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Šajā publikācijā ir Eiropas Parlamenta deputātu rakstiskie jautājumi un atbildes, ko sniegusi kāda Eiropas Savienības iestāde.

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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

(2014/C 56 E/01)

Saturs **Lappuse**

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-006814/12
alla Commissione
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(9 luglio 2012)

Oggetto: Bonifica della discarica di Borgo Montello (Latina)

La gestione dei rifiuti nel Lazio costituisce una vera e propria emergenza, per la quale la Commissione europea lo scorso anno ha aperto una procedura d'infrazione con una lettera di messa in mora per violazione della direttiva 1999/31/CE.

La discarica di Borgo Montello (in provincia di Latina) è la terza più grande d'Italia. Come reso noto dall'articolo Una bomba ecologica pubblicato dal settimanale «IL PUNTO» del 6 luglio, essa poggia su falde acquifere ormai contaminate, come rilevato da uno studio richiesto dalla Procura di Latina e da un rapporto dell'Arpa Lazio. Sembra inoltre che la zona più antica contenga sin dagli anni '80 fusti tossici frutto di traffici illeciti e che le indagini avviate dalla Regione Lazio si siano fermate per la mancata individuazione di un eventuale sito in cui trattare i rifiuti speciali che potrebbero essere rinvenuti.

Alla luce di ciò, può la Commissione far sapere:

— se è a conoscenza dei fatti sopra esposti;

— come intende intervenire al fine di tutelare la salute delle persone;

— se intende sollecitare lo Stato italiano a procedere alla bonifica di tale area dalle sostanze tossiche o che non hanno i requisiti minimi previsti?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(4 settembre 2012)

La Commissione non è a conoscenza dell'articolo menzionato dall'onorevole parlamentare e chiederà al governo italiano ulteriori informazioni, anche con riguardo alle misure che potrebbero essere adottate dalle autorità competenti al fine di risolvere il problema cui fa riferimento l'interrogazione dell'onorevole parlamentare.

Risposta complementare di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(29 ottobre 2013)

Come indicato nella precedente risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-006814/2012, la Commissione ha raccolto informazioni sulle questioni sollevate. La Commissione rileva che è in corso un'indagine giudiziaria in merito al presunto smaltimento illecito di rifiuti pericolosi mescolati a rifiuti urbani nella discarica di Borgo Montello, nonché alla contaminazione delle acque sotterranee nell'area ove si situa la discarica. In attesa delle conclusioni dell'inchiesta delle autorità italiane, l'avvio di un'indagine parallela da parte della Commissione non apporterebbe alcun reale valore aggiunto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-006814/12
to the Commission
Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE)
(9 July 2012)

Subject: Reclamation of landfill site in Borgo Montello (Latina)

Waste management in the Lazio (Latium) region has become a genuine emergency, in relation to which the Commission last year initiated infringement proceedings with a letter of formal notice for breach of Directive 1999/31/EC.

The Borgo Montello landfill (in the province of Latina) is the third largest in Italy. As revealed in the article entitled 'An environmental time bomb', published by the weekly magazine *Il Punto* on 6 July, it lies above a water table that is now contaminated, as determined by a study demanded by the Latina Public Prosecutor's Office and set out in a report by ARPA Lazio (the regional environmental protection agency). It also appears that the oldest part of the landfill has, since the 1980s, contained toxic drums that are the result of waste trafficking and that the investigation launched by the Lazio regional authorities has ground to a halt due to the failure to identify a site that could treat any hazardous waste that might be found.

Can the Commission therefore say:

— whether it is aware of these facts;

— what action it will take to protect people's health;

— and whether it will call on the Italian Government to clean up the toxic substances — and any others that do not meet minimum requirements — in this area?

Preliminary answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2012)

The Commission is not aware of the press article mentioned by the Honourable Member and will ask the Italian Government for further information, including on any measures the competent authorities may plan to take to address the problem referred to in the question posed by the Honourable Member.

Supplementary answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(29 October 2013)

As indicated in the previous answer to Written Question E-006814/2012, the Commission has gathered information about the issues raised. The Commission notes that there is an ongoing judicial investigation concerning the alleged illegal disposal of hazardous waste mixed with municipal waste in the landfill of Borgo Montello, as well as contamination of ground waters in the area where the landfill is located. Pending the conclusions of the investigation by the Italian Authorities, launching a parallel investigation by the Commission would not bring any real value added.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007674/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Απόφαση από το Ισραήλ για εξαγωγή αποθεμάτων φυσικού αερίου

Σε συνεδρία του, την Κυριακή 23 Ιουνίου, το Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο του Ισραήλ υπό τον Πρωθυπουργό Βενιαμίν Νετανιάχου, αποφάσισε την εξαγωγή του 40% των αποθεμάτων φυσικού αερίου της χώρας. Η Κύπρος, λόγω γειτνίασης και γεωγραφικής θέσης, προσφέρεται ως διαμετακομιστικός σταθμός προς την Ευρώπη.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Τι μπορεί να σημαίνει για την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση η απόφαση αυτή του Ισραηλινού Υπουργικού Συμβουλίου, καθώς επίσης μια πιθανή συνεργασία ανάμεσα σε Ισραήλ, Ελλάδα και Κύπρο στα θέματα φυσικού αερίου;

— Πιστεύει ότι μια τέτοια συνεργασία εξυπηρετεί τα συμφέροντα της ΕΕ;

— Πώς προτίθεται να αντιδράσει η ΕΕ σε περίπτωση που η Τουρκία επιχειρήσει επέμβαση στην κυπριακή ΑΟΖ;

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά τις έρευνες για υδρογονάνθρακες που διενεργούνται στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο.

Η εύρεση κοιτασμάτων φυσικού αερίου στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο θα μπορούσε να διαδραματίσει πολύ σημαντικό ρόλο στην επίλυση των προβλημάτων ενεργειακής ασφάλειας τόσο των παραγωγών όσο και των γειτονικών χωρών, περιλαμβανομένης και της Ελλάδας. Οι χώρες αυτές θα μπορούσαν να αποκτήσουν έναν ολοένα και μεγαλύτερο ρόλο στη στρατηγική διαφοροποίησης της ΕΕ, μολονότι είναι πολύ νωρίς για να εκτιμηθούν οι επιπτώσεις που θα είχαν τα κοιτάσματα αυτά στην αγορά αερίου της ΕΕ.

Όσον αφορά την Τουρκία στο πλαίσιο των αποκλειστικών οικονομικών ζωνών της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-001320/2013 ([1]).

Τα ζητήματα που θίγει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος τονίζουν την ανάγκη ταχείας και ολοκληρωμένης διευθέτησης του Κυπριακού, μεταξύ των ηγετών της ελληνοκυπριακής και της τουρκοκυπριακής κοινότητας, υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών. Η διευθέτηση του Κυπριακού θα ανοίξει ένα ευρύ φάσμα επιλογών για την εκμετάλλευση των κοιτασμάτων υδρογονανθράκων με τον πλέον συμφέροντα από οικονομική άποψη τρόπο, προς όφελος όλων των Κυπρίων.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/redirect-plenary-archive.html?rewrite=parliamentary-questions

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007674/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Israel's decision to export natural gas reserves

At its meeting of Sunday, 23 June, the Israeli Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, decided that 40% of Israel's natural gas reserves should be exported. Due to its proximity to Israel and its geographical location, Cyprus is well placed to act as a transit point to Europe.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— What are the possible implications for the European Union of this decision by the Israeli Cabinet and of possible cooperation between Israel, Greece and Cyprus in respect of natural gas?

— Does it believe that such cooperation will serve the EU's interests?

— How does the EU intend to react should Turkey attempt to intervene in Cyprus' EEZ?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

The Commission is closely following the exploration activities in the East Mediterranean basin.

The East Mediterranean gas finds could play a very important role in helping both producing and neighbouring countries including Greece to address their energy security problems. They could also have a growing role in the EU's diversification strategy, although it is too early to assess the impact these finds could have on the EU gas market.

Regarding Turkey in the context of the Republic of Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zones, the Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-001320/2013 ([1]).

The issues raised by the Honourable Member underline the need for a rapid comprehensive settlement in Cyprus between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities under the auspices of the United Nations. A settlement would open up a range of options for the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the economically most advantageous way for the benefit of all Cypriots.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/redirect-plenary-archive.html?rewrite=parliamentary-questions

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007675/13
aan de Commissie
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: Illegale subsidie voor hernieuwbare energie

Op 20 juni 2013 heeft het Europese Hof van Justitie in een arrest ([1]) bepaald dat een Oostenrijkse huizenbezitter recht had op een btw-registratie, waarmee hij de belasting die hij had betaald over de kosten van de installatie van zonnepanelen op het dak van zijn huis kon terugvorderen ([2]). Het Hof heeft in dit arrest bepaald dat huishoudens die elektriciteit opwekken via zonne-energie en stroom toevoegen aan het net volwaardige ondernemers zijn. Wanneer deze uitspraak ingang vindt in de lidstaten, kan dit de weg openen voor miljoenen vorderingen tot terugbetaling van btw door huishoudens die al zonnepanelen hebben geïnstalleerd.

Kan de Commissie in het licht hiervan antwoorden op de volgende vragen:

1. Hoe interpreteert zij bovengenoemd arrest van het HvJ?

2. Is zij ook van mening dat het beleid van subsidieverstrekking in de vorm van belastingteruggave aan bezitters van zonnepanelen ongelijkheid tussen ondernemingen creëert en daarmee strijdig is met EU-recht, aangezien de energiemarkt als gevolg van het HvJ-arrest voor een groot gedeelte uit huishoudens zal bestaan?

3. Welk advies geeft zij in verband met de plotselinge toename van het aantal ondernemers als gevolg van dit arrest, op grond waarvan huishoudens verplicht zijn zich te laten registreren als ondernemers?

4. Welke maatregelen en/of initiatieven neemt zij met het oog op een vlot herstel van concurrentiewetgeving? Stelt zij een herziening van de regels inzake subsidieverstrekking voor? Gaat zij geld van de belastingbetaler terugvorderen dat is gebruikt om illegaal ondernemingen te financieren?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(21 augustus 2013)

1. In het door het geachte Parlementslid genoemde arrest van het Hof van Justitie van de EU is een interpretatie gegeven van het begrip „economische activiteiten" voor btw-doeleinden en is eraan herinnerd dat de belastingen die in een eerder stadium zijn geheven over de goederen of diensten die een belastingplichtige in het kader van zijn belaste handelingen gebruikt, kunnen worden afgetrokken.

2. De btw-richtlijn ([3]) definieert het concept „economische activiteit" als „alle werkzaamheden van een fabrikant, handelaar of dienstverrichter". Wanneer de installatie en het gebruik van zonnepanelen leidt tot de levering van elektriciteit onder bezwarende titel, is de persoon die zelfstandig een dergelijke activiteit uitvoert, een „belastingplichtige" die achteraf over deze leveringen btw moet heffen, maar krijgt hij ook het recht om de voorbelasting op goederen en diensten die hij heeft gebruikt om deze leveringen te produceren, af te trekken. Onder deze voorwaarden is de terugbetaling van de voorbelasting geen subsidie, maar eerder een mechanisme om bescherming te bieden tegen dubbele belastingheffing en om de neutraliteit van het btw-systeem te garanderen.

3. In de btw-richtlijn ([4]) is bepaald dat alle economische subjecten die belastbare activiteiten uitvoeren zich voor btw-doeleinden moeten laten registreren. De lidstaten kunnen een speciale regeling introduceren voor het mkb ([5]); dat kan betekenen dat belastingplichtigen die daarvoor hebben gekozen een volledige vrijstelling genieten, in welk geval zij echter geen recht op aftrek hebben. In haar mededeling over de toekomst van de btw ([6]) heeft de Commissie aangegeven dat de mkb-regeling aan een nader onderzoek zal worden onderworpen om het functioneren ervan te verbeteren.

([1]) C-219/2012, Finanzamt Freistadt Rohrbach Urfahr / Unabhängiger Finanzsenat Außenstelle Linz.
([2]) http://www.accountancylive.com/croner/editorialDetails/category/Tax/Tax-Law-and-Regulation_-601055/editorial/VAT-cloud-cast-over-solar-panels.
([3]) Artikel 9, lid 1, van de btw-richtlijn (Richtlijn 2006/112/EG van de Raad betreffende het gemeenschappelijke stelsel van belasting over de toegevoegde waarde).
([4]) De artikelen 213 en 214 van de btw-richtlijn.
([5]) Artikel 281 en volgende van de btw-richtlijn.
([6]) Mededeling van de Commissie aan het Europees Parlement, de Raad en het Europees Economisch en Sociaal Comité over de toekomst van de btw (COM(2011) 851 definitief).

4. De btw-verschuldigdheid en de potentiële btw-verminderingen of teruggave voor huishoudens die zonnepanelen installeren zijn het gevolg van de toepassing van de btw-richtlijn en vormen in principe geen staatssteun in de zin van artikel 107 VWEU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007675/13
to the Commission
Auke Zijlstra (NI)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Illegal subsidies for renewable energies

On 20 June 2013 the European Court of Justice (ECJ) delivered a ruling ([1]) determining that an Austrian homeowner was entitled to register for VAT and therefore to reclaim the tax paid on the cost of installing solar panels on the roof of his home ([2]). In this ruling, the ECJ declared that households generating electricity from solar energy and delivering power to the grid were fully-fledged entrepreneurs. When applied in the Member States, this could open the way to millions of VAT claims from households that have already installed solar panels.

In the light of the above:

1. can the Commission interpret the abovementioned judgment delivered by the ECJ?

2. does the Commission agree that the policy of granting subsidies in the form of a tax refund to owners of solar panels creates a disparity among businesses and thus violates EC law, given that under the ECJ ruling households will constitute a significant part of the energy market?

3. what are the Commission's recommendations as regards the sudden increase in the number of entrepreneurs as a result of this judgment, which obliges households to register themselves as entrepreneurs?

4. what actions and/or initiatives will the Commission take in order to ensure the prompt restoration of competition law? Will it suggest a revision of the rules on granting subsidies? Will the Commission recover taxpayers' money that has been used to illegally fund businesses?

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

1. In this judgment the Court of Justice of the EU has given an interpretation of the notion of 'economic activities' for VAT purposes and has recalled that input VAT on goods or services used by a taxable person for his taxed transactions may be deducted.

2. The VAT Directive ([3]) defines the concept of 'economic activities' as 'any activity of producers, traders or persons supplying services'. When the installation and use of solar panels gives rise to supplies of electricity against consideration, the person carrying out such an activity independently will be a 'taxable person' who has to charge output VAT on these supplies but is also granted a right to deduct the input VAT on goods and services used to make these supplies. Under those conditions, refund of input VAT does not constitute a subsidy but is rather a mechanism to safeguard against double taxation and ensure the neutrality of the VAT system.

3. The VAT Directive ([4]) provides that all economic operators carrying out taxable activities shall register for VAT purposes. Member States may introduce a special scheme for SMEs ([5]), which can imply a full exemption for taxable persons having opted for it but leaves them without a right of deduction. In its communication on the future of VAT ([6]), the Commission has indicated that the SMEs scheme will be further examined in order to improve its functioning.

4. The VAT liability and the potential VAT deductions and refunds for households installing solar panels result from the application of the VAT Directive and in principle do not give rise to the existence of state aid within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU.

([1]) C-219/2012, Finanzamt Freistadt Rohrbach Urfahr v Unabhängiger Finanzsenat Außenstelle Linz.
([2]) http://www.accountancylive.com/croner/editorialDetails/category/Tax/Tax-Law-and-Regulation_-601055/editorial/VAT-cloud-cast-over-solar-panels.
([3]) Article 9 (1) of the VAT Directive (Council Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of VAT).
([4]) Articles 213 and 214 of the VAT Directive.
([5]) Article 281and following of the VAT Directive.
([6]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the future of VAT (COM(2011) 851).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007676/13
to the Commission
Glenis Willmott (S&D), David Martin (S&D) and Stephen Hughes (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: ISS strikebreaking in the UK

ISS is a multinational company actively engaged in contracting across the EU, and it has been awarded contracts with Parliament. ISS is a member of trade associations in the cleaning and catering sectors, which are formally recognised parties to the official sectoral social dialogue committees, for which the Commission provides support and the secretariat.

On 20 June 2013, 250 members of the GMB and Unite unions employed by ISS in the United Kingdom went on strike at eight Royal Air Force (RAF) stations. This action followed the breakdown of last-ditch talks between ISS and GMB and Unite to avert strike action earlier in the week.

The dispute is due to the treatment and low pay of ISS staff.

During the strike, armed service personnel from RAF Waddington were offered GBP 15 per hour by ISS to strikebreak and strikebreakers were bussed from 400 miles away with the offer of three days' pay and full-board lodging.

— Does the Commission agree that such clear attempts to break legal industrial action by a major multinational represented in the EU sectoral social dialogue process are contrary to the principles of positive social partnership which underpin the sectoral social dialogue committees?

— Will the Commission take action to raise this issue formally at the next meetings of the relevant sectoral social dialogue committees?

— Does the Commission agree that the refusal of the company to enter into serious negotiations with the trade unions and the attempt to break the strike action when negotiations failed are in breach of the solidarity principles contained in Articles 27 and 28 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?

— Will the Commission review the contracts it currently holds with ISS and determine what influence it could exert in order to urge the company to reconsider its actions?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The Commission fully respects the autonomy of the social partners, who are responsible for deciding on their representatives attending sectoral social dialogue committee meetings and for setting the agendas.

In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Charter's provisions are addressed to the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the Union and to the Member States only when they are implementing EC law. No European legislation specifically provides for the right to strike or governs the conditions for its exercise. Article 153 (5) TFEU, does not apply to that right. It is therefore for the competent national authorities to assess any issues relating to replacement of staff during a strike and to enforce the relevant national legislation with due regard for the Member State's international obligations. In that context, the Commission would draw the Honourable Member's attention to the EU Directives on worker information and consultation; in particular Directive 2002/14/EC ([1]). It is for the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing that directive is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of each case.

The Commission has signed one contract with the company ISS following a tendering procedure which will end 30 June 2016 and it will ensure that the contractor respects the terms of its contract.

([1]) Directive 2002/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2002 establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community, OJ L 80, 23.3.2002, p. 29.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007678/13
alla Commissione
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Matteo Salvini (EFD) e Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Segnalazioni del Sistema di allerta rapido per gli alimenti e i mangimi nel 2012 (Cina, India e Turchia)

Secondo la relazione annuale 2012 del Sistema di allerta rapido per alimenti e mangimi (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed — RASFF) che la Commissione ha recentemente pubblicato, i tre Paesi con il numero di segnalazioni maggiore sono, in ordine, Cina, India e Turchia. Se si sommano le segnalazioni provenienti da questi soli tre Paesi, si copre più di un terzo delle segnalazioni provenienti da tutto il mondo.

Altro fattore che desta molta preoccupazione è che il loro numero, sempre per questi tre paesi, non accenna a dare un deciso segnale di diminuzione; anzi, riferendosi al 2010, si passa complessivamente da 956 a 1188 segnalazioni, con un incremento corrispondente al 24,3 %.

Infine, osservando la tabella riportante le dieci notifiche più frequenti, si può notare come 9 casi su 10 siano imputati sempre a Cina, India e Turchia. Fra queste notifiche rientrano rischi dovuti a contaminazioni da aflatossine, formaldeide, cromo, manganese, nickel e altri.

Alla luce di quanto suesposto, si chiede alla Commissione:

1. È già stata sollecitata un'ispezione dell'Ufficio Veterinario e Alimentare europeo con l'intento di verificare:

— quali siano le problematiche che pregiudicano la sicurezza delle produzione alimentari provenienti da questi tre paesi terzi, e

— quale sia l'efficacia dei sistemi di controlli ufficiali negli Stati membri?

2. Intende procedere a una revisione degli accordi commerciali, per quanto riguarda gli alimenti, con questi tre paesi terzi, con l'intento di ottenere una maggiore garanzia per la sicurezza dei cittadini europei?

3. Intende contattare le autorità competenti di questi tre paesi terzi, al fine di assicurare un maggiore impegno per contrastare questi episodi di contaminazione?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(5 agosto 2013)

La Commissione ha già chiesto agli Stati membri dell'UE di aumentare la vigilanza alle frontiere dell'Unione per i prodotti menzionati. Ciò può spiegare anche l'elevato numero di notifiche RASFF che devono essere analizzate in rapporto ai volumi commerciali.

La Commissione effettua audit regolari sia nei paesi terzi che negli Stati membri dell'UE al fine di verificare la conformità dei prodotti esportati e l'efficienza dei sistemi di controllo.

La Commissione non ha accordi commerciali con questi tre paesi. L'UE può tuttavia adottare misure preventive per tutelare i consumatori dell'Unione. L'UE attua già tali misure per alcuni dei prodotti e dei paesi menzionati.

La Commissione è in regolare contatto con le autorità competenti di questi tre paesi al fine di migliorare la sicurezza degli alimenti e dei mangimi esportati verso l'Unione europea.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007678/13
to the Commission
Giancarlo Scottà (EFD), Matteo Salvini (EFD) and Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed notifications in 2012 (China, India and Turkey)

According to the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) 2012 annual report, which was recently published by the Commission, the three countries with the highest number of notifications were China, India and Turkey in descending order. If the notifications from these three countries alone are added together, they account for more than a third of the total notifications from all countries.

Another cause for concern is the fact that the number of notifications for these three countries shows no sign of decreasing — on the contrary, in 2010, the number of notifications rose from 956 to 1 188, i.e. an increase of 24.3%.

Finally, the table showing the 'top ten notifications' reveals that nine out of ten cases were recorded in China, India and Turkey. These notifications were for hazards such as aflatoxins, formaldehyde, chromium, manganese, nickel and others.

1. In light of the above, can the Commission say whether a Food and Veterinary Office inspection has been conducted with a view to analysing the problems that are compromising the safety of food products from these three third countries and the effectiveness of Member State official monitoring systems?

2. Does it intend to revise trade agreements concluded with these three countries, which cover food products, with a view to improving food safety in the EU?

3. Does it intend to liaise with the competent authorities in these three countries in order to boost efforts to tackle cases of contamination?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The Commission has already asked EU Member States to increase vigilance at EU borders for the commodities mentioned. This also may explain the high number of RASFF notifications which have to be viewed in relation to trade volumes.

The Commission carries out regular audits both in third countries and EU Member States to verify the compliance of exported products and the efficiency of control systems.

The Commission has no trade agreements with these three countries. Nevertheless, the EU can adopt preventive measures to protect EU consumers. The EU already implements such measures for some of the products and countries mentioned.

The Commission is in regular contact with the competent authorities of these three countries with the aim of improving the safety of food and feed exported to the EU.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007679/13
aan de Commissie
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: EU-propaganda gericht op kinderen

Onlangs verscheen er een artikel in de *Daily Telegraph* ([1]) waarin melding werd gemaakt van een kleurboek, uitgebracht door het DG INLO. In dit kleurboek wordt een werkdag van een Europarlementariër beschreven. In dit kleurboek treft men een gênante zelfparodie van Europarlementariërs aan, waar parlementariërs rondvliegen van kantoor naar kantoor, opgehaald worden per limousine en bij de meest elementaire taken de hulp nodig hebben van hele legers assistenten.

Alhoewel deze uitgave onder de competentie van de Voorzitter van het Europees Parlement valt, zou ik niettemin uw opinie willen vragen over dergelijke praktijken in het algemeen:

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van dit artikel? Zo nee, waarom niet?

2. Het komt op mij over als een zorgelijke ontwikkeling als propaganda van de Europese Unie zich speciaal gaat richten op kinderen. Deelt u mijn mening hierover? Zo nee, waarom niet?

3. Maakt de Commissie zelf ook gebruik van propaganda die rechtstreeks op kinderen is gericht? Zo ja, wat is het doel hiervan?

4. Bent u van mening dat het ethisch verantwoord is om dergelijke uitingen te richten op kinderen? Zo ja, waarom?

5. Indien men zich realiseert dat er allerlei restricties zijn ingesteld op propaganda teneinde kinderen te beschermen (tabak, alcohol etc.), zouden er dan ook geen restricties t.a.v politieke propaganda moeten zijn? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(3 oktober 2013)

De Commissie volgt de communicatie-initiatieven van andere instellingen vol belangstelling (met inbegrip van initiatieven die het Europees burgerschap en de Europese Unie in scholen helpen toelichten). Hoewel de leerplannen een zaak zijn van de lidstaten, vindt de Commissie dat het belangrijk is dat schoolkinderen onderricht krijgen over democratie, politieke geschiedenis en regeringsvormen (onder meer over de vraag waarom de Europese Unie is opgericht en hoe de Unie functioneert).

([1]) http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/bruno-in-brussels-eu-unplugged/brusselsbruno/132/mrs-and-mrs-mep-theeu-assemblys-new-book-for-small-children/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007679/13
to the Commission
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU propaganda aimed at children

An article has recently appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* ([1]) referring to a colouring book published by DG INLO that describes the working day of an MEP. In fact, it appears to be an embarrassing self parody in which MEPs are depicted as dashing from office to office, being picked up by limousines and needing the help of whole armies of assistants to perform the simplest tasks.

While this publication was the responsibility of the European Parliament President, can the Commission nevertheless give its views on such practices in general?

In particular:

1. Is the Commission aware of this article? If not, why not?

2. Does the Commission agree that EU propaganda aimed specifically at children is a matter for great concern? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission itself direct propaganda specifically at children? If so, what purpose does this serve?

4. Does the Commission consider it ethically justifiable to target children specifically in this respect? If so, can it give its reasons?

5. In view of the numerous restrictions imposed for the protection of children (regarding tobacco and alcohol advertising etc.), should similar restrictions not also be imposed on political propaganda? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Commission follows with interest the communication initiatives of other Institutions, including those contributing to explaining European citizenship and the European Union in schools. While recognising that the school curriculum is a matter for individual Member States, the Commission is of the view that it is important for school children to learn about democracy, political history and systems of government, including why the European Union was set up and how it functions.

([1]) http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/bruno-in-brussels-eu-unplugged/brusselsbruno/132/mrs-and-mrs-mep-theeu-assemblys-new-book-for-small-children/

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007680/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: Turkse premier wil kiesdrempel van 10 % handhaven

De Turkse eerste minister Erdogan verklaarde tijdens een bijeenkomst van de „Wijze Personen" in Istanbul op 26 juni dat de regering niet de bedoeling heeft de drempel van 10 % weg te halen uit de kieswet. Volgens hem moeten de politieke partijen maar hard genoeg werken om de kiesdrempel te overschrijden.

In de Europese Unie is de consensus dat een kiesdrempel van 10 % zeer hoog is en nadelig is voor de representativiteit en dus de democratische legitimiteit van het parlement.

— Is de Commissie van oordeel dat het handhaven van een kiesdrempel van 10 % in overeenstemming is met de criteria van Kopenhagen?

— Welke stappen overweegt de Commissie te nemen om deze situatie te veranderen?

— Welke gevolgen heeft deze uitspraak voor het verdere verloop van de toetredingsonderhandelingen?

Antwoord van de heer Füle namens de Commissie
(4 september 2013)

Zoals vermeld in het voortgangsverslag 2012 over Turkije, is de kiesdrempel van 10 % voor het behalen van een zetel in het parlement nog steeds de hoogste van alle landen die lid zijn van de Raad van Europa.

Het Europees Hof voor de rechten van de mens oordeelde in 2008 dat deze kiesdrempel geen schending vormde van het Europees Verdrag voor de rechten van de mens. Het Hof vond echter wel dat een dergelijke drempel in het algemeen als „buitensporig" wordt beschouwd.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007680/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Desire of Turkey's Prime Minister to retain the 10% electoral threshold

Turkey's Prime Minister Erdoğan stated during a meeting of the 'Wise People' in Istanbul on 26 June that the government did not intend to remove the 10% threshold from the Electoral Law. In his view, political parties simply need to work hard enough to exceed it.

In the European Union, there is a consensus that an electoral threshold of 10% is very high and that it damages Parliament's representativeness and hence its democratic legitimacy.

— Does the Commission consider that retaining a 10% electoral threshold accords with the Copenhagen Criteria?

— What steps is the Commission considering in order to change this situation?

— What consequences will this statement have for the progress of the accession negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

As it has been stated in the 2012 progress report on Turkey, the 10% national threshold for obtaining seats in parliament remains the highest among Council of Europe Member States.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in 2008 that the 10% electoral threshold was not a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). However, it did admit that such a threshold would generally seem 'excessive'.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007681/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: OLAF-onderzoek naar smokkel Japan Tobacco International

In november 2011 ontving de Europese Commissie een klacht tegen Japan Tobacco International (JTI), een klacht die door de Europese antifraudedienst OLAF ontvankelijk werd verklaard. De klacht betreft het mogelijk schenden door JTI van de Europese sancties tegen het Syrische regime, door grote hoeveelheden sigaretten te verkopen aan een bedrijf in handen van familieleden van de Syrische president Bashir al-Assad. The Wall Street Journal bericht in augustus 2012 ([1]) gedetailleerd over bedrijfsdocumenten van JTI, waaruit blijkt dat een in Zwitserland gevestigde dochter van JTI in mei 2011 via een tussenhandel in Cyprus miljoenen sigaretten verkocht aan een Syrisch bedrijf dat deels eigendom was van de Makhlouf-familie, verbonden met al-Assad en betrokken bij het financieren van het militair bevechten van de Syrische opstand. In mei 2011 waren reeds Europese sancties tegen deze familie van kracht. Het baart ons zorgen dat in tegenstelling tot de Dalli-zaak het belangrijke JTI-onderzoek bijzonder traag verloopt.

1. Wanneer heeft OLAF officieel kennis genomen van de klacht tegen JTI?

2. Volgens de WSJ bevestigde OLAF dat een onderzoek in deze zaak werd opgestart. Wanneer heeft OLAF beslist om de klacht ontvankelijk te verklaren en het onderzoek gestart?

3. Heeft de directeur-generaal van OLAF in het verleden direct leiding gegeven aan of was hij direct betrokken bij het onderzoek naar JTI? Is de directeur-generaal op dit moment nog betrokken bij dit onderzoek?

4. Wanneer is de inhoud van de klacht doorgestuurd naar de Cypriotische autoriteiten voor verificatie van de aantijgingen? Heeft OLAF al een inhoudelijk antwoord ontvangen van de Cypriotische autoriteiten?

5. Wanneer zullen leden van de Commissie budgetcontrole van het EP, officieel op de hoogte worden gesteld van de inhoud van het onderzoek jegens JTI?

6. Voert de Commissie onderhandelingen met JTI om een eventuele strafrechtelijke klacht te voorkomen, zoals eerder juridische akkoorden werden gesloten met bedrijven als Philip Morris en BAT?

Antwoord van de heer Šemeta namens de Commissie
(30 september 2013)

1 en 2. De Commissie heeft van het Europees Bureau voor fraudebestrijding (OLAF) vernomen dat het bureau kennis heeft genomen van de klacht tegen Japan Tobacco International (JTI) op 3 november 2011 en dat het op 5 december 2011 een extern onderzoek is begonnen.

3. De leiding van alle OLAF-onderzoeken berust steeds bij de directeur-generaal van OLAF, zoals is voorzien in Verordening (EG) nr. 1073/1999 en de nieuwe OLAF-Verordening (EU, Euratom) nr. 883/2013 ([2]). De directeur-generaal bepaalt in hoeverre hij bij een specifiek onderzoek betrokken is.

4. OLAF heeft de Dienst Instrumenten voor het buitenlands beleid van de Commissie op 22 november 2012 bericht over eventuele schendingen van beperkende maatregelen van de EU en gevraagd deze informatie aan de Cypriotische permanente vertegenwoordiging door te geven. De Commissie heeft de beschuldigingen van mogelijke schendingen van de beperkende maatregelen van de EU op 30 november 2012 onder de aandacht van de Cypriotische autoriteiten gebracht. De Cypriotische autoriteiten hebben op de beschuldigingen gereageerd.

5. Er is geen procedure op grond waarvan het Europees Parlement over de resultaten van individuele onderzoeken van OLAF wordt geïnformeerd. In artikel 17, lid 4, van de nieuwe OLAF-verordening (artikel 12, lid 3, van Verordening (EG) nr. 1073/1999) worden de rapportageverplichtingen van OLAF aan de instellingen beschreven.

6. Nee. De overeenkomsten met tabaksproducenten, inclusief de door de Europese Gemeenschap en de 26 deelnemende lidstaten op 14 december 2007 getekende overeenkomst met de Japanse tabaksproducenten JTI en JTH, hebben tot doel de bestrijding van smokkel en namaak van sigaretten op te voeren ([3]).

([1]) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444233104577595221203321922.html
([2]) PB L 248 van 18.9.2013, blz. 1.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/documents/cigarette_smug/2007/cooperation_agreement.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007681/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: OLAF investigation into smuggling involving Japan Tobacco International

In November 2011, the Commission received a complaint about Japan Tobacco International (JTI), which the European Anti-Fraud Office OLAF declared admissible. The complaint concerned a possible breach by JTI of European sanctions against the Syrian regime by selling large quantities of cigarettes to a business owned by relatives of the Syrian President, Bashir al-Assad. In August 2012 ([1]), the Wall Street Journal reported in detail on corporate documents belonging to JTI which indicated that in May 2011 a subsidiary of JTI based in Switzerland had sold millions of cigarettes to a Syrian company partly owned by the Makhlouf family, relatives of al-Assad, via an intermediary business in Cyprus. The Syrian company was involved in financing military operations against the Syrian rebels. In May 2011, European sanctions against this family were already in force. We are concerned that, unlike in the Dalli case, the important investigation into JTI is proceeding extremely slowly.

1. When did OLAF officially learn of the complaint against JTI?

2. According to the WSJ, OLAF had confirmed that an investigation had been launched in this case. When did OLAF decide to declare the complaint admissible and when did it launch the investigation?

3. Did OLAF's Director-General in the past directly head the investigation, or was he directly involved in the investigation into JTI? Is the Director-General currently still involved in this investigation?

4. When was the substance of the complaint forwarded to the Cypriot authorities for verification of the accusations? Has OLAF already received a substantive answer from the Cypriot authorities?

5. When will members of the EP's Committee on Budgetary Control officially be informed of the substance of the investigation into JTI?

6. Is the Commission conducting negotiations with JTI in order to avoid possible criminal proceedings, in the same way as legal agreements were previously concluded with such companies as Philip Morris and BAT?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(30 September 2013)

1 and 2. The Commission has been informed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) that it first learnt of the complaint against JTI on 3 November 2011 and opened an external investigation on 5 December 2011.

3. The OLAF Director-General is in charge of all OLAF investigations, as provided for in Regulation No 1073/1999 and the new OLAF Regulation No 883/2013 ([2]). It is for the Director-General to decide on the extent of his involvement in any specific investigation.

4. OLAF informed the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments of the Commission of possible breaches of EU restrictive measures on 22 November 2012 and requested transfer of this information to the Cypriot Permanent Representation. The Commission brought the allegations of possible breaches of the EU restrictive measures to the attention of the Cypriot authorities on 30 November 2012. The Cypriot authorities have responded to the allegations.

5. There is no procedure by which the European Parliament is informed on the outcome of individual OLAF investigations. Article 17(4) of the new OLAF Regulation (Article 12(3) of Regulation No 1073/1999) sets out OLAF's reporting duties to the institutions.

([1]) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444233104577595221203321922.html
([2]) OJ L 248, 18.9.2013, p. 1.

6. No. The agreements with tobacco companies including the agreement concluded with Japan Tobacco Companies (JTI and JTH), the European Community and 26 participating Member States signed on 14 December 2007 aim at reinforcing the fight against cigarette smuggling and counterfeiting ([3]).

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/documents/cigarette_smug/2007/cooperation_agreement.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007682/13
à Comissão
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Grupo DIA

A prática do grupo internacional DIA Minipreço para com os seus franquiados inclui a imposição de assinatura de novos contratos de «franchising» em termos que divergem daqueles inicialmente acordados, em especial no que toca à redução do campo de exclusividade, e ameaças dirigidas não só a membros da direção da associação portuguesa criada para defender os direitos dos seus franquiados, mas à generalidade dos mesmos.

Contrariamente ao previsto na lei, este grupo utiliza um sistema inacessível por parte dos franquiados, não lhes permitindo efetuarem a gestão dos seus *stocks* no que respeita a preços, quantidade de artigos disponíveis ou margem de lucro. Inclui ainda a impossibilidade de os franquiados disponibilizarem nos seus estabelecimentos artigos que não os da marca DIA, mesmo não apresentando qualquer concorrência àqueles, bem como a obrigação de aceitarem os produtos que lhes são enviados, mesmo que não solicitados.

Acresce a arbitrariedade exercida pelo grupo DIA Minipreço quanto ao preço de venda dos produtos, muitas vezes obrigando os franquiados a procederem a reduções/«promoções» em artigos que lhes continuam a ser contabilizados ao preço inicial nas faturas a pagar, o que se traduz em prejuízos contínuos e na constante falência dos franquiados.

1. A Comissão tem conhecimento das práticas acima mencionadas do grupo DIA Minipreço? Que comentário faz relativamente à alegada violação sistemática das leis e diretivas europeias que regulam a concorrência e o mercado interno?

2. Que medidas já tomou, porventura, a Comissão relativamente às práticas fraudulentas e violadoras da Lei do grupo DIA Minipreço?

Resposta dada por Joaquín Almunia em nome da Comissão
(20 de agosto de 2013)

A Comissão não recebeu qualquer denúncia formal sobre alegadas práticas do grupo Dia Minipreço. Se for feita uma denúncia, a Comissão irá avaliar cuidadosamente se esta contém elementos de prova suficientes que suscitem preocupações quanto a eventuais comportamentos anticoncorrenciais dos operadores de mercado, podendo dar início a uma investigação sobre uma alegada infração, caso a denúncia apresente interesse suficiente a nível da União Europeia. Com efeito, alguns comportamentos, como a limitação da liberdade dos franquiados de fixarem os preços dos seus produtos, podem constituir uma violação do direito da concorrência. Contudo, também é possível que a melhor maneira de abordar a questão seja a nível nacional pelas autoridades nacionais de concorrência (ANC). A Comissão observa que foi realizada uma série de investigações pelas ANC sobre as práticas anticoncorrenciais dos operadores de supermercados nas suas redes de franquia ([1]).

Para além de comportamentos que podem constituir uma infração ao direito da concorrência, algumas das práticas mencionadas podem ser exemplos de «práticas comerciais desleais» (PCD). As PCD podem ser entendidas como práticas que se desviam significativamente da boa conduta comercial, são contrárias à boa-fé e às práticas comerciais leais e são impostas unilateralmente por um parceiro comercial à sua contraparte. A Comissão está a analisar as respostas à sua consulta pública relativa ao Livro Verde sobre as práticas comerciais desleais na cadeia de abastecimento alimentar e não alimentar entre as empresas na Europa e está a preparar uma avaliação do impacto para determinar se há necessidade, por parte da União Europeia, de adotar medidas complementares sobre esta questão.

([1]) O relatório sobre atividades no setor alimentar, publicado no ano passado pela Rede Europeia da Concorrência (REC), dá informações sobre os casos tratados pelas ANC finlandesa, grega, romena e sueca, respeitantes à manutenção dos preços de revenda que as grandes cadeias de supermercados impõem nas suas redes de distribuição/franquia. O caso grego referia-se à cadeia de supermercados Dia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007682/13
to the Commission
Ana Gomes (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Dia group

The international Dia Minipreço group's franchising practices include the imposition of new franchising contracts whose terms differ from those initially agreed, particularly as regards the scope of exclusive arrangements. Threats have been made against leading members of the Portuguese association set up to defend franchise holders rights, and also against franchise holders in general.

Contrary to the provisions laid down by law, this group uses a system that is inaccessible to franchise holders, which means that they cannot manage their own stocks, set prices, or determine the quantity of articles available and their profit margin. Franchise holders are also prevented from stocking brands other than Dia, even when they are not in competition with the Dia brand, and are obliged to accept products sent to them even though they have not ordered them.

Another problem concerns the Dia Minipreço group's arbitrary setting of prices. Franchise holders are often obliged to offer reductions or 'promotions' on articles for which they are still charged the original price, leading to constant financial losses and bankruptcies among franchise holders.

1. Is the Commission aware of these practices on the part of the Dia Minipreço group? What comments would it make on the allegations of systematic breaches of the law, including European directives on competition and the internal market?

2. Has the Commission already taken any action in relation to fraudulent and irregular practices on the part of the Dia Minipreço group? If so, what action has it taken?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The Commission has not received any formal complaint regarding alleged practices by the Dia Minipreço group. If a complaint is made, the Commission will carefully assess whether it provides sufficient evidence of concerns about possible anticompetitive behaviour by market operators and may start an investigation of an alleged infringement if the complaint presents sufficient European Union interest. Indeed, certain behaviour such as limiting franchises' freedom to price their products could constitute a violation of competition law. However, it is also possible that this might best be addressed at national level by National Competition Authorities (NCAs). The Commission notes that a number of investigations have been carried out by NCAs regarding anticompetitive practices of supermarket operators in their franchising networks ([1]).

In addition to behaviour that could constitute an infringement of competition law, some of the practices mentioned could be examples of 'Unfair Trading Practices' (UTPs). UTPs can be understood as practices that significantly deviate from good commercial conduct, are contrary to good faith and fair dealing and are unilaterally imposed by one trading partner on its counterparty. The Commission is currently analysing the responses to its public consultation on the Green Paper on Unfair Trading Practices in the business-to-business food and non-food supply chain in Europe and is preparing an impact assessment to determine if there is a need for further action on this issue by the European Union.

([1]) The report 'Activities in the Food Sector', published last year by the European Competition Network (ECN) provides information on cases dealt with by the Finnish, Greek, Romanian and Swedish NCAs on resale price maintenance that large supermarket chains imposed in their distribution/franchise networks. The Greek case concerned the supermarket chain DIA.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-007683/13
an die Kommission
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE)
(28. Juni 2013)

Betrifft: Politik und Unterstützung der EU im Energiebereich für die Ukraine

Im September 2010 wurde die Ukraine Mitglied der Europäischen Energiegemeinschaft. Der für Energie zuständige Kommissar Günter Oettinger behauptete, dieser Beitritt stelle einen wichtigen Schritt für die Ukraine, aber auch für die Energiegemeinschaft dar. Die Ukraine sollte demnach von der Solidarität und der Transparenz der Europäischen Energiegemeinschaft profitieren ([1]).

In den letzten Monaten zeigte sich die Ukraine jedoch zunehmend unzufrieden mit den Handlungen, bzw. mit dem Nichthandeln der Energiegemeinschaft. So beklagte sich Präsident Wiktor Janukowitsch in einem Interview für Ria Novosti, dass die Ukraine als Mitglied der Europäischen Energiegemeinschaft ihren vertraglichen Obliegenheiten immer nachkomme, allerdings von der EU im Gasstreit mit Russland keinerlei Unterstützung bekomme ([2]). Auch habe die Ukraine, als gegen sie Russland eine Vertragsstrafe in Höhe von sieben Milliarden US-Dollar verhängte, die Europäische Energiegemeinschaft auf diese Sache mehrmals angesprochen, auf eine Stellungnahme jedoch vergeblich gehofft ([3]).

1. Hat sich die ukrainische Regierung an die Europäische Energiegemeinschaft mit der Bitte um eine Stellungnahme im Fall des Gasstreites mit Russland gewendet?

2. Wenn ja, welche konkrete Schritte wurden seitens der EU unternommen, um die Ukraine in dieser Frage zu unterstützen?

3. Welche Formen der Kooperation, welche Projekte und finanzielle Unterstützung gibt es seit 2010 zwischen der EU und der Ukraine? Bitte stellen Sie eine detaillierte Übersicht der einzelnen Projekte und der Höhe der finanziellen Zuwendungen zur Verfügung.

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(8. August 2013)

Der Vertrag zur Gründung der Energiegemeinschaft sieht keine Zuständigkeit für die Energiegemeinschaft bei der Vermittlung zwischen einer Vertragspartei und Drittländern bzw. bei der Erörterung eines privatrechtlichen Vertrags zwischen diesen vor.

Im Februar 2013 hat der Direktor des Sekretariats der Energiegemeinschaft als Reaktion auf die Behauptungen von Präsident Janukowitsch in einem Schreiben ([4]) festgestellt, dass die Ukraine das Sekretariat nicht gebeten hatte, bilaterale Gespräche mit Russland aufzunehmen.

Die Europäische Kommission arbeitet eng mit der Ukraine zusammen, um deren Energiequellen zu diversifizieren und gleichzeitig sicherzustellen, dass ihr Erdgas-Fernleitungsnetz ein wichtiger Teil des gesamteuropäischen Energienetzes bleibt. Mittel- bis langfristig dürfte dies der wirksamste Weg sein, um die Ukraine in Energiefragen zu unterstützen.

([1]) Vgl. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-1173_de.htm
([2]) Vgl. http://de.rian.ru/politics/20130206/265469982.html
([3]) Vgl. Ebd.
([4]) http://www.energy-community.org/portal/page/portal/ENC_HOME/NEWS/News_Details?p_new_id=6821

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007683/13
to the Commission
Werner Schulz (Verts/ALE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU policy on and support for Ukraine in the energy sector

In September 2010 Ukraine became a member of the European Energy Community. The Commissioner for Energy, Günter Oettinger, maintained that this was an important step for Ukraine, but also for the Energy Community. He claimed that Ukraine would benefit from the solidarity and transparency of the European Energy Community ([1]).

However, in recent months Ukraine has appeared increasingly unhappy with the action, or inaction, of the Energy Community. In an interview for Ria Novosti, President Viktor Yanukovych complained that while Ukraine always complied with its treaty obligations as a member of the European Energy Community, it received no support from the EU in its gas dispute with Russia ([2]). Furthermore, he said, when Russia imposed a USD 7 billion penalty on Ukraine for breach of contract, Ukraine had repeatedly raised this issue with the European Energy Community but no opinion had been forthcoming ([3]).

1. Did the Ukrainian Government approach the European Energy Community with a request for an opinion in the gas dispute with Russia?

2. If so, what concrete measures did the EU take to assist Ukraine in this matter?

3. What forms of cooperation, what projects and financial support have there been since 2010 between the EU and Ukraine? Please provide a detailed summary of the individual projects and the amount of funding involved.

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2013)

The Energy Community Treaty does not foresee any competence for the Energy Community to arbitrate between or to intervene in the discussion of a private law contract of a Contracting Party and Third Countries.

In February 2013, the Director of the Energy Community Secretariat replying to President Yanukovych's claims, stated in his letter ([4]) that Ukraine had not invited the Secretariat to become involved in bilateral discussions with Russia.

The European Commission has been closely working with Ukraine with a view to diversifying Ukraine's energy sources whilst ensuring that its gas transmission system remains a key part of the pan-European energy network. In the medium to long-term this should constitute the most effective way of assisting Ukraine, as far as energy issues are concerned.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-1173_en.htm
([2]) http://de.rian.ru/politics/20130206/265469982.html (in German).
([3]) Ibid.
([4]) http://www.energy-community.org/portal/page/portal/ENC_HOME/NEWS/News_Details?p_new_id=6821.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007684/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: Tipo de interés que pagan las PYME en España

Según las recientes estadísticas del sector, el diferencial entre el tipo de interés medio que están pagando las pequeñas y medianas empresas y las grandes compañías españolas está alcanzando sus máximos históricos. Teniendo en cuenta que son las PYME las que más contribuyen a la creación de empleo en el país, estos elevados tipos de interés suponen un sangrante obstáculo para el desarrollo de la pequeña empresa y la generación de puestos de trabajo en el país.

Pese a la política de rescate que las instituciones europeas están aplicando al sector bancario y sus intenciones de consolidar la unión bancaria en los próximos años, vemos cómo cada vez el mercado financiero europeo está más fragmentado. El diferencial supone que los pequeños préstamos para las PYME deben pagar, de media, más del doble (5,36 %) de lo que pagan los grandes créditos (2,62 %). Además este tipo de interés que deben pagar las PYME españolas se encuentra muy por encima de la media europea que supone un 3,86 %.

Esta diferencia es una confirmación del fracaso de las reformas que se están implementando, se castiga a la población con una fuerte política de austeridad que supone la destrucción del Estado del bienestar y de los derechos sociales conquistados a lo largo de los últimos años, argumentando que es necesario para ganar en competitividad. Sin embargo la capacidad de las pequeñas empresas españolas se encuentra lastrada por un sector bancario que les exige casi el doble que a las grandes empresas y un 1,5 % más que al resto de las empresas europeas.

Esta es una evidencia más de cómo la política de austeridad es un sinsentido económico, que solo conduce a un mayor estrangulamiento económico. Las PYME, clave para la generación de empleo, se encuentran en un segundo plano frente a un sector bancario que absorbe todos los recursos, tanto públicos como privados, y lastra al resto de la economía hacia el colapso.

— ¿Qué efectos considera la Comisión que la diferencia entre el tipo de interés que pagan las PYME españolas y las europeas producirá en España, considerando que compiten en un mercado común?

— ¿Cómo piensa actuar para garantizar la igualdad de condiciones para las PYME europeas? ¿Y para garantizar la igualdad de condiciones entre PYME y grandes empresas?

— ¿Considera que este diferencial puede ser la causa de la pérdida de competitividad de las PYME españolas?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de agosto de 2013)

Los diferenciales a los que se presta a las empresas españolas en comparación con las empresas de otros países han aumentado y representan un elemento de desventaja competitiva para algunas empresas españolas, aunque no sea este el motivo principal de la actual fragilidad económica.

Desde el inicio de la crisis, los tipos medios de los préstamos a empresas no financieras españolas han estado por encima de la media de la zona del euro. Esto refleja las primas de riesgo más elevadas por la sensación de riesgo que producen los desequilibrios acumulados por España a lo largo del tiempo, incluyendo la pérdida de competitividad internacional y su gran endeudamiento internacional, así como cierta fragmentación de los mercados financieros de la zona del euro, por lo que los bajos tipos de interés oficiales no han sido plenamente canalizados a las empresas españolas. El aumento de los tipos de interés de los préstamos de hasta 1 millón de euros, que podría ser el más representativo de los préstamos a las PYME, coincide también con primas de riesgo más altas que se reflejan en las elevadas tasas de préstamos no productivos en el sector de las PYME.

Son varias las iniciativas que se han adoptado o están en curso para aliviar las restricciones de crédito y de liquidez para las empresas, en particular las PYME, en España. En el contexto del programa para el sector bancario, en noviembre de 2012 se anunciaron diversas medidas de fomento de la intermediación no bancaria, las cuales se están llevando a cabo y se recogen de forma detallada y desarrollan en el Programa Nacional de Reformas.

Para más información, me permito remitir a Su Señoría a las revisiones del programa de ayuda financiera para recapitalizar las instituciones financieras en España, y al Documento de trabajo de la Comisión que evalúa el Programa Nacional de Reformas ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp130_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp155_en.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_spain_es.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007684/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Interest rate paid by SMEs in Spain

According to the latest figures for the sector, the difference between the average interest rate paid by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and large companies in Spain is the widest it has ever been. Bearing in mind that the SME sector generates the most new jobs in the country, these high interest rates are an unacceptable barrier to the development of small companies and to job creation.

Despite the rescue package which the European institutions are implementing in the banking sector and their plans to deepen banking union in the coming years, the European financial market is increasingly fragmented. The interest rate paid by SMEs is on average more than double (5.36%) the rate paid by large companies (2.62%). The rate paid by Spanish SMEs is also much higher than the European average of 3.86%.

The disparity between the two interest rates is evidence that the reforms currently being implemented are failing. Spain's tough austerity policy, which is being sold as something necessary for competitiveness, is punishing the Spanish people, destroying the welfare state and wiping out the social rights acquired in recent years. Spanish SMEs are being hobbled by interest rates which are almost double those paid by large companies and 1.5% more than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe.

This is further evidence that austerity is economic nonsense, serving only to tighten the straitjacket on firms. SMEs, which are key to job creation, are treated as second-class citizens by a banking sector which is absorbing all the resources, both public and private, and which is leading the rest of the economy towards collapse.

— What impact does the Commission think that the difference between the interest rates paid by Spanish SMEs and their European counterparts, which are competitors in the common market, will have on Spain?

— What will it do to ensure that all European SMEs operate on a level playing field? How will it ensure that SMEs and large companies can take out loans on equal terms?

— Does it take the view that the difference between the interest rates could be the reasonbehind Spanish SMEs' loss of competitiveness?

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

The spreads at which Spanish companies borrow relative to their counterparts from other countries have increased and represent one element of competitive disadvantage for some Spanish companies, though not the main driver of the current economic fragility.

Since the onset of the crisis, average lending rates for Spanish non-financial corporates have been above the euro area average. This reflects higher risk premia from the perceived risk from the imbalances accumulated by Spain over time, including the loss of international competitiveness and a very large international debtor position, as well as some fragmentation of euro area financial markets, whereby low official interest rates have not been fully channelled to Spanish corporations. Rising interest rates for loans up to EUR 1 million, which could be a proxy for SME loans, also coincide with higher risk premia reflected by the high NPL ratios in the SME sector.

Several initiatives have been taken or are underway to alleviate credit and liquidity constraints for companies, in particular SMEs, in Spain. Measures promoting non-bank intermediation, announced in November 2012 in the context of the banking sector programme, are being implemented and are further detailed and developed in the national reform programme.

For more information, the Honourable Member is referred to the Reviews of the Financial Assistance Programme for the Recapitalisation of Financial Institutions in Spain, and the Commission Staff Working Document assessing the 2013 national reform programme. ([1])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp130_en.pdf . http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp155_en.pdf . http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_spain_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007685/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: Incremento del número de millonarios en España

Recientemente se ha publicado el «Informe Anual sobre la riqueza en el mundo» correspondiente al pasado año, elaborado por Capgemini y RBC. Dicho informe registra un aumento del número de ricos en el mundo que ha alcanzado una cifra récord.

Uno de los puntos de interés de este informe es la cifra de crecimiento del número de millonarios en España, país intervenido y con enormes dificultades económicas y fiscales que, sin embargo, es capaz de hacer crecer el número de millonarios en un 5,4 % durante el peor año de la crisis. El informe considera millonarios a aquellos individuos con un millón de dólares o más en activos, y sostiene que su número en todo el mundo se ha incrementado en un 9,4 %. En España, con este crecimiento citado, la cifra de millonarios se sitúa en 144 600 personas que han resultado muy beneficiadas de las actuales políticas de austeridad que se están implementando en el país.

La política de austeridad que la Comisión Europea está exigiendo a los Estados miembros que enfrentan problemas presupuestarios se supone que va dirigida a mejorar la eficiencia de la economía, el sector público y terminar con el derroche de épocas pasadas. Los recortes que el Gobierno de España está practicando en la economía son una trampa que estanca la demanda interna e impide la creación de empleo, al mismo tiempo que se destruyen servicios sociales fundamentales para la gran mayoría de la población y se imponen impuestos indirectos de carácter regresivo, con los cuales cada vez se recauda menos. En este contexto de descalabro económico es donde crece el número de millonarios, a los que no se les debe incrementar los impuestos directos, puesto que como reza el dogma de la económica neoclásica, provocaría distorsiones en la asignación eficiente de los recursos.

— ¿Está al tanto la Comisión del incremento de los millonarios en España en 2012?

— Considerando la gravedad de la situación económica para una parte del país, ¿cómo justifica que en sus pasadas recomendaciones de política fiscal a España no se mencionase la imposición directa sobre las personas más ricas, que, según parece, no están siendo afectadas por la situación del país, para garantizar la estabilidad de los ingresos públicos?

— ¿Considera necesario que estas 144 600 personas deben hacer un esfuerzo fiscal para consolidar los ingresos tributarios del sector público?

— ¿No justifica la Comisión un incremento de la imposición directa progresiva en un contexto de crecimiento de grandes fortunas en una crisis económica?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de agosto de 2013)

En su Estudio Prospectivo Anual sobre el crecimiento de 2013, la Comisión pide unos sistemas fiscales más eficientes, competitivos y justos. Las reformas necesarias para alcanzar estos objetivos, por lo general, exigen enfoques conjuntos respecto de la fiscalidad. De conformidad con el principio de subsidiariedad, corresponde a los Estados miembros determinar el grado de redistribución que desean que logren sus sistemas fiscales y las herramientas que quieren movilizar.

La Comisión no recopila específicamente datos sobre el número de millonarios en los Estados miembros. El coeficiente de Gini —una medida común de la desigualdad en los ingresos— muestra un aumento en España entre 2005 y 2011 (último año disponible), medido tanto en términos de ingresos de mercado como de renta disponible. No obstante, esto no es algo exclusivo de España.

El paso de un crecimiento insostenible guiado por la demanda interna hacia un modelo de crecimiento más equilibrado y orientado a la exportación ha llevado a una erosión de las bases impositivas anteriores en España. En consecuencia, España ha de reforzar la base de ingresos de sus finanzas públicas de forma estructural. Se han incrementado los impuestos indirectos, como el IVA y los impuestos medioambientales; se ha reintroducido el impuesto sobre el patrimonio, y se ha introducido un recargo progresivo en el impuesto sobre la renta de las personas físicas, elevando los tipos superiores al 52 %. Como se señala en las recomendaciones específicas por país dirigidas a España, aún parece haber cierto margen para mejorar el sistema fiscal y, a tal efecto, se recomendó a España, entre otras cosas, realizar una revisión sistemática del sistema fiscal antes de marzo de 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007685/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: The increasing number of millionaires in Spain

The Capgemini & RBC World Wealth Report was recently published. The report, which concerns 2012, shows that the number of rich people in the world has risen to record levels.

One of its focal points is the growth in the number of millionaires in Spain: this country, beset by enormous economic and fiscal difficulties, has seen a 5.4% increase in millionaires in the worst year of the crisis. The report, which considers any person with more than USD one million in assets to be a millionaire, claims that the number of millionaires in the world rose by 9.4% last year. The number of millionaires in Spain grew by 144 600, which shows that they have been major beneficiaries of the austerity policies currently being implemented in Spain.

The austerity policies that the Commission is imposing on Member States with fiscal imbalances are intended to make their economies and public sectors more efficient and to put an end to the profligate spending of the past. The Spanish Government, by making such swingeing cuts, is placing a straitjacket on the economy, stifling domestic demand, and thus preventing job creation, whilst destroying basic social services for the vast majority of the population and imposing regressive indirect taxes which yield less revenue for the public purse. It is against this background of a failed economy that the number of millionaires — people who, the prevailing neoclassical economic dogma argues, should not be taxed directly — is skyrocketing, leading to the inefficient distribution of wealth.

— Is the Commission aware of the increase in the number of millionaires in Spain in 2012?

— Given the gravity of the economic problems affecting a part of the country, how can the Commission justify its failure to include direct taxation for the most wealthy — who appear to have been unaffected by the situation in the country — in its fiscal policy recommendations for Spain, something that would have helped ensure stable tax revenues?

— Does it not think that these 144 600 people should be made to make a fiscal contribution to consolidating public sector tax revenue?

— Does the Commission agree that an increase in progressive direct taxation is justified when vast fortunes are being made during an economic crisis?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

In its Annual growth Survey 2013, the Commission calls for more efficient, competitive and fairer tax systems. The reforms needed to achieve those objectives generally require package approaches to taxation. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, it is up to the Member States to determine the degree of redistribution they want their tax system to achieve and the tools they want to mobilise.

The Commission does not specifically collect data on the number of millionaires in the Member States. The Gini coefficient — a common measure of inequality in incomes — shows an increase in Spain between 2005 and 2011 (last available year) both when measured in terms of market income or disposable income. This is not unique to Spain however.

The shift from unsustainable domestic-demand-driven growth to a more balanced, export-oriented growth model has led to an erosion of previous tax bases in Spain. As a result, Spain has to reinforce the revenue base of its public finances in a structural way. Indirect taxes have been raised, such as VAT and environmental taxes; the wealth tax was reintroduced, and a progressive surcharge on personal income tax was levied, bringing the top PIT rates to 52%. As pointed out in the country-specific recommendations directed to Spain, there still appears to be some room to improve the tax system, and to this end Spain was *inter alia* recommended to undertake a systematic review of the tax system by March 2014.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007686/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: Fondos Europeos en la Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia (España)

A través de esta pregunta escrita solicitamos información sobre los Fondos Europeos que se destinan a la Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia (España) y el tipo de control que desarrollan las instituciones europeas sobre dichos fondos. Resulta necesario para comparar la información disponible en España y, de esta forma, garantizar una mayor transparencia en la financiación de proyectos europeos en la región.

¿Cuánto dinero proveniente del Banco Europeo de Inversiones o del Fondo Europeo de Inversiones ha recibido la Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia entre 2007 y el presente ejercicio 2013? ¿Qué organismos han recibido ese dinero?

¿En qué proyectos ha invertido la Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia el dinero proveniente del Banco Europeo de Inversiones o del Fondo Europeo de Inversiones entre 2007 y el presente ejercicio 2013?

¿Qué mecanismos de control ha ejercido el BEI sobre la gestión de esos fondos? ¿Y sobre la realización de los proyectos?

Respuesta del Sr. Rehn en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de agosto de 2013)

Entre enero de 2007 y el 12 de julio de 2013, la Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia recibió 1 694 millones EUR del Banco Europeo de Inversiones (BEI). Los prestatarios de los préstamos del BEI concedidos son actualmente dicha Comunidad, el Instituto Valenciano de Finanzas, EPSAR y Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat Valenciana. No hay transacciones entre el Fondo Europeo de Inversiones y la Comunidad Valenciana.

El BEI supervisa los proyectos que financia desde la firma del contrato de préstamo, pasando por la ejecución del proyecto y la fase operativa, hasta que se reembolsa el préstamo. Los requisitos de control se establecen en función de las características del proyecto.

Se remite directamente a Su Señoría y al Parlamento un anexo con un cuadro en el que figuran las transacciones firmadas con la Comunidad Valenciana y sus empresas públicas desde 2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007686/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: European funds in the Autonomous Community of Valencia, Spain

Through this Written Question, we request information about the European funds made available to the Autonomous Community of Valencia, Spain, and the type of control the European institutions have over them. We need this to be able to crosscheck the information available in Spain and, in turn, ensure greater transparency in how EU projects are funded in the region.

How much money has the Autonomous Community of Valencia received from the European Investment Bank or the European Investment Fund between 2007 and the current financial year (2013)? Which bodies received these funds?

In what projects has the Autonomous Community of Valencia invested these funds?

What control mechanisms has the EIB put in place to manage these funds and to monitor the completion of the projects?

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

Between January 2007 and 12 July 2013, the Comunidad Autónoma de Valencia (CAV) received EUR 1.694 million from the European Investment Bank (EIB). The borrowers of the EIB loans granted are currently CAV, the Instituto Valenciano de Finanzas, EPSAR and Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat Valenciana. There are no European Investment Fund transactions with the Community of Valencia.

The EIB monitors the projects that it finances from the signature of the loan contract through the project implementation and operation phase until the loan is paid back. Monitoring requirements are determined according to the characteristics of the project.

An annex with a table with the transactions signed with CAV and its public companies since 2007 is sent directly to the Honourable Member and the Parliament.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007687/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Declaraciones de Benjamin Netanyahu sobre la construcción de asentamientos en Palestina

El pasado 6 de junio el Primer Ministro de Israel, Benjamin Nethanyahu, realizó unas polémicas declaraciones en las que afirmaba: «La construcción en Judea y Samara continuará. Está continuando incluso hoy, pero tenemos que entender qué pasa a nuestro alrededor. Tenemos que ser inteligentes no solo correctos».

Estas declaraciones, realizadas por el máximo exponente del Gobierno israelí, muestran el claro apoyo que Israel está prestando a la política de construcción de asentamientos en territorio palestino. Dicha política, declarada absolutamente ilegal en base al Derecho internacional, y que supone el mayor obstáculo hacia cualquier proyecto de paz planteado para el conflicto, es defendida y aplicada por el Gobierno israelí desde todos sus niveles administrativos.

Hemos denunciado esta orientación criminal del Ejecutivo israelí cada vez que han planteado la construcción de viviendas en territorios palestinos. *Entre 2009 y 2012 han sido más de 24 asentamientos en los territorios ocupados, lo que demuestra que Israel no tiene ninguna voluntad para terminar con esta política. La Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante ha afirmado en sus respuestas a preguntas parlamentarias relacionadas con la construcción de viviendas en Palestina que «ha instado reiteradamente a Israel a que ponga fin a toda actividad de asentamientos en Cisjordania». Las declaraciones expuestas aquí, así como los hechos acaecidos en Cisjordania demuestran que Israel no tiene voluntad alguna de terminar con la construcción de asentamientos en territorios palestinos.*

Las posiciones defendidas por la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante están siendo públicamente ignoradas y ridiculizadas desde el Ejecutivo israelí, mientras que la Unión Europea sigue afirmando que Israel negocia con la UE para respetar el Derecho internacional. *El Acuerdo de Asociación firmado con Israel implica la cooperación política a todos los niveles para que se respete este último.*

¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante las declaraciones de Benjamin Netanyahu que se exponen en la pregunta? ¿Considera que estas declaraciones demuestran la nula voluntad política y suponen un bloqueo definitivo a unas supuestas negociaciones que la UE mantiene con Israel para que termine con su política de construcción asentamientos? Ante estas declaraciones, ¿considera congelar el Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Israel hasta que respete el Derecho internacional o tenga la voluntad política de hacerlo?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

La Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta sigue estando muy preocupada por la construcción de los asentamientos israelíes. La UE continúa supervisando este tema muy de cerca. La UE sigue oponiéndose con firmeza a los asentamientos israelíes en Palestina y transmite este mensaje a sus homólogos israelíes a todos los niveles, así como en diversos foros internacionales. Al mismo tiempo, la Unión Europea ha acogido con satisfacción el anuncio hecho por el Secretario de Estado John Kerry, el 19 de julio de 2013, de que se había llegado a un acuerdo por el que se sientan las bases para reanudar las negociaciones directas sobre el estatuto final entre palestinos e israelíes. Se trata de un paso fundamental hacia la consecución de una solución duradera al conflicto. La Unión Europea encomia la dedicación del Secretario de Estado Kerry y el compromiso personal demostrado por el Primer Ministro Netanyahu y el Presidente Abbas.

La posición de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta respecto a la posibilidad de congelar el Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Israel se expuso en la respuesta a las preguntas escritas anteriores E-010294/2011 y E-012660/2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007687/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Statement by Benjamin Netanyahu on the construction of settlements in Palestine

On 6 June 2013 the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, controversially stated that 'construction in communities in Judea and Samaria will continue, and is continuing still today, but we must be aware of what is happening around us. We must be smart, not just right.'

These words, from Israel's highest political authority, clearly show government support for the policy of building settlements on Palestinian territory. This policy — a flagrant breach of international law and the biggest obstacle to any peace plan proposed to end the conflict — is advocated and implemented at all levels of the Israeli Government.

We have spoken out against this criminal behaviour by the Israeli Government each time it has planned settlements on the Palestinian territories. Between 2009 and 2012, more than 24 settlements have been built in the occupied territories, demonstrating that Israel has no desire to end this policy. The Vice-President/High Representative has stated in answers to parliamentary questions on settlements in Palestine that she has 'repeatedly called on Israel to end all settlement activity in the West Bank'. These statements by Mr Netanyahu, and the events in the West Bank, show that Israel has no desire to halt the construction of settlements in the Palestinian territories.

The Israeli Government is ignoring or publically mocking the stance taken by the Vice-President/High Representative, and yet the EU maintains that Israel is negotiating with it with a view to complying with international law. The association agreement with Israel is, however, contingent upon political cooperation at all levels in upholding international law.

Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware of these statements by Mr Netanyahu? Does she not think that they are an example of political bad faith and represent an insurmountable obstacle to the EU's negotiations with Israel on halting the country's policy of building settlements? In view of these statements, would she consider suspending the EU-Israel association agreement until such time as Israel complies with international law and demonstrates the political will to do so?

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

The HR/VP remains deeply concerned by Israeli settlement activity. The EU continues to monitor this issue very closely. The EU remains firmly opposed to Israeli settlement activities in Palestine and conveys this message to its Israeli counterparts at all levels as well as in various international fora. At the same time the EU has welcomed the announcement by Secretary of State John Kerry on 19 July 2013 that an agreement has been reached establishing a basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis. This is a crucial step towards achieving a lasting resolution to the conflict. The EU commends Secretary Kerry's dedication and the personal commitment demonstrated by Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas.

The HR/VP's position with regard to the possibility of freezing the EU-Israel Association Agreement was set out in the reply to previous questions E-010294/2011and E-012660/2011.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007688/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzittern / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Toenadering OIC tot EU is levensgevaarlijk voor vrijheid van meningsuiting

De OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) heeft de status van permanente waarnemer bij de EU verkregen. Commissievoorzitter Barroso heeft met de secretaris-generaal van de OIC gesproken over verbetering van de samenwerking tussen beide organisaties ([1]).

1. Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de mening dat de OIC een organisatie is van voornamelijk islamitische dictaturen die er, blijkens de artikelen 24 en 25 van hun verklaring van Caïro, op uit zijn de mensenrechten te knevelen door ondergeschiktmaking daarvan aan de sharia ([2])? Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de mening dat dit ook blijkt uit het OIC-beleid om de kritiek op de islam aan banden te leggen? Zo neen, hoe legt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de artikelen 24 en 25 van de verklaring van Caïro en het OIC-beleid dan wél uit?

2. Is de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger ertoe bereid in de krachtigst mogelijke bewoordingen afstand te nemen van de recente uitlating van de secretaris-generaal Ihsanoglu van de OIC „dat er een religieuze vervolging van moslims is in het Westen" ([3])? Zo neen, waarom niet?

3. Is het de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger bekend dat de OIC, onder aanvoering van haar secretaris-generaal, een campagne heeft gevoerd om te bevorderen dat in het internationaal recht kritiek op de islam aan banden wordt gelegd ([4])? Is het de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger ook bekend dat deze secretaris-generaal zijn strijd om islamkritiek aan banden te leggen, door het bevorderen van sancties, blijft voortzetten ([5])? Verwerpt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger dit? Zo neen, waarom niet?

4. Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de mening dat de OIC in Europa niets te zoeken heeft? Deelt de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger de mening dat contact resp. samenwerking tussen de OIC en de EU uitermate onwenselijk is en vermeden moet worden? Zo neen, waarom niet?

5. Is de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger ertoe bereid ervoor te zorgen dat de waarnemersstatus van de OIC bij de EU zo snel mogelijk wordt opgeheven? Zo neen, waarom wil de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger dat er contact resp. samenwerking bestaat met een organisatie waar islamitische dictaturen de toon zetten en die tot doel hebben om de mensenrechten ondergeschikt te maken aan de sharia?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(22 augustus 2013)

De Organisatie van Islamitische Samenwerking (OIC) beschouwt zichzelf met haar 57 leden als de op een na grootste intergouvernementele organisatie, na de VN. Zij is verspreid over vier continenten en streeft ernaar de collectieve spreekbuis te zijn van de moslimmeerderheden in de wereld. De OIC is in het afgelopen decennium aanzienlijk veranderd. Zij heeft zich meer ingezet voor de vrijheid van meningsuiting en de vrijheid van godsdienst en overtuiging en heeft het democratische overgangsproces in de Arabische wereld ondersteund. Voorts heeft de organisatie haar samenwerkingsagenda uitgebreid naar de gebieden van economie, cultuur, wetenschap, ontwikkeling en humanitaire kwesties.

Overeenkomstig de onlangs aangenomen EU-richtsnoeren ter zake zal de EU zich blijven inzetten voor de vrijheid van godsdienst en overtuiging, als prioriteit in het kader van het EU-mensenrechtenbeleid. Zij blijft ook ernstig bezorgd over daden van religieuze onverdraagzaamheid en geweld in de wereld. De overeenstemming die in de afgelopen twee jaar in opeenvolgende VN-resoluties werd bereikt over hoe religieuze onverdraagzaamheid overeenkomstig de normen op het gebied van de mensenrechten kan worden bestreden, was een belangrijk signaal. Om ervoor te zorgen dat deze overeenstemming wordt behouden en verder wordt ontwikkeld, is ten aanzien van partnerlanden en -organisaties, zoals de OIC, zowel betrokkenheid als waakzaamheid nodig.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-609_en.htm?locale=en
([2]) http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/cairodeclaration.html
([3]) http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2013/05/201353014431119659.html
([4]) http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/12/islamic_world_tells_clinton_defamation_of_islam_must_be_prevented_in_america.html, http://articles.latimes.com/print/2011/dec/12/opinion/la-oe-turley-blasphemy-20111210
([5]) http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/15/us-islam-blasphemy-idUSBRE89E18U20121015, http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/146323/oic-sg-ihsanoglu-religious-intolerance-unaccaptable.html

Dialoog is essentieel om misvattingen en meningsverschillen te overwinnen. De EU en de OIC kunnen samenwerken en kunnen over talrijke belangrijke kwesties overeenstemming bereiken, ondanks de huidige verschillen die op dit moment tussen hen bestaan. Het is belangrijk te benadrukken dat betrokkenheid geen goedkeuring inhoudt en dat er ruimte is voor een betere verstandhouding. De betrekkingen tussen de EU en de OIC moeten niet beperkt blijven tot de gebieden van godsdienst, humanitaire kwesties en bijstand, en kunnen zich uitbreiden tot diverse andere belangrijke domeinen. De nieuwe permanente observatiemissie van de OIC in Brussel kan hier ook toe bijdragen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007688/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Rapprochement between the OIC and the EU: a serious threat to freedom of expression

The OIC (Organisation of the Islamic Conference) has been assigned the status of a permanent observer at the EU. Mr Barroso has discussed ways of improving cooperation between the two organisations with the Secretary-General of the OIC ([1]).

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that the OIC is an organisation of primarily Islamic dictatorships which, as indicated by Articles 24 and 25 of their Cairo Declaration, are bent on restricting human rights by making them subordinate to Sharia law ([2])? Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that this is also apparent from the OIC's policy of preventing criticism of Islam? If not, how does the Vice-President/High Representative interpret Articles 24 and 25 of the Cairo declaration and the OIC's policy?

2. Will the Vice-President/High Representative distance itself in the strongest possible terms from the recent statement by OIC Secretary-General Ihsanoglu that Muslims are subject to 'religious persecution' in the West ([3])? If not, why not?

3. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware that the OIC, with its Secretary-General in the vanguard, has conducted a campaign to restrict criticism of Islam by means of international law ([4])? Is the Vice-President/High Representative also aware that the Secretary-General is continuing his campaign to restrict criticism of Islam by seeking to introduce penalties ([5])? Does the Vice-President/High Representative reject this? If not, why not?

4. Does the Vice-President/High Representative consider that the OIC has no place in Europe? Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that contact and cooperation between the OIC and the EU are extremely undesirable and should be avoided? If not, why not?

5. Will the Vice-President/High Representative ensure that the OIC's observer status at the EU is withdrawn as soon as possible? If not, why does the Vice-President/High Representative wish to maintain contact and cooperation with an organisation where Islamic dictatorships call the tune whose aim is to subordinate human rights to Sharia law?

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

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) sees itself with its 57 members as the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the UN. It spreads over four continents and strives to be the collective voice of the Muslim majority world. The OIC has undergone important changes during the last decade. It has made advances in support of both freedom of speech and freedom of religion or belief, and supported the democratic transition process in the Arab world. It has also enlarged its cooperation agenda to encompass economic, culture, scientific, development and humanitarian areas.

