate accession with a country that is intent on enlargement?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2013)

The Commission does not intend to comment on every statement attributed by the press to Turkish members of the government.

With regard to the accession negotiations the Commission would like to draw the Honourable Member's attention to the provisions clearly set out in the Negotiating Framework agreed by all Member States in 2005 which stipulates the conditions for a suspension of the accession negotiations. The Commission does not consider these conditions to be met.

([1]) http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/politik/article111533601/Erdogan-traeumt-vom-Reich-der-Osmanen.html

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010873/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Toranjas e medicamentos — eventuais riscos para a saúde pública

A BBC deu recentemente nota da preocupação de parte da comunidade médica acerca dos efeitos seriamente nefastos para a saúde dos consumidores que a combinação da ingestão de certos medicamentos com o consumo de toranjas poderá eventualmente causar. Alegadamente, o consumo de toranjas e outras frutas similares teria como consequência que os medicamentos ingeridos deixariam de ser processados pelos intestinos e pelo fígado, atuando com violência sobre o organismo. Segundo a BBC, os investigadores que primeiro detetaram esta possível relação tornaram-na pública por intermédio do «Canadian Medical Association Journal».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Que informações dispõe a este respeito? Que credibilidade lhe merecem? Tomou ou prevê tomar medidas neste tocante?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(11 de fevereiro de 2013)

De acordo com a legislação farmacêutica ([1]), a informação sobre a interação de um medicamento com alimentos, que pode afetar o efeito do mesmo, deve estar incluída na informação do produto. A informação do produto é aprovada como parte da autorização de introdução no mercado concedida pelos Estados-Membros ou pela Comissão.

O sumo da toranja é um potencial inibidor da enzima do citocromo P450 CYP3A4, que pode afetar o metabolismo de vários medicamentos, aumentando a sua biodisponibilidade. A potencial interação dos produtos de toranja e de outros citrinos com produtos medicinais é conhecida. Esta é mencionada especificamente na «Guideline on Summary of Product Characteristics» ([2]), preparada pela Comissão em consulta com os Estados-Membros e a Agência Europeia de Medicamentos.

Tendo em conta o conhecimento existente, para além da informação do produto, os pacientes devem ser aconselhados, quando necessário, pelo seu médico e farmacêutico quando o produto medicinal é prescrito ou adquirido.

([1]) Diretiva 2001/83/CE que estabelece um código comunitário relativo aos medicamentos para uso humano, JO L 311, 28.11.2004, alterada.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-2/c/smpc_guideline_rev2_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010873/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Grapefruit and medication — potential risks for public health

The BBC recently reported that some members of the medical community are concerned that the combination of ingestion of certain medication and the consumption of grapefruit could cause serious adverse effects on consumers' health. Allegedly, consumption of grapefruit and other similar fruits could lead to the medication ingested not being broken down by the intestines and the liver, thereby seriously harming the body. According to the BBC, the researchers who first brought to light this possible link made it public in the 'Canadian Medical Association Journal'.

I would therefore ask the Commission:

What information is available in this regard? How reliable is it? Has it taken or does it intend to take any measures in this respect?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 February 2013)

According to pharmaceutical legislation ([1]), information on interaction of a medicinal product with food, which may affect the action of the medicinal product, should be included in the product information. Product information is approved as part of the marketing authorisation granted by Member States or by the Commission.

Grapefruit juice is a potent inhibitor of the cytochrome P450 CYP3A4 enzyme, which can affect the metabolism of a variety of drugs, increasing their bioavailability. The potential interaction of grapefruit products and other citrus fruits with medicinal products is known. It is mentioned specifically in the Guideline on Summary of Product Characteristics ([2]), prepared by the Commission, in consultation with Member States and the European Medicines Agency.

Taking into account the existing knowledge, in addition to product information, patients should get advice, where appropriate, from their physician and pharmacist at the time of prescription or dispensation of the medicinal product.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, as amended.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-2/c/smpc_guideline_rev2_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010874/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Política Cultural

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-008638/2012, a comissária Androulla Vassiliou declarou, em nome da Comissão, que «no âmbito da política cultural, um grupo de peritos nacionais encontra-se atualmente a deliberar sobre a forma como as artes e as instituições culturais podem promover a diversidade e o diálogo intercultural. Uma análise das políticas e um manual de boas práticas serão elaborados em 2013».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Quantos elementos compõem o grupo de peritos e qual a sua formação e o âmbito das suas competências? Pode antecipar as principais linhas da análise e do manual de boas práticas?

Resposta dada por AndroullaVassiliou em nome da Comissão
(31 de janeiro de 2013)

O Plano de Trabalho para a Cultura 2011-2014 foi adotado pelo Conselho em 2010 e nele se identifica a diversidade cultural, o diálogo intercultural e a cultura acessível e inclusiva como prioridades de trabalho.

Este plano propõe a criação de um grupo de peritos dos Estados-Membros, no âmbito do método aberto de coordenação, para refletir sobre o papel das instituições artísticas e culturais públicas na promoção da diversidade cultural e do diálogo intercultural.

O grupo de peritos reuniu-se pela primeira vez em 24 de setembro de 2012. Desde então voltou a reunir-se outra vez e prosseguirá os seus trabalhos em 2013. Até ao momento, 24 Estados-Membros (incluindo a Croácia) nomearam peritos que são funcionários dos respetivos Ministérios da Cultura ou representantes de instituições culturais nomeados pelos ministérios nacionais. Os conhecimentos especializados dos membros vão desde as artes do espetáculo ao património cultural em articulação com o diálogo intercultural.

O grupo tem como mandato identificar políticas e boas práticas na criação de espaços em instituições artísticas e culturais públicas, com vista a facilitar o intercâmbio entre as culturas e grupos sociais, em especial, pondo em relevo a dimensão intercultural do património cultural, promovendo a educação artística e cultural e desenvolvendo as competências interculturais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010874/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Cultural policy

In reply to my Question E-008638/2012, Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou stated on behalf of the Commission that 'in the field of culture policy, a group of national experts is currently deliberating how arts and cultural institutions may promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. An analysis of policies and a good practice manual will be produced in 2013'.

I would therefore ask the Commission:

How many members are there in the group of experts and what is their training and expertise? Can the Commission indicate what the main points of the analysis and of the good practice manual will be?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 was adopted by the Council in 2010 and identified cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture as priority areas of work.

It called for a group of Member State experts to be set up within the framework of the Open Method of coordination to work on the role of public arts and cultural institutions with a view to promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

The group of experts met for the first time on 24 September 2012. It has met a second time since and will continue its work in 2013. So far, 24 Member States (including Croatia) have appointed experts who are either officials of their respective Ministries of Culture or representatives of cultural institutions appointed by the national Ministries. The expertise of members ranges from performing arts to cultural heritage in liaison with intercultural dialogue.

The mandate of the group is to identify policies and good practices in creating spaces in public arts and cultural institutions in order to facilitate exchanges between cultures and social groups, in particular by highlighting the intercultural dimension of cultural heritage, promoting artistic and cultural education and developing intercultural competences.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010875/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Alteração às regras sobre a comunicação de ocorrências no setor da aviação civil

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-008277/2012, o Comissário Siim Kallas declarou que «tendo em conta a importância de que se reveste para a segurança a troca do maior número possível de informações sobre esta matéria [acidentes ou incidentes envolvendo a aviação civil] entre as entidades reguladoras competentes, nomeadamente entre os Estados-Membros, a Comissão está a preparar uma alteração às regras existentes sobre a comunicação de ocorrências no setor da aviação civil».

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Quais foram as principais deficiências ou insuficiências detetadas nas regras existentes quanto à troca de informações que justificaram a preparação da sua modificação? Quais são os aspetos dessa proposta de modificação que pode, desde já, antecipar e destacar? Qual o efeito pretendido com a sua adoção?

Resposta dada por Siim Kallas em nome da Comissão
(31 de janeiro de 2013)

A Comissão agradece ao Senhor Deputado a sua pergunta sobre a alteração da legislação relativa à comunicação de ocorrências na aviação civil.

No contexto do atual sistema, as ocorrências relacionadas com a segurança são coligidas pelo Estado-Membro responsável pela supervisão da organização afetada pelo incidente. Por exemplo, se uma transportadora aérea do Estado A sofrer um incidente ao realizar um voo no Estado B, deve comunicar o incidente ao Estado A e não ao Estado em que o incidente ocorreu. Neste caso, o Estado B é privado de informações que podem ser importantes para alcançar um elevado nível de segurança no seu espaço aéreo.