In line with the newly adopted EU guidelines on fredom of religion or belief, the EU will continue to promote this freedom as a priority under the EU's human rights policy, and remains deeply concerned by acts of religious intolerance and violence across the world. A key signal was the agreement found in the past two years in successive UN resolutions on how to address the fight against religious intolerance, in line with human rights standards. Engagement and vigilance are both required with partner countries and organisations, such as the OIC, in order to maintain and develop this common understanding.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-609_en.htm?locale=en
([2]) http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/cairodeclaration.html
([3]) http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2013/05/201353014431119659.html
([4]) http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/12/islamic_world_tells_clinton_defamation_of_islam_must_be_prevented_in_america.html, http://articles.latimes.com/print/2011/dec/12/opinion/la-oe-turley-blasphemy-20111210
([5]) http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/15/us-islam-blasphemy-idUSBRE89E18U20121015 http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/146323/oic-sg-ihsanoglu-religious-intolerance-unaccaptable.html

Dialogue is the only way to overcome misperceptions and differences of opinion. The EU and OIC can work together and find common understanding on many important issues, even if there are current prevailing differences. But it is important to stress that engagement is not endorsement, and that there are scope for fostering better understanding. The EU-OIC relations can go beyond the religious, humanitarian and assistance fields, and could be engaged on a number of important issues. The new Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC in Brussels could also contribute to this.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007690/13
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Redução de controlos de segurança alimentar em consequência da crise

A política de segurança alimentar da União Europeia tem por objetivo proteger a saúde e os interesses dos consumidores, através do estabelecimento e aplicação de normas de controlo em matéria de higiene dos produtos alimentares, de saúde e de bem-estar dos animais, de fitossanidade, de prevenção dos riscos de contaminação por substâncias externas, bem como de regras para uma rotulagem adequada.

Notícias recentes dão conta de que, em resultado da crise e das consequentes medidas de austeridade, alguns Estados-Membros têm vindo a reduzir os controlos de segurança alimentar exigidos pela legislação comunitária.

Tem a Comissão conhecimento destas situações e, em caso afirmativo, que medidas tem intenção de tomar?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(31 de julho de 2013)

A responsabilidade pela aplicação da legislação relativa à cadeia alimentar é dos Estados-Membros, que devem estabelecer um sistema de controlos oficiais para verificar o cumprimento por parte dos operadores dos requisitos daí decorrentes. O Regulamento (CE) n.° 882/2004 ([1]) exige a realização regular de controlos oficiais em função do risco, com frequência apropriada, e solicita que sejam tomadas medidas para eliminar os riscos e aplicar a legislação alimentar da UE.

A Comissão acompanha constantemente a realização pelos Estados-Membros das suas funções de controlo, nomeadamente através de auditorias no local pelo seu Serviço Alimentar e Veterinário, e está ciente das dificuldades com a organização dos controlos oficiais que podem surgir em consequência da crise financeira e da crescente falta de recursos. Por isso, a proposta da Comissão de um novo regulamento relativo aos controlos oficiais (adotada em 6 de maio de 2013) tem por objetivo reforçar, integrar e modernizar as regras em matéria de controlo oficial e procura ajudar os Estados-Membros a aumentar a eficácia e reduzir os encargos administrativos. Além disso, a proposta solicita que os recursos financeiros adequados sejam disponibilizados às autoridades competentes que realizam os controlos oficiais e exige a cobrança de taxas obrigatórias a um conjunto mais vasto de operadores, a fim de recuperar os custos incorridos pelas referidas autoridades na execução das atividades de controlo oficial.

([1]) JO L 165 de 30.4.2004, p. 1-141.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007690/13
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Reduction in food safety checks as a result of the crisis

The aim of the EU's food safety policy is to protect the health and interests of consumers by establishing and applying monitoring standards for hygiene in food products, animal health and wellbeing, plant health and prevention of contamination by external substances, as well as rules to ensure proper labelling.

Recent news reports indicate that as a result of the crisis and the attendant austerity measures, some Member States have not been carrying out all the food safety checks required under Community law.

Is the Commission aware of this situation and, if so, what steps does it intend to take?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

The responsibility for enforcing food chain legislation lies with Member States, which are required to establish a system of official controls to verify compliance by operators with requirements deriving therefrom. Regulation 882/2004 ([1]) requires official controls to be carried out regularly, on a risk basis, with appropriate frequency and calls for measures to be taken to eliminate risk and enforce EU food law.

The Commission constantly monitors delivery by the Member States of their control duties, including through on-the-spot audits by its Food and Veterinary Office, and is aware of difficulties with the organisation of official controls which may arise as a result of the financial crisis and the growing lack of resources. For this reason, the Commission proposal for a new Regulation on official controls (which was adopted on 6 May 2013) aims to strengthen, integrate and modernise official control rules and seeks to aid Member States to increase efficiency and reduce administrative burdens. Moreover, the proposal calls for adequate financial resources to be made available to the competent authorities performing official controls and requires mandatory fees to be charged on a wider array of operators to recover the costs incurred by the said authorities as a result of the performance of official control activities.

([1]) OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1-141.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007691/13
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Publicidade a alimentos pouco saudáveis e obesidade infantil

Dados da Organização Mundial de Saúde (OMS) mostram que, na Europa, uma criança em cada três na faixa dos seis aos nove anos tem excesso de peso ou é obesa.

Diversos estudos confirmam a correlação entre a exposição a publicidade a alimentos pouco saudáveis e a obesidade infantil, sendo nas crianças com excesso de peso que esses anúncios têm maior impacte.

Apesar de várias marcas da indústria alimentar terem aderido a um compromisso europeu para não fazerem publicidade em programas televisivos cuja audiência tenha pelo menos 35 % de crianças com menos de 12 anos, de acordo com um relatório recente da OMS esta publicidade é agora usada em *sites* na Internet, redes sociais, telemóveis e jogos de computador.

Que medidas irá a Comissão tomar para monitorizar estes fenómenos e assegurar que as crianças não são expostas a publicidade a alimentos pouco saudáveis?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(5 de agosto de 2013)

A Comissão está empenhada em resolver questões relacionadas com a publicidade aos alimentos com elevado teor de gordura, sal e/ou açúcar destinados a crianças, uma vez que se trata de um domínio de ação considerado prioritário pela estratégia da UE em matéria de problemas de saúde ligados à nutrição, ao excesso de peso e à obesidade ([1]).

Além disso, a Comissão gostaria de remeter a Senhora Deputada para a resposta dada à pergunta escrita E-011157/2012 ([2]) sobre a Diretiva 2010/13/UE relativa aos serviços de comunicação social audiovisual ([3]).

([1]) Uma estratégia para a Europa em matéria de problemas de saúde ligados à nutrição, ao excesso de peso e à obesidade, COM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:095:0001:0024:PT:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007691/13
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Advertising for unhealthy foods and child obesity

Figures produced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) show that, in Europe, one child in three between the ages of six and nine is overweight or obese.

Various different studies have confirmed the correlation between exposure to advertising for unhealthy food products and child obesity, and it is on overweight children that such advertising has the greatest impact.

Even though a number of food industry brands have kept to a European commitment not to advertise on television programmes at least 35% of whose audience comprises children under 12, a recent WHO report reveals that this advertising has now shifted to Internet sites, social networks, mobile phones and computer games.

What action will the Commission take to monitor these developments and guarantee that children are not exposed to advertising for unhealthy foods?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The Commission is committed to addressing issues related to advertising of foods high in fat, salt and/or sugar to children, as this is an area for action highlighted by the 2007 EU Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related health issues ([1]).

Moreover, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to the Written Question E-011157/2012 ([2]) concerning the Audiovisual Media Service Directive 2010/13/EU ([3]).

([1]) A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues, COM(2007) 279.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:095:0001:0024:EN:PDF.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007692/13
à Comissão
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Segurança dos produtos de aquacultura

De acordo com um relatório da Organização para a Cooperação e Desenvolvimento Económico (OCDE) e da Organização das Nações Unidas para a Alimentação e Agricultura (FAO), o peixe criado em cativeiro ou aquacultura vai ser o mais consumido a nível mundial em 2015, ultrapassando o peixe selvagem.

Do peixe de aquacultura consumido na Europa, uma parte significativa e crescente tem origem noutras partes do mundo, sendo que na Europa a produção de peixe em aquacultura se encontra, em geral, estagnada, representando apenas 20 % da produção de peixe.

Os riscos associados a este tipo de produção resultam sobretudo da aplicação de químicos, designadamente antibióticos e desinfetantes.

Que medidas tem a Comissão vindo a aplicar para garantir o controlo e a segurança do peixe produzido em aquacultura na Europa, bem como daquele que é proveniente de outras partes do mundo?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(7 de agosto de 2013)

No âmbito da legislação da UE sobre a segurança dos alimentos, existem regras específicas ([1]) aplicáveis à produção e à colocação no mercado dos produtos da pesca, incluindo os produtos da aquicultura, como os peixes de viveiro. Essas regras, cujo cumprimento deve ser garantido, são um conjunto de requisitos de higiene específicos para a segurança da produção de produtos da pesca que inclui, nomeadamente, normas sanitárias. Tais requisitos e normas devem também ser aplicados aos produtos da pesca importados de países terceiros. Sobre este aspeto, o regulamento estabelece as condições de importação incluindo a obrigação de importar produtos da pesca exclusivamente de estabelecimentos aprovados em países terceiros autorizados.

A verificação da conformidade dos operadores com os requisitos é da competência dos Estados-Membros, através dos controlos oficiais adequados. Tal inclui a verificação e avaliação do cumprimento dos objetivos da legislação. As obrigações das autoridades competentes e os requisitos para a organização desses controlos oficiais estão também estabelecidos na legislação da UE ([2]).

Os serviços de inspeção da Comissão ([3]) efetuam periodicamente auditorias nos Estados-Membros e países terceiros para verificar o desempenho das autoridades competentes dos Estados-Membros e o cumprimento da legislação da UE. Os resultados destas auditorias são públicos ([4]).

([1]) Secção VIII do anexo III do Regulamento (CE) n.° 853/2004 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 29 de abril de 2004, que estabelece regras específicas de higiene aplicáveis aos géneros alimentícios de origem animal (JO L 139 de 30.4.2004, p. 55).

([2]) Regulamento (CE) n.° 882/2004 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 29 de abril de 2004, relativo aos controlos oficiais realizados para assegurar a verificação do cumprimento da legislação relativa aos alimentos para animais e aos géneros alimentícios e das normas relativas à saúde e ao bem-estar dos animais (JO L 165 de 30.4.2004, p. 1) e Regulamento (CE) n.° 854/2004 do Parlamento Europeu e do Conselho, de 29 de abril de 2004, que estabelece regras específicas de organização dos controlos oficiais de produtos de origem animal destinados ao consumo humano (JO L 139 de 30.4.2004, p. 206).

([3]) Direção-Geral da Saúde e da Defesa dos Consumidores, Serviço Alimentar e Veterinário.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/what_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007692/13
to the Commission
Edite Estrela (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Safety of aquaculture products

According to a report drawn up by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), farmed fish will overtake wild fish as the most widely consumed source at world level in 2015.

A sizeable and growing proportion of the farmed fish consumed in Europe originates from other parts of the world and aquaculture production in Europe is generally stagnant, accounting for only 20% of fish production.

The risks associated with aquaculture stem mainly from the use of chemicals, particularly antibiotics and disinfectants.

What action is the Commission taking to guarantee checks on and the safety of farmed fish produced in Europe, and farmed fish imported from other parts of the world?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

In the framework of the EU legislation on food safety, there are specific rules ([1]) applicable to the production and placing of the market of fishery products, including aquaculture products like farmed fish. Those rules are a set of specific hygienic requirements for the safe production of fishery products including health standards to be ensured. Such requirements and standards are also to be applied to fishery products imported from third countries. On this aspect, the regulation lays down detailed import conditions including the obligation to import fishery products only from approved establishments in authorised third countries.

The verification of compliance of the operators with the requirements is a competence of the Member States through the appropriate official controls. That includes the verification and assessment that the objectives of the legislation are achieved. The obligations of the competent authorities and the requirements for the organisation of such official controls are also laid down in EU legislation ([2]).

The Commission inspection services ([3]) carry out regular audits in Member States and third countries in order to verify the performance of competent authorities of Member States and compliance with EU legislation. The outcome of those audits is publicly available ([4]).

([1]) Section VIII of Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55).

([2]) Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules (OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1) and Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 206).

([3]) Directorate General for Health and Consumers' Food and Veterinary Office.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/what_en.htm

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007693/13
adresată Consiliului (Președintelui Consiliului European)
Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)
(28 iunie 2013)

Subiect: PCE/PEC — Redresarea producției industriale pe întreg teritoriul UE

În scrisoarea transmisă de dumneavoastră, în data de 24 mai 2013, membrilor Consiliului European pentru Angajarea Tinerilor subliniați faptul că unul din cele patru elemente-cheie ale ieșirii din criză constă în lupta împotriva șomajului și în sprijinirea, pe termen scurt, a creșterii economice în UE. În aceeași scrisoare, menționați că diferențele mari între ratele șomajului în rândul tinerilor din diferite state membre arată că situațiile și politicile naționale influențează acest indicator. De asemenea, în discursul dumneavoastră de deschidere a European Business Summit 2013, intitulat „Deblocarea oportunităților de creștere și competitivitate", subliniați că „nimic nu poate fi mai important decât focalizarea pe măsuri și rezultate concrete, pe deblocarea rapidă a oportunităților pentru companii, pentru investitori și pentru industrie".

Rata șomajului în rândul tinerilor depinde și de politica industrială a fiecărui stat membru, politică care depinde, la rândul ei, de accesul la resurse naturale, element subliniat și în cadrul Summitului G8 ce a avut loc la Lough Erne (UK) în perioada 17-18 iunie 2013 și la care ați participat.

Conform statisticilor Eurostat, patru dintre cele 27 de state membre — Germania (27,29%), Italia (12,44%), Marea Britanie (11,93%) și Franța (11,65%) — au realizat peste 60% din producția industrială a UE în 2010, în timp ce 10 state membre au realizat împreună sub 4% din producția industrială a UE. Având în vedere că scăderea producției industriale înseamnă creșterea posibilă a importurilor, scăderea competitivității UE și pierderea de locuri de muncă pe teritoriul UE, inclusiv în rândul tinerilor, aș dori să va întreb dacă intenționați să includeți subiectul redresării industriale a UE în cadrul viitoarelor reuniuni ale Consiliul European? De asemenea, aș dori să vă întreb dacă, la solicitarea Parlamentului, veți accepta participarea la o dezbatere în plenul Parlamentului European privind posibile recomandări pentru redresarea producției industriale a UE (în toate statele membre ale UE și, în special, în cele a căror producție industrială reprezintă sub 1% din producția industrială a UE), recomandări care să fie ulterior prezentate și dezbătute în cadrul viitoarelor reuniuni ale Consiliului European?

Răspuns
(23 septembrie 2013)

La reuniunile Consiliului European se discută frecvent aspecte ale politicii industriale, iar viitoarele reuniuni nu fac excepție, punând accentul, în octombrie, pe inovare și agenda digitală, iar în decembrie pe apărare, inclusiv aspectele industriale/tehnologice ale acesteia. Vom lua în discuție politica industrială ca atare la reuniunea din februarie 2014. Se înțelege de la sine că discuțiile referitoare la asigurarea unei economii stabile și în creștere sunt vitale și pentru politica industrială.

În ceea ce privește participarea la dezbaterile parlamentare, practica consacrată și convenită cu Parlamentul este ca președintele Consiliului European să prezinte Parlamentului un raport după fiecare reuniune a Consiliului European (și după reuniunile la nivel înalt ale zonei euro), în timp ce președintele Consiliului, precum și Comisia, participă la eventualele dezbateri dinaintea reuniunii Consiliului European.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007693/13
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: PCE/PEC — Industrial recovery across the EU

In the letter you sent to the members of the European Council on Youth Employment on 24 May 2013, you emphasised that one of the four key factors for exiting the crisis was that of fighting unemployment and supporting economic growth in the EU in the short term. In the same letter, you stated that the large differences in youth unemployment between the various Member States demonstrate that national situations and policies matter. Similarly, in the opening speech you gave at the European Business Summit 2013, on the theme 'Unlocking industrial opportunities for growth and development', you stressed that 'nothing could be more important than focusing on tangible steps and concrete results for growth and for jobs — unlocking opportunities fast for companies, for investors and for industry'.

The youth unemployment rate also reflects the industrial policy of each Member State, with that policy in turn depending on access to natural resources, as was stressed at the G8 Summit at Lough Erne (UK) on 17-18 June 2013, which you attended.

According to Eurostat statistics, four of the 27 Member States accounted for over 60% of EU industrial output in 2010 — Germany (27.29%), Italy (12.44%), the United Kingdom (11.93%) and France (11.65%) — while 10 Member States together accounted for under 4% of total EU industrial output.

Given that the fall in industrial output may lead to a growth in imports, decreased competitiveness and job losses across the EU, including among the young, do you intend to broach the subject of EU industrial recovery at future European Council meetings? Similarly, can you state whether, at the request of Parliament, you would agree to take part in a debate during its plenary session on possible recommendations for industrial recovery in the EU (in all EU Member States and especially in those whose industrial output amounts to under 1% of EU industrial output), and subsequently to present those recommendations for debate at future European Council meetings?

Reply
(23 September 2013)

Aspects of industrial policy are frequently discussed at European Council meetings, and the forthcoming meetings are no exception, with a focus on innovation and the digital agenda in October and on defence, including its industrial/technological aspects, in December. We will discuss industrial policy as such at the February 2014 meeting. It goes without saying that the discussions on securing a stable and growing economy are also vital for industrial policy.

As regards participation in parliamentary debates, established practice, as agreed with the Parliament, is that the President of the European Council reports to Parliament after each meeting of the European Council (and after Eurozone summits), whereas the President of the Council, and the Commission, participate in any debates ahead of the meeting of the European Council.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007694/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Protestas campesinas en Catatumbo (Colombia): asesinato de campesinos tras la actuación criminal del Gobierno colombiano y la grave represión policial y militar

El pasado 12 de junio, miles de campesinos colombianos iniciaron una serie de protestas pacíficas en el Norte de Santander para exigir condiciones de vida dignas y el cumplimiento de una serie de compromisos por parte del Estado colombiano que permitan la superación de la crisis humanitaria en la que se encuentran sus comunidades. A estas iniciales protestas pacíficas se unieron, el pasado 17 de junio, miles de campesinos del Catatumbo que se trasladaron al norte de Santander para participar en la legítima exigencia de constitución de una Zona de Reserva Campesina, que incluya la erradicación gradual de cultivos ilícitos, y la puesta en marcha de proyectos productivos alternativos de iniciativa propia del campesinado.

A esta demanda pacífica y legítima de políticas públicas encaminadas a mejorar la difícil situación en la que viven la inmensa mayoría de los campesinos y campesinas colombianas, el Gobierno colombiano ha contestado con una política criminal de represión policial y militar que, tras los ataques con armas de fuego por parte de la policía y el ejército colombiano de los días 22 y 25 de junio, ha supuesto el asesinato de cuatro campesinos —Edwin Franco, Dionel Jacome, Diomar Angarita y Hermidez Palacios— y dejado decenas de heridos graves.

Esta respuesta criminal por parte del Gobierno colombiano es totalmente inaceptable y desproporcionada, suponiendo un ataque contra los principios democráticos más básicos y una grave violación de los derechos humanos.

Teniendo en cuenta que la entrada en vigor del conocido «fuero militar» supondrá sin lugar a duda un serio obstáculo para que se aclaren los autores materiales e intelectuales de los asesinatos y las responsabilidades penales por la represión policial y militar, ¿ha expresado públicamente la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante su preocupación y un rechazo contundente a la violenta represión ejercida por el Gobierno colombiano ante las legítimas protestas y exigencias campesinas o tiene pensado hacerlo? A la luz de lo que establece el Acuerdo Comercial UE-Colombia/Perú, ¿está la delegación de la UE en Bogotá monitoreando estos graves ataques a los derechos humanos en Catatumbo y piensa exigir explicaciones al Gobierno de Santos con la posible congelación del proceso de ratificación e implementación de este acuerdo de continuar estos ataques? ¿Exigirá la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante al Estado colombiano que los policías y militares de estos crímenes sean sometidos a un proceso penal dirigido por tribunales civiles que garanticen la imparcialidad?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(22 de agosto de 2013)

La Delegación de la UE y las misiones de los Estados miembros de la UE en Colombia han seguido con atención los recientes sucesos de Catatumbo. La violencia producida en las últimas semanas, que provocó cuatro muertos y docenas de heridos entre manifestantes y fuerzas del orden, suscita gran preocupación. Las circunstancias de los enfrentamientos y las posibles responsabilidades están siendo investigadas por la Fiscalía General. La UE acoge positivamente que el Gobierno de Colombia haya propuesto entablar un diálogo con los representantes de las comunidades campesinas de Catatumbo para abordar los problemas económicos y sociales en el origen de la protesta. El vicepresidente, Angelino Garzón, dirige el equipo negociador del Gobierno, lo que confirma el compromiso político del ejecutivo con el diálogo al más alto nivel.

La UE sigue apoyando firmemente los esfuerzos por luchar contra la impunidad mediante la consolidación del sistema judicial. Además, la UE observará atentamente los resultados de la aplicación de la reforma de los tribunales militares y seguirá ofreciendo intercambios de experiencias y mejores prácticas. Este compromiso se ha reafirmado recientemente con ocasión del diálogo entre la UE y Colombia sobre los derechos humanos.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007694/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Protests by farmers in Catatumbo (Colombia): death of farmers resulting from illegal clampdown by Colombian Government and acts of violence committed by the police and armed forces

On 12 June 2013, thousands of Colombian farmers launched a series of peaceful protests in the north of Santander seeking decent living conditions and fulfilment of promises by the Colombian Government in response to the humanitarian crisis affecting them. On 17 June, they were joined by thousands of farmers from Catatumbo who had travelled to northern Santander to add their voices to legitimate demands for the creation of an agricultural reserve area, the phasing out of illegal crops and the launching of alternative projects initiated by the farmers themselves.

The response of the Colombian Government to this peaceful and legitimate call for measures to alleviate the serious difficulties affecting the overwhelming majority of farmers and their families was to orchestrate a violent clampdown by the police and armed forces, which opened fire on the protesters, killing of four farmers — Edwin Franco, Dionel Jacome, Diomar Angarita and Hermidez Palacios — and injuring dozens of others during clashes between 22 and 25 June.

This illegal clampdown by the Colombian Government is totally unacceptable and disproportionate, striking at the most fundamental democratic principles and human rights.

The introduction of marshal law will undoubtedly make it very difficult to establish the identity of the perpetrators or those bearing criminal responsibility for the violent actions of the police and military. In view of this, has the Vice-President/High Representative expressed her concerns and roundly condemned the disproportionately harsh response by the Colombian Government to the legitimate protests and demands of the farmers or does she intend to do so? Given the terms of the EU-Colombia/Peru trade agreement, is the EU delegation in Bogota monitoring these serious human rights violations in Catatumbo and does it intend to call the Santos regime to account, indicating that ratification and implementation of the trade agreement may be frozen in the event of continued violence? Will the Vice-President/High Representative call on the Colombian Government to try the members of the police and armed forces responsible for these crimes before civilian jury in a criminal court, thereby guaranteeing the impartiality of proceedings?

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

The Delegation of the EU together with the EU Member States' missions in Colombia have been closely following the recent events in Catatumbo. The violence occurred in the past weeks, which caused four casualties and dozens of injured among protesters and law enforcement officers, is a matter of serious concern. The circumstances of the clashes and possible responsibilities are now being investigated by the General Prosecutor office. The EU welcomes that the Government of Colombia has proposed to open a dialogue with the representatives of the peasant communities of Catatumbo in order to address the economic and social issues underlying the protest. Vice-president Angelino Garzón is leading the Government's negotiating team, which confirms the political commitment of the executive to the dialogue at the highest level.

The EU continues to be firmly committed in supporting the efforts to fight impunity through strengthening the justice system. Furthermore, the EU will follow closely the results of the implementation of the reform of the military jurisdiction, and it will continue to offer exchange of experience and best practices. This commitment was lately reiterated on the occasion of the EU-Colombia Dialogue on Human Rights.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007695/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(28. Juni 2013)

Betrifft: Transatlantische Expertengruppe zum Datenschutz

Vor dem Hintergrund des PRISM-Skandals forderte Justizkommissarin Viviane Reding am 19. Juni 2013 im Innenausschuss eine solide Datenschutzreform. Es gehe nicht an, dass US-amerikanischen Behörden EU-Bürger bespitzeln. Dies gelte auch für Unternehmen, die in der EU tätig sind; auch sie müssten die europäischen Datenschutzauflagen erfüllen, unabhängig davon, in welchem Land ihr Hauptsitz liegt. Die Justizkommissarin kündigte in diesem Zusammenhang die Einberufung einer transatlantischen Expertengruppe, welche zu den kritischen Punkten verhandeln sollte, an.

1. Wie wird sich diese Expertengruppe zusammensetzen?

2. Wer entscheidet über die Zusammensetzung?

3. Werden der Expertengruppe auch Vertreter großer IT-Konzerne wie Facebook oder Google angehören?

4. Welche konkreten Themenbereiche werden von der Expertengruppe behandelt? Wo sieht die Kommission die besonders kritischen Punkte, die Frau Kommissarin Reding angesprochen hat?

5. Wird das Parlament über die laufenden Ergebnisse unterrichtet? Wenn nein: warum nicht?

6. Wird die Öffentlichkeit über die laufenden Ergebnisse informiert? Wenn nein: warum nicht?

7. Wie schätzt die Kommission die Stärke der Verhandlungsposition der EU ein, zumal ja bereits der Vorschlag zur Datenschutzverordnung durch amerikanische Lobbyisten abgeschwächt wurde (z. B. geringere Strafzahlungen)?

8. Ist die von Frau Reding angekündigte Expertengruppe Teil der Verhandlungen zur transatlantischen Freihandelszone oder wird hier gesondert vor dem Hintergrund des PRISM-Skandals verhandelt? Wenn Letzteres der Fall ist: Inwieweit werden die Ergebnisse der Expertengruppe in die Verhandlungen zur transatlantischen Freihandelszone einfließen?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(2. September 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-007934/2013 und E-007101/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007695/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Transatlantic group of experts on data protection

On 19 June 2013, against the background of the PRISM scandal, Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding, in an exchange of views with Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, called for substantive data protection reform. It is not acceptable that US authorities should spy on EU citizens. The same applies to companies that operate in the EU: they too must be subject to EU data protection rules irrespective of where they are based. Commissioner Reding announced that a transatlantic group of experts on data protection was to be set up to address the critical issues.

1. What will be the composition of the group of experts?

2. Who will decide on its membership?

3. Will it include representatives of big IT groups such as Facebook or Google?

4. What specific areas will the group of experts discuss? What does the Commission see as the critical issues here?

5. Will Parliament be informed on an ongoing basis of the group's findings, and if not, why not?

6. Will the public be informed on an ongoing basis of the group's findings, and if not, why not?

7. Does the Commission consider that the EU has a strong negotiating position, given that the proposal for a regulation on data protection was watered down by American lobbyists (with the reduction of penalties, for example)?

8. Will the transatlantic group of experts announced by Commissioner Reding play a part in negotiating the transatlantic free trade area or will its deliberations following the PRISM scandal be separate from that? If the latter is the case, will the group's findings influence the negotiations on the transatlantic free trade area?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Commisison would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-007934/2013 and E-007101/2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007696/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ενσωμάτωση της απόφασης-πλαίσιο 2008/841/ΔΕΥ στο εσωτερικό δίκαιο των κρατών μελών

Σύμφωνα με την απόφαση-πλαίσιο 2008/841/ΔΕΥ για την καταπολέμηση του οργανωμένου εγκλήματος, τα κράτη μέλη ήταν υποχρεωμένα να διαβιβάσουν στην Επιτροπή, εντός του 2010, το κείμενο των διατάξεων με τις οποίες μεταφέρουν τον τρόπο μεταφοράς της οδηγίας στο εθνικό τους δίκαιο. Δύο χρόνια αργότερα η Επιτροπή είχε διαπιστώσει ότι πολλά κράτη μέλη δεν είχαν μεταφέρει τη συγκεκριμένη οδηγία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Έχει συμμορφωθεί το σύνολο των κρατών μελών με τις διατάξεις της απόφασης-πλαίσιο; Είναι σε θέση να με ενημερώσει η Επιτροπή για την περίπτωση της Ελλάδας;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η έκθεση εφαρμογής σχετικά με την απόφαση-πλαίσιο 2008/841/ΔΕΥ για την καταπολέμηση του οργανωμένου εγκλήματος βρίσκεται προς το παρόν στο στάδιο της προετοιμασίας από την Επιτροπή. Η Επιτροπή προτίθεται να εγκρίνει την έκθεση έως το τέλος του 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007696/13
to the Commission
Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Transposition of Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA into the national law of Member States

According to Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA on the fight against organised crime, Member States were required to transmit to the Commission, during 2010, the text of the provisions transposing this framework Decision into their national law. Two years later, the Commission had noted that many Member States had not yet done so.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Have all Member States complied with the provisions of the framework Decision? Can the Commission state whether Greece has done so?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The implementation report concerning the framework Decision 2008/841/JHA on the fight against organised crime is currently under preparation by the Commission. The Commission intends to adopt it by the end of 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007697/13
to the Commission
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Gibraltar border

7 683 border workers who live in Spain commute to Gibraltar for employment every day. The vast majority of these workers are EU nationals, 3 998 of them Spanish.

Every day these workers are subjected to delays and checks at the borders that last for hours when returning home from work in Gibraltar, which as a British Overseas Territory lies outside of the Schengen area and the customs union.

Spain of course has every right to conduct checks on persons and goods passing through this border. However, such checks must not be so disproportionate as to undermine the fundamental right of EU nationals to freedom of movement through an EU border.

Nonetheless, inordinate delays at this border are a daily occurrence and when they peaked in October 2012 they lasted up to six hours. Currently there are many days where the delays still last an average of two hours.

Every citizen of the European Union, including the residents of Gibraltar and those Spanish citizens who choose to work there, has a fundamental right to the freedom to move and work anywhere within the EU.

These delays have been condemned by the Government of the UK, the Government of Gibraltar, the mayor of the Spanish border town of La Línea, and the Association of Spanish Workers in Gibraltar (ASCTEG).

Can the Commission commit to monitoring the situation at this border, report on whether the delays are disproportionate, and advise on any appropriate action it will take if it finds the delays to be inconsistent with the right of the Spanish Government to conduct checks or with the right to freedom of movement?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

Gibraltar is not part of the area without internal border controls. 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 European 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.

Following questions from Honourable Members and citizens' complaints the Commission contacted the relevant authorities to get further clarifications. Their reply is now being assessed.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007698/13
to the Commission
Brian Simpson (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Accompanying measures for sugar protocol countries

The 2006 reform of the EU sugar regime included a EUR 1.25 billion package of transitional assistance through accompanying measures for sugar producers in Africa, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) countries and the least developed countries (LDCs) aimed at, *inter alia*, enhancing the competitiveness of the sugar sector and promote economic diversification.

Can the Commission confirm that the assistance has reached its intended destination? If not, what action does the Commission intend to take to ensure that delegations in the ACP/LDC countries are sufficiently resourced?

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

The AMSP (Accompanying Measures of the Sugar Protocol) is being implemented in 18 countries, based on national adaptation strategies which formed the pillars for each of the Multiannual Indicative Plans.

Since 2006, EUR 1,020 million have been committed with a further commitment of EUR 177 million foreseen this year. This means that at the end of 2013 around 97% of the funds will be committed. As on average project activities can take 4 years the last activities will end in 2017 or 2018.

Assistance has been targeted to improve sectorial competitiveness and, in some instances, to diversify operations. Activities, focus for example on

— Production and export increases in Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

— Improvements in competitiveness and export capacity in Belize, Fiji, Guyana and Mauritius.

— Redressing sugar production to supply domestic market in Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar and Tanzania.

— To withdraw from sugar production and aim at diversification of the economy in Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007699/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Monitoraggio del fisco sui conti correnti delle famiglie italiane

Il 24 giugno scorso è entrato in vigore in Italia, unico caso in Europa, il provvedimento antievasione n. 37561/2013 approvato il 25 marzo 2013 che prevede il monitoraggio da parte del fisco dei conti correnti di tutti i cittadini. Saranno sottoposti a controllo i depositi di titoli azionari, le gestioni patrimoniali, le carte di credito, le operazioni sul mercato dei metalli preziosi, le cassette di sicurezza, le movimentazioni e i saldi di inizio e fine anno. Le banche acquisiranno automaticamente i dati dei contribuenti relativamente al 2011 e li invieranno all'Agenzia delle Entrate entro il 31 ottobre 2013, mentre per le informazioni inerenti al 2012 l'invio dovrà avvenire entro il 31 marzo 2014. I dati permetteranno di ricostruire le spese effettuate dal contribuente e, nel caso di incongruenze tra quanto dichiarato al fisco e quanto speso, saranno avviati i controlli. Il Garante per la privacy ha assicurato che il Sid (Sistema Interscambio Dati tra gli intermediari e l'Agenzia delle Entrate) previsto dal provvedimento per la raccolta e l'invio delle informazioni garantisce adeguate misure di sicurezza di natura tecnica e organizzativa a tutela dei dati dei cittadini.

Può la Commissione dire se:

— è a conoscenza dei fatti;

— ritiene che il provvedimento che realizza una schedatura di massa di tutti i contribuenti, anche di quelli onesti, porti all'acquisizione di miliardi di dati sensibili sulla vita privata dei cittadini, ma irrilevanti per il fisco;

— ritiene il provvedimento in contrasto con la direttiva 95/46/CE del 24 ottobre 1995 sulla tutela delle persone fisiche, la quale stabilisce l'obbligo di informazione e il rilascio del consenso esplicito per l'utilizzo dei dati personali;

— considerato che i sistemi informatici non possono garantire la totale sicurezza di funzionamento e che una mole imponente di dati sarà raccolta tutta in un unico database, ritiene che le informazioni riservate dei cittadini corrano un alto rischio di intercettazione?

Risposta di Algirdas Šemeta a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2013)

Ciascuno Stato membro è libero di stabilire la propria politica per la raccolta di informazioni dai suoi istituti finanziari e da altri intermediari ai fini fiscali.

Il trattamento dei dati personali da parte delle autorità fiscali italiane è soggetto alle disposizioni della legge nazionale di attuazione della direttiva 95/46/CE. Fatte salve le competenze della Commissione in qualità di custode dei trattati, il rispetto di queste disposizioni è controllato dalle autorità nazionali garanti della protezione dei dati.

La Commissione non è pertanto in grado di esprimere un parere sulla domanda relativa al volume possibile di dati sensibili in questione e i rischi potenziali dell'intercettazione di dati personali.

La Commissione desidera sottolineare che la lotta alla frode fiscale e all'evasione fiscale è una delle sue priorità fondamentali. Il 6 dicembre 2012 ha adottato un ambizioso pacchetto di misure che comprende il Piano d'azione per rafforzare la lotta alla frode fiscale e all'evasione fiscale ([1]). Una delle iniziative previste dal Piano d'azione è la promozione dello scambio automatico di informazioni (AEOI) come futura norma europea e internazionale per la trasparenza in materia fiscale.

([1]) COM(2012)722 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007699/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Monitoring by the tax authorities of the current accounts of Italian families

On 24 June 2013 the anti-tax evasion law (No 37561/2013, adopted on 25 March 2013), which provides for the monitoring by the tax authorities of the current accounts held by Italian citizens, came into force. Italy is the only EU Member State to have such a law. The monitoring will cover share portfolios, asset management, credit cards, operations on the precious metals market, the contents of safety deposit boxes, account movements and account balances at the beginning and end of each year. Banks will automatically acquire taxpayers' data for 2011 and forward them to the Revenue Office by 31 October 2013; data concerning 2012 must be forwarded before 31 March 2014. The data will be used to reconstruct taxpayers' outgoings and, should discrepancies between the sums declared to the tax authorities and the amounts apparently spent, checks will be ordered. The Italian Data Protection Supervisor has given assurances that appropriate technical and organisational security measures have been incorporated into the SID, the system for the exchange of data between intermediaries and the Revenue Office, which will be used to collect and forward information.

— Is the Commission aware of these facts?

— Does it not take the view that the law on combating tax evasion, which lumps all taxpayers, including the honest ones, together, will result in the acquisition of billions of items of sensitive data concerning the private lives of Italian citizens which are of no use whatsoever to the tax authorities?

— Does it not see the law as being at odds with Directive 95/46/EC of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data, which stipulates that individuals must be informed about and give their explicit consent to the use of their personal data?

— Given that no IT system is completely secure and that a huge volume of data will be stored in one database, does it not think that there is a serious risk of private data being intercepted?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2013)

Each Member State is free to establish its own policy for gathering information from its financial institutions and other intermediaries for tax purposes.

The processing of personal data by the Italian tax authorities is subject to the provisions of the national law implementing Directive 95/46/EC. Without prejudice to the powers of the Commission as guardian of the Treaties, the compliance with these provisions is supervised by the national data protection supervisory authority.

The Commission is therefore not in a position to comment on questions regarding the possible volume of sensitive data concerned and the potential risks of interception of private data.

The Commission would like to stress that it considers the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion as one of its key priorities. On 6 December 2012, it adopted an ambitious package of measures including an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion ([1]). One of the initiatives included in the action plan is the promotion of the automatic exchange of information (AEOI) as the future European and international standard of transparency in tax matters.

([1]) COM(2012) 722 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007700/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Costi eccessivi dei servizi bancari a carico dei cittadini italiani

Secondo Federconsumatori, l'associazione italiana a tutela dei consumatori, le commissioni applicate dalle banche italiane sono tra le più costose d'Europa. In Italia l'apertura di un conto corrente può costare fino a 250 euro contro i 49 euro richiesti in Olanda. Nel 2012 i costi dei servizi sono ulteriormente aumentati rispetto all'anno precedente, costringendo i clienti a pagare in media fino a 7,75 euro per un bonifico, 4 euro per le commissioni di pagamento delle bollette, 10 euro per quelle delle tasse, 5 euro per le rate dell'affitto e 3 euro per ricaricare le carte prepagate a fronte di un tasso d'interesse pari allo 0,006 %. Il divario tra quanto le banche remunerano il denaro e quanto incassano per il prestito è salito al 19,79 %. A tale sproporzione si aggiunge la mancanza di chiarezza di informazione sulle tariffe, che in molti casi sono incomplete o di difficile comprensione.

Può la Commissione far sapere se:

— considerato che i principali intestatari dei conti correnti sono le famiglie, ritiene che il continuo aumento del costo dei servizi bancari penalizzi tali soggetti, già colpiti dalla crisi, e ritardi la ripresa economica del paese;

— con riferimento alla proposta di direttiva dell'8 maggio 2013 sull'accesso a un conto di pagamento di base e sulla trasparenza e comparabilità delle spese applicate ai conti, ritiene tali provvedimenti sufficienti a limitare i costi delle commissioni e a migliorare i servizi offerti ai cittadini?

Risposta di Michel Barnier a nome della Commissione
(9 agosto 2013)

La Commissione ritiene che l'incremento delle commissioni applicate dalle banche per i servizi di pagamento collegati ai conti possa avere un impatto rilevante sui costi complessivi sostenuti dalle famiglie, specialmente da quelle con minori risorse economiche. Ciò vale, a maggior ragione, nel contesto economico attuale.

Alla luce di quanto precede, le misure adottate nella proposta della Commissione di direttiva sui conti di pagamento mirano ad accrescere il livello di concorrenza sul mercato dei prodotti finanziari al dettaglio in tutta l'Unione europea, migliorando la trasparenza delle condizioni offerte dai prestatori di servizi di pagamento e semplificando il processo di trasferimento del conto. I consumatori potranno pertanto compiere una scelta più informata e saranno maggiormente consapevoli dei prodotti più convenienti sul mercato. Inoltre, la proposta introduce il diritto per tutti i consumatori di accedere a un conto di pagamento con caratteristiche di base, gratuitamente o a un costo ragionevole.

La Commissione ritiene che le misure contenute nella proposta miglioreranno notevolmente la competitività sul mercato dei conti di pagamento, riducendo pertanto i prezzi dei prodotti offerti a beneficio dei consumatori. In futuro ci potrà naturalmente essere margine per ulteriori miglioramenti, ma la Commissione ritiene che la proposta costituisca già un passo importante nella direzione giusta.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007700/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Excessive charges for banking services payable by members of the public in Italy

According to Federconsumatori, the Italian consumers' association, banks charge more commission in Italy than anywhere else in Europe. In Italy, opening a current account can cost up to EUR 250, as against EUR 49 in Holland. In 2012, the service charges were further increased in comparison with the previous year, compelling customers to pay, on average, up to EUR 7.75 for a transfer, EUR 4 to pay a bill, EUR 10 to pay a tax, EUR 5 for a rent payment and EUR 3 to reload a prepaid card, while receiving interest at a rate of 0.006%. The disparity between the interest rate paid by banks and that which they charge on loans has risen to 19.79%. In addition to this disproportion, the information provided concerning rates is unclear, in many cases being incomplete or hard to understand.

— As most current account-holders are families, does the Commission consider that the constantly rising cost of banking services penalises them at a time when they have already been hit by the crisis and that it is delaying the country's economic recovery?

— With reference to the proposal for a directive of 8 May 2013 on access to a basic payment account and on transparency and comparability of charges levied on accounts, does the Commission consider these provisions to be sufficient to limit the costs of commission and to improve the services provided to members of the public?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The Commission considers that increases in the fees charged by banks for services offered on payment accounts are likely to have a relevant impact on the overall costs borne by families, especially those with fewer economic resources at their disposal. This is all the more the case in the current economic situation.

In this light, the measures adopted in the Commission proposal for a directive on payment accounts aim to enhance the level of competition in the market for retail financial products EU-wide by increasing the transparency of the conditions offered by payment service providers and simplifying the process for account switching. This will allow consumers to make a more informed choice and be more aware of the most convenient products on the market. Moreover, the proposal introduces the right for every consumer to access a payment account with basic features, which will have to be offered either free of charge or at a reasonable fee.

The Commission believes that measures contained in its proposal will substantially improve the competitive process in the market for payment accounts therefore lowering the prices of the products on offer to the benefit of consumers. There may of course be scope for further improvement in the future, but it is the Commission's view that the proposal already constitutes an important step in the right direction.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007701/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Eventuale pronuncia di illegittimità del Fiscal Compact da parte di una Corte costituzionale di uno Stato membro

Il 2 marzo 2012, 25 Stati membri hanno sottoscritto il Trattato sulla Stabilità, sul Coordinamento e sulla Governance nell'Unione Economica Monetaria, cosiddetto Fiscal Compact o Patto di Bilancio.

Nell'eventualità che una Corte costituzionale di uno degli Stati membri si esprimesse dichiarando illegittimo questo trattato, può la Commissione riferire quali sarebbero le conseguenze?

Risposta di José Manuel Barroso a nome della Commissione
(19 luglio 2013)

In risposta alla questione sollevata dall'onorevole parlamentare, la Commissione desidera sottolineare che il trattato sulla stabilità, sul coordinamento e sulla governance (TSCG), entrato in vigore il 1º gennaio 2013, è stato fino ad ora ratificato da 21 delle sue parti contraenti. Esso non è stato dichiarato incostituzionale da nessuna Corte costituzionale nazionale. Pertanto, la questione relativa a possibili conseguenze di una dichiarazione di illegittimità del TSCG da parte di una Corte costituzionale nazionale è di natura puramente ipotetica. Secondo la prassi abituale, la Commissione non si esprime in merito a situazioni ipotetiche.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007701/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Possible implications of the Fiscal Compact being declared unlawful by a Member State Constitutional Court

On 2 March 2012, 25 Member States signed the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union — the so-called Fiscal Compact.

Can the Commission say what the implications would be if the treaty were declared unlawful by a Constitutional Court in one of the Member States?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

In response to the question of the Honorable Member of Parliament, the Commission would like to point out that the the Treaty on Stability Coordination and Governance (TSCG), which entered into force on 1 January 2013, has by now been ratified by 21 of its Contracting Parties. It has not been declared unconsititional by any national constitutional court. The question about the possible implications of a national constitutional court declaring the TSCG unconstitutional is therefore of a purely hypothetical nature. In line with established practice, the Commission does not express itself on hypothetical scenarios.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-007702/13
do Komisji
Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska (PPE)
(28 czerwca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Projekt Komisji mający zastąpić obowiązujące rozporządzenie (WE) nr 800/2008 z dnia 6 sierpnia 2008 r. w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych (GBER)

Odnośnie do opublikowanego przez Komisję Europejską projektu, mającego zastąpić obowiązujące rozporządzenie Komisji (WE) nr 800/2008 z dnia 6 sierpnia 2008 r. w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych (GBER), zakładającego wprowadzenie górnego pułapu pomocy w wysokości 0,01 % PKB, powyżej którego program pomocowy dla osób niepełnosprawnych musi być notyfikowany.

Rozporządzenie to uderza w interesy osób niepełnosprawnych oraz pogłębia dysproporcje pomiędzy państwami członkowskimi. W konsekwencji oznacza ono znaczne zmniejszenie dostępu do wsparcia dla osób pochodzących z państw o niższym rocznym PKB. Ten pułap zastosowany do warunków polskich oznacza, iż zamiast kwoty 3 mld PLN, która przeznaczana jest na program dofinansowania wynagrodzeń dla osób niepełnosprawnych, bez notyfikacji będzie można wydać 150 mln PLN. W przypadku Polski spowoduje to dwudziestokrotne zmniejszenie skali pomocy.

Tak skonstruowany limit nie jest dobrym instrumentem zapobiegania zakłóceniom konkurencji, gdyż to nie wartość programu, ale kwota pomocy przypadającej na beneficjenta (lub projekt) stanowi odzwierciedlenie wpływu na rynek. Tym samym takie ograniczenie narusza zasadę równego traktowania wszystkich państw członkowskich w ramach rynku wewnętrznego, dyskryminując państwa o mniejszym rocznym PKB.

W Polsce na ponad 2 milionów osób niepełnosprawnych w wieku produkcyjnym zaledwie 240 tysięcy otrzymuje wsparcie w postaci dofinansowania do wynagrodzenia. Pomoc ta jest rozproszona pośród ponad 18 tysięcy przedsiębiorstw.

— Czy Komisja bierze pod uwagę fakt, że niepewność co do uzyskania zgody na udzielenie pomocy oraz jakiekolwiek opóźnienie w dofinansowaniu do wynagrodzeń spowoduje masowe zwolnienia osób niepełnosprawnych?

— W związku z tym, w jaki sposób Komisja zamierza poprawić sytuację zawodową osób niepełnosprawnych i zwiększyć odsetek zatrudnienia?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Joaquína Almunię w imieniu Komisji
(26 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Komisja jest zaangażowana w obronę praw pracowników niepełnosprawnych.

Górny pułap pomocy zaproponowany w projekcie ogólnego rozporządzenia w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych (GBER) dla bardzo dużych projektów może spowodować konieczność notyfikacji niektórych polskich programów w zakresie pomocy na zatrudnienie osób niepełnosprawnych. Niemniej jednak Komisja gromadzi obecnie opinie na temat projektu rozporządzenia GBER poprzez konsultacje i dyskusje z państwami członkowskimi. Komisja otrzymała uwagi dotyczące projektu od wielu obywateli oraz organizacji reprezentujących osoby niepełnosprawne, a także od polskich władz. Komisja przeanalizuje te uwagi i rozważy, jak najlepiej zająć się poruszonymi kwestiami dla dobra osób niepełnosprawnych. Komisja z pewnością nie zamierza zaostrzyć szczegółowych warunków zgodności ustalonych w ogólnym rozporządzeniu w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych związanych z pomocą dla pracowników niepełnosprawnych w stosunku do obowiązujących obecnie zasad.

Poprawa szans zatrudnienia dla osób niepełnosprawnych jest specjalnym zadaniem Europejskiego Funduszu Socjalnego, który funkcjonuje w Polsce w ramach Programu Operacyjnego Kapitał Ludzki ([1]). Tworzenie miejsc pracy dla osób niepełnosprawnych, wspieranie ich przedsiębiorczości oraz kampanie uświadamiające na temat walki z dyskryminacją to przykładowe działania podjęte w celu integracji osób niepełnosprawnych na rynku pracy, co pozostanie priorytetem w programie na lata 2014-2020.

([1]) Program zarządzany przez Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego: http://www.efs.gov.pl/

W kwestii polityki zatrudnienia Komisja uprzejmie prosi szanowną Panią Poseł o zapoznanie się z odpowiedzią udzieloną na pytanie pisemne E-6731/2013 na temat strategii mającej na celu zapewnienie osobom niepełnosprawnym dostępu do życia społecznego na równi z innymi obywatelami.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007702/13
to the Commission
Joanna Katarzyna Skrzydlewska (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Commission plan to replace current General Block Exemptions Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (GBER)

The Commission has published a proposal, intended to replace current General Block Exemptions Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (GBER), which would introduce an upper limit on aid of 0.01% of GDP. Above this threshold, support programmes for disabled persons would be subject to compulsory notification.

This regulation is an attack on the interests of disabled persons and deepens the divergences between Member States. In effect, it will mean a significant reduction in access to support for people from countries with lower GDP. The upper limit — adjusted for Polish conditions — would mean that instead of PLN 3 billion being earmarked for a programme to supplement the salaries of the disabled, only PLN 150 million would be available without notification. In Poland's case, this would result in a twentyfold reduction in the provision of support.

A limit formulated in such a way is not a good means of avoiding distortions of competition, since it is not the value of the programme, but the amount of support paid to the beneficiaries or projects which reflects its impact on the market. This restriction is therefore in violation of the principle of equal treatment for all Member States in the internal market, as it discriminates against countries with lower GDP.

In Poland there are more than 2 million disabled persons of productive age. However, only 240 000 of them receive support in the form of salary supplements. This support is dispersed among more than 18 000 different companies.

— Is the Commission aware that uncertainty surrounding whether support will be authorised,or whether there will be delays in the payment of salary supplements, is resulting in masslay-offs of disabled persons?

— How does the Commission intend to improve the professional prospects of disabledpersons and increase their employment rate?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

The Commission is committed to defending the rights of disabled workers.

The threshold proposed in the draft General block exemption Regulation (GBER) for notification of very large schemes might trigger the need to notify certain Polish schemes for employment aid for disabled persons. However, the draft GBER constitutes a document on which the Commission services are collecting views during the public consultation and in discussions with Member States. The Commission has received feedback on it from many citizens and disabled people's organisations as well as from the Polish authorities. It will now analyse this feedback and consider how best to address the concerns expressed to the benefit of disabled persons. The Commission certainly does not intend to make the compatibility conditions in the GBER relating to the support of disabled workers stricter than the existing rules.

Improving employment opportunities of disabled persons is a special focus of the European Social Fund, which is implemented in Poland within the Human Capital Operational Programme ([1]). Job creation for disabled people, special support to promote their entrepreneurship and awareness raising campaigns to combat discrimination are examples of measures aiming at integration of disabled persons in the labour market, which will remain priority also in the programming period 2014-2020.

Regarding employment measures, the Commission would moreover refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-6731/2013 for the strategy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in society on equal terms with other citizens.

([1]) Managed by the Ministry of Regional Development, http://www.efs.gov.pl/.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007703/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: Red Europea de Transporte en Alta Velocidad

Según parece, Francia aplaza hasta más allá de 2030 la conexión ferroviaria de Alta Velocidad hacia España ([1]). Así lo ha confirmado el Primer Ministro galo, Jean-Marc Ayrault, en una entrevista publicada por la revista *L'Usine Nouvelle* que comparte el diagnóstico de un informe del diputado socialista Philippe Duron, donde se calcula que las 70 grandes infraestructuras que se habían concebido para un horizonte de una veintena de años costarían 245 000 millones de euros, un coste que considera inasumible. **Los presidentes Zapatero y Villepin presentaron el 17 de octubre de 2005 en Barcelona un paquete de proyectos que mejorarían las conexiones viarias y ferroviarias a través de los Pirineos**, que incluía la prolongación de la línea de AVE Madrid-Barcelona-Frontera francesa hasta Montpellier, por lo que quedaría garantizada su continuidad hasta París ([2]).

¿No cree la Comisión que la decisión unilateral del Gobierno francés afecta a la competitividad del sur de Europa?

¿No cree la Comisión que esta decisión del Gobierno francés perjudica gravemente al desarrollo a la zona Eurorregión Prinieos-Mediterráneo y al Estado miembro español, que ha construido ya su línea de alta velocidad pensando en la conexión con la red francesa para que la infraestructura sea rentable y recuperar la inversión?

Entre Perpiñán y Nimes (200 kilómetros), la línea de ancho internacional aún no está técnicamente preparada para la alta velocidad. Y un tramo de Perpiñán (Le Soler) aún carece de la electrificación de 25 000 voltios, circulando los trenes con una catenaria de 1 500 voltios, la tensión habitual en las líneas convencionales francesas. Puesto que el AVE funciona con 25 000/3 000 voltios, en Perpiñán se verá obligado a ir muy lento. ¿No cree la Comisión que estas obras son fácilmente asumibles por el Gobierno francés?

Respuesta del Sr. Kallas en nombre de la Comisión
(29 de julio de 2013)

La Comisión atribuye la máxima prioridad a la conexión ferroviaria entre Francia y España por la costa mediterránea y la ha incluido en el proyecto prioritario n° 3 de la RTE-T, en el corredor ferroviario de mercancías n° 6 y, con ocasión de la revisión de la RTE-T, en el corredor mediterráneo de la red principal de la RTE-T.

La Comisión reconoce que, en esta línea, debe crearse un corredor efectivo de ferrocarril y carretera tanto para viajeros como para mercancías antes de 2030, según la planificación de la UE, ya que contribuirá a la competitividad de la región y de la Unión en su conjunto.

El Gobierno francés todavía no se ha pronunciado de manera oficial sobre la nueva línea Montpellier-Perpiñán ni sobre las intervenciones que deberán programarse en la línea existente.

La conexión internacional debe efectuarse según las normas europeas de interoperabilidad, incluidos el ERTMS ([3]) y el ETCS ([4]) como sistema de señalización y control, y tanto las características técnicas como la capacidad deberán ajustarse a los requisitos funcionales del plan de ejecución del corredor n° 6 de transporte ferroviario de mercancías, que se encuentra en fase de elaboración, y del futuro plan de desarrollo del corredor mediterráneo.

([1]) http://www.expansion.com/2013/06/27/empresas/transporte/1372320108.html
([2]) http://www.factoriaurbana.com/urbanforums/viewtopic.php?p=10187&sid=d0e32e4c6736a57ddde8a2a2d92a66be
([3]) Sistema Europeo de Gestión del Tráfico Ferroviario.
([4]) Sistema Europeo de Control de Trenes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007703/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: European high-speed rail network

It would seem that France is postponing its high-speed rail link with Spain until after 2030 ([1]). The French Prime Minister, Jean-Marc Ayrault, confirmed this news in an interview published by the magazine, *L'Usine Nouvelle*. The magazine comes to the same conclusion as the report by socialist MP Philippe Duron estimates that the 70 major infrastructure projects that had been planned for the next 20 years would cost some EUR 245 billion, a sum he considers cannot be justified. Meeting in Barcelona on 17 October 2005, the then Prime Ministers, Zapatero and de Villepin, presented a package of projects to improve road and rail connections through the Pyrenees. The projects included extending the Spanish high-speed rail line Madrid-Barcelona-French Border to Montpellier, where it would connect to the existing high-speed rail link to Paris ([2]).

Does the Commission not think that the French Government's unilateral decision will affect southern Europe's ability to compete?

Does it not think that the French Government's decision could seriously harm the development of the Mediterranean-Pyrenees Euro-region and damage Spain, which constructed the high-speed rail line with a view to linking it to the French network in order to ensure that the infrastructure is profitable and recoup its investment?

The international gauge line between Perpignan and Nimes (200 km) is not yet technically ready for high speed. The stretch around Le Soler in Perpignan is still not electrified at 25 000 volts. Trains there run on 1 500 volts, which is the normal voltage for conventional lines in France. Since high-speed trains run on 25 000/3 000 volts, they will be forced to go very slowly. Does the Commission not think that the French Government can easily justify these projects?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(29 July 2013)

The Commission attributes the highest priority to the connection between France and Spain along the Mediterranean coast, having included it in TEN-T Priority Project n°3, in Rail Freight corridor n°6 and, during the revision of TEN-T, in the Mediterranean Corridor of the TEN-T Core Network.

The Commission acknowledges that an effective rail-road corridor for both passengers and freight has to be developed before 2030 along this line, according to the EU planning, since it contributes to the competitiveness of the Region and of the Union as a whole.

A formal position by the French Government is still awaited on the new line Montpellier-Perpignan and on the interventions to be scheduled on the existing line.

The international connection has to be developed according to the European Standards for interoperability, including ERTMS ([3])/ETCS ([4]) as signalling and control system, and technical characteristics and capacity will have to fulfil the functional requirements of Rail Freight Corridor n°6 implementation plan, that is currently being drafted, as well as in the future development plan of the Mediterranean Corridor.

([1]) http://www.expansion.com/2013/06/27/empresas/transporte/1372320108.html
([2]) http://www.factoriaurbana.com/urbanforums/viewtopic.php?p=10187&sid=d0e32e4c6736a57ddde8a2a2d92a66be
([3]) European Rail Traffic Management System.
([4]) European Train Control System.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007704/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines

I have been contacted by a constituent who has recently visited Bequia in the Grenadines. While there, he discovered that the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines was holding onto funds that had been given by the EU for a specific project, even when work on the project had been completed by contractors.

Could the Commission state:

— what evidence it has of the government holding on to funds in order to use them as collateral or using them to settle other more pressing claims rather than to pay the money to those who have undertaken work for the government in good faith in the expectation that they will be paid?

— what action it can take to prevent this practice and ensure that European taxpayers' money goes to the projects and contractors for which it was intended?

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

EU development cooperation with St Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG) is implemented under the guiding principles of the financial regulation and its practical guide (PRAG).

Our cooperation with SVG is implemented through 'partial decentralisation'. The Office of the National Authorising Officer (NAO) is the formal counterpart and as such is responsible for all cooperation that is implemented through the Government of SVG. Partial decentralisation means that the EU rules and regulations for the implementation of these projects/programmes apply.

The implementing authority (NAO) is applying these rules (including procurement procedures) but with *ex-ante*/*ex-post* checks, carried out by the EU Delegation to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Staff from the EU Delegation are in regular contact with their counterparts and actively carry out such checks. The relevant mechanisms include Steering Committees, in which Delegation representatives are present as observers, independent mid-term reviews or evaluations, and expenditure audits. No recently audited SVG projects have unveiled any financial problem.

Moreover, the Members of the European Parliament (Mr Filip Kaczmarek and Mr Norbert Neuser) who visited SVG in December 2012 were satisfied with the good results of several programmes in SVG.

As a consequence, the Commission has no evidence that any EU funds are being utilised for purposes other than those foreseen within its development cooperation.

Finally, concrete allegations of misuse of EU funds can be transmitted to the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) which is responsible for investigating such matters.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007705/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Human rights of protesters in Turkey

I have been contacted by a number of constituents who are concerned about the current situation in Turkey.

Could the Commission confirm:

— whether it is monitoring the Turkish authorities' response to the protests?

— what pressure it is bringing to bear on the Turkish Government to protect the civil liberties and rights of the protesters?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2013)

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to its answer to previous written questions E-006193/13, E-006403/13, E-006871/13, E-006302/13, E-006922/13, E-007265/13, E-007260/13, E-007036/13, E-007238/13, E-006378/13, E-006390/13, E-006507/13, E-006891/13, E-006721/13, E-007023/13, E-007093/13, E-007264/13, E-007259/13 ([1]).

The Commission examines progress made by Turkey towards meeting the Copenhagen criteria — including the safeguard of Human Rights — in its annual Progress Reports. The 2013 Progress Report will be published on 16 October 2013.

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007706/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχέδιο δράσης για τη νεολαία για την Ελλάδα

Απαντώντας στην ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004875/2013, η Επιτροπή αναφέρει ότι έχει γίνει εκτεταμένος επαναπρογραμματισμός των ελληνικών προγραμμάτων που συγχρηματοδοτούνται από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο (ΕΚΤ) με βασικό στόχο την αντιμετώπιση της ανεργίας των νέων. Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, εγκρίθηκε εθνικό σχέδιο δράσης για τη νεολαία, με την υποστήριξη από την ΕΕ να ανέρχεται σε 517 εκατ. ευρώ (ΕΚΤ: 466 εκατ. ευρώ, ΕΤΠΑ: 51 εκατ. ευρώ). Το σχέδιο δράσης αφορά 350 000 άτομα κάτω των 35 ετών.

Τούτων δοθέντων, παρακαλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στις εξής ερωτήσεις:

1. Ποια υπήρξε η συνολική πρόοδος του σχεδίου δράσης για την νεολαία στην Ελλάδα;

2. Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παράσχει στοιχεία σχετικά με το ποσό της χρηματοδότησης που έχει απορροφηθεί μέχρι σήμερα σε εθνικό επίπεδο;

3. Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παρουσιάσει πίνακα με τα χρηματοδοτικά ποσά που έχουν απορροφηθεί έως σήμερα ανά περιοχή;

4. Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παρουσιάσει πίνακα με τους αριθμούς των ατόμων που έχουν μέχρι στιγμής επωφεληθεί από το σχέδιο δράσης για τη νεολαία, σε εθνικό επίπεδο και σε επίπεδο περιοχής;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Αυγούστου 2013)

Το εθνικό σχέδιο δράσης της Ελλάδας για τη νεολαία εγκρίθηκε από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση στις αρχές του 2013. Έκτοτε, σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες από τις ελληνικές αρχές, οι ενέργειες που είχαν ήδη ξεκινήσει πριν από την έγκριση του σχεδίου δράσης εξακολουθούν να εφαρμόζονται κανονικά, ενώ πρόσφατα άρχισε η εφαρμογή δύο νέων ενεργειών («Επιταγή εισόδου στην αγορά εργασίας άνεργων νέων» και «Επιταγή εισόδου στην αγορά εργασίας άνεργων νέων στον τομέα του τουρισμού») που περιλαμβάνονται στο σχέδιο, ενώ σύντομα θα ξεκινήσει μια τρίτη ενέργεια («Προώθηση της καινοτόμου επιχειρηματικότητας των νέων»).

Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με την οικονομική και φυσική πρόοδο της εφαρμογής του εθνικού σχεδίου δράσης της Ελλάδας για τη νεολαία, ιδίως στο επίπεδο των λεπτομερειών που ζητεί ο κ. βουλευτής, η Επιτροπή του συνιστά να έρθει σε επαφή με την Ειδική Υπηρεσία Συντονισμού και Παρακολούθησης Δράσεων του ΕΚΤ στην Ελλάδα (ΕΥΣΕΚΤ): κα Σ. Παπούλια, προϊσταμένη της ΕΥΣΕΚΤ, Κοραή 4, 105 64 Αθήνα, τηλέφωνο: +30 210 52 71 400, φαξ: +30 210 52 71 420, διεύθυνση ηλεκτρονικού ταχυδρομείου: spapoulia@mou.gr

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007706/13
to the Commission
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Youth action plan for Greece

In its reply to Written Question E-004875/2013, the Commission mentions that there has been an extensive reprogramming of the Greek programmes that are co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), the main aim being to combat youth unemployment. In this respect, a national youth action plan was approved, with EU support amounting to EUR 517 million (ESF support: EUR 466 million; European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support: EUR 51 million). This action plan concerns 350 000 people below the age of 35.

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

1. What has been the overall progress of the youth action plan for Greece?

2. Could the Commission provide information on the amount of funding that has been absorbed so far at national level?

3. Could the Commission provide a table with the amount of funding that has been absorbed so far per region?

4. Could the Commission provide a table indicating the number of people that have so far benefited from the youth action plan, at national level and per region?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The National Youth Action Plan of Greece was adopted by the Greek Government in early 2013. Since then, according to information from the Greek authorities, operations already launched before the adoption of the action plan continue to be implemented on a regular basis, while the implementation of two new operations ('Cheque for the entrance of unemployed young people to the labour market' and 'Cheque for the entrance of unemployed young people to the labour market in the sector of tourism') included in the plan has recently started and a third operation ('Promotion of youth innovative entrepreneurship') will be launched soon.

For more information on the financial and physical progress of the implementation of the Greek Youth Action Plan, especially at the level of detail requested by the Honourable MEP, the Commission suggests that he contacts the Special Service for the Coordination of ESF Actions in Greece (EYSEKT): Mrs S. Papoulia, Head of the EYSEKT, 4 Korai Street, 105 64 Athens, telephone: +30 210 52 71 400, fax: +30 210 52 71 420, e-mail: spapoulia@mou.gr

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007707/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Επαναπρογραμματισμός του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης υπέρ των ΜΜΕ στην Ελλάδα

Απαντώντας στην ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-004875/2013, η Επιτροπή αναφέρει ότι το 2012 επαναπρογραμματίστηκε η χρηματοδότηση του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης προς τα ελληνικά περιφερειακά προγράμματα προκειμένου να διατεθούν επιπλέον πόροι για τη στήριξη της ανταγωνιστικότητας, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της επιπλέον υποστήριξης ύψους 1 δισ. ευρώ για τις ΜΜΕ και για τη διασφάλιση της αποτελεσματικής λειτουργίας του Ταμείου Εγγυήσεων για τις ΜΜΕ. Οι δράσεις που υποστηρίζουν τις ΜΜΕ είχαν φτάσει σε σημείο μεγάλου κορεσμού και ήταν απαραίτητη μια αναδιάρθρωση. Για τον σκοπό αυτό, οι πόροι που διατέθηκαν στις προτεραιότητες «Προσβασιμότητα» και «Αειφόρος ανάπτυξη και ποιότητα ζωής» μεταφέρθηκαν στην προτεραιότητα «Ανταγωνισμός, καινοτομία και ψηφιακή σύγκλιση». Επιπλέον, το πρόγραμμα «Ψηφιακή σύγκλιση» μείωσε τον προϋπολογισμό του κατά 225 εκατ. ευρώ συμμετοχής της ΕΕ (300 εκατ. ευρώ δημόσιας δαπάνης) ώστε να ενισχυθεί το πρόγραμμα «Ανταγωνισμός και επιχειρηματικότητα» και, ιδίως, οι δράσεις υπέρ των ΜΜΕ.

Παρακαλείται η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στις ακόλουθες ερωτήσεις:

1. Ποια υπήρξε η συνολική πρόοδος των προγραμμάτων που αναδιαρθρώθηκαν για να υποστηριχθούν οι ΜΜΕ;

2. Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παράσχει στοιχεία σχετικά με τα ποσά που έχουν απορροφηθεί μέχρι σήμερα σε εθνικό επίπεδο, κατανεμημένα ανά πρόγραμμα;

3. Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παρουσιάσει πίνακα με τα ποσά που έχουν απορροφηθεί έως σήμερα από ΜΜΕ ανά περιοχή;

4. Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να παρουσιάσει πίνακα με τους αριθμούς των ΜΜΕ που έχουν μέχρι στιγμής επωφεληθεί από την αναδιάρθρωση, κατανεμημένων τόσο ανά κράτος μέλος όσο και ανά περιοχή;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η αναθεώρηση του ελληνικού εθνικού προγράμματος και των ελληνικών περιφερειακών προγραμμάτων, η οποία πραγματοποιήθηκε το 2012, είχε σκοπό να ενισχύσει την υποστήριξη προς τις επιχειρήσεις μέσω μέτρων για την αύξηση της ρευστότητας αλλά και μέσω στοχευμένων παρεμβάσεων άμεσης υποστήριξης.

Στη μέτρηση της προόδου έπρεπε να ληφθεί υπόψη η σταθερή αλλά αργή ανάκαμψη της οικονομίας της χώρας και ιδίως του τραπεζικού της συστήματος. Με βάση αυτά η Ελλάδα βρίσκεται σήμερα στην τέταρτη θέση μεταξύ των 27 κρατών μελών, όσον αφορά την απορρόφηση των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων.

Στο παράρτημα 1 θα βρείτε συγκεκριμένες πληροφορίες για τις δράσεις και προσκλήσεις υποβολής προτάσεων που πραγματοποιήθηκαν μετά την εγκριθείσα αναθεώρηση, όπως τις λάβαμε από τις ελληνικές αρχές και στο παράρτημα 2 στοιχεία για τη συγκεκριμένη κατάσταση απορρόφησης των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων στην Ελλάδα καθώς και για την εξέλιξη της απορρόφησης από το 2007 μέχρι σήμερα.

Επειδή οι δράσεις για την υποστήριξη των ΜΜΕ βρίσκονται σε εξέλιξη και εμπλέκονται πολλοί ενδιάμεσοι φορείς (διαχειριστικές αρχές και ενδιάμεσοι φορείς για τις δράσεις άμεσης υποστήριξης και διαχειριστικές αρχές, εταιρείες επενδύσεων χαρτοφυλακίου και τράπεζες για τις δράσεις που εξαρτώνται από τα μέσα χρηματοοικονομικής τεχνικής) δεν μπορεί να γίνει αθροιστική εκτίμηση των άμεσων ενισχύσεων και των δανείων σ' αυτό το στάδιο σε εθνικό και/ή περιφερειακό επίπεδο. Ωστόσο, σε ό,τι αφορά την άμεση ενίσχυση, έχουν ωφεληθεί μέχρι σήμερα 106 711 επιχειρήσεις με το ποσό των 3 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ που εκταμιεύτηκε για δράσεις του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης και του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007707/13
to the Commission
Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: European Regional Development Fund reprogramming in favour of SMEs in Greece

In its reply to Written Question E-004875/2013, the Commission mentions that in 2012 financing from the Greek regional programmes of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was reprogrammed in order to allocate additional resources to support competitiveness, including the additional support of EUR 1 billion for SMEs, and in order to ensure the effective functioning of the Guarantee Fund for SMEs. Actions supporting SMEs had reached saturation point and reprogramming was necessary. For this purpose, resources allocated to priorities 'Accessibility' and 'Sustainable development and quality of life' were transferred to the priority 'Competition, innovation and digital convergence'. Moreover, the EU budget contribution for the programme 'Digital Convergence' was reduced by EUR 225 million (EUR 300 million of public expenditure) in order to strengthen the programme 'Competition and Entrepreneurship', in particular the actions in support of SMEs.

Could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. What has been the overall progress of the programmes that have been reprogrammed in support of SMEs?

2. Could the Commission provide information on the amounts that have been absorbed so far at a national level broken down by programme?

3. Could the Commission provide a table with the amounts that have been absorbed so far by SMEs per region?

4. Could the Commission provide a table with the number of SMEs that have so far benefited from the reprogramming, broken down both at the national level and per region?

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

The 2012 revision of the Greek national and regional programmes aimed at enhancing business support through measures which would strengthen the liquidity but also through targeted interventions of direct support.

Progress has to be measured while taking into consideration the steady but slow recovery of the country's economy and, particularly, of its banking system. Taking this into account, at this moment Greece stands 4th out of the 27 Member States, in terms of absorption of Structural Funds.

Specific information is attached in Annex 1 about the actions and calls made after the approved revision, as received from the Greek authorities and in Annex 2 about the state of play of the Structural Funds absorption in Greece and on the evolution of absorption from 2007 to date.

As the actions supporting SMEs are ongoing, involving many intermediate bodies (managing authorities (MAs) and intermediate bodies for the direct support actions and MAs, holding funds and banks for the financial engineering instruments actions) an aggregation between direct aid and loans cannot be made at this stage at national and/or regional level. However, regarding direct aid, 106.711 enterprises have benefited so far from EUR 3 billion, paid for actions supported by the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007708/13
aan de Commissie
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: Gevolgen van het Duitse auteursrecht voor het recht op informatie en het vrije verkeer van diensten

Op 1 augustus 2013 wordt in Duitsland een nieuwe wet op het auteursrecht van kracht ([1]) waarmee uitgevers een exclusief recht wordt verleend op het commerciële gebruik van hun publicaties op het internet. In de wet is voorzien in een uitzondering voor het gebruik van losse woorden en zeer kleine tekstsnippers. Er wordt niet gespecificeerd wat de maximum tekstlengte is waarop de uitzondering van toepassing kan zijn.

Om de nieuwe wet na te leven heeft Google aangekondigd alle Duitse uitgevers te zullen verwijderen uit Google News met ingang van 1 augustus 2013, tenzij zij zich voor de dienst opgeven en Google News toestemming verlenen om delen van hun onlinepublicaties over te nemen ([2]). In andere lidstaten hoeven uitgevers Google geen voorafgaande toestemming te verlenen om in Google News te worden opgenomen, maar hebben zij de mogelijkheid om niet met de dienst mee te doen.

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat de maatregelen die door Google zijn genomen om het Duitse auteursrecht na te leven, significante gevolgen kunnen hebben voor de toegang van Duitse burgers tot nieuws op het internet, met als gevolg een impact op het recht om informatie te ontvangen en te verspreiden? Zo niet, waarom niet?

2. Is de Commissie van mening dat het Duitse auteursrecht het vrije verkeer van diensten schendt? Zo niet, waarom niet?

3. Wil de Commissie zorgen voor dezelfde gebruiksvoorwaarden in de hele EU voor diensten (inclusief onlinediensten) die in de EU worden verstrekt? Zo niet, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(27 augustus 2013)

1. De Commissie is op de hoogte van de discussies over de door het geachte Parlementslid genoemde nieuwe Duitse wet met betrekking tot de rechten van uitgevers wat onlinepublicatie betreft. De Commissie merkt op dat Google News van Google een belangrijke dienst is, maar dat de Duitse burgers ook via andere online- en offlinediensten toegang hebben tot informatie. Allereerst zal de zoekmachine van Google nog steeds verwijzen naar de perswebsites en ten tweede zijn er andere informatiebronnen op grote schaal toegankelijk in Duitsland. Op dit moment zijn er geen aanwijzingen dat de wet invloed zou kunnen hebben op het recht van Duitse burgers om informatie te ontvangen en te verspreiden.

2. De Commissie kan op grond van de ontvangen informatie niet concluderen dat de nieuwe Duitse wet een ongerechtvaardigde beperking vormt op het vrije verkeer van diensten in de EU. In deze context merkt de Commissie op dat overeenkomstig de rechtspraak van het Hof van Justitie van de Europese Unie de bescherming van intellectuele eigendom, waaronder het auteursrecht, een dwingende reden van algemeen belang is, die maatregelen kan rechtvaardigen die leiden tot een beperking van het vrij verrichten van diensten, op voorwaarde dat de betrokken maatregelen niet-discriminerend en evenredig zijn.

3. Op dit moment is de Commissie niet van plan om op EU-niveau soortgelijke maatregelen voor te stellen als die welke in de nieuwe Duitse wet zijn opgenomen. De Commissie benadrukt voorts dat de vrijheid van meningsuiting en informatie een van de belangrijkste pijlers van onze democratische samenleving is, vastgelegd in artikel 11 van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie en artikel 10 van het Europees Verdrag voor de rechten van de mens (EVRM). Overeenkomstig haar bevoegdheden zet de Commissie zich ten volle in om de eerbiediging van de grondrechten te waarborgen en te bevorderen.

([1]) http://www.bgbl.de/Xaver/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl & jumpTo=bgbl113s1161.pdf#__Bundesanzeiger_BGBl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D'bgbl113s1161.pdf'%5D__1372177469034.

([2]) http://google-produkte.blogspot.de/2013/06/google-news-bleibt-offene-plattform-fuer-verlage.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007708/13
to the Commission
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Impact of German copyright law upon the right to information and the free movement of services

On 1 August 2013 a new copyright law ([1]) will enter into force in Germany, giving publishers the exclusive right to the commercial use of their publications on the Internet. The law provides for an exception with regard to the use of single words and very small snippets of text. It does not specify the maximum length of text to which the exception may be applied.

In order to comply with the new law, Google has announced that it will remove all German publishers from Google News as of 1 August 2013, unless they opt in to the service and allow Google News to republish parts of their online publications ([2]). In other Member States, publishers do not have to give Google prior consent to be included in Google News, but they do have the possibility of opting out of the service.

1. Does the Commission consider that the measures taken by Google in order to comply with German copyright law could have a significant impact upon German citizens' access to news on the Internet, thereby impacting upon the right to receive and communicate information? If not, why not?