A legislação em vigor tentou resolver este problema promovendo o intercâmbio de informações através de um repositório central europeu, que regista todas as ocorrências coligidas pelos Estados-Membros. Na atualidade, contudo, os Estados-Membros têm um acesso limitado a esta base de dados, nomeadamente no que respeita à descrição dos incidentes (narração dos factos), elemento de grande importância para a compreensão das possíveis ameaças à segurança da aviação.

A proposta da Comissão para a revisão da legislação atualmente em vigor inclui disposições que garantem aos Estados--Membros pleno acesso ao repositório central europeu. Além disso, exige aos Estados-Membros que enviem para o repositório informações sobre as medidas tomadas para suprir as deficiências.

A Comissão considera que estas disposições permitirão aos Estados-Membros não só receber informações sobre todas as ocorrências registadas, nomeadamente as que tiveram lugar no seu espaço aéreo, como também ser informados das medidas tomadas para fazer face a essas ocorrências.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010875/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Amendment of the rules on occurrence reporting in civil aviation

In reply to my Question E-008277/2012, Commissioner Siim Kallas stated that 'in view of the importance for safety of a maximum level of exchange of safety related information [accidents or incidents involving civil aviation] amongst appropriate safety regulators including notably Members States, the Commission is preparing a modification of the existing rules on occurrence reporting in civil aviation'.

I therefore wish to ask the Commission:

What were the main failures or shortcomings detected in the existing rules on the exchange of information that warranted preparing their modification? What are expected to be the main features of this modification? What is the intended effect of their adoption?

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

The Commission thanks the Honourable Member of the European Parliament for his question about the amendment of the legislation on occurrence reporting in civil aviation.

In the current system, safety occurrences are collected by the Member State ensuring the oversight of the organisation which has experienced the incident. This means for example that if an airline from State A experiences an incident while operating a flight in State B, the airline will report the incident to State A and not to the State where the incident occurred. In this case State B therefore be deprived of information which could be important to help achieving a high level of safety in its airspace.

The current legislation has attempted to address this issue by supporting the exchange of information through the means of a European Central Repository (ECR) which contains all occurrences collected by Member States. However Member States access to this database is currently limited and notably does not cover the narrative of the incident (the descriptive of what happened), an element important to understand the potential threat to aviation safety.

The Commission proposal to revise the current legislation includes provisions granting Member States full access to the European Central Repository. In addition, it requires Member States to transfer to the ECR information about the actions taken to remedy to the deficiencies.

The Commission believes that these provisions would not only allow Member States to receive information about all occurrences collected, and in particular those which have happened in their airspace, but also to be informed about the actions taken to address the issue.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010876/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Diálogo intercultural — Modelos de integração

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-008638/2012, a Comissária Androulla Vassiliou declarou não ser possível fornecer uma análise da situação do diálogo intercultural na União Europeia em sede de resposta a uma pergunta escrita. Gostaria, ainda assim, de ver precisados alguns dos temas contidos na referida resposta.

Assim, reitero à Comissão a seguinte pergunta:

— Considera que os vários modelos de integração adotados pelos Estados-Membros têm resultado num reforço do diálogo e da integração das comunidades que mais recentemente residem nos Estados-Membros?

E acrescento:

— Quais considera serem as comunidades melhor sucedidas? Que modelos e boas práticas concretas recomenda a este respeito?

Resposta dada por Cecilia Malmström em nome da Comissão
(28 de janeiro de 2013)

Os países europeus têm um historial diverso no que se refere à integração e definem este conceito de formas diferentes. Desde os anos 80, tem vindo a desenvolver-se uma vasta literatura em torno da noção de modelos, evidenciando diferenças notáveis entre as características históricas, políticas, filosóficas, sociais e culturais das políticas de integração nos diferentes contextos nacionais.

O papel da Comissão consiste essencialmente em coordenar e facilitar o intercâmbio de boas práticas entre os Estados-Membros. Foram adotadas diversas medidas com vista a recolher informações sobre a política e as práticas de integração dos diferentes Estados-Membros. O sítio Web da União Europeia sobre integração ([1]) apresenta uma recolha atualizada de práticas de integração dos Estados-Membros, enquanto os manuais sobre integração ([2]) se destinam a estruturar o intercâmbio de boas práticas entre os Estados-Membros.

Em 2011, a Comissão apresentou a Agenda europeia para a integração dos nacionais de países terceiros ([3]), um contributo para o debate sobre a forma de compreender e dar maior apoio à integração. É necessária uma grande diversidade de abordagens, em função dos diferentes desafios em matéria de integração que os vários tipos de migrantes enfrentam, sendo o objetivo comum assegurar que os imigrantes são bem preparados para uma vida plena e independente na sociedade de acolhimento.