2. Does the Commission consider that the German copyright law impinges upon the free movement of services? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission seek to establish the same terms of use throughout the EU for services (including online services) provided in the EU? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of discussions prompted by the new German law on the rights of publishers online mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Commission notes that Google News service provided by Google, however significant, is not the only means by which German citizens have access to information, either online or offline. First, the press websites are still referenced in the Google search engine and second, other information sources are largely accessible and available in Germany. There are at this stage no indications that the law may affect German citizens' rights to receive and communicate information.

2. The Commission is not in a position, based on the information received, to conclude whether the new German law unjustifiably restricts free movement of services in the EU. The Commission notes in this context that according to the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union the protection of intellectual property, which includes copyright, is an overriding reason of general interest, which may justify measures resulting in restrictions to freedom to provide services provided that such measures are non-discriminatory and proportionate.

3. At the moment the Commission is not planning to propose measures similar to those covered by the new German law at EU level. Furthermore, the Commission underlines that freedom of expression and information constitutes one of the essential foundations of democratic societies, enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Commission is fully committed to ensuring and promoting the respect of fundamental rights within the scope of its competences.

([1]) http://www.bgbl.de/Xaver/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl113s1161.pdf#__.Bundesanzeiger_BGBl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D'bgbl113s1161.pdf'%5D__1372177469034.

([2]) http://google-produkte.blogspot.de/2013/06/google-news-bleibt-offene-plattform-fuer-verlage.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007709/13
to the Commission
James Nicholson (ECR)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Driving of mega trucks in Europe

The revision of the EU 'Circulation Directive' (Directive 96/53/EC) proposes to legalise cross-border mega trucks. It is worth bearing in mind that 14% of fatal crashes are caused by heavy good vehicles (HGVs) and that these accidents are often due to the blind spots and the sheer size and mass of the vehicles. Statistics from 2011 show that 98% of people fatally involved in such accidents are occupants of other vehicles. Mega trucks are larger and heavier than normal HGVs and this will inevitably create more blind spots and increase the chance of other issues such as snaking, which makes the mega truck even more dangerous than normal trucks to those in and surrounding the vehicle.

With this in mind, what measures are being taken by the Commission to ensure that mega trucks are safer to surrounding traffic? Further, what measures are being taken to improve safety on the trucks themselves?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The Commission proposal does not 'legalise cross-border mega trucks'. It clarifies the current provisions of an article in the existing Directive 96/53/EC.

This article allows a longer vehicle to cross one border, where the two Member States allow the circulation of such vehicles on their respective territories. It is a choice for Member States to make, based on local conditions. The directive does not impose longer trucks. At the same time, if two Member States have authorised the use of such vehicles and if they share a border, it would be manifestly absurd for the EU to suggest that the vehicles cannot cross the border, as long as international competition is not significantly affected.

Reports on the trials of longer vehicles in Denmark and the Netherlands point to fewer kilometres driven, reduced emissions, no detrimental impact on road safety and no detrimental impact on infrastructure wear and tear. The Commission will gladly make these reports available to the Honourable Member on request.

The Commission proposal also intends to provide manufacturers with the opportunity to improve the design of the cabin, allowing safer and more aerodynamic cabins than today. This measure shall improve the field of vision of the driver, reduce dead angles, and allow implementing crumple zones to reduce the impact of crashes.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007710/13
alla Commissione
Patrizia Toia (S&D), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) e Oreste Rossi (NI)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Controversie transfrontaliere in materia civile: patrocinio a spese dello Stato in Germania

Il Mediatore del Parlamento europeo per i casi di sottrazione internazionale di minori ha ricevuto diverse segnalazioni di presunte irregolarità concernenti l'applicazione in Germania della normativa per la concessione del patrocinio a spese dello Stato nell'ambito di controversie transfrontaliere in materia civile.

Viene, infatti, segnalato che spesso in Germania a decidere della concessione o meno del patrocinio a spese dello Stato in casi di controversie transfrontaliere in materia civile, sia la stessa autorità giudiziaria competente per il merito della controversia.

Oltretutto, in alcuni casi l'autorità giudiziaria impone al richiedente, ai fini della concessione o meno del patrocinio a spese dello Stato, di fornire alla controparte i documenti giustificativi relativi a reddito, patrimonio, situazione familiare, e valutazione delle risorse delle persone a carico del richiedente della domanda di patrocinio a spese dello Stato.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— il fatto che la stessa Autorità giudiziaria competente nel merito decida anche della concessione del patrocinio a spese dello Stato per il richiedente non è in contrasto con la direttiva 2002/8/CE del Consiglio del 27 gennaio 2003?

— Il fatto che l'Autorità giudiziaria competente richieda che i documenti giustificativi della domanda di patrocinio a spese dello Stato relativi a reddito, patrimonio, situazione familiare, e valutazione delle risorse delle persone a carico del richiedente siano messe a disposizione della controparte, non è in contrasto con la direttiva 2002/8/CE del Consiglio del 27 gennaio 2003?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(30 agosto 2013)

La direttiva 2003/8/CE del Consiglio del 27 gennaio 2003 («direttiva sul patrocinio a spese dello Stato») punta a migliorare l'accesso alla giustizia nelle controversie transfrontaliere attraverso la definizione di norme minime comuni relative al patrocinio a spese dello Stato in tali controversie. La direttiva assicura che la complessità e le differenze dei sistemi giuridici degli Stati membri, così come i costi derivanti dal carattere transfrontaliero delle controversie, non ostacolino l'accesso alla giustizia. Tuttavia, essa non interviene nei sistemi giudiziari degli Stati membri laddove tale intervento non risulta necessario in considerazione dell'obiettivo della direttiva. Pertanto, la direttiva non disciplina le questioni di competenza, né armonizza la procedura per le richieste di patrocinio negli Stati membri.

Poiché la direttiva non stabilisce quale autorità nello Stato membro del foro o di esecuzione della sentenza è competente a decidere in merito alla richiesta di patrocinio a spese dello Stato, il fatto che in uno Stato membro l'autorità giudiziaria che decide se concedere il patrocinio al richiedente possa essere la stessa autorità giudiziaria competente in caso di controversia non viola la direttiva in questione.

La direttiva sul patrocinio a spese dello Stato non disciplina la questione della riservatezza delle informazioni riguardanti le risorse finanziarie del richiedente, né stabilisce in quali casi tali informazioni possano essere comunicate alla parte avversa. Pertanto, la possibilità concessa all'autorità giudiziaria di uno Stato membro di decidere di mettere a disposizione della parte avversa i documenti giustificativi relativi al reddito, al patrimonio e alla situazione familiare del richiedente e la valutazione delle risorse delle persone a suo carico non viola la direttiva.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007710/13
to the Commission
Patrizia Toia (S&D), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Cross-border civil disputes: legal aid in Germany

The European Parliament Mediator for International Parental Child Abduction has received a number of reports of alleged irregularities in the application in Germany of laws on legal aid in cross-border civil disputes.

It is reported in fact that in Germany, the court that decides whether or not legal aid should be granted for cross-border civil disputes is often the same court as is competent for the dispute.

Moreover, there are cases where, for the purposes of granting or not granting legal aid, the court orders the applicant to provide the opposing party with documentary proof of income, assets, family situation and an estimation of his/her dependants' means.

Could the Commission answer the following:

— The court competent to hear the dispute may also be the court that decides whether the applicant shall be granted legal aid. Does this not contravene Council Directive 2003/8/EC of 27 January 2003?

— The competent court may order that documentary proof of the legal aid applicant's income, assets and family situation, and an estimation of his or her dependants' means, is to be made available to the opposing party. Does this not contravene Council Directive 2003/8/EC of 27 January 2003?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

Council Directive 2003/8/EC of 27 January 2003 ('Legal Aid Directive') aims at improving access to justice in cross-border disputes by establishing minimum common rules relating to legal aid in such disputes. It ensures that the complexity of and differences between the legal systems of the Member States and the costs inherent in the cross-border dimension of a dispute do not preclude access to justice. The directive does however refrain from intervening into the judicial systems of the Member States where such an intervention is not necessary in view of the directive's purpose. Therefore, the directive does not regulate questions of jurisdiction or harmonise the procedure for legal aid applications in the Member States.

As the directive does not regulate which authority in the Member State in which the court is sitting or where a judgment is to be enforced is competent to decide upon the application for legal aid, the fact that in a Member State the court that decides whether the applicant shall be granted legal aid may also be the court competent to hear the dispute does not contravene the Legal Aid Directive.

The Legal Aid Directive does not regulate the question of confidentiality of information concerning the financial resources of the applicant nor circumstances under which this information may be disclosed to the opposing party. The possibility for a court in a Member State to decide to make documentary proof of the legal aid applicant's income, assets and family situation and an estimation of his or her dependants' means, available to the opposing party does therefore not contravene the directive.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007711/13
alla Commissione
Patrizia Toia (S&D), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) e Oreste Rossi (NI)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: La misura amministrativa «Beistandschaft» dello Jugendamt tedesco

Lo Jugendamt tedesco emette correntemente nel corso della sua attività misure amministrative («Beistandschaft») che sostanzialmente consistono nel mettere in dimora un genitore, spesso non tedesco e non residente in Germania, per il pagamento del sostegno alimentare per il figlio che vive con l'altro genitore in Germania, spesso prima ancora dell'intervento di una sentenza giudiziaria che ne sancisca la legalità.

In sostanza lo Jugendamt, dopo aver anticipato una somma che esso stesso ha stabilito congrua al genitore che vive «de facto» con il figlio, richiede, con la prerogativa e la forza esecutiva di un organismo pubblico, le somme all'altro genitore.

La «Beistandschaft» non è appellabile, non vi è contraddittorio al momento della sua definizione e spesso è viziata da mancata notificazione alla parte che ne apprende l'esistenza soltanto dopo molto tempo, addirittura con il sequestro delle somme richieste dallo stipendio.

Alla luce di quanto sopra esposto e dopo verifica della legislazione tedesca in materia, potrebbe la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

Ritiene che la misura amministrava «Beistandschaft» sia compatibile con il diritto dell'Unione europea?

Ritiene che una misura amministrativa senza contraddittorio, come la «Beistandschaft», in cui un organismo pubblico quale lo Jugendamt si sostituisce a una delle parti contro l'altra, sia compatibile con l'articolo 17 del regolamento (CE) n. 4/2009 del Consiglio, che prevede che la decisione emessa sia riconosciuta in un altro Stato membro senza che sia necessario il ricorso ad alcuna procedura particolare e sia quindi immediatamente esecutiva?

Non ritiene che una misura amministrativa che non prevede alcun tipo di appello, come la «Beistandschaft», emessa da un organismo pubblico quale lo Jugendamt, sia in contrasto con l'articolo 19 del regolamento (CE) n. 4/2009 del Consiglio del 18 dicembre 2008?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(20 agosto 2013)

Gli onorevoli deputati chiedono alla Commissione di pronunciarsi sulla compatibilità della Beistandschaft con il diritto dell'Unione europea. Secondo le informazioni di cui dispone la Commissione, la Beistandschaft in materia di obbligazioni alimentari designa il potere dello Jugendamt (ufficio di assistenza ai minori) di agire in veste di consigliere giuridico del minore. La Commissione sottolinea che la determinazione di un credito alimentare o di prestazioni erogate in luogo degli alimenti, l'organizzazione interna di uno Stato membro ai fini dell'erogazione degli alimenti, la definizione dei poteri dello Jugendamt nell'assistenza ai minori relativamente agli alimenti, il diritto di agire per il rimborso di prestazioni erogate in luogo degli alimenti appartengono alla sfera del diritto nazionale. L'esercizio di tali competenze non rientra nell'applicazione del diritto dell'Unione europea e la Commissione non è pertanto in grado di valutarne la compatibilità.

Peraltro, gli onorevoli deputati chiedono il parere della Commissione sulla compatibilità di una decisione presa dal Jugendamt, nell'ambito delle prerogative di Beistandschaft in materia di obbligazioni alimentari, con gli articoli 17 e 19 del regolamento (CE) n. 4/2009 (regolamento sulle obbligazioni alimentari). La Commissione precisa che lo Jugendamt non è assimilato a una giurisdizione ai sensi del suddetto regolamento; pertanto, ammesso che possa prendere «decisioni unilaterali», queste non fruirebbero delle norme previste dal regolamento sulle obbligazioni alimentari in materia di riconoscimento e di esecuzione, in particolare dell'abolizione dell'exequatur (articolo 17) e della procedura di riesame (articolo 19).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007711/13
to the Commission
Patrizia Toia (S&D), Roberta Angelilli (PPE), Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Erminia Mazzoni (PPE), Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE) and Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Germany's Jugendamt (child welfare office) and its 'Beistandschaft' administrative measure

In Germany, part of the Jugendamt's everyday work involves issuing administrative measures known as 'Beistandschaft'. These consist in the main of bringing a default action against a parent, who is often not a German citizen and not resident in Germany, for maintenance payments for the child living with the other parent in Germany. This can often happen even before a judicial ruling gives it legality.

In essence the Jugendamt, having advanced a sum of money that it has itself decided is suitable to the parent that is de facto living with the child, then applies to the other parent for repayment of this amount, relying in so doing on its prerogative and enforceable powers as a public body.

There is no right of appeal against the 'Beistandschaft'. It is decided upon without a hearing and it is often vitiated by a failure to notify the party concerned, who only learns of its existence some considerable time later when the sums involved are deducted under an attachment of earnings.

Having duly verified the German laws concerned, could the Commission answer the following:

Does it believe the 'Beistandschaft' administrative measure is compatible with European Union law?

Does it believe that an administrative measure without a hearing, such as the 'Beistandschaft', in which a public body such as the Jugendamt stands in the place of one party against the other, is compatible with Article 17 of Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009, which provides that a decision given is recognised in another Member State without any special procedure being required and is therefore immediately enforceable?

Does it believe that an administrative measure that does not allow for any form of appeal, such as the 'Beistandschaft', issued by a public body such as the Jugendamt, is contrary to Article 19 of Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009 of 18 December 2008?

(Version française)

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

Les Honorables Parlementaires interrogent la Commission sur la compatibilité du Beistandschaft avec le droit de l'Union européenne. Selon les informations dont dispose la Commission, le Beistandschaft en matière d'obligations alimentaires désigne le pouvoir donné au Jugendamt (service d'aide à la jeunesse) d'agir en tant que conseiller juridique de l'enfant en ce domaine. La Commission souligne que la détermination d'une créance alimentaire ou de prestations versées à titre d'aliments, l'organisation interne d'un État membre pour allouer des aliments, la définition des pouvoirs du Jugendamt pour assister un enfant en matière alimentaire ou son droit d'agir en remboursement des prestations fournies à titre d'aliments relèvent du droit national. L'exercice de ces pouvoirs ne relève pas de la mise en œuvre du droit de l'Union européenne. La Commission n'est donc pas en mesure d'en évaluer la compatibilité avec le droit de l'Union européenne.

Par ailleurs, les Honorables Parlementaires souhaitent connaître l'avis de la Commission quant à la compatibilité d'une décision prise par le Jugendamt dans le cadre de ses pouvoirs de Beistandschaft en matière d'obligations alimentaires avec les articles 17 et 19 du règlement (CE) n° 4/2009 (le règlement «aliments»). À cet égard, la Commission précise que le Jugendamt n'est pas assimilé à une juridiction au sens du règlement «aliments». Dès lors, à supposer qu'il puisse prendre des «décisions unilatérales», celles-ci ne bénéficieraient pas des règles prévues par le règlement «aliments» en matière de reconnaissance et d'exécution, en particulier de l'abolition de l'exequatur (article 17) et de la procédure de réexamen (article 19).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007712/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Minori temporaneamente fuori dalla famiglia di origine

Numerosi rapporti e articoli di stampa italiani hanno messo in luce un eccessivo affidamento di bambini in casa-famiglia o all'affidamento familiare, tanto da far parlare di «allontanamenti facili».

Spesso i minori vengono allontanati per motivi generici (ad esempio conflittualità, problemi economici, inidoneità genitoriale, problemi abitativi), senza una reale possibilità di ascoltare i genitori e i minori coinvolti, sulla sola base dei rapporti dei servizi sociali e delle perizie psichiatriche o psicologiche.

Secondo il documento «Quaderni della ricerca sociale — bambine e bambini temporaneamente fuori dalla famiglia di origine», al 31 dicembre 2010, i minorenni accolti temporaneamente presso i servizi residenziali familiari e socio-educativi e le famiglie affidatarie erano circa 30 mila.

Il fenomeno è cresciuto del 24 % rispetto al periodo 1998/1999.

Allo stato attuale, non si riesce a distinguere gli allontanamenti realmente necessari da quelli che, con un'adeguata politica di sostegno alle famiglie in grado di prevenire e risolvere i disagi, potrebbero essere evitati, soprattutto senza allontanare i bambini dai propri genitori.

Fatto salvo il rispetto del principio di sussidiarietà, può la Commissione chiarire se la situazione sopra descritta possa considerarsi compatibile con l'applicazione della vigente normativa UE in compimento di quanto previsto dall'articolo 24 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea (diritti dei minori), dagli articoli 47 e 48 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'UE nonché dall'articolo 6 della Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo (diritto a un processo equo e diritti della difesa)?

Può inoltre indicare le modalità per informare e sensibilizzare genitori e operatori del settore sui temi legati alla famiglia, con particolare enfasi sulla necessità di preferire il supporto alla famiglia in difficoltà e di considerare l'allontanamento del minore dal proprio nucleo familiare come soluzione estrema?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(3 settembre 2013)

In base all'articolo 24 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, in tutti gli atti relativi ai minori l'interesse superiore del minore deve essere considerato preminente. Tuttavia, conformemente all'articolo 51, paragrafo 1, della medesima, le disposizioni della Carta si applicano agli Stati membri esclusivamente nell'attuazione del diritto dell'Unione. Tale principio si applica anche agli articoli 47 e 48 della stessa.

Dalle informazioni fornite dall'onorevole deputato non risulta che le questioni sollevate concernano l'applicazione del diritto dell'Unione. In casi del genere, spetta agli Stati membri e alle loro autorità giudiziarie garantire che i diritti fondamentali siano effettivamente rispettati e tutelati, in conformità alle rispettive legislazioni nazionali e agli obblighi internazionali in materia di diritti umani. Ciò vale anche per l'articolo 6 della Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo.

La responsabilità primaria della cura dei minori ricade sulle famiglie di origine, mentre gli Stati membri hanno la responsabilità generale di sviluppare sistemi di tutela dei minori, compresi servizi che consentano loro di stare con le rispettive famiglie, ove possibile. La Commissione intende sostenere le autorità nazionali nella fornitura di servizi efficaci ed efficienti, come sottolineato dalla Commissione nella raccomandazione «Investire nell'infanzia per spezzare il circolo vizioso dello svantaggio sociale» ([1]). La Commissione aiuta inoltre gli Stati membri a potenziare i sistemi di protezione dei minori, incoraggiando un approccio preventivo, la collaborazione intersettoriale con gli operatori del settore, la formazione di professionisti e il coinvolgimento della società civile e delle famiglie, e garantendo la partecipazione dei minori ([2]).

([1]) COM(2013)778 def.
([2]) Si veda il 7° Forum europeo sui diritti dei minori: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/european-forum/seventh-meeting/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007712/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Children temporarily taken away from their families

A large number of reports and press articles that have appeared in Italy indicate that too many children are being taken into care in institutions and foster families, to the extent that this now appears to have become the 'default option'.

Children are often taken away from their parents on general grounds such as family conflicts, financial problems, parental unsuitability and poor housing solely on the basis of social services' reports and psychiatric or psychological assessments without any real attempt to listen to what the parents and children concerned have to say.

According to the report *'Quaderni della ricerca sociale — bambine e bambini temporaneamente fuori dalla famiglia di origine'* [Social research studies — children temporarily removed from their families] published on 31 December 2010, approximately 30 000 children were temporarily placed with foster families or taken into institutional care that year.

The number of children being taken into care has increased by 24% since 1998/1999.

At present, it is hard to distinguish between cases where there is a real need to take children into care and those where taking them away from their parents could be avoided if the latter were given appropriate support.

Without prejudice to the principle of subsidiarity, can the Commission say whether the abovementioned situation can be considered consistent with EC law implementing Articles 24 (rights of the child), 47 and 48 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights concerning the right to a fair hearing?

How can parents and social workers be made aware of the fact that, where families experience difficulties, the primary focus must be on providing them with support, with children being taken away from their parents only if all else fails?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

According to Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights the child's best interests must be given primary consideration in all actions relating to children. However, in line with Article 51(1) of the Charter, the provisions of the Charter are addressed to Member States only when they are implementing Union law. This also concerns Articles 47 and 48 of the Charter.

On the basis of the information provided by the Honourable Member it does not appear that the matter referred to is related to the implementation of European Union law. In such a case, it is for Member States, including their judicial authorities, to ensure that fundamental rights are effectively respected and protected in accordance with their national legislation and international human rights obligations. This also concerns Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

The primary responsibility for the care of children lies with their birth family. Member States have the overall responsibility for developing their child protection systems, including the provision of services to allow children to stay in their families, where possible. The Commission aims to support national authorities in delivering effective and efficient services as outlined in the Commission Recommendation 'Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage' ([1]). The Commission further supports Member States in strengthening their child protection systems by encouraging a preventative approach and collaboration between child protection actors and across sectors, training of professionals, the involvement of civil society and families and ensuring child participation ([2]).

([1]) COM(2013) 778 final.
([2]) See 7th European Forum on the rights of the child: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/rights-child/european-forum/seventh-meeting/index_en.htm

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007713/13
do Komisji
Tadeusz Zwiefka (PPE)
(28 czerwca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne (ZIT) w województwie kujawsko-pomorskim

W ramach nowej perspektywy finansowej na lata 2014-2020 przewidywana jest w Polsce osobna pula pieniędzy na tzw. zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne. W województwie kujawsko-pomorskim dwa miasta pełnią funkcje związane z zarządzaniem regionem – Bydgoszcz i Toruń. Obecnie przygotowywane są dokumenty, które będą określać zasady współpracy tych dwóch miast w ramach jednego obszaru funkcjonalnego.

1. Czy warunkiem otrzymania wsparcia w ramach funduszy na zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne jest utworzenie przez Bydgoszcz i Toruń jednego ośrodka funkcjonalnego?

2. Czy w momencie znacznych różnic pomiędzy miastami w ramach jednego obszaru funkcjonalnego powinny one na równych prawach sprawować funkcje zarządcze?

3. Czy kryteria wsparcia dla obszarów funkcjonalnych powinny zakładać przymusową zinstytucjonalizowaną współpracę dwóch niezależnych od siebie obszarów miejskich?

4. Czy możliwe jest stworzenie dwóch strategii ZIT, które byłyby obowiązkowo uzgodnione na szczeblu województwa lub, przy braku porozumienia, na szczeblu właściwego ministerstwa?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(20 sierpnia 2013 r.)

1. Zgodnie z projektem aktu prawnego, który jest obecnie negocjowany, zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne (ZIT) mogą być stosowane do połączenia priorytetów jednego lub więcej programów w celu wdrożenia strategii terytorialnych w jednolity sposób. Do państw członkowskich należy określenie obszarów, na których te zintegrowane strategie zostaną zastosowane. To samo odnosi się do obszarów miejskich, gdzie zostanie wprowadzony plan zrównoważonego rozwoju miast.

2. Jeśli państwo członkowskie zdecyduje o zastosowaniu ZIT do wdrożenia planu zrównoważonego rozwoju miasta, władze danego miasta lub funkcjonalnego obszaru miejskiego powinny być co najmniej odpowiedzialne za wybór działań. W uzgodnieniu z instytucją zarządzającą można delegować więcej funkcji zarządczych.

3. ZIT stanowią narzędzie dostosowane do wyzwań, potrzeb i potencjału charakterystycznego dla danego obszaru, które wykraczają poza granice administracyjne (np. funkcjonowanie systemu transportu miejskiego). Do wdrożenia jednej strategii terytorialnej należy stosować jedną strategię ZIT. W przypadku dwóch miast ich strategia powinna być wspólna, ale współpraca międzyinstytucjonalna nie jest wymagana.

4. ZIT są mechanizmem realizacji. Decyzja, czy i gdzie stosować ZIT, powinna zatem wynikać ze zidentyfikowanych potrzeb, wyzwań i potencjału. Do kompetencji państwa członkowskiego należy podjęcie decyzji dotyczących zarządzania ZIT i ich zatwierdzania.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007713/13
to the Commission
Tadeusz Zwiefka (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Integrated Territorial Investments in Kujawsko-Pomorskie province

Under the new Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020, a separate pool of funds has been earmarked for Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) in Poland. There are two cities in Kujawsko-Pomorskie province which perform functions related to the administration of the region: Bydgoszcz and Toruń. Documents are currently being drafted which will define the terms for cooperation between these two cities as they form one functional area.

1. Is receiving support from ITI funds contingent upon Bydgoszcz and Toruń establishing a single functional centre?

2. At a time when there are significant divergences between the two cities that are to form this single functional area, should they be performing management functions on an equal footing?

3. Should the criteria for support for functional areas be premised upon compulsory institutional cooperation between two completely separate urban areas?

4. Would it be possible to establish two ITI strategies that would have to be approved at provincial level, or — in the event that no agreement can be reached — at the level of the appropriate ministry?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

1. According to the draft legistation which is currently being negotiated, the ITI tool can be used to combine priorities from one or more programmes in order to implement territorial strategies in an integrated way. It is up to Member States to define the areas where these integrated strategies will be developped. The same holds for the urban areas where sustainable urban development will be implemented.

2. If a Member State decides that ITIs will be used to implement sustainable urban development, then the urban authorities of the city/functional urban area should be at least responsible for the selection of operations. In agreement with the managing authority, more management functions may be delegated.

3. ITI is a tool that is well suited to address a challenge, need or potential that is specific to an area and that crosses administrative borders (e.g. functioning of urban transport systems). One ITI should implement one territorial strategy. In the case of two cities, their strategy should therefore be common, but compulsory institutional cooperation is not required.

4. ITI is a delivery mechanism. Therefore the choice of if and where to use ITIs should follow from the identified needs, challenges and potential. It is the responsibility of the Member State to decide on the arrangements for the management and approval of ITIs.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007714/13
adresată Comisiei
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(28 iunie 2013)

Subiect: Tarifele de roaming în Uniunea Europeană

Recent, comisarul pentru Agenda Digitală, Neelie Kroes, a anunțat intenția Comisiei Europene de a propune eliminarea tarifelor la serviciile de roaming în Uniunea Europeană. În prezent, Regulamentul (UE) nr. 531/2012 prevede diminuarea acestor tarife la 1 iulie 2013 și, respectiv, la 1 iulie 2014.

Nu este însă clar dacă, prin viitoarea propunere de eliminare a tarifelor de roaming, cetățenii care se vor afla într-un alt stat membru vor plăti costul convorbirilor/SMS-urilor/traficului de date la tarifele naționale din statul de origine. În acest caz, există riscul ca abonații din unele state membre cu costuri mai ridicate ale serviciilor de telefonie mobilă să nu resimtă în aceeași măsură eliminarea tarifelor de roaming, cu excepția posibilei eliminări a costurilor pentru apelurile primite. Totodată, ar putea avea loc și o creștere a tarifelor naționale practicate de operatorii de telefonie mobilă pentru a compensa eliminarea tarifelor de roaming.

Intenționează Comisia să propună o modificare a Regulamentului (UE) nr. 531/2012 sau să vină cu o nouă propunere? De asemenea, abonații la servicii de telefonie mobilă care beneficiază de minute de convorbire/SMS-uri/trafic de date incluse în abonamentul lor se vor putea bucura de pachetul inclus în abonament și atunci când călătoresc în afara țării? Se au în vedere alte măsuri pentru a preveni o creștere a tarifelor practicate de operatorii de telefonie mobilă din statele membre?

Răspuns dat de dna Kroes în numele Comisiei
(1 august 2013)

În lumina concluziilor Consiliului European de primăvară din 2013 în ceea ce privește necesitatea adoptării unor măsuri concrete înainte de Consiliul European din octombrie pentru a realiza piața unică în domeniul TIC cât mai devreme posibil, în prezent, Comisia lucrează la elaborarea unui set de măsuri legislative care ar trebui să permită operatorilor să furnizeze servicii digitale în întreaga UE, iar cetățenilor și întreprinderilor să beneficieze de astfel de servicii, peste tot în Europa. Bazându-se pe măsurile proconcurențiale din Regulamentul privind serviciile de roaming din 2012, Comisia are în vedere adoptarea de măsuri suplimentare pentru a stimula operatorii să furnizeze servicii de roaming la nivelul prețurilor interne, indiferent de pachetul de servicii mobile naționale.

Deși nivelul prețurilor serviciilor interne nu sunt reglementate ca atare în temeiul dreptului UE, cadrul actual de reglementare oferă deja autorităților naționale instrumente de soluționare a oricăror probleme de concurență care ar putea exista în cadrul piețelor lor naționale și, dacă este cazul, de a lua măsuri corective.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007714/13
to the Commission
Elena Băsescu (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Roaming tariffs in the European Union

Neelie Kroes, the Commissioner responsible for the digital agenda, recently announced that the Commission was to bring forward a proposal eliminating tariffs for roaming services in the European Union. Under Regulation (EU) No 531/2012, those tariffs are to be reduced on 1 July 2013, and again on 1 July 2014.

However, it is not clear whether or not, under the forthcoming proposal on eliminating roaming tariffs, people using mobile services in another Member State will be charged for the cost of calls/SMS/data traffic at the tariff applicable in their home Member State. If they are, there is a risk that subscribers in Member States where the cost of mobile phone services is higher will benefit less, comparatively, from the elimination of roaming tariffs, outside the possible abolition of charges for calls received. At the same time, mobile phone operators might increase the tariffs they apply nationally in order to compensate for the elimination of roaming tariffs.

Does the Commission plan to bring forward a proposal amending Regulation (EU) No 531/2012, or will it come forward with a new proposal? Similarly, will subscribers to mobile phone services whose contracts include free calls/SMS/data traffic also be able to use these all-inclusive packages when travelling outside their home country? Are any other measures being considered to prevent mobile phone operators in the various Member States from increasing their tariffs?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(1 August 2013)

In light of the 2013 Spring European Council conclusions regarding the need for concrete measures ahead of the October European Council to achieve the single market in ICT as early as possible, the Commission is currently working on a set of legislative measures which should allow operators to provide digital services across the EU and allow citizens and businesses to enjoy such services from anywhere in Europe. Building on the pro-competitive measures of the 2012 Roaming Regulation the Commission is considering further measures to incentivise operators to provide roaming at domestic price levels irrespective of the domestic mobile service package.

Although the price levels of domestic services are not regulated as such under EU law, the current regulatory framework already provides National Regulatory Authorities with tools to act in relation to any competition problems that may exist within their national markets and, where appropriate, to impose remedies.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-007715/13
до Комисията
Philippe Juvin (PPE), Glenis Willmott (S&D) и Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE)
(28 юни 2013 г.)

Относно: Борбата срещу рака при децата

Според Седмичния епидемиологичен бюлетин ([1]) през 2011 г. туморните патологии са били втората причина за смъртност при децата на възраст от 1 до 14 години. 21 % от смъртните случаи при момчетата и 20 % от случаите при момичетата се дължат на онкологично заболяване. Всяка година във Франция се откриват близо 2 500 нови случаи на онкологични заболявания при деца, като 1 700 от тях са при деца на възраст от 1 до 14 години. За тази възрастова категория в Обединеното кралство се установява сравним брой на диагностицираните случаи — 1 600 случая годишно ([2]).

Оскъдните данни, налични в европейски мащаб, позволяват да се стигне до заключението, че положението е много по-тежко в някои държави от Източна Европа, където нивото на заболеваемост от рак е по-високо.

През последните 30 години в Европа броят на случаите на рак при децата се повишава всяка година с 1 % до 3 %, като от 2010 г. насам се отчита по-рязко увеличение.

Трябва да се отбележи, че по отношение на борбата срещу онкологичните заболявания децата са най-пренебрегнати. Що се отнася до Франция, например, само 2 % от финансирането за научни изследвания в областта на борбата срещу рака е насочено за изследване на заболяването при децата.

Основните причини за настоящото положение са следните:

— остра липса на индивидуализиране при лечението и неадекватност на някои протоколи за лечение;

— недостиг и преустановяване на научните изследвания за откриване на нови молекули с цел лечение на онкологични заболявания при децата поради недостатъчна рентабилност;

— липса на ефикасна химиотерапия, адаптирана за лечението на деца;

— твърде нищожно национално и европейско финансиране, насочено за специализирани научни изследвания (основни, транслационни и клинични), както и прекалено краткосрочни субсидии.

1. Предвид липсата на показатели и данни за целия Европейски съюз по отношение на развитието на онкологичните заболявания при децата, нивото на смъртност и възможните видове лечение възможно ли е Комисията да изготви оценка на въздействието?

2. Предвид тежестта на положението има ли Комисията намерение да предложи законодателство в тази област? Ако да, какви са нейните приоритети?

3. Би ли могла Комисията да предвиди създаването на специфичен ресурс, който би позволил финансирането на програми и дейности с цел провеждане на научни изследвания в областта на борбата срещу онкологичните заболявания при децата?

4. Би ли могла Комисията да предвиди по-значително финансиране за научните изследвания в областта на онкологичните заболявания при децата?

5. Предвижда ли Комисията други инициативи в тази област, които биха могли да бъдат приложени на равнище Европейски съюз и/или на равнище държави членки?

([1]) Седмичен епидемиологичен бюлетин, 7 юни 2011 г./№ 22: http://www.invs.sante.fr/beh/2011/22/beh_22_2011.pdf
([2]) Списание за научни изследвания в областта на онкологичните заболявания „Cancer Research UK“, 14 ноември 2012 г.: http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/childhoodcancer/incidence/.

Отговор, даден от г-н Борг от името на Комисията

(13 август 2013 г.)

В обхвата на Политическата рамка на Комисията относно редките заболявания попадат всички видове онкологични заболявания при децата ([3]). Регламентът за лекарствените продукти сираци ([4]) предоставя стимули за провеждането на научни изследвания и пускането на пазара на лекарствени продукти за редки заболявания. Освен това Регламентът относно лекарствените продукти за педиатрична употреба ([5]) гарантира, че новите лекарствени продукти, предназначени за лечение на онкологични заболявания, се проверяват по отношение на тяхната потенциална употреба при деца. Също така политиката на Комисията за борба с рака обхваща различни дейности, които са от значение и за редките видове рак ([6]).

Що се отнася до наличните данни за онкологичните заболявания при децата, Комисията се позовава на данните на Евростат относно причините за смъртност.

В рамките на Седмата рамкова програма за научни изследвания ([7]) бяха финансирани научни изследвания в областта на онкологичните заболявания при децата в размер на 94 милиона евро. В рамките на инициативи като ENCCA ([8]) (Европейска мрежа за изследвания на рака при децата и подрастващите), IRDiRC ([9]) (Международен консорциум за изследване на редките болести) и създаването на пилотни мрежи за сътрудничество между педиатричните онкологични центрове ([10]) бяха разгърнати допълнителни усилия за координация.

С предложението на Комисията за „Хоризонт 2020“ — Рамкова програма за научни изследвания и иновации (2014—2020 г.) ([11]) ще се създадат възможности за развиване на изследванията на онкологичните заболявания при децата.

На 17 юли 2012 г. Комисията прие предложение за Регламент на Европейския парламент и на Съвета относно клиничните изпитвания на лекарствени продукти за хуманна употреба ([12]). След като бъде приет, настоящият регламент ще премахне ненужните административни пречки за провеждането на клинични изследвания в ЕС. Това важи с особена сила за клиничните изпитвания, които често се разгръщат в няколко държави членки, например клинични изпитвания сред педиатричната популация).

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/non_com/docs/rare_com_en.pdf и http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:151:0007:0010:EN:PDF

([4]) Регламент (ЕО) № 141/2000 на Европейския парламент и на Съвета от 16 декември 1999 г. за лекарствата сираци, ОВ L 18, 22.1.2000 г., стр. 1.

([5]) Регламент (ЕО) № 1901/2006 на Европейския парламент и на Съвета от 12 декември 2006 г., ОВ L 378, 27.12.2006 г., стр.1.

([6]) www.epaac.eu

([7]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html

([8]) http://www.encca.eu/

([9]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/rare-diseases/irdirc_en.html

([10]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/wp2013_fr.pdf

([11]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

([12]) COM(2012) 369 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007715/13
à la Commission
Philippe Juvin (PPE), Glenis Willmott (S&D) et Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE)
(28 juin 2013)

Objet: Lutte contre les cancers pédiatriques

D'après le Bulletin épidémiologique hebdomadaire ([1]), les pathologies tumorales constituaient, en 2011, la deuxième cause de mortalité chez les enfants âgés de 1 à 14 ans. Elles représentaient 21 % des décès chez les garçons et 20 % chez les filles. Chaque année, près de 2 500 nouveaux cas de cancers pédiatriques sont recensés en France, dont 1 700 chez les enfants âgés de 1 à 14 ans. Pour cette dernière catégorie, on constate un nombre comparable de 1 600 cas diagnostiqués par an au Royaume-Uni ([2]).

Les rares données existantes à l'échelle européenne nous permettent de constater que la situation est encore plus dramatique dans certains pays d'Europe de l'Est où les incidences de cancer sont plus importantes.

Le nombre de cancers pédiatriques augmente de 1 à 3 % par an en Europe depuis 30 ans avec une accélération constatée depuis 2010.

Force est de constater que les enfants sont les grands oubliés de la lutte contre le cancer. Par exemple, pour le cas de la France, seulement 2 % des fonds alloués à la recherche contre le cancer sont consacrés aux cancers pédiatriques.

Les raisons principales de cette situation sont:

— un manque cruel d'individualisation des traitements et une inadéquation de certains protocoles de traitements;

— un manque et un arrêt des recherches de nouvelles molécules pour le traitement des cancers pédiatriques pour des motifs de non-rentabilité;

— une absence de traitement chimiothérapeutique adapté aux enfants et efficace;

— un financement national et européen trop faible de la recherche (fondamentale, translationnelle et clinique) spécialisée et des subventions à trop court terme.

1. Vu le manque d'indicateurs et de données à l'échelle de l'Union européenne sur l'apparition des cancers pédiatriques, les taux de mortalité et les traitements disponibles, la Commission pourrait-elle lancer une étude d'impact?

2. Devant la gravité de la situation, la Commission a-t-elle l'intention de légiférer dans ce domaine? Si oui, quelles sont ses priorités?

3. La Commission pourrait-elle envisager de créer une ressource spécifique qui permettrait de financer des programmes et des actions de recherche dans la lutte contre les cancers pédiatriques?

4. La Commission pourrait-elle envisager de dédier une proportion plus importante de financements à la recherche sur le cancer pédiatrique?

5. La Commission voit-elle d'autres initiatives qui pourraient être mises en place à l'échelle de l'Union européenne et/ou des États membres dans ce domaine?

([1]) Bulletin épidémiologique hebdomadaire, 7 juin 2011/n°22: http://www.invs.sante.fr/beh/2011/22/beh_22_2011.pdf
([2]) Cancer Research UK, 14 novembre 2012: http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/childhoodcancer/incidence/.

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(13 août 2013)

Tous les cancers pédiatriques relèvent du cadre politique sur les maladies rares de la Commission ([3]). Le règlement concernant les médicaments orphelins ([4]) encourage la recherche et la mise sur le marché de médicaments destinés aux maladies rares. De plus, le règlement relatif aux médicaments à usage pédiatrique ([5]) garantit que les nouveaux médicaments développés pour traiter le cancer sont vérifiés en ce qui concerne leur utilisation potentielle en pédiatrie. Par ailleurs, la politique de la Commission relative au cancer couvre différentes activités qui concernent également les cancers rares. ([6])

En ce qui concerne les données disponibles sur les cancers pédiatriques, la Commission renvoie aux données d'Eurostat sur les causes de mortalité.

Le septième programme-cadre de recherche ([7]) a financé la recherche sur les cancers pédiatriques pour un montant de 94 millions d'euros. Les efforts de coordination sont renforcés par des initiatives telles que l'ENCCA ([8]) (réseau européen pour la recherche du cancer chez les enfants et les adolescents), l'IRDiRC ([9]) (consortium international de recherche sur les maladies rares) et la création de réseaux pilotes de coopération entre les centres d'oncologie pédiatrique ([10]).

La proposition de la Commission pour Horizon 2020 — Le programme-cadre pour la recherche et l'innovation (2014-2020) ([11]) offrira des possibilités de promouvoir la recherche sur le cancer pédiatrique.

Le 17 juillet 2012, la Commission a adopté une proposition de règlement du Parlement européen et du Conseil sur les essais cliniques et les médicaments à usage humain ([12]). Ce règlement, une fois adopté, lèvera les obstacles administratifs inutiles à la réalisation d'essais cliniques dans l'UE. Cela vaut en in particulier pour les essais cliniques qui sont souvent déployés dans plusieurs États membres (tels que les essais cliniques en pédiatrie).

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/non_com/docs/rare_com_fr.pdf et http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:151:0007:0010:FR:PDF
([4]) Règlement (CE) n° 141/2000 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 16 décembre 1999 concernant les médicaments orphelins (JO L 18 du 22.1.2000, p. 1).
([5]) Règlement (UE) n° 1901/2006 du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 12 décembre 2006 (JO L 378 du 27.12.2006, p. 1).
([6]) www.epaac.eu.
([7]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
([8]) http://www.encca.eu/
([9]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/rare-diseases/irdirc_en.html
([10]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/wp2013_fr.pdf
([11]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents
([12]) COM(2012)369 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007715/13
to the Commission
Philippe Juvin (PPE), Glenis Willmott (S&D) and Antonyia Parvanova (ALDE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Fight against childhood cancer

According to a study published in the French weekly epidemiological report ([1]), in 2011 tumours were the second most common cause of death in France among children between the ages of 1 and 14, accounting for 21% of male deaths and 20% of female deaths. Some 2 500 new cases of childhood cancer are recorded in France each year, of which 1 700 concern children between the ages of 1 and 14. The figures are similar for the United Kingdom, where 1 600 children in this age group are diagnosed with cancer every year ([2]).

The limited data available at European level shows that the situation is even worse in some Eastern European countries, where the incidence of cancer is even higher.

The number of childhood-cancer cases in Europe has been increasing by 1% to 3% each year over the past 30 years, with a marked rise since 2010.

Children are often overlooked in the fight against cancer. In the case of France, for example, only 2% of cancer research funding is dedicated to research into childhood cancers.

The main reasons for this are:

— mismatched treatment protocols and a severe lack of tailored therapy,

— scant research into new molecules for treating childhood cancers, which has now been stopped altogether for reasons of non-profitability,

— no effective chemotherapy treatment properly adapted to children,

— insufficient national and European funding for specialised research (basic, translational and clinical) and excessively short-term subsidies.

1. Given the lack of European indicators and data on the development of childhood cancers, mortality rates and the treatments available, might the Commission consider conducting an impact assessment?

2. Given the severity of the situation, does the Commission intend to legislate in this area? If so, what are its priorities?

3. Might the Commission consider creating a specific resource for funding research programmes and actions in the fight against childhood cancer?

4. Might the Commission consider dedicating more funding to childhood-cancer research?

5. Does the Commission see any other initiatives that could be put in place in this area at EU and/or Member State level?

([1]) Bulletin épidémiologique hebdomadaire, 7 June 2011, n°22: http://www.invs.sante.fr/beh/2011/22/beh_22_2011.pdf
([2]) Cancer Research UK, 14 November 2012: http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-info/cancerstats/childhoodcancer/incidence/.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

All paediatric cancers fall under the Commission policy framework on rare diseases ([3]). The regulation on orphan medicinal products ([4]) provides incentives for research and placing on the market of medicinal products for rare diseases. Moreover, the regulation on medicinal products for paediatric use ([5]) ensures that newly developed medicinal products to treat cancer are checked as regards their potential use in children. In addition, the Commission policy on cancer covers different activities which are also of relevance for rare cancers ([6]).

Regarding available data on childhood cancer, the Commission would refer to the Eurostat causes of death data.

The Seventh Framework Programme for Research ([7]) has funded research on childhood cancers to an amount of EUR 94 million. Enhanced coordination efforts are developed through initiatives such as ENCCA ([8]) (European Network for Cancer Research in Children and Adolescents), IRDiRC ([9]) (International Rare Diseases Research Consortium), and the creation of pilot networks of cooperation between paediatric oncology centres ([10]).

The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([11]) will offer opportunities to address research on childhood cancer.

On 17 July 2012, the Commission has adopted a Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use ([12]). This regulation, once adopted, is going to remove unnecessary administrative hurdles for the conduct of clinical research in the EU. This holds in particular for clinical trials which are often rolled out in several Member States (such as clinical trials with pediatric populations).

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/non_com/docs/rare_com_en.pdf and http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:151:0007:0010:EN:PDF
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1999 on orphan medicinal products, OJ L 18, 22.1.2000, p. 1.
([5]) Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006, OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p.1.
([6]) www.epaac.eu.
([7]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
([8]) http://www.encca.eu/
([9]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/rare-diseases/irdirc_en.html
([10]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/wp2013_fr.pdf
([11]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents
([12]) COM(2012) 369 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007716/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανάγκη αποζημίωσης ελαιοπαραγωγών

Τόσο στην Κρήτη όσο και σε άλλες ελαιοπαραγωγικές περιοχές της Ελλάδας, παρατηρήθηκαν φέτος ασυνήθιστα υψηλές θερμοκρασίες, σε συνδυασμό με ισχυρούς νότιους ανέμους, κατά την περίοδο άνθησης των ελαιοδένδρων.

Αποτέλεσμα των δυσμενέστατων αυτών συνθηκών ήταν, όπως επιβεβαιώνεται από όλους τους επιστημονικούς φορείς και υπηρεσίες, η καρπόδεση στις περισσότερες περιοχές να εμφανίζεται φέτος, από ιδιαίτερα χαμηλή έως μηδενική. Τονίζεται ότι το φαινόμενο αυτό δεν έχει παρατηρηθεί ξανά, ενώ οι καιρικές συνθήκες που το προκάλεσαν δεν μπορούσαν να προβλεφθούν από τους παραγωγούς.

Δεδομένης της τεράστιας οικονομικής ζημιάς που προμηνύεται για τους χιλιάδες ελαιοπαραγωγούς της χώρας και της άμεσης ανάγκης αποζημίωσης και ενίσχυσής τους, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Σε τι ενέργειες έχει προβεί μέχρι στιγμής η ελληνική κυβέρνηση για την αποζημίωση των πληγέντων ελαιοπαραγωγών; Έχει δεχθεί η Επιτροπή αίτημα έκτακτης χρηματοδότησης για το λόγο αυτό μέσω των ΠΣΕΑ (Πολιτική Σχεδίαση Έκτακτης Ανάγκης);

— Τι άλλες δράσεις μπορεί να λάβει άμεσα η ελληνική κυβέρνηση ώστε να δοθεί μία οικονομική ανάσα στους πληγέντες ελαιοπαραγωγούς;

Απάντηση του κ. Ciolos εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν έλαβε μέχρι σήμερα καμία αίτηση έκτακτης βοήθειας για την Κρήτη ούτε για άλλες ελαιοπαραγωγούς περιοχές στην Ελλάδα.

Η Ελλάδα δύναται να χορηγεί εθνικές ενισχύσεις για την αντιστάθμιση ζημιών που οφείλονται σε δυσμενείς καιρικές συνθήκες, εξαιτίας των οποίων καταστρέφεται άνω του 30% της μέσης ετήσιας παραγωγής των γεωργικών εκμεταλλεύσεων, η οποία υπολογίζεται με βάση την παραγωγή της προηγούμενης τριετίας ή τον τριετή μέσο όρο της προηγούμενης πενταετίας, με εξαίρεση τα περισσότερο και λιγότερο παραγωγικά έτη. Οι ενισχύσεις αυτές μπορεί να φθάσουν στο 80% των ζημιών (90% σε μειονεκτικές περιοχές) και πρέπει να μειωθούν κατά τα ποσά που έχουν τυχόν εισπραχθεί στο πλαίσιο καθεστώτων ασφάλισης και τις δαπάνες που δεν πραγματοποιήθηκαν λόγω των δυσμενών καιρικών συνθηκών. Πριν χορηγήσει τις ενισχύσεις αυτές, η Ελλάδα πρέπει είτε να κοινοποιήσει ένα καθεστώς κρατικών ενισχύσεων στην Επιτροπή, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 108 παράγραφος 3 της ΣΛΕΕ, ή να ζητήσει απαλλαγή από την υποχρέωση κοινοποίησης βάσει του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1857/2006 της Επιτροπής ([1]), εάν το καθεστώς ενισχύσεων προορίζεται για ΜΜΕ.

Μια άλλη δυνατότητα για την Ελλάδα είναι να χορηγήσει ενισχύσεις σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1535/2007 της Επιτροπής ([2]). Οι εν λόγω ενισχύσεις θα περιορίζονται σε 7 500 ευρώ ανά δικαιούχο για οποιαδήποτε περίοδο τριών οικονομικών ετών, εντός των ορίων εθνικού ανώτατου ορίου που ορίζεται για την ίδια περίοδο στο παράρτημα του κανονισμού (75 382 500 ευρώ για την Ελλάδα). Οι ενισχύσεις αυτές δεν θεωρούνται ως κρατικές ενισχύσεις και δεν πρέπει να κοινοποιούνται, ούτε να εξαιρούνται από την υποχρέωση κοινοποίησης. Επιπλέον, δεν πρέπει να τηρούνται το προαναφερόμενο όριο ζημίας και οι εντάσεις ενισχύσεων.

([1]) ΕΕ L 358 της 16.12. 2006.
([2]) ΕΕ L 337 της 21.12.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007716/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Need to compensate olive oil producers

Both Crete and other olive oil producing regions in Greece have seen unusually high temperatures this year, coupled with strong southerly winds during the period when olive trees were in flower.

As all the relevant scientific bodies and services have confirmed, the result of these extremely adverse conditions has been that fruit formation in most regions this year has been very low to non-existent. It is worth pointing out that this phenomenon is unprecedented, and the weather conditions that caused it could not have been foreseen by producers.

Given the enormous economic damage this will mean for the thousands of olive producers in Greece and the immediate need to provide them with aid and support, will the Commission say:

— What action has the Greek Government taken so far to compensate the olive oil producers who have been affected? Has the Commission received any application for emergency funding in this connection through the PSEA (civil emergency planning)?

— What other actions can the Greek Government take directly in order to give financial relief to the affected olive oil producers?

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

The Commission did not receive any application for emergency aid for Crete nor for other olive oil producing areas in Greece so far.

Greece may grant national aids to compensate for losses brought about by adverse weather conditions which destroy more than 30% of the average annual production of farms, calculated on the basis of the production in the three preceding years or a three-year average based on the five preceding years, excluding the most and the less productive years. Such aids may reach 80% of the loss (90% in less-favoured areas) and must be reduced by any amounts received under insurance schemes and costs not incurred because of the adverse weather conditions. Before granting such aids, Greece must either notify a state aid scheme to the Commission under Article 108(3) TFEU or ask for an exemption from notification under Commission Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006 ([1]), if the aid scheme is earmarked for SMEs.

Another possibility for Greece is to grant *de minimis* aids under Commission Regulation (EC) No 1535/2007 ([2]). Such aids will be limited to EUR 7 500 per beneficiary over any period of three fiscal years, within the limits of a national ceiling laid down for the same period in the annex to the regulation (EUR 75 382 500 for Greece). Such aids are not considered as state aids and must not be notified nor exempted from notification. Moreover the abovementioned loss threshold and aid intensities do not have to be complied with.

([1]) OJ L 358, 16.12, 2006.
([2]) OJ L 337, 21.12.2007.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007717/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανάγκη αποζημίωσης παραγωγών για ζημιές από χαλάζι

Τον τελευταίο μήνα, τεράστιες καλλιεργήσιμες εκτάσεις, από τη Μακεδονία και τη Θεσσαλία ως τη Στερεά Ελλάδα και την Πελοπόννησο, επλήγησαν από έντονες βροχοπτώσεις, συνοδευόμενες από πρωτόγνωρα σφοδρή χαλαζόπτωση. Καλλιέργειες δενδρώδεις, κηπευτικών, σιτηρών, κ.λπ., πολλές από τις οποίες βρίσκονταν στη φάση της συγκομιδής, καταστράφηκαν σε ποσοστό που, σε πολλές περιπτώσεις, φτάνει και στο 100% της παραγωγής.

Σε παλαιότερη ερώτησή μου (E-005449/2012), η Επιτροπή είχε αναφερθεί στο Μέτρο 1.2.6. «Αποκατάσταση του γεωργικού παραγωγικού δυναμικού που έχει πληγεί από φυσικές καταστροφές και εισαγωγή των κατάλληλων δράσεων πρόληψης», ως εφαρμογή των κανονισμών (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1698/2005 και 1974/2006.

Δεδομένου ότι:

— χιλιάδες παραγωγοί έχουν υποστεί τεράστια οικονομική ζημιά και η εθνική στήριξη, είτε από τον ΕΛΓΑ είτε από τα ΠΣΕΑ, πιθανότατα δεν θα επαρκέσει για την πλήρη κάλυψη της ζημιάς που υπέστησαν,

— η ανάγκη οικονομικής στήριξης των πληγέντων παραγωγών είναι άμεση καθώς έχουν ήδη προβεί σε τεράστια έξοδα για εργατικά και γεωργικά εφόδια, και

— έχει πληγεί το παραγωγικό δυναμικό, αλλά βεβαίως υπάρχει ανάγκη και προληπτικών δράσεων,

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Σε τι ενέργειες έχει προβεί μέχρι στιγμής η ελληνική κυβέρνηση για την αποζημίωσή τους; Έχει δεχθεί αίτημα έκτακτης χρηματοδότησης για το λόγο αυτό;

— Υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα κονδύλια στο Μέτρο 126 του Άξονα 1 του ΠΑΑ 2007-2013 και τους σχετικούς κανονισμούς; Εάν ναι, τι πρέπει να πράξει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση;

— Τι άλλες δράσεις μπορούν να ληφθούν από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση, σε συνεργασία με την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, ώστε να δοθεί μία οικονομική ανάσα στους πληγέντες παραγωγούς;

Απάντηση του κ. Cioloş εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Αυγούστου 2013)

Μέχρι στιγμής, οι ελληνικές αρχές δεν έχουν υποβάλει στην Επιτροπή αίτηση για έκτακτη χρηματοδότηση όσον αφορά τις εκτάσεις που επλήγησαν από χαλάζι. Δεν υπάρχουν διαθέσιμες πιστώσεις στο πλαίσιο του μέτρου 126 του άξονα 1 του προγράμματος αγροτικής ανάπτυξης (ΠΑΑ) 2007-2013, καθώς το μέτρο αυτό αφαιρέθηκε από το πρόγραμμα αυτό το 2012, κατόπιν σχετικού αιτήματος του κράτους μέλους.

Η Ελλάδα δικαιούται να χορηγεί εθνικές ενισχύσεις αποζημίωσης ζημιών οφειλόμενων σε δυσμενείς καιρικές συνθήκες, εξαιτίας των οποίων καταστρέφεται ποσοστό άνω του 30% της μέσης ετήσιας παραγωγής των γεωργικών εκμεταλλεύσεων, η οποία υπολογίζεται με βάση την παραγωγή των τριών προηγουμένων ετών ή το μέσο όρο της παραγωγής μιας τριετίας κατά τα πέντε προηγούμενα έτη, με εξαίρεση τα περισσότερο και τα λιγότερο παραγωγικά έτη. Οι ενισχύσεις αυτές μπορούν να φθάσουν το 80% των ζημιών (90% στις μειονεκτικές περιοχές) και πρέπει να μειώνονται κατά τα ποσά που έχουν εισπραχθεί στο πλαίσιο καθεστώτων ασφάλισης και τις δαπάνες που δεν πραγματοποιήθηκαν λόγω των δυσμενών καιρικών συνθηκών. Πριν από τη χορήγηση των εν λόγω ενισχύσεων, η Ελλάδα πρέπει είτε να κοινοποιεί στην Επιτροπή ένα καθεστώς κρατικών ενισχύσεων, σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 108 παράγραφος 3 της ΣΛΕΕ είτε να ζητά απαλλαγή από την υποχρέωση κοινοποίησης βάσει του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1857/2006 της Επιτροπής ([1]), εάν το καθεστώς ενισχύσεων προορίζεται για ΜΜΕ.

([1]) ΕΕ L 358 της 16.12.2006.

Μια άλλη δυνατότητα για την Ελλάδα είναι η χορήγηση ενισχύσεων ήσσονος σημασίας σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1535/2007 της Επιτροπής ([2]). Οι εν λόγω ενισχύσεις περιορίζονται σε 7 500 ευρώ ανά δικαιούχο σε οποιαδήποτε περίοδο τριών οικονομικών ετών, εντός των ορίων ενός εθνικού ανώτατου ορίου, που ορίζεται για την ίδια περίοδο στο παράρτημα του κανονισμού (75 382 500 ευρώ για την Ελλάδα). Οι ενισχύσεις αυτές δεν θεωρούνται κρατικές ενισχύσεις και δεν πρέπει να κοινοποιούνται ούτε να εξαιρούνται από την υποχρέωση κοινοποίησης. Επιπλέον, το προαναφερόμενο όριο ζημίας και οι εντάσεις των ενισχύσεων δεν πρέπει να τηρούνται.

([2]) ΕΕ L 337 της 21.12.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007717/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Need to compensate farmers for damage caused by hail

Last month, vast areas of farmland from Macedonia and Thessaly to Mainland Greece and the Peloponnese were hit by heavy rainfall, accompanied by unprecedentedly violent hailstorms. Tree crops, horticultural crops, cereals, etc., many of which were in the process of being harvested, suffered heavy damage, and in many cases 100% of production was destroyed.

In its answer to a previous question (E-005449/2012), the Commission had referred to Measure 1.2.6 on 'restoring agricultural production potential damaged by natural disasters and introducing appropriate prevention actions' as implementation of Regulations (EC) Nos 1698/2005 and 1974/2006.

Given that:

— Thousands of producers have suffered huge financial losses, and national support, either from ELGA or the PSEA, will most probably not be enough to fully cover the losses incurred;

— There is an immediate need for financial support for the producers affected, since they have already spent huge amounts on labour and agricultural supplies; and

— While the productive potential has been affected, preventive actions are certainly needed;

will the Commission say:

— What action has the Greek Government taken so far to compensate them? Has it received any application for emergency funding in this connection?

— Are any funds available under Measure 126, Axis 1, of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-2013 and the relevant regulations? If so, what should the Greek Government do?

— What other actions can be taken by the Greek Government, in collaboration with the Commission, in order to provide financial relief to the affected farmers?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The Greek authorities have not submitted any application for emergency funding for the areas affected by hail so far to the Commission. No funds are available under Measure 126, Axis 1, of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007-13 as this measure was removed from this programme in 2012 upon request of the Member State.

Greece may grant national aids to compensate for losses brought about by adverse weather conditions which destroy more than 30% of the average annual production of farms, calculated on the basis of the production in the three preceding years or a three-year average based on the five preceding years, excluding the most and the less productive years. Such aids may reach 80% of the loss (90% in less-favoured areas) and must be reduced by any amounts received under insurance schemes and costs not incurred because of the adverse weather conditions. Before granting such aids, Greece must either notify a state aid scheme to the Commission under Article 108(3) TFEU or ask for an exemption from notification under Commission Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006 ([1]), if the aid scheme is earmarked for SMEs.

Another possibility for Greece is to grant *de minimis* aids under Commission Regulation (EC) No 1535/2007 ([2]). Such aids will be limited to EUR 7 500 per beneficiary over any period of three fiscal years, within the limits of a national ceiling laid down for the same period in the annex to the regulation (EUR 75 382 500 for Greece). Such aids are not considered as state aids and must not be notified nor exempted from notification. Moreover the abovementioned loss threshold and aid intensities do not have to be complied with.

([1]) OJ L 358, 16.12, 2006.
([2]) OJ L 337, 21.12.2007.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007718/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Δωροδοκία από την Deutsche Bank για ανάληψη έργου στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα του γερμανικού Τύπου, η εισαγγελία της Φρανκφούρτης, μετά από δικαστική έρευνα, επέβαλε πρόστιμα 500 000 ευρώ σε «πρώην συνεργάτες» της εταιρίας των Γερμανικών Σιδηροδρόμων για δωροδοκίες σε αφρικανικές και ασιατικές χώρες και στην Ελλάδα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Γνωρίζει αν η δικαστική έρευνα ονομάζει για ποια συγκεκριμένα έργα στην Ελλάδα δόθηκαν οι δωροδοκίες; Πρόκειται για έργα συγχρηματοδοτούμενα από την ΕΕ; Αν ναι προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να ερευνήσει την υπόθεση με όλα τα μέσα που διαθέτει;

— Ποια κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ δεν έχουν επικυρώσει τη Σύμβαση Ποινικού Δικαίου κατά της Διαφθοράς του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης και τη Σύμβαση των ΗΕ κατά της Διαφθοράς, την οποία έχει επικυρώσει η ίδια η ΕΕ; Πώς κρίνει η Επιτροπή τη στάση αυτή; Τι συστάσεις έχει κάνει στα κράτη μέλη ως την επικύρωση και την εφαρμογή των σχετικών συμβάσεων;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Αυγούστου 2013)

Όσον αφορά την έρευνα στην οποία αναφέρεται το αξιότιμο μέλος, δυνάμει της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει καμία αρμοδιότητα παρέμβασης σε μεμονωμένες περιπτώσεις, και δεν διαθέτει πληροφορίες σχετικά με συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία της έρευνας που διαχειρίζονται οι εθνικές αρχές. Η Επιτροπή πληροφορήθηκε από την Ευρωπαϊκή Υπηρεσία Καταπολέμησης της Απάτης (OLAF) ότι δεν διεξάγει καμία έρευνα για τα θέματα που ανέφερε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου.

Η σύμβαση ποινικού δικαίου του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης περί διαφθοράς δεν έχει κυρωθεί από την Αυστρία και τη Γερμανία, μολονότι επίκειται η κύρωση στην Αυστρία λόγω της νομοθετικής διαδικασίας που έχει ήδη δρομολογηθεί. Η Σύμβαση των Ηνωμένων Εθνών κατά της διαφθοράς δεν έχει κυρωθεί από την Τσεχική Δημοκρατία και τη Γερμανία.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί και αξιολογεί τις επιπτώσεις της καταπολέμησης της διαφθοράς σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, ανεξαρτήτως του εάν έχουν επικυρώσει τις εν λόγω συμβάσεις. Η Επιτροπή αποδίδει ιδιαίτερη προσοχή στις αρνητικές συνέπειες της διαφθοράς και έχει πλήρη επίγνωση της σχέσης μεταξύ κονδυλίων του δημοσίου και οικονομικών προβλημάτων. Την εφαρμογή των πολιτικών για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη παρακολουθείται στο πλαίσιο του μηχανισμού υποβολής εκθέσεων για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς στην ΕΕ («έκθεση για την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς στην ΕΕ»), που συστάθηκε τον Ιούνιο του 2011. Η έκθεση θα περιλαμβάνει αξιολόγηση των προσπαθειών των κρατών μελών κατά της διαφθοράς, έκθεση των συστημικών προβλημάτων, και θα δημοσιευθεί για πρώτη φορά το φθινόπωρο του 2013. Ο μηχανισμός υποβολής εκθέσεων είναι ένα μέσο που αποσκοπεί στην τόνωση της πολιτικής βούλησης εκεί όπου η καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς βραδυπορεί,, και ενθαρρύνει τα κράτη μέλη ως προς την τήρηση των διεθνώς συμφωνημένων προτύπων. Η Επιτροπή έχει στόχο να αναδείξει τα συστημικά προβλήματα και να παράσχει κίνητρα για την επίλυση των προβλημάτων που σχετίζονται με τη διαφθορά στα κράτη μέλη.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007718/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Bribery by Deutsche Bahn to undertake a project in Greece

It has been reported in the German press that, following a judicial investigation, the Frankfurt public prosecutor has fined 'former associates' of the Deutsche Bahn (German Railways) EUR 500 000 for bribery in African and Asian countries and in Greece.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Does it know whether the judicial investigation states in respect of which specific projects in Greece the bribes were given? Are these projects co-funded by the EU? If so, will it investigate the case with all the means at its disposal?

— Which EU Member States have not ratified the Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and the UN Convention against Corruption, which has been ratified by the EU itself? How does the Commission view this position? What recommendations has it made to Member States regarding the ratification and implementation of the relevant conventions?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

Regarding the investigation to which the Honourable Member refers, under EU legislation, the Commission has no competence to intervene in individual cases, and has no information about particular details of an investigation run by national authorities. The Commission has been informed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) that it does not have any investigation into the matters mentioned by the Honourable Member.

The Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption has not been ratified by Austria and Germany, although ratification in Austria is imminent due to the legislative process already launched. The UN Convention against Corruption has not been ratified by the Czech Republic and Germany.

The Commission monitors and evaluates the impact of the fight against corruption in all EU Member States, whether or not they have ratified these conventions. The Commission pays attention to the detrimental effects of corruption and is fully aware of the link between diversion of public funds and economic problems. The implementation of anti-corruption policies in all Member States is followed as part of the EU anti-corruption reporting mechanism ('EU Anti-Corruption Report') set up in June 2011. The report will assess the Member States efforts against corruption, exposing systemic problems, and will be published in autumn 2013 for the first time. The reporting mechanism is an instrument which aims at boosting political will where the fight against corruption is lagging, and encouraging Member States to maintain internationally-agreed standards. The Commission aims to highlight systemic problems and to provide incentives to solve corruption-related problems in Member States.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007719/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Λειτουργία «distressed funds» στην Ελλάδα

Η εντεινόμενη οικονομική κρίση στην Ευρωζώνη και ειδικότερα στις χώρες που έχουν ενταχθεί σε καθεστώς Μνημονίου (Προγράμματος Οικονομικής Προσαρμογής), έχει εκτινάξει τα επίπεδα μη εξυπηρετούμενων δανείων και έχει περιορίσει σημαντικά τις αξίες των ενυπόθηκων στοιχείων. Σε αυτό το οικονομικό περιβάλλον έχουν ανθίσει χρηματοοικονομικές επιχειρήσεις (distressed funds) που δραστηριοποιούνται στην αγορά προβληματικών στοιχείων ενεργητικού εταιρειών και τραπεζών, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των μη εξυπηρετούμενων δανείων, οι οποίες αγοράζουν τιτλοποιημένα προβληματικά δάνεια τραπεζών, σε χαμηλές τιμές, και είτε πιέζουν τους δανειολήπτες για την αποπληρωμή των εν λόγω δανείων, είτε καταφεύγουν στην εκποίηση του ενυπόθηκου στοιχείου. Το φαινόμενο αυτό έχει πάρει μεγάλες διαστάσεις στην Ισπανία, όπου οι εξώσεις κατοίκων λόγω μη εξυπηρέτησης των στεγαστικών δανείων είναι σχεδόν καθημερινό φαινόμενο, ενώ γίνεται λόγος και για την είσοδο αυτών των funds στην ελληνική αγορά προβληματικών επιχειρήσεων και δανείων, γεννώντας μεγάλο φόβο στους έλληνες δανειολήπτες.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Υπάρχει στην ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία πλαίσιο για την προστασία των κατοικιών των δανειοληπτών και ιδιαίτερα της πρώτης κατοικίας;

— Ποιο είναι το θεσμικό πλαίσιο της Ελλάδας σχετικά με τη δράση των distressed funds; Υπάρχουν συζητήσεις στα πλαίσια του Προγράμματος Μακροοικονομικής Προσαρμογής της Ελλάδας, σχετικά με τον «εκσυγχρονισμό» του θεσμικού πλαισίου; Εάν ναι, περιλαμβάνονται σε αυτές τις συζητήσεις οι αλλαγές που προωθούνται όσον αφορά στον ελληνικό νόμο για την προστασία της πρώτης κατοικίας των ελλήνων δανειοληπτών;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τη δυσχερή οικονομική θέση στην οποία έχουν περιέλθει τα νοικοκυριά λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης στην Ελλάδα και έχει εξετάσει το συγκεκριμένο θέμα στο πλαίσιο του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα. Ως αποτέλεσμα της δεύτερης αποστολής ελέγχου, η οποία ολοκληρώθηκε τον Μάιο του 2013, και προκειμένου να βρεθεί μια συνετή λύση για τα νοικοκυριά που βρίσκονται σε δυσχερή θέση, στο Μνημόνιο Οικονομικών και Χρηματοπιστωτικών Πολιτικών (ΜΟΧΠ) παράγραφος 25 ([1]) (σελ. 134 του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα — δεύτερος έλεγχος) προβλέπεται ότι οι ελληνικές αρχές, σε διαβούλευση με την ΕΕ, την ΕΚΤ και το ΔΝΤ, θα καταρτίσουν ένα νέο «πρόγραμμα διευκόλυνσης» που απευθύνεται σε άτομα με χαμηλό εισόδημα τα οποία βρίσκονται σε βαθιά οικονομική δυσχέρεια, προκειμένου να διευκολύνουν την εξυγίανση του μη βιώσιμου χρέους των νοικοκυριών. Η αναγκαία νομοθεσία για αυτό το νέο «πρόγραμμα διευκόλυνσης» θεσπίστηκε ήδη τον Ιούνιο του 2013. Το πρόγραμμα εφαρμόζεται μόνο σε δάνεια με υποθήκη επί της κύριας κατοικίας. Η τακτική συμμετοχή στο πρόγραμμα θα επιτρέψει στα νοικοκυριά να αποφύγουν τις εξώσεις, ούτως ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί η προστασία της ιδιοκτησίας τους. Επιπλέον, ο νόμος 4128/2013 προβλέπει επί του παρόντος αναστολή πλειστηριασμών.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp148_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007719/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Operation of 'distressed funds' in Greece

The deepening economic crisis in the eurozone, in particular in countries that have adopted a Memorandum (Economic Adjustment Programme), has led to an explosive growth in levels of non-performing loans and has significantly reduced the value of mortgage assets. In this economic environment, distressed funds have flourished: these are financial firms engaged in buying up the distressed assets of companies and banks, including non-performing loans. They buy distressed securitised bank loans at low rates, and either pressurize borrowers to repay these loans or resort to selling off the mortgaged assets. This phenomenon has become widespread in Spain, where evictions of residents unable to repay their mortgage loans are virtually a daily occurrence. Now there is talk of such funds entering the Greek market in distressed companies and loans, a prospect Greek borrowers find extremely worrying.

Given the above, will the Commission say:

— Does EU legislative contain a framework for the protection of the dwellings of mortgage holders, in particular first-time home buyers?

— What is the legal framework in Greece regarding the activities of distressed funds? Are any discussions taking place, within the framework of the macroeconomic adjustment programme in Greece, on the 'modernisation' of the legal framework? Is so, do these discussions include the changes promoted with respect to the Greek law on the protection of Greek mortgage holders who are first-time home buyers?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2013)

The Commission is aware of the difficult financial situation of households due to the economic crisis in Greece, and has addressed this issue in the context of the Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece. As a result of the second review mission, which finished May 2013, and in order to find a sensible solution for households in distressed situations, it is envisaged in the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies (MEFP) Paragraph 25 ([1]) (page 134 of the Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece — Second Review) that Authorities, in consultation with the EC/ECB/IMF staff, will introduce a new 'Facilitation Program' targeted to low-income individuals in financial distress to facilitate the resolution of unsustainable household debt. The necessary legislation for this new 'Facilitation Program' has already been introduced in June 2013. The programe applies only to loans with mortgage on main residence. Regular participation in the scheme will allow households to avoid evictions, thus providing protection to their property. Additonally, Law 4128/2013 provides that currently there is moratoria for household mortgage foreclosure.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/pdf/ocp148_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007720/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ομαδικές απολύσεις και κλείσιμο του εργοστασίου στην Χαλκίδα της ΑΓΕΤ Ηρακλής του πολυεθνικού ομίλου Lafarge

Η τσιμεντοβιομηχανία ΑΓΕΤ Ηρακλής του πολυεθνικού ομίλου Lafarge στις 26.3.2013, αποφάσισε την «οριστική διακοπή της λειτουργίας του εργοστασίου της Χαλκίδας», ενός εκ των τριών εργοστασίων του ομίλου στην Ελλάδα. Την ίδια μέρα ενημέρωσε μέσω επιστολών τους 229, σε σύνολο 236, εργαζομένους για την απόφαση αυτή. Στις 24 Απριλίου 2013 το Ανώτατο Συμβούλιο Εργασίας (ΑΣΕ), το οποίο εξέτασε την αίτηση της Lafarge για ομαδικές απολύσεις την απέρριψε, όπως και η ελληνική Επιθεώρηση Εργασίας, η οποία επέβαλε πρόστιμο στη Lafarge για παράβαση της νομοθεσίας για τις ομαδικές απολύσεις.

Με δεδομένο ότι υπάρχουν περιπτώσεις που, με πρόσχημα την οικονομική κρίση, εργοδότες προβαίνουν σε καταχρηστικές καταγγελίες των συμβάσεων των εργαζομένων και με δεδομένο ότι ο όμιλος Lafarge είναι μια εκ των εταιριών κολοσσών στην παραγωγή τσιμέντου με παρουσία σε 64 χώρες και με 65 000 εργαζομένους, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Είναι ενήμερη για την κατάσταση αυτή; Έχουν εφαρμοστεί οι οδηγίες που υποτίθεται ότι προστατεύουν τους εργαζομένους όταν οι επιχειρήσεις λαμβάνουν σημαντικές αποφάσεις, όπως το κλείσιμο του ανωτέρω εργοστασίου;

— Έχουν δοθεί ενισχύσεις στις επιχειρήσεις του ομίλου στην Ελλάδα από ελληνικό αναπτυξιακό νόμο που συγχρηματοδοτεί η Επιτροπή ή από άλλα ευρωπαϊκά κονδύλια; Τι επιβάλλει η σχετική νομοθεσία;

— Με δεδομένο ότι οι μεγαλύτερες τσιμεντοβιομηχανίες αποχωρούν από την Ευρώπη και μεταφέρονται στις αναδυόμενες χώρες, θεωρεί η Επιτροπή ότι τα μέτρα που μέχρι τώρα έχει λάβει έχουν φέρει ικανοποιητικά αποτελέσματα ως προς την αύξηση της απασχόλησης και την βελτίωση των συνθηκών εργασίας στον τομέα αυτό της βιομηχανίας;

— Με δεδομένο ότι οι εργαζόμενοι απολύονται και στις υπάρχουσες συνθήκες τεράστιας ανεργίας που υπάρχουν στην Ελλάδα, τι εργαλεία έχει η Επιτροπή για την περαιτέρω ενίσχυση των εργαζομένων;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Αυγούστου 2013)

Είναι πολλές οι οδηγίες της ΕΕ σχετικά με την ενημέρωση των εργαζομένων και τη διαβούλευση με αυτούς που θα μπορούσαν να εφαρμοστούν στις περιπτώσεις στις οποίες μια επιχείρηση αποφασίζει το κλείσιμο ή την αναδιάρθρωσή της, ιδίως δε οι οδηγίες 2002/14/ΕΚ ([1]) και 98/59/ΕΚ ([2]). Οι αρμόδιες εθνικές αρχές, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των δικαστικών, πρέπει να διασφαλίζουν ότι η εθνική νομοθεσία, με την οποία μεταφέρονται οι οδηγίες αυτές στο εθνικό δίκαιο, εφαρμόζεται ορθά και αποτελεσματικά από τον εργοδότη, λαμβανομένων υπόψη των ειδικών περιστάσεων κάθε υπόθεσης.