No âmbito da referida Agenda, a Comissão concebeu também uma «caixa de ferramentas» flexível (modelos europeus de integração) na qual as autoridades nacionais podem escolher as medidas que terão mais probabilidades de eficácia no seu contexto específico e as mais adaptadas aos seus objetivos de integração, o que contribuirá para melhorar a qualidade das políticas e das práticas em toda a UE ([4]).

([1]) www.integration.eu.
([2]) Manuais sobre integração para responsáveis políticos e profissionais. http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_12892_168517401.pdf
([3]) COM(2011) 455 final.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_25494_793453556.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010876/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Intercultural dialogue — Integration models

In reply to my Question E-008638/2012, Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou stated that it was not possible to provide an analysis of the situation of intercultural dialogue in a reply to a written question. I would none the less like clarification of some of the points contained in that reply.

I therefore resubmit the following question to the Commission:

— Does the Commission consider that the various integration models adopted by the Member States have resulted in increased dialogue and integration of the communities that have most recently come to live in the Member States?

In addition:

— Which communities have proved the most successful? What models and good practices can be recommended in this respect?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(28 January 2013)

European countries have a diverse history in relation to integration and define the concept in different ways. Since the 1980s, an extensive literature has developed around the notion of models, bringing out notable differences between historical, political, philosophical, social and cultural features of integration policies in different national situations.

The Commission's role is essentially to coordinate and facilitate the exchange of best practices among the Member States. Several steps have been taken to collect information regarding integration policy and practices across the Member States. The European Website on Integration ([1]) presents a collection of updated integration practices from the Member States, while the Handbooks on Integration ([2]) aim at structuring the exchange of best practice between Member States.

In 2011 the Commission presented the European Agenda for the Integration of Third Country Nationals ([3]), a contribution to the debate on how to understand and better support integration. A diversity of approaches is called for, depending on the different integration challenges faced by various types of migrants, with the common objective of ensuring that migrants are well prepared to lead a full and independent life in the host society.

As part of this Agenda, the Commission has also put together a flexible 'tool box' (European Modules for integration) from which national authorities can pick up measures most likely to prove effective in their specific context and most suited to their particular integration objectives in order to increase the quality of policies and practices across the EU ([4]).

([1]) www.integration.eu.
([2]) Handbooks on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_12892_168517401.pdf
([3]) COM(2011)455.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_25494_793453556.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010877/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Identidade europeia

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-008638/2012, a Comissária Androulla Vassiliou declarou não ser possível fornecer uma análise da situação do diálogo intercultural na União Europeia em sede de resposta a uma pergunta escrita, mas esclareceu que a Comissão «promove uma cidadania europeia ativa e uma identidade europeia respeitosa, dinâmica e multifacetada». Gostaria, ainda assim, de ver precisados alguns dos conceitos contidos nesta declaração.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Como define a identidade europeia? Em que história, cultura e valores assenta? Em que medida deve esta ser respeitosa, dinâmica e multifacetada?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(7 de fevereiro de 2013)

A União Europeia funda-se nos valores do respeito pela dignidade humana, da liberdade, da democracia, da igualdade, do Estado de direito e do respeito pelos direitos do Homem, incluindo os direitos das pessoas pertencentes a minorias, consagrados no artigo 2.° do Tratado da União Europeia.

O programa «Europa para os cidadãos», para o qual remete a resposta à pergunta E-008638/2012, é um dos instrumentos que visam reforçar a tolerância e a compreensão mútua entre os cidadãos europeus, respeitando e promovendo a diversidade cultural e linguística, congregando pessoas de toda a Europa para partilhar e trocar experiências, opiniões e valores, aprender com os ensinamentos da história como meio de superar o passado e construir o futuro, ou, como formulado na resposta à pergunta E-008638/2012, construir uma Europa respeitosa, dinâmica e multifacetada.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010877/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: European identity

In answer to my Question E-008638/2012, the Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou said that it was not possible to analyse the state of intercultural dialogue in the European Union in an answer to a written question but declared that the Commission 'promotes active European citizenship and a respectful, dynamic and multifaceted European identity'. Nevertheless, I would like to receive a more detailed explanation of some of the concepts contained in this declaration.