Σύμφωνα με τις ελληνικές αρχές, ο όμιλος Lafarge έλαβε ενίσχυση από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία μέσω της συμμετοχής του σε τρία έργα κατά την περίοδο 2000-2006 (ερευνητικά κατά κύριο λόγο συνολικής δημόσιας δαπάνης 1,24 εκατ. ευρώ), ένα έργο ΕΤΠΑ (κατά την περίοδο 2007-2013, συνεργασίας ερευνητικών κέντρων και επιχειρήσεων, συνολικού κόστους 0,40 εκατ. ευρώ ([3])) και ένα έργο του ΕΚΤ, το οποίο εγκρίθηκε το 2011 στο πλαίσιο του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Ανάπτυξη ανθρώπινων πόρων». Η κοινοτική συνδρομή καταβάλλεται, εφόσον αποδειχθεί από τον έλεγχο των αρμόδιων εθνικών αρχών και/ή της Επιτροπής ότι πληρούνται οι κανονιστικές απαιτήσεις για τη συγχρηματοδότηση.

([1]) Οδηγία 2002/14/ΕΚ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 11ης Μαρτίου 2002, περί θεσπίσεως γενικού πλαισίου ενημερώσεως και διαβουλεύσεως των εργαζομένων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Κοινότητα, ΕΕ L 80 της 23.3.2002.

([2]) Οδηγία του Συμβουλίου 98/59/ΕΚ, της 20ής Ιουλίου, για προσέγγιση των νομοθεσιών των κρατών μελών που αφορούν τις ομαδικές απολύσεις, ΕΕ L 225 της 12.8.1998.

([3]) Έως σήμερα δεν έχουν υποβληθεί αιτήσεις πληρωμής σχετικά με το έργο αυτό.

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει αρμοδιότητα να παρεμβαίνει στις αποφάσεις των επιχειρήσεων. Ωστόσο, προτρέπει όλες τις επιχειρήσεις να ακολουθούν τις ορθές πρακτικές όσον αφορά την πρόβλεψη και τη διαχείριση των αναδιαρθρώσεων. Σε συνέχεια της Πράσινης Βίβλου του 2012 ([4]) και της έκθεσης Cercas ([5]), η Επιτροπή θα εκδώσει μια ανακοίνωση σχετικά με τη δημιουργία ενός πλαισίου ποιότητας που θα υποστηρίζει τη νομοθεσία της ΕΕ και τις πρωτοβουλίες που αφορούν την αναδιάρθρωση και θα παρουσιάζει τις βέλτιστες πρακτικές που πρέπει να εφαρμόζονται από όλα τα ενδιαφερόμενα μέρη.

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση P-11242/2012 ([6]).

([4]) Βλ. τις απαντήσεις και μια σύνοψη στη διεύθυνση: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8908&langId=en

([5]) Ψήφισμα του ΕΚ της 15ης Ιανουαρίου 2013 σχετικά με την ενημέρωση και τη διαβούλευση με τους εργαζομένους, την πρόβλεψη και τη διαχείριση των αναδιαρθρώσεων, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0005+0+DOC+XML+V0//EL

([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2012-011242&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007720/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Closure of Lafarge's AGET Iraklis cement factory in Halkida and collective redundancies

On 26 March 2013 the Lafarge Group's AGET Iraklis cement industry decided to definitively suspend operations at the plant in Halkida, one of the group's three such plants in Greece. On the same day, it sent letters to 229 out of a total of 236 employees informing them of this decision. On 24 April 2013, the Supreme Labour Council, which examined the Lafarge Group's application to make collective redundancies, rejected this application, as did the Greek Labour Inspectorate, which imposed a fine on Lafarge for violating the law on collective redundancies.

Given that there are cases in which, under the pretext of the economic crisis, employers have arbitrarily denounced workers' contracts, and given that Lafarge is one of the corporate giants in cement production with a presence in 64 countries and 65 000 employees, will the Commission say:

— Is it aware of this situation? Have the guidelines that are supposed to protect workers when businesses take important decisions, such as the closure of the above plant, been followed?

— Have companies belonging to the group in Greece been given aid under a Greek development law co-funded by the Commission or other EU funds? What are the requirements of that legislation?

— Given that the largest cement plants are leaving Europe and relocating in the emerging countries, does the Commission consider that the measures it has taken so far have had satisfactory results in terms of increasing employment and improving working conditions in this industry?

— Given that workers are being made redundant despite the massive unemployment that exists in Greece, what instruments does the Commission have to further strengthen the position of workers?

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

Several EU Directives on informing and consulting employees could be applicable in cases where a company contemplates closure or restructuring, in particular Directives 2002/14/EC ([1]) and 98/59/EC ([2]). The competent national authorities, including the courts, should ensure that national legislation transposing the directives is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of each case.

According to the Greek Authorities, the Group Lafarge received assistance from the Structural Funds through its participation: to three projects in period 2000-06 (mainly research ones total public expenditure EUR 1,24 million); to an ERDF project (period 2007-13, cooperation between research centres and businesses, total cost EUR 0,40 million ([3])), and to an ESF project, approved in 2011, in the context of the Operational Programme 'Human Resources Development'. Payment of the Community assistance is subject to verification by the relevant national authorities and/or the Commission that the regulatory requirements for co-financing are fulfilled.

The Commission has no power to interfere in specific company's decisions. However, it urges them to follow good practices in anticipating and managing restructuring. Following its 2012 Green Paper ([4]), and the Cercas report ([5]), the Commission will issue a communication establishing a Quality Framework that will frame the EU legislation and initiatives relevant to restructuring and will present the best practices to be implemented by all stakeholders.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-11242/2012 ([6]).

([1]) Directive 2002/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2002 establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community, OJ L 80, 23.3.2002.
([2]) Council Directive 98/59/EC of 20 July 1998 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to collective redundancies, OJ L 225, 12.8.1998.
([3]) No payment claims have been presented so far regarding this project.
([4]) See the replies and a summary under http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8908&langId=en.
([5]) EP Resolution of 15 January 2013 on Information and consultation of workers, anticipation and management of restructuring, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0005+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2012-011242&language=EN.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007721/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: ΠΕΠ Αττικής και έργα-γέφυρες

Σύμφωνα με την απάντηση της Επιτροπής (E-002513/2013), οι κατευθυντήριες γραμμές για την περάτωση της συνδρομής (2000-2006) των Διαρθρωτικών Ταμείων έχουν τροποποιηθεί (απόφαση Επιτροπής C(2013)1215) ώστε να «χορηγούν, υπό ορισμένους όρους και σε ορισμένα κράτη μέλη, μεταξύ των οποίων η Ελλάδα, παράταση της προθεσμίας έως τις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2013, προκειμένου να ολοκληρώσουν ή να θέσουν σε λειτουργία, με δικές τους δαπάνες, όλα τα έργα που δηλώνονται ημιτελή ή/και μη λειτουργικά κατά το κλείσιμο της περιόδου 2000-2006».

Με δεδομένο ότι ορισμένα έργα-γέφυρες (bridge projects) των ελληνικών Περιφερειακών Επιχειρησιακών Προγραμμάτων (ΠΕΠ), δεν έχουν ακόμα ξεκινήσει, ούτε όσον αφορά τη φάση δημοπράτησης, ούτε όσον αφορά τη φάση της περάτωσης, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Ποια είναι τα μεγάλα έργα-γέφυρες από την περίοδο 2000-2006 στην περίοδο 2007-2013, των ελληνικών ΠΕΠ; Για ποια έργα-γέφυρες υπάρχει ο κίνδυνος να χαθούν πιθανά κονδύλια της περιόδου 2000-2006 και για ποια έργα, εάν δεν ολοκληρωθούν ή τεθούν σε λειτουργία μέχρι τις 31.12.2013, υπάρχει κίνδυνος να απαιτηθεί η επιστροφή κονδυλίων, όπως ορίζει και η απόφαση της Επιτροπής C(2013)1215;

— Συγκεκριμένα, για το ΠΕΠ Αττικής και το ΠΕΠ Πελοποννήσου, ποια είναι τα έργα-γέφυρες και ποια είναι η φάση της υλοποίησής τους;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(12 Αυγούστου 2013)

Όσον αφορά την ολοκλήρωση των επονομαζόμενων «έργων-γεφυρών» η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στην γραπτή ερώτηση E-5949/2013.

Τα «μεγάλα έργα-γέφυρες» που περιλαμβάνονται στα περιφερειακά προγράμματα (με βάση τους ενδεικτικούς καταλόγους μεγάλων έργων που επισυνάπτονται στα προγράμματα) παρατίθενται στον συνημμένο πίνακα.

Με βάση τις πληροφορίες που λάβαμε από τις ελληνικές αρχές, η υλοποίηση των μεγάλων έργων που περιλαμβάνονται στον κατάλογο σημειώνει πρόοδο, μολονότι ορισμένα έργα παρουσιάζουν καθυστερήσεις κυρίως λόγω προβλημάτων στις δημόσιες συμβάσεις, δικαστικών διαδικασιών και προβλημάτων ρευστότητας των κατασκευαστών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007721/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Regional operational programme for Attica and 'bridge projects'

In reply to Question for written answer E-002513/2013, the Commission indicated that the guidelines on closure of assistance (2000-2006) from the Structural Funds had been amended by Commission Decision C(2013)1215 so as to grant under certain conditions to certain Member States, including Greece, an extension until 31 December 2013 in order to complete or render operational at their own expense all operations declared unfinished and/or non-functional at the closure of the 2000-2006 period.

Given that certain bridge projects forming part of regional operational programmes for Greece have not yet been completed while others have not even got as far as the public procurement phase:

— Can the Commission identify major bridge projects forming part of the 2007-2013 regional operational programmes for Greece which date from the 2000-2006 period? Which of them are in danger of forfeiting funding accorded for the 2000-2006 period or of being required to return funding under Commission Decision C(2013)1215 if they have not been completed or become functional by 31 December 2013?

— What bridge projects have been envisaged under regional operational programmes for Attica and the Peloponnese specifically and how far have they progressed?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

As regards the completion of the so-called 'bridge projects' the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-5949/2013.

The 'major bridge projects' included in the regional programmes (based on the indicative lists of major projects annexed to programmes) are listed in the attached table.

On the basis of information received from the Greek authorities, the implementation of the major projects listed is advancing, even though some projects are delayed mainly due to public procurement issues, judicial procedures and liquidity problems of the constructors.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007722/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πολυετές Δημοσιονομικό Πλαίσιο 2014-2020 και Περιφέρεια Αττικής

Σύμφωνα με την πρόσφατη απόφαση του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου για το Πολυετές Δημοσιονομικό Πλαίσιο 2014-2020, οι πόροι για το στόχο «Επενδύσεις στην ανάπτυξης και την απασχόληση» ανέρχονται σε 313 197 εκατομμύρια ευρώ, εκ των οποίων το 52% αφορά τις λιγότερο ανεπτυγμένες περιφέρειες των κρατών μελών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, δηλαδή τις περιφέρειες των οποίων το Ακαθάριστο Εγχώριο Προϊόν, σε ισοτιμίες αγοραστικής δύναμης με βάσει τα στοιχεία της περιόδου 2007-2009, είναι μικρότερο από το 75% του μέσου όρου της ΕΕ-27.

Με βάση τους παραπάνω υπολογισμούς, η Περιφέρεια Αττικής εμφανίζεται να έχει κατά κεφαλήν ΑΕΠ άνω του 75% του κοινοτικού μέσου όρου, αφού τα στατιστικά στοιχεία που έλαβε υπόψη της η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή δεν συμπεριλαμβάνουν τις επιδράσεις της οικονομικής κρίσης, ιδιαίτερα για τα έτη 2010, 2011, 2012. Στο άρθρο 54 της απόφασης του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου, αναφέρεται ότι το 2016 θα επανεξεταστούν τα συνολικά κονδύλια του στόχου «Επενδύσεις στην Ανάπτυξη και την Απασχόληση», ώστε να υπολογιστεί η επίδραση της οικονομικής κρίσης για το διάστημα 2012 έως 2014-2015 (σωρευτική παρέκκλιση άνω του +/- 5%), με ανώτατο, όμως, όριο προσαρμογών τα 4 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, αλλά και το γεγονός ότι η Περιφέρεια Αττικής είναι η μεγαλύτερη περιφέρεια της Ελλάδας, με πληθυσμό άνω των 5 εκατομμυρίων, που πλήττεται περισσότερο από την οικονομική κρίση, με τη συνολική ανεργία να φτάνει το 2012 στο 25%, την ανεργία στις γυναίκες στο 27%, την ανεργία στους νέους στο 56% και τους μακροχρόνια άνεργους να φτάνουν στο 59,6% (στοιχεία Eurostat — 78/2013), ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Για ποιο λόγο η ρήτρα επανεξέτασης λόγω των επιπτώσεων της οικονομικής κρίσης εφαρμόζεται από το 2016 και όχι νωρίτερα, ώστε να ωφεληθούν οι ευρωπαϊκές περιφέρειες που καταστρέφονται οικονομικά και κοινωνικά από την κρίση;

— Πώς δικαιολογείται το ανώτατο όριο προσαρμογής 4 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ, σε μια χώρα σαν την Ελλάδα, όπου οι σωρευτικές επιδράσεις της οικονομικής ύφεσης φτάνουν το 23,2% για την περίοδο 2008-2013;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Αυγούστου 2013)

Όπως επισημαίνει ο αξιότιμος ευρωβουλευτής, τα συμπεράσματα του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου στα οποία αναφέρεται αποσκοπούν να συνεκτιμήσουν τον αντίκτυπο της οικονομικής κρίσης και να αφήσουν περιθώρια για επανεξέταση των συνολικών κονδυλίων που προορίζονταν για επένδυση στην ανάπτυξη και στην απασχόληση στα κράτη μέλη.

Από αυτή την άποψη, τα συμπεράσματα του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου συνδέονταν με ορισμένες προϋποθέσεις σχετικά με α) την ελάχιστη σωρευτική παρέκκλιση μεταξύ των δεικτών για την περίοδο αναφοράς (2007-2009) και μετά, β) το μέγιστο συνολικό καθαρό αποτέλεσμα των προσαρμογών και γ) τον χρόνο για δοκιμή της ικανοποίησης των προϋποθέσεων αυτών (2016). Έτσι θα υπάρξουν τα περιθώρια ώστε να αντιμετωπιστούν με αντικειμενικό και διαφανή τρόπο οι πραγματικές αποκλίσεις μεταξύ των προαναφερόμενων δεικτών, και, ταυτόχρονα, να εξασφαλιστεί η χρηστή και απρόσκοπτη δημοσιονομική διαχείριση των κονδυλίων της ΕΕ σε ολόκληρη την ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007722/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 and the Attica region

The recent European Council conclusions regarding the multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 indicate that an amount of EUR 313 197 million has been earmarked for investment in growth and jobs, 52% being allocated to less developed regions of the EU Member States whose GDP per capita, expressed in terms of purchasing power parity based on indices for the period 2007-2009, is less than 75% of the EU-27 average.

Given that the Commission's statistics do not take account of the impact of the economic crisis, particularly for 2010, 2011 and 2012, GDP per capita in the Attica region is calculated to be over 75% of the EU average. Paragraph 54 of the European Council conclusions indicates that, to take account of the impact of the economic crisis emerging from a comparison between figures for 2012 and 2014-15, the Commission will, in 2016, review total allocations earmarked for 'investment for growth and jobs' in the Member States and adjust them wherever there is a cumulative divergence of more than +/-5%, ensuring that the total net effect of the adjustments does not exceed EUR 4 billion.

In fact, Attica, which is the largest region of Greece and has a population of over 5 million, has been hardest hit by the economic crisis, total unemployment figures reaching 25% in 2012, with 27% of women and 56% of young people being out of work and the long-term unemployed amounting to 59.6% of the total (Eurostat-78/2013).

In view of the above:

— Can the Commission say why the allocations will not be reviewed before 2016 so as to take account of the crisis and benefit those European regions worst affected in economic and social terms?

— How does it justify limiting the total net effect to EUR 4 billion with regard to a country such as Greece, where the cumulative impact of the recession rose to 23.2% for the period 2008-2013?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

As pointed out by the Honourable MEP, the European Council's conclusions to which he refers aim to take account of the impact of the economic crisis and allow for a review of total allocations earmarked for investment in growth and jobs in the Member States.

In this respect, the European Council's conclusions were conditioned with regard to (a) the minimum cumulative divergence between indices for the reference period (2007-2009) and beyond, (b) the maximum total net effect of adjustments and (c) the time for testing the fulfilment of these conditions (2016). This will allow for an objective and transparent response to real divergences between the abovementioned indices, and at the same time ensure a sound uninterrupted financial management of EU funds across the EU.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007723/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόσθετα Μέτρα Δημοσιονομικής Προσαρμογής περιόδου 2015-2016

Στην πρόσφατη έκθεση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για την Ελλάδα (European Economy, Occasional Papers 148, May 2013, The Second Adjustment Programme for Greece, Second Review) αναφέρεται (σελ. 33) ότι το χρηματοδοτικό κενό στον προϋπολογισμό της γενικής κυβέρνησης για τα έτη 2015-2016, είναι 1,7% και 2,1%, αντίστοιχα. Στην ίδια έκθεση σημειώνεται ότι το χρηματοδοτικό αυτό κενό θα εξεταστεί από την τρόικα και την ελληνική κυβέρνηση στα πλαίσια των συζητήσεων για τη σύνταξη του προϋπολογισμού του 2014, που θα διεξαχθούν το προσεχές φθινόπωρο. Επιπρόσθετα, λόγω της «απόσυρσης» της εταιρείας Gazprom από το διαγωνισμό ιδιωτικοποίησης της ΔΕΠΑ, υπολογίζεται ότι δημιουργείται επιπλέον δημοσιονομικό κενό.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Εάν η εκτέλεση του προϋπολογισμού του 2013 και των μακροοικονομικών προοπτικών για τα επόμενα έτη επιβεβαιώσουν τις εκτιμήσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για σωρευτικό χρηματοδοτικό κενό, για τα έτη 2015-2016, στα 3,8% του ΑΕΠ, καθώς επίσης και χρηματοδοτικό κενό λόγω των ιδιωτικοποιήσεων, θα ζητηθούν νέα μέτρα δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση; Ποιες είναι οι σκέψεις της;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στον πίνακας Γ1 της έκθεσης συμμόρφωσης που ακολούθησε τη δεύτερη ανασκόπηση του δεύτερου προγράμματος ([1]), σύμφωνα με την οποία η διαφορά μεταξύ των προβλέψεων και του δημοσιονομικού στόχου για το 2016 ήταν 2,1% του ΑΕγχΠ, και όχι 3,8 τοις εκατό, επειδή η πρώτη εκφράζεται ήδη αθροιστικά. Το φθινόπωρο, νέα μακροοικονομικά και δημοσιονομικά δεδομένα θα παράσχουν πληρέστερες πληροφορίες σχετικά με το μέγεθος της τυχόν υπόλοιπης δημοσιονομικής διαφοράς που πρέπει να καλυφθεί μέχρι το 2015-16.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/op148_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007723/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Further economic adjustment measures for the period 2015-2016

A recent Commission report concerning Greece (European Economy, Occasional Papers 148, May 2013, The Second Adjustment Programme for Greece, Second Review), indicates (page 33) that general budget shortfalls, currently estimated at around 1.7% of GDP in 2015 and 2.1% of GDP in 2016, will be examined by the Troika, together with the Greek Government, in the context of the 2014 budget negotiations in the autumn. In addition, following the withdrawal of Gazprom from the privatisation of the DEPA natural gas company, further shortfalls are anticipated.

In view of this:

— If the implementation of the 2013 budget and the macroeconomic perspectives for the coming years confirm the accumulated shortfall of 3.8% of GDP being predicted by the Commission for 2015-2016, together with further shortfalls following the privatisation process, will further economic adjustment measures by the Greek Government be discussed? What are the Commission's expectations in this respect?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to table C1 of the Compliance Report following the second review of the second programme ([1]) according to which the gap between the projections and the fiscal target for 2016 was 2.1% of GDP, and not 3.8%, as the former is expressed already in cumulative terms. In the autumn, new macroeconomic and fiscal data will provide more complete information on the size of any remaining fiscal gap to be filled for 2015-16.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/2013/op148_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007724/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 Ιουνίου 2013)

Θέμα: Χρονοδιάγραμμα ολοκλήρωσης επέκτασης Μετρό Θεσσαλονίκης

Σε απάντησή της (E-000004/13) σχετικά με τη δημοπράτηση του έργου επέκτασης του Μετρό Θεσσαλονίκης, η Επιτροπή είχε επισημάνει μεταξύ άλλων ότι «όλα τα έργα, τα οποία έχουν εγκριθεί για συγχρηματοδότηση από την ΕΕ, βάσει του εθνικού στρατηγικού πλαισίου αναφοράς για την περίοδο 2007-2013, συμπεριλαμβανομένων της κύριας γραμμής και της επέκτασης του Μετρό της Θεσσαλονίκης (εάν ληφθούν οι εν λόγω αποφάσεις), πρέπει να έχουν ολοκληρωθεί και τεθεί σε λειτουργία έως τις 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2015».

Επιπλέον, σε παλαιότερη απάντησή της (E-009120/12), η Επιτροπή είχε επισημάνει ότι «η λειτουργικότητα του έργου για την επέκταση του Μετρό της Θεσσαλονίκης είναι άμεσα συνδεδεμένη με την εφαρμογή και τη λειτουργικότητα της κύριας γραμμής και συνεπώς τα δύο έργα θεωρούνται αλληλένδετα».

Μόλις χθες ανακοινώθηκε ότι υπογράφηκε η σύμβαση ανάμεσα στην ΑΤΤΙΚΟ ΜΕΤΡΟ ΑΕ και την ανάδοχο εταιρία για το έργο αυτό, κόστους 518 εκατομμυρίων ευρώ, με την πρόβλεψη το έργο να έχει ολοκληρωθεί μέσα στα επόμενα 5 χρόνια.

Δεδομένων των ανωτέρω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Υπάρχει, αυτή τη στιγμή, υποχρέωση τα έργα τόσο της κύριας γραμμής όσο και της επέκτασης να έχουν ολοκληρωθεί μέχρι την 31/12/2015; Εάν ναι, πώς σχολιάζει το γεγονός ότι η σύμβαση που υπέγραψε η ανάδοχος εταιρία με την ΑΤΤΙΚΟ ΜΕΤΡΟ ΑΕ έχει πενταετή διάρκεια;

— Υπάρχουν συζητήσεις σχετικά με το σχήμα που πρόκειται να επιλεγεί όσον αφορά τη χρηματοδότηση του έργου;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει λάβει μέχρι σήμερα καμία αίτηση μεγάλου έργου για την περίοδο 2007-2013, ούτε για την κύρια γραμμή του μετρό της Θεσσαλονίκης ούτε για την επέκταση προς την Καλαμαριά. Για τον καλύτερο σχεδιασμό του έργου γίνονται συζητήσεις μεταξύ της Επιτροπής και των ελληνικών αρχών.

Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για καμία σύμβαση που να έχει συναφθεί από την Αττικό Μετρό σχετικά με τα σχεδιαζόμενα μεγάλα έργα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007724/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Timetable for completion of Thessaloniki metro extension

In its answer to Question for Written Answer E-000004/2013 concerning public procurement for the Thessaloniki metro extension project, the Commission indicated that all operations approved for EU funding on the basis of the national strategic framework for 2007-2013, including the Thessaloniki metro main line and extension (once the relevant decisions had been taken), must be completed and enter into operation by 31 December 2015.

Furthermore, in a previous answer (E-009120/2012), the Commission indicated that it considered the functionality of the Thessaloniki metro extension project to be directly related to the implementation and functionality of the main line and that the two projects were therefore considered to be interlinked.

Yesterday it was announced that a EUR 518 million deal had been concluded between Attica Metro and a contracting company for completion of the project within the next five years.

In view of the above:

— Can the Commission indicate whether there is a requirement for work on the main line and extension to have been completed by 31 December 2015? If so, what view does it take of the fact that the deal concluded between Attica Metro and the contracting company has a five-year deadline?

— Have any discussions been held with regard to project funding arrangements?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

So far the Commission has not received any major project application for the 2007-2013 period, either for the main line of the Thessaloniki metro or for the extension to Kalamaria. In order to better plan the project, discussions are taking place between the Commission and the Greek authorities.

The Commission is not aware of any contract concluded by the Attica Metro concerning the envisaged major projects.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-007725/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28. Juni 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Kolumbien: Zunehmende Straffreiheit infolge der Unterstützung der EU im Bereich des Militärstrafrechts

Am 17. Juni 2013 nahm der kolumbianische Kongress ein Gesetz an, das die militärische Strafgerichtsbarkeit regelt. Das Gesetz wurde trotz zahlreicher gegenteiliger Empfehlungen von VN-Gremien angenommen, einschließlich einer bisher noch nie da gewesenen Erklärung von 11 Menschenrechtsexperten der Vereinten Nationen, die eine Rücknahme der Reform forderten und erklärten: „Sollte diese Reform verabschiedet werden, könnte sie die Rechtspflege bei mutmaßlichen Verstößen gegen die Menschenrechte und das internationale humanitäre Recht, auch bei schweren Straftaten, durch das Militär oder die Polizei (Fuerza Pública) ernsthaft untergraben".

Zahlreiche nichtstaatliche Organisationen, darunter Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, das internationale Büro für Maßnahmen im Bereich Menschenrechte in Kolumbien (OIDHACO) und der Internationale Bund der Ligen für die Menschenrechte (FIDH), haben sich besorgt gezeigt über diese kontroverse Reform der Militärgerichtsbarkeit, und einige von ihnen haben insbesondere die Ablehnung eines vorgeschlagenen Gesetzes gefordert, mit dem der Militärjustiz größere Befugnisse verliehen werden sollen, und das die Mitglieder der Streitkräfte und der Polizei bei Straftaten nach internationalem Recht vor der Justiz schützen wird.

Es sei mit Nachdruck darauf hingewiesen, dass die Anklagebehörde des Internationalen Strafgerichtshofs in ihrem Bericht vom November 2012 ([1]) festgestellt hat, dass die Organe des kolumbianischen Staates Handlungen begangen haben, welche als Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit und Kriegsverbrechen gelten.

Anstatt jedoch ihre Besorgnis zum Ausdruck zu bringen, bot die EU anlässlich des jüngsten Besuchs des kolumbianischen Verteidigungsministers ihre Zusammenarbeit bei der Umsetzung dieser Reform an ([2]).

1. Ist die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass von den 1 579 Verfahren, die in den letzten 13 Jahren in Kolumbien betreffend außergerichtliche Hinrichtungen stattgefunden haben, nur 1 % zu einem Urteil geführt hat ([3])?

2. Wie will die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin „Unterstützung im Bereich der Militärgerichtsbarkeit prüfen", wie von kolumbianischer Seite gefordert?

3. Ist die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass eine Unterstützung Kolumbiens oder eine Hilfe für dieses Land bei dieser Reform der Militärgerichtsbarkeit einer Legitimierung eines Gesetzes gleichkommt, das von internationalen Organisationen, auch den Vereinten Nationen, scharf kritisiert wird? Ist die Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass die EU, wenn sie dieses kolumbianische Gesetz unterstützt, ohne Achtung der Menschenrechtsstandards der Vereinten Nationen handelt?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2013)

Die Zahlen, die in der kürzlich vorgelegten FIDH-Veröffentlichung im Zusammenhang mit der Untersuchung der außergerichtlichen Hinrichtungen genannt wurden, sind der Hohen Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin bekannt.

Auch die Kritik, die von UN-Einrichtungen sowie von der Zivilgesellschaft an dem Gesetz zur Reform der militärischen Strafgerichtsbarkeit in Kolumbien vorgebracht wird, ist der Hohen Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin bekannt. Die EU hat zu diesem Thema keineswegs geschwiegen, sondern bei verschiedenen Gelegenheiten und auf allen Ebenen ihre Bedenken zum Ausdruck gebracht, so u. a. Präsident Barroso bei einem Treffen mit dem kolumbianischen Präsidenten Santos Ende des Jahres 2012. Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin hat ihrerseits zu diesem Thema am 29. Dezember 2012 eine Erklärung abgegeben ([4]).

([1]) Anklagebehörde des Internationalen Strafgerichtshofs, Zwischenbericht über ihre „erste Untersuchung" der Lage in Kolumbien, November 2012.
([2]) http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/colombie589e.pdf
([3]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/pressdata/EN/foraff/137600.pdf
([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134562.pdf

In Reaktion auf diese Bedenken hat der kolumbianische Verteidigungsminister die EU während seines Besuchs in Brüssel um Unterstützung in diesem Bereich ersucht. Dieses Ersuchen wird derzeit geprüft.

Eine solche Unterstützung würde darin bestehen, dass europäische Sachverständige Informationen über die Militärgerichtsbarkeit in der EU und diesbezügliche bewährte Praktiken bereitstellen, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Menschenrechtsstandards, die in diesem Bereich u. a. durch die Rechtsprechung des Europäischen Gerichtshofs für Menschenrechte festgelegt wurden. Somit kann dieses Unterstützungsangebot nicht als Legitimierung der Gesetzgebung ausgelegt werden. Im Rahmen der Unterstützung sollen Informationen über diesbezügliche bewährte Praktiken in der EU bereitgestellt und die Möglichkeit geboten werden, den Dialog über dieses kritische Thema auszuweiten. In diesem Sinne hat die EU das Thema auch mit Kolumbien bei dem jüngsten Treffen im Rahmen des Menschenrechtsdialogs am 17. Juni in Brüssel erörtert.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007725/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Colombia: EU assistance in the area of military penal jurisdiction will increase impunity

On 17 June 2013, the Colombian Congress adopted a law regulating military criminal jurisdiction. The law was approved in the face of multiple recommendations to the contrary by UN bodies, including an unprecedented statement by 11 UN human rights experts who called for the reform to be withdrawn and stated: 'Should this reform be approved, it could seriously undermine the administration of justice for cases of alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including serious crimes, by military or police forces (Fuerza Pública)'.

Numerous NGOs, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia (OIDHACO) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), have expressed concerns over this controversial military jurisdiction reform, and some of them have specifically called for the rejection of a proposed law whose purpose is to give greater powers to the military justice system and which will shield members of the armed forces and the police from justice for crimes under international law.

It should be emphasised that in its November 2012 report ([1]), the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) determined that acts constituting crimes against humanity and war crimes had been committed by organs of the Colombian state.

However, instead of expressing concern, during the recent visit of the Defence Minister of Colombia the EU offered its cooperation in implementing this reform ([2]).

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware that of the 1 579 lawsuits taken out in the last 13 years in Colombia over extrajudicial executions, only 1% have resulted in sentences ([3])?

2. How does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to 'consider assistance in the area of military penal jurisdiction as requested by the Colombian side'?

3. Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware that to support or help Colombia with this military jurisdiction reform means to legitimate a law strongly criticised by international organisations including the UN? Is the Vice-President/High Representative aware that in supporting this Colombian law the EU is acting without regard for the human rights standards of the UN?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the figures in question related to the investigation of extrajudicial executions, which are reported in a recent FIDH publication.

She is also aware of the criticism levelled against the legislation on the reform of military criminal jurisdiction in Colombia by the UN system, as well as by civil society. Far from remaining silent on this matter, the EU has expressed its own concerns on various occasions and at all levels, including that of President Barroso, in a meeting with Colombian President Santos in late 2012. The HR/VP herself issued a statement on this issue on 29 December 2012 ([4]).

It was in response to these expressions of concern that the Colombian Minister of Defence, during his visit to Brussels, requested EU assistance in this area. This request is currently under consideration.

([1]) Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Interim report on its 'preliminary examination' of the situation in Colombia, November 2012.
([2]) http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/colombie589e.pdf
([3]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/pressdata/EN/foraff/137600.pdf
([4]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/134562.pdf

Such assistance would consist of the provision, by European experts, of information and best practices regarding military justice in the EU, with particular reference to the human rights standards established in this area, i.a. through the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. Thus, the offer of assistance cannot be interpreted as an endorsement of the legislation. It provides information on EU best practices on the matter and gives an opportunity to broaden dialogue on this delicate issue. It is in the same spirit that the EU engaged on this issue with Colombia in the latest session of the human rights dialogue, which took place in Brussels on 17 June.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej P-007726/13
do Komisji
Jan Kozłowski (PPE)
(28 czerwca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Projekt Komisji, mający zastąpić obowiązujące rozporządzenie (WE) nr 800/2008 z dnia 6 sierpnia 2008 r. w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych (GBER)

Odnośnie opublikowanego przez Komisję Europejską projektu, mającego zastąpić obowiązujące rozporządzenie Komisji (WE) nr 800/2008 z dnia 6 sierpnia 2008 r. w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych (GBER), zakładającego wprowadzenie górnego pułapu pomocy w wysokości 0,01 % PKB, powyżej którego program pomocowy dla osób niepełnosprawnych musi być notyfikowany.

Rozporządzenie to uderza w interesy osób niepełnosprawnych oraz pogłębia dysproporcje pomiędzy krajami członkowskimi. W konsekwencji oznacza ono znaczne zmniejszenie dostępu do wsparcia dla osób pochodzących z państw o niższym rocznym PKB. Ten pułap zastosowany do warunków polskich oznacza, iż zamiast kwoty 3 miliardów PLN, która przeznaczana jest na program dofinansowania wynagrodzeń dla osób niepełnosprawnych, bez notyfikacji będzie można wydać 150 milionów PLN. W przypadku Polski spowoduje to dwudziestokrotne zmniejszenie skali pomocy.

Tak skonstruowany limit nie jest dobrym instrumentem zapobiegania zakłóceniom konkurencji, gdyż to nie wartość programu, ale kwota pomocy przypadającej na beneficjenta (lub projekt) stanowi odzwierciedlenie wpływu na rynek. Tym samym, takie ograniczenie narusza zasadę równego traktowania wszystkich państw członkowskich w ramach rynku wewnętrznego, dyskryminując państwa o mniejszym rocznym PKB.

W Polsce na ponad 2 milionów osób niepełnosprawnych w wieku produkcyjnym zaledwie 240 tysięcy otrzymuje wsparcie w postaci dofinansowania do wynagrodzenia. Pomoc ta jest rozproszona pośród ponad 18 tysięcy przedsiębiorstw.

— Czy Komisja bierze pod uwagę fakt, że niepewność co do uzyskania zgody na udzielenie pomocy oraz jakiekolwiek opóźnienie w dofinansowaniu do wynagrodzeń spowoduje masowe zwolnienia osób niepełnosprawnych?

— W związku z tym, w jaki sposób Komisja zamierza poprawić sytuację zawodową osób niepełnosprawnych i zwiększyć odsetek zatrudnienia?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Joaquína Almunię w imieniu Komisji
(7 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Komisja jest zaangażowana w obronę praw niepełnosprawnych pracowników.

Komisja zdaje sobie sprawę, że wprowadzenie do ogólnego rozporządzenia w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych proponowanego progu powodującego obowiązek zgłoszenia bardzo dużych programów może spowodować konieczność notyfikacji niektórych polskich programów w zakresie pomocy na zatrudnienie osób niepełnosprawnych. Jednakże próg ten oznacza jedynie, że Komisja będzie analizować te programy *ex ante*, nie zaś *ex post*, nie oznacza natomiast, że w sposób domniemany będzie je uważać za niezgodne ze wspólnym rynkiem. Ponadto proponowany próg oraz, ogólnie rzecz biorąc, cały projekt ogólnego rozporządzenia w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych to wniosek ustawodawczy, który Komisja chce przetestować w drodze konsultacji publicznych oraz dyskusji z państwami członkowskimi.

Komisja otrzymała uwagi na temat projektu ogólnego rozporządzenia w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych od wielu obywateli oraz organizacji reprezentujących osoby niepełnosprawne, a także od polskich władz. Komisja przeanalizuje te uwagi i rozważy, jak najlepiej zająć się poruszonymi kwestiami dla dobra osób niepełnosprawnych.

Zmieniony wniosek dotyczący ogólnego rozporządzenia w sprawie wyłączeń blokowych zostanie opublikowany w Dzienniku Urzędowym przed końcem roku i będzie ponownie przedmiotem konsultacji społecznych. Osoby niepełnosprawne, organizacje reprezentujące te osoby oraz krajowe administracje będą mogły w ten sposób uważnie śledzić zmiany w zakresie pomocy będącej przedmiotem wyłączeń grupowych oraz zostaną poproszone o przekazanie swoich uwag.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007726/13
to the Commission
Jan Kozłowski (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Commission plan to replace current General Block Exemptions Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (GBER)

The Commission has published a proposal, intended to replace current General Block Exemptions Regulation (EC) No 800/2008 of 6 August 2008 (GBER), which would introduce an upper limit on aid of 0.01% of GDP. Above this threshold, support programmes for disabled persons would be subject to compulsory notification.

This regulation is an attack on the interests of disabled persons and deepens the divergences between Member States. In effect, it will mean a significant reduction in access to support for people from countries with lower GDP. The upper limit — adjusted for Polish conditions — would mean that instead of PLN 3 billion being earmarked for a programme to supplement the salaries of the disabled, only PLN 150 million would be available without notification. In Poland's case, this would result in a twentyfold reduction in the provision of support.

A limit formulated in such a way is not a good means of avoiding distortions of competition, since it is not the value of the programme, but the amount of support paid to the beneficiaries or projects which reflects its impact on the market. This restriction is therefore in violation of the principle of equal treatment for all Member States in the internal market, as it discriminates against countries with lower GDP.

In Poland there are more than 2 million disabled persons of productive age. However, only 240 000 of them receive support in the form of salary supplements. This support is dispersed among more than 18 000 different companies.

— Is the Commission aware that uncertainty surrounding whether support will be authorised, or whether there will be delays in the payment of salary supplements, is resulting in mass lay-offs of disabled persons?

— How does the Commission intend to improve the professional prospects of disabled persons and increase their employment rate?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The Commission is committed to defending the rights of the disabled workers.

It is aware that the introduction into the new General block exemption Regulation of a proposed threshold for notification of very large schemes might trigger the necessity to notify certain Polish schemes for employment aid for disabled persons. However, this threshold will only mean that the Commission will analyse these schemes *ex ante* rather than *ex post*, not that by default it will not consider them compatible. In any case this threshold, and the whole draft GBER in general, constitute a proposal which the Commission wants to test through public consultation and in discussions with the Member States.

The Commission has received feedback on the draft GBER from numerous citizens and disabled people's organisations as well as from the Polish authorities. It will now analyse this feedback and consider how best to address the concerns expressed to the benefit of disabled persons.

The revised proposal for the GBER will be published in the Official Journal before the end of the year and will again be subject to public consultation. Disabled people, their organisations and national administrations will therefore be able to follow closely the developments in the area of block-exempted aid and will be asked for their opinions.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007727/13
an die Kommission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), José Bové (Verts/ALE) und Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE)
(28. Juni 2013)

Betrifft: Langzeitstudie zu gentechnisch veränderten Futtermitteln

Im September 2012 wurde in der von Fachgutachtern geprüften Fachzeitschrift „Food and Chemical Toxicology" eine über einen Zeitraum von zwei Jahren durchgeführte toxikologische Studie über Ratten veröffentlicht, die mit einer gentechnisch veränderten Maissorte (NK603) und dem dazugehörigen Herbizid (Roundup) von Monsanto gefüttert wurden, in der sich schwere gesundheitliche Folgen für die Ratten zeigten, einschließlich sehr großer Tumore ([1]). Obwohl die Europäische Behörde für Lebensmittelsicherheit (EFSA) und einzelstaatliche Agenturen Kritik an der Methodik und den Schlussfolgerungen dieser Studie geäußert haben, wurde anerkannt, dass nie eine vergleichbare Langzeitstudie durchgeführt worden ist. Die GD SANCO der Kommission hat kürzlich angekündigt, dass sie eine öffentliche Ausschreibung zur Durchführung einer toxikologischen Langzeitstudie zu gentechnisch veränderten Organismen (GVO) auf den Weg bringen wird.

1. Weshalb beabsichtigt die Kommission, eine Studie zu der Maissorte MON810 in Auftrag zu geben, und nicht zur Sorte NK603, die in der oben genannten Studie untersucht wurde? Zwar ist in der EU nur die Sorte MON810 zu Anbauzwecken zugelassen, beide Sorten sind jedoch zur Verwendung als Futtermittel und als Lebensmittel zulässig und werden in die EU eingeführt.

2. Auf welche Weise und wann genau wird die Kommission die Ausschreibung durchführen?

3. Wie beabsichtigt die Kommission, angesichts der wissenschaftlichen Kontroverse um die anzuwendende Methodik und der Zurückhaltung der EFSA, eine solche Langzeitstudie durchzuführen, eine gemeinsame und glaubhafte wissenschaftliche Methodik für diese Studie zu entwickeln?

4. Wie wird die Kommission in Anbetracht der ihr bekannten Tatsache, dass wiederholt Fragen zur wissenschaftlichen Unabhängigkeit der EFSA und zu Interessenkonflikten in deren wissenschaftlichen Gremien aufgeworfen wurden, wie eine Mitteilung des Europäischen Rechnungshofs ([2]) verdeutlicht, die Studie finanzieren und deren wissenschaftliche Unabhängigkeit gewährleisten?

5. Wird die Kommission die Studie so konzipieren, dass den Versuchstieren ebenfalls eine Kombination aus GVO und Roundup gefüttert wird, was in der landwirtschaftlichen Praxis häufig der Fall ist und daher der Realität entspräche?

6. Welchen Zeitplan verfolgt die Kommission, um den Prozess in Gang zu bringen, und für welchen Zeitpunkt rechnet sie damit, dass ihr die Ergebnisse vorliegen?

Antwort von Frau Geoghegan-Quinn im Namen der Kommission
(7. August 2013)

1. Bei der relevanten Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen des Siebten Rahmenprogramms für Forschung, technologische Entwicklung und Demonstration (RP7) liegt der Schwerpunkt auf zweijährigen Versuchen mit Ratten, die mit NK603 gefüttert werden.

2. Diese RP7-Aufforderung wurde am 28. Juni 2013 veröffentlicht; Einreichungsfrist ist der 1. Oktober 2013.

3. Auf Aufforderung der Kommission sagte die EFSA zu, zusätzliche Leitlinien zu zentralen Elementen bereitzustellen, die bei zweijährigen Karzinogenitätsstudien mit Ratten zur Lebens- und Futtermittelsicherheit zu berücksichtigen sind. Der wissenschaftliche Bericht der EFSA wird Ende Juli 2013 erwartet.

([1]) Séralini, G. E., E. Clair, et al. (2012). Long term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize (Langfristige Toxizität eines Roundup-Herbizids und einer Roundup-verträglichen, genetisch veränderten Maissorte). Food and Chemical Toxicology.
([2]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/17216793.PDF

4. Die Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen wurde im Rahmen des 7. Rahmenprogramms veröffentlicht. Die für die Bewertung und Auswahl der Vorschläge geltenden Kriterien sind dem Beschluss Nr. 1982/2006/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates ([3]) (Anhang I) und der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1906/2006 ([4]) zu entnehmen: a) wissenschaftliche und/oder technologische Exzellenz und Relevanz für die Ziele dieser spezifischen Programme, b) potenzielle Auswirkungen aufgrund der Entwicklung, Verbreitung und Nutzung der Projektergebnisse und c) Qualität und Effizienz der Durchführung und Verwaltung. Ferner muss die Kommission gemäß Artikel 17 der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1906/2006 unabhängige Experten für die Bewertung der Vorschläge benennen.

5. Die Kommission wird die Studie nicht konzipieren, sondern hat im Wortlaut der offenen Aufforderung zur Einreichung von Vorschlägen eindeutig Rahmen und Umfang der Forschungsarbeiten sowie die Mindestvoraussetzungen für die Förderung festgelegt. Es ist Aufgabe der Antragsteller, sich mit Fragen wie der Konzeption der Studie oder landwirtschaftlichen Praktiken auseinanderzusetzen.

6. Siehe Frage 2 zum Beginn des Aufforderungsverfahrens. Der Abschluss der Studie wird vom Beginn und der Dauer der Arbeiten im Rahmen des ausgewählten Projekts abhängen, das derzeit noch nicht bekannt ist.

([3]) ABl. L 412 vom 30.12.2006, S. 1-43.
([4]) ABl. L 391 vom 30.12.2006, S. 1-18.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007727/13
à la Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), José Bové (Verts/ALE) et Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE)
(28 juin 2013)

Objet: Étude à long terme sur les aliments pour animaux génétiquement modifiés

En septembre 2012, la revue *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, soumise à un comité de lecture, a publié une étude toxicologique menée pendant deux ans sur des rats nourris avec du maïs OGM (NK603) et son herbicide associé (Roundup) du groupe Monsanto, qui a montré de graves conséquences sur la santé des rats, notamment des tumeurs de taille considérable ([1]). Bien que l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (AESA) et les agences nationales aient critiqué la méthodologie et les conclusions de cette étude, il a été reconnu qu'aucune étude à long terme n'avait jamais été réalisée sur le sujet. La DG SANCO de la Commission a récemment indiqué qu'elle lancerait un appel d'offres public pour une étude toxicologique à long terme sur les OGM.

1. Pourquoi la Commission entend-elle demander une étude sur le MON810 et non pas sur le NK603, qui a été testé dans l'étude susmentionnée? Si seul le MON810 est autorisé à la culture dans l'Union européenne, les deux sont autorisés à la consommation animale et humaine et sont importés dans l'Union.

2. Comment et quand exactement la Commission va-t-elle lancer cet appel d'offres?

3. Comment la Commission entend-elle concevoir une méthodologie scientifique collective et crédible pour cette étude, à la lumière de la controverse scientifique entourant la méthodologie requise et la réticence de l'AESA à mener cette étude à long terme?

4. Comment la Commission financera-t-elle cette étude et en garantira l'indépendance scientifique, étant donné que, comme elle le sait, l'AESA a été à plusieurs reprises mise en cause au sujet de son indépendance scientifique et de conflits d'intérêt au sein de ses groupes scientifiques, comme le montre une communication de la Cour des comptes européenne ([2])?

5. La Commission concevra-t-elle l'étude de façon à ce que les animaux de laboratoire soient également nourris avec une combinaison d'OMG et de Roundup, ce qui est souvent le cas dans les pratiques agricoles, afin de refléter la réalité?

6. Quel est le calendrier de la Commission pour lancer le processus et quand la Commission espère-t-elle avoir les résultats?

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

1. L'appel à propositions ouvert au titre du septième programme-cadre pour des actions de recherche, de développement technologique et de démonstration (7^e^ PC) concerne essentiellement des études de 2 ans sur des rats nourris avec du maïs NK603.

2. Cet appel à propositions du 7^e^ PC a été lancé le 28 juin 2013 avec le 1^er^ octobre 2013 comme date de clôture.

3. Sur mandat de la Commission, l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments (EFSA) a convenu de fournir des «indications supplémentaires sur les principaux éléments à prendre en compte en vue d'une étude de la cancérogénicité par administration orale de l'aliment entier à des rats pendant 2 ans». L'EFSA doit publier son rapport scientifique d'ici à la fin de juillet 2013.

([1]) Séralini, G. E., E. Clair, et al. (2012): «Long term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize». Food an Chemical Toxicology.
([2]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/17216793.PDF

4. L'appel à propositions a été lancé au titre du 7e PC. Les critères applicables concernant l'évaluation et la sélection des propositions sont définis à l'annexe I de la décision no 1982/2006/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil ([3]) et à l'article 15, paragraphe 1, du règlement (CE) no 1906/2006 ([4]): a) excellence scientifique et/ou technologique et pertinence par rapport aux objectifs des programmes spécifiques; b) effets potentiels par le biais du développement, de la diffusion et de la valorisation des résultats du projet; et c) qualité et efficacité de la mise en œuvre et de la gestion. De plus, comme précisé à l'article 17 du règlement (CE) no 1906/2006, la Commission nommera des experts indépendants pour évaluer les propositions.

5. Il n'incombe pas à la Commission de concevoir l'étude. Son rôle a plutôt consisté à établir le texte de l'appel à propositions ouvert, lequel définit avec précision le cadre et la portée des activités de recherche ainsi que les conditions minimales d'éligibilité. Il appartiendra aux proposants d'examiner certaines questions comme, entre autres, la conception de l'étude ou les pratiques agricoles.

6. Voir la question 2 concernant la date de lancement de la procédure. La finalisation dépendra de la date de début et de la durée de la proposition sélectionnée, laquelle n'est pas encore connue.

([3]) JO L 412 du 30.12.2006, p. 1.
([4]) JO L 391 du 30.12.2006, p. 1.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007727/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), José Bové (Verts/ALE) en Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE)
(28 juni 2013)

Betreft: Langetermijnstudie naar genetisch gemodificeerde diervoeders

In september 2012 publiceerde de aan collegiale toetsing onderworpen Food and Chemical Toxicology journal een twee jaar durende toxicologische studie naar ratten die waren gevoerd met een genetisch gemodificeerde maïssoort (NK603) en het daaraan gekoppelde herbicide (Roundup) van Monsanto, waarna ernstige gevolgen voor de gezondheid van de ratten konden worden vastgesteld, zoals enorme tumoren ([1]). De Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid (EFSA) en nationale agentschappen hebben weliswaar kritiek geuit op de methodiek en de conclusies van deze studie, maar wel is erkend dat een dergelijke langetermijnstudie nooit eerder is uitgevoerd. DG SANCO van de Commissie heeft onlangs aangegeven dat er een openbare aanbesteding zal worden uitgeschreven voor de uitvoering van een toxicologisch langetermijnonderzoek naar ggo's.

1. Waarom wil de Commissie een studie laten uitvoeren naar MON810 en niet naar NK603, dat was onderzocht in bovengenoemde studie? Het gebruik van MON810 is alleen toegestaan voor teeltdoeleinden in de EU, maar beide stoffen mogen worden gebruikt voor voeding of voeder en worden ingevoerd in de EU.

2. Hoe en wanneer precies zal de Commissie de openbare aanbesteding uitschrijven?

3. Hoe wil de Commissie een collectieve en geloofwaardige wetenschappelijke methodiek voor deze studie ontwerpen, gezien de wetenschappelijke controverse rond de vereiste methodiek en de terughoudendheid van de EFSA om een dergelijke langetermijnstudie te verrichten?

4. Hoe zal de Commissie de studie financieren en de wetenschappelijke onafhankelijkheid ervan garanderen, daar zij weet dat er herhaaldelijk twijfel is gerezen over de wetenschappelijke onafhankelijkheid van de EFSA en over de belangenconflicten in de wetenschappelijke panels, zoals bleek uit een mededeling van de Europese Rekenkamer ([2])?

5. Zal de Commissie de studie zodanig vormgeven dat proefdieren ook worden gevoerd met een combinatie van ggo's en Roundup, zoals het geval is in veel landbouwbedrijven en wat dus een afspiegeling zou zijn van de situatie zoals die zich in de praktijk voordoet?

6. Wanneer wil de Commissie van start gaan met het proces en wanneer hoopt zij de resultaten binnen te hebben?

Antwoord van mevrouw Geoghegan-Quinn namens de Commissie
(7 augustus 2013)

1. De oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen in het kader van het zevende kaderprogramma voor activiteiten op het gebied van onderzoek, technologische ontwikkeling en demonstratie (KP7) heeft betrekking op onderzoeken waarbij ratten gedurende twee jaren met NK603 worden gevoed.

2. Deze oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen in het kader van KP7 werd gepubliceerd op 28 juni 2013. De sluitingsdatum is 1 oktober 2013.

3. Op grond van een mandaat van de Commissie heeft de EFSA toegezegd te zorgen voor „supplementary guidance on key elements to consider for a 2-year carcinogenicity trial in rats with whole food/feed". De EFSA zal naar verwachting eind juli 2013 een wetenschappelijk verslag uitbrengen.

4. De oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen is gedaan in het kader van KP7. De voor de beoordeling en selectie van voorstellen toepasselijke criteria zijn vastgelegd in bijlage I bij Besluit nr. 1982/2006/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad ([3]) en in artikel 15, lid 1, van Verordening (EG) nr. 1906/2006 ([4]): a) wetenschappelijke en/of technologische kwaliteit en relevantie voor de doelstellingen van deze specifieke programma's; b) het potentiële effect door de ontwikkeling, de verspreiding en het gebruik van projectresultaten; en c) de kwaliteit en doelmatigheid van de uitvoering en het beheer. Bovendien benoemt de Commissie onafhankelijke deskundigen voor de beoordeling van voorstellen, zoals bepaald in artikel 17 van Verordening (EG) nr. 1906/2006.

([1]) Séralini, G. E., E. Clair, et al. (2012). Long term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize. Food and Chemical Toxicology.
([2]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/17216793. PDF.
([3]) PB L 412 van 30.12.2006, blz. 1-43.
([4]) PB L 391 van 30.12.2006, blz. 1-18.

5. De Commissie bepaalt de opzet van de studie niet zelf, maar heeft de tekst vastgelegd van de oproep tot het indienen van voorstellen, waarin het kader, het onderzoeksgebied en de minimale toelatingsvoorwaarden duidelijk zijn vermeld. Het is aan de indieners om over zaken als de opzet van de studie, de landbouwpraktijken en andere aspecten te beslissen.

6. Zie vraag 2 voor de aanvangsdatum van de procedure. De afronding van het proces is afhankelijk van de begindatum en de duur van het geselecteerde voorstel. Op dit ogenblik zijn die nog niet bekend.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007727/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), José Bové (Verts/ALE) and Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Long-term study on GMO feed

In September 2012, the peer-reviewed Food and Chemical Toxicology journal published a two-year toxicological study on rats fed with a GMO maize (NK603) and its associated herbicide (Roundup) from Monsanto that showed serious health impacts on rats, including huge tumours ([1]). Although the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and national agencies have criticized the methodology and conclusions of this study, it has been recognised that no such long-term study has ever been performed. DG SANCO of the Commission has recently indicated that it will launch a public tender for conducting a long-term toxicological study on GMOs.

1. Why does the Commission intend to ask for a study on MON810 and not on NK603, which was tested in the abovementioned study? While only MON810 is permitted for cultivation purposes in the EU, both are permitted for feed and food uses and are imported into the EU.

2. How and when exactly will the Commission launch the call for tender?

3. How is the Commission intending to design a collective and credible scientific methodology for this study, in light of the scientific controversy surrounding the methodology required and the reluctance at the EFSA to conduct such a long-term study?

4. How will the Commission fund the study and guarantee its scientific independence, given that, as it knows, the EFSA has been questioned repeatedly about its scientific independence and about conflicts of interest on its scientific panels, as reflected in a communication by the European Court of Auditors ([2])?

5. Will the Commission design the study in such a way that test animals will also be fed a combination involving GMOs and Roundup, which is the case in many agricultural practices and thus would reflect the real world?

6. What is the Commission's timeline for starting the process and when does the Commission hope to have the results?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

1. The open call for proposals under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities (FP7) concerned focuses on 2-year feeding trials of rats with NK603.

2. This FP7 call for proposals was launched on 28 June 2013 with a closing date of 1 October 2013.

3. Following a Commission mandate, EFSA has agreed to provide 'supplementary guidance on key elements to consider for a 2-year carcinogenicity trial in rats with whole food/feed'. EFSA is expected to issue its scientific report by the end of July 2013.

4. The call for proposals was launched under FP7. The applicable criteria in terms of proposal evaluation and selection are laid down in European Parliament and Council Decision 1982/2006/EC ([3]), Annex I, and in Article 15 (1) of Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006 ([4]): (a) scientific and/or technological excellence and relevance to the objectives of these specific programmes; (b) the potential impact through the development, dissemination and use of project results; and (c) the quality and efficiency of the implementation and management. Furthermore, as specified in Article 17 of Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006, the Commission shall appoint independent experts for the evaluation of proposals.

([1]) Séralini, G. E., E. Clair, et al. (2012). Long term toxicity of a Roundup herbicide and a Roundup-tolerant genetically modified maize. Food and Chemical Toxicology.
([2]) http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/17216793.PDF
([3]) OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 1-43.
([4]) OJ L 391, 30.12.2006, p. 1-18.

5. The Commission will not design the study but has rather defined the text for the open call for proposals, which clearly specifies the framework and scope of the research and the minimum eligibility conditions. It will be up to the proposers to consider issues like study design, agricultural practices and others.

6. See question 2 concerning the starting date of the procedure. The finalisation will depend on the starting date and duration of the selected proposal, which is currently unknown.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-007728/13
till rådet
Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(28 juni 2013)

Angående: Möjligheterna för syriska medborgare att beviljas tillstånd till inresa i EU av humanitära skäl

Tredjelandsmedborgare som inte uppfyller ett eller flera av villkoren för inresa får, i enlighet med artikel 5 i kodexen om Schengengränserna, av en medlemsstat beviljas tillstånd till inresa på dess territorium av humanitära skäl, av nationellt intresse eller på grund av internationella förpliktelser.

Enligt artikel 25 i viseringskodexen får medlemsstaterna undantagsvis utfärda visering med territoriellt begränsad giltighet när de finner det nödvändigt av humanitära skäl, av hänsyn till nationella intressen eller på grund av internationella förpliktelser.

— I vilken utsträckning använder sig medlemsstaterna av dessa bestämmelser för att bevilja syriska medborgare tillstånd till inresa?

— Vad har medlemsstaterna för rutiner för tillämpningen av dessa bestämmelser?

Svar
(16 september 2013)

Rådet har inte tillgång till de uppgifter som parlamentsledamoten efterfrågar. Enligt artikel 17 i fördraget om Europeiska unionen är det kommissionen som, i egenskap av fördragens väktare, ska övervaka medlemsstaternas tillämpning av unionsrätten. Kommissionen är därför bättre skickad att veta hur medlemsstaterna tillämpar EU:s regelverk.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007728/13
to the Council
Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Possibilities for Syrian nationals to enter the EU on humanitarian grounds

According to Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code, third-country nationals who do not fulfil one or more of the conditions for entry may be authorised by a Member State to enter its territory on humanitarian grounds, on grounds of national interest or because of international obligations.

According to Article 25 of the Visa Code, Member States may exceptionally issue visas with limited territorial validity when the Member State concerned considers it necessary on humanitarian grounds, for reasons of national interest or because of international obligations.

— To what extent are Member States making use of these provisions to allow the entry of Syrian nationals?

— What are the Member States' practices in applying these articles?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The information requested by the Honourable Member is not available to the Council. By virtue of Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union, it is for the Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, to oversee the application by the Member States of Union law, and therefore it is better placed to know how Member States apply the EU *acquis*.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-007729/13
till kommissionen
Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(28 juni 2013)

Angående: Möjligheterna för syriska medborgare att beviljas tillstånd till inresa i EU av humanitära skäl

Tredjelandsmedborgare som inte uppfyller ett eller flera av villkoren för inresa får, i enlighet med artikel 5 i kodexen om Schengengränserna, av en medlemsstat beviljas tillstånd till inresa på dess territorium av humanitära skäl, av nationellt intresse eller på grund av internationella förpliktelser.

Enligt artikel 25 i viseringskodexen får en medlemsstat undantagsvis utfärda visering med territoriellt begränsad giltighet när den finner det nödvändigt av humanitära skäl, av hänsyn till nationella intressen eller på grund av internationella förpliktelser.

— I vilken utsträckning använder sig medlemsstaterna av dessa bestämmelser för att bevilja syriska medborgare tillstånd till inresa?

— Känner kommissionen till vilka rutiner medlemsstaterna har för tillämpningen av dessa bestämmelser?

— Vad gör kommissionen för att uppmuntra till tillämpning av dessa bestämmelser, så att människor i behov av internationellt skydd kan beviljas tillstånd till inresa i enlighet med EU:s internationella åtaganden?

Svar från Cecilia Malmström på kommissionens vägnar
(9 augusti 2013)

Medlemsstaterna är inte skyldiga att rapportera till kommissionen om tillämpningen av artikel 5.4 c i kodexen om Schengengränserna, och därför känner kommissionen inte till medlemsstaternas praxis vid tillämpningen av den.

När det gäller tillämpningen av artikel 25 i viseringskodexen så visar uppgifter som baseras på medlemsstaternas anmälningar om viseringar som sökts och beviljats under 2012 ([1]) att ca 300 000 viseringar med territoriellt begränsad giltighet utfärdades i hela världen. Kommissionen har inga närmare uppgifter om de särskilda skälen för utfärdande av denna typ av visering.

Medlemsstaterna är skyldiga att se till att personer som söker internationellt skydd ges tillgång till asylförfarandet. Framför allt är en medlemsstat skyldig att behandla varje tredjelandsmedborgare som begär skydd på medlemsstaternas territorium, inbegripet vid gränsen eller i ett transitområde, som asylsökande (med rätt att stanna på landets territorium under förfarandet). Kommissionen använder alla medel som står till dess förfogande för att se till att medlemsstaterna till fullo uppfyller sina skyldigheter i detta avseende.

([1]) Offentliggjord på http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007729/13
to the Commission
Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Possibilities for Syrian nationals to enter the EU on humanitarian grounds

According to Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code, third-country nationals who do not fulfil one or more of the conditions for entry may be authorised by a Member State to enter its territory on humanitarian grounds, on grounds of national interest or because of international obligations.

According to Article 25 of the Visa Code, a Member State may exceptionally issue visas with limited territorial validity when it considers it necessary on humanitarian grounds, for reasons of national interest or because of international obligations.

— To what extent are Member States making use of these provisions to allow the entry of Syrian nationals?

— Is the Commission aware of the practices of Member States in applying these provisions?

— How is the Commission promoting the application of these provisions in allowing the entry of people in need of international protection, in line with the EU's international obligations?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

Member States are not required to report to the Commission on the application of Article 5(4)(c) of the Schengen Borders Code, and therefore the Commission is not aware of the practices of Member States in applying it.

As regards the application of Article 25 of the Visa Code, based on Member States' notification on visas applied for and issued ([1]), in 2012 approximately 300 000 visas with limited territorial validity were issued worldwide. The Commission does not have detailed information as to the specific reasons for issuing this type of visa.

Member States have an obligation to ensure that persons seeking international protection are given effective access to an asylum procedure. In particular, a Member State is obliged to treat as an asylum-seeker (with the right to remain on the territory for the purpose of the procedure) any third-country national who makes a request for protection anywhere on the territory, including at the border or in a transit zone. The Commission uses all tools at its disposal to ensure that Member States fully respect their obligations in this regard.

([1]) Published on: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007730/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (NI)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Migliorare la fertilità dei terreni agricoli grazie alla pacciamatura

Affinché un vegetale possa crescere e svilupparsi dall'impianto del seme fino al termine del ciclo di vita, è necessario che le circostanze ambientali siano idonee. Tra queste, molto importante è la condizione del suolo. In particolare, il terreno deve mantenere una temperatura mite e per lo più stabile, evitare una elevata evaporazione con conseguente inaridimento e limitare la germinazione di infestanti. Una tecnica che permette di migliorare tali condizioni è la pacciamatura. Questa consiste nel coprire il suolo che circonda la pianta con materiale organico o inorganico: nel primo caso si possono utilizzare fogliame, sfalci di potature, compost o altri preparati naturali e, in alternativa, da qualche tempo sono disponibili anche pacciamanti artificiali quali, a titolo di esempio, sono i film di polietilene o polipropilene. Un'ulteriore modalità per effettuare la pacciamatura consiste nell'utilizzo di pietre bianche, le quali avrebbero anche la capacità di riflettere le radiazioni solari e regolare, ancorché limitatamente, il microclima.

Considerato che la pacciamatura è una pratica a basso grado di complessità di realizzazione ma che, contemporaneamente, può apportare notevoli benefici alla fertilità dei terreni, se effettuata in maniera opportuna e che le caratteristiche sopra elencate (stabilizzazione della temperatura del terreno, limitazione dell'evaporazione e della crescita di infestanti) hanno un'influenza positiva su qualsiasi tipologia di terreno, ma i miglioramenti in termini di fertilità sarebbero nettamente più marcati in territori con condizioni climatiche altamente sfavorevoli (zone semi-desertiche o soggette ad elevati sbalzi di temperatura), può la Commissione far sapere se:

— intende incentivare l'implementazione della pacciamatura, soprattutto tramite campagne informative volte a metterne in luce le peculiarità;

— ritiene di favorire la diffusione di tale pratica nei paesi in via di sviluppo, soprattutto nel continente africano, in modo da aumentare la produttività dei terreni?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(31 luglio 2013)

La condizionalità stabilisce i requisiti che gli agricoltori devono rispettare, fra cui le buone condizioni agronomiche e ambientali. A tal fine gli Stati membri sono tenuti a definire i requisiti per la protezione dei pascoli permanenti e per la gestione delle stoppie. In questo contesto, la pacciamatura può essere imposta ove opportuno.

Nel quadro della politica di sviluppo rurale, gli Stati membri hanno incoraggiato la pratica della pacciamatura nel periodo di programmazione 2008-2013 mediante misure agro-ambientali (per es. nell'ambito di impegni per l'agricoltura integrata o biologica). Il sostegno a titolo di questa misura può essere concesso per gli impegni che superano i requisiti obbligatori, compresi quelli riguardanti la condizionalità.

Per il prossimo periodo di programmazione la politica di sviluppo rurale prevede il sostegno a favore di gruppi operativi e dei loro progetti connessi alla partnership europea per l'innovazione. I gruppi operativi riuniscono agricoltori, consulenti e imprenditori agricoli per valutare nuovi approcci pratici. Lo sviluppo di nuove tecniche di pacciamatura potrebbe rientrare fra gli incarichi dei gruppi operativi.

A tale proposito esiste coerenza fra i programmi promossi nell'Unione europea e quelli dei paesi terzi. Lo strumento politico da adottare a tal fine è il programma per il bene pubblico e le sfide a livello globale, che riguarderà anche la sicurezza alimentare. Nel nuovo esercizio di programmazione 2014-2020 si cercherà di migliorare la coerenza con gli strumenti geografici, soprattutto l'undicesimo Fondo europeo di sviluppo. I due strumenti contribuiranno a sostenere i programmi di sviluppo agricolo per cui sarà promossa l'applicazione di buone pratiche agricole incentrate sull'intensificazione sostenibile, compresa la pacciamatura.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007730/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Improving soil fertility using mulching

For plants to grow and complete their full life cycle from seed, they need to have the right conditions. Soil conditions are particularly important. The soil needs to be maintained at a mild temperature at all times and excessive evaporation resulting in dryness needs to be avoided; weed growth also needs to be kept under control. Mulching is a technique which helps to promote such conditions. This technique involves covering the soil surrounding the plant with natural or synthetic materials. Organic mulches include foliage, prunings and compost, while a variety of artificial mulching materials such as polyethylene or polypropylene film, which have been available for some time, may be used. Another method involves using white stones, which reflect the sun's rays and are thought to regulate the microclimate, albeit to a limited degree.

Mulching is a simple practice that can significantly improve the fertility of soil if applied properly. Stabilising soil temperature and limiting evaporation and weed growth have a positive impact on all soil types, and soil fertility could be significantly improved in those areas where climate conditions are particularly unfavourable (semi-deserts or areas subject to sharp changes in temperature).

Does the Commission intend to encourage the use of mulching, particularly by raising awareness of its benefits?

Does it believe that this practice should be promoted in developing countries, particularly in Africa, in order to increase land productivity?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

Cross compliance provides requirements to be observed by farmers including Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC). For this purpose Member States have to define prescriptions for the protection of permanent pastures and for arable stubble management. In this respect, mulching can be imposed where appropriate.

In the context of the rural development (RD) policy, Member States have encouraged mulching in the programming period 2008-2013 through agri-environment measures (for instance as a part of integrated farming or organic farming commitments). Support under this measure can be granted for commitments going beyond mandatory requirements, including cross compliance requirements.

For the upcoming programming period RD policy provides the support for operational groups and their projects related to the European Innovation Partnership. Operational groups bring together farmers, advisers and agribusiness to explore new approaches in practice. Developing new mulching techniques could form part of the undertakings of operational groups.

On this subject coherence exists between programmes promoted in the European Union and those in third countries. The policy instrument to be adopted to this end is the Global Public Good and Challenges Programme, which will also address food security. In the new programming exercise 2014-2020 an improved coherence will be sought with geographical instruments, namely the 11th European Development Fund. Both instruments will contribute to support agricultural development programmes for which the application of good agricultural practices focusing on sustainable intensification, including mulching, will be promoted.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007731/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (NI)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: SLA: nuova speranza per i malati con trapianto di cellule staminali cerebrali umane

La sclerosi laterale amiotrofica, SLA, è una grave malattia neurologica che colpisce la capacità di muoversi. In Italia si stimano circa 3.500 malati di SLA, e sono più di 1.000 le nuove diagnosi in un anno. La SLA colpisce le persone di tutte le razze e di tutti i gruppi etnici, soprattutto tra i 40 e i 60 anni d'età, e gli uomini sono più colpiti delle donne. La prima parte della sperimentazione, iniziata il 25 giugno dello scorso anno con il primo trapianto al mondo di cellule staminali cerebrali umane su sei pazienti, è terminata con successo a fine marzo di quest'anno; alla luce dei dati preliminari di questi primi test è stato autorizzato l'avvio della seconda parte della sperimentazione, che prevede il trapianto in zone più alte del midollo spinale, cioè nella regione cervicale.

Lo studio è stato eseguito su sei pazienti reclutati, trapiantando cellule staminali cerebrali umane nel midollo spinale lombare. In particolare, secondo il protocollo, i primi tre pazienti hanno ricevuto l'inoculazione in tre punti da un solo lato del midollo, mentre i rimanenti tre pazienti hanno ricevuto l'inoculazione bilateralmente per un totale di sei punti, ricevendo, rispettivamente 2,5 e 5 milioni di cellule in totale. Le cellule staminali sono state trapiantate in prossimità delle cellule nervose chiamate motoneuroni, che nella SLA muoiono gradualmente, paralizzando progressivamente i muscoli, fino a causare la morte del paziente. La sperimentazione, condotta secondo i più rigorosi criteri scientifici ed etici per una malattia neurologica mortale, viene svolta secondo la normativa internazionale, in accordo alle regole dell'*European Medicine Agency*, e con cellule prodotte in stretto regime di norme di buona fabbricazione, vale a dire riconosciute dalle commissioni sanitarie nazionali come idonee all'utilizzo di studi clinici, con certificazione dell'AIFA, confermando l'Italia fra i paesi che fanno test di avanguardia nell'ambito delle staminali.

Alla luce dei dati preliminari dei primi test l'autorità competente ha autorizzato l'avvio della seconda parte della sperimentazione più specifica in zone più alte del midollo spinale, e i malati di SLA possono cominciare a sperare in una nuova cura, legata alle cellule staminali.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— che posizione intende assumere alla luce dei nuovi test di trapianto di cellule staminali cerebrali su pazienti affetti da SLA?

— Ha già previsto o intende promuovere campagne di prevenzione e informazione sulle cure con cellule staminali per questa malattia neurologica?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(4 settembre 2013)

L'uso di cellule staminali in un prodotto medicinale è disciplinato dalla legislazione UE sui prodotti medicinali e più in particolare dal regolamento (CE) n. 1394/2007 («Medicinali per terapie avanzate») ([1]). Inoltre, la donazione, l'approvvigionamento, il controllo, la lavorazione, la conservazione, lo stoccaggio e la distribuzione di cellule destinate al trapianto sono disciplinati dalla direttiva 2004/23/CE ([2]).

L'Agenzia europea per i medicinali fornisce consulenza alle imprese che sviluppano medicinali a base di cellule staminali per il tramite dei suoi comitati pertinenti e del gruppo di lavoro per la consulenza scientifica. La Commissione ha attribuito la designazione di orfani a diversi medicinali contenenti cellule staminali per il trattamento di patologie rare tra cui anche, di recente, la sclerosi laterale amiotrofica (ALS).

La Commissione incoraggia e sostiene la ricerca scientifica e le prove cliniche realizzate in modo valido che si avvalgono di nuovi medicinali (come ad esempio i prodotti a base di cellule staminali) per il trattamento di patologie per le quali sinora non vi sono terapie soddisfacenti. Il programma quadro di ricerca in corso, l'FP-7, ha finanziato un progetto denominato Euro-MOTOR ([3]) finalizzato a individuare nuovi elementi causali e fattori di alterazione della malattia per aprire la via a nuove terapie dell'ALS.

([1]) GU L 324 del 10.12.2007.
([2]) GU L 102 del 7.4.2004.
([3]) http://www.euromotorproject.eu/.

Allorché la Commissione rilascia un'autorizzazione alla commercializzazione di un prodotto medicinale basato sulle cellule staminali tale autorizzazione è valida in tutti gli Stati membri dell'UE. Di converso, non compete alla Commissione promuovere un prodotto medicinale specifico.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007731/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: ALS: transplant of human brain stem cells brings new hope for patients

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a serious neurological disease which affects the ability to move. In Italy, estimates put the number of people affected by ALS at 3 500, and over 1 000 new cases are diagnosed every year. ALS affects people of all races and from all ethnic backgrounds, but is most prevalent in people aged between 40 and 60, and more men than women are affected. The first stage of the test, which began on 25 July 2012 when six patients received the first transplant in the world of human brain stem cells, finished successfully at the end of March 2013. In light of preliminary data from these first tests, authorisation has been given for the second stage of these tests to start, in which cells will be transplanted higher up the spinal cord, i.e. in the cervical regions.

Six patients were recruited for the trial in which human brain stem cells were transplanted into the lumber spinal cord. Records show that the first three patients were injected at three points on just one side of the spinal cord while the other three patients were injected on both sides of the cord, in six places in total. The two groups of patients received 2.5 million and 5 million cells in total respectively. The stem cells were transplanted close to nerve cells known as motor neurons. In ALS, these die gradually, progressively paralysing the muscles and eventually causing the patient's death. The strictest scientific and ethical criteria for a lethal neurological disease were followed for the tests, which complied with international regulations and the rules of the European Medicine Agency. The cells were produced according to strict standards of good manufacturing practice, namely standards recognised by national health boards as suitable for use in clinical trials. Certification was given by the Italian Medicines Agency AIFA, confirming Italy as one of the leading countries in the field of stem cell testing.

In light of the preliminary data from the first tests, the authority concerned has authorised the start of the second stage of the test, which will be in an area of the spinal cord that is higher up, and patients with ALS can begin to hope for a new treatment linked to stem cells.

— What will be the Commission's position in light of the new tests on transplanting brain stem cells into patients suffering from ALS?

— Does the Commission already plan, or will it plan, to promote a prevention and information campaign on stem cell treatment of this neurological disease?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

The use of stem cells in a medicinal product is regulated under the EU legislation on medicinal products and more specifically under Regulation (EC) No 1394/2007 ('Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products') ([1]). In addition, the donation, procurement, testing, processing, preservation, storage and distribution of cells intended for transplantation is governed by Directive 2004/23/EC ([2]).

The European Medicines Agency has been advising companies developing stem-cell-based medicines through its relevant Committees and the Scientific advice working party. The Commission has granted orphan designation to a number of medicines containing stem cells for the treatment of rare diseases, including recently also for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

The Commission encourages and supports scientific research and well conducted clinical trials with novel medicines (such as stem cell products) for the treatment of diseases for which there are no satisfactory treatments so far. The ongoing Research Framework Programme FP-7 funded a project called Euro-MOTOR ([3]), to discover new causative and disease-modifying pathways to pave the way for novel therapies for ALS.

([1]) OJ L 324/121, 10.12.2007.
([2]) OJ L 102/48, 7.4.2004.
([3]) http://www.euromotorproject.eu/

If the Commission grants a marketing authorisation for a medicinal product based on stem cells, this will be valid in all EU Member States. By contrast, it is not the role of the Commission to promote any specific medicinal product.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007733/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (NI)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Quale futuro per il gas di scisto in Europa

Negli ultimi anni la ricerca e l'utilizzo di nuove tipologie di combustibili non convenzionali si è concentrata particolarmente sul gas di scisto o shale gas. Questo gas, principalmente metano, viene estratto dal sottosuolo, ove è intrappolato in rocce, per l'appunto, scistose, ovvero aventi la caratteristica di sfaldarsi lungo linee parallele che corrono su di esse. La particolarità degli scisti bituminosi appena descritta è proprio alla base del procedimento utilizzato per estrarre il gas, ovvero la fratturazione idraulica o fraking. Tale metodo consiste nell'indurre la frantumazione delle rocce sotterranee, ove il gas è intrappolato nelle microporosità delle stesse, tramite il pompaggio di fluidi, solitamente acqua additivata con particolari agenti chimici ad alta pressione. La fratturazione idraulica ha il duplice scopo di rendere maggiormente accessibili i giacimenti presenti nel sottosuolo (sovente situati ad alcune migliaia di metri di profondità) e fare in modo che l'estrazione sia economicamente vantaggiosa, tenendo conto dei costi fissi da sostenere per l'impiantistica e delle quantità di gas disponibile nonché della scarsa permeabilità delle rocce sotterranee.

Considerato che contrariamente a quanto avviene in Europa, negli Stati Uniti, dove negli ultimi anni si sono moltiplicati gli impianti di estrazione di shale gas, il trend del prezzo spot negli hub è decrescente e ad oggi si assesta al di sotto dei 4$ per milione di BTU (British Thermal Unit); il suddetto andamento del prezzo può avere ripercussioni positive a cascata sull'intera economia, dal risparmio sulle bollette energetiche per i cittadini, alla competitività delle imprese, all'emancipazione dalle importazioni di petrolio; un eventuale spostamento dalle fonti convenzionali di combustibili fossili al gas di scisto potrebbe incidere positivamente sulla riduzione di gas a effetto serra immessi nell'atmosfera; studi approfonditi necessitano di essere predisposti per quanto concerne la procedura della fratturazione idraulica, con particolare riguardo per l'impatto dei composti chimici, alcuni potenzialmente cancerogeni, usati per essere additivati all'acqua e il cui recupero nel processo non è totale, determinando un possibile inquinamento del sottosuolo, può la Commissione far sapere:

— quale è il suo orientamento in merito allo sfruttamento dei giacimenti di gas di scisto in Europa;

— se ha previsto o intende prevedere studi di fattibilità o progetti pilota che tengano conto delle peculiarità del territorio europeo?

Risposta di Günther Oettinger a nome della Commissione
(12 agosto 2013)

La Commissione ritiene che spetti in primo luogo all'industria e agli Stati membri decidere in merito all'eventuale sfruttamento del gas di scisto, nonché eseguire gli studi di fattibilità correlati e le ricerche sull'impatto dello sfruttamento del gas di scisto, tenendo conto delle specificità regionali, geologiche e di altro tipo. In questo contesto l'industria e gli Stati membri devono conformarsi alla legislazione UE, ivi compresa quella relativa alla tutela dell'ambiente e della salute umana.

La Commissione sta studiando attentamente i vantaggi e i rischi possibili di queste nuove fonti di gas naturale, nonché le loro possibili implicazioni in termini di ambiente e clima, di mercato energetico e di competitività. In questo contesto, ha incluso nel suo programma di lavoro per il 2013 un «quadro di valutazione ambientale climatica ed energetica ai fini dell'estrazione sicura di idrocarburi non convenzionali», allo scopo di valutare come diversificare le fonti di approvvigionamento energetico e migliorare la nostra competitività, assicurando al contempo che lo sviluppo degli idrocarburi non convenzionali, in particolare del gas di scisto, sia accompagnato da opportune misure di salvaguardia del clima e dell'ambiente che garantiscano a cittadini, autorità competenti e operatori la massima chiarezza sul piano giuridico e prevedibilità.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007733/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: What future for shale gas in Europe?

In recent years, efforts to find and exploit new unconventional fuel sources have focused in particular on shale gas. This gas — mainly methane — is extracted from underground shale rock where it is trapped. Shale rock is characterised by breaks along parallel lines running through the rock. Owing to the nature of this rock, a technique known as hydraulic fracturing or 'fracking' is used to extract the gas. This involves fracturing the rock, where the gas is held in pore spaces, by pumping fluid into it at high pressure. The fluid is normally made up of water and chemical additives. The purpose of hydraulic fracturing is to make the deposits (which are located in rock with a low natural permeability that is often thousands of metres underground) more accessible and thus ensure that extraction is economically viable wherever sufficient quantities of gas are available to justify the fixed plant costs.

Unlike in Europe, in the United States, where shale gas extraction operations have soared in recent years, hub spot prices are falling and now stand at under USD 4 per million BTU (British Thermal Unit). This downward price trend can have a positive knock-on effect on the economy in general, resulting in lower energy bills, more competitive businesses and less reliance on oil imports. A shift from conventional fossil fuels towards shale gas could also have the positive effect of reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. However, in-depth studies need to be conducted on hydraulic fracturing, with a particular focus on the impact that the chemicals in the fluid used (some of which are carcinogenic) have on the environment, since some of these additives are left behind and can cause underground pollution.

— What is the Commission's position on the exploitation of shale gas deposits in Europe?

— Has it had, or does it intend to have, feasibility studies or pilot projects which take account of Europe's geological and other specificities carried out?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

The Commission considers that it is primarily for industry and Member States to decide about the possible exploitation of shale gas as well as to carry out related feasibility studies and research into the impacts of shale gas exploitation taking into account regional geological and other specificities. In doing so they have to comply with EU legislation, including that on the protection of the environment and human health.

The Commission is carefully studying the possible benefits and risks of such new sources of natural gas as well as their possible implications in terms of environment and climate, energy market and competitiveness . In this context, the Commission included in its 2013 Work Programme an 'Environmental, Climate and Energy Assessment Framework to Enable Safe and Secure Unconventional Hydrocarbon Extraction' with the aim to investigate how possibilities to diversify our energy supply and to improve our competitiveness can be utilised while ensuring that unconventional hydrocarbon developments, notably on shale gas, are carried out with proper climate and environmental safeguards in place and under maximum legal clarity and predictability for citizens, competent authorities and operators.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007734/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (NI)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili giacimenti di idrocarburi in Africa orientale: una nuova frontiera per i paesi dell'area

L'Africa orientale è una delle zone meno sviluppate e politicamente più instabili del pianeta. Paesi come l'Etiopia, la Tanzania, la Somalia o il Mozambico hanno fondamentali economici basati quasi esclusivamente su attività di sussistenza. Le risorse naturali o minerarie, limitate se si considera la vastità dell'area geografica in oggetto e le centinaia di milioni di abitanti, sono spesso gestite da governi autoritari e funzionari pubblici che non hanno le competenze necessarie per poter amministrare tale patrimonio, per cui, talvolta, sono protagonisti di episodi di corruzione. In un simile contesto, uno studio che rivela la presenza di potenziali giacimenti di idrocarburi nell'area geografica in questione assume una rilevanza fondamentale. Come noto, infatti, nonostante i tentativi di limitare la dipendenza dai combustibili fossili, aumentare la quota di fonti rinnovabili nel computo dell'energy mix e abbattere il livello di emissioni di CO_2 nell'atmosfera, la domanda di petrolio e di altri combustibili fossili continua ad aumentare, soprattutto in virtù della sempre maggiore necessità dei paesi del continente asiatico, e con essa il prezzo di tendenza.

Considerato che lo studio, effettuato utilizzato il metodo del total petroleum system, mette in luce come nell'area delle Seychelles e nelle zone costiere di Tanzania, Mozambico e Madagascar possa localizzarsi, mediamente, l'equivalente di 28 miliardi di barili di petrolio, oltre ad altre vaste riserve di gas sia in forma liquida che aeriforme, con alcune probabilità che la quantità sia anche superiore ai 40 miliardi di barili; in Kenya, Etiopia e Somalia da diverso tempo sono state concesse licenze di prospezioni a compagnie petrolifere di tutto il mondo che ora stanno esplorando i territori e valutando la fattibilità, soprattutto economica, di iniziare le operazioni di estrazione; i potenziali introiti derivanti dalle licenze se da un lato offrirebbero la possibilità di uno sviluppo inaspettato, dall'altro potrebbero innescare tensioni sociali dovute ad eventuali fenomeni di corruzione o occultamento illecito dei proventi o anche, più semplicemente, per le maggiori aspettative nei confronti dello Stato in virtù delle risorse economiche ottenute, può la Commissione far sapere se:

— intende instaurare canali diplomatici con i paesi dell'Africa orientale per supportarli nella gestione dei potenziali giacimenti di fonti fossili;

— intende incentivare le istituzioni locali a gestire autonomamente le risorse naturali, anche ricorrendo a forme di partenariato pubblico-privato in modo da trarne un maggiore beneficio?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(21 agosto 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole dei benefici socioeconomici che i paesi dell'Africa orientale possono trarre da una gestione trasparente ed efficace delle risorse esistenti e potenziali di petrolio e di gas e del ruolo strategico che l'UE può svolgere in questo processo.

Nell'ambito dell'11° FES, la Commissione dà priorità all'energia in paesi come la Tanzania, l'Etiopia, Gibuti, l'Eritrea e, eventualmente, il Kenya. Il sostegno dell'UE nel settore dell'energia sarà erogato secondo i principi del programma di cambiamento e consisterà in investimenti fondamentali per i quali il cofinanziamento dell'UE mobiliterà contributi più elevati da altre fonti, ivi compresi gli investitori privati. L'UE fornirà sostegno per le energie rinnovabili e per lo sviluppo delle capacità onde potenziare le istituzioni e i quadri giuridici e normativi favorendo inoltre un dialogo politico atto a promuovere politiche adeguate e una buona governance, compresa una gestione sostenibile e trasparente delle risorse naturali e dei servizi ecosistemici. In Tanzania, ad esempio, la Commissione sta ultimando un memorandum d'intesa per formalizzare la cooperazione nel settore dell'energia.

La Commissione intende inoltre dare priorità alla buona governance in Uganda, Somalia, Kenya e Mozambico, con un forte accento sulla lotta contro la corruzione e la prevenzione degli sprechi nell'ambito della gestione delle risorse naturali.

La Commissione incoraggia attivamente l'adesione dei paesi dell'Africa orientale all'iniziativa per la trasparenza delle industrie estrattive (EITI), che il Mozambico e la Tanzania hanno già sottoscritto. Nel Sud Sudan i partner internazionali promuovono l'adesione all'EITI nell'ambito di un «New Deal Compact» e la Commissione ha subordinato il sostegno diretto alle istituzioni pubbliche all'adozione della legislazione relativa alla gestione efficiente e trasparente delle risorse petrolifere.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007734/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Potential oil and gas deposits in east Africa: a new frontier for countries in the region

East Africa is one of the least developed and politically most instable regions in the world. The economic fundamentals of countries such as Ethiopia, Tanzania, Somalia and Mozambique are based almost solely on subsistence activities. Natural or mineral resources — limited actually, when the vastness of the geographical area and its population numbering hundreds of millions are borne in mind — are often managed by authoritarian governments and public officials who do not have the skills needed to be able to administer assets like these, resulting sometimes in their becoming leading players in corruption cases. Against a background like this, a survey showing the presence of potential hydrocarbon deposits in this geographical area is of fundamental importance. As everyone knows, notwithstanding attempts to curb dependence on fossil fuels, increase the quota of renewables in calculating the energy mix and lower the level of CO_2 emissions in the atmosphere, the demand for oil and other fossil fuels continues to rise, especially by virtue of the constantly growing needs of countries in Asia, as does the market reference price.

The study, conducted using the total petroleum system method, shows that the Seychelles area and coastal areas in Tanzania, Mozambique and Madagascar may hold the equivalent of 28 billion barrels of petroleum, on average, as well as vast reserves of gas in both liquid and gaseous form. It is even possible that this figure may go above 40 billion barrels. Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia have been awarding prospecting licences to oil companies from around the world for some time now and these are now exploring the fields and assessing the viability, particularly the economic viability, of starting drilling. While the potential income from licensing could, on the one hand, present the possibility of unexpected development, on the other it could spark off social tensions as a result of possible corruption or of proceeds being illegally concealed or even, quite simply, on account of people having greater expectations of the State because of the money thus obtained.

— In light of the above, does the Commission intend to set up diplomatic channels with east African countries in order to give them support in the management of these potential fossil fuel deposits?

— Will it encourage local institutions to be independent in their management of natural resources, including through recourse to public private partnerships in order that the maximum benefit may be derived from these resources?

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

The Commission is aware of the socioeconomic benefits that East African countries can reap from a transparent and efficient management of existing and potential oil and gas wealth, and the strategic role the EU can play in this process.

The Commission is prioritising energy under the 11th EDF in countries such as Tanzania, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and possibly Kenya. EU support to energy will be aligned with the Agenda for Change principles, and will consist of key investments where EU co-financing will leverage higher contributions from other actors, including private investors. The EU will provide support for renewable energy as well as capacity building to strengthen institutions, legal and regulatory frameworks, and a fluid policy dialogue that promotes proper policies and good governance, including for the sustainable and transparent management of natural resources and ecosystem services. In Tanzania for instance the Commission is finalising a memorandum of understanding to formalise cooperation in the energy sector.

The Commission will also prioritise good governance in Uganda, Somalia, Kenya and Mozambique, with a strong emphasis on the fight against corruption and the prevention of wasteful spending in the management of natural resources.

The Commission actively encourages the accession of East African countries to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Mozambique and Tanzania are already signatories. In South Sudan, under a 'New Deal Compact', international partners promote EITI membership and the Commission has made direct support to public institutions conditional to the adoption of legislation on the efficient and transparent management of oil resources.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007735/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 giugno 2013)

Oggetto: Nuovo virus della sindrome respiratoria del coronavirus: Mers-CoV

Il virus della sindrome respiratoria del coronavirus, denominato Mers-CoV, scatena sintomi simil-influenzali che nei soggetti più deboli ed esposti possono trasformarsi in polmonite acuta o in insufficienza renale portando alla morte. Si tratta di un microbo che, ad oggi, ha ucciso 39 persone in tutto il mondo legato al pericoloso virus della SARS che nel 2003 ha causato l'epidemia mondiale che ha portato al decesso di almeno 800 persone. Questa nuova forma di coronavirus tende ad essere molto più aggressiva della SARS, visto che uccide il 65 % delle persone che infetta e in base alle prime analisi è emerso che si diffonde non solo attraverso il contatto tra le persone (goccioline di saliva, tosse), ma anche all'interno di strutture ospedaliere e luoghi pubblici, in generale. Da settembre ad oggi, le zone maggiormente colpite dalla malattia sono state: il Medio Oriente, in particolare l'Arabia Saudita che ha registrato ben 33 decessi, e alcune zone dell'Europa: Gran Bretagna, Francia, Italia (ad oggi solo 3 casi accertati), Germania e Tunisia. Tutti questi paesi hanno in comune il fatto di aver avuto collegamenti diretti con il focolaio del virus.

Considerato che la Mers-CoV risulta essere più aggressiva della SARS, con un tasso di mortalità maggiore dell'8 %; che dalle prime analisi, i canali di trasmissione non avvengono solo attraverso il contatto tra le persone, ma per la maggiore all'interno degli ospedali e dei luoghi pubblici in generale; la scarsa conoscenza e le inadeguate cure possono rappresentare un perfetto veicolo di espansione del virus, può la Commissione far sapere:

— quali strumenti intende adottare per agevolare ed accelerare le ricerche e lo studio della Mers-CoV al fine di trovare una cura appropriata ed evitarne la diffusione;

— quali strategie di prevenzione intende adottare al fine di evitare il contagio;

— stante la mappa di diffusione dell'infezione sopraindicata, quali precauzioni intende adottare per evitare il possibile contagio specialmente durante i viaggi all'estero e alla luce dell'evento che ad ottobre interesserà molti musulmani che si recheranno in pellegrinaggio nei luoghi santi dell'Arabia Saudita?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(13 agosto 2013)

1. Al momento non sono disponibili trattamenti antivirali specifici contro l'infezione da MERS-CoV. Alcuni gruppi di ricerca europei e internazionali stanno lavorando per individuare possibili antivirali attivi contro la MERS-CoV.

2-3. Da quando, nel settembre 2012, sono stati notificati i primi casi nell'UE la Commissione ha seguito attentamente la situazione in stretta collaborazione con il Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie (ECDC), con l'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità (OMS) e con gli Stati membri dell'UE.

Per quanto riguarda le strategie di prevenzione, la Commissione e il comitato per la sicurezza sanitaria hanno elaborato documenti di orientamento, con il sostegno tecnico del Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie e dell'Organizzazione mondiale della sanità. Si è provveduto pertanto a fornire suggerimenti al personale sanitario ed informazioni ai viaggiatori. I consigli di viaggio sono stati tradotti in tutte le lingue dell'UE e, in previsione degli eventi religiosi dell'autunno, anche in arabo. Tutte le informazioni sanitarie sono state condivise con le autorità sanitarie degli Stati membri.

Secondo l'ultima valutazione dei rischi ([1]) predisposta dal Centro europeo per la prevenzione e il controllo delle malattie, evitare di trovarsi a stretto contatto con persone malate, in particolare con chi è affetto da infezioni respiratorie acute, e praticare una corretta igiene delle mani contribuisce a prevenire la trasmissione interumana del virus.

([1]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/RRA-ECDC-MERS-CoV-Sixth-update.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007735/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: New respiratory syndrome coronavirus Mers-CoV

The respiratory syndrome coronavirus which has been dubbed Mers-CoV produces flu-like symptoms which, in the case of those whose immune systems are already weakened, can lead to acute pneumonia or kidney failure, followed by death. So far, the virus has killed 39 people worldwide; it is linked to the dangerous SARS virus, which in 2003 caused a worldwide pandemic, killing at least 800 people. This new type of coronavirus tends to be far more aggressive than SARS, as it kills 65% of people infected, and the initial analyses indicate that it spreads not only through contact between people (drops of saliva, coughing), but also in hospitals and public places in general. Since September, the regions most affected have been the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, where no fewer than 33 people have died, and some areas of Europe: Britain, France, Italy (only 3 confirmed cases to date), Germany and Tunisia. What these countries have in common is that they have all been directly linked to an outbreak elsewhere.

Bearing in mind that Mers-CoV is more aggressive than SARS, with a mortality rate of more than 8%, that it appears from initial analyses that transmission occurs not only through contact between people but in the majority of cases within hospitals and in public places in general, that little is known about the virus, that the therapies available are inadequate, and that all this may create ideal conditions for the spread of the virus, can the Commission indicate:

— what measures it intends to take to facilitate and expedite research into Mers-CoV in order to find an appropriate cure and prevent its spread;

— what prevention strategies it intends to adopt to prevent contagion;

— in view of the geographical spread of the infection indicated above, what precautions it intends to take to prevent possible contagion, particularly during journeys abroad and in the light of the event in October in which many Muslims will be involved when they go on pilgrimage to the holy places in Saudi Arabia?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

1. A specific antiviral treatment for MERS-CoV infections is not available at the moment. A number of European and international research groups are working to identify possible antivirals active against the MERS-CoV.

2-3. Since the first notification of cases in the EU in September 2012 the Commission has been closely monitoring the situation in close cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the EU Member States.

As regards prevention strategies, guidance documents have been prepared by the Commission and the Health Security Committee with the technical support of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the World Health Organisation. Thus, advice to healthcare workers has been provided and also information to travellers. The travel advice has been translated into all EU languages and, in view of the religious events in autumn, also in Arabic. All health information has been shared with the public health authorities in the Member States.

According to the latest risk assessment ([1]) prepared by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, avoiding close contact with sick people, especially those suffering from acute respiratory infections, and practising good hand hygiene help prevent human to human transmission of the virus.

([1]) http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/RRA-ECDC-MERS-CoV-Sixth-update.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007736/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Ajuda humanitária, gestão de situações de crise e assistência pós-crise

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 12 (Ajuda humanitária, gestão de situações de crise e assistência pós-crise) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007737/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Ambiente

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 6 (Ambiente) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007738/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Comércio, normas e setor privado

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 10 (comércio, normas e setor privado) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007739/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Conferências

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 5 (conferências) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007740/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Desenvolvimento rural

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 1 (desenvolvimento rural) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007741/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes —Cultura, educação, emprego e assuntos sociais

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 9 (cultura, educação, emprego e assuntos sociais) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007742/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Governação e assuntos internos

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 7 (governação e assuntos internos) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007743/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Macroeconomia, estatísticas e gestão das finanças públicas

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 11 (macroeconomia, estatísticas e gestão das finanças públicas) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007744/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Energia e segurança nuclear

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 4 (energia e segurança nuclear) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007745/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Saúde

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 8 (saúde) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007746/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes — Telecomunicações e tecnologias da informação

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 3 (telecomunicações e tecnologias da informação) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007747/13
à Comissão
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 de junho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento da cooperação externa da UE — Contrato-quadro múltiplo de 12 lotes —Transporte e infraestruturas

Em 2008, a Comissão Europeia lançou um concurso público para celebrar um contrato-quadro múltiplo com vista a contratar serviços a curto prazo no interesse exclusivo dos países terceiros beneficiários da ajuda externa da Comissão Europeia. Este contrato, dividido em 12 lotes, veio posteriormente a ser celebrado com diversos consórcios, selecionados por lote.

De acordo com o teor do anúncio oficial, os contratos específicos celebrados ao abrigo daquele contrato-quadro seriam financiados pela União Europeia e pelo Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, tendo sido estimada a quantia de 350 mil milhões de euros como orçamento para os 12 lotes do contrato.

Chegou agora ao seu termo o contrato-quadro vigente nos últimos quatro anos.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão:

Pode indicar a lista completa dos contratos específicos celebrados para o lote 2 (transporte e infraestruturas) e respetivos objetos/finalidades e montantes despendidos?

Resposta conjunta dada por Andris Piebalgs em nome da Comissão
(21 de agosto de 2013)

Remete-se o Senhor Deputado para a lista, que figura em anexo, dos contratos específicos concluídos para os 12 lotes do Contrato-Quadro BENEF 2009 desde o seu arranque em 16 de setembro de 2009 até 10 de julho de 2013, inclusive.

O Contrato-Quadro BENEF 2009 continua em vigor, devendo, em princípio, expirar em 15 de setembro de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007736/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — humanitarian aid, crisis management and post-crisis assistance

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 12 (humanitarian aid, crisis management and post-crisis assistance), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007737/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — environment

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 6 (environment), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007738/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — trade, standards and private sector

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 10 (trade, standards and private sector), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007739/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — conferences

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 5 (conferences), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007740/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — rural development

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 1 (rural development), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007741/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — culture, education, employment and social affairs

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 9 (culture, education, employment and social affairs), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007742/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — governance and home affairs

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 7 (governance and home affairs), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007743/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — macroeconomy, statistics and public finance management

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 11 (macroeconomy, statistics and public finance management), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007744/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — energy and nuclear safety

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 4 (energy and nuclear safety), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007745/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — health

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 8 (health), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007746/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — telecommunications and information technologies

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 3 (telecommunications and information technologies), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

Question for written answer E-007747/13
to the Commission
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU external cooperation funding — 12-lot multiple framework contract — transport and infrastructures

In 2008, the Commission launched an open call for tender to conclude a multiple framework contract to recruit short-term services in the exclusive interest of third countries benefiting from European Commission external aid. That contract, divided into 12 lots, was then concluded with several consortia, selected per lot.

According to the official notice, the individual contracts concluded under the framework contract would be funded by the European Union and by the European Development Fund, with an estimated budget of EUR 350 million for the 12 lots of the contract.

The framework contract in force for the last four years has now expired.

Can the Commission provide a complete list of the individual contracts concluded for lot 2 (transport and infrastructures), the respective objects/purposes of the contracts and the amounts spent?

(Version française)

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

L'Honorable Parlementaire voudra bien se reporter à la liste, jointe en annexe, des *contrats spécifiques* conclus pour les 12 lots du Contrat-Cadre BENEF 2009 depuis son démarrage le 16 septembre 2009 jusqu'au 10 juillet 2013 inclus.

Le Contrat-Cadre BENEF 2009 est toujours en vigueur et devrait normalement expirer le 15 septembre 2013 prochain.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007748/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(28 iunie 2013)

Subiect: Politica comună a UE în domeniul energiei

Recent, consorțiul Shah Deniz, care exploatează unul dintre cele mai mari zăcăminte de gaze din Azerbaidjan, a ales proiectul TAP, gazoduct ce va transporta gazele azere către Europa via Grecia, Albania și Italia, și nu proiectul Nabucco, declarat proiect de importanță strategică pentru UE. Practic, în acest caz, statele membre au participat în oferte concurente, neexistând o poziție comună a UE privind participarea UE la acest proiect. Acest fapt, precum și faptul că diferite state membre plătesc prețuri diferite pentru gazele importate din Rusia, arată că statele membre UE au politici energetice și negocieri proprii, în dauna unei politici comune a UE în domeniul energiei.

În acest context, aș dori să întreb Comisia care sunt măsurile pe care le are în vedere pentru a întări politica comună a UE în domeniul energiei, politică ce va permite UE să își asigure independența energetică și să implementeze proiectele strategice ale UE în domeniul energiei?

Răspuns dat de dl Oettinger în numele Comisiei
(20 august 2013)

Atât gazoductul transadriatic (TAP), cât şi proiectul Nabucco West intră sub incidența conceptului de coridor sudic al gazelor, care are o importanță strategică pentru securitatea aprovizionării cu energie a UE. Scopul său constă în diversificarea surselor de aprovizionare cu gaze a Uniunii, iar UE şi statele sale membre au urmat o strategie comună şi coordonată pentru a realiza acest lucru. În acest sens, Comisia salută decizia recentă a consorțiului Shah Deniz în favoarea proiectului TAP, considerând-o un pas important către realizarea primei faze a coridorului sudic al gazelor. Comisia lucrează, în strânsă cooperare cu statele membre, la extinderea în continuare a coridorului sudic al gazelor, exploatând resurse suplimentare în regiunea Mării Caspice şi dincolo de aceasta (inclusiv gazoductul transcaspic) şi sprijinind construirea de noi rute pentru gazoducte. De asemenea, Comisia sprijină activ continuarea integrării pieţelor din sud-estul Europei în acest context, printre altele prin procesul de identificare a unor proiecte de interes comun ([1]).

Pentru a a consolida dimensiunea externă a politicii energetice a UE, la 7 septembrie 2011, Comisia a adoptat o comunicare privind securitatea aprovizionării cu energie şi cooperarea internațională ([2]). Comunicarea a identificat o serie de priorități cu privire la care Comisia va prezenta un raport în cea de-a doua jumătate a anului 2013.

([1]) Regulamentul (UE) nr. 347/2013 al Parlamentului European şi al Consiliului din 17 aprilie 2013 privind liniile directoare pentru infrastructurile energetice transeuropene.
([2]) COM(2011) 539 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007748/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: EU common energy policy

The Shah Deniz Consortium, which exploits one of the largest natural gas fields in Azerbaijan, recently opted for the TAP gas pipeline project to transport gas from that country to Europe through Greece, Albania and Italy, rather than the Nabucco project, which is a project of strategic importance to the EU. In practice, Member States participated in competing offers, as there was no common EU stance on participation in the project. This, along with the fact that different Member States pay different prices for gas imported from Russia, shows that the EU Member States are pursuing separate energy policies and negotiations, despite the EU having a common energy policy.

Can the Commission state, in this connection, what steps it envisages taking to strengthen the EU's common energy policy, which is a policy that will allow the EU to become energy independent and to implement strategic EU energy projects?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

Both Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and Nabucco West are falling under the concept of the Southern Gas Corridor which is of strategic importance for EU energy security of supply. Its aim is to diversify the sources of gas supply to the EU, and the EU and its Member States have pursued a common and coordinated strategy to achieve this. In this regard the Commission welcomes the recent decision of the Shah Deniz Consortium in favour of TAP as an important step towards the realisation of the first phase of the Southern Gas Corridor. The Commission is working, in close cooperation with the Member States, on the further expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor, exploiting additional resources in the region of the Caspian Sea and beyond (including the Trans-Caspian Pipeline) and supporting the construction of additional pipeline routes. The Commission is also actively supporting further integration of the markets of South East Europe in this context inter alia through the process of identifying Projects of Common Interest ([1]).

To strengthen the external dimension of the EU energy policy, on 7 September 2011 the Commission adopted a communication on security of energy supply and international cooperation ([2]). The communication identified a number of priorities on which the Commission will report in the second half of 2013.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure.
([2]) COM(2011) 539 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007749/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: Ayuda estatal a la terminal T4 del aeropuerto Madrid-Barajas contra otros aeropuertos españoles. Discriminación a la libre competencia y revisión de las Directrices sobre ayudas a aeropuertos

La Comisión, ha expresado en el pasado su «preocupación creciente» por las ayudas públicas recibida por algunos aeropuertos ([1]) ([2]).

La normativa comunitaria sobre ayudas estatales permite las inversiones públicas en compañías siempre que se hagan «en condiciones que aceptaría un actor privado operando bajo condiciones de mercado». En particular, en el sector de la aviación los subsidios a infraestructuras deben *ser* «necesarios, proporcionados, perseguir objetivos de interés general y asegurar un acceso no discriminatorio a todos los usuarios», según las directrices comunitarias. Estas directrices afirman también que: «las ayudas operativas son más susceptibles de distorsionar la competencia entre aeropuertos, y son por tanto incompatibles con el mercado interior» ([3]).

En España, se observa un claro apoyo político del Gobierno, orientado a mantener el aeropuerto de Barajas como un centro neurálgico en el mercado global de transporte aéreo. Para el Gobierno es fundamental potenciar el aeropuerto de Madrid con vistas a la privatización de AENA sin tener en cuenta el resto de aeropuertos de la red ([4]).

— ¿No piensa que las medidas a favor del aeropuerto de Madrid-Barajas y de su principal compañía-cliente comporten elementos de ayuda de Estado que les confieren una ventaja indebida respecto a sus rivales y que por tanto son incompatibles con el mercado interior?

— ¿En el marco de la revisión de las directrices sobre ayudas a aeropuertos y rutas aéreas, piensa que el sistema de ayudas preferenciales por el aeropuerto de Barajas violan Directivas europeas en materia de ayuda de Estado y son contrarios a la libre competencia entre aeropuertos y aerolíneas?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de agosto de 2013)

Por lo que se refiere a la inversión de infraestructura en el aeropuerto madrileño de Barajas, la Comisión no tiene indicios concretos en este momento de que el Estado haya actuado de forma distinta a como lo habría hecho un inversor privado. La Comisión no dispone de información pertinente para evaluar si las decisiones de inversión en infraestructuras de AENA son imputables al Estado.

En general, la Comisión no tiene datos que apunten a una posible infracción de las normas sobre ayudas estatales, incluidas las Directrices sobre ayudas estatales en materia de aviación de 2005 ([5]). Por otra parte, no ha entrado todavía en vigor el proyecto de nuevas directrices sobre las ayudas estatales en el sector de la aviación ([6]).

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/23/agencias/1358947134_910274.html
([2]) http://www.preferente.com/noticias-de-transportes/aeropuertos/la-ue-analiza-las-ayudas-publicas-a-los-aeropuertos-espanoles-93059.html
([3]) http://noticias.lainformacion.com/economia-negocios-y-finanzas/ayuda-estatal/la-ce-investigara-las-ayudas-estatales-a-aeropuertos-de-alemania-y-austria_PxpW2kH5GAAT4UxKLyIB72/
([4]) http://www.elconfidencial.com/economia/2013/06/28/fomento-exige-al-ceo-de-iberia-luis-gallego-que-frene-el-lsquovaciadorsquo-de-la-aerolinea-en-barajas-123902/
([5]) DO C 312 de 9.12.2005. Directrices comunitarias sobre la financiación de aeropuertos y las ayudas estatales de puesta en marcha destinadas a compañías aéreas que operen desde aeropuertos regionales.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2013_aviation_guidelines/index_en.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007749/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Revision of the guidelines on state aid for airports: state aid for Terminal 4 at Madrid-Barajas airport at the expense of other Spanish airports — breach of free competition

In the past, the Commission has expressed its 'growing concern' over the granting of state aid to certain airports ([1]) ([2]).

Community rules on state aid allow governments to invest in companies, so long as they do so on terms that a private player operating under market conditions would accept. In the specific case of the aviation industry, Community guidelines state that infrastructure subsidies must be 'necessary, proportionate, pursue objectives of general interest, and ensure non-discriminatory access to all users'. These guidelines also state that 'operating aid is more likely to distort competition among airports, and is therefore incompatible with the internal market' ([3]).

In Spain, there is clear political support from the government to secure the position of Madrid-Barajas airport as a major hub in the global air transport market. The government believes it is critically important to improve the infrastructure of Madrid-Barajas airport in preparation for AENA's privatisation, irrespective of the implications it might have on other airports in the network ([4]).

— Does the Commission not think that the measures taken to support Madrid-Barajas airport and its main client company might involve elements of state aid that give them an unfair advantage over their rivals and are therefore incompatible with the internal market?

— In the context of the revision of the guidelines on state aid for airports and airlines, does the Commission consider the granting of preferential aid to Madrid-Barajas airport to be in breach of EU directives on state aid and to be inconsistent with the principle of free competition among airports and airlines?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

With regard to infrastructure investment at Madrid Barajas airport, at this stage the Commission does not have concrete indications suggesting that the state may have acted differently than a private investor would have. The Commission does not dispose of information relevant to the assessment of whether AENA's infrastructure investment decisions are imputable to the state.

Overall, the Commission has no concrete elements pointing to a potential breach of any state aid rules, including the 2005 Aviation state aid Guidelines ([5]). The draft for new state aid Guidelines in the aviation sector, on the other hand, is not yet in force ([6]).

([1]) http://economia.elpais.com/economia/2013/01/23/agencias/1358947134_910274.html
([2]) http://www.preferente.com/noticias-de-transportes/aeropuertos/la-ue-analiza-las-ayudas-publicas-a-los-aeropuertos-espanoles-93059.html
([3]) http://noticias.lainformacion.com/economia-negocios-y-finanzas/ayuda-estatal/la-ce-investigara-las-ayudas-estatales-a-aeropuertos-de-alemania-y-austria_PxpW2kH5GAAT4UxKLyIB72/
([4]) http://www.elconfidencial.com/economia/2013/06/28/fomento-exige-al-ceo-de-iberia-luis-gallego-que-frene-el-lsquovaciadorsquo-de-la-aerolinea-en-barajas-123902/
([5]) OJ C 312, 9.12.2005. Community guidelines on financing of airports and start-up aid to airlines departing from regional airports.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/competition/consultations/2013_aviation_guidelines/index_en.html

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-007750/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(28 de junio de 2013)

Asunto: Cierre de la planta de producción de Thyssenkrupp Galmed en España. Competencia desleal de Alemania en materia laboral

Thyssenkrupp AG es una industria siderúrgica alemana dedicada a la fundición y forja del acero. El Grupo Thyssenkrupp agrupa algunas de sus empresas, concretamente las que se ubican en la Península Ibérica. Solo la planta ubicada en Sagunto, España, denominada Thyssenkrupp Galmed, se encarga de producir la «bobina de acero galvanizada con recubrimiento de zinc aluminio». Esta planta, que da empleo directo a 165 personas y a otras 500 de manera indirecta, ha sido hasta la fecha una de las principales proveedoras de bobinas para la fabricación de automóviles en Europa, razón por la que siempre ha sido rentable.

El pasado 8 de febrero la dirección de la empresa Thyssenkrupp anunció el cierre de Thyssenkrupp Galmed, no porque la planta estuviera pasando por dificultades económicas, financieras o de producción, sino porque la compañía alemana decidió desviar su producción a dos plantas ubicadas en Alemania, relocalizando así toda la producción de este tipo de bobinas en ese país.

Thyssenkrupp AG no es la primera gran empresa alemana que impulsa la relocalización de su producción, Bosch o Siemens han impulsado movimientos similares atraídos por el favorable marco laboral que ofrece el Gobierno alemán. En Alemania no se reconoce —la existencia de un salario mínimo interprofesional y la utilización del régimen de los *mini-jobs* contratos cuya remuneración máxima es 450 euros brutos mensuales— se ha generalizado.

La Comisión Europea ha recomendado reiteradamente a Alemania que impulse la transformación de ese tipo de contratos hacia otros más estables y que mejore las condiciones salariales aplicando criterios de productividad, tendiendo a armonizar las legislaciones europeas y no a hacerlas cada vez más dispares; el ejecutivo comunitario está siendo alertado de la existencia de una competencia desleal en materia laboral por parte de Alemania que favorece que muchas empresas trasladen su actividad productiva a ese Estado. Como consecuencia de estos movimientos, áreas industriales de algunos Estados miembros, como es el caso de Sagunto en España, se están convirtiendo en zonas cada vez más pobres, azotadas por una tasa de desempleo cada vez más elevada.

¿Está incurriendo Alemania en competencia desleal en materia laboral al mantener un marco jurídico que la Comisión recomienda modificar?

¿Puede existir un nexo de unión entre el cierre de Thyssenkrupp Galmed en Sagunto, España, el traslado de su actividad productiva a suelo germano y el beneficio de aplicar un marco jurídico laboral como el vigente en Alemania?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de agosto de 2013)

En las recomendaciones específicas por países formuladas por el Consejo en 2013 se invitaba a Alemania a mantener las condiciones necesarias para generar un crecimiento de los salarios y apoyar así la demanda interna, así como a facilitar la transición de formas de empleo atípico, como los *minijobs,* hacia formas más sostenibles.

La Comisión no tiene competencias que le permitan intervenir en las conversaciones entre los directivos y los representantes de los trabajadores o en las decisiones propias de una empresa, aunque no por ello deja de instar a los responsables a que prevean y gestionen las reestructuraciones de forma socialmente responsable. La Comisión junto con los Estados miembros y todas las partes interesadas lleva a cabo el Plan de Acción para el Acero de la UE, presentado el 11 de junio de 2013, cuyo objetivo es fomentar la competitividad y la sostenibilidad del sector. En el Plan de Acción se reconoce la necesidad de que este sector industrial realice ajustes, tanto cíclicos como estructurales, y se destacan la importancia crucial del diálogo social y la necesidad de adoptar las soluciones menos nocivas para el empleo. En él se propone movilizar los instrumentos de apoyo existentes en la EU, y especialmente el Fondo Europeo de Adaptación a la Globalización y el Fondo Social Europeo, para ayudar a los trabajadores afectados a reinsertarse rápidamente en el mercado laboral.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007750/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(28 June 2013)

Subject: Closure of ThyssenKrupp's Galmed steel plant in Spain: unfair labour-market competition from Germany

ThyssenKrupp AG is a German steel conglomerate. Of all its businesses, many of which are based in the Iberian Peninsula, only ThyssenKrupp's Galmed plant in Sagunto, Spain manufactures steel coils galvanised with zinc aluminium. The plant, which employs 165 people directly and another 500 indirectly, is a major supplier of steel coils to the automotive industry and, as such, has always been profitable.

On 8 February 2013, the management of ThyssenKrupp announced the closure of the Galmed plant, not because it was undergoing economic, financial or production-related difficulties, but because it wished to transfer production of this type of coils to two plants in Germany.

ThyssenKrupp AG is not the first German company to transfer production facilities in this way: Bosch and Siemens have similarly taken advantage of the favourable labour conditions offered by the German Government. Germany has no minimum wage applicable to all sectors in its economy, and the hiring of staff on 'mini-job' contracts — with a maximum wage of EUR 450 per week — has become commonplace.

The European Commission has called on Germany to encourage its companies to give such staff more stable contracts on better wages, by applying productivity incentives, and has advocated closer labour-law harmonisation. Germany is guilty of unfair labour practices in offering incentives for companies to move manufacturing there. By poaching manufacturing jobs from other Member States — as it has done with Galmed in Sagunto — it is further impoverishing them and aggravating their already soaring rates of unemployment.

Is Germany indeed guilty of unfair labour-market competition in maintaining a legal framework that the Commission wishes to amend?

Is there a link between the closure of ThyssenKrupp's Galmed plant in Sagunto, the transfer of production to Germany and the fact that such plants in Germany are subject to more favourable labour laws?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(2 August 2013)

The Council's 2013 country-specific recommendations to Germany call on the latter to 'Sustain conditions that enable wage growth to support domestic demand' and to 'Facilitate the transition from non-standard employment such as mini-jobs into more sustainable forms of employment'.

While the Commission has no power to interfere in discussions between management and workers' representatives or in specific company decisions, it urges them to anticipate and manage restructuring in a socially responsible way. Together with the Member States and all the stakeholders, the Commission is implementing the EU Steel Action Plan put forward on 11 June 2013, which aims to improve the sector's competitiveness and sustainability. The action plan recognises the need for the industry to make both cyclical and structural adjustments and stresses the crucial importance of social dialogue and the need to find the least damaging solutions from an employment viewpoint. It proposes to mobilise the EU's existing support instruments, and in particular the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and the European Social Fund, to help the workers who may be affected to get back into the labour market quickly.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-007751/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(1 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μετατροπή του ιστορικού ναού της Αγίας Σοφίας της Τραπεζούντας σε τζαμί

Στα πλαίσια του εκπεφρασμένου εδώ και καιρό πολιτικού στόχου ενίσχυσης του ισλαμικού στοιχείου στην Τουρκία, ήρθε να προστεθεί η μετατροπή του ιστορικού ναού της Αγίας Σοφίας της Τραπεζούντας σε τζαμί, καθώς την περασμένη εβδομάδα έλαβε χώρα το πρώτο ναμάζι (συλλογική προσευχή) στον εν λόγω χριστιανικό ναό έπειτα από 52 ολόκληρα χρόνια.

Σημειώνεται ότι ο ναός της Αγίας Σοφίας στην Τραπεζούντα, αποτελεί ένα από τα σημαντικότερα ιστορικά μνημεία της Χριστιανοσύνης στην περιοχής της Μαύρης Θάλασσας με ηλικία 800 ετών. Κατέχει εξέχουσα θέση τόσο ανάμεσα στα μνημεία του Πόντου, όσο και ανάμεσα στα βυζαντινά μνημεία ευρύτερα, παρουσιάζοντας μοναδικά στοιχεία αρχιτεκτονικής, ζωγραφικής, ψηφιδωτής και γλυπτής διακόσμησης.

Η Αγία Σοφία της Τραπεζούντας έως σήμερα λειτουργούσε ως μουσείο. Ωστόσο, μετά από απόφαση του Ανώτατου Ακυρωτικού Δικαστηρίου, στα τέλη του 2012, ανετράπη το ιδιοκτησιακό καθεστώς του βυζαντινού ναού επηρεάζοντας και την χρήση του ως μουσείου.

Υπενθυμίζεται ότι είχε προηγηθεί επίσης η μετατροπή του ιστορικού ναού της Αγίας Σοφίας Βιθυνίας σε τζαμί, αυξάνοντας έτσι τις ανησυχίες για συστηματική προσπάθεια εκ μέρους των τουρκικών αρχών για αλλοίωση του ιστορικού και θρησκευτικού χαρακτήρα μνημείων της βυζαντινής περιόδου στη χώρα.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τα παραπάνω ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι εν γνώσει της συγκεκριμένης εξέλιξης και πώς την σχολιάζει;

2. Στα πλαίσια της ενταξιακής διαδικασίας, προτίθεται να θέσει το θέμα προς την Άγκυρα και τι είδους μέτρα παρακολούθησης λαμβάνει η Επιτροπή για τη διασφάλιση της προστασίας της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς της βυζαντινής περιόδου στην Τουρκία;

3. Δεδομένου ότι ανάλογες κινήσεις θα μπορούσαν να προκαλέσουν στο μέλλον τριβές με το σύνολο των χριστιανικών χωρών της περιοχής, σκοπεύει να αναλάβει πρωτοβουλίες για την αποτροπή παρόμοιων αποφάσεων αλλά και την αποκατάσταση του ιστορικού και θρησκευτικού χαρακτήρα μνημείων που έχουν ήδη υποστεί σημαντικές αλλοιώσεις το τελευταίο διάστημα;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-004607/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007751/13
to the Commission
Marietta Giannakou (PPE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Conversion of the historic church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond into a mosque

As part of measures to realise the long-cherished political objective of strengthening the Islamic element in Turkey, the historic church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond has now been converted into a mosque: last week Muslim collective prayers took place in this Christian church for the first time in 52 years.

It is worth pointing out that the church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond, which is eight hundred years old, is one of the most significant historical monuments of Christianity in the Black Sea region. It occupies a prominent place both among the monuments of the Pontus and among Byzantine monuments more generally and has unique architectural features, paintings, mosaics and sculptural decoration.

The church of Hagia Sophia in Trebizond functioned until recently as a museum. However, after a decision by the Supreme Court at the end of 2012, the ownership status of this Byzantine church was changed: this has affected its use as a museum.

It should also be recalled that the historic church of Hagia Sophia in Bithynia had previously been converted into a mosque, thereby raising concern that a systematic effort was being made by the Turkish authorities to alter the historical and religious character of Byzantine monuments in Turkey.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of this development and, if so, how does it view it?

2. As part of the accession process, does it intend to raise this matter with the Turkish authorities and what kind of follow-up measures will it take to ensure the protection of the cultural heritage of the Byzantine period in Turkey?

3. Given that these trends could in future cause friction with all the Christian countries of the region, does it intend to take steps to prevent similar decisions and also to restore the historical and religious character of those monuments which have already undergone major changes recently?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to previous Written Question E-004607/2013 ([1]).

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

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie P-007752/13
Komisii
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(1. júla 2013)

Vec: Šiesty, siedmy a ôsmy rámcový program pre výskum: finančné prostriedky EÚ na výskumné projekty využívajúce ľudské embryá

Môže Komisia poskytnúť zoznam všetkých výskumných projektov financovaných v rámci šiesteho a siedmeho rámcového programu EÚ pre výskum, ktoré využívajú ľudské embryonálne kmeňové bunky ako zdroj biologického materiálu? Koľko finančných prostriedkov bolo investovaných do týchto projektov?

Akým spôsobom zahŕňa návrh Komisie týkajúci sa programu Horizont 2020 financovanie výskumných projektov, ktoré využívajú ľudské embryonálne kmeňové bunky ako zdroj biologického materiálu? Koľko finančných prostriedkov vyčlenila Komisia v rozpočte na tieto výskumné projekty?

Odpoveď pani Geogheganovej-Quinnovej v mene Komisie
(24. júla 2013)

Na úvod si Komisia dovoľuje pripomenúť, že prijala záväzok rešpektovať hranice etiky, ako aj zákazy, ktoré v oblasti výskumu využívajúceho ľudské embryonálne kmeňové bunky (*human embryonic stem cells*, hESC) zaviedli jednotlivé členské štáty. ([1])

V zmysle tohto záväzku bolo v rámci RP6 ([2]) (priorita „Vedy o živej prírode, genomika a biotechnológia v službách zdravia“) podporených 18 projektov, ktoré sa čiastočne týkali hESC. ([3]) Z akcií Marie Curie na podporu mobility v rámci RP6 sa financovalo 14 projektov ([4]), ktoré sa čiastočne týkali hESC.

V rámci RP7 ([5]) (téma „Zdravie“ osobitného programu „Spolupráca“) sa financuje 25 projektov, ktoré sa čiastočne týkajú hESC. ([6]) Celkový príspevok EÚ predstavuje približne 144 miliónov EUR. ([7]) V rámci osobitného programu „Myšlienky“ financuje Európska rada pre výskum (ERC) 6 projektov celkovou sumou 11,4 milióna EUR. O 4 projektoch v celkovej hodnote 7,9 milióna EUR sa ešte rokuje (pozri prílohu 1). V rámci akcií Marie Curie osobitného programu „Ľudia“ sa financuje 20 projektov, pričom celkový príspevok EÚ predstavuje 22,6 milióna EUR (pozri prílohu 2). Dvanásť týchto projektov podporuje jednotlivých výskumných pracovníkov.

Komisia navrhla, aby podpora výskumu hESC bola možná iba v rámci nástroja Horizont 2020 s podmienkou dodržania uvedených hraníc etiky stanovených pre RP7. Legislatívny balík nástroja Horizont 2020 v plnej miere zodpovedá koncepcii podporovanej Európskym parlamentom a Radou pri prijímaní právnych predpisov k RP7 (pozri vyhlásenie Komisie z roku 2006). V rámci nástroja Horizont 2020 neboli na výskum hESC zatiaľ pridelené žiadne špecifické finančné prostriedky. Tie sa budú udeľovať prostredníctvom konkurenčných výziev na predkladanie návrhov a po etickom preskúmaní a schválení projektov príslušným regulačným výborom.

([1]) Hranice etiky pri výskume využívajúcom ľudské embryonálne kmeňové bunky sú pre RP7 (a predtým RP6) podrobne opísané vo vyhlásení Komisie z roku 2006 (pozri http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:412:0042:0043:SK:PDF).

([2]) RP6 (Šiesty rámcový program v oblasti výskumu, technického rozvoja a demonštračných činností, 2002 – 2006).

([3]) Tieto projekty možno vyhľadať v katalógu výskumu kmeňových buniek v rámci RP6, ktorý sa nachádza tu: ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/stemcell_eu_research_fp6_en.pdf

([4]) Akronymy týchto akcií Marie Curie v rámci RP6: PENNINGER-POSPISILIK, ES-TRAP, EMBRYONIC HEART CELL, GUT STEM CELL NICHE, NOVOSTEM, MATILDE LLEONART, CELL REPROG.BY MMCT, DOHESP, KIDSTEM, STEM CELL SIGNALING, INTESTINAL STEM CELL, REGMEDTEACH, MRI OF STEM CELLS, HOMOL. RECOMB. HESC.

([5]) RP7 (Siedmy rámcový program v oblasti výskumu, technického rozvoja a demonštračných činností, 2007 – 2013).

([6]) Akronymy prebiehajúcich projektov v rámci RP7 (téma „Zdravie“) s uvedením webových lokalít: ESNATS (www.esnats.eu); NEUROSTEMCELL (www.neurostemcell.org); INFARCT CELL THERAPY (www.infarctcelltherapy.eu); HYPERLAB (www.hyperlab.eu); LIV-ES (www.liv-es.eu); CARDIOCELL (www.cardiocell.org): BEST-STEM CELLS (www.beststemcells.ed.ac.uk); PLURISYS (www.plurisys.biotalentum.eu); BETACELLTHERAPY (www.betacelltherapy.org); SCR&TOX (www.scrtox.eu); DETECTIVE (www.detect-iv-e.eu); EPIGENESYS (www.epigenesys.eu); 4DCELLFATE (www.4dcellfate.eu); INNOVALIV (www.innovaliv.eu); EPIHEALTH (epihealth.biotalentum.eu); DDPDGENES (www.facebook.com/pages/The-Dopaminergic-Neuron/314451378641487); TISSUEGEN (www.tissuegen.org); BETABAT (betabat.ulb.ac.be);OSTEOGROW (www.osteogrow.eu); NanoBio4Trans (www.nanobio4trans.eu); AFHELO (www.afhelo.eu); HESUB (hesub.eu). Webové lokality, ktoré zatiaľ nie sú k dispozícii: AMBULUNG; Repair-HD; HumEn.

([7]) Číselné údaje o celkovej výške príspevku EÚ v rámci tejto odpovede zodpovedajú financovaniu všetkých projektových činností. hESC môže v rámci výskumného projektu predstavovať iba malú časť jeho celkového pracovného programu a finančné prostriedky, ktoré sú naň pridelené, sú adekvátne (oveľa) nižšie ako celková suma.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007752/13
to the Commission
Anna Záborská (PPE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Framework Programmes for Research: EU funding of research projects using human embryos

Can the Commission provide a list of all research projects funded by the Sixth and the Seventh EU Framework Programmes for Research which use human embryonic stem cells as a source of biological material? How much money has been invested in these projects?

In what ways does the Commission proposal on Horizon 2020 include the funding of research projects which use human embryonic stem cells as a source of biological material? How much money has been budgeted by the Commission for these research projects?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(24 July 2013)

At the outset, the Commission would like to recall that it has committed to respect ethical boundaries as well as national prohibitions concerning research with human embryonic stem cells (hESC) ([1]).

In line with this commitment, in FP6, ([2]) the 'Life Sciences, Genomics & Biotechnology for Health' priority supported 18 projects with a research component on hESC ([3]). The FP6 Marie Curie Mobility programme funded 14 projects ([4]) with a research component on hESC.

In FP7, ([5]) in the 'Cooperation' Specific Programme, the 'Health' theme is funding 25 projects with a hESC component ([6]). The total EU contribution amounts to around EUR 144 million ([7]). Under the 'Ideas' Specific Programme, the European Research Council (ERC) is funding 6 projects for a total of EUR 11.4 million; 4 projects are under negotiation for a total of EUR 7.9 million (see Annex 1). In the 'Marie Curie' Actions of the 'People' Specific Programme, 20 projects are funded for a total EU contribution of EUR 22.6 million (see Annex 2). Twelve of these are projects supporting individual researchers.

The Commission has proposed that support for hESC research should be possible under Horizon 2020, provided the aforementioned ethical boundary conditions established for FP7 are respected. The Horizon 2020 legislative package is fully in line with the approach supported by the European Parliament and the Council upon their adoption of the FP7 legislation, as set out in the Commission's statement of 2006. No specific funding has been allocated for hESC research in Horizon 2020 — funding will be awarded through competitive calls for proposals and following ethical review and approval of projects by the appropriate regulatory committee.

([1]) The ethical boundaries for research involving human embryonic stem cells in FP7 (and previously FP6) are detailed in the statement of the Commission of 2006 (see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:412:0042:0043:EN:PDF).

([2]) FP6 (Sixth Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities, 2002-2006).

([3]) These are included in a searchable catalogue of FP6 stem cell research, available at: ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/fp7/docs/stemcell_eu_research_fp6_en.pdf

([4]) The acronyms of these FP6 Marie Curie projects are: PENNINGER-POSPISILIK, ES-TRAP, EMBRYONIC HEART CELL, GUT STEM CELL NICHE, NOVOSTEM, MATILDE LLEONART, CELL REPROG.BY MMCT, DOHESP, KIDSTEM, STEM CELL SIGNALING, INTESTINAL STEM CELL, REGMEDTEACH, MRI OF STEM CELLS, HOMOL. RECOMB. HESC.

([5]) FP7 (Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities, 2007-2013).

([6]) The acronyms of the running FP7 Health projects (with websites) are: ESNATS (www.esnats.eu); NEUROSTEMCELL (www.neurostemcell.org); INFARCT CELL THERAPY (www.infarctcelltherapy.eu); HYPERLAB (www.hyperlab.eu); LIV-ES (www.liv-es.eu); CARDIOCELL (www.cardiocell.org): BEST-STEM CELLS (www.beststemcells.ed.ac.uk); PLURISYS (www.plurisys.biotalentum.eu); BETACELLTHERAPY (www.betacelltherapy.org); SCR&TOX (www.scrtox.eu); DETECTIVE (www.detect-iv-e.eu); EPIGENESYS (www.epigenesys.eu); 4DCELLFATE (www.4dcellfate.eu); INNOVALIV (www.innovaliv.eu); EPIHEALTH (epihealth.biotalentum.eu); DDPDGENES (www.facebook.com/pages/The-Dopaminergic-Neuron/314451378641487); TISSUEGEN (www.tissuegen.org); BETABAT (betabat.ulb.ac.be);OSTEOGROW (www.osteogrow.eu); NanoBio4Trans (www.nanobio4trans.eu); AFHELO (www.afhelo.eu); HESUB (hesub.eu). Websites not yet available — AMBULUNG; Repair-HD; HumEn.

([7]) In this answer, the figures for total EU contribution reflect the funding for ALL project activities. The hESC research component of any project may be only a minor part of the overall project work programme and so the allocated funding for such work would accordingly be (much) less than the total.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-007753/13
alla Commissione
Oreste Rossi (NI)
(1º luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Definizione della situazione delle indicazioni salutistiche botaniche (Botanical Health Claims)

Il 14 dicembre 2012, in seguito all'adozione da parte della Commissione del regolamento (CE) n. 432/2012 e trascorsi i sei mesi del periodo di trasposizione, è entrato in vigore l'articolo 13.1 che elenca le indicazione salutistiche (health claims) approvate per essere applicate sui prodotti alimentari. Nonostante ciò, oltre 2000 «health claims» inerenti i cosiddetti «botanicals» sono ancora in stand-by, come si evince anche dal Discussion Paper on Health Claims on Botanicals Used in Foods, e la loro valutazione non è ancora terminata. La commissione per la catena alimentare e la salute degli animali ha indicato i riferimenti di tali indicazioni salutistiche in un documento di supporto. Di fatto ora esistono due differenti modalità per identificare i «botanicals», cioè come medicinale (secondo la direttiva 2004/24/CE sui Traditional Herbal Medicine Products, THMPs) o integratore alimentare (regolamento (CE) n. 1924/2006), per cui, a seconda della definizione adottata, due diverse normative saranno applicate. Poiché gli Stati membri hanno la possibilità di considerare, di volta in volta, una sostanza come medicinale o come alimento si possono verificare distorsioni, su tutte l'imperfetto funzionamento del mercato.

Considerato che: il fatturato annuo del settore degli integratori alimentari in Europa è di quasi 9 miliardi di euro; la procedura di approvazione degli «health claims» consiste in una considerazione della Commissione e degli Stati membri che segue una valutazione della European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), laddove la EFSA è responsabile della verifica della fondatezza scientifica delle indicazioni salutistiche; nel Discussion Paper sono ipotizzate due opzioni per risolvere la questione, cioè mantenere l'attuale struttura normativa o riconoscere le peculiarità dei «botanicals» e rivederne la legislazione; più del 95 % delle aziende del settore sono piccole e medie imprese e, pertanto, una decisione inappropriata avrebbe un serio impatto sul comparto; una delle maggiori differenze normative nel trattare i «botanicals» come medicinale o come integratore è l'applicazione del principio degli usi tradizionali (traditional use, ovvero una serie di condizioni tra le quali la cosiddetta long-standing tradition che richiede 30 anni di utilizzo della sostanza in campo medico dei quali almeno 15 in Europa), principio che soltanto ha un ruolo rilevante nel caso del THMP;

può la Commissione far sapere:

— quali misure intende adottare sui «botanical health claims»;

— per quale motivo la procedura di approvazione degli stessi non è ancora stata finalizzata;

— quando intende fornire istruzioni dettagliate ad EFSA per quanto riguarda la valutazione scientifica dei «botanicals»?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(19 luglio 2013)

La Commissione è pienamente consapevole dell'importanza della questione delle indicazioni salutistiche botaniche. Per tale motivo, la Commissione ha avviato una riflessione nel cui ambito sollecita anche il punto di vista degli Stati membri al fine di stabilire quale approccio adottare nei confronti dei prodotti botanici. Sempre in tale contesto la Commissione ha chiesto all'Autorità europea per la sicurezza alimentare di sospendere la valutazione delle indicazioni salutistiche sui prodotti botanici. La Commissione sta analizzando attentamente tutte le prese di posizione che le sono state comunicate.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007753/13
to the Commission
Oreste Rossi (NI)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Determination of the situation with regard to botanical health claims

On 14 December 2012, due to the Commission's adoption of Regulation (EC) No 432/2012 and after the six-month transposition period had elapsed, Article 13(1) entered into force, listing the health claims permitted for food products. Despite this, more than 2 000 'health claims' relating to botanicals are still on hold, as appears from the Discussion Paper on Health Claims on Botanicals Used in Foods, and their assessment has not yet been completed. The Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health has indicated the parameters for such health claims in a background document. There are now two different ways of identifying botanicals, namely as being medicinal (pursuant to Directive 2004/24/EC on Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products, THMPs) or as food supplements (Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006), to which, according to the definition adopted, two different sets of rules will apply. As Member States have the option of regarding a substance, from case to case, as medicinal or as a food, distortions may occur, and may particularly lead to imperfect functioning of the market.

The annual turnover of the food supplements industry in Europe is approximately EUR 9 bn. The procedure for authorising health claims entails consideration by the Commission and the Member States after an assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), in which EFSA is responsible for checking whether health claims are scientifically founded. The Discussion Paper suggests two ways of resolving the issue: either by maintaining the existing legislative framework or by recognising the specificities of botanicals and revising legislation on them. More than 95% of businesses in the industry are SMEs, and an inappropriate decision would therefore have serious repercussions for the industry. One of the main legislative differences in the treatment of botanicals as being medicinal or as food supplements lies in the application of the principle of traditional use — a series of conditions which include 'long-standing tradition', requiring 30 years' use of the substance in the medical field, including at least 15 in Europe), a principle which only plays a significant role in the case of THMPs.

— What measures will the Commission take with regard to botanical health claims?

— Why has the authorisation procedure for them not yet been finalised?

— When will the Commission issue detailed instructions to EFSA regarding the scientific assessment of botanicals?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 July 2013)

The Commission is fully aware of the importance of the issue of health claims on botanicals. For that reason, the Commission launched a reflection exercise seeking also the position of the Member States concerning the approach to be taken with regards to botanicals and in that context it asked the European Food Safety Authority to suspend the assessment of health claims on botanicals. The Commission is carefully analysing all the positions received.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007754/13
al Consejo
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(1 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Paro juvenil en el Reino de España

El Consejo Europeo ha acordado que el Reino de España recibirá 1 900 millones de euros de la UE para luchar contra el paro juvenil desde 2014, más concretamente, recibirá 950 millones en 2014 y la misma cantidad en 2015 ([1]).

El Sr. Van Rompuy ha admitido que «los niveles de paro son alarmantemente altos» y que «el problema no se resolverá de la noche a la mañana». Lo cierto es que es un primer paso para intentar solucionar la tasa de paro del 56,4 % en el Reino de España, la segunda más alta de la UE.

El problema de fondo parece ser estructural. ¿Qué recomendaciones ha hecho la UE al Reino de España para que este dinero europeo se utilice de manera efectiva?

Respuesta
(21 de octubre de 2013)

En junio de 2013, el Consejo Europeo decidió que, para que la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil desempeñe plenamente su función, el desembolso de los 6 000 millones de euros que se le han asignado debería tener lugar durante los dos primeros años del próximo marco financiero plurianual (MFP). Además, los márgenes que queden disponibles por debajo de los límites máximos del MFP para los años 2014-2017 se utilizarán para constituir un «margen global para compromisos» destinado a financiar medidas específicas para luchar contra el desempleo juvenil ([2]).

En el contexto del Semestre Europeo y las recomendaciones específicas por país, el Consejo recomendó a España aplicar las medidas de lucha contra el desempleo juvenil que figuran en la Estrategia de Emprendimiento y Empleo Joven 2013-2016 y efectuar un estrecho seguimiento de su eficacia, por ejemplo, mediante una Garantía Juvenil, así como proseguir la labor encaminada a reforzar la pertinencia de la educación y la formación para el mercado de trabajo, reducir el abandono escolar prematuro y potenciar la educación permanente, concretamente, prorrogando la aplicación de la formación profesional dual más allá de la actual fase piloto e introduciendo un sistema global de seguimiento del rendimiento de los alumnos antes de finales de 2013 ([3]).

([1]) http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20130628/espana-recibira-1900-millones-euros-para-luchar-contra-paro-juvenil-desde-2014/700203.shtml
([2]) EUCO 104/2/13.
([3]) DO C 217 de 30.07.2013, p. 85.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007754/13
to the Council
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Youth unemployment in the Kingdom of Spain

The European Council has agreed that the Kingdom of Spain will receive EUR 1.9 billion from the EU, beginning in 2014, to combat youth unemployment. Specifically, it will receive EUR 950 million in 2014 and the same amount in 2015. ([1])

Mr Van Rompuy has said that 'unemployment levels are alarmingly high' and that 'the problem won't be solved overnight'. However, these funds are the first step towards attempting to fix Spain's 56.4% unemployment rate, which is the second highest in the EU.

The fundamental problem seems to be structural. What recommendations has the EU made to the Kingdom of Spain to ensure that these European funds are used effectively?

Reply
(21 October 2013)

In June 2013 the European Council decided that in order for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to play its full role, the disbursement of the EUR 6 billion allocated to it should take place during the first two years of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Furthermore, margins left available below the MFF ceilings for the years 2014-2017 will be used to constitute a 'global margin for commitments' to fund particular measures to fight youth unemployment ([2]).

In the context of the European Semester and the Country-Specific Recommendations, the Council has recommended to Spain that it should implement and monitor closely the effectiveness of the measures to fight youth unemployment set out in the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Strategy 2013-2016, for example through a Youth Guarantee, and to continue with efforts to increase the labour market relevance of education and training, to reduce early school leaving and to enhance life-long learning, namely by expanding the application of dual vocational training beyond the current pilot phase and by introducing a comprehensive system for monitoring pupils' performance by the end of 2013 ([3]).

([1]) http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20130628/espana-recibira-1900-millones-euros-para-luchar-contra-paro-juvenil-desde-2014/700203.shtml
([2]) EUCO 104/2/13.
([3]) OJ C 217, 30.7.2013, p. 85.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007755/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(1 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Paro juvenil en el Reino de España

El Consejo Europeo ha acordado que el Reino de España recibirá 1 900 millones de euros de la UE para luchar contra el paro juvenil desde 2014, más concretamente, recibirá 950 millones en 2014 y la misma cantidad en 2015 ([1]).

El Sr. Van Rompuy ha admitido que «los niveles de paro son alarmantemente altos» y que «el problema no se resolverá de la noche a la mañana». Lo cierto es que es un primer paso para intentar solucionar la tasa de paro del 56,4 % en el Reino de España, la segunda más alta de la UE.

El problema de fondo parece ser estructural. ¿Qué recomendaciones ha hecho la UE al Reino de España para que este dinero europeo se utilice de manera efectiva?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(16 de octubre de 2013)

La Comisión propuso medidas específicas para apoyar a los Estados miembros en la lucha contra el paro juvenil en su Comunicación al Consejo Europeo *Un llamamiento a la acción contra el desempleo juvenil* en junio de 2013. Estas medidas incluyen la aplicación de la «Garantía Juvenil»; el uso del Fondo Social Europeo (FSE); la puesta a disposición anticipada de los fondos de la Iniciativa sobre Empleo Juvenil (IEJ); el apoyo a la movilidad laboral en el interior de la UE mediante EURES; el apoyo a las PYME; y la adopción de medidas tendentes a facilitar la transición de la educación al empleo mediante contratos de aprendizaje y períodos de prácticas.

El FSE continúa siendo el principal instrumento financiero de la UE para apoyar la inversión en capital humano y, dentro ese contexto, promover el empleo juvenil. Por tanto, los recursos del FSE asignados por los Estados miembros a esta cuestión dentro y fuera del IEJ requieren un importante esfuerzo. La Comisión supervisa los trabajos preparatorios que se llevan a cabo en España en relación con este objetivo y presta su ayuda a España con el objeto de garantizar una respuesta adecuada y rápida a la preocupante situación actual.

Por último, dentro del contexto del Semestre Europeo de 2013 se proporcionaron a España recomendaciones específicas para el país ([2]) relativas al empleo juvenil y actualmente se está efectuando un estrecho seguimiento.

([1]) http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20130628/espana-recibira-1900-millones-euros-para-luchar-contra-paro-juvenil-desde-2014/700203.shtml
([2]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st10/st10656-re01.en13.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007755/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Youth unemployment in the Kingdom of Spain

The European Council has agreed that the Kingdom of Spain will receive EUR 1.9 billion from the EU, beginning in 2014, to combat youth unemployment. Specifically, it will receive EUR 950 million in 2014 and the same amount in 2015. ([1])

Mr Van Rompuy has said that 'unemployment levels are alarmingly high' and that 'the problem won't be solved overnight'. However, these funds are the first step towards attempting to fix Spain's 56.4% unemployment rate, which is the second highest in the EU.

The fundamental problem seems to be structural. What recommendations has the EU made to the Kingdom of Spain to ensure that these European funds are used effectively?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 October 2013)

The Commission presented specific activities to support Member States in the fight against youth unemployment, in its communication '*Call to action on youth unemployment*' to the European Council in June 2013. They include the implementation of the Youth Guarantee; the use of the European Social Fund (ESF); the front-loading of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI); support to intra-EU labour mobility through EURES; support for SMEs; and measures to ease the transition from education to work through apprenticeships and traineeships.

The ESF remains the main EU financial instrument to support human capital investment, and in that context youth employment. The ESF resources allocated by the Member States to this issue in and outside of the YEI would therefore require an ambitious effort. The Commission monitors the preparatory work in Spain with regards to this objective and helps Spain to ensure a rapid and adequate response to the present worrying situation.

Finally, specific country-specific recommendations ([2]) related to youth employment were addressed to Spain in the context of the European Semester 2013 and a close follow-up is ongoing.

([1]) http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20130628/espana-recibira-1900-millones-euros-para-luchar-contra-paro-juvenil-desde-2014/700203.shtml
([2]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st10/st10656-re01.en13.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007756/13
a la Comisión
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Publicidad institucional en un número muy limitado de medios de comunicación

El Departamento de la Presidencia del Gobierno de Cataluña (España) ha adjudicado hace poco un contrato de publicidad de más de un millón trescientos mil euros a cuatro empresas de información con el compromiso de realizar durante el año 2013 determinadas campañas de publicidad institucional. En concreto, anuncios sobre el llamado «plan del Gobierno 2013-2016», sobre el fomento del deporte catalán, sobre la Oficina virtual de trámites, sobre el número 112, sobre las redes sociales que utiliza esa Administración catalana etc.

Junto a esos medios de comunicación existen otros en el ámbito de esa Comunidad autónoma que tienen una gran difusión, según los estudios generales de medios, o más presencia local. En general, una mayor repercusión que los diarios beneficiarios del contrato. Téngase en cuenta además que, en el pliego de condiciones, no se especificaba el modo de divulgación de los anuncios (papel, soporte digital …).

1. ¿Cree la Comisión que se ha publicado esa convocatoria pública de forma regular?

2. ¿Considera la Comisión que la falta de publicidad de los criterios de adjudicación con su correspondiente baremo respeta la normativa comunitaria?

3. ¿No cree que beneficiar solo a cuatro diarios que no son los de mayor difusión o de mayor presencia local puede alterar el mercado competitivo de los medios de comunicación europeos?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(9 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión no ha sido alertada de la situación que refiere Su Señoría, por lo que en este momento no se halla en condiciones de efectuar un análisis jurídico de la misma. La limitada información de que se dispone actualmente no parece indicar que la adjudicación del contrato quebrante las normas de competencia de la UE, incluidas las disposiciones de control de las ayudas estatales.

Dicho esto, la Comisión considera que los hechos presentados por Su Señoría pueden merecer un escrutinio más detenido con arreglo a la Directiva 2004/18/CE sobre contratación pública. En efecto, si el contrato tiene por objeto principal los servicios de publicidad recogidos en el anexo II A de dicha Directiva, su concesión debería ajustarse a todos los requisitos de la Directiva. En tal caso, la autoridad contratante está obligada a cumplir, entre otras, las condiciones específicas de la Directiva sobre publicación de convocatorias y criterios de adjudicación.

La Comisión se propone recabar nuevos datos sobre este caso y, en caso necesario, adoptar las medidas oportunas.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007756/13
to the Commission
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Institutional advertising in a very limited number of media outlets

The Office of the Head of the Catalan Government (Spain) recently awarded an advertising contract worth more than EUR 1.3 million to four media companies, which will run certain institutional advertising campaigns over the course of 2013. Specifically, these campaigns will include advertisements on the 'Government plan 2013-2016', on promoting Catalan sport, on the virtual procedures office, on the number 112, and on the social networks that the Catalan Government uses.

In addition to these media outlets, there are others in Catalonia that are widely distributed, according to general media studies, and have a stronger local presence. In general, these other media outlets are more influential than the daily newspapers to which the contract has been awarded. In addition, the specifications to the contract do not indicate how the advertisements will be disseminated (on paper, in digital form, etc.).

1. Does the Commission believe that this open invitation to tender has been published in a regular manner?

2. Does it believe that the lack of publicity regarding the award criteria and its corresponding scale complies with EU regulations?

3. Does it not believe that benefiting just four daily newspapers, which are not the ones most widely distributed or with the strongest local presence, could alter the competitive market for European media?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(9 September 2013)

The situation referred to by the Honourable Member has not been brought to the attention of the Commission. The Commission is therefore not in a position to provide a formal legal analysis at this stage. The limited information available at this stage does not seem to indicate that the granting of the contract would be in breach of EU competition laws, including the state aid control rules.

However, the Commission considers that the facts raised by the Honourable Member may deserve further attention under the directive 2004/18/EC on public Procurement. Indeed, should advertising services listed in Annex II A of this directive be the main subject of the contract, the award of the contract would be governed by all the requirements of this directive. In this case, the contracting authority is bound to respect, among others, the specific requirements of the directive concerning the publication of notices and the award criteria.

The Commission intends to collect further information on this case and, if necessary, take appropriate further actions.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007757/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(1 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Chamaeleo chamaeleón

Desde hace varios años estamos asistiendo a la desaparición del hábitat del camaleón común (*Chamaeleo chamaeleón*), en Andalucía (España), concretamente en las provincias de Cádiz, Málaga, y Huelva, una especie protegida, que figura en el anexo V de la Ley 42/2007, de 13 de diciembre, del Patrimonio Natural y de la Biodiversidad, que a su vez recoge lo contenido en la Directiva comunitaria 92/43/CEE, en relación a la conservación de los hábitat naturales de la fauna y flora silvestres.

La fiebre urbanística que ha afectado a todo nuestro litoral, coincidente con el hábitat de esta especie protegida, ha afectado muy negativamente a las poblaciones de camaleones, realizándose proyectos en el entorno litoral sin declaración de impacto ambiental (DIA), o manipulando el contenido del mismo, nos hemos encontrado con zonas que han sido totalmente destruidas, y sin embargo le han dedicado un monumento al camaleón, limitándose las administraciones a efectuar translocaciones puntuales de ejemplares, y destruyendo con ello las zonas de reproducción y de hábitat, haciendo caso omiso a la legislación vigente en lo referente a que la protección del hábitat se realizara independientemente de la titularidad del terreno donde se asienta.

Por todo ello consideramos que estas actuaciones vulneran la Directiva 92/43/CEE, y la Ley 42/2007 del Patrimonio Natural y de la Biodiversidad.

¿Solicitará la Comisión información sobre los proyectos que afecten al hábitat de esta especie protegida, y las medidas que se están tomando en relación a la conservación y protección de su hábitat?

¿Aceptará esta Comisión documentación relativa a la transgresión sistemática de la normativa nacional y comunitaria, en relación a la destrucción del hábitat del camaleón común en España?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(9 de agosto de 2013)

Chamaeleo chamaeleon es una de las especies incluidas en el anexo IV de la Directiva de Hábitats ([1]). El artículo 12 de esa Directiva obliga a los Estados miembros a instaurar un sistema de protección rigurosa de esa especie en su área de distribución natural y a prohibir su captura, sacrificio o perturbación deliberados, así como el deterioro o destrucción de sus lugares de reproducción o de sus zonas de descanso.

En España, la Ley 42/2007, del Patrimonio Natural y de la Biodiversidad, protege esta especie al haberla incluido en el Listado de Especies Silvestres en Régimen de Protección Especial con arreglo a sus artículos 53 y 54. Además, de acuerdo con la información disponible, en Andalucía se está ejecutando un Programa de Conservación y Recuperación del Camaleón Común ([2]).

La responsabilidad de velar por el cumplimiento de la Directiva de Hábitats corresponde principalmente a los Estados miembros. La Comisión agradecerá cualquier información adicional sobre este asunto y, de demostrarse cualquier posible infracción, adoptará las medidas necesarias para garantizar el pleno cumplimiento de la legislación de la UE.