Can the Commission say how European identity is defined? On what history, culture and values does it draw? To what extent is it 'respectful, dynamic and multifaceted'?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(7 February 2013)

The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union.

The 'Europe for Citizens' programme, to which the previous answer to Question E-008638/2012 referred, is one of the instruments which aims to enhance tolerance and mutual understanding between European citizens, respecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, by bringing together people across Europe to share and exchange experiences, opinions and values, to learn from history a means of moving beyond the past and building the future, or, as was formulated in answer to Question E-008638/2012, to build a respectful, dynamic and multi-faceted Europe.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010878/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Defesa do consumidor: Qualidade e classificação do gasóleo à venda na UE

A comunicação social portuguesa deu recentemente nota de que a DECO — Associação Portuguesa Para a Defesa do Consumidor — efetuou um estudo acerca de quatro tipos de gasóleo à venda em Portugal e concluiu que, não obstante serem vendidos com preços diferentes e graduados com referências que vão de «low-cost» a «premium», na realidade não apresentavam diferenças significativas no tocante ao consumo, «performance» do automóvel e efeitos no motor.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

— Tem conhecimento deste estudo? Dispõe de informações semelhantes acerca do mesmo tipo de produtos noutros países da União Europeia?

— Não considera que a publicidade que promete níveis diferentes de «performance», ganhos substanciais no consumo e uma segurança acrescida em termos de efeitos no motor de determinados tipos de gasóleo pode induzir em erro os consumidores quanto às suas propriedades e vantagens efetivas?

— Julga que os consumidores dispõem de toda a informação necessária para que possam escolher o produto que mais lhes convém e que esta é suscetível de ser facilmente apreendida pelos mesmos no momento da compra? Que medidas tomou ou prevê tomar neste tocante?

Resposta dada por Joe Borg em nome da Comissão
(1 de fevereiro de 2013)

Os combustíveis utilizados nos veículos contam-se entre os bens de consumo que estão atualmente a ser analisados pela Comissão.

Em 2012, a Comissão deu início a um estudo aprofundado sobre os combustíveis utilizados nos veículos, na sequência das conclusões do sexto painel de avaliação dos mercados de consumo, que identificaram esses combustíveis como um mercado em que existe uma certa confusão.

No painel de avaliação, o mercado de combustíveis está em segundo lugar entre os mercados de bens. Isto é importante, tanto mais que o mercado de combustíveis é o quarto maior mercado em termos da despesa total dos orçamentos familiares e é influenciado pela grande volatilidade dos preços da gasolina.

O estudo de mercado aprofundado sobre os combustíveis utilizados nos veículos deverá analisar a questão de saber se os consumidores podem fazer escolhas informadas e incluirá questões relacionadas com a compreensão dos consumidores e transparência das informações. O estudo irá debruçar-se em especial sobre a compreensão, por parte do consumidor, de: a) a informação constante dos rótulos, b) as diferenças entre combustíveis, e c) a adequação dos combustíveis aos veículos automóveis. O estudo estará concluído no final de 2013, devendo a Comissão comunicar as suas conclusões ao Parlamento.

Deverá ser do conhecimento da Senhora Deputada que a Diretiva relativa às práticas comerciais desleais ([1]) já impede os comerciantes de enveredar por práticas comerciais enganosas ou agressivas. Dispõe esta diretiva que os comerciantes não deveriam fornecer aos consumidores informações falsas, enganosas ou que de algum modo induzam em erro, incluindo a informação sobre as principais características de um produto, como a sua composição, se tais práticas forem suscetíveis de conduzir o consumidor médio a adquirir um produto que não teria adquirido noutras circunstâncias. Cabe primordialmente às autoridades nacionais e aos tribunais investigar quaisquer práticas potencialmente enganosas por parte das empresas que operam no seu território.

([1]) Diretiva 2005/29/CE do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 11 de maio de 2005, relativa às práticas comerciais desleais das empresas face aos consumidores no mercado interno e que altera a Diretiva 84/450/CEE do Conselho, as Diretivas 97/7/CE, 98/27/CE e 2002/65/CE e o Regulamento (CE) n.° 2006/2004 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, JO L 149 de 11.6.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010878/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Consumer protection — quality and classification of diesel sold in the EU

The Portuguese media recently reported that a study carried out by DECO, the Portuguese Association for Consumer Protection, into four types of diesel on sale in Portugal had found that, despite their being sold at different prices under descriptions ranging from 'low-cost' to 'premium', in reality there was no significant difference between them as regards consumption, performance or wear and tear on the engine.

Can the Commission therefore say:

— Is it aware of this study? Does it have similar information about the same type of product in other countries of the European Union?

Does it not consider that advertising certain types of diesel with the promise of different levels of performance, substantial improvements in consumption and increased engine safety might mislead consumers as to their real properties and advantages?

Does it believe that consumers are sufficiently well informed to be able to choose the product that best suits them and draw on this knowledge at the time of purchase? What steps has it taken or does it propose to take on this matter?

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

Vehicle fuels are among the consumer goods that are currently being studied by the Commission.

In 2012 the Commission initiated an in-depth study on vehicle fuels following findings from the sixth Consumer Markets Scoreboard which identified vehicle fuels as a consumer market where some confusion exists.

In the Scoreboard, the fuels market ranks second lowest amongst the goods markets. This is significant since the fuels market is the fourth largest market in terms of total expenditure of household budgets and influenced by highly volatile petrol prices.

The in-depth market study on vehicle fuels will assess whether consumers are able to make informed choices and include issues related to consumer understanding and transparency of information. In particular, the study will review consumer understanding of: a) information on labels, b) differences between fuels, and c) suitability of fuels for cars. The study will be finalised towards the end of 2013 and the Commission will share its findings with the Parliament.

The Honourable Member should know that the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ([1]) already prevents traders from engaging in misleading and aggressive commercial practices. Under its provisions, traders should not provide consumers with false, untruthful or otherwise misleading information, including on the main characteristics of a product such as its composition, 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.

([1]) Directive 2005/29/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the Parliament and of the Council, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-010879/12
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 de novembro de 2012)

Assunto: Futura avaliação da estratégia comunitária para a saúde e segurança no trabalho 2007-2012

Em resposta à minha pergunta E-008642/2012, o comissário László Andor declarou, em nome da Comissão, que «a Comissão encontra-se atualmente a avaliar os resultados da Estratégia comunitária para a saúde e segurança no trabalho 2007-2012. As ações relativas ao apoio oferecido pela Comissão e a promoção da saúde e da segurança a nível internacional também fazem parte da avaliação acima mencionada. Os resultados finais da avaliação serão apresentados nos próximos meses.»

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Está em condições de adiantar as principais linhas da avaliação anunciada? Qual o grau de prioridade que confere ao apoio internacional oferecido pela Comissão? Em quantas ações e em que países oferece presentemente esse apoio?

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(31 de janeiro de 2013)

Os resultados finais da avaliação sobre a estratégia da UE em matéria de saúde e segurança no trabalho para 2007-2012 serão apresentados durante o primeiro trimestre de 2013. O documento incluirá referências específicas a iniciativas desenvolvidas a nível internacional para promover a saúde e a segurança no trabalho.

Em linha com a estratégia da UE, a saúde e a segurança no trabalho constitui uma questão-chave que a Comissão Europeia promove na esfera internacional: através da Agenda para o Trabalho Digno da OIT, no âmbito de fóruns de diálogo em matéria de política regional (nomeadamente, a Cimeira Ásia-Europa), bem como de conversações políticas bilaterais com países parceiros. Nos últimos anos, essas conversações envolveram, em particular, a China, os EUA, a Índia e o Chile.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-010879/12
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(29 November 2012)

Subject: Future evaluation of the EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012

In reply to my Question E-008642/2012, Commissioner László Andor stated on behalf of the Commission that 'the Commission is currently evaluating the results of the EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work 2007-2012. The actions regarding the support offered by the Commission and the promotion of health and safety at international level are also part of the above evaluation. The final results of the evaluation will be presented in the forthcoming months.'

Accordingly:

Is the Commission able to outline the main thrust of the evaluation mentioned? What priority is given to the international support offered by the Commission? In how many actions and in which countries is this support currently provided?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(31 January 2013)

The final results of the evaluation of the EU Strategy on Health and Safety at Work for 2007-12 will be presented in the first quarter of 2013. It will contain specific references to international-level initiatives to promote health and safety at work.

In line with the EU Strategy, health and safety at work is a key issue which the European Commission promotes internationally: at global level through the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, within regional policy dialogue forums (in particular, the Asia-Europe Meeting) and in bilateral policy dialogues with partner countries. In the last few years, these have involved China, the USA, India and Chile in particular.

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