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

([2]) http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/site/portalweb/menuitem.7e1cf46ddf59bb227a9ebe205510e1ca/?vgnextoid=296c682c9542a110VgnVCM1000000624e50aRCRD&vgnextchannel=a1bff703e8207310VgnVCM1000001325e50aRCRD

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007757/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Chamaeleo chamaeleon

For several years, we have been witnessing the disappearance of the habitat of the common chameleon (*Chamaeleo chamaeleon*) in Andalusia (Spain), specifically in the provinces of Cadiz, Malaga, and Huelva. The common chameleon is a protected species, included in Annex V of Law 42/2007 of 13 December on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity, which in turn incorporates the contents of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

The development frenzy that has affected our entire shoreline — which coincides with the habitat of this protected species — has had a very negative impact on chameleon populations. Projects along the shoreline have been carried out without an environmental impact statement (EIS), or the content of the EIS has been manipulated. We have found areas that have been completely destroyed and, despite the fact that a conservation area has been dedicated to the chameleon, governments have done nothing more than translocate individual chameleons on a case-by-case basis. As a result, the chameleons' breeding and habitat areas are being destroyed. The legislation in force, which establishes that habitat will be protected regardless of the ownership of the land where it is located, is being ignored.

Therefore, we believe that these activities violate Directive 92/43/EEC and Law 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.

Will the Commission request information about projects affecting the habitat of this protected species, and the measures being taken to conserve and protect its habitat?

Will the Commission accept documentation on the systematic violation of national and EU legislation, with regard to the destruction of the common chameleon's habitat in Spain?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

Chamaeleo chamaeleon is listed under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive ([1]). In accordance with Article 12 of the directive, Member States are requested to establish a system of strict protection for this species in its natural range, prohibiting its deliberate capture, killing and disturbance, as well as the deterioration or destruction of its breeding sites or resting places.

In Spain, the Law 42/2007 on Natural Heritage and Biodiversity provides a system of protection for this species, as it is included in the List of Wild Species under Special Protection Regime, in accordance with Article 53 and 54 of the Law. Furthermore, according to the available information, a programme for the conservation and recovery of the Common Chameleon is being implemented in Andalusia ([2]).

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive lies primarily with the Member States. The Commission would welcome further detailed information on the issue. In case of evidence of possible infringements, it will take the necessary actions to ensure full compliance with the EU legislation.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, of 21 May 1992, on the protection of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206 of 22.07.1992).
([2]) http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/site/portalweb/menuitem.7e1cf46ddf59bb227a9ebe205510e1ca/?vgnextoid=296c682c9542a110VgnVCM1000000624e50aRCRD&vgnextchannel=a1bff703e8207310VgnVCM1000001325e50aRCRD.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007758/13
al Consejo
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Cierre de Thyssenkrupp Galmed en España. Competencia desleal de Alemania. Incongruencia con la política económica europea

Thyssenkrupp AG es una industria siderúrgica alemana dedicada a la fundición y forja del acero. El Grupo Thyssenkrupp agrupa algunas de sus empresas, concretamente las que se ubican en la Península Ibérica. Solo la planta ubicada en Sagunto, España, denominada Thyssenkrupp Galmed, se encarga de producir la «bobina de acero galvanizada con recubrimiento de zinc aluminio». Desde esta planta se suministra este tipo de bobina a los principales fabricantes europeos de automóviles, razón por la que esta empresa siempre ha sido rentable. El pasado 8 de febrero la dirección de la empresa Thyssenkrupp anunció el cierre de Thyssenkrupp Galmed, con el fin de desviar su producción a dos plantas ubicadas en Alemania y así relocalizar en suelo alemán toda la producción de este tipo de bobinas.

Thyssenkrupp AG no es la primera gran empresa alemana que impulsa la relocalización de su producción, Bosch o Siemens han impulsado movimientos similares atraídos por el favorable marco laboral que ofrece el Gobierno alemán. En Alemania no se reconoce la existencia de un salario mínimo interprofesional y la utilización del régimen de los *mini-jobs* —*contratos* cuya remuneración máxima es 450 euros brutos mensuales— se ha generalizado. La Comisión Europea ha recomendado reiteradamente a Alemania que impulse la transformación de ese tipo de contratos hacia otros más estables y que mejore las condiciones salariales aplicando criterios de productividad, tendiendo a armonizar las legislaciones europeas y no a hacerlas cada vez más dispares. Alemania está incurriendo en competencia desleal en materia laboral y en un proteccionismo creciente que está empobreciendo áreas industriales como la de Sagunto en España.

Todo lo expuesto lleva a pensar que el Gobierno alemán no está actuando de manera adecuada y coherente, ya que está alentando movimientos empresariales contrarios a la política económica común centrada en impulsar la creación de empleo, sobre todo el juvenil, en países con una elevada tasa de desempleo como es España. Es incongruente que el Gobierno alemán firme acuerdos de colaboración en materia de empleo con el Gobierno español y luego permita que el cierre de una gran empresa alemana destruya casi mil puestos de trabajo.

¿Cree el Consejo que sería conveniente tratar, en la reunión del Consejo del mes de junio, el anuncio de cierre de la empresa Thyssen Galmed S.A., teniendo en cuenta la manera en que Alemania está actuando y su incidencia en la creciente tasa de desempleo en España?

Respuesta
(25 de noviembre de 2013)

El Consejo no ha debatido sobre este tema, ya que no entra dentro de su ámbito de competencias.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007758/13
to the Council
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Closure of Thyssenkrupp Galmed in Spain. Unfair competition by Germany. Inconsistency with EU economic policy

Thyssenkrupp AG is a German steel company specialising in steel foundry and forging. The Thyssenkrupp Group clusters together some of its companies, specifically those located in the Iberian Peninsula. The plant in Sagunto, Spain, named Thyssenkrupp Galmed, is unique in that it is the only plant that produces 'galvanised steel coil coated with zinc-aluminium'. The plant supplies this type of coil to the main European automobile manufacturers, and consequently, Thyssenkrupp Galmed has always been profitable. On 8 February 2013, Thyssenkrupp's management announced that Thyssenkrupp Galmed would be closed, in order to shift its production to two plants located in Germany, thus relocating onto German soil the entire production of such coils.

Thyssenkrupp AG is not the first large German company that has taken steps to relocate its production. Bosch and Siemens have made similar moves, attracted by the favourable labour policies that the German Government offers. In Germany, the existence of a national minimum wage is not recognised, and the use of the mini-jobs system — contracts providing a maximum remuneration of EUR 450 gross per month — has become common. The Commission has repeatedly recommended that Germany promote the conversion of such contracts into other, more stable contracts, and that it improve wage conditions by applying productivity criteria. Taking these steps would help to harmonise European legislation, rather than make it increasingly disparate. Germany is engaging in unfair competition with regard to employment, as well as increasingly strong protectionism, which is having a detrimental effect on industrial areas such as Sagunto in Spain.

All of these factors lead to the conclusion that the German Government is not acting in an appropriate, coherent manner, since it is encouraging actions by businesses which are contrary to EU economic policy. EU economic policy is focused on encouraging job creation, especially among young people, in countries with a high unemployment rate such as Spain. It is incongruous that the German Government should sign partnership agreements on employment with the Spanish Government and then enable the closure of a large German company, destroying nearly one thousand jobs.

Does the Council believe that it would be appropriate to address, during the meeting of the Council in June, the announcement regarding Thyssen Galmed S.A.'s closure, bearing in mind the way in which Germany is acting and its impact on the growing unemployment rate in Spain?

Reply
(25 November 2013)

The Council has not discussed this question, as it does not fall within its sphere of competence.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007759/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(1 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Despilfarro fondos europeos en Castilla y León

El pasado 13 de mayo, *László Ándor, Comisario de Empleo y Asuntos Sociales, participó en un debate celebrado por la Fundación Fuhem donde afirmó que España ha despilfarrado los fondos europeos de cohesión al haber desarrollado políticas poco inteligentes.*

El Comisario ha llegado a sostener que este despilfarro se encuentra en la base de los problemas de competitividad que lleva arrastrando la economía española. Los fondos de cohesión en España se han despilfarrado en la construcción de infraestructuras inútiles o duplicadas que no han mejorado en nada la competitividad. Estas infraestructuras tan solo han beneficiado a las grandes *empresas de construcción que, en última instancia, han sido las grandes perceptoras de los fondos europeos.*

Durante años estos fondos se han estado empleado para beneficiar a las citadas empresas y en la actualidad ha aparecido información sobre los supuestos pagos que dichas compañías realizaban a la cúpula del partido que gestionaba los proyectos. Esto podría explicar la lógica con la que las autoridades españolas han estado elaborando los proyectos financiados con fondos europeos. *Por ello resulta necesario recabar la mayor información posible sobre la evaluación que la Comisión ha realizado de dichos proyectos.*

Teniendo en cuenta *las críticas lanzadas por el Comisario, sobre la ejecución de dichos fondos ¿qué proyectos, a la luz de las evaluaciones que la Comisión ha debido realizar, son considerados como «poco inteligentes» y cuáles son las alternativas que la Comisión Europea entiende que podrían haber sido ejecutadas en su lugar? Castilla y León es una de las regiones europeas con mayor desempleo y por eso urge conocer ¿cómo evalúa el Comisario los proyectos realizados en la región?*

¿Qué proyectos financiados con los fondos de cohesión suponen para la Comisión proyectos que no han servido para el impulso económico de Castilla y León y un despilfarro de los fondos europeos?

¿Qué alternativas considera que habrían podido ser financiadas en Castilla y León para generar un incremento de la actividad económica y un descenso del desempleo?

Respuesta del Sr. Andor en nombre de la Comisión
(6 de agosto de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a las preguntas escritas E-005454/2013, E-005885/2013 y E-006360/2013, transmitida el 15 de julio de 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007759/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Wasting of European funds in Castile-Leon

On 13 May 2013, László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, took part in a debate held by the FUHEM Foundation in which he stated that Spain had wasted European cohesion funds by developing policies that were not very smart.

The Commissioner even claimed that such waste was at the root of the competitiveness problems hanging over the Spanish economy. In Spain, cohesion funds have been wasted on building useless or duplicated infrastructure that has not led to any improvement in competitiveness at all. Such infrastructure has only benefited the large construction companies, which ultimately have been the main recipients of European funds.

These funds have been used to benefit these companies for years, and information has recently come to light on the alleged payments that they have made to the leaders of the party administering the projects. That could account for the thinking behind the way the Spanish authorities have been drafting projects funded with European money; it is vital, therefore, to gather as much information as possible on the Commission's evaluation of those projects.

In the light of the Commissioner's scathing remarks about the use of said funds, we believe we should be told which projects are regarded as not very smart, based on the evaluations that the Commission must have carried out, and what alternatives the Commission thinks could have been put into practice instead. Castile-Leon is among the regions with the highest unemployment in Europe, and we therefore need to know how the Commissioner rates the projects carried out in the region.

Which projects financed from cohesion funds does the Commission believe have not helped to boost Castile-Leon's economy and have been a waste of European funds?

What alternatives does it think could have been financed in Castile-Leon so as to increase economic activity and cut unemployment?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-005454/2013 and E-005885/2013 and E-006360/2013, transmitted on 15 July 2013.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-007760/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(1. juli 2013)

Om: Hormonforstyrrende stoffer

Jeg har læst, at Kommissionen har besluttet at udskyde pakken om hormonforstyrrende stoffer, som blandt andet indeholder kriterierne for en definition af »et hormonforstyrrende stof«. Forbrugerne venter utålmodigt på, at der sker noget, og det har de gjort længe.

Mit spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor:

Hvorfor bliver pakken udskudt? Har den kemiske industri været aktiv fortaler for at udskyde pakken?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Janez Potočnik
(4. september 2013)

Kommissionen er nødt til at inddrage yderligere eksterne input i sit arbejde vedrørende hormonforstyrrende stoffer (f.eks. WHO's og UNEP's rapport). Desuden bør den nyligt offentliggjorte udtalelse fra Den Europæiske Fødevaresikkerhedsautoritet (EFSA) om specifikke videnskabelige aspekter af emnet tages med i betragtning. Alle disse faktorer har bidraget til forsinkelser i forhold til den oprindelige planlægning. Derfor behandler Kommissionen for øjeblikket disse supplerende oplysninger og har nu besluttet først at foretage en grundig konsekvensanalyse med det formål at indføre kriterier for identifikation af hormonforstyrrende stoffer i forordningen om plantebeskyttelsesmidler ([1]) og i forordningen om biocidholdige produkter ([2]).

([1]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EF) nr. 1107/2009 af 21. oktober 2009 (EUT L 309 af 24.11.2009, s. 1).
([2]) Europa-Parlamentets og Rådets forordning (EU) nr. 528/2012 af 22. maj 2012 (EUT L 167 af 27.6.2012, s. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007760/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Endocrine disruptors

I have read that the Commission has decided to postpone the package on endocrine disruptors, which contains, among other things, the criteria for defining 'an endocrine disruptor'. Consumers are waiting with impatience for something to happen, and they have been doing so for a long time.

I would therefore ask the Commission:

Why is the package being postponed? Did the chemicals industry actively support the postponement of the package?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

The Commission needs to consider additional external input for its work on Endocrine Disrupting Substances (e.g., the WHO UNEP Report). In addition, the recently published opinion from the European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA) on specific scientific aspects of the topic needs to be considered. All these factors have contributed to delays compared to the original planning. Thus, the Commission is currently considering this additional information and has now decided to carry out first a thorough Impact Assessment for the introduction of criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors in the Plant Protection Products Regulation ([1]) and in the Biocidal Products Regulation ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009, OJ L 309/1, 24.11.2009.
([2]) Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2012, OJ L 167/1, 27.6.2012.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-007761/13
til Kommissionen
Ole Christensen (S&D)
(1. juli 2013)

Om: Klageadgang i luftfarten

EU vedtog i april måned 2012 opdateringer til forordninger ((EF) nr. 883/2004 og (EF) nr. 987/2009) om koordinering af medlemsstaternes sociale sikringsordninger.

Med reglerne bliver begrebet »hjemmebase« blandt andet indført, det vil sige, at ansatte nyder de sociale forhold, som gælder i det land, hvor de begynder og slutter deres arbejde. Efter at reglerne er trådt i kraft, er det kommet frem, at nogle flyselskaber mener, at de ændringer, som forordningen skaber, er så væsentlige, at det skal væltes over på de ansatte.

Jeg har i spørgsmål den 7.6.2012 gjort Kommissionen opmærksom på denne problematik, hvorefter Kommissionen i svar til mig den 19.7.2012 har utrykt sig således:

»Det ville helt klart være ulovligt for arbejdsgiveren at fratrække et beløb fra arbejdstagerens løn, som er højere end det, der skal betales i henhold til reglerne for det relevante sociale sikringssystem. I så fald bør arbejdstageren tage de fornødne skridt i henhold til national lovgivning (ved at indgive en klage til de kompetente nationale myndigheder eller ved at anlægge retssag).«

Kommissionen henviser til, at arbejdstageren skal tage de fornødne skridt til at indbringe en sag for de ansvarlige nationale myndigheder. Det er dog ofte umuligt for den enkelte arbejdstager at afgøre, i hvilket land vedkommende skal klage til de kompetente nationale myndigheder.

Det skyldes, at der kan være tale om et selskab, der er baseret i et land (land A), arbejdskontrakten og gældende overenskomst fra et andet land (land B) og selve ansættelsen foretaget i et tredje land (land C). Derudover ansættes arbejdstagere i luftfarten ofte gennem vikarbureauer, som kan være baseret i et fjerde land (land D).

Kommissionen bedes svare på, hvordan en arbejdstager skal afgøre, hvor vedkommende skal klage, når der er tale om grænseoverskridende aktivitet, herunder hvordan vedkommende skal afgøre, hvor vedkommende er tilknyttet, når det ansættende selskab er baseret i land A, anvender overenskomst og arbejdskontrakt fra land B, men foretager den faktiske ansættelse i land C. Derudover bedes Kommissionen svare på, hvad ansættelse gennem vikarbureau — eksempelvis baseret i land D — betyder i forhold til hvor arbejdstageren skal klage.

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af László Andor
(27. august 2013)

Med forordning (EU) nr. 465/2012 ([1]) blev forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004 ændret, og den relevante lovgivning for flyve- og kabinebesætningsmedlemmer blev knyttet til den pågældendes hjemmebase. Hjemmebasen for flypersonale er et EU-dækkende begreb, der gælder for den civile luftfart ([2]) og defineres som det sted (lufthavn), hvor besætningsmedlemmet normalt påbegynder og afslutter sin tjenesteperiode.

De bestemmelser, der gælder for fastlæggelsen af den lovgivning, der finder anvendelse, findes i afsnit II i forordning (EF) nr. 883/2004. Forordning (EF) nr. 987/2009 ([3]) indeholder yderligere bestemmelser om fastlæggelsen af den lovgivning, der finder anvendelse. Artikel 6 i sidstnævnte forordning fastsætter klare regler om midlertidig anvendelse af en lovgivning og foreløbig tilkendelse af ydelser, hvis der er uenighed mellem institutionerne eller myndighederne i to eller flere medlemsstater på dette punkt.

Endvidere bestemmer artikel 16 i forordning (EF) nr. 987/2009, at en person, der udøver aktiviteter i to eller flere medlemsstater, skal underrette den institution, som er udpeget af den kompetente myndighed i bopælsmedlemsstaten. I tilfælde, hvor der stadig er usikkerhed om, hvilken lovgivning der skal anvendes, giver denne bestemmelse klare regler for fastlæggelsen af den lovgivning, der finder anvendelse, samtidig med at den forpligter medlemsstaternes institutioner eller myndigheder.

Ifølge disse bestemmelser skal den pågældende straks oplyses om udfaldet af proceduren.

([1]) Forordning (EU) nr. 465/2012 (EUT L 149 af 8.6.2012, s. 4).
([2]) Rådets forordning (EØF) nr. 3922/91 om harmonisering af tekniske krav og administrative procedurer inden for civil luftfart.
([3]) Forordning (EF) nr. 987/2009 (EUT L 284 af 30.10.2009, s. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007761/13
to the Commission
Ole Christensen (S&D)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Right of complaint in the aviation sector

In April 2012, the EU adopted updates to Regulations ((EC) Nos 883/2004 and 987/2009) on the coordination of social security systems.

Among other things, the rules introduced the concept of 'home base', which means that employees will benefit from social security arrangements that are valid in the country in which they begin and end their work. After the rules entered into force, it emerged that some airlines believe that the changes brought about by the regulation are so substantial that they should be passed onto the employees.

In a question dated 7 June 2012, I made the Commission aware of this problem, to which the Commission responded as follows in its answer to me dated 19 July 2012:

'It would clearly be illegal for the employer to deduct a higher amount from the employee's salary than that due under the social security system applicable. In such an event, the employee should take the appropriate action in accordance with national law (by submitting a complaint to the competent national authorities or taking legal action).'

The Commission states that employees should take the appropriate action to bring a case before the competent national authorities. However, it is often not possible for individual employees to determine the country in which they should submit a complaint to the competent national authorities.

This is because a company may be based in one country (country A), the employment contract and valid agreement may be from another country (country B) and the employment itself may take place in a third country (country C). Moreover, employees in the aviation sector are often recruited via temporary employment agencies, which may be based in a fourth country (country D).

Could the Commission say how employees are to determine where they should complain when the complaint relates to cross-border activity, including how they are to determine the country with which they are affiliated when the company employing them is based in country A, it applies an agreement and employment contract from country B, but the actual employment takes place in country C. In addition, what is the significance of recruitment via temporary employment agencies — based in country D, for example — in terms of where the employee is to submit a complaint?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

Regulation (EU) No 465/2012 ([1]) amended Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 and linked the applicable social security legislation for flight and cabin crew to the home-base of the person concerned. The home-base for flight crew is an EU-wide concept applicable to the civil aviation industry ([2]) and is defined as the place (airport) from where the crew member normally starts and ends his period of duty.

The rules governing the determination of the legislation applicable are enshrined in Title II of Regulation (EC) No 883/2004. Regulation (EU) No 987/2009 ([3]) contains further provisions about the determination of the applicable legislation. Article 6 of the latter Regulation provides clear rules on provisional application of legislation and provisional granting of benefits in case there are different views between the institutions or authorities of two or more Member States in that respect.

Moreover, Article 16 of Regulation 987/2009 determines that a person, who pursues activities in two or more Member States, has to inform the institution designated by the competent authority of the Member State of residence. Where uncertainty about the determination of the applicable legislation still exists, this provision provides clear rules on how to determine the legislation applicable as well as imposing obligations on the institutions or authorities of Member States.

According to these provisions, the person concerned has to be informed about the outcome of the procedure without delay.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 465/2012 (OJ L 149, 8.6.2012, p. 4).
([2]) Regulation (EEC) No 3922/91 on the harmonisation of technical requirements and administrative procedures in the field of civil aviation.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 987/2009 (OJ L 284, 30.10.2009, p. 1).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007762/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(1. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Überwachungsskandal (PRISM) der USA — Reaktion der EU

Der Angriff auf die Bürgerrechte der Europäer durch die US-Geheimdienste hat gezeigt, dass jetzt dringend Maßnahmen der EU nötig sind. Wie britische und US-Medien aufdeckten, haben NSA und FBI durch das Überwachungsprojekt PRISM direkten Zugriff auf die Daten europäischer Bürger. Nach dem Swift-Abkommen, der Fluggastdatenspeicherung usw. und dem damit verbundenen Datentransfer an die US-Geheimdienste bedeutet dies einen weiteren Schritt zur totalen Unterwerfung der europäischen Politik gegenüber dem Willen der US-Regierung sowie hin zum gläsernen Bürger. Daraus ergeben sich folgende Fragen:

1. Wie schätzt die Kommission PRISM ein, das der NSA und dem FBI unter dem Deckmantel der „Sicherheit", hier namentlich der Terrorismus- und Kriminalitätsbekämpfung, einen Direktzugriff auf die Server verschiedener Internetanbieter ermöglicht?

2. Welche Möglichkeiten sieht die Kommission, die Überwachung von Bürgern aus EU-Mitgliedstaaten durch US-Geheimdienstorganisationen zu unterbinden?

3. Welche Auswirkungen haben diese Erkenntnisse auf die neue Datenschutzverordnung, welche derzeit zur Diskussion steht?

4. Werden die Daten der europäischen Bürger so nicht durch das geplante TTIP-Binnenmarktabkommen zwischen Europa und USA weiterhin oder sogar verstärkt durch die Hintertür an die US-Geheimdienste ausgeliefert?

5. Wäre es nicht nach den neuen Informationen und Erkenntnissen für die EU an der Zeit, dem Safe-Harbor-Abkommen zur Übertragung personenbezogener Daten einen Riegel vorzuschieben und auf eigene Programme zur verdachtsunabhängigen Überwachung von Cloud-Diensten zu verzichten? Wie sieht die Kommission dies?

6. In welchem Zusammenhang stehen die beiden Überwachungsprojekte PRISM und Indect; inwieweit sind diese beiden Projekte verknüpft? Was weiß die Kommission darüber?

7. Wo ist aus Sicht der Kommission im Zusammenhang mit staatlicher Überwachung die Trennlinie zwischen Sicherheit und Freiheit der Bürger zu ziehen?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(5. September 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antworten auf die schriftlichen Anfragen E-7934/13, E-7101/13 und E-8922/12.

Nach Kenntnis der Kommission gibt es keine Verknüpfung zwischen dem Forschungsprojekt Indect und den PRISM-Programmen der amerikanischen NSA.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007762/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: US surveillance scandal (PRISM)/EU reaction

The violation of European citizens' rights by the US secret services has demonstrated that the EU urgently needs to take action. As reported in both the British and US media, the NSA and FBI used the PRISM surveillance project to directly access data on European citizens. Coming in the wake of the SWIFT agreement, storage of data on flight passengers and so on, and the associated transfer of data to the US secret services, this represents yet another step in the total subjugation of European policy to the will of the US government, and another step towards the transparency of the citizen. This raises the following questions:

1. What is the Commission's opinion of PRISM, which enables the NSA and the FBI to directly access the servers of various Internet service providers in the name of 'security', in this case the fight against terrorism and crime?

2. What potential does the Commission see for preventing the surveillance of citizens from EU Member States by the US secret services?

3. What impact does this knowledge have on the new data protection regulation currently being debated?

4. Does this mean that data on European citizens are not being supplied via the planned TTIP internal market agreement between Europe and the USA to the US secret services, but are now or even increasingly being supplied to the US secret services through the back door?

5. Is it not time, in light of this new information and knowledge, for the EU to pull the plug on the safe harbour agreement on personal data transfers and to dispense with its own programme of arbitrary surveillance of cloud services? What is the Commission's view on this?

6. What is the connection between the two surveillance projects (PRISM and INDECT)? To what extent are these two projects linked? What does the Commission know about this?

7. Where, in the Commission's opinion, should the dividing line be drawn on the matter of state surveillance between security and civil liberties?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-7934/13, E-7101/13 and E-8922/12.

To the Commission's knowledge, there is no connection between this research project and the US-NSA's PRISM system.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007763/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(1 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Σχέδια εκποίησης και τουριστικής ανάπτυξης της περιοχής του Δικτύου Natura 2000 «Χρυσή Αμμουδιά Θάσου»

Σύμφωνα με απόφαση της Ελληνικής Κυβέρνησης, η οποία δημοσιεύτηκε στο ΦΕΚ 1020/24-5-13, το Ταμείο Αξιοποίησης της Ιδιωτικής Περιουσίας του Ελληνικού Δημοσίου (ΤΑΙΠΕΔ) μπορεί να διαχειριστεί έκταση 183 στρεμμάτων της περιοχής «Χρυσή Αμμουδιά», στο νησί της Θάσου. Η περιοχή της Χρυσής Αμμουδιάς ενδέχεται να εμπίπτει εντός των ορίων της περιοχής του Δικτύου Natura 2000 «Θάσος, Όρος Υψάριο και παράκτια ζώνη, νήσοι Κοίνυρα και Ξηρονήσι» (GR1150012) ως Ζώνη Ειδικής Προστασίας, ενώ και η εκεί υποθαλάσσια περιοχή είναι ενταγμένη στον εθνικό κατάλογο των Τόπων Κοινοτικής Σημασίας (GR1150008, «Όρμος Ποταμιάς-Ακρωτήριο Πύργος έως Νησίδα Γραμβούσα») ως πρώτης προτεραιότητας υποθαλάσσιος οικότοπος, λόγω της παρουσίας λιβαδιών ποσειδωνίας. Σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες των κατοίκων, ο κυβερνητικός σχεδιασμός περιλαμβάνει την κατάτμηση της περιοχής του αιγιαλού σε κομμάτια των 10-20 στρεμμάτων και την εκποίησή τους με διαδικασίες Fast Track, κατά παράβαση κάθε πολεοδομικής και περιβαλλοντικής πρόβλεψης ([1]).

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει σχετική πληροφόρηση από τις αρμόδιες αρχές;

2. Εμπίπτει μέρος ή το σύνολο της έκτασης των 183 στρεμμάτων σε περιοχή του Δικτύου Natura 2000;

3. Εάν ναι, τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει;

4. Δεδομένου του γεγονότος της άμεσης γειτνίασης με τον ΤΚΣ GR1150008, θεωρεί συμβατό το συγκεκριμένο είδος τουριστικής ανάπτυξης με την προστασία αυτού του οικοτόπου προτεραιότητας;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει ενημερωθεί από τις ελληνικές αρχές σχετικά με την απόφαση στην οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, σχετικά με τη «Χρυσή Αμμουδιά» στη νήσο Θάσο, δεδομένου ότι δεν υπάρχει σχετική απαίτηση. Ως εκ τούτου, η Επιτροπή αδυνατεί να αποφανθεί κατά πόσον η έκταση των 183 στρεμμάτων εμπίπτει σε περιοχή του Δικτύου Natura 2000. Είναι ευθύνη των ελληνικών αρμόδιων αρχών να εξασφαλίζουν ότι οιαδήποτε τουριστική ανάπτυξη που ενδέχεται να προκύψει από την εν λόγω απόφαση είναι πλήρως συμβατή με τους στόχους διατήρησης των περιοχών του δικτύου Natura 2000, οι οποίες ενδέχεται να θιγούν. Ως εκ τούτου, οι δυνητικές επιπτώσεις, συμπεριλαμβανομένων όσων έχουν σωρευτικό χαρακτήρα, θα πρέπει να εκτιμούνται σύμφωνα με τις διατάξεις του άρθρου 6 της οδηγίας για τους οικοτόπους 92/43/ΕΟΚ ([2]), λαμβάνοντας ιδίως υπόψη τους βασικούς τύπους θαλάσσιων οικοτόπων «αμμοσύρτεις» και «θαλάσσια λιβάδια Ποσειδωνίας», για τους οποίους η θαλάσσια περιοχή μπροστά από τη «Χρυσή Αμμουδιά» έχει χαρακτηριστεί ως τόπος κοινοτικής σημασίας (GR1150008).

([1]) http://goo.gl/0lgZS
([2]) Οδηγία 92/43/ΕΟΚ του Συμβουλίου της 21ης Μαΐου 1992 για τη διατήρηση των φυσικών οικοτόπων και της άγριας πανίδας και χλωρίδας. ΕΕ L 206 της 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007763/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Sale plans and tourist development of the Natura 2000 network area at Golden Beach, Thassos

According to a decision by the Greek Government published in the Greek Official Gazette 1020/24-5-13, the Hellenic Republic Assets Development Fund (HRADF) can manage 18.3 hectares of the 'Golden Beach' area on the Island of Thassos. The Golden Beach area is likely to be included within the Natura 2000 network area 'Thasos — Mount Ypsario, the coastal area and islands of Koinira and Xironisi' (GR1150012) as a Special Protection Area while the marine area is also included in the national catalogue of Sites of Community Importance (GR1150008, 'Ormos Potamias — Cape Pyrgos to the island of Gramvoussa') as a high-priority marine eco-system, due to the presence of posidonia meadows. According to reports by residents, government planning involves dividing the seashore area into segments of 1-2 hectares and selling them through Fast Track procedures, in breach of all planning and environmental provisions ([1]).

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it have the relevant information from the competent authorities?

2. Does it cover part or all of the 183 hectares of the Natura 2000 network area?

3. If so, what measures does it intend to take?

4. Given its close proximity to SCI GR1150008, does it consider this particular type of tourist development compatible with the protection of this high-priority ecosystem?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2013)

The Commission has not been informed by the Greek authorities about the decision referred to by the Honourable Member concerning the 'Golden Beach' on Thassos island as there is no requirement to do so. Therefore the Commission cannot say whether the 18,3 ha area in question is included within a Natura 2000 site. It is the responsibility of Greek competent authorities to ensure that any tourist development that may arise from that decision will be fully compatible with the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites likely to be affected. Therefore the potential effects, including those of a cumulative nature, will have to be assessed in accordance with the provisions of Art. 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([2]), taking particularly into account the key marine habitat types 'sandbanks' and 'Posidonia beds' for which the marine area in front of the 'Golden Beach' has been designated as site of Community importance GR1150008.

([1]) http://goo.gl/0lgZS.
([2]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007764/13
to the Commission
Chris Davies (ALDE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: The subsidiarity principle

Article 5 of the Treaty of the European Union sets out the subsidiarity principle, viz. that the Union 'shall act only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, either at central level or at regional and local level, but can rather, by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved at Union level'.

Will the Commission explain exactly how it ensures that each legislative proposal it adopts meets the requirements of the subsidiarity principle both in letter and in spirit in order to prevent EU competences straying into areas that can best be left to Member States?

What arrangements are in place to ensure that the Commission alone is not the sole determiner of the way in which the subsidiarity principle should be applied?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The Commission's annual reports on subsidiarity and proportionality (better lawmaking reports) ([1]) and on relations between the Commission and national parliaments ([2]) give a comprehensive account of how the principle of subsidiarity is implemented by the different EU institutions and bodies. They also examine how the subsidiarity control mechanism, which under Article 12 TEU and the Protocol (No 2) gives national Parliaments a particular role in scrutiny of the principle of subsidiarity, has developed since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty.

For additional details on some specific aspects the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer given to Question E-6119/13 ([3]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/governance/better_regulation/reports_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/relations/relations_other/npo/.
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007765/13
to the Commission
Marta Andreasen (ECR)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Property rights and market restrictions in Andalucia, Spain

In 1999, constituents of mine purchased an apartment in a hotel building in Torremolinos, Andalucia. The property was purchased freehold and without encumbrances, with the intention that it could be used by the owners and also let out.

In 2004, the Junta de Andalucia (government of Andalucia) introduced Decreto 47/2004 de 10 de febrero, de establicimientos hoteleros (Decree 47/2004 of 10 February 2004 regarding hotel establishments).

Article 6 of this decree establishes the principal of 'unity of management'.

This effectively means that if my constituents wish to let out their property, then they are obliged to do so through the management of the building in which it is situated.

The decree is retrospective in its effect. It has two effects on my constituents.

Firstly, it diminishes their property rights. They are limited as to what they can do with this property, which is clearly worth less with this (uncompensated) encumbrance.

Secondly, it provides an effective market monopoly to the management of buildings such as the one in which my constituents' property is located. There is an obvious conflict of interest if the management is offering rooms to let on their own account and in competition with my constituents. Furthermore, a charge is levied for the (unwanted) services provided.

Does the Commission consider that the restrictions on excercise of trading rights implicit in the decree are compatible with the treaties?

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

The Honourable Member should be aware that the competences of the European Union, and consequently of the Commission, regarding real estate property ownership are limited. EU legislation does not regulate matters linked to the management of buildings, which fall within the remit of the Member States.

In addition, Article 345 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union expressly provides that it shall in no way prejudice the rules in Member States governing the system of property ownership.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-007766/13
til Kommissionen
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(1. juli 2013)

Om: Grænseværdier for deponering af gipsaffald i Tyskland

I Tyskland bliver der deponeret betydelige mængder gipsaffald i samme depot som almindeligt affald i de tyske affaldsdeponeringsanlæg af type 1 og type 2 (Deponiklasse 1 and 2). Af denne grund findes der ingen specialdepoter til gipsaffald ved de tyske affaldsdeponeringsanlæg. Tyskland har set bort fra behovet for specialdepoter, idet Tyskland har indført temmeligt strenge almene grænseværdier for DOC og TOC i deponeret affald, som ikke opfylder kravene anført i afsnit 2.2.3. i bilaget til Rådets beslutning 2003/33/EF, men disse grænseværdier kan være og bliver i realiteten overskredet af talrige undtagelser. Derudover er de fleste aktive affaldsdeponeringsanlæg i dag anbragt oven på gamle depoter til husholdningsaffald (med et højt indhold af organisk affald) og adskilles blot fra disse via en mineralsk afspærring. I de nordiske lande gælder de i afsnit 2.2.3. angivne grænseværdier for DOC og TOC eksempelvis også for gipsaffald og andet affald, der bliver deponeret sammen med gipsaffald (i specialdepoter).

1. Kan Kommissionen bekræfte, om de i afsnit 2.2.3. i bilaget til Rådets beslutning 2003/33/EF beskrevne grænseværdier for TOC og DOC, som skal sikre, at der ikke dannes hydrogensulfitgasser ved affaldsdeponeringsanlæg med gipsaffald, skal være gældende for både andet affald, som deponeres sammen med gipsaffald, og for deponeret gipsaffald?

2. Hvad har Kommissionen til hensigt at gøre ved de forskellige fortolkninger i medlemsstaterne af afsnit 2.2.3. med hensyn til, hvilke affaldstyper grænseværdierne for DOC og TOC skal finde anvendelse på, og hvordan agter Kommissionen i særdeleshed at sikre, at Tyskland også anvender grænseværdien for TOC og DOC ved gipsaffald?

3. Hvad bestræber Kommissionen sig på at gøre ved det faktum, at der ikke findes specialdepoter i Tyskland, hvor gipsaffald praktisk talt accepteres ved alle affaldsdeponeringsanlæg af type 1 og type 2, hvor det enten deponeres sammen med eller oven på gammelt almindeligt affald, som kan fremvise niveauer af DOC og TOC, som ligger langt over grænseværdierne beskrevet i afsnit 2.2.3. i bilaget til Rådets beslutning?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Janez Potočnik
(18. september 2013)

Ikke-farligt affald, som deponeres sammen med gipsbaserede materialer, skal overholde de grænseværdier for TOC og DOC, der er fastsat i afsnit 2.3.2 og 2.3.1 i Rådets beslutning 2003/33/EF ([1]), og ikke-farlige gipsbaserede materialer skal overholde den grænseværdi for DOC, der er fastsat i afsnit 2.2.2 i denne beslutning.

Kommissionen finder, at det er tilstrækkeligt tydeligt, hvilken type affald afsnit 2.2.3 finder anvendelse på, nemlig ikke-bionedbrydeligt affald, der kan deponeres på affaldsdeponeringsanlæg for ikke-farligt affald efter de kriterier, der er fastsat i afsnit 2.2 i Rådets beslutning. Det påhviler de kompetente myndigheder i medlemsstaterne at anvende rådsbeslutningen i overensstemmelse hermed.

Rådets beslutning kræver ikke, at der anvendes specialdepoter til gipsbaserede materialer, så længe disse ikke deponeres sammen med bionedbrydeligt affald, og de relevante TOC- og DOC-grænseværdier overholdes.

Hvad angår de generelle krav til bygning af affaldseponeringsanlæg, finder Rådets direktiv 1999/31/EF ([2]) anvendelse. I afsnit 3 i bilag I til direktivet fastsættes det bl.a., at deponeringsanlæggene skal være placeret og udformet på en sådan måde, at de opfylder de nødvendige krav til geologiske/kunstige barrierer til forebyggelse af forurening. Ifølge afsnit 3.4 i bilag I til direktivet påhviler det de kompetente myndigheder at vurdere miljørisiciene og at træffe beslutning om lempelse af miljøbeskyttelseskravene, hvis noget sådant skulle komme på tale.

([1]) EFT L 11 af 16.1.2003.
([2]) EFT L 182 af 16.7.1999.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007766/13
to the Commission
Dan Jørgensen (S&D)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Limit values for gypsum waste landfilled in Germany

In Germany, significant amounts of gypsum waste are being landfilled, and it is placed in the same cells as ordinary waste in the German landfill types one and two (*Deponiklasse* one and two). Thus, no special cells (mono-cells) for gypsum waste exist in German landfills. Germany has disregarded the need for mono-cells because it has applied relatively strict general limit values for the dissolved organic carbon (DOC) and total organic carbon (TOC) of the waste landfilled, and these values are below the requirements in Section 2.2.3 of the annex to Council Decision 2003/33/EC. However, these limit values can be, and in reality are, exceeded by numerous exceptions and, in addition, most active landfills in Germany today are situated on top of old household waste landfills (with a high content of organic waste), separated only by a mineral barrier. For instance, in the Nordic countries the DOC and TOC limits found in Section 2.2.3 are applied to gypsum waste as well as to the other waste landfilled with it (in the special cell).

1. Can the Commission confirm that the limit values regarding TOC and DOC found in Section 2.2.3 of the annex to Council Decision 33/2003/EC, aimed at ensuring that hydrogen sulphite gases are not generated at the landfills accepting gypsum waste, should be applied to the other waste landfilled together with gypsum waste as well as to the gypsum waste landfilled?

2. What does the Commission intend to do about the fact that varying interpretations exist among Member States regarding which waste types the DOC and TOC limit values of Section 2.2.3 should be applied to? In particular, how will the Commission help to ensure that Germany also applies the limit value for TOC and DOC to gypsum waste?

3. What does the Commission intend to do about the fact that no special cells for gypsum waste exist in Germany, where gypsum waste is accepted at virtually all type one and two landfills, where it is landfilled with or on top of old ordinary waste that can have DOC and TOC levels far above the limits found in Section 2.2.3 of the annex to Council Decision 2003/33/EC?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

Whereas the non-hazardous waste landfilled together with gypsum-based materials are required to meet the limit values for TOC and DOC set out in sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.1 of Council Decision 2003/33/EC ([1]), the non-hazardous gypsum-based materials are required to meet the limit value for DOC in Section 2.2.2 of the Council Decision.

The Commission believes that the type of waste to which Section 2.2.3 applies is sufficiently clear. That is, wastes other than biodegradable waste allowed being disposed in landfills for non-hazardous waste following the criteria as set out in Section 2.2 of the Council Decision. The competent authorities in Member States are responsible to enforce the Council Decision accordingly.

The Council Decision does not require the use of special cells for the disposal of gypsum-based material for as long as this is not landfilled together with biodegradable waste and that the relevant TOC and DOC limit values are met.

As regards the general requirements for the construction of landfills, the provisions of Council Directive 1999/31/EC ([2]) apply. In particular, Annex I provision 3 of the directive provides that the landfill must be situated and designed so as to meet the necessary conditions e.g. geological/artificial barriers, for preventing pollution. Pursuant to Annex I provision 3.4 of the directive, it is up to the competent authorities to assess the environmental risks and decide to reduce the environmental protection requirements, should the case so warrant.

([1]) OJ L 11 of 16.1.2003.
([2]) OJ L 182 of 16.7.1999.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007767/13
to the Commission
Robert Sturdy (ECR)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Gliding and Regulation (EC) No 216/2008

Following the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 216/2008 and the consequent amendments to the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) regulations, there were several changes that affected the sport of gliding. Previously, gliding was regulated at a national level. In the United Kingdom, for instance, this was through the British Gliding Association, a non-governmental organisation.

Many of these new rules require extra procedures and documentation that place a large burden on the gliding community, which is predominantly recreational and supported by volunteers. Most of the changes appear to be designed for the airline industry, not for part-time hobbyists. Some examples include changes to the requirements for medical examinations, pilot training and instructor training.

1. Is the Commission planning to review or amend the EASA rules affecting gliding in the future?

2. How will the Commission be monitoring the implementation of the new EASA rules affecting gliding and reviewing them if necessary?

3. Is the Commission undertaking any initiatives to assist national gliding associations to adjust to these new rules? If so, in what way?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

1. The only planned amendment affecting gliding concerns the introduction of a cloud flying rating. There is no other rulemaking activity specific to gliding in the EASA 2013-2016 Rulemaking Programme. However, lessons learned from the implementation of the new rules may lead the Commission to consider adjustments if the need arises.

2. Implementation of the new rules would follow the existing patterns. Rules of the kind are monitored at a first level by the National Aviation Authorities (NAAs) of the Member States. Their responsibilities are described in the relevant parts of the so called 'Air Crew' ([1]) and 'Air Operations' ([2]) regulations. At a second level, by virtue of the so called 'Standardisation Regulation' ([3]), EASA monitors the activity of the NAAs.

3. Assisting national associations is rather the responsibility of the Member States. However EASA supports the Member States by providing ad-hoc training, dedicated presentations at regional workshops and dedicated meetings to discuss implementation issues.

([1]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 1178/2011 of 3 November 2011.
([2]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 965/2012 of 5 October 2012.
([3]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 628/2013 of 28 June 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007961/13
à la Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

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

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

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

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

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

La haute représentante/vice-présidente estime que les démarches diplomatiques et les déclarations publiques, qui relèvent de l'approche cohérente adoptée par l'Union européenne dans le cadre de son dialogue politique avec Israël, sont autant d'instruments utiles de la politique étrangère, qui ont notamment contribué à:

— relever l'âge de la majorité des enfants palestiniens de 16 à 18 ans au regard de la loi militaire israélienne (aligné sur celui des enfants israéliens);

— parvenir à un accord entre les autorités israéliennes et plusieurs Palestiniens ayant entamé une grève de la faim dans les prisons israéliennes;

— réduire considérablement le nombre de cas de détention administrative au cours de l'année écoulée;

— sensibiliser le public à la situation des défenseurs palestiniens des Droits de l'homme ayant participé à des manifestations pacifiques (affaire Abu-Rahma);

— inscrire résolument la situation dans la zone C de la Cisjordanie à l'ordre du jour des discussions internationales, y compris en ce qui concerne les démolitions, les expulsions et les permis de construire.

Depuis que la question a été posée, l'UE a également publié des lignes directrices visant à empêcher les entités établies dans les colonies et les activités qu'elles y déploient de bénéficier d'une aide au titre des instruments financiers financés par l'UE. Dans l'intervalle, la Commission et la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante continuent de veiller, sur la base des conclusions du Conseil des affaires étrangères de décembre 2012, à ce que les accords passés entre Israël et l'UE ne s'appliquent pas aux territoires occupés par Israël depuis 1967. L'UE a également réaffirmé sa détermination à garantir une mise en œuvre durable, complète et effective de la législation européenne en vigueur et des accords bilatéraux applicables aux produits des colonies. Ces questions ont suscité un vif intérêt en Israël, en Palestine, dans l'ensemble de la région, ainsi que dans l'Union européenne elle-même en juillet 2013 et elles représentent un nouveau témoignage de l'action de l'UE.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007769/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Joanna Senyszyn (S&D)
(1 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – stosunki UE-Izrael

1. Według Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciela UE nie popiera stosowania sankcji handlowych w kontekście stosunków dwustronnych UE-Izrael (jak wspomniano w odpowiedzi na pytanie pisemne P-002683/2013). Jakie dodatkowe instrumenty, poza ograniczeniami w handlu, ma do dyspozycji UE i jakie instrumenty zostały użyte, aby przekonać Izrael do przestrzegania prawa międzynarodowego oraz międzynarodowego prawa humanitarnego w zakresie praw człowieka?

2. W jaki sposób instrumenty te przyczyniły się do poprawy sytuacji w zakresie praw człowieka na okupowanych terytoriach palestyńskich?

3. W jakich okolicznościach Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel uznałaby, że warunki te zostały spełnione na tyle właściwie, aby UE uznała, że nie ma już żadnego instrumentu, mogącego wpłynąć na politykę Izraela tak, aby ten przestrzegał prawa międzynarodowego, międzynarodowego prawa humanitarnego oraz wymogów UE?

Wspólna odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton
w imieniu Komisji
(26 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca uważa, że konsekwentne podejście UE do dialogu politycznego z Izraelem, włączając w nie działania dyplomatyczne i oświadczenia publiczne, stanowi przydatne narzędzie kształtowania polityki, które m.in. przyczyniło się do:

— podniesienia dla palestyńskich dzieci granicy pełnoletniości z 16 do 18 lat zgodnie z izraelskim prawem wojskowym (zrównanie z granicą pełnoletniości dzieci izraelskich);

— osiągnięcia porozumienia między władzami izraelskimi a Palestyńczykami prowadzącymi strajk głodowy w izraelskich więzieniach;

— znacznego spadku liczby zatrzymań administracyjnych w przeciągu ostatnich lat;

— wzrostu świadomości na temat sytuacji palestyńskich obrońców praw człowieka, którzy angażowali się w pokojowe protesty (sprawa Mahmouda Abu-Rahmy);

— skutecznego zwrócenia uwagi społeczności międzynarodowej na sytuację w strefie C na Zachodnim Brzegu Jordanu, dotyczącą m.in. rozbiórki domów, eksmisji i pozwoleń budowlanych.

Już po skierowaniu pytania przez Panią Poseł UE opublikowała wytyczne zmierzające do tego, aby podmioty mające siedzibę w osiedlach izraelskich na terytoriach okupowanych nie mogły otrzymywać wsparcia w ramach instrumentów finansowych UE. Jednocześnie Komisja i Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca kontynuują prace na podstawie wniosku Rady Spraw Zagranicznych z grudnia 2012 r., mające na celu wykluczenie niestosowania porozumienia zawartego między UE a Izraelem na terytoriach okupowanych przez Izrael od 1967 r. UE podtrzymuje swoje zaangażowanie na rzecz systematycznego, pełnego i skutecznego wdrażania istniejącego prawodawstwa UE i ustaleń dwustronnych mających zastosowanie do produktów pochodzących z osiedli. Kwestie te wzbudziły w lipcu 2013 r. znaczne zainteresowanie w Izraelu, Palestynie, całym regionie oraz w UE i stanowią kolejny dowód działań UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007769/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Joanna Senyszyn (S&D)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU-Israel relations

1. According to the Vice-President/High Representative, the EU does not promote the use of trade sanctions in the context of bilateral EU-Israel relations (as stated in the reply to Written Question P-002683/2013). What additional instruments, other than trade restrictions, does the EU have at its disposal, and what instruments have been used, to persuade Israel to comply with international law and international humanitarian law as regards human rights?

2. What contributions have these instruments made towards improving the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

3. Under what circumstances would the Vice-President/High Representative consider that the conditions have been sufficiently met for the EU to decide that 'there is no other instrument at reach' to influence Israeli policy with a view to complying with international law and international humanitarian law and with EU demands?

Question for written answer E-007961/13
to the Commission
Véronique De Keyser (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Means of action available to the Commission with regard to Israel

In answer to my Question P-002683/2013, the Vice-President/High Representative stated: 'The EU does not promote the use of trade sanctions in the context of bilateral EU-Israel relations. […] trade bans could only be considered when there is no other instrument at reach, which is not the case on bilateral EU-Israeli relations.'

Can you describe each of the means of action, other than trade sanctions, available to the EU and which it has used over the last 20 years to make Israel bring its policy into line with international law, following on from the many formal written and verbal requests made by the EU, and explain what specific effects employing these means of action has had on Israeli policy?

Can you explain why, despite the EU's use of each of these instruments, Israel has not changed its policy whatsoever as regards human rights or international humanitarian law, and has not complied with the EU's requests in relation to the following: the continued establishment of settlements, the continued construction of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory as well as the refusal to compensate Palestinians for damages resulting from the wall's construction, the ongoing blockade of Gaza and the restrictions imposed on Palestinian fishermen, the continued demolition of Palestinian houses and the policy of not granting enough building permits to Palestinians, the destruction of Palestinian water tanks and wells, the monopolising of water resources in the West Bank for 350 000 settlers, the expulsion of Palestinians legally residing in East Jerusalem, as well as the continued administrative detention of a large number of Palestinian prisoners, including minors, with no possibility of judicial oversight?

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

The HR/VP believes that the EU's consistent approach to political dialogue with Israel, including diplomatic demarches and public statements, are useful foreign policy tools that have, *inter alia*, contributed to:

— raising the age of majority for Palestinian children from 16 to 18 under Israeli military law (equal with the age of majority for Israeli children);

— reaching an agreement between the Israeli authorities and a number of Palestinian hunger strikers in Israeli prisons;

— a significant reduction in the number of cases of administrative detention over the past year;

— raising awareness on the situation of Palestinian human rights defenders having been engaged in peaceful protests (the Abu-Rahma case);

— putting the situation in Area C of the West Bank firmly on the international agenda, including as regards demolitions and evictions and building permits.

Since the question was tabled, the EU has also published guidelines to prevent settlement-based entities and activities from benefitting from support under EU funding instruments. Meanwhile, the Commission and the HR/VP continue the work, based on the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions of December 2012, to ensure the inapplicability of agreements between Israel and the EU to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. The EU has also reiterated its commitment to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing EU legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products. These issues have generated considerable attention in Israel, Palestine, the wider region and the EU itself in July 2013 and represent a further demonstration of EU action.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007770/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Health impacts of coal and other fossil fuels

The health impact of the use of fossil fuels is significant. According to research by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the most common air pollutants such as particulate matter (PM), ozone (O_3), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and sulphur dioxide (SO_2) emitted during the combustion of fossil fuels lead to higher rates of acute and chronic respiratory infections, heart disease and lung cancer.

Coal, which accounts for a quarter of all electricity generation in Europe, contributes to 18 200 premature deaths, 8 500 new cases of chronic bronchitis and over 4 million lost working days each year across the EU.

People in Europe have higher exposure to PM than to any other pollutant. In 2011, 82.8% of people in European cities experienced PM levels exceeding the Air Quality Guidelines recommended by the WHO.

Furthermore, tackling this health threat will also help combat global warming. Burning coal emits CO_2 and other greenhouse gases, which have the potential to dangerously and irrevocably alter our climate. Black Carbon, a component of fine PM, is known to contribute to global warming as a 'short-lived forcer'.

The Commission's review of its 2005 Thematic Strategy for Air Pollution stated that the EU's goal is 'to achieve levels of air quality that do not result in unacceptable impacts on, and risk to, human health and the environment'. The latest 2008 Air Quality Directive stated the commitment to reduce exposure to PM by 20% by 2020.

Does the Commission intend to carry out an investigation into the long-term health implications and costs to the economy of the use of coal and other fossil fuels?

Will it take into consideration in all future proposals and communications on the issue the health and climate 'co-benefits' of phasing out coal entirely?

Answer given by Mr Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The review of the thematic strategy on air pollution ([1]), currently under finalisation, includes a thorough investigation of the long-term health implications and costs to the economy of air pollution, which is the result of a combination of sources that include combustion of fossil fuels but also of biomass as well as some non-combustion sources such as agriculture.

The review confirms that as of 2010 the levels of particulate matter (PM) were still the cause of 380,000 premature deaths and 185,000 chronic bronchitis cases across the EU, as well as of large losses to the economy including 85 million lost working days.

An impact assessment is ongoing to support update of the EU air quality policy framework by the Commission regarding PM pollution. Options considered include e.g setting stricter emission ceilings under the National Emission Ceilings Directive 2001/81/EC, including new ceilings for primary fine particles (PM2,5) and provisions for Black Carbon. Source measures to ensure that combustion installations of different sizes, from domestic heating to industrial plants, comply with strict emission standards are also being looked into.

The analysis underpinning the review considers the implications of structural changes to the energy mix, including the phasing out of coal, for the achievement of the EU's climate and air quality objectives.

As part of the impact assessment for a 2030 climate and energy policy framework the health effects of further reductions of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions will be assessed. Such reductions are likely to entail a reduction in energy demand and fuel substitution away from carbon intensive fuels such as coal.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/review_air_policy.htm

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-007771/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(1 juli 2013)

Angående: 1999 års studie av konsumtion av rättigheter som är knutna till ett varumärke och KKV:s rapport om Silhouette

I sitt svar till skriftlig fråga E-000363/2013 hävdar kommissionen att en studie som beställdes av kommissionen 1999 ([1]) gav följande slutsatser: Man har ”inte hittat några bevis på fall av missbruk av varumärken med avseende på den fria rörligheten av varor i enlighet med det nya systemet. I avsaknad av en global inre marknad skulle ett system med internationell konsumtion på det hela taget göra mera skada än nytta för den internationella handeln och de internationella investeringarna. Det finns också starka argument för att konsumenterna i EU inte nödvändigtvis skulle få det bättre med ett system med internationell konsumtion i stället för med det existerande systemet med regional konsumtion.”

Vid en närmare genomläsning av studien tycks det emellertid inte finnas något stöd i texten för dessa slutsatser. Tvärtom, studien sammanfattas med att unilateral global konsumtion troligtvis skulle sänka genomsnittspriserna genom att öka mellanmärkeskonkurrensen, och att antalet varumärken i EU skulle öka (s. 37). Det framgår vidare att lägre priser i EU skulle innebära högre realinkomster och allmänna fördelar för konsumenterna (s. 38).

I en studie från 2001 ([2]) framhåller även Konkurrensverket (KKV), att ett förbud mot parallellimporter skulle medföra en definitiv makroekonomisk förlust, och att ett avskaffande av parallellimporter även skulle få mer indirekta och långsiktiga effekter för konkurrenssituationen i berörda sektorer. Billig import, och medvetenheten om att sådan import kan stimuleras av höga priser på den svenska marknaden, sätter press på priserna vid normal försäljning genom etablerade detaljhandelskanaler.

Det tycks finnas belägg för att regional konsumtion ger fördelar till eller skyddar de aktörer som äger de rättigheter som är knutna till ett varumärke, en upphovsrätt eller ett patent på Europeiska unionens inre marknad, på bekostnad av andra aktörer såväl på som utanför denna marknad.

Anser kommissionen inte att denna skyddsåtgärd därför bör genomgå samma rigorösa granskning i varje enskilt fall som gäller för andra handelsskyddsåtgärder?

Svar från Michel Barnier på kommissionens vägnar
(11 oktober 2013)

Enligt resultaten från NERA-studien, som parlamentsledamoten hänvisar till, skulle en omvandling av konsumtionssystemet på kort sikt ha en inverkan på konsumentpriserna som varierar mellan ”liten” för vissa produkter (en prissänkning på mindre än 2 %) till ”försumbar” för andra (en prissänkning på 0 %) ([3]). En omvandling från konsumtion av varumärkesrättigheter inom EU till internationell konsumtion skulle därför inte leda till någon större sänkning av konsumentpriserna.

Studien visar även att effekterna av förändringar i konsumtionssystemet är svårare att förutspå på lång sikt. Det är dock troligt att den marginella positiva effekten på konsumentprissättningen i det långa loppet kommer att försvinna ([4]). Ett internationellt konsumtionssystem kan med tiden störa investeringar i nya varumärken och göra så att varumärksinnehavare drar tillbaka produkter från marknaden. Rättighetshavare som fortsätter att tillhandahålla märkesvaror kan komma att dra ner på varornas kvalitet eller tillhandahållandet av tillhörande tjänster, vilket skulle gå stick i stäv med konsumenternas långsiktiga intressen ([5]). En internationell konsumtionspolitik skulle dessutom kunna innebära en konkurrensnackdel för företag inom EU, med tanke på att den inre marknadens integrationsnivå ännu inte har uppnåtts i hela världen ([6]). Marknadsförhållandena för varor från tredjeländer är i detta skede mindre likvärdiga än vad som är fallet inom EU. Skillnader i handelsvillkor hos olika länder kan påverka parallellhandeln, exempelvis vad gäller administrativa krav för registrering och arbetskostnader.

([1]) The economic consequences of the choice of a regime of exhaustion in the area of trade marks, slutrapport för GD XV, Europeiska kommissionen, NERA/SJ Berwin & Co/IFF Research, 1999 (tillgänglig på webbplatsen för GD Inre marknaden och tjänster).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/20010410/juri/3_goranson.pdf
([3]) Se uppgifter i tabellerna 6.10 och 6.11 på s. 125 respektive s. 126.
([4]) Se s. 124.
([5]) Se s. 105.
([6]) Se s. 106.

Mot denna bakgrund anser kommissionen fortfarande att det inte ligger i EU:s intresse att ändra det rådande konsumtionssystemet.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007771/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: 1999 study on trademark exhaustion and Swedish KKV report on Silhouette

In its answer to Written Question E-000363/2013, the Commission claims that a study commissioned by it in 1999 ([1]) came to the following conclusions: 'No evidence of cases of abuse of trademarks with regard to the free movement of goods under the current regime was found. In the absence of a global single market, a regime of international exhaustion would on balance be more harmful than beneficial to international trade and investment. There are also strong arguments that consumers in the EU would not necessarily be better off under a regime of international than under the existing regime of regional exhaustion'.

However, examination of this study shows that these conclusions do not seem to be supported by the text. Instead, the study concludes that unilateral global exhaustion is likely to 'reduce average prices by increasing intra-brand competition', and that 'the range of brands in the EU would be enlarged' (p. 37). It goes on to state that 'lower prices in the EU' would mean 'a rise in real personal incomes and general benefit to consumers' (p. 38).

In a 2001 study ([2]), Konkurrensverket (KKV), the Swedish competition authority, also stressed that 'a ban on parallel imports would mean a definite macroeconomic loss' and that 'elimination of parallel imports would, however, also have more indirect and long-term effects on the state of competition in the industries concerned. The existence of cheap imports, and awareness that such imports can be stimulated by high prices on the Swedish markets, puts pressure on prices of normal sales through established retail channels'.

It appears from the evidence that regional exhaustion benefits or defends those actors who enjoy the right to a trademark, copyright or patent inside the European Union single market, at the expense of other actors from both within and outside that market.

Does the Commission not believe that it would therefore be justifiable to expose this defence instrument to the same rigorous, case-by-case scrutiny that other trade defence instruments are subject to?

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

According to the findings of the NERA study referred to by the Honourable Member, the short term effects on consumer pricing of a change of exhaustion regime would merely vary from 'small' (meaning less than 2% price reduction) for certain products to 'negligible' (meaning 0% price reduction) for other products ([3]). It follows from this that a change from Union exhaustion of trade mark rights to international exhaustion would not lead to a significant fall of consumer prices.

As the study further states, the long term effects of a change of exhaustion regime are more difficult to predict. It is however likely that the marginal, positive effect on consumer pricing in the long run will even disappear ([4]). Moreover, moving to international exhaustion may over time impede investment in new brands or even make trade mark proprietors withdraw products from the market. Right holders who continue to provide the branded goods may choose to reduce the quality of goods or the provision of associated services which would be contrary to the long term interests of consumers ([5]). Finally, with an international exhaustion policy EU businesses might face a competitive disadvantage, given that the integration level of the Single Market has not occurred worldwide yet ([6]). Market conditions for goods from third countries are less equal at this stage than within the EU; parallel trade may be influenced by differences regarding trade conditions in different countries such as administrative burdens of registration and labour costs.

([1]) 'The economic consequences of the choice of a regime of exhaustion in the area of trade marks', Final Report for DG XV of the European Commission, NERA/SJ Berwin & Co/IFF Research, 1999 (available on the DG Markt website).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/hearings/20010410/juri/3_goranson.pdf
([3]) See data provided in Table 6.10 and Table 6.11 on p. 125 and 126 respectively.
([4]) See p. 124.
([5]) See p. 105.
([6]) See p. 106.

The Commission therefore still believes that on the basis of the above findings it would not be in the interest of the EU to change the current exhaustion regime.

(Svensk version)

Frågor för skriftligt besvarande E-007772/13
till kommissionen
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(1 juli 2013)

Angående: E-hälsoprojekt i Central- och Östeuropa, särskilt i Tjeckien

I Central- och Östeuropa har systemen för digitalisering av hälso- och sjukvårdsuppgifter planerats som centraliserade databaser och är kraftigt överprissatta. I Tjeckien har flera läkare kritiserat Izip-systemet (för ett slags e-hälsojournaler) för att det inte utvecklas för att hjälpa patienter och läkare, utan att man i stället använder en stor del av hälso- och sjukvårdsbudgeten till ett onödigt projekt som främjats genom korruption ([1]). Den tjeckiska patientföreningen har till och med förklarat att systemet är misslyckat från första början ([2]).

Kommissionsledamot Neelie Kroes verkar vara en stor anhängare av (e-hälso)projekt, men denna process kan utgöra ett allvarligt hot mot skyddet av personliga medicinska uppgifter, som är mycket känsliga för de flesta människor.

Dessa system medför också ofta att uppgifter för miljontals privata patienter inom hälso- och sjukvården centraliseras, något som leder till nya och allvarliga risker för eventuella säkerhets- eller personuppgiftsbrott. Riskerna är många och omfattar allt från utpressning av systemadministratörer, läkare eller anställda till målinriktade organstölder, spionage och avsiktliga och illvilliga ändringar i patientjournalerna. Enligt en rapport ([3]) 2011 från United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre kommer de flesta offren för människohandel från ett av följande länder: Nigeria, Polen, Rumänien, Slovakien eller Tjeckien.

Vilka konkreta åtgärder vidtar kommissionen för att garantera att e-hälsoprojekt i medlemsstaterna inte i slutändan innebär en risk för medborgarna av de skäl som nämns ovan?

Hur ser kommissionen till att dess e-hälsopolitik är förenlig med dess politik mot korruption inom lokala myndigheter i medlemsstaterna?

Svar från Neelie Kroes på kommissionens vägnar
(29 augusti 2013)

Det finns många fördelar med e-hälsovårdslösningar, men de innebär att personuppgifter behandlas och för med sig de risker som är förknippade med detta.

I sin rekommendation av den 2 juli 2008 om gränsöverskridande interoperabilitet för elektroniska patientjournalsystem ([4]) rekommenderade kommissionen medlemsstaterna att se till att den grundläggande rätten till skydd av personuppgifter inte kränks i e-hälsovårdssystem, i enlighet med unionens bestämmelser om skydd av personuppgifter, framför allt direktiv 95/46/EG ([5]).

Behandling av hälsouppgifter är i princip förbjuden och endast tillåten på stränga villkor som fastställs i direktivet om skydd för personuppgifter (95/46/EG ([6])). Enligt det direktivet krävs det även att registeransvariga ska vidta lämpliga säkerhetsåtgärder för att skydda personuppgifter från förstöring genom olyckshändelse, från otillåtna handlingar eller otillåten spridning. Tillsynen över EU-lagstiftningen på detta område är de nationella myndigheternas behörighet. Nationella tillsynsmyndigheter för uppgiftsskydd har inrättats i alla medlemsstater. Vidare stöder kommissionen en omfattande tillämpning av principen om inbyggt integritetsskydd (”privacy by design”) ([7]), som även beaktades när förslaget till en allmän uppgiftsskyddsförordning utarbetades.

([1]) http://zdravi.e15.cz/denni-zpravy/komentare/elektronizace-zdravotnictvi-se-ceskym-obcanum-krvave-vymsti-468211
([2]) http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/Svaz-pacientu-CR-Zdravotni-dokumentace-jako-byznys-172362
([3]) http://www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/library/doc_download/400-soca-ukhtc-baseline-assessment
([4]) EUT L 190, 18.7.2008, s. 37.
([5]) Europaparlamentets och rådets direktiv 95/46/EG av den 24 oktober 1995 om skydd för enskilda personer med avseende på behandling av personuppgifter och om det fria flödet av sådana uppgifter (EGT L 281, 23.11.1995, s. 31).
([6]) Direktivet kommer enligt planerna att ersättas av en ny förordning om uppgiftsskydd (KOM(2012) 11) med en enda uppsättning regler som stärker enskilda individers rättigheter och som är anpassade till den tekniska utvecklingen.
([7]) KOM/2010/0245 slutlig/2 */ kommissionens meddelande: En digital agenda för Europa.

I samband med den europeiska planeringsterminen för samordning av den ekonomiska politiken identifierade kommissionen både kampen mot korruption och behovet av ökad effektivitet i hälso- och sjukvårdssystemen som några av utmaningarna för Tjeckien. Rådet har senare rekommenderat Tjeckien att bl.a. genomföra sin strategi mot korruption, inte minst genom ett bättre genomförande av reglerna om offentlig upphandling, och att vidta åtgärder för att förbättra kostnadseffektiviteten när det gäller utgifterna för hälso- och sjukvård ([8]).

([8]) 10626/1/13 REV 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007772/13
to the Commission
Amelia Andersdotter (Verts/ALE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: e-Health projects in central and eastern Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic

In central and eastern Europe, planned healthcare data digitisation systems are designed as centralised databases and are highly overpriced. In the Czech Republic, many doctors have criticised the IZIP system (an 'electronic health booklet') as not actually being built to help patients or doctors but rather to devour a large portion of the healthcare budget in an unnecessary project motivated by corruption ([1]). The system has even been deemed 'broken by design' by the association of patients of the Czech Republic ([2]).

Commissioner Neelie Kroes appears to be very supportive of (e-health) projects. But this process could present major threats to the protection of personal medical data, which are very sensitive for most people.

Also, such systems often involve the centralisation of data pertaining to millions of private healthcare patients, something which introduces new and grave risks with regard to potential security or data breaches. The risks are numerous, ranging from the blackmailing of system administrators, doctors or officials, to targeted organ harvesting, espionage, and deliberate, malicious alterations of patient files. The United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre's 2011 assessment states ([3]) that the five most common countries of origin for victims of human trafficking were Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Nigeria.

What concrete measures is the Commission undertaking to ensure that e-health projects carried out in Member States do not end up causing a risk to citizens for the reasons described above?

How does the Commission reconcile its policies on e-health with its policies against corruption in local administrations in Member States?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2013)

While there are many advantages of eHealth solutions, this entails processing of personal data with its inherent risks.

In its Recommendation of 2 July 2008 on cross-border interoperability of electronic health record systems ([4]), the Commission recommended to Member States to ensure that the fundamental right to protection of personal data is fully and effectively protected in eHealth systems, in conformity with Union provisions on the protection of personal data, in particular Directive 95/46/EC ([5]).

Processing of health data is in principle prohibited and only allowed under strict conditions laid down under the Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC ([6])). The directive also requires data controllers to implement appropriate security measures to protect personal data against accidental or unlawful destruction or unauthorised disclosure. The supervision and enforcement of EU legislation in this area falls under the competence of national authorities. National data protection supervisory authorities are set up in all Member States. Additionally, the Commission supports the wide application of the 'Privacy by Design'-principle ([7]), which was also taken into account in the preparation of the proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation.

([1]) http://zdravi.e15.cz/denni-zpravy/komentare/elektronizace-zdravotnictvi-se-ceskym-obcanum-krvave-vymsti-468211.
([2]) http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/Svaz-pacientu-CR-Zdravotni-dokumentace-jako-byznys-172362.
([3]) http://www.soca.gov.uk/about-soca/library/doc_download/400-soca-ukhtc-baseline-assessment.
([4]) OJ L 190, 18.7.2008, p. 37.
([5]) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31.
([6]) The directive is expected to be replaced by a new Regulation on Data Protection (COM(2012) 11), providing for one single set of rules, strengthening individuals' rights and being adapted to technological progress.
([7]) COM/2010/0245 f/2 */ Commission Communication: A Digital Agenda for Europe.

The Commission identified in the context of the European Semester of economic coordination both the fight against corruption and the need for increased efficiency of the health systems amongst the challenges of the Czech Republic. The Council subsequently recommended to the Czech Republic, among other issues, to implement its strategy against corruption, including by a better implementation of public procurement rules, and to take measures to improve cost-effectiveness of healthcare expenditure ([8]).

([8]) 10626/1/13 REV 1.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007773/13
al Consiglio
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1º luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Attivazione da parte della Svizzera del meccanismo previsto dall'art. 23 del regolamento (CE) n. 562/2006 (cosiddetto codice frontiere Schengen)

Il Consiglio Nazionale svizzero, con la mozione 12.3337, ha chiesto al Consiglio Federale di attivare il meccanismo previsto dall'art. 23 del regolamento (CE) n. 562/2006 (cosiddetto codice frontiere Schengen). Il 23 maggio u.s., il Consiglio Federale ha già proposto di rigettare la mozione.

Poiché i controlli doganali e delle merci sono già effettuati, è facile che un'intensificazione possa avere conseguenze principalmente per chi varca più spesso i confini, vale a dire i lavoratori transfrontalieri.

Può il Consiglio far sapere, per quanto di sua competenza:

— se è avvenuta una qualche contestazione dei dati citati dal Consiglio Nazionale;

— se sta monitorando l'iter di questa mozione;

— quali reazioni sono previste nel caso in cui il Consiglio Federale decidesse di accogliere la mozione?

Risposta
(16 settembre 2013)

Si richiama l'attenzione dell'onorevole deputato sul fatto che ai sensi dell'articolo 23 del regolamento (CE) n. 562/2006 (codice frontiere Schengen), uno Stato membro o uno Stato Schengen associato può in via eccezionale ripristinare il controllo di frontiera alle sue frontiere interne per un periodo limitato in caso di minaccia grave per l'ordine pubblico o la sicurezza interna. L'articolo 24 prevede una procedura secondo cui, in caso di avvenimenti prevedibili, lo Stato membro interessato dà quanto prima comunicazione agli altri Stati membri e alla Commissione della sua intenzione di ripristinare il controllo di frontiera. L'articolo 25 prevede una procedura secondo cui uno Stato membro, nei casi che richiedono un'azione urgente, può ripristinare in via eccezionale e immediatamente il controllo di frontiera alle frontiere interne e ne avverte senza indugio gli altri Stati membri e la Commissione.

Il Consiglio non ha ricevuto alcuna informazione dalla Svizzera ai sensi delle disposizioni summenzionate in relazione alle questioni cui l'interrogazione dell'onorevole deputato fa riferimento e non è in grado di commentare su tali materie.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007773/13
to the Council
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Activation by Switzerland of the mechanism provided for by Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (the 'Schengen Borders Code')

The Swiss National Council has tabled motion 12.3337 to call on the Federal Council to activate the mechanism provided for by Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (the 'Schengen Borders Code'). On 23 May 2013, the Federal Council proposed rejecting the motion.

Since customs controls and controls of goods are already carried out, stepping up controls could easily have consequences predominantly affecting those who cross borders more often, namely cross-border workers.

— Have the data cited by the National Council been disputed at all?

— Is the Council monitoring the progress of this motion?

— What does it think the reaction would be were the Federal Council to decide to accept the motion?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The attention of the Honourable Member is drawn to the fact that, by virtue of Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (Schengen Borders Code), a Member State or an associated Schengen State may exceptionally reintroduce border control at its internal borders for a limited period in cases of a serious threat to public policy or internal security. Article 24 provides for a procedure whereby, for foreseeable events, the Member State concerned shall notify the other Member States and the Commission as soon as possible of its intention to reintroduce border control. Article 25 provides for a procedure whereby a Member State, in cases requiring urgent action, may exceptionally and immediately introduce control at its internal borders and shall inform the other Member States and the Commission without delay.

The Council has not been informed of any notification from Switzerland under the provisions mentioned in relation to the matters referred to in the Honourable Member's question and is not in a position to comment on these matters.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007774/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1º luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Attivazione da parte della Svizzera del meccanismo previsto dall'art. 23 del regolamento (CE) n. 562/2006 (cosiddetto codice frontiere Schengen)

Il Consiglio Nazionale svizzero, con la mozione 12.3337, ha chiesto al Consiglio Federale di attivare il meccanismo previsto dall'art. 23 del regolamento (CE) n. 562/2006 (cosiddetto codice frontiere Schengen). Il 23 maggio u.s., il Consiglio Federale ha già proposto di rigettare la mozione.

Poiché i controlli doganali e delle merci sono già effettuati, è facile che un'intensificazione possa avere conseguenze principalmente per chi varca più spesso i confini, vale a dire i lavoratori transfrontalieri.

Può la Commissione far sapere, per quanto di sua competenza:

— se è avvenuta una qualche contestazione dei dati citati dal Consiglio Nazionale;

— se sta monitorando l'iter di questa mozione;

— quali reazioni sono previste nel caso in cui il Consiglio Federale decidesse di accogliere la mozione?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(2 settembre 2013)

Le autorità svizzere non hanno trasmesso alcuna notifica riguardo alla reintroduzione dei controlli doganali lungo i confini interni ai sensi dell'articolo 23 del codice frontiere Schengen. Pertanto, la Commissione non è in grado di rispondere alle questioni sollevate dall'onorevole deputata.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007774/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Activation by Switzerland of the mechanism provided for by Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (the 'Schengen Borders Code')

The Swiss National Council has tabled motion 12.3337 to call on the Federal Council to activate the mechanism provided for by Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (the 'Schengen Borders Code'). On 23 May 2013, the Federal Council proposed rejecting the motion.

Since customs controls and controls of goods are already carried out, stepping up controls could easily have consequences predominantly affecting those who cross borders more often, namely cross-border workers.

— Have the data cited by the National Council been disputed at all?

— Is the Commission monitoring the progress of this motion?

— What does it think the reaction would be were the Federal Council to decide to accept the motion?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Swiss authorities have not brought forward any notification of reintroduction of border control at the internal borders in accordance with Article 23 of the Schengen Borders Code. The Commission is thus not in a position to reply to the questions raised by the Honourable Member.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007775/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1º luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Standard e ostacoli al mercato interno

La Commissione ha attivato due procedure di infrazione contro la Germania (la 2006/4010 e la 2008/4063), su reclamo presentato dall'azienda italiana FRABO S.p.A., che produce raccorderia in rame, ma tali procedure non hanno dato, ad oggi, nessun esito.

La Corte di giustizia si è espressa con riferimento alle questioni reclamate da FRABO, nel caso C-171/11, ma tale sentenza della Corte ad oggi risulta inapplicata, in quanto il mercato tedesco è ancora precluso al prodotto oggetto della sentenza.

Orbene, poiché un prodotto con marcatura CE (una guarnizione secondo EN 681-1) non può entrare nel mercato tedesco per uno degli usi nel campo d'applicazione dello standard in data 18 e 27 maggio 2013 FRABO ha introdotto due ulteriori reclami presso la Commissione.

1. Quali misure intende prendere la Commissione per dare pronta e piena applicazione alla sentenza della Corte di giustizia nel caso C-171/11?

2. In che modo intende rimuovere le violazioni, di diritto e di fatto, ai principi di cui alla direttiva 98/34/CE e relative modifiche, con riferimento alle specifiche tecniche del DVGW, affinché la regolamentazione tecnica tedesca dei prodotti per impianti acqua e gas rispetti pienamente il principio del mutuo riconoscimento, eliminando le gravi distorsioni di mercato che, come il caso della FRABO dimostra, sono a oggi presenti?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(23 settembre 2013)

Il 12 luglio 2012 la Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea ([1]) si è pronunciata in via pregiudiziale nella causa C-171/11, Fra.bo, affermando che un ente privato è soggetto al rispetto dell'articolo 34 del TFUE qualora la legislazione nazionale consideri conformi al diritto nazionale i prodotti certificati da tale ente e ciò produca l'effetto di ostacolare la commercializzazione di prodotti sprovvisti di tale certificato. La causa era stata deferita alla CGUE dal tribunale tedesco di seconda istanza di Düsseldorf ([2]), che ha ora dovuto applicare nella sua sentenza la pronuncia pregiudiziale della Corte. Il 14 agosto 2013 l'Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf ha decretato che, in applicazione della sentenza della Corte di giustizia, la revoca del certificato da parte dell'ente di certificazione privato tedesco DVGW, da esso stesso emesso, era irregolare, in quanto tale ente era soggetto al rispetto dell'articolo 34 del TFUE e non poteva introdurre prove ingiustificate che producessero l'effetto di ostacolare l'accesso al mercato dei prodotti importati.

Indipendentemente da questa causa del tribunale tedesco, la Commissione ha avviato un dialogo con le autorità tedesche al fine di garantire l'applicazione generale della sentenza della Corte, oltre all'esecuzione della sentenza da parte dei tribunali competenti. Nel caso in cui le risposte che le autorità tedesche presenteranno entro la fine di settembre non siano ritenute soddisfacenti la Commissione prenderà in considerazione la possibilità di avviare una procedura di infrazione nei confronti della Germania. Per quanto riguarda la procedura di infrazione 4063/2008 e la procedura di notifica di cui alla direttiva 98/34/CE, nell'aprile 2008 la Commissione ha avviato una procedura di infrazione ed ha invitato le autorità tedesche a notificare il decreto tedesco in questione ([3]). Il 14 settembre 2010 la Germania ha notificato alla Commissione la versione definitiva del decreto. Poiché con tale notifica è stato rimosso il vizio procedurale dovuto alla mancata notifica, la Commissione ha successivamente chiuso tale procedura di infrazione.

([1]) GCUE.
([2]) Oberlandesgericht Düsseldorf.
([3]) Verordnung zur Neufassung und Änderung von Vorschriften auf dem Gebiet des Energiewirtschaftsrechts sowie des Bergrechts.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007775/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Standards and barriers to the internal market

The Commission has opened two infringement procedures against Germany (2006/4010 and 2008/4063), following a complaint submitted by the Italian company FRABO S.p.A., which manufactures copper fittings, but these procedures have not yet yielded any results.

The Court of Justice has ruled on FRABO's claims, in case C-171/11, but the Court's judgment has not been implemented to date, since the product forming the subject of the judgment is still barred from the German market.

However, since a product (a seal in accordance with standard EN 681-1) with CE marking cannot be placed on the German market for one of the uses falling within the scope of the standard, FRABO submitted two further complaints to the Commission on 18 and 27 May 2013.

1. What action will the Commission take to ensure the Court of Justice's judgment in case C-171/11 is implemented quickly and fully?

2. How will it resolve the violations, in law and in fact, of the principles set out by Directive 98/34/EC, as amended, with regard to the technical specifications of the Deutsche Vereinigung des Gas- und Wasserfaches (DVGW), so that German technical regulations for products for water and gas installations fully comply with the principle of mutual recognition, removing the serious distortions which, as the FRABO case shows, are currently affecting the market?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

On 12 July 2012 the European Court of Justice ([1]) gave a preliminary ruling in the Frabo case, C -171/11, holding that a private-law body is bound by Article 34 TFEU where national legislation deems products certified by that body to be compliant with national law which has the effect of restricting the marketing of products not certified by that body. The case was referred to the ECJ by the German appellate court of Düsseldorf ([2]), which now had to apply the ruling of the Court in its judgment. On 14 August 2013 the OLG Düsseldorf now ruled that in application of the judgment of the Court of justice the withdrawal of the DVGW certificate by the German private certifier DVGW was unlawful, as DVGW was bound by Article 34 TFEU and could not introduce unjustified tests that have the effect of restricting market access for imported products.

Independently from this German court case the Commission has opened a dialogue with the German authorities with a view to ensuring comprehensive implementation of the Court judgment beyond application of the judgment by the responsible courts. If the reaction of the German authorities proposed by the end of September should not be deemed to be satisfactory, the Commission will consider starting an infringement procedure against Germany. As regards the infringement case 4063/2008 and the notification procedure under Directive 98/34 EC, the Commission launched an infringement action in April 2008 and asked the German authorities to notify the German Decree in question ([3]). On 14 September 2010 Germany notified to the Commission the final version of the Decree. As this notification of the Decree eliminated the procedural vice created by the absence of notification, the Commission subsequently closed that infringement.

([1]) ECJ.
([2]) OLG Düsseldorf.
([3]) Verordnung zur Neufassung und Änderung von Vorschriften auf dem Gebiet des Energiewirtschaftsrechts sowie des Bergrechts.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007776/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR)
(1 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Prawa człowieka na Białorusi

Konieczność przestrzegania praw człowieka na Białorusi, a w szczególności prawa do wolności wypowiedzi, jest jednym z zasadniczych elementów polityki UE wobec Białorusi. Obecnie w białoruskich więźniach przebywa 11 więźniów sumienia, a międzynarodowe organizacje notorycznie odnotowują przypadki nieprzestrzegania praw człowieka na Białorusi. Zagadnienie to ma szczególne znaczenie dla państw członkowskich UE w relacjach z Białorusią i w kontekście zbliżającego się Szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego w Wilnie.

1. Jakie działania podejmują obecnie instytucje unijne w celu uwolnienia więźniów politycznych na Białorusi i jakie są efekty tych działań?

2. Jakie alternatywne scenariusze wobec Białorusi rozważa unijna dyplomacja, zwłaszcza gdyby więźniowie polityczni na Białorusi nie zostali uwolnieni?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(6 września 2013 r.)

Natychmiastowe i bezwarunkowe uwolnienie oraz rehabilitacja wszystkich więźniów politycznych jest kwestią priorytetową dla Unii Europejskiej. Świadczy o tym fakt, że we wszystkich swoich działaniach, oświadczeniach i kontaktach dyplomatycznych dotyczących tych zagadnień UE nieustannie podnosi kwestię więźniów politycznych, w tym warunków ich przetrzymywania i stanu ich zdrowia. Delegatura UE w Mińsku nieustannie zwraca uwagę władz białoruskich na kwestię więźniów i wielokrotnie składała wnioski w sprawie odwiedzania ich w więzieniu. Więźniowie polityczni oraz ogólnie rzecz biorąc ofiary represji zawsze były i są wspierane przez Unię.

UE będzie w dalszym ciągu zwracać uwagę Białorusi na problem więźniów politycznych i łamania praw człowieka. Rozwój stosunków dwustronnych w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego zależy od postępów poczynionych przez Białoruś w zakresie poszanowania zasad demokracji, praworządności i praw człowieka. Stale monitorowane jest stosowanie środków ograniczających, które obecnie są skierowane wobec 30 podmiotów i 242 osób.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007776/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — human rights in Belarus

One of the key aspects of the EU's policy on Belarus is the progress that needs to be made in terms of human rights in the country, in particular the right to freedom of speech. There are currently 11 prisoners of conscience being held in Belarusian prisons, and international organisations repeatedly record violations of human rights in the country. This issue holds particular significance for those EU Member States which maintain relations with Belarus and in the context of the forthcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius.

1. What action is currently being taken by the EU institutions with a view to securing the release of the political prisoners being held in Belarus, and what has been the outcome of this action?

2. Which alternative courses of action are being considered by EU diplomats in relation to Belarus, particularly if the political prisoners in Belarus are not released?

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

The immediate and unconditional release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners is a political priority for the EU. This is evidenced by the reference to the political prisoners, including the conditions under which they are imprisoned and their state of health, in all relevant actions, statements and diplomatic messages of the EU. The EU Delegation in Minsk keeps engaging the Belarusian authorities on the issue of political prisoners and has repeatedly submitted requests to visit them in prison. Political prisoners, and in general victims of repression, have been and continue to be supported by the EU.

The EU will continue to engage Belarus on the issue of political prisoners and human rights violations in general. The development of bilateral relations under the Eastern Partnership is conditional on progress towards respect by Belarus for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The application of restrictive measures, currently targeting 30 entities and 242 persons, remains under constant review.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007777/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) e João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(1 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Declarações da troika sobre as negociações entre o governo português e os professores

De acordo com notícias vindas a público, a troika — Comissão Europeia, Banco Central Europeu e FMI — terá apontado ao governo português «riscos políticos e constitucionais» na implementação das medidas apresentadas no início de maio. Perante a negociação do Ministério da Educação com as organizações sindicais representativas dos professores portugueses, a troika terá alegadamente considerado que a forma como o Governo cedeu em toda a linha perante os professores é um caso exemplar e um sinal forte para outras áreas da administração pública de que o Governo não tem força política para aplicar os cortes previstos e de que a contestação e as greves podem compensar.

Em face destas notícias, perguntamos à Comissão:

1. Que comentários faz a esta avaliação da troika à luta dos professores em defesa dos seus direitos e à forma autoritária como esta advoga o tratamento da luta dos trabalhadores e do povo português em geral em defesa dos seus direitos e conquistas, e contra o retrocesso social? Partilha das opiniões expressas em nome da troika?

2. Estes comentários, denotando uma intolerável e reiterada postura de ingerência, significarão que a troika defende a violação pelo governo português dos princípios e direitos consagrados na Constituição da República Portuguesa ou a sua alteração, nomeadamente em relação ao direito à greve, ao direito à resistência, à liberdade sindical e de participação dos sindicatos na elaboração da legislação do trabalho?

3. Defende a Comissão uma postura do governo português que vá ainda mais além no autoritarismo e na atuação à margem da Lei Fundamental portuguesa, que este tem vindo a evidenciar?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(7 de agosto de 2013)

As notícias em causa parecem referir-se ao debate entre a Troica e o Governo português no quadro do programa de assistência financeira a Portugal. Dada a natureza confidencial de tais debates, a Comissão abstém-se de tecer observações sobre essas notícias que obviamente têm por base meras especulações e rumores.

A Comissão não defende de modo nenhum restrições ao direito à greve, à reivindicação, à formação de sindicatos e à participação dos sindicatos na elaboração da legislação laboral.

A Comissão não é favorável a ações de qualquer governo dos Estados-Membros da UE que estejam em contradição com a Constituição.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007777/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL) and João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)
(1 July 2013)

Subject: Troika statements on the negotiations between the Portuguese Government and teachers

According to news reports, the Troika — the Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — has pointed out to the Portuguese Government the political and constitutional risks of implementing the measures unveiled at the start of May. In relation to the Ministry of Education's negotiations with the Portuguese teaching unions, the Troika allegedly considered the way in which the government gave in to the teachers on every issue to be a demonstration that the government lacked the political strength to implement the planned cuts, sending a strong signal to other civil servants that fighting back with strikes could pay off.

1. What does the Commission have to say about the Troika's assessment of the teachers' struggle to defend their rights and the authoritarian way in which the Troika advocates handling the struggle by workers and the Portuguese people in general in defence of their rights and achievements, and against moving society backwards? Does it agree with the opinions expressed in the Troika's name?

2. As these comments represent unacceptable and repeated meddling, do they mean that the Troika advocates the Portuguese Government violating the principles and rights enshrined in the Portuguese Constitution or amending it, specifically as regards the right to strike, the right to resist, the freedom to form unions, and union involvement in drafting labour legislation?

3. Does the Commission advocate the Portuguese Government going even further with the stance it has been taking, which has involved moving towards authoritarianism and breaching the Portuguese Constitution?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The news report seems to refer to discussions between the troika and the Portuguese Government in the framework of the financial assistance programme for Portugal. Given the confidential nature of such discussions the Commission refrains from commenting on such news reports which are obviously based on rumours, hearsay and speculations.

The Commission is in no way advocating restrictions to the right to strike, to resist, to form unions and on union involvement in drafting labour legislation.

The Commission is not advocating actions by any government of the EU Member States which are in contradiction with the constitution.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007778/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Ulrike Rodust (S&D)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Sklavenhandel in Mauretanien

Menschenrechtsorganisationen und Medienberichten zufolge bestehen Sklaverei und Sklavenhandel in Mauretanien auch 32 Jahre nach der letzten Gesetzesänderung zur Abschaffung dieser verachtenswerten Praktiken fort. Obwohl der Besitz von Sklaven strafrechtlich verfolgt werden kann und der von Sklaverei am stärksten betroffene Volksstamm der Haratin seit 1984 Zugang zu öffentlichen Ämtern hat, werden bekannt gewordene Fälle meist nicht geahndet. Schlimmer noch, Aktivisten der wenigen Organisationen, die sich für eine endgültige Abschaffung der Sklaverei einsetzen, müssen oft mit empfindlichen Bestrafungen und langer Gefängnishaft rechnen. Berichten zufolge haben die Sklaven als Eigentum ihrer Besitzer darüber hinaus oft auch mit sexueller und physischer Ausbeutung zu kämpfen.

Ist sich die Hohe Vertreterin des Problems der Sklaverei in Mauretanien bewusst? Wenn ja, wie geht sie in den bilateralen Beziehungen zu Mauretanien mit diesem Problem um?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(21. August 2013)

Sklaverei ist ein komplexes Phänomen, das traditionell in der mauretanischen Gesellschaft verwurzelt ist. Auch wenn keine zuverlässigen statistischen Daten vorliegen, lässt sich festhalten, dass Sklaverei weiterhin vorkommt und dabei auch zeitgenössische und urbane Formen annimmt (z. B. unbezahlte häusliche Dienste und Arbeiten).

Die Bekämpfung der Sklaverei und ihrer Folgen ist daher eine zentrale thematische Priorität der EU-Menschenrechtsstrategie für Mauretanien. Das Thema wird zudem auf offizieller Ebene von den EU-Missionsleitern im Rahmen ihres regelmäßigen politischen Dialogs mit der Regierung behandelt.

Parallel zu dem von ihr geführten politischen Dialog und ihrem Engagement für die Menschenrechte berücksichtigt die EU auch die sozioökonomische Dimension der Sklaverei. Im Rahmen spezifischer Projekte, die aus dem Europäischen Instrument für Demokratie und Menschenrechte finanziert werden, setzt sich die EU direkt für die Betroffenen und für Menschenrechtsverteidiger ein. In diesem Kontext verfolgt die EU einen mehrgleisigen Ansatz, der sowohl auf die Förderung der Menschenrechte als auch auf die sozioökonomische und psychologische Emanzipation der Opfer von Sklaverei abzielt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007778/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Ulrike Rodust (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — The slave trade in Mauritania

According to human rights organisations and media reports, slavery and the slave trade still exist in Mauritania 32 years after the last legislative amendment was passed abolishing these despicable practices. Although it is a prosecutable offence to own slaves, and the Haratin, the tribe hardest hit by slavery, have been able to file official complaints since 1984, cases which come to light often go unpunished. Worse still, activists from the few organisations fighting for the definitive abolition of slavery often face severe punishment and long periods of imprisonment. According to reports, slaves — who are considered to be the property of their owners — often have to contend with sexual and physical exploitation.

Is the High Representative aware of the problem of slavery in Mauritania? If so, how will she handle this problem in bilateral relations with Mauritania?

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

Slavery is a complex phenomenon, traditionally anchored in Mauritanian society. Although reliable statistical data are not available, slavery still persists and is transforming into contemporary and urban forms (for instance unpaid domestic services and work).

The fight against slavery and its consequences is a top thematic priority under the EU country Strategy for Human Rights in Mauritania. The issue is also formally addressed by the EU Heads of Mission in the framework of their regular Political Dialogue with the Government.

Alongside its political dialogue and the advocacy of human rights, the EU also focuses on the socioeconomic dimension of the phenomenon. Through specific projects funded under the EU Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the EU is working directly with the affected population and human rights defenders. In this context, the EU is following a multi-layered approach, based both on the promotion of human rights as well as on the socioeconomic and psychological emancipation of the victims of slavery.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007780/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Incertezze sull'applicazione della pena capitale in Papua Nuova Guinea

In Papua Nuova Guinea la pena capitale, seppur non più applicata dal 1954, non è ancora stata formalmente abolita. All'inizio di quest'anno, il procuratore generale del paese ha tuttavia ammesso che dieci detenuti si trovano attualmente nel braccio della morte.

In tutto il mondo sono più di due terzi i paesi che hanno abolito la pena di morte, ma solo alcuni di questi hanno anche compiuto una riforma legislativa a questo riguardo, mentre molti altri attuano una moratoria de facto.

Inoltre dal 2009 in tutta la regione del Pacifico si stia registrando un aumento del numero delle condanne a morte e una maggiore incertezza sulle future applicazioni della pena capitale anche nelle isole sovrane di Naru e Tonga.

Si evidenzia infine l'articolo 6, paragrafo 1, del Patto internazionale sui diritti civili e politici, il quale recita: «Il diritto alla vita è inerente alla persona umana. Questo diritto deve essere protetto dalla legge. Nessuno può essere arbitrariamente privato della vita».

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione riferire se intende svolgere indagini approfondite, anche attraverso il Servizio di azione esterna, al fine di conoscere i dati reali sul numero di condanne pronunciate nell'area del Pacifico (in particolare nei paesi abolizionisti de facto) e in che modo intende continuare a sensibilizzare i paesi non-abolizionisti?

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

L'UE difende una forte posizione di principio contro la pena di morte e ricorre a tutti gli strumenti offerti dalla diplomazia e dall'assistenza alla cooperazione per promuoverne l'abolizione in tutto il mondo. L'Unione europea chiede ai paesi che non sono disposti ad abrogare la legislazione nazionale di rispettare una moratoria sull'applicazione della pena capitale. Negli ultimi trenta anni nessun paese dell'area del Pacifico ha attuato una condanna a morte. Soltanto Papua Nuova Guinea, Tonga, Fiji e Nauru prevedono la pena capitale. Fiji la prevede esclusivamente nel codice militare. Papua Nuova Guinea, Fiji e Tonga non hanno firmato il Patto internazionale relativo ai diritti civili e politici (ICCPR). Nauru lo ha firmato, senza tuttavia sottoscrivere il secondo protocollo facoltativo. L'UE incoraggia e favorisce l'adesione di questi quattro Stati dell'area del Pacifico all'ICCPR e al relativo secondo protocollo facoltativo, con il fine ultimo di eliminare la pena capitale dalla legislazione dei paesi in questione.

L'UE segue da vicino la situazione nella regione. Di recente, con una dichiarazione rilasciata il 3 giugno 2013 dall'Alta Rappresentante a nome dell'Unione europea, ha espresso profonde preoccupazioni circa la reintroduzione della pena di morte a Papua Nuova Guinea. L'UE è in costante contatto con le autorità nazionali e con i rappresentanti della società civile per raccogliere informazioni pertinenti e aggiornate. Secondo le fonti disponibili, sette prigionieri si trovano attualmente nel braccio della morte nelle carceri di Papua Nuova Guinea e tre sono stati condannati alla pena capitale ma hanno presentato ricorso. A Fiji, Nauru e Tonga nessun condannato si trova nel braccio della morte.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007780/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Doubts over use of the death penalty in Papua New Guinea

The death penalty has still not been formally abolished in Papua New Guinea, despite the last execution having been carried out in 1954. At the start of 2013, however, the Attorney General of Papua New Guinea admitted that 10 prisoners were currently on death row.

More than two thirds of countries worldwide have abolished the death penalty, but only some of them have also reformed their legislation accordingly, while many others apply a de facto moratorium.

Moreover, since 2009, the number of people sentenced to death has been increasing and uncertainty has been growing over whether the death penalty will be applied in future throughout the Pacific region, including on the sovereign island states of Nauru and Tonga.

Lastly, Article 6(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights lays down: 'Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.'

Does the Commission plan to conduct in-depth investigations, including through the External Action Service, to determine the real number of people sentenced to death in the Pacific region (particularly in de facto abolitionist countries) and how will it continue to raise awareness in countries that have not abolished the death penalty?

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

The EU holds a strong and principled position against death penalty and uses all available tools of diplomacy and cooperation assistance for its abolition worldwide. The EU enjoins the countries unwilling to abrogate their legislation to respect a moratorium on the implementation of the death sentence. No country in the Pacific has implemented the death penalty in the past three decades. Only Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Fiji and Nauru retain the death penalty. Fiji only retains death penalty in the Military Code. Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga are not signatories of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Nauru has signed it without the Second Optional Protocol. The EU encourages and supports the accession of these four Pacific States to ICCPR and its Second Optional Protocol with the ultimate aim of abolishing death penalty's legal provisions in these countries.

The EU closely monitors the situation in the region. Recently, it has raised its deep concern about the reactivation of the death penalty in Papua New Guinea in a Declaration issued by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on 3 June 2013. The EU maintains regular contacts with the authorities and with representatives of civil society to gather relevant and updated information. According to our sources 7 prisoners are currently on death row in Papua New Guinea and 3 have been sentenced to death but are currently under appeal. No prisoner is on the death row in Fiji, Nauru and Tonga.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007781/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Attivista per i diritti umani in stato di arresto nel Bahrein

Zainab Al-Khawaja è un'attivista per i diritti umani del Bahrein, figlia di un membro dell'opposizione, arrestata lo scorso anno per «raduno illegale» e «incitamento all'odio contro il regime». È stata imprigionata dopo essere stata scoperta in possesso della foto di un manifestante ferito, al quale cercava di far visita in uno degli ospedali della capitale Manama.

Secondo quanto affermato dalle organizzazioni internazionali, soprattutto da «Amnesty International», lo stato del Bahrein applica le proprie leggi al di fuori dello stato di diritto, dando luogo a una crisi dei diritti umani che causa vittime soprattutto tra coloro che si ribellano al regime.

Inoltre, un rapporto ufficiale della Commissione d'inchiesta indipendente del Bahrein (BICI) conferma l'esistenza di violazioni dei diritti fondamentali all'interno del paese (soprattutto torture, maltrattamenti contro i manifestanti ed esecuzioni sommarie).

Infine, l'articolo 11 della Dichiarazione universale dei diritti dell'uomo sancisce che «ogni individuo accusato di un reato è presunto innocente sino a che la sua colpevolezza non sia stata provata legalmente in un pubblico processo nel quale egli abbia avuto tutte le garanzie necessarie per la sua difesa».

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere quali misure intende intraprendere a favore della tutela della libertà di opinione in Bahrein e se ha già provveduto ad avviare con il paese una serie di incontri per ottenere la liberazione dei prigionieri di coscienza?

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

L'AR/VP segue attentamente la situazione nel Bahrain e continuerà a farlo.

L'AR/VP ha puntualmente sottolineato l'esigenza di garantire in maniera trasparente la legalità dei procedimenti giudiziari. Nelle dichiarazioni pubbliche e nei contatti diretti con le autorità ai massimi livelli ha espresso preoccupazione per le dure condanne nei confronti degli attivisti politici.

La lotta contro l'impunità rimane una questione prioritaria nel Bahrain. Questo elemento, insieme alle altre misure concrete e significative per il rafforzamento della fiducia, compresi la liberazione delle persone arrestate nell'ambito delle dimostrazioni politiche pacifiche, il rispetto della libertà di riunione e di espressione e l'impegno alla riforma politica e al dialogo nazionale su entrambi i lati, potrebbero spianare la strada a un graduale ripristino del clima di fiducia e quindi a una vera riconciliazione nazionale.

Per ulteriori dettagli si rinvia l'onorevole deputato alla risposta data all'interrogazione E-006473/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007781/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Human rights activist under arrest in Bahrain

Zainab al-Khawaja is a Bahraini human rights activist, the daughter of a member of the opposition, who was arrested last year for 'unlawful assembly' and 'incitement to hatred against the regime'. She was imprisoned after being found in possession of a photograph of an injured protester, whom she was trying to visit in a hospital in the capital, Manama.

According to international organisations, and Amnesty International in particular, the state of Bahrain applies its own laws outside the rule of law, causing a human rights crisis that especially victimises those who oppose the regime.

Moreover, an official report by the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) confirms that there are fundamental rights violations in the country (especially torture, mistreatment of protesters and summary executions).

Lastly, Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays down that 'Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.'

Can the Commission say what steps it will take to protect freedom of opinion in Bahrain and whether it has already started a series of meetings with the country to secure the release of prisoners of conscience?

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

The HR/VP follows the situation in Bahrain very closely and will continue to do so.

The HR/VP has persistedly stressed that due legal process has to be applied in a transparent manner. In public statements and in direct contacts with the authorities at the highest level, she has raised concerns at the harsh sentences pronounced against political activists.

The fight against impunity remains a priority issue in Bahrain. This, together with other significant and concrete confidence building steps, including the release of those arrested in the context of peaceful political demonstrations, the respect of freedom of assembly and expression, and a commitment to political reform and National Dialogue on both sides, has the potential to restore gradual confidence leading up to genuine national reconciliation.

The Honourable Member is referred to the answer given to E-006473/2013 ([1]) for additional details.

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007782/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili casi di torture di civili da parte delle forze di polizia — La situazione nello Sri Lanka

Numerose associazioni per i diritti umani, oltre allo «Sri Lanka Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2012», accusano la polizia dello Sri Lanka di utilizzare metodi di interrogatorio violenti, attuando anche trattamenti inumani e degradanti. In particolar modo l'ONG «Right to Life» ha indetto alla fine del mese di giugno un incontro per dare voce alle testimonianze delle vittime.

L'utilizzo di torture e trattamenti inumani e degradanti è divenuto pratica ordinaria nel paese fin dalla guerra civile del 2009, ma è espressamente vietato da numerose dichiarazioni internazionali nonché dalla Convenzione contro la tortura e altre pene o trattamenti crudeli, inumani o degradanti del 1984.

Inoltre, tra le recenti denunce presentate contro le forze dell'ordine, molte evidenziano l'impiego di sostanze urticanti, tra cui anche il comune peperoncino, su parti del corpo particolarmente sensibili, così da estorcere false confessioni.

Infine, i casi di tortura accertati sono almeno 1.500, ma negli ultimi vent'anni nel paese si sono registrate solo cinque condanne.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere se è a conoscenza della situazione nello Sri Lanka?

Può inoltre indicare se intende adottare misure volte ad arginare il fenomeno?

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

I presunti casi di tortura sono difficili da verificare, ma i casi di violazione dei diritti umani nello Sri Lanka sono stati puntualmente sollevati e il Consiglio per i diritti umani dell'ONU continua ad occuparsi di tali questioni. Queste ultime sono state affrontate in maggior dettaglio anche nell'ambito dell'esame periodico universale (UPR) dello scorso anno relativo allo Sri Lanka. Nel 2009-10 la Commissione ha svolto un'indagine approfondita sull'attuazione delle convenzioni internazionali da parte delle autorità del paese (compresa la Convenzione contro la tortura e altre pene o trattamenti crudeli, disumani o degradanti), che ha portato alla sospensione temporanea delle preferenze commerciali autonome dell'UE.

Lo Sri Lanka ha adottato un piano d'azione nazionale per i diritti umani che individua una serie di misure. Se attuate efficacemente, potrebbero contribuire a migliorare la situazione. L'UE continuerà a esortare lo Sri Lanka a dare seguito a tali proposte e alle raccomandazioni contenute nell'UPR.

La tortura e i maltrattamenti figurano tra le violazioni più gravi dei diritti umani e della dignità dell'uomo. Il diritto internazionale non ammette eccezioni e tutti i paesi sono tenuti a rispettare sempre il divieto incondizionato di qualsiasi forma di tortura e di maltrattamento. La prevenzione e la soppressione di qualsiasi forma di tortura e di maltrattamento, ovunque si possano verificare, è uno dei principali obiettivi della politica dell'UE per i diritti umani. In linea con gli orientamenti dell'UE in materia di tortura, l'UE si avvale di tutti gli strumenti diplomatici e di cooperazione disponibili per raggiungere tali obiettivi, in particolare attraverso il dialogo politico, le rappresentanze diplomatiche e il sostegno ai progetti delle ONG nell'ambito dell'Iniziativa europea per la democrazia e i diritti umani (EIDHR).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007782/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Possible cases of civilians being tortured by the police — the situation in Sri Lanka

Several human rights organisations, and the Sri Lanka Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2012, accuse the Sri Lankan police of using brutal interrogation techniques, and even resorting to inhuman and degrading treatment. In particular, the non-governmental organisation Right to Life called a meeting at the end of June to hear victims' testimonies.

The use of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment has become common place in Sri Lanka since the civil war ended in 2009, but it is expressly prohibited by several international declarations and the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Moreover, according to many of the recent accusations levelled at the police, irritants, including ordinary chilli, are applied to particularly sensitive parts of the body in order to force people into making false confessions.

Lastly, there are at least 1 500 verified cases of torture, but only five people have been convicted of it in the country in the last 20 years.

Is the Commission aware of the situation in Sri Lanka?

Can it also say what steps it will take to curb the problem?

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

Allegations of torture are difficult to verify, but cases of human rights violations in Sri Lanka have been systematically raised and these issues remain on the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council. They were addressed in some detail in last year's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Sri Lanka. The Commission undertook an exhaustive investigation in 2009-10 into the implementation of international conventions by the Sri Lankan authorities, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which led to the temporary withdrawal of autonomous EU trade preferences.

Sri Lanka has adopted a National Action Plan for Human Rights identifying a number of measures which, if effectively implemented, could contribute to improving the situation. The EU will continue to urge Sri Lanka to follow up these proposals and the recommendations of the UPR.

Torture and ill-treatment rank among the most abhorrent violations of human rights and human dignity. No exceptions are permitted under international law and all countries are required to comply at all times with the unconditional prohibition of all forms of torture and ill treatment. The prevention and eradication of all forms of torture and ill- treatment worldwide represents one of the main objectives of the European Union's human rights policy. In line with the EU Guidelines on Torture, the EU resorts to all available tools of diplomacy and cooperation to reach these objectives, most notably through political dialogue, diplomatic representations and assistance to NGO projects under the European Intrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007783/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Azioni a contrasto del decremento del tasso di natalità nell'UE

Alcuni recenti studi realizzati nell'ambito dell'Unione europea evidenziano come il tasso di fecondità di molti Stati membri abbia visto una costante diminuzione negli ultimi decenni, arrivando in media a quota 1,57 (1,40 in Italia). In particolar modo, una di queste ricerche evidenzia come nel 2011 siano nati 5,2 milioni di bambini in tutto il territorio dell'UE, contro i 7,5 milioni venuti alla luce ogni anno nel corso degli anni Settanta.

La riduzione della popolazione produrrebbe una diminuzione degli individui dagli attuali 504 milioni ai 467 milioni previsti nel 2045 e ciò comporterebbe una flessione della forza lavoro e minori risorse operative anche nel campo dell'assistenza agli anziani (a fronte di una popolazione che, invece, invecchia sempre più).

La Convenzione sulla protezione della maternità, adottata dall'Organizzazione internazionale del lavoro nel 2000, riconosce «la diversità (…) dello sviluppo della protezione della maternità nelle legislazioni e nelle prassi nazionali». Inoltre, l'articolo 16, paragrafo 3, della Dichiarazione universale dei diritti dell'uomo sancisce che «la famiglia è il nucleo naturale e fondamentale della società e ha diritto ad essere protetta dalla società e dallo Stato» e l'articolo 12 della CEDU, in tema di diritto al matrimonio, stabilisce che «a partire dall'età minima per contrarre matrimonio, l'uomo e la donna hanno il diritto di sposarsi e di fondare una famiglia secondo le leggi nazionali che regolano l'esercizio di tale diritto».

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere quali azioni intende intraprendere per sostenere attivamente la famiglia fondata sull'unione tra un uomo e una donna e, di conseguenza, la crescita del tasso di natalità?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(20 agosto 2013)

La Commissione attribuisce grande importanza alla famiglia e ha promosso misure volte ad affrontare il problema del calo delle nascite e a creare condizioni favorevoli per coloro che desiderano avere bambini. Tali misure figurano nella Comunicazione «Investire nel settore sociale a favore della crescita e della coesione» ([1]), adottata nel febbraio 2013, e nella recente relazione della Commissione sugli obiettivi di Barcellona ([2]). Inoltre, la raccomandazione «Investire nell'infanzia» ([3]) ribadisce l'importanza di servizi per l'infanzia e di un'istruzione prescolare qualitativamente validi e accessibili al fine di migliorare le opportunità di sviluppo dei bambini aiutando nel contempo i genitori che lavorano.

Questi orientamenti politici sono supportati dai programmi unionali. In primo luogo, la politica della fertilità e della famiglia è un aspetto importante del programma quadro di ricerca, ad esempio nell'ambito dei progetti Repro ([4]) e Family Platform ([5]). Progetti finanziati nel contesto della tematica «Salute», come i progetti GRADIENT ([6]), DRIVERS ([7]) e HEALTHatWORK ([8]), contribuiscono a sostenere le famiglie e i bambini, anche sul luogo di lavoro. Inoltre, strumenti finanziari unionali come PROGRESS e l'FSE finanziano programmi e progetti sperimentali a sostegno delle famiglie e della genitorialità nell'UE. Ne costituisce un esempio la piattaforma europea «Investire nell'infanzia» (EPIC) ([9]) che contribuisce a condividere esperienze e conoscenze in diversi ambiti legati alla politica della famiglia e dell'infanzia e individua e valuta le buone pratiche.

([1]) Cfr. COM(2013)083 def.
([2]) Cfr. COM(2013)322 def.
([3]) Cfr. 2013/112/UE.
([4]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/projects/429_en.html
([5]) Cfr. http://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de:8080/bitstream/2003/27726/1/Family%20Platform%20Brochure%20I.pdf
([6]) Cfr. http://health-gradient.eu/other-research/gradient/.
([7]) Cfr. http://health-gradient.eu/.
([8]) Cfr. http://www.abdn.ac.uk/haw/.
([9]) Cfr. http://europa.eu/epic/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007783/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Action to tackle the falling birth rate in the EU

According to recent studies conducted in the European Union, the fertility rate in many Member States has been in freefall in recent decades, with the average rate now standing at 1.57 (1.40 in Italy). In particular, according to one of these studies, 5.2 million babies were born in the whole of the EU in 2011, compared with the 7.5 million born every year in the 1970s.

A decrease in the population would lead to the number of people falling from 504 million at present to a predicted 467 million in 2045 and that would mean a reduction in the workforce and fewer operational resources for elderly care (compared with an increasingly ageing population).

The Maternity Protection Convention, adopted by the International Labour Organisation in 2000, recognises 'the diversity […] in the development of the protection of maternity in national law and practice'. Furthermore, Article 16(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays down that 'The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State' and Article 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights, regarding marriage, lays down that 'Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family, according to the national laws governing the exercise of this right.'

Can the Commission say what action it will take actively to support families built on the union of a man and a woman and, consequently, increasing the birth rate?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The Commission attaches great importance to families, and has promoted policy measures to address falling birthrates and create supportive conditions to people who wish to have children. These measures have been addressed in the communication 'Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion' ([1]), adopted in February 2013 and the Commission's recent report on the Barcelona objectives ([2]). Furthermore the 'Recommendation on Investing in Children' ([3]) stressess the importance of quality, accessible early childhood education and care (ECEC) services to improve childrens' opportunities for development while supporting working parents.

These policy orientations are supported through EU programmes. Firstly, fertility and family policy is an important area in the Research Framework programme, as exemplified by the Repro ([4]) and Family Platform ([5]) projects. Projects funded under the Health Theme contribute to supporting families and children, also at the workplace, such as GRADIENT ([6]), DRIVERS ([7]) and HEALTHatWORK ([8]). Moreover, EU financial instruments such as PROGRESS and the ESF have been funding programmes and experimental projects that support family and parenthood in the EU. The European Platform on Investing in Children (EPIC) ([9]) is one such example, which helps to share experience and expertise on different areas related to child and family policy, and identifies and evaluates good practices.

([1]) See COM(2013)083.
([2]) See COM(2013)322.
([3]) See C(2013)778 Final.
([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/projects/429_en.html
([5]) See http://eldorado.tu-dortmund.de:8080/bitstream/2003/27726/1/Family%20Platform%20Brochure%20I.pdf
([6]) See http://health-gradient.eu/other-research/gradient/.
([7]) See http://health-gradient.eu/.
([8]) See http://www.abdn.ac.uk/haw/.
([9]) See http://europa.eu/epic/.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007784/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Repressione della libertà di espressione in Tunisia

A fine giugno si è svolto il processo di appello contro il rapper tunisino Weld el 15, alias Alaa Eddine Yacoub, condannato dal tribunale di Ben Arous a due anni di carcere senza attenuanti per complotto finalizzato alla violenza contro i pubblici ufficiali e per oltraggio alla polizia durante gli scontri che hanno caratterizzato la Primavera Araba.

La vicenda ha quale presupposto la pubblicazione su Youtube, da parte del giovane, di un video critico nei confronti delle forze dell'ordine, ma la libertà di espressione è fatta salva dall'articolo 19 della Dichiarazione Universale dei diritti dell'uomo («Ogni individuo ha diritto alla libertà di opinione e di espressione incluso il diritto di non essere molestato per la propria opinione e quello di cercare, ricevere e diffondere informazioni e idee attraverso ogni mezzo e senza riguardo a frontiere»).

Inoltre nel marzo del 2012 sono stati condannati a sette anni e mezzo di reclusione anche i disegnatori Ghazi Beji e Jabeur Mejri, accusati di blasfemia per aver pubblicato sui social network delle caricature di Maometto.

Infine la Costituzione tunisina ha riconosciuto formalmente la libertà di espressione quale libertà fondamentale senza darvi tuttavia tutela sostanziale.

Può la Commissione far sapere se intende intraprendere un dialogo strutturato e costruttivo con la Tunisia riguardo alla tutela della libertà di espressione, costituzionalmente riconosciuta?

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

L'UE segue da vicino questi singoli casi.

Ribadendo la posizione assunta in altre circostanze recenti in cui sentenze giudiziarie hanno limitato la libertà di espressione, l'UE ha sottoposto la questione all'attenzione delle autorità tunisine, chiedendo la revisione della legislazione ereditata dal regime di Ben Ali, che si presta ad essere utilizzata per limitare tale libertà. In questo contesto, è opportuno sottolineare che alcuni pubblici ministeri in Tunisia hanno impugnato diversi articoli del codice penale nei procedimenti giudiziari contro cittadini tunisini. L'UE attribuisce grande importanza alle disposizioni di legge che rafforzano e garantiscono la libertà di espressione.

Nel dialogo politico costante che intrattiene con le autorità tunisine, l'UE ha ribadito più volte il suo appello a rafforzare tale libertà, in linea con le aspirazioni della rivoluzione tunisina.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007784/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Repression of freedom of expression in Tunisia

At the end of June, an appeal hearing was held involving the Tunisian rapper, Ala Yaacoub, alias Weld el 15, sentenced by the Ben Arous court to two years' imprisonment with no extenuating circumstances for conspiracy to commit violence against public officials and for insulting the police during the clashes which characterised the Arab Spring.

The case is based on a video which the young man published on YouTube, which criticises the forces of law and order; however freedom of expression is safeguarded by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ('Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers').

Furthermore, in March 2012, the cartoonists Ghazi Beji and Jabeur Mejri were sentenced to seven and a half years' imprisonment for blasphemy, having published caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad on social network sites.

Lastly, the Tunisian Constitution formally recognises freedom of expression as a fundamental freedom without, however, affording it effective protection.

Can the Commission state whether it intends to launch structured and constructive dialogue with Tunisia on the protection of freedom of expression, recognised under its Constitution?

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

The EU is closely monitoring these individual cases.

As in other recent events where freedom of expression has been curtailed by judgments, the EU has brought this issues to the attention of Tunisian authorities, calling for the revision of laws inherited from the Ben Ali regime and which can be used to limit freedom of expression. In that framework, it is worth noting that several articles of the penal code have been used by Tunisian prosecutors in cases against Tunisian citizens. Similarly, the EU attaches great importance to legal provisions consolidating and guaranteeing this freedom.

In its regular political dialogue with the Tunisian authorities, the EU has repeatedly reiterated its pleas for the consolidation of freedom of expression, in line with the aspirations of the Tunisian revolution.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007785/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Tutela della salute riproduttiva nelle Filippine

Dopo quattordici anni di discussioni, le Filippine si accingono a promulgare una legge sulla salute riproduttiva dei cittadini («Rh Bill») che promuove un programma di pianificazione familiare basato sulla regola per la quale ogni coppia non dovrebbe avere più di due figli, prevedendo inoltre la sterilizzazione di parte della popolazione.

L'articolo 35 della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, in tema di tutela alla salute, afferma anche la necessità di garantire un'elevata protezione della salute umana.

Inoltre, siccome la sterilizzazione colpirebbe soprattutto la componente femminile della popolazione, ciò va a discapito della dignità e del valore della persona umana, oltre che dell'uguaglianza dei diritti tra uomini e donne, così come sancita dallo Statuto delle Nazioni Unite.

Infine il disegno di legge è stato promosso proprio dalle Nazioni Unite e dall'Unicef, in netto contrasto con le loro dichiarazioni originarie d'intenti, in quanto tali organizzazioni ricollegano sempre più di frequente la povertà di un Paese al suo alto tasso di natalità.

Può la Commissione precisare:

— se è a conoscenza degli sviluppi normativi in merito alla legge sulla salute riproduttiva dei cittadini;

— quali azioni intende intraprendere per sensibilizzare le predette organizzazioni internazionali a non ridurre gli aiuti economici ai paesi in via di sviluppo a causa della mancata promulgazione di leggi di pianificazione familiare?

Risposta di Andris Piebalgs a nome della Commissione
(13 agosto 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza degli sviluppi normativi del disegno di legge sulla salute riproduttiva delle Filippine, ormai diventato legge (Repubblic act 10354 — The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012), firmata dal presidente Aquino nel dicembre 2012. L'attuazione della legge è attualmente sospesa perché la Corte suprema ha prorogato l'ordine di mantenimento dello «status quo ante» di 120 giorni, che aveva emesso nel marzo 2013 e che resterà in vigore fino a nuovo ordine.

La Commissione ha attivamente incoraggiato il governo a firmare la legge sulla salute riproduttiva, poiché fornisce la possibilità di cambiare in meglio la vita di numerose famiglie filippine e di ridurre l'incidenza dell'HIV/AIDS e gli elevati livelli di mortalità materna.

La legge sulla salute riproduttiva non impone obblighi e si basa, tra l'altro, sui principi di rispetto delle scelte libere e informate e di rispetto della tutela e applicazione dei diritti legati alla salute riproduttiva. La parità di genere e l'emancipazione femminile sono gli elementi centrali della suddetta legge, che non promuove specificamente la sterilizzazione, ma fa riferimento piuttosto alla scelta di «tutti i metodi di pianificazione familiare» e sancisce il diritto di stabilire le dimensioni ideali del proprio nucleo familiare.

Le agenzie delle Nazioni Unite e gli altri partner per lo sviluppo hanno sostenuto l'approvazione della legge sulla salute riproduttiva, in quanto può aiutare il governo a intensificare gli sforzi per conseguire l'Obiettivo di sviluppo del millennio 5 (OSM 5) in materia di mortalità materna, e di accesso universale alla salute sessuale e riproduttiva. Alla Commissione non risulta che siano previsti tagli all'assistenza finanziaria per i paesi che non promulghino leggi sulla pianificazione familiare.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007785/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Protection of reproductive health in the Philippines

After 14 years of debate, the Philippines is set to promulgate a law on the reproductive health of its citizens (the 'RH bill') which promotes a family-planning programme based on the rule that each couple should not have more than two children, and which furthermore provides for the sterilisation of part of the population.

With regard to the protection of health, Article 35 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states the need to ensure a high level of human health protection.

Moreover, given that sterilisation would mainly affect the female part of the population, this undermines the dignity and value of humans, as well as the equality of rights between men and women, as established by the Charter of the United Nations.

Lastly, the draft bill has been promoted precisely by the United Nations and Unicef, in sharp contrast to their original declarations of intent, given that these organisations increasingly associate a country's poverty with its high birth rate.

Can the Commission state:

— whether it is aware of the legislative developments regarding the law on the reproductive health of Filipino citizens;

— what action it will take to encourage the above international organisations not to cut economic aid to developing countries owing to their failure to promulgate family-planning laws?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

The Commission is aware of the legislative developments regarding the Reproductive Health Bill in the Philippines, which has now become a law (Republic Act 10354 — The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012) signed by President Aquino in December 2012. The implementation of the law is currently suspended since the Supreme Court extended the 120-day 'status quo ante' order issued on March 2013, which will remain in effect until further order from the Court.

The Commission actively encouraged the Government to sign the Reproductive Health Law. The Law provides for the opportunity to change for the better the lives of many Filipino families and to curb the burden of HIV/AIDS and the high levels of maternal mortality.

The Reproductive Health Law is not prescriptive and is founded, among others, on the principles of respect for free and informed decisions and respect for protection and fulfilment of reproductive health and rights. Gender equality and women empowerment are its central elements. The Law does not specifically promote sterilisation but instead refers to the choice of 'all methods of family planning'. It states that each family will have the right to determine its ideal family size.

The United Nations agencies and other development partners have supported the passage of the Reproductive Health Law because it can help the Government intensify its efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 on maternal mortality, including ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health. The Commission is not aware of planned cuts in financial assistance due to the country's failure to promulgate family planning laws.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007786/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Condannato in Francia un partecipante alla manifestazione contro la legalizzazione delle unioni omosessuali

Un ragazzo francese di 23 anni è stato condannato a 2 mesi di reclusione e al pagamento di una multa pecuniaria per aver partecipato ad attacchi contro la polizia, di fatto smentiti dalle riprese delle telecamere. L'episodio si sarebbe verificato a Neuilly-sur-Seine, dove si svolgeva una manifestazione contro la legalizzazione del matrimonio omosessuale. Il giornale Nouvelle de France ha sottolineato come l'evento sia degenerato quando le forze dell'ordine hanno caricato la folla, mentre Le Figaro aggiunge che il giovane sarebbe stato arrestato in assenza di reato.

I reati per i quali l'accusato è stato condannato non hanno visto l'emissione di alcun mandato di comparizione da parte dell'autorità giudiziale e, durante il processo, il suo difensore ha mostrato in aula il video che prova la mancanza di una condotta penalmente rilevante in capo all'imputato.

Inoltre il detenuto, sempre secondo fonti giornalistiche, è stato costretto a trascorrere le notti precedenti al processo in una cella angusta, priva di servizi igienici e nella quale non gli è stato somministrato cibo a sufficienza.

Infine la Convenzione contro la tortura o altre pene e trattamenti crudeli, inumani e degradanti, conclusa a New York nel 1984, all'articolo16 prevede: «Ogni Stato Parte si impegna a proibire in ogni territorio sotto la sua giurisdizione altri atti costitutivi di pene o trattamenti crudeli, inumani o degradanti che non siano atti di tortura quale definita all'articolo 1, qualora siano compiuti da un funzionario pubblico o da qualsiasi altra persona che agisce a titolo ufficiale o sotto sua istigazione oppure con il suo consenso espresso a tacito».

Può la Commissione riferire:

— se è a conoscenza dell'accaduto;

— quali misure intende adottare affinché la Francia si adegui agli standard europei del giusto processo e del rispetto alla dignità umana degli imputati?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2013)

La Commissione considera primordiale il rispetto dei diritti procedurali degli indagati e degli imputati in tutti gli Stati membri. Sono già state adottate misure concrete per garantire il diritto a un processo equo nei procedimenti penali, tra le quali l'adozione di due direttive, rispettivamente sul diritto all'interpretazione e alla traduzione ([1]) e sul diritto all'informazione ([2]), e i due co-legislatori hanno raggiunto un accordo sulla futura direttiva sul diritto di accesso a un difensore nei procedimenti penali ([3]).

La Commissione è convinta che queste direttive rafforzeranno la protezione dei diritti procedurali negli Stati membri e seguirà attentamente la loro attuazione.

([1]) Direttiva 2010/64/UE del 20 ottobre 2010 (GU L 280 del 26.10.2010, pag. 1).
([2]) Direttiva 2012/13/UE del 22 maggio (GU L 142 dell'1.6.2012, pag. 1).
([3]) Direttiva del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, relativa al diritto di accesso a un difensore nel procedimento penale e nel procedimento di esecuzione del mandato di arresto europeo e ai diritti di informare un terzo al momento della privazione della libertà personale e di comunicare, durante lo stato di privazione della libertà personale, con terzi e autorità consolari.

Ciononostante, la Commissione europea non è competente ad intervenire nella gestione ordinaria degli ordinamenti giudiziari dei singoli Stati membri, tra cui figurano le condizioni di detenzione; queste ultime sono di competenza degli Stati membri i quali si sono impegnati a rispettare le vigenti norme del Consiglio d'Europa in materia, come le regole penitenziarie europee del 2006. Nel 2011 la Commissione ha pubblicato un libro verde volto a rafforzare la fiducia reciproca nel settore della detenzione ([4]), attualmente si sta occupando dell'adeguata attuazione dei vigenti strumenti di riconoscimento reciproco adottati nel settore della detenzione ([5]) ed entro settembre 2013 pubblicherà una relazione sull'attuazione delle tre decisioni quadro.

([4]) «Rafforzare la fiducia reciproca nello spazio giudiziario europeo — Libro verde sull'applicazione della normativa dell'UE sulla giustizia penale nel settore della detenzione» (COM(2011)327 definitivo). Una sintesi delle risposte alla consultazione è stata pubblicata sul seguente sito: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm

([5]) Decisione quadro 2008/909/GAI, del 27 novembre 2008, relativa all'applicazione del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle sentenze penali che irrogano pene detentive o misure privative della libertà personale, ai fini della loro esecuzione nell'Unione europea (GU L 327 del 5.12.2008 pag. 27); decisione quadro 2008/947/GAI, del 27 novembre 2008, relativa all'applicazione del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle sentenze e alle decisioni di sospensione condizionale in vista della sorveglianza delle misure di sospensione condizionale e delle sanzioni sostitutive (GU L 337 del 16.12.2008 pag. 102); e decisione quadro 2009/829/GAI, del 23 ottobre 2009, sull'applicazione tra gli Stati membri dell'Unione europea del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle decisioni sulle misure alternative alla detenzione cautelare (GU L 294 dell'11.11.2009 pag. 20).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007786/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Protester against the legalisation of same-sex marriage convicted in France

A 23-year-old Frenchman has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine for his involvement in attacks against the police; television camera footage shows he is innocent. The incident took place in Neuilly-sur-Seine, where a protest was being held against the legalisation of same-sex marriage. According to the newspaper *Nouvelle de France*, the protest turned violent when the police charged the crowd; according to *Le Figaro*, the young man was arrested despite having committed no crime.

The court issued no summons for the offences the man was convicted of and, during the trial, his defence lawyer showed in court the video proving that the defendant had not committed any crime.

Also according to press sources, the defendant was forced to spend the nights leading up to the trial in a cramped cell with no toilet facilities and where he was not given enough food.

Lastly, according to Article 16 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, concluded in New York in 1984: 'Each State Party shall undertake to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in article 1, when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.'

— Is the Commission aware of the above events?

— What steps will it take to ensure that France complies with European standards regarding due process and respect for defendants' human dignity?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2013)

The Commission attaches great importance to the respect of the procedural rights for suspects and accused persons in all Member States. Concrete measures with a view to guaranteeing the right of a fair trial in criminal proceedings have already been taken, including the adoption of two Directives on the right to interpretation and translation ([1]) and on the right to information ([2]). Political agreement has been reached between the co-legislators on the future Directive on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings ([3]).

The Commission trusts that these Directives will strengthen the protection of procedural rights in the Member States and will be closely following their implementation.

The European Commission has however no competence to intervene in the day-to-day administration of the justice systems of individual Member States including detention conditions which are under the competence of Member States who have agreed to respect the existing Council of Europe standards on the matter, such as the European Prison Rules 2006. In 2011 the Commission published a Green Paper on strengthening mutual trust in the field of detention ([4]). The Commission is currently focusing on the proper implementation of the existing mutual recognition instruments adopted in the field of detention ([5]) and will publish an implementation report on the three Framework Decisions by September 2013.

([1]) Directive 2010/64/EU of 20 October 2010, OJ L 280, 26.10.2010, p. 1-7.
([2]) Directive 2012/13/EU of 22. Mai 2012, OJ L 142, 1.6.2012, p. 1-10.
([3]) Directive on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings and European arrest warrant proceedings, and on the right to have a third party informed upon deprivation of liberty and to communicate with third persons and with consular authorities while deprived of liberty.
([4]) Green Paper Strengthening mutual trust in the European judicial area — A Green Paper on the application of EU criminal justice legislation in the field of detention, COM(2011) 0327 final. A summary of the replies has been published on the website: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm
([5]) Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodial sentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of their enforcement in the European Union, OJ 5.12.2008, L 327/27, Framework Decision 2008/947/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to judgments and probation decisions with a view to the supervision of probation measures and alternative sanctions, OJ 16.12.2008, L 337/102, and Framework Decision 2009/829/JHA of 23 October 2009 on the application, between Member States of the European Union, of the principle of mutual recognition to decisions on supervision measures as an alternative to provisional detention, OJ 11.11.2009, L 294/20.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007787/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Nuovi attentati terroristici tra Nepal e Pakistan — Il caso Nanga Parbat

È notizia recente l'uccisione di undici alpinisti di varie nazionalità da parte di un gruppo terroristico talebano, alla fine del mese di giugno, sulla cima del Nanga Parbat. Tra le vittime anche un cittadino europeo, per la precisione lettone. Sono rimasti feriti altri scalatori, arrivati quando l'attacco si era ormai concluso, e 8 guide sherpa.

Considerando che molti cittadini dell'Unione decidono ogni anno di scalare la vetta tra Nepal e Pakistan, accompagnati da guide locali; osservando inoltre che gli attacchi terroristici nella regione sono in costante aumento, tanto che il neoeletto governo pakistano afferma che il Paese vive in un costante stato di guerra; evidenziando infine la risoluzione del Parlamento europeo P7_TA(2011)0577, del 14 dicembre 2011, sulla strategia antiterrorismo dell'UE, in particolare la parte in cui il Parlamento stesso «richiama l'attenzione sulla necessità di ampliare gli esistenti partenariati strategici di lotta al terrorismo con Paesi al di fuori dell'Europa e di crearne di nuovi, a condizione che tali partenariati rispettino i diritti umani»,

si chiede alla Commissione:

— È a conoscenza di quanto avvenuto sul Nanga Parbat?

— Quali misure intende intraprendere per assicurare maggiori tutele ai cittadini europei all'estero per turismo o attività di lavoro?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007956/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Alpinisti uccisi in Pakistan

Il 26 giugno 2013 diversi giornali hanno riportato la notizia della deliberata uccisione di 11 alpinisti avvenuta nel campo base del Nanga Parbat, in Pakistan, una delle vette più alte del mondo. Tra le vittime si contano tre ucraini, due slovacchi, due cinesi, un lituano, un nepalese, un americano e la loro guida pakistana. Un portavoce dei talebani pakistani ha dichiarato che l'attacco è stato effettuato dal gruppo affiliato ai talebani Jundul Hafsa per vendicare la morte del suo capo rappresentante, Valiura Rahman, ucciso da un drone americano.

1. Quali misure ha adottato il Vicepresidente/l'Alto Rappresentante per sostenere il dialogo tra l'UE e il Pakistan al fine di combattere il problema dei gruppi estremisti militanti affiliati ai talebani in Pakistan?

2. Alla luce di questo caso, quali provvedimenti intende adottare il Vicepresidente/l'Alto Rappresentante insieme alle autorità competenti pakistane per evitare l'uccisione dei turisti che visitano il Pakistan?

3. Quali misure ha adottato il Vicepresidente/l'Alto Rappresentante per sostenere il salvataggio dei due cittadini cechi, Hana Humpálová e Antonie Chrástecká, rapiti a marzo in Pakistan da militanti islamici e ritenuti ancora in vita?

Risposta congiunta dell'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente Catherine Ashton a nome della Commissione
(22 agosto 2013)

L'AR/VP è a conoscenza della tragedia avvenuta sul Nanga Parbat, dell'aumento della violenza settaria in Pakistan e della difficile situazione in cui si trovano i residenti e i turisti stranieri, come pure la popolazione e le autorità del Pakistan, a seguito degli attacchi terroristici. L'UE si è impegnata a fornire al Pakistan un sostegno a lungo termine, aiutandolo anche ad affrontare i suoi numerosi problemi.

L'Unione ha assunto l'impegno inequivocabile di aiutare il Pakistan nella lotta al terrorismo, che figura tra le priorità del dialogo strategico UE-Pakistan. L'UE sostiene progetti volti a migliorare le attività di contrasto in Pakistan in collaborazione con la polizia e le procure. In seguito all'adozione, nel 2012, della strategia di sicurezza/antiterrorismo dell'UE per il Pakistan da parte dal Consiglio Affari esteri, si prevede un'ulteriore intensificazione delle attività a sostegno della sicurezza e della lotta al terrorismo, compreso l'estremismo violento, in Pakistan. Questo andrà a integrare il sostegno costante fornito dall'UE a favore dell'istruzione in Pakistan, comprese la comprensione delle altre religioni e la tolleranza nei loro confronti.

La responsabilità dell'assistenza consolare ai cittadini europei che si recano all'estero per turismo o per lavoro spetta ai rispettivi governi, che possono pubblicare consigli per i viaggiatori. L'UE ha chiesto al Pakistan di informarla sui progressi di tutte le indagini di polizia e sulle misure che possono essere adottate per garantire la sicurezza dei residenti e dei turisti stranieri. La Repubblica ceca non ha chiesto assistenza all'UE in seguito al rapimento di cittadini cechi.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-008229/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(9 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Ataque no Paquistão

Considerando que:

— O Movimento Talibã do Paquistão reivindicou o ataque a um grupo de alpinistas estrangeiros, que resultou na morte de, pelo menos, 11 pessoas;

— O porta-voz do movimento, Ehsanullah Ehsan, afirmou que o ataque foi perpetrado por uma fação até então desconhecida, Junood ul-Hifa, para vingar a morte do número dois dos taliban paquistaneses, Wali-ur Rehman, que foi morto em maio num ataque aéreo norte-americano;

— Estas mortes podem pôr em causa o futuro do montanhismo e as caminhadas no Paquistão, que constituem o último vestígio do turismo internacional num país que está na linha da frente da violência da Al-Qaeda e dos talibãs.

Pergunto à Vice-Presidente/Alta-Representante:

Como avalia o sucedido?

De que dados dispõe sobre o atual ponto da situação do conflito?

Resposta conjunta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(22 de agosto de 2013)

A Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente tem conhecimento da tragédia ocorrida em Nanga Parbat, do aumento da violência sectária no Paquistão e da difícil situação com que se encontram confrontados os residentes e os turistas estrangeiros, e a população e as autoridades paquistanesas, na sequência dos ataques terroristas. A UE está empenhada em apoiar o Paquistão a longo prazo, o que inclui fazer face aos inúmeros desafios com que o país se depara.

A UE assumiu um compromisso inequívoco de ajudar o Paquistão a combater o terrorismo, que figura entre as prioridades do diálogo estratégico UE-Paquistão. A UE apoia vários projetos para melhorar a aplicação da lei no Paquistão, em colaboração com a polícia e os serviços do Ministério Público. Na sequência da adoção, em 2012, da Estratégia de segurança/luta contra o terrorismo da UE para o Paquistão por parte do Conselho dos Negócios Estrangeiros, prevê-se a intensificação das ações no Paquistão em prol da segurança e da luta contra o terrorismo, incluindo a luta contra o extremismo violento. Estas ações virão acrescentar-se ao apoio concedido pela UE ao setor da educação no Paquistão — incluindo a compreensão das outras religiões e a tolerância em relação às mesmas.

A assistência consular aos cidadãos europeus que se deslocam ao estrangeiro em turismo ou em trabalho é da responsabilidade dos governos dos seus países de origem, que podem emitir conselhos de viagem. A UE solicitou ao Paquistão que a mantivesse informada sobre os progressos realizados em investigações policiais, bem como sobre as medidas que poderão ser tomadas para garantir a segurança de residentes e turistas estrangeiros. Relativamente aos cidadãos checos raptados, o Governo checo não solicitou a assistência da UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007787/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Further terrorist attacks between Nepal and Pakistan — the Nanga Parbat case

According to recent reports, at the end of June 2013 eleven climbers of various nationalities were killed by a Taliban terrorist group on Mount Nanga Parbat. The victims included an EU citizen from Latvia. Other climbers, who arrived after the attack, as well as eight Sherpa guides, were injured.

Many EU citizens decide each year to scale the peak between Nepal and Pakistan, accompanied by local guides. Furthermore, the number of terrorist attacks in the region is increasing so steadily that the new Pakistani Government claims that the country is in a state of perpetual war. Finally, European Parliament resolution P7_TA(2011)0577 of 14 December 2011 on the EU Counter-Terrorism Policy 'draws attention to the need to expand and develop existing and new counter-terrorism related strategic partnerships with countries outside Europe, as long as these partnerships respect human rights'.

— Is the Commission aware of what took place on Nanga Parbat?

— What steps will it take to ensure greater protection for EU citizens who travel abroad as tourists or to work?

Question for written answer E-007956/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Mountain climbers murdered in Pakistan

On 26 June 2013, various newspapers reported that 11 mountain climbers were deliberately killed at the base camp of Nanga Parbat in Pakistan, one of the world's highest mountains. Among those murdered were: three Ukrainians, two Slovaks, two Chinese, one Lithuanian, a Nepalese, an American and their Pakistani guide. A spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban said that the attack was conducted by the Taliban-linked group *Dzundul Hafsa* to avenge the death of its chief representative Valiura Rahman, who was killed in a US drone strike.

1. What measures has the Vice-President/High Representative taken to support the EU-Pakistani dialogue to combat the problem of militant extremist groups linked to the Taliban in Pakistan?

2. In light of this case, what steps is the Vice-President/High Representative going to take with the relevant Pakistani authorities to prevent the murder of tourists visiting Pakistan?

3. What actions has the Vice-President/High Representative taken to support the rescue of two Czech nationals, Hana Humpálová and Antonie Chrástecká, who were kidnapped by Islamist militants in March 2013 in Pakistan and believed to be still alive?

Question for written answer E-008229/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nuno Melo (PPE)
(9 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Attack in Pakistan

— The Pakistani Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack on a group of foreign climbers, which resulted in the death of at least 11 people.

— The movement's spokesperson, Ehsanullah Ehsan, said that the attack had been made by a previously unknown faction, Junood ul-Hifa, to avenge the death of Wali-ur-Rehman, the Pakistani Taliban's second-in-command, who was killed in May in a US air strike.

— These deaths could jeopardise the future of mountaineering and trekking in Pakistan, which are the last vestige of international tourism in a country on the front line of al-Qaeda and Taliban violence.

How does the Vice-President/High Representative view these events?

What information does she have on the current state of play of the conflict?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the tragedy on Nanga Parbat, and of the growing sectarian violence in Pakistan as well as the difficult situation with which foreign residents and visitors, as well as the Pakistani people and authorities are confronted as a result of terrorist attacks. The EU is committed to supporting Pakistan for the long-term, including addressing the many challenges facing the country.

The EU has given its unequivocal commitment to assist Pakistan to combat terrorism. The issue is a priority under the EU's Strategic Dialogue with Pakistan. The EU is supporting projects to improve law enforcement in Pakistan with the police and prosecution services. Following adoption of the EU Counter-Terrorism/Security Strategy for Pakistan by the Foreign Affairs Council in 2012, it is expected that activities in support of security and counter-terrorism, including countering violent extremism, in Pakistan will be reinforced. This is in addition to continued EU support for education in Pakistan — including understanding and tolerance of other religions.

The responsibility for consular assistance to individual European citizens who travel abroad for tourism or work lies with their home governments which can issue travel advisories. The EU has requested to be informed by Pakistan on progress in any police investigation, and of steps that may be taken to ensure the safety of foreign residents and visitors. In the matter of the Czech nationals that have been kidnapped, the Czech Government has not requested assistance from the EU.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007788/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Nuove violazioni della libertà di espressione: il caso dei rifugiati tibetani in Nepal

Lo scorso 20 giugno 2013, in occasione della Giornata mondiale dei rifugiati, migliaia di tibetani ormai costretti a vivere lontano dalla terra d'origine, in Nepal, hanno rinunciato a manifestare per evitare le possibili ritorsioni della polizia locale.

Da quando l'*Unified Communist Party of Nepal* (Ucpn) ha vinto le elezioni politiche nel 2009, la politica estera nepalese ha visto un avvicinamento progressivo al modello cinese e lo stesso portavoce del Ministero degli Interni, Shankar Koirala, ha recentemente negato la libertà di pensiero dei rifugiati tibetani, per evitare la reazione cinese.

L'articolo 9, comma 1, della CEDU, recita che «ogni persona ha diritto alla libertà di pensiero, di coscienza e di religione» e in base all'articolo 11, comma 1, della Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea «Ogni individuo ha diritto alla libertà di espressione. Tale diritto include la libertà di opinione e la libertà di ricevere o di comunicare informazioni o idee senza che vi possa essere ingerenza da parte delle autorità pubbliche e senza limiti di frontiera».

Alla luce di quanto precede, si chiede alla Commissione:

— se abbia provveduto ad avviare un dialogo serio e costruttivo con il Nepal, con riguardo alla tutela della libertà di espressione e degli altri diritti fondamentali dei rifugiati tibetani;

— se sia a conoscenza di nuovi sviluppi al riguardo.

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

L'attuale governo del Nepal è un governo ad interim costituito da funzionari statali sotto la guida del giudice capo della Corte suprema, il cui compito principale consiste nell'organizzare le elezioni dell'Assemblea costituente entro il 19 novembre 2013; il suo impegno in materia di politica estera è pertanto limitato. L'UE e i membri della comunità internazionale che ne condividono le posizioni ritengono che sarebbe più costruttivo sollevare nuovamente la questione con il governo che subentrerà con le prossime elezioni politiche. Questa considerazione è valida anche per il sostegno alla registrazione dei rifugiati tibetani di lunga permanenza in Nepal.

Nel contempo, la delegazione UE continua a monitorare la situazione dei rifugiati tibetani in Nepal, si riunisce regolarmente con i membri della comunità tibetana di Kathmandu ed esprime solidarietà al popolo tibetano.

La Cina ha intensificato le sue attività al confine con il Nepal e arresta coloro che tentano di attraversarlo, il che ha comportato una drastica diminuzione degli arrivi di rifugiati tibetani negli ultimi due anni. Il costo del transito dal Tibet al Nepal è aumentato poiché sono sempre meno le guide disposte a compiere il viaggio, soprattutto in vista delle severe pene a cui vanno incontro se scoperte dalla polizia cinese. Per quanto riguarda coloro che riescono a raggiungere Kathmandu, il governo nepalese ha in gran parte tenuto fede al «gentlemen's agreement», in virtù del quale l'Agenzia delle Nazioni Unite per i Rifugiati (UNHCR) aiuta i rifugiati a transitare e a stabilirsi in India. Tutti i governi che si sono succeduti in Nepal, formati da diversi partiti politici, hanno riconosciuto la politica di «una sola Cina».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007788/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Fresh violations of freedom of expression: Tibetan refugees in Nepal

On 20 June 2013, thousands of Tibetans in Nepal, forced to live far from their homeland, decided not to demonstrate on World Refugee Day for fear of retaliation by local police.

Since the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (UCPN) won the 2009 elections, Nepalese foreign policy has continually moved towards the Chinese model. Ministry of the Interior spokesman Shankar Koirala recently denied freedom of thought to Tibetan refugees to avoid provoking the Chinese.

Article 9(1) of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion', and Article 11(1) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union reads: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers'.

— Has the Commission begun a serious and constructive dialogue with Nepal on the protection of freedom of expression and other fundamental human rights for Tibetan refugees?

— Is the Commission aware of any new developments in this area?

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

The current Government of Nepal is an Interim Election Government formed by State officials under the leadership of the Chief Justice, whose main task is to organise the Constituent Assembly Elections by 19 November 2013; its engagement on matters of foreign policy remains therefore limited. The EU and likeminded members of the international community believe that it would be more constructive to take up the issue again with a new government after the next general elections. This also includes support to the registration of the long-staying Tibetan refugees in Nepal.

In the meantime the EU Delegation continues to monitor the situation of refugees from Tibet in Nepal, regularly meets with members of the Tibetan community in Kathmandu and expresses solidarity to the Tibetan community.

China has intensified its activities on the border with Nepal, apprehending those who attempt to cross it, which has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the arrivals of Tibetan refugees over the past couple of years. The cost of transit from Tibet into Nepal has increased as fewer guides are willing to make the journey, especially considering the severe punishments if caught by the Chinese police. For those who make it to Kathmandu, the Nepalese Government has been largely upholding the 'Gentlemen's Agreement' whereby the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) helps the refugees to transit and resettle in India. All successive governments in Nepal formed by different political parties have recognised the 'One China Policy'.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007789/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: L'Afghanistan in vetta alla classifica dei paesi dai quali proviene il maggior numero di rifugiati

L'ultimo rapporto diffuso dall'Alto Commissariato ONU per i rifugiati pone l'Afghanistan, per il 32° anno consecutivo, in testa alla classifica dei paesi dai quali proviene il maggior numero di rifugiati. Nel solo 2012, infatti, circa 2,6 milioni di rifugiati afghani erano ospitati in più di trenta paesi diversi, benché la maggior parte si concentrasse in Iran e Pakistan.

I dati diffusi dall'ONU dimostrano come l'Afghanistan, formalmente libero dai talebani dall'elezione del Presidente Karzai, sia ancora lontano dal ripristino della pubblica sicurezza e dell'ordine interno.

Inoltre, negli ultimi anni, i talebani hanno riorganizzato il proprio assetto militare e strategico, al punto di realizzare proprio in questi mesi nuove stragi terroristiche, una delle quali è costata la vita all'operatrice umanitaria italiana Barbara De Anna.

Infine, lo scorso 18 giugno il movimento islamista legato ad Al Qaeda ha celebrato l'apertura di una sua nuova ambasciata in Qatar, a Doha.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— di quali dati dispone in relazione al livello di minaccia terroristica nei paesi sopracitati e qual è il rischio, allo stato attuale, di attacchi entro i confini dell'UE?

— Quali misure intende adottare per continuare la lotta al terrorismo anche dopo l'abbandono dell'Afghanistan da parte delle truppe straniere, nel 2014?

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

L'intervento internazionale in Afghanistan ha notevolmente ridotto la minaccia del terrorismo che agisce fuori dai suoi confini. Nonostante i progressi raggiunti nella stabilizzazione della situazione di sicurezza, i Talebani e altri gruppi di insorti continuano a rappresentare una minaccia continua e diffusa in Afghanistan. Anche in Pakistan i gruppi terroristici continuano a rappresentare una minaccia per la sicurezza e la stabilità.

L'UE continuerà a sostenere lo sviluppo di un efficace Stato afghano che sia in grado di vigilare il suo territorio al fine di scongiurare il ripetersi della situazione esistente negli anni fino al 2001. Il Consiglio ha riaffermato l'impegno a lungo termine dell'UE di continuare a sostenere l'Afghanistan durante la transizione e il decennio di trasformazione. Nel giugno 2013 la Commissione ha ribadito che il suo impegno comprenderà un'azione globale per sostenere gli sforzi dell'Afghanistan volti a rafforzare la polizia civile e lo Stato di diritto. L'UE sta già fornendo assistenza in questo settore. I progetti dell'UE comprendono il sostegno al potenziamento delle capacità, alla riforma della polizia civile, alla polizia di frontiera e alla lotta al traffico di stupefacenti.

L'UE è impegnata in un dialogo regolare con il Pakistan in materia di lotta contro il terrorismo. L'UE sostiene un certo numero di progetti in materia di lotta al terrorismo nel paese, comprese le attività volte a rafforzare l'applicazione della legge, in particolare attraverso le forze di polizia e le procure. Gli interventi fanno parte di un più ampio programma di strategie per rafforzare le istituzioni democratiche e promuovere uno sviluppo socioeconomico inclusivo, con l'obiettivo di contribuire alla stabilizzazione a lungo termine in entrambi i paesi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007789/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Afghanistan tops the list of countries from which the highest number of refugees originate

According to the latest report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Afghanistan has topped the list of countries from which the most refugees originate for the 32nd consecutive year. In 2012 alone, around 2.6 million Afghan refugees were living in over 30 different countries, though the majority were concentrated in Iran and Pakistan.

UN figures show how Afghanistan, officially free of the Taliban since the election of President Karzai, is still a long way from restoring public safety and internal order.

Moreover, in recent years, the Taliban has reorganised its military and strategic structure, to the extent of launching new terrorist attacks in recent months, one of which claimed the life of an Italian humanitarian worker, Barbara De Anna.

Lastly, on 18 June 2013, the al-Qaeda-linked Islamist movement opened its new embassy in Doha, Qatar.

— What information does the Commission have on the level of the terrorist threat in the above countries and what is the current risk of attacks within the EU?

— What steps will it take to continue the fight against terrorism, including after the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan in 2014?

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

The international intervention in Afghanistan has significantly reduced the threat from terrorists operating out of Afghanistan. Despite progress in stabilising the security situation, the Taliban and other insurgent groups continue to pose a persistent and widespread threat in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, terrorist groups continue to pose a threat to security and stability.

The EU will continue to support the development of an effective Afghan state that is able to police its territory to ensure that there is no repeat of the the situation that existed in the years leading up to 2001. The Council has reaffirmed the EU's long term commitment to continue support to Afghanistan during transition and the decade of transformation. In June 2013, it reiterated that this will include comprehensive action to support Afghan efforts to strengthen civilian policing and the Rule of Law. The EU is already providing assistance in this area. EU projects include support for capacity building, civilian police reform, border police, counternarcotics.

In Pakistan, the EU is engaged in regular dialogue with Pakistan on countering terrorism. The EU is supporting a number of Counter-Terrorism related projects in the country, including work to strengthen the law enforcement, not least with the police and prosecution services. These interventions are part of wider strategies to strengthen democratic institutions and promote inclusive socioeconomic development with the aim of contributing to long term stabilisation in both countries.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007790/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Uccisione di un monaco eremita nella regione di Ghassanyeh in Siria

Alla fine del mese di giugno, il custode cristiano dei religiosi francescani in Terra Santa, padre Halim Noujaim, ha annunciato l'assalto a un convento di Gassanyeh (nord-ovest della Siria), la demolizione di parte dell'edificio e l'uccisione di un monaco eremita, padre François Mourad.

La comunità francescana presente in Siria sottolinea anch'essa, tra gli altri, i rischi legati al sostegno economico ai rivoluzionari, sostenuti da gruppi estremistici che in più occasioni hanno attuato violenze contro la minoranza cristiana.

Inoltre, attacchi simili si sono già verificati in altri luoghi di culto e in particolar modo, lo scorso aprile, in Mesopotamia, dove è stato raso al suolo il convento di Deir Ezzor, mentre altre chiese sono state distrutte anche a Zabadani, Deraa, Harasta, Raqqa, Aleppo e Damasco.

Infine, la risoluzione ONU sulla Siria, adottata lo scorso 15 maggio 2013, incoraggia il Consiglio di sicurezza a valutare «misure appropriate» per assicurare alla giustizia coloro che compiono gravi violazioni dei diritti umani durante il conflitto, pur riconoscendo al contempo come propri interlocutori gli oppositori al regime di Assad.

Alla luce di quanto sopra, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— è a conoscenza la Commissione di questi ultimi avvenimenti?

— Quali future azioni intende intraprendere per perseguire l'obiettivo della cessazione delle violenze ai danni della minoranza cristiana?

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

La Commissione è a conoscenza di questi avvenimenti. Il Consiglio Affari esteri e l'AR/VP hanno condannato gli atti di violenza confessionale.

Trovare una soluzione politica rimane il modo più valido per alleviare le sofferenze generali della popolazione. La Commissione e l'AR/VP si sono impegnate con l'équipe del Segretario generale delle Nazioni Unite e con il rappresentante speciale congiunto Lakhdar Brahimi, nonché con gli Stati Uniti e la Russia, per convocare la Conferenza di Ginevra sulla Siria, destinata ad avviare il processo di transizione politica. L'UE ha invitato la coalizione nazionale delle forze siriane dell'opposizione a diventare più inclusiva in modo da rappresentare veramente la società siriana. I servizi dell'UE hanno inoltre consultato personalità del mondo religioso come Sua Beatitudine Gregorio III, patriarca della Chiesa cattolica melchita, che ha recentemente reso visita al Presidente del Consiglio van Rompuy.

L'UE ha sostenuto la Commissione internazionale indipendente d'inchiesta sulla Siria, che ha documentato violazioni dei diritti umani perpetrate, fra l'altro, contro le comunità cristiane: queste ultime, disperse in varie zone del paese, si trovano spesso intrappolate tra due fuochi.

Finora l'UE, compresi i suoi Stati membri, ha elargito più di 1,2 miliardi di EUR per affrontare la crisi siriana e le sue conseguenze, diventando il maggior donatore a livello mondiale. L'UE lavora con svariate organizzazioni ONU e con ONG internazionali, fornendo sia assistenza umanitaria che aiuti allo sviluppo a favore delle persone in stato di necessità in Siria e nei paesi confinanti, indipendentemente dalla loro fede religiosa. Sostiene inoltre numerose iniziative comunitarie in Siria che, anche durante il conflitto, cercano di promuovere il dialogo e la tolleranza tra comunità religiose ed etniche per raggiungere la pace e la riconciliazione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007790/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Killing of a hermit monk in Ghassanieh, Syria

At the end of June, the Custodian of the Franciscan friars in the Holy Land, Father Halim Noujaim, announced that there had been an attack on a convent in Ghassanieh (northwest Syria), which destroyed part of the building and killed a hermit monk, Father François Murad.

The Franciscan community in Syria stresses the risks associated with providing economic support to the revolutionaries, who are backed by extremist groups that have repeatedly carried out acts of violence against the Christian minority.

There have been similar attacks at other places of worship — most notably in Mesopotamia last April, where the Deir Ezzor convent was razed to the ground — while other churches have been destroyed in Zabadani, Deraa, Harasta, Raqqa, Aleppo and Damascus.

Finally, the UN resolution on Syria of 15 May 2013 encourages the Security Council to consider 'appropriate measures' to ensure that those who commit severe human rights violations during the conflict are brought to justice, but also recognises opponents to the Assad regime as partners.

— Is the Commission aware of these latest events?

— What actions does it plan to take to stop the violence against the Christian minority?

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

The Commission is aware of these events. The Foreign Affairs Council and the HR/VP have condemned acts of confessional violence.

Finding a political solution remains the most important to alleviate the general plight of the population. The Commission and the HR/VP have been working with the UN team of the Secretary General and the Joint Special Representative L. Brahimi as well as with the US and Russia to convene the Geneva Conference on Syria that would start the political transition process. The EU has been calling on the Syrian Opposition Coalition (SOC) to become more inclusive and truly representative of the Syrian society. The services have also consulted the religious figures such as His Beautitude Patriarch Gregorius III of the Melkite Catholic Church who has recently visited the President of the Council Mr van Rompuy.

The EU has supported the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on Syria which has documented violations of human rights including those perpetrated against Christian communities, who often find themselves caught up in the cross-fire as they are widely dispersed across the country.

To date the EU, including Member States, has provided over EUR 1.2 billion to address the Syrian crisis and its consequences, making it the largest donor worldwide. The EU works with a variety of UN organisations as well as international NGOs in providing both humanitarian and development assistance to those in need in Syria and the neighbouring countries, irrespective of their religious affiliation. The EU also supports a number of community initiatives in Syria that, even during the conflict, seek to promote dialogue and tolerance among religious and ethnic communities in order to advance peace and reconciliation.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007791/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Aumento dell'inquinamento ambientale in tutto il continente asiatico

A fine giugno, l'indice di rilevamento degli agenti inquinanti nella città di Singapore evidenziava un aumento, nell'aria, della loro concentrazione con potenziale pericolo per la salute di anziani e bambini.

Considerando che l'inquinamento ambientale presenta livelli degni di nota non solo a Singapore ma, in generale, in tutta l'Asia e soprattutto laddove si registrano incendi boschivi che vanno a diretto vantaggio delle società di produzione dell'olio di palma; evidenziando inoltre che, secondo il «Global Burden of Desease», già nel corso del 2010 si sono registrati sull'intero pianeta circa 3,2 milioni di decessi riconducibili a danni alla salute prodotti dall'inquinamento, 2,5 milioni dei quali nelle sole Cina e India; osservando infine che a Pechino, negli ultimi anni, sono aumentati del 20 % i ricoveri ospedalieri dovuti ad asma, infiammazioni alle vie respiratorie ed altre patologie simili, mentre, con riferimento ad Hong Kong, l'«Health Effects Institute» (Hei) parla di livelli di inquinamento per troppo tempo sottostimati,

si chiede alla Commissione:

— È in possesso di studi scientifici documentati con riferimento al livello di contaminazione dell'ambiente nel continente asiatico?

— Quale disponibilità hanno finora dimostrato i Paesi orientali a confrontarsi con l'UE e con altre organizzazioni intergovernative?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(2 agosto 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dei problemi ambientali in Asia, ivi compreso l'impatto dell'inquinamento atmosferico, grazie alle valutazioni complessive dell'inquinamento atmosferico in Asia e a livello mondiale effettuate dal Centro comune di ricerca dell'UE, ai suoi contatti bilaterali, alle relazioni delle delegazioni dell'UE e al monitoraggio delle pubblicazioni e degli studi internazionali, tra cui lo studio «Global burden of disease».

Sono inoltre in corso contatti e attività specifici sugli sviluppi recenti in Asia e altrove, in collaborazione con le organizzazioni mondiali in ambito sanitario e l'istituto statunitense «Health Effect».

L'UE ha molteplici rapporti e contatti con i paesi asiatici. Tra questi si annoverano i dialoghi bilaterali diretti, come il 5° dialogo politico UE-Cina sull'ambiente che ha avuto luogo nel luglio di quest'anno, nel quadro del quale si sono svolti dibattiti con la Cina e l'India sull'inquinamento atmosferico e sulla cooperazione nel campo dell'energia pulita. Inoltre sono stati avviati dibattiti con una serie di paesi nell'ambito di organizzazioni internazionali come l'UNEP, la Convenzione sull'inquinamento atmosferico transfrontaliero a lunga distanza e altri importanti convegni. Questi dibattiti sono sempre stati aperti e hanno consentito all'UE di acquisire maggiori conoscenze su una serie di problematiche, tra cui l'inquinamento atmosferico, che sono affrontate in varie convenzioni multilaterali in materia ambientale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007791/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Increase in environmental pollution across Asia

At the end of June 2013, Singapore's pollution index recorded an increase in the concentration of air pollutants presenting a potential health hazard to elderly people and children.

Environmental pollution is reaching significant levels not only in Singapore but throughout Asia in general, and especially where there are forest fires from which palm oil companies directly benefit. Furthermore, according to the Global Burden of Disease, in 2010 pollution was already responsible for approximately 3.2 million deaths worldwide as a result of its damaging effects on health, with 2.5 million of those deaths occurring in China and India alone. Finally, in Beijing the number of people admitted to hospital suffering from asthma, inflammation of the airways and other similar diseases has risen by 20% in recent years, while the Health Effects Institute (HEI) reports that the pollution levels in Hong Kong have for too long been underestimated.

— Is the Commission in possession of any documented scientific studies on the level of environmental pollution in Asia?

— How willing have the countries of Asia been up to now to hold discussions with the EU and with other intergovernmental organisations?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(2 August 2013)

The Commission is aware of environmental problems in Asia, including the impact of air pollution, via the comprehensive assessments of air pollution in Asia and worldwide, produced by the EU Joint Research Center, its bilateral contacts and reporting from the EU Delegations and the surveillance of international publications and studies, including the Global Burden of Disease.

Specific contacts and activities area also being carried out in cooperation with World Health Organisations and the U.S.-based Health Effect Institute, on recent development in Asia and elsewhere.

The EU has a variety of relations and contacts with Asian countries. These include direct bilateral dialogues, such as the 5th EU-China Policy Dialogue on environment of July 2013 which included discussions on ar pollution and clean energy-related cooperation with China and India.In addition, discussions with a wider range of countries in the context of international organisations like UNEP, the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution and other major international conferences. These talks have always been open and provided better insight for the EU with respect to a broad range of issues, including air pollution, which are dealt with in a variety of multilateral environmental conventions.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007792/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Giovani cristiane rapite in Egitto per sposare mariti musulmani

L'*Association of Victims of Abduction and forced disappearance* (AVAFD) ha recentemente denunciato la sparizione di oltre 500 donne egiziane di religione cristiano-copta, costrette a convertirsi all'islam e a sposare un marito musulmano.

La maggioranza delle giovani rapite ha appena raggiunto la pubertà e subisce gravi violenze per sposare l'uomo che le ha sottratte alla famiglia — una ragazza ha subito anche l'asportazione di un tatuaggio perché rappresentava una croce.

In un recente comunicato diramato dal fronte salafita, si ritiene ingiusta la «restituzione» delle ragazze alle famiglie d'origine, perché «raggiunta la pubertà esse sono libere di sposare un musulmano e di accettare le conseguenze del matrimonio».

L'articolo 37, comma 1, della Convenzione del Consiglio d'Europa sulla prevenzione e la lotta contro la violenza nei confronti delle donne e la violenza domestica, prevede che «le Parti adottano le misure legislative o di altro tipo necessarie per penalizzare l'atto intenzionale di costringere un adulto o un bambino a contrarre matrimonio».

Alla luce di quanto precede, si chiede alla Commissione:

— di quali dati disponga in merito ai casi di conversioni e matrimoni forzati tra le giovani egiziane di fede cristiana;

— quale percorso intenda intraprendere con le autorità egiziane per fermare il fenomeno dei rapimenti.

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

L'UE è a conoscenza delle costrizioni subite da diverse minoranze religiose in Egitto, esprime profonda preoccupazione al riguardo e condanna ogni forma di intolleranza, discriminazione e violenza nei confronti delle persone per motivi di religione o di credo, in ogni parte del mondo e indipendentemente dalla religione. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha ripetutamente esortato le autorità egiziane a garantire la libertà di religione e di credo nel paese.

Il rispetto dei diritti umani, compresi i diritti delle donne, è uno dei valori fondamentali dell'Unione europea. L'UE è impegnata a sostenere il ruolo delle donne nella fase di transizione politica in corso nei paesi arabi, tra cui l'Egitto; a tal fine ha prodigato notevoli sforzi e ha mobilitato ingenti risorse finanziarie.

In primavera la delegazione dell'UE ha organizzato un seminario dedicato alle donne e presieduto dall'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente sul tema «Il futuro delle donne egiziane». In questa occasione è stato firmato un contratto del valore di 4 milioni di euro a sostegno dell'azione delle Nazioni Unite per le donne, per dotare le egiziane della carta d'identità.

Durante le sue ultime visite di giugno e luglio, l'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente si è fatta portavoce delle preoccupazioni dell'UE per quanto riguarda le violazioni dei diritti delle donne. L'UE, sia attraverso la sua delegazione sia dalla sede centrale, intende monitorare da vicino la situazione e mantenere il proprio impegno per sostenere pienamente i diritti delle donne in Egitto.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007792/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Young Christian women kidnapped in Egypt in order to marry Muslim men

According to a recent report by the Association of Victims of Abduction and Forced Disappearance (AVAFD), over 500 Egyptian Coptic Christian women have been abducted, forced to convert to Islam and to marry Muslim men.

Most of the abducted young women have only just reached puberty and are subjected to severe brutality to marry the men who take them away from their families. One young woman had a tattoo removed because it depicted a cross.

In a recent statement, the Salafist Front said it was unjust to return girls to their families because, as they had reached puberty, they were free to marry a Muslim and to accept the consequences of marriage.

Article 37(1) of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence lays down that 'Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that the intentional conduct of forcing an adult or a child to enter into a marriage is criminalised.'

— What figures does the Commission have on cases of conversion and forced marriage among young Egyptian Christian women?

— What line will it take with the Egyptian authorities to put a stop to the abductions?

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

The EU is aware and concerned about the constraints that different religious minorities face in Egypt and condemns all forms of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons because of their religion or belief, wherever it takes place and regardless of the religion. The HR/VP repeatedly called on the Egyptian authorities to ensure freedom of religion or belief in the country.

The respect for Human Rights, including the rights for women, is part of the values of the European Union. In particular, the EU is fully dedicated to supporting the role of women in the political transitions going on in the Arab countries, including in Egypt. Significant efforts and financial resources have been mobilised in this regard.

In spring, the EU Delegation organised a women's seminar chaired by HR/VP on 'Egyptian Women — the Way Forward' during which a EUR 4 million contract in support of UN Women's action to provide Egyptian women with ID cards was signed.

The HR/VP raised the EU's concern on women rights during her last visits in June and July. The EU, at the EU Delegation as well as from headquarters, will monitor the situation closely and stay involved in fully supporting the rights of women in Egypt.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007793/13
alla Commissione
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Progetto di un imprenditore americano di avviare una catena di negozi di marijuana importata dal Messico

Secondo una notizia diffusa di recente a mezzo stampa, l'imprenditore statunitense Jamen Shively avrebbe presentato a Seattle un progetto volto a commercializzare la cannabis «come avviene per il buon cognac, il buon brandy o un buon sigaro». Lo scopo di Shively è quello di aprire una catena di negozi di marijuana nello Stato di Washington e in Colorado.

Per far fronte alla domanda di marijuana su scala mondiale (stimata attorno ai 75 miliardi di euro), Shively ha già prospettato la possibilità di importare la cannabis dal Messico, dove la criminalità organizzata basa gran parte dei suoi proventi sulle droghe leggere, sfruttando a tal fine migliaia di esseri umani per produrle e distribuirle.

D'altro canto, l'articolo 35 CEDU, in tema di protezione della salute, nella sua seconda parte afferma l'importanza di garantire un elevato livello di protezione della salute umana.

Alla luce di quanto precede, quale posizione in merito intende assumere la Commissione, per evitare l'acuirsi del commercio illegale di sostanze stupefacenti provenienti dal continente americano?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(23 agosto 2013)

Adottare provvedimenti legislativi sull'uso personale di cannabis, garantendone la conformità con le pertinenti convenzioni dell'ONU ([1]), rientra nella discrezionalità degli Stati membri dell'UE.

La Commissione ribadisce il suo impegno nella lotta contro il traffico illecito di sostanze stupefacenti provenienti dal continente americano, impegno portato avanti sia attraverso il dialogo e l'assistenza personalizzata ai singoli paesi sia affrontando gli aspetti transregionali. Grazie al progetto «Cocaine Route Programme», il primo del suo genere a considerare il ricorso a mezzi strategici di lotta al crimine organizzato sulla cosiddetta «rotta della cocaina», l'UE ha stanziato quasi 30 milioni di euro per un periodo di 5 anni in 36 paesi nel quadro dello strumento per la stabilità, integrando tale somma con finanziamenti più ingenti erogati mediante i suoi strumenti nazionali e regionali. Il programma offre sostegno e consulenza tecnica e promuove il coordinamento tra gli Stati lungo l'intera rotta dalle Ande all'Europa, attraverso i Caraibi e l'Africa occidentale, per rendere più efficaci le attività di sequestro di droghe e altri prodotti illeciti, arrestare e perseguire i colpevoli e rafforzare la capacità dei governi nazionali di proteggere i cittadini dall'impatto negativo della criminalità organizzata.

([1]) Convenzione unica sugli stupefacenti del 1961, nella versione modificata dal protocollo del 1972, e Convezione sulle sostanze psicotrope del 1971.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007793/13
to the Commission
Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: American businessman's plan to start a chain of stores selling marijuana imported from Mexico

United States businessman Jamen Shively recently held a press conference in Seattle, where he introduced a plan to sell cannabis by 'position[ing] it similar to a fine cognac, a fine brandy, a fine cigar'. Shively's goal is to open a chain of marijuana stores in the States of Washington and Colorado.

To satisfy the global demand for marijuana (estimated to be worth around EUR 75 billion), Shively has proposed importing cannabis from Mexico, where organised crime derives much of its earnings from soft drugs and exploits thousands of human beings to produce and distribute them.

The second part of Article 35 (Healthcare) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union affirms the importance of ensuring a high level of human health protection.

In light of the above, what position does the Commission plan to take on this matter to prevent growth of the trade in illegal drugs from the American continent?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2013)

In the EU, it is within Member States' discretion to adopt legislative provisions on the personal use of cannabis, guaranteeing their conformity with the relevant UN Conventions ([1]).

The Commission will continue to engage in combating the trafficking of illicit drugs from the American hemisphere. Apart from country-tailored assistance and dialogues, the Commission also addresses the trans-regional aspects: through the Cocaine Route Programme, the first of its kind to consider strategically ways of confronting organised crime on the so-called Cocaine Route, the EU has committed almost EUR 30 million over 5 years, in 36 countries under its Instrument for Stability, complemented by more substantial resources under its national and regional instruments. The programme provides support, technical advice and promotes coordination between the States along the entire route from the Andes to Europe, via the Caribbean and West Africa, to strengthen the capacity to seize drugs and other illicit commodities, to arrest and prosecute perpetrators and to build up the capacity of national governments to protect their citizens from the negative impact of organised crime.

([1]) Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961 (as amended by the 1972 Protocol amending the Single Convention, 1961) and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007794/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 iulie 2013)

Subiect: Protecția cetățenilor UE împotriva comercializării medicamentelor contrafăcute

Statistici recente arată că medicamentele contrafăcute reprezintă aproximativ 10% din vânzările de medicamente la nivel mondial, iar în regiuni precum America de Sud, acest procent se estimează a fi între 20% și 30%. De asemenea, Europol a declarat recent că a identificat aproximativ 10 000 de site-uri ilicite de farmacii „online". Evident, toate medicamentele contrafăcute sunt periculoase, iar prețurile atractive practicate de aceste farmacii „online" se reflectă în costul sănătății celor care cumpără medicamente contrafăcute.

În acest context, aș dori să întreb Comisia care sunt măsurile pe care le are în vedere pentru a proteja cetățenii europeni împotriva comercializării medicamentelor contrafăcute? Care sunt măsurile pe care Comisia le are în vedere pentru a asigura un control strict și pentru a oferi garanții de origine și de calitate pentru medicamentele comercializate de farmaciile „online"? Are în vedere Comisia declanșarea unor ample campanii de informare la nivel european pentru a preveni și proteja cetățenii europeni împotriva medicamentelor contrafăcute comercializate în special prin farmaciile „online"? Are în vedere Comisia să reglementeze funcționarea farmaciilor „online" în UE, de exemplu prin obligarea acestora să dețină un certificat calificat pentru autentificarea unui site internet, în sensul propunerii de Regulament privind identificarea electronică și serviciile de asigurare a încrederii pentru tranzacțiile electronice pe piața internă?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(5 august 2013)

1. Comisia depune eforturi în vederea reducerii ofertei de produse contrafăcute de toate tipurile, inclusiv de medicamente. Cele mai periculoase tipuri de medicamente contrafăcute sunt cele care se încadrează în categoria definită „medicamente falsificate".

2. Protejarea cetățenilor împotriva medicamentelor falsificate este unul dintre principalele obiective ale Directivei 2011/62/UE ([1]) privind prevenirea pătrunderii medicamentelor falsificate în lanțul legal de aprovizionare. Comisia lucrează la punerea în aplicare a acestei directive.

3. De asemenea, directiva introduce norme în vederea soluționării problemei vânzărilor ilegale către public, prin internet, de medicamente falsificate. În special, directiva prevede instituirea unui logo comun care să permită identificarea „farmaciilor online" și a comercianților cu amănuntul care își desfășoară legal activitatea în statele membre. Comisia a început să lucreze la această măsură.

4. În plus, directiva prevede promovarea de către Comisie, în cooperare cu Agenția Europeană pentru Medicamente și cu autoritățile din statele membre, a unor campanii de informare privind pericolele pe care le prezintă medicamentele falsificate, în special cele vândute pe internet. Comisia a produs deja două materiale video ([2]). După instituirea logoului de încredere pentru farmaciile online, ar putea fi promovate și alte campanii.

5. Comisia nu intenționează să armonizeze normele naționale aplicate de autoritățile naționale competente în ceea ce privește autorizarea, funcționarea și supravegherea „farmaciilor online". Totuși, toate normele naționale noi sau adaptate din acest domeniu trebuie să fie notificate Comisiei în conformitate cu Directiva 98/48/CE ([3]), pentru se asigura compatibilitatea acestora cu *acquis-ul*, în special cu Directiva privind comerțul electronic ([4]) și cu principiile prevăzute de TFUE.

([1]) Directiva 2011/62/UE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 8 iunie 2011 de modificare a Directivei 2001/83/CE de instituire a unui cod comunitar cu privire la medicamentele de uz uman în ceea ce privește prevenirea pătrunderii medicamentelor falsificate în lanțul legal de aprovizionare. JO L 174, 1.7.2011.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/videos/videos/fake_medicines_en.mp4
http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/videos/videos/counterfeit_med_en.mp4

([3]) Directiva 98/48/CE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 20 iulie 1998 de modificare a Directivei 98/34/CE de stabilire a unei proceduri pentru furnizarea de informații în domeniul standardelor și reglementărilor tehnice. JO L 217/18, 5.8.1998.

([4]) Directiva 2000/31/CE a Parlamentului European și a Consiliului din 8 iunie 2000 privind anumite aspecte juridice ale serviciilor societății informaționale, în special ale comerțului electronic, pe piața internă (directiva privind comerțul electronic). JO L 178, 17.7.2000, p. 1-16.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007794/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Safeguarding EU citizens against the marketing of counterfeit medicines

Recent statistics show that counterfeit medicine represents approximately 10% of medicine sales globally. However, in regions such as South America, this percentage is estimated to be between 20 and 30%. Furthermore, Europol recently stated that it has identified approximately 10 000 illegal online pharmacy websites. All counterfeit medicine is evidently dangerous, but the attractive prices exercised by these online pharmacies are reflected in the health cost to those buying such products.

In light of this, I would like to ask the Commission what measures it envisages to safeguard European citizens against the marketing of counterfeit medicines? What measures does the Commission envisage to ensure the strict control of online pharmacies and provide guarantees as to the origin and quality of medicines marketed by them? Does the Commission intend to coordinate an extensive EU-wide information campaign to safeguard European citizens against counterfeit medicines, particularly those marketed by online pharmacies? Does the Commission intend to regulate the operation of online pharmacies in the EU, for example by requiring them to have a qualified certificate for website authentication, as set out in the proposal for a regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

1. The Commission is actively seeking to reduce the offer of counterfeit products of all kinds including medicines. The most dangerous forms of counterfeit medicines are those falling under the definition of falsified medicines.

2. The protection of citizens against falsified medicines is one of the main purposes of Directive 2011/62/EU ([1]) on the prevention of the entry into the legal supply chain of falsified medicinal products. The Commission is working on the implementation of this directive.

3. The directive also introduces rules to address the illegal sales of falsified medicines to the public over the Internet. In particular, it provides for the establishment of a common logo enabling the identification of 'online pharmacies' and retailers operating legally in the Member States. The Commission has initiated work on this act.

4. Moreover, the directive provides for the promotion by the Commission, in cooperation with the European Medicines Agency and Member State authorities, of information campaigns on the dangers of falsified medicinal products, in particular those sold over the Internet. Two videos have already been produced by the Commission ([2]). Further campaigns may be promoted once the trust logo for online pharmacies is put in place.

5. The Commission does not plan to harmonise the national rules that apply to the authorisation, functioning and supervision of 'online pharmacies' by the competent national authorities. However, any new or adapted national rules in this field have to be notified to the Commission under Directive 98/48/EC ([3]) to ensure that they are compatible with the acquis, notably the E-commerce Directive ([4]), and the principles of the TFEU.

([1]) Directive 2011/62/EU of Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2011 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. OJ L 174, 1.7.2011.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/videos/videos/fake_medicines_en.mp4.
http://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use/videos/videos/counterfeit_med_en.mp4.

([3]) Directive 98/48/EC of the Parliament and of the Council of 20 July 1998 amending Directive 98/34/EC laying down a procedure for the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations.
OJ L 217/18, 05.08.1998.

([4]) Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the internal market ('Directive on electronic commerce').
OJ L 178, 17.7.2000, p. 1-16 .

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007795/13
adresată Consiliului
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 iulie 2013)

Subiect: Președinția lituaniană a UE — ridicarea barierelor pentru lucrătorii români și bulgari

Tratatele de aderare nu conferă Consiliului sau Președinției competența de a lua inițiativa în vederea extinderii accesului lucrătorilor români și bulgari la piețele forței de muncă ale statelor membre. Cu toate acestea, Consiliul poate invita statele membre care continuă să aplice restricții în temeiul măsurilor tranzitorii prevăzute în tratatele de aderare să ridice restricțiile în cea de a treia etapă, dacă nu se poate determina că există perturbări grave ale piețelor forței de muncă ale statelor membre în cauză sau amenințarea unor astfel de perturbări.

Aș dori să întreb Președinția lituaniană a Consiliului care sunt măsurile concrete pe care le are în vedere pentru asigurarea liberei circulații a forței de muncă în cadrul UE și, în special, pentru ridicarea barierelor privind lucrătorii români și bulgari, înainte de 1 ianuarie 2014?

Răspuns
(16 septembrie 2013)

Libertatea de circulație a persoanelor constituie una dintre libertățile fundamentale garantate de tratat şi de legislația secundară. Aceasta include dreptul cetățenilor UE de a trăi şi de a lucra în alt stat membru. Cu toate acestea, este la latitudinea fiecărui stat membru care aplică încă restricții în urma aderării din 2007 să evalueze impactul asupra propriei piețe a forței de muncă şi să decidă în ceea ce priveşte continuarea sau diminuarea restricțiilor rămase, înainte de sfârşitul celei de a treia etape a perioadei de tranziție (ianuarie 2012 - decembrie 2013).

Prin urmare, nici Consiliul, nici Preşedinția nu sunt implicate în stabilirea sau ridicarea măsurilor tranzitorii. Consiliul a invitat totuşi statele membre, care continuă să aplice restricții în temeiul măsurilor tranzitorii prevăzute în tratatele de aderare, să ridice restricțiile în cea de a treia etapă, dacă nu se poate determina că există perturbări grave ale piețelor forței de muncă ale statelor membre în cauză, sau amenințarea unor astfel de perturbări ([1]).

([1]) Documentul 6480/09, punctele 40 şi 41.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007795/13
to the Council
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU — Lifting labour market barriers to Romanians and Bulgarians

The accession treaties do not confer competence on the Council or the Presidency to take decisions with regard to extending the access of Romanian and Bulgarian workers to the labour markets of Member States. However, the Council may call on those Member States which continue to apply restrictions under the transitional arrangements set out in the accession treaties to lift restrictions in the third phase if serious disturbances of the labour market of the Member State concerned, or a threat of such disturbances, cannot be established.

I would like to ask the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council what specific measures it envisages to ensure the free circulation of labour within the EU and, in particular, to lift the labour market barriers to Romanians and Bulgarians, prior to 1 January 2014?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

Freedom of movement for persons is one of the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Treaty and the secondary legislation. This includes the right of EU citizens to live and work in another Member State. However, it is up to each Member State still applying restrictions following the 2007 accession to assess the impacts to its labour markets and to decide whether to continue or to ease the remaining restrictions before the end of the third and final phase of the transitional period (January 2012-December 2013).

Therefore, neither the Council nor its Presidency are involved in the setting or lifting of transitional measures. Nevertheless, the Council invited Member States that continued to apply restrictions under the transitional arrangements set out in the Accession Treaties to lift restrictions in the third phase if serious disturbances to the labour markets of the Member States concerned, or a threat of thereof, cannot be established. ([1])

([1]) 6480/09, points 40 and 41.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-007796/13
à la Commission
Louis Michel (ALDE)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Intégration régionale

L'Union européenne reconnaît l'importance de l'intégration régionale pour le développement, tant sur le plan politique qu'économique, mais aussi pour la prospérité et la stabilité (paix, sécurité régionale).

La constitution de marché régionaux intégrés permet, en effet, de créer des cercles vertueux, grâce à l'accroissement de la taille des marchés, aux économies d'échelle engendrées, à l'harmonisation des règles, à l'interconnectivité des infrastructures et à l'attrait exercé par conséquent sur les investissements étrangers.

En raison de son importance pour favoriser le développement, l'intégration régionale figure parmi les secteurs clés dans le 10e Fonds européen de développement.

Toutefois, l'intégration régionale ne figure plus comme secteur clé dans le 11e Fonds européen de développement.

La Commission pourrait-elle expliquer les raisons de ce changement de priorité pour le 11e Fonds européen de développement?

Réponse donnée par M. Piebalgs au nom de la Commission
(2 septembre 2013)

L'Union européenne soutient de longue date l'intégration régionale et la coopération dans les pays d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique (ACP), et il en restera ainsi dans le cadre du 11e Fonds européen de développement (FED). L'UE a clairement mis en exergue cette priorité dans son programme pour le changement.

L'UE est un partenaire essentiel pour les régions ACP: elle a une responsabilité particulière vis-à-vis de cette zone et elle apporte également une valeur ajoutée évidente. L'intégration régionale est particulièrement importante en Afrique, aussi bien pour la stabilité politique que pour le développement économique et la gestion efficace des biens publics régionaux.

Le cadre stratégique régissant le soutien de l'UE est défini par l'accord de Cotonou. Il a été officialisé dans la communication du 6 octobre 2008 sur «l'Intégration régionale pour le développement des pays ACP» ([1]). Les grandes orientations de ce cadre sont toujours valables et resteront au cœur de l'aide de l'UE. Cependant, l'UE, les pays ACP et leurs organisations régionales doivent tirer des leçons de l'expérience du 10e FED: il est possible de faire plus et mieux grâce au financement de l'UE.

À cet effet, la Commission et la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante sont en train d'élaborer une nouvelle stratégie pour le 11e FED, pour éviter de devoir à nouveau faire face aux insuffisances du 10e FED. D'une part, notre intention est de continuer à soutenir les organisations régionales en abordant plus directement leurs principales priorités et missions et en définissant conjointement quelques secteurs clés qui permettront de faire la différence ensemble. D'autre part, nous ressentons le besoin de compléter ce soutien en nous attaquant aux obstacles à l'intégration régionale à la racine: il faudra à cette fin prendre des mesures pour encourager les pays ACP à jouer un rôle plus important à l'échelle régionale et dans la réalisation de leurs engagements régionaux, tout en veillant à ce que les programmes régionaux soient mis en œuvre par les acteurs les plus appropriés.

([1]) COM(2008)604 final/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007796/13
to the Commission
Louis Michel (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Regional Integration

The European Union recognises the importance of regional integration for development, both politically and economically, but also for prosperity and stability (peace, regional security).

The emergence of integrated regional markets allows the creation of virtuous circles, thanks to the increase in market size, the economies of scale thus generated, the harmonisation of rules, the inter-connectivity of infrastructures and the ensuing capacity to attract foreign investment.

Because of its importance for promoting development, regional integration is a key sector in the 10th European Development Fund.

However, regional integration is no longer included as a key sector in the 11th European Development Fund.

Can the Commission explain the reasons for this shift in priorities in the 11th European Development Fund?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The EU is a long-standing supporter of regional integration and cooperation in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and will remain so under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The EU has clearly stressed this priority in its Agenda for Change.

The EU is a key partner for ACP regions and has both a special responsibility to fulfil in this area and a clear added value. Regional integration remains particularly essential in Africa for political stability as well as for economic development and the efficient management of regional public goods.

The strategic policy framework governing EU support is defined by the Cotonou Agreement and was formalised in the communication of 6 October 2008 on 'Regional integration for development in ACP countries' ([1]). The main lines of this framework remain valid and will lie at the core of EU support. However, EU, ACP States and their regional organisations must learn from 10th EDF experience: more can be done with EU funding, and better.

Accordingly, Commission and HR/VP are working to shape a new approach to the 11th EDF, so that we are not confronted with the same shortcomings as in the 10th EDF. On the one hand, our intention is to continue supporting regional organisations by addressing their core agenda and mandate more directly and by jointly identifying a few key sectors in which we can make a difference together. On the other hand, we feel the need to complement this support by tackling obstacles to regional integration at their very roots: this will involve providing ACP States with the incentive to play a larger role at regional level and to implement their regional commitments, while also ensuring that regional programmes are implemented by the most appropriate stakeholders.

([1]) COM(2008) 604 final/2.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007797/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Declaraciones de Gas Natural sobre el gaseoducto de Doñana

Desde el pasado 15 de junio, momento en el que el Gobierno de España aceptó la declaración de impacto ambiental, el proyecto del gaseoducto y almacenamiento subterráneo de gas en las marismas de Doñana continúa a la espera de una resolución definitiva.

Pese a la clara existencia de alternativas geográficas, el proyecto pretende instalarse allí para poder explotar los yacimientos que aún contienen unas reservas de 7 000 GWh, así como, emplear las instalaciones ya construidas y ahorrar costes en el proyecto. El informe del Gobierno sobre la DIA puede sostener que el proyecto tiene un escaso impacto ambiental, debido a que considera por separado cada uno de ellos, incumpliendo la normativa sobre evaluación de impacto ambiental (85/337/CEE).

Según declaraciones de Gas Natural Fenosa aparecidas en los medios de comunicación, «el gaseoducto será una herramienta para el desarrollo de la actividad industrial y comercial en la zona». Pero el impacto de la actividad industrial y comercial que generará un almacén con capacidad para un tercio de todas las reservas del país pone en riesgo un delicado ecosistema, como es el de dicho parque natural. Parte de este proyecto se encuentra dentro de las fronteras del parque natural, violando claramente lo dispuesto en la normativa tanto nacional como europea, y pese a ello la empresa Petroleum Oil Gas-España, filial de Gas Natural a cargo del proyecto, continúa sosteniendo que el proyecto podría estar en funcionamiento en el plazo de tres años.

Siendo una reserva de la biosfera tan importante y existiendo alternativas para su localización, la única razón para continuar poniendo en riesgo esta reserva es el ahorro de costes para la empresa. La Comisión afirmó que solicitaría información a las autoridades españolas en su respuesta a varias preguntas parlamentarias, para evaluar el cumplimiento de la normativa.

A la luz de la información solicitada a las autoridades españolas, ¿considera que la declaración de impacto ambiental (85/337/CEE) cumple todos los requisitos, especialmente en cuanto a su evaluación fragmentada?

Considerando que el almacenamiento supondrá un tercio de la capacidad del país, ¿piensa que dicha DIA ha considerado en manera suficiente el impacto de la actividad industrial y comercial que se desarrollará en la zona, así como los riesgos que acarreará tal cantidad de gas? ¿Cuál es la razón esgrimida para no plantear un lugar alternativo para dicho depósito?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(18 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión ha recibido recientemente la información solicitada a las autoridades españolas en relación con este proyecto. Una vez se haya examinado adecuadamente dicha información, la Comisión estará en condiciones de determinar si en este caso se ha respetado la normativa medioambiental de la UE o si se ha incumplido.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007797/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Statements by Gas Natural about the Doñana gas pipeline

Since 15 June 2013, when the Spanish Government accepted the environmental impact statement for the project involving a gas pipeline and the underground storage of gas in the Doñana marshlands, the project has continued to await a final decision.

In spite of the obvious existence of geographic alternatives, the Doñana marshlands are the project's desired location, given the possibility to exploit the deposits that still contain reserves of 7 000 GWh and to use the facilities that have already been built, reducing the cost of the project. The Government's report on the EIS states that the project has a low environmental impact, since it considers each impact separately, in breach of the directive on the assessment of environmental impacts (85/337/EEC).

According to statements by Gas Natural Fenosa, reported by the media, the gas pipeline will be a tool with which to develop industrial and commercial activity in the area. However, the impact of industrial and commercial activity generated by a storage facility with the capacity to hold one third of the country's entire reserves will place a delicate ecosystem — that of the Doñana nature park — at risk. Part of this project falls within the boundaries of the nature park, in clear violation of both national and European rules. Nevertheless, Petroleum Oil Gas-España, which is a subsidiary of Gas Natural, the company heading the project, continues to maintain that the project could be in operation within three years.

Since this biosphere reserve is so important, and the project could be located at an alternative site, the only reason to continue placing this reserve at risk is to save the company money. In its answer to several parliamentary questions, the Commission stated that it would request information from the Spanish authorities in order to assess compliance with the regulations.

On the basis of the information requested from the Spanish authorities, does the Commission believe that the environmental impact statement (85/337/EEC) meets all of the requirements, particularly with regard to its fragmented assessment?

Given that the storage facility will hold one third of the country's capacity, does the Commission believe that the aforementioned EIS gives sufficient consideration to the impact of the industrial and commercial activity that will take place in the area and to the risks that this amount of gas will pose? Why has an alternative site for this storage not been proposed?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission has recently received the information requested from the Spanish authorities in relation to this project. Once this information has been appropriately assessed, the Commission will be in a position to determine whether or not EU environmental legislation has been complied with in this case.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007798/13
a la Comisión (Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: VP/HR — Ley de prensa en Ecuador

El pasado 14 de junio, *la Asamblea Nacional de Ecuador aprobó la Ley Orgánica de Comunicación que establece una novedosa reglamentación de la actividad para evitar el conflicto de intereses y garantizar la imparcialidad en el terreno periodístico del país.*

Esta legislación se produce tras años durante los que el Presidente del país, Rafael Correa, denunció públicamente la manifiesta manipulación informativa que numerosos medios de comunicación privados llevaban realizando en contra del Gobierno. Debido a estas quejas, el Gobierno de Ecuador ha sido acusado, en múltiples ocasiones, de pretender violar las libertades fundamentales y el derecho a la libertad de expresión y de libertad de prensa. Sin embargo, *esta nueva ley establece una regulación sin precedentes del sector que no ataca a la libertad, ni a los periodistas, sino que trata de acabar con la manipulación y el conflicto de intereses, manteniendo los códigos deontológicos por encima de los intereses privados de los propietarios.*

Este novedoso enfoque de la implementación de la libertad de prensa busca proteger al periodista de la censura previa que comúnmente se ven obligados a aplicarse para que la edi*torial acepte sus noticias. La Resolución del Parlamento Europeo de 13 de junio de 2013 sobre la libertad de prensa y de los medios de comunicación en el mundo establece unos criterios para apoyar dicha libertad en terceros países.*

El Parlamento Europeo aprobó una Resolución durante el pleno de mayo de este año sobre normas para la libertad de los medios de comunicación en la EU, en la que planteaba numerosas cuestiones de interés para el periodismo en la EU. La citada ley ecuatoriana podría resultar muy útil como inspiración para responder a muchos de los problemas planteados en la resolución.

— ¿Conoce la Vicepresidenta/Alta Representante la nueva Ley de prensa de Ecuador?

— ¿Cómo evalúa dicha ley?

— ¿No considera que dicha ley podría servir de inspiración para aplicar lo indicado en la resolución sobre normas para la libertad de los medios de comunicación en la EU?

— *¿Piensa legislar para dotarse de instrumentos legales que permitan defender la libertad de prensa y de expresión del mismo modo en la Unión Europea?*

Respuesta conjunta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(13 de septiembre de 2013)

La AR/VP es consciente de la nueva ley sobre comunicación de Ecuador, ya que sus servicios, especialmente la Delegación de la UE en Quito, siguieron estrechamente el proceso legislativo que condujo a su adopción. Además, es consciente de las diferencias que existen entre el Gobierno y los medios de comunicación privados, así como de las medidas y las decisiones adoptadas por los organismos estatales en respuesta a las mismas.

La UE expresó su preocupación por dicha ley durante la reunión del mecanismo de consulta UE-Ecuador que se celebró en Bruselas el 21 de junio y que incluyó la libertad de expresión como uno de los temas del orden del día. En esa ocasión, la UE expresó su preocupación por el margen discrecional para sancionar a los medios de comunicación que el proyecto de ley otorgará al nuevo órgano regulador y el consiguiente control que podría dar al Estado sobre los medios de comunicación.

La UE seguirá defendiendo la libertad de expresión y supervisará la aplicación de la citada ley y sus consecuencias para los medios de comunicación en el país. De hecho, el apoyo a la libertad de expresión es una de las prioridades de la estrategia global por país sobre derechos humanos para Ecuador. La delegación de la UE en Quito y otras misiones de la UE mantienen contactos regulares con las ONG en defensa de la libertad de expresión y de los medios de comunicación.

Por lo que se refiere a la legislación sobre medios de comunicación en la EU, la libertad de expresión y de información está consagrada en el artículo 11 de la Carta de Derechos Fundamentales de la UE. La Comisión se ha comprometido a garantizar el respeto de la libertad de expresión, pero subraya que la Carta solo tiene vigencia dentro de los límites del Derecho de la Unión.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-008013/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(4 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – prawo ogranicza swobodę wypowiedzi dziennikarzy i mediów w Ekwadorze

W dniu 14 czerwca 2013 r. Zgromadzenie Narodowe Ekwadoru zatwierdziło ustawę o komunikacji, która w poważny sposób ogranicza swobodę wypowiedzi. Projekt tej ustawy wysunął rząd w 2009 r., jednak poprzednie Zgromadzenie Narodowe odrzuciło ją. Nowa kadencja Zgromadzenia Narodowego rozpoczęła się w maju br., a większość posłów do niego pochodzi z partii politycznej prezydenta Rafaela Correi. Zatwierdzili oni zmienioną wersję pierwotnej ustawy. Prawo zezwala władzom nakazywanie wydawcom publikowania przeprosin i przewiduje nakładanie na nich sankcji karnych i cywilnych. Każdy obywatel i każda organizacja może oskarżyć wydawców o brak poszanowania honoru i dobrego imienia ludzi, co pozwoli władzom wystosować do danego wydawcy ostrzeżenie lub nałożyć na niego sankcje. W świetle tej ustawy dziennikarze nie mogą publikować treści, które będą naruszać prawa konstytucyjne i porządek publiczny państwa. W przypadku nieprzestrzegania przepisów ustawy na dziennikarzy można będzie nakładać sankcje cywilne, karne lub inne. Tym samym ustawa umożliwia rządowi Ekwadoru nielegalną cenzurę.

— Jakie kroki może podjąć UE w celu ochrony dziennikarzy i wydawców w Ekwadorze?

— Czy Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel poruszyła tę kwestię w rozmowach z prezydentem Rafaelem Correą?

— W jaki sposób ESDZ może pomóc dziennikarzom przedstawiać treści zachęcające do dyskusji i wspierające demokrację w tym kraju?

Wspólna odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton
w imieniu Komisji
(13 września 2013 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca wie o nowej ekwadorskiej ustawie w sprawie swobody komunikacji, gdyż za pośrednictwem podległych jej służb, a zwłaszcza delegatury UE w Quito uważnie śledziła proces legislacyjny prowadzący do jej przyjęcia. Wie także o nieporozumieniach między rządem a prywatnymi mediami, a także środkach i decyzjach podjętych w związku z tym przez organy państwowe.

Swoje obawy dotyczące wspomnianej ustawy Unia wyraziła podczas spotkania, które odbyło się w Brukseli w dniu 21 czerwca br. w ramach mechanizmu konsultacji UE-Ekwador, na którym kwestia swobody wypowiedzi była jednym z punktów obrad. Przy tej okazji strona UE wyraziła obawę co do zakresu swobody w nakładaniu sankcji na media, jaki w projekcie ustawy przyznaje się nowemu organowi regulacyjnemu oraz związaną z tym ewentualną kontrolą państwa nad mediami.

UE będzie nadal bronić wolności słowa i monitorować wdrażanie wspomnianej ustawy oraz związane z nią konsekwencje dla sektora mediów w Ekwadorze. Wspieranie wolności wypowiedzi jest jednym z priorytetów unijnej strategii dla Ekwadoru w dziedzinie praw człowieka. Delegatura UE w Quito i inne misje UE są w stałym kontakcie z organizacjami pozarządowymi broniącymi wolności wypowiedzi i mediów.

Co się tyczy prawodawstwa w sprawie mediów w UE, wolność wypowiedzi i informacji zapisano w art. 11 Karty praw podstawowych Unii Europejskiej. Komisja podejmuje się zapewniać poszanowanie wolności wypowiedzi, podkreśla jednak, że karta ma zastosowanie jedynie w granicach prawa unijnego.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007798/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Press law in Ecuador

On 14 June 2013, Ecuador's National Assembly approved the Organic Law on Communication, which establishes new regulations on communication to prevent conflicts of interest and to ensure the impartiality of the country's media.

This law comes into being after years of public denunciations by Ecuador's President, Rafael Correa, regarding the obvious manipulation of information by numerous private media outlets, to the Government's detriment. As a result of these denunciations, the Ecuadorian Government has been accused on multiple occasions of attempting to violate fundamental freedoms and the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of the press. However, this new law establishes an unprecedented regulation of the media that does not undermine freedom or journalists, but instead attempts to put an end to manipulation and conflicts of interest, giving codes of ethics precedence over the private interests of owners.

This innovative approach to ensuring freedom of the press seeks to protect journalists from the self-censorship that they are often required to practise in order for their publishers to accept their articles. The European Parliament resolution of 13 June 2013 on the freedom of press and media in the world establishes some criteria to support freedom of the press in third countries.

Parliament adopted a resolution during the plenary of May this year on rules for media freedom in the EU, which raised numerous issues of interest regarding journalism in the EU. The aforementioned Ecuadorian law could serve as a very useful inspiration for addressing many of the problems raised in the resolution.

— Is the Vice-President/High Representative familiar with Ecuador's new press law?

— How does she assess this law?

— Does she not believe that this law could serve as an inspiration for putting into practice the resolution on rules for media freedom in the EU?

— Does she intend to legislate to provide herself with the legal instruments needed to defend freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the same way in the European Union?

Question for written answer E-008013/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Law limits free expression of journalists and media outlets in Ecuador

On 14 June 2013, the Ecuadorian National Assembly approved a communications law that seriously undermines free speech. This law was proposed by the government in 2009, but was quickly denied in the previous National Assembly. The new National Assembly began in May with the majority of members from President Rafael Correa's political party. They approved a modified version of the original bill. The law allows authorities to order media outlets to issue apologies and can be subjected to criminal and civil sanctions. Any citizen or organisation can accuse media outlets of failing to respect people's honor and reputation, which will give the authorities the power to write a warning or impose sanctions. Lastly, the law states that journalists cannot display content that will undermine constitutional rights and public security of the state. If the journalists fail to follow the law, they will be subject to civil, criminal, or other sanctions. This opens the door for the Ecuadorian government to unlawful censorship.

— What steps can the EU to protect journalists and media outlets in Ecuador?

— Has the Vice-President/High Representative addressed this issue with President Rafael Correa?

— What are some ways that the EEAS could aid the journalists in providing content that will encourage debates and democracy in the country?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the new Communication Law in Ecuador, having followed the legislative process that led to its adoption closely through her services, notably the EU Delegation in Quito. She is also aware of the disagreements between the government and the private media, and the measures and decisions taken by state bodies in response thereto.

The EU has expressed its concerns about the law during the meeting of the EU-Ecuador Consultation Mechanism which took place in Brussels on 21 June, where freedom of expression was one of the themes on the agenda. The EU side on this occasion expressed its preoccupation about the discretionary margin for sanctioning media that the bill will grant to the new regulatory body and the consequent control that it could give the state over the media.

The EU will continue defending freedom of expression and monitor the implementation of the aforementioned law and its consequences for the media sector in Ecuador. Indeed, support to freedom of expression is one of the priorities in the EU's Human Rights Country Strategy for Ecuador. The EU Delegation in Quito and other EU missions there are in regular contact with NGOs defending freedom of expression and media.

As regards legislation on media in the EU, freedom of expression and information is enshrined in Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Commission is committed to ensure respect for freedom of expression, but underlines that the Charter applies only within the limits of Union law.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007799/13
an die Kommission
Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Verschlechterungsverbot der EU-Wasserrahmenrichtlinie (WRRL)

Die Umsetzung und Verwirklichung der Ziele der EU-Wasserrahmenrichtlinie (WRRL) erweist sich als auf Jahre hinaus angelegte Herausforderung für alle Beteiligten.

Grundsätzlich gilt ein Verschlechterungsverbot für die Gewässerqualität. Vor dem Hintergrund der übergeordneten Ziele einer nachhaltigen Nutzung von Wasserressourcen gibt Artikel 4 Absatz 1 der WRRL die Ziele vor. Eine Verschlechterung des Zustandes aller Gemeinschaftsgewässer ist zu verhindern, also sowohl der Oberflächengewässer als auch des Grundwassers und der Küstengewässer in der gesamten EU.

Welche Grundsätze verfolgt die Kommission bei der Auslegung des Verschlechterungsverbotes in den Artikeln 1 und 4 der WRRL?

Welche diesbezüglich wichtigen Entscheidungen hat die Kommission dazu in der Vergangenheit getroffen, und welche einschlägigen Urteile des EuGH gibt es dazu?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(13. August 2013)

Das Verschlechterungsverbot ist ein zentrales Umweltziel der Wasserrahmenrichtlinie (WRR) (Artikel 4) ([1]). In der WRR wird der ökologische Zustand nach fünf Kategorien eingestuft und festgelegt, dass sich der Zustand nicht verschlechtern sollte. Alle Abweichungen oder Ausnahmen von diesem Ziel sind eng auszulegen. Als Teil der gemeinsamen Durchführungsstrategie zur Wasserrahmenrichtlinie (*Common Implementation Strategy, CIS*) nahmen die Mitgliedstaaten und die Kommission das *CIS-Guidance-Dokument 20 „Exemptions to the environment objectives"* ([2]), das Empfehlungen für die Auslegung von Ausnahmen u. a. im Zusammenhang mit dem Ziel einer Nichtverschlechterung enthält. Diese Auslegungen sind nicht verbindlich, da nur der Europäische Gerichtshof eine bindende Auslegung erlassen kann.

Die Kommission fasst in dieser Angelegenheit keine Beschlüsse (auch wenn sie, wie weiter oben angegeben, Hilfestellung bietet). Rechtsprechung in Bezug auf Artikel 4 ist noch sehr selten. In der Rechtssache C 41/10 (Acheloos) hat der Europäische Gerichtshof bei der Auslegung von Artikel 4 der WRR festgelegt, dass die Mitgliedstaaten keine Vorschriften erlassen dürfen, die die Erreichung des in Artikel 4 vorgeschriebenen Ziels ernstlich gefährden können, auch vor dem Datum nicht, an dem sie ihre Bewirtschaftungspläne für die Einzugsgebiete veröffentlichen müssen.

([1]) Richtlinie 2000/60/EG, ABl. L 327 vom 22.12.2000.
([2]) Abzurufen unter:
https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/a3c92123-1013-47ff-b832-16e1caaafc9a

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007799/13
to the Commission
Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Deterioration ban in the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)

Implementing and attaining the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is proving to be a challenge for all those involved, a challenge which will continue to persist for years.

Basically, there must be no deterioration in the quality of water. Article 4(1) of the WFD sets out targets based on the ultimate objective of the sustainable use of water resources. A deterioration in the condition of all Community waters, which includes surface waters as well as groundwater and coastal waters, must be prevented throughout the entire EU.

What criteria does the Commission apply when interpreting the deterioration ban in Articles 1 and 4 of the WFD?

What important decisions has the Commission adopted on this in the past and what relevant judgments have been passed by the ECJ?

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

The non-deterioration ban is a core environmental objective of the Water Framework Directive (WDF) (Article 4) ([1]). The WFD classifies status according to five categories and states that there should be no deterioration of status. Any derogations or exemptions to this objective have to be strictly interpreted. In the context of the common implementation strategy for the WFD, the Member States and the Commission adopted Guidance Document 20 on exemptions to the environmental objectives, which suggest interpretation of exemptions used in relation to *inter alia* the objective of non-deterioration ([2]). These interpretations are not binding as only the European Court of Justice can give a binding interpretation.

The Commission does not adopt decisions on this matter (though there is guidance as mentioned above). Case law on Article 4 WFD is still quite rare. In Case C-41/10 (known as Acheloos) the European Court of Justice gave an interpretation of Article 4 WFD, notably that Member States had to refrain from taking any measures liable seriously to compromise the attainment of the result prescribed by Article 4, also prior to the due date for publication of their river basin management plans.

([1]) Directive 2000/60/EC, OJ L 327, 22.12.200.
([2]) Available at https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/a3c92123-1013-47ff-b832-16e1caaafc9a.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007800/13
an die Kommission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Datenschutz beim OLAF

1. Ein Ehepaar trägt beim OLAF die Verantwortung für den Zugang zu persönlichen Daten im Zuge von forensischen OLAF-Untersuchungen, und der andere Partner trägt die Verantwortung für den Datenschutz von Personen, die von diesen Verfahren betroffen sind. Warum ist dies der Fall? Wie funktioniert Kontrolle in einer engen persönlichen Beziehung?

2. Datenschutzbeauftragte sind unabhängig, um ihnen einen glaubwürdige Stellung zu geben. Warum wurde diese Konstruktion aufrechterhalten und nach Auslaufen des Mandats erneut verlängert?

3. Welche Interessenkonflikte gab es bislang? Wie wurden diese gelöst?

4. Wie bewertet das OLAF diesen Interessenkonflikt?

5. Welche Maßnahmen wurden ergriffen, um den Datenschutz glaubwürdig zu vertreten?

6. Wurde die Meinung des EDSB eingeholt? Wenn ja, mit welchem Ergebnis?

7. Wie hat der Generaldirektor die Bestimmungen von Artikel 11a des Personalstatuts umgesetzt?

8. Wie viele Fälle haben die betroffenen Mitarbeiter dem Generaldirektor signalisiert?

9. Kann der Generaldirektor gewährleisten, dass seine Entscheidungen, bei denen die betroffenen Mitarbeiter eine aktive Rolle gespielt haben, nicht von diesem Mangel an Unabhängigkeit beeinflusst waren?

10. Welche besonderen Maßnahmen wurden getroffen, um jeden Interessenkonflikt auszuschließen?

11. Im Jahr 2012 hat das OLAF 10 digitale forensische Untersuchungen durchgeführt. In wie vielen Fällen hat die Datenschutzbeauftragte das OLAF wegen dieser Untersuchungen konsultiert? Wie viele Beschwerden gab es wegen der Untersuchungen? Wie wurde mit diesen Beschwerden umgegangen? Für wie glaubwürdig darf man den Datenschutz bei digitalen forensischen OLAF-Untersuchungen halten?

Antwort von Herrn Šemeta im Namen der Kommission
(20. August 2013)

Die Kommission bestätigt, dass die ethischen Vorgaben des EU-Vertrags und des Personalstatuts für den Umgang mit einer Frage, wie sie von der Frau Abgeordneten aufgeworfen wurde, völlig ausreichend sind. Die Mitarbeiter des OLAF haben in dieser Angelegenheit im Einklang mit den Grundsätzen der Unparteilichkeit und Integrität gehandelt.

Sie haben in vollem Einklang mit Artikel 11 Buchstabe a des Statuts die Anstellungsbehörde rechtzeitig davon in Kenntnis gesetzt, dass ihre Ernennung trotz der funktionalen Trennung des Datenschutzbeauftragten (DSB) von allen OLAF-Referaten einen Interessenkonflikt auslösen oder den Anschein eines Interessenkonflikts erwecken könnte. Der Generaldirektor des OLAF legt großen Wert auf die Unabhängigkeit des Datenschutzbeauftragten. Dementsprechend hat der Generaldirektor vor der Wiederernennung des DSB den Europäischen Datenschutzbeauftragten (EDSB) konsultiert. Der EDSB empfahl bestimmte Sicherheitsvorkehrungen, die vom OLAF umgesetzt wurden. So hat der Generaldirektor hat unter anderem einen stellvertretenden DSB ernannt, der alle Aufgaben, Pflichten und Befugnisse des Datenschutzbeauftragten in Bezug auf Verarbeitungsvorgänge des betreffenden Referats innehat.

Das OLAF hat bei seiner kriminaltechnischen Arbeit im Jahr 2012 die Datenschutzbestimmungen vollständig eingehalten. Es wurden im Zusammenhang mit dieser Tätigkeit keine Beschwerden beim EDSB eingereicht. Mit etwaigen Beschwerden an den EDSB würde sich die Rechtsabteilung des OLAF befassen. Sollte der DSB des OLAF eine Beschwerde über einen Verarbeitungsvorgang in dem betreffenden Referat erhalten, würde der stellvertretende Datenschutzbeauftragte die Beschwerde bearbeiten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007800/13
to the Commission
Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Data protection at the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)

1. One partner of a married couple is responsible at OLAF for access to personal data during the course of OLAF's forensic investigations, and the other partner is responsible for data protection of the persons affected by such proceedings. Why is this so? How does monitoring operate in a close personal relationship?

2. Data protection officers are independent so that their position can be considered credible. Why was this arrangement maintained and renewed on expiry of the position?

3. What conflicts of interest have arisen to date? How have they been resolved?

4. What is OLAF's view of this conflict of interest?

5. What measures have been taken to maintain the credibility of dataprotection?

6. Was the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) asked for his opinion? If so,what was the result?

7. How has the Director-General implemented the provisions of Article 11a of the Staff Regulations?

8. How many cases have been reported to the Director-General by theemployees affected?

9. Can the Director-General guarantee that his decisions, in which the employees affected played an active role, were not affected by this lack of independence?

10. What specific measures have been taken to exclude any conflicts of interest?

11. In 2012, OLAF conducted 10 digital forensic investigations. In how many cases did data protection officers consult OLAF in connection with those investigations? How many complaints were made as a result of the investigations? How were those complaints dealt with? To what extent can data protection in OLAF's digital forensic investigations be considered credible?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The Commission affirms that the ethical framework provided by the Treaty and the Staff Regulations is entirely adequate for dealing with an issue such as the one referred to by the Honourable Member. In this case OLAF officials have acted in accordance with the principles of impartiality and integrity.

In full respect of Article 11 (a) of the Staff Regulations, the officials concerned informed the appointing authority in due time that, notwithstanding the functional separation of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) from all OLAF units, their appointment to their respective positions could potentially give rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance thereof. OLAF's Director General places great importance on the independence of the DPO. Accordingly, prior to the re-appointment of the DPO, the Director General consulted the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) on this matter. The EDPS recommended certain safeguards which OLAF has implemented. In particular, the Director General appointed an Assistant DPO who has all the tasks, duties and powers of the DPO with regard to processing operations performed by the Unit concerned.

In 2012, OLAF has performed its forensic activities in full respect of all data protection requirements, and no complaints have been filed with the EDPS concerning those activities. The replies to any eventual complaints made to the EDPS would be dealt with by OLAF's Legal affairs unit. Should a data subject submit a complaint to OLAF's DPO concerning a processing operation relating to the Unit concerned, it would fall within the tasks of the Assistant DPO.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007801/13
aan de Commissie
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(2 juli 2013)

Betreft: Toelating tot de EU van gekloonde dieren, embryo's en vleesproducten uit de VS

Monoculturen gaan ten koste van de biodiversiteit en vormen een bedreiging voor de voedselzekerheid, aangezien nieuwe ziekten waarvoor monoculturen vatbaar zijn, het einde kunnen betekenen voor de betreffende voedselbron.

Het Europees Octrooibureau (EOB) heeft zowel octrooien verleend voor genetisch gemodificeerde planten en dieren als voor planten en dieren die langs conventionele weg zijn geteeld ([1]), daarin gesteund door de EU-Richtlijn betreffende de rechtsbescherming van biotechnologische uitvindingen ([2]). Dit is volkomen in tegenspraak met de uitvoerig en zorgvuldig onderbouwde argumenten die in artikel 53(b) van het Europees Octrooiverdrag (EOV) worden aangevoerd om de octrooieerbaarheid van om het even welke planten- of diersoort uit te sluiten. Dergelijke regelingen stellen de octrooihouders namelijk in staat beperkende voorwaarden op te leggen aan de afnemers van zaden, embryo's, planten, dieren, klonen, enz., zodat het landbouwers bijvoorbeeld niet is toegestaan hun gewassen te gebruiken voor latere teelten. Het Amerikaanse Hooggerechtshof heeft overigens bevestigd dat het beperken van de mogelijkheid voor landbouwers om hun vee en gewassen voor teeltdoeleinden te gebruiken een direct gevolg is van de toegekende planten- en dierenoctrooien ([3]).

De invoering van hoogproductieve gewassen heeft met name onder bijvoorbeeld Indiase katoenboeren verwoestingen aangericht, en dwingt hen om elk jaar verse zaden in te kopen in plaats van gebruik te kunnen maken van zaden van eerdere oogsten, hetgeen heeft geleid tot een golf van zelfmoorden onder Indiase boeren.

— Kan de Commissie nadrukkelijk bevestigen dat de landbouwers in de EU, wanneer de invoer van gekloonde dieren, embryo's en vleesproducten in de EU wordt toegestaan, niet met soortgelijke risico's zullen worden geconfronteerd in de zin dat zij: (i) zich gedwongen zouden zien op nog grotere schaal ethisch dubieuze technieken te moeten toepassen voor het fokken van voor menselijke consumptie bestemde dieren; (ii) elk jaar onder licentie verkochte gekloonde dieren of gekloonde embryo's zouden moeten aanschaffen waarmee niet mag worden doorgefokt; of (iii) van dierlijke vleesproductie zouden moeten afzien?

— Zo niet, is de Commissie dan bereid een wijziging van Richtlijn 98/44/EU voor te stellen om te waarborgen dat de lidstaten geen octrooien voor dieren en planten mogen verlenen, en dat aan de verkoop van dieren of planten binnen de EU generlei contractuele verplichting mag zijn verbonden om het gebruik van het aangeschafte biologische materiaal voor voortplantingsdoeleinden te beperken?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(18 september 2013)

Landbouwers in de EU verbeteren de genetische prestaties van hun vee via traditionele genetische selectie en genomische selectie. Wanneer wordt gekloond voor fokdoeleinden, wordt het genoom van een bestaand of reeds gestorven elitedier zonder wijzigingen van het DNA gekopieerd. Dat is een zeer uitzonderlijke want zeer dure techniek.

Fokkers en landbouwers in de EU importeren zeer weinig reproductiemateriaal (bijvoorbeeld ongeveer 2,5 % van het rundersperma) en het is niet bekend hoeveel daarvan van gekloonde dieren afkomstig is.

Voor de kloontechniek voor dieren gelden diverse octrooien, waarvan de exacte werkingssfeer niet bekend is. In principe kan op kloontechnieken een octrooi worden genomen overeenkomstig Richtlijn 98/44/EG ([4]), op voorwaarde dat dergelijke uitvindingen niet indruisen tegen de openbare orde en de goede zeden. Voorts voorziet Richtlijn 98/44/EG in specifieke afwijkingen voor landbouwers: het zogenoemde landbouwersvoorrecht. Dankzij dat voorrecht mogen landbouwers die dierlijk reproductiemateriaal of dieren hebben verworven dat/die door de eigenaar van het octrooi of met zijn toestemming in de handel is/zijn gebracht, de dieren op hun eigen landbouwbedrijf fokken wanneer zij deze achteraf niet verkopen ([5]).

([1]) EOB-besluiten in de zaken T-19/90, G-1/98 en G-2/12.
([2]) Richtlijn 98/44/EU van juli 1998.
([3]) Bowman v. Monsanto.
([4]) Richtlijn 98/44/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 6 juli 1998 betreffende de rechtsbescherming van biotechnologische uitvindingen. PB L 213 van 30.7.1998, blz. 13.
([5]) Artikel 11, lid 2, van Richtlijn 98/44/EG.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007801/13
to the Commission
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Allowing cloned animals, embryos and meat products into the EU from the US

Monocultures reduce biodiversity and bring with them the risk of a loss of food security, given that a new disease to which a monoculture is susceptible may wipe out the food source.

The European Patent Office (EPO) has been granting patents for plants and animals that have been genetically modified, as well as for those that have been produced via conventional breeding processes ([1]), with the support of the EU Directive on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions ([2]). This is in direct conflict with the long and carefully argued exclusion from patentability of any kind of plant or animal, which is found in Article 53(b) of the European Patent Convention (EPC). Such patenting allows the patent holders to impose restrictive clauses on the purchasers of seeds, embryos, plants, animals, clones etc., for example forbidding farmers from using their crops to grow future crops. This restriction on the ability of farmers to grow future generations has been confirmed by the US Supreme Court to be a direct result of plant and animal patenting ([3]).

The introduction of such high-yield crops has caused devastation amongst Indian farmers (for example cotton farmers), forcing them to buy fresh seeds each year rather than replanting seeds from an earlier crop, something which has led to a wave of suicides among Indian farmers.

— Can the Commission confirm explicitly that, in permitting the importation of cloned animals, embryos and meat products into the EU, EU farmers will not be faced with similar risks of: (i) having to adopt even more intensive and ethically dubious techniques for the rearing of animals intended for human consumption; (ii) each year having to buy cloned animals or cloned embryos sold under licenses which forbid future breeding; or (iii) having to move away from animal-meat production?

— If not, will the Commission propose a change to Directive 98/44/EU so as to ensure that Member States may not grant any patent which covers animals or plants, and that the sale of animals or plants within the EU may not be accompanied by any contractual obligation restricting future breeding of the biological material purchased?

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

EU farmers are improving the genetic performance of their livestock via traditional genetic selection and genomic selection. Cloning for breeding purposes is copying the genome of an existing or past elite animal without changes of the DNA. It is a very exceptional technique because of its high costs.

EU breeders and farmers are importing very low level of reproductive material (e.g. around 2.5% for bovine semen) and it is not known how much of these levels derives from clones.

The cloning technique for animals is covered by several patents the exact scope of which is unknown. In principle animal cloning techniques are patentable under Directive 98/44/EC ([4]) as long as such inventions would not be contrary to 'ordre public' and morality. Furthermore Directive 98/44/EC provides for specific derogations for farmers — the so-called farmers' privilege. This privilege allows farmers who have acquired animal reproductive material or animals placed on the market by the proprietor of the patent or with his consent, to reproduce the animals on their own farm if they do not sell them afterwards ([5]).

([1]) EPO decisions/cases T-19/90, G-1/98, and G-2/12.
([2]) Directive 98/44/EU of July 1998.
([3]) Bowman v Monsanto.
([4]) OJ L 213, 30.7.1998, p. 13-21 Directive 98/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 1998 on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions.
([5]) Article 11, paragraph 2 of Directive 98/44/EC.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007802/13
alla Commissione
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Problematiche derivanti dall'introduzione dei nuovi tagli di banconote

Il 2 maggio 2013 è entrato in circolazione il nuovo taglio di banconote da 5 euro ritenuto, date le sue caratteristiche tecniche, meno passibile di contraffazione. Nonostante l'indubbia validità dello scopo, l'introduzione delle nuove banconote ha creato alcuni disagi soprattutto a causa del fatto che, essendo la banconota da 5 euro il taglio minoritario, il suo impiego è rilevante nelle piccole transazioni giornaliere. In particolare, problematiche si sono registrate per quelle attività che utilizzano apparecchi automatici incorporanti lettori ottici di banconote per effettuare acquisti: stazioni di servizio e pompe di benzina, tabaccai, biglietterie di trasporti pubblici. Essendo la struttura delle banconote nuova, affinché queste possano essere utilizzate in esercizi come quelli indicati c'è bisogno di un aggiornamento del software dei dispositivi, che, data la rigidità dell'offerta del servizio e il limitato numero di tecnici in rapporto alle esigenze, può arrivare a costare anche centinaia di euro. In conseguenza della poco florida situazione economica molti esercenti, soprattutto in Italia, hanno deciso di non adeguare le loro apparecchiature, posticipando l'imprevista spesa anche perché, essendo il vecchio taglio di banconote da 5 euro ancora non ritirato, la percentuale di queste ultime sul totale in circolazione è ancora molto alta.

Posto che la lotta alla contraffazione deve continuare ad essere un obiettivo da perseguire tramite l'adozione delle misure necessarie, può la Commissione far sapere:

— quali sono le competenze della Commissione stessa e quelle della BCE in merito all'attuazione della strategia di sostituzione;

— se sono state effettuate valutazioni dettagliate con riguardo all'impatto e ai costi che la sostituzione della massa di denaro circolante avrebbe avuto;

— se intende predisporre misure idonee per agevolare la sostituzione della strumentazione da parte delle attività economiche che utilizzano dispositivi automatici e/o di lettura ottica delle banconote;

— cosa intende fare, in via preventiva, per evitare ulteriori disagi in vista della sostituzione dei restanti tagli di banconote già programmati dalla BCE?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(7 agosto 2013)

L'emissione di banconote, compreso il nuovo taglio da 5 euro, non è di competenza della Commissione, bensì della BCE.

La BCE è pertanto responsabile dell'adozione di eventuali misure di accompagnamento all'introduzione della nuova banconota da 5 euro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007802/13
to the Commission
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Problems arising from the introduction of the new banknotes

On 2 May 2013 the new EUR 5 banknote was put into circulation, the idea being that its technical characteristics will make it less susceptible to counterfeiting. While the objective is undoubtedly sound, the introduction of the new banknotes has caused some disruption, especially since the EUR 5 banknote is used in many small day-to-day transactions because it is the smallest denomination of banknote. In particular, problems have occurred when automatic devices with built-in banknote readers are used to process sales at service stations and fuel pumps, in tobacconist shops and at public transport ticket offices. Since the banknotes have a new design, the devices' software has to be updated before the banknotes can be used in those types of establishments. This can end up costing hundreds of euros because of the inelastic supply of the service and the limited number of technicians to meet demand. Due to the difficult economic situation, many shopkeepers, particularly in Italy, have decided not to adapt their equipment. They are putting off this unexpected expense partly because the old EUR 5 banknotes have not yet been withdrawn and therefore still account for a very high percentage of the total number in circulation.

Given that the fight against counterfeiting must remain an objective to be pursued through the adoption of appropriate measures, can the Commission say:

— what powers the Commission and the European Central Bank (ECB) have with regard to the implementation of the replacement strategy;

— whether any detailed assessments have been carried out on the impact and the costs of replacing the money supply;

— whether it will introduce measures to help businesses that use automatic devices and/or banknote readers to replace their equipment;

— what precautionary measures it will take to prevent further disruption when the remaining banknote denominations are replaced, as already planned by the ECB?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The issuance of banknotes including the new 5 Euro banknote is not a competence of the Commission, but of the ECB.

The ECB is therefore in charge with any accompanying measures regarding the introduction of the new 5 Euro banknote.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007803/13
alla Commissione
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Ristrutturazione azienda Marlboro Classics

L'azienda di abbigliamento Marlboro Classics è stata recentemente venduta al fondo finanziario Emerisque Brands. Alcuni mesi dopo l'acquisto, il 13 giugno scorso, la nuova proprietà ha annunciato un'imponente ristrutturazione dell'azienda, che prevede l'eliminazione delle linee donna e «Facon», il trasferimento della produzione dalla attuale sede e la delocalizzazione o esternalizzazione di una parte consistente delle attività. Questa ristrutturazione comporterebbe almeno 99 esuberi su 166 dipendenti.

L'azienda rappresenta una delle più importanti storie manifatturiere italiane e la sua delocalizzazione causerebbe un impoverimento del settore manifatturiero italiano in netto contrasto con l'obiettivo del suo rilancio, più volte dichiarato dal governo italiano e dalla Commissione europea. La produzione della Marlboro Classics rappresenta inoltre un elemento economico centrale per la zona di Maglio di Sopra Valdagno (Vicenza), in cui è situata e il suo eventuale spostamento causerebbe danni pesantissimi dal punto di vista sociale.

Alla luce di quanto sopra esposto, può la Commissione riferire:

— se ritiene che il comportamento della dirigenza di Marlboro Classics risponda ai principi di una corretta integrazione nella strategia aziendale dei principi di responsabilità sociale di impresa, che richiamano anzitutto le imprese a assumersi responsabilità «per il loro impatto sulla società»;

— quali azioni intende adottare per garantire il rispetto della direttiva 2002/14/CE che istituisce un quadro generale relativo all'informazione e alla consultazione dei lavoratori e favorire il necessario dialogo tra la dirigenza e i rappresentanti dei lavoratori;

— se ritiene compatibili con il rilancio del settore manifatturiero e dell'economia europea, lo spostamento e la delocalizzazione di importanti realtà produttive, come quella della Marlboro Classics, che hanno profondi legami con la realtà in cui sono inserite e che costituiscono il fulcro di importanti reti di attività economiche determinanti per il benessere e lo sviluppo del territorio;

— quali azioni ha intrapreso o intende intraprendere per impedire l'impoverimento del sistema produttivo europeo con le gravi conseguenze economiche e sociali che ne derivano a causa dei sempre più frequenti processi di delocalizzazione?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(20 agosto 2013)

La Commissione non ha il potere di interferire nelle decisioni particolari delle imprese. Essa le sollecita tuttavia a seguire le buone pratiche in tema di gestione proattiva e socialmente responsabile delle ristrutturazioni. A seguito del suo Libro verde del gennaio 2012 ([1]) e dell'adozione ad opera del Parlamento europeo, il 15 gennaio 2013, della relazione Cercas, la Commissione presenterà entro la fine del 2013 una comunicazione in merito a un quadro di qualità per le ristrutturazioni che farà il punto della legislazione e delle iniziative unionali in materia di ristrutturazione e presenterà le pratiche ottimali da applicarsi ad opera di tutti gli stakeholder.

Spetta alle autorità nazionali competenti, compresi i tribunali, assicurare che la legislazione nazionale a recepimento della direttiva UE cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato sia applicata correttamente ed efficacemente dal datore di lavoro in questione considerate le circostanze specifiche del caso.

Come menzionato sopra, la Commissione non ha il potere di interferire nelle decisioni particolari delle imprese. Essa ritiene che le migliori prospettive per la ripresa del settore manifatturiero, in particolare quello del tessile e dell'abbigliamento, risiedano nell'innovazione, nella creatività, nella sostenibilità e nello sviluppo delle competenze.

([1]) Cfr. le risposte e una sintesi all'indirizzo http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8908&langId=en

La Commissione procede nell'implementazione della strategia Europa 2020 nel campo della politica industriale con il fine di accrescere il peso dell'industria manifatturiera portandolo a oltre il 20 % del PIL. La Commissione sta diffondendo l'uso delle prove di competitività della nuova normativa e i check-up del quadro normativo già in vigore per valutarne l'impatto. Essa esamina anche le modalità per rendere più efficace l'amministrazione pubblica, per alleviare le problematiche che incontrano industrie specifiche e per determinare come la Commissione e gli Stati membri possano meglio integrare le loro politiche ai fini della crescita e della creazione di posti di lavoro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007803/13
to the Commission
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Restructuring of Marlboro Classics

The clothing company Marlboro Classics was recently sold to the Emerisque Brands investment fund. A few months after the acquisition, on 13 June 2013, the new owner announced that the company would be undergoing a major restructuring exercise to dispense with the women's and 'Facon' lines, to transfer production from the current site and to relocate or outsource a substantial part of the business. The restructuring would see at least 99 of the 166 employees made redundant.

The company is one of Italy's leading manufacturers; relocating it would result in the impoverishment of the Italian manufacturing sector and would clearly contradict the Italian Government's and the Commission's repeatedly stated objective of reviving the sector. Production at Marlboro Classics also makes a major contribution to the economy of Maglio di Sopra in the municipality of Valdagno (Vicenza), where the company is based, and any relocation would have a huge social impact.

— Does the Commission believe that Marlboro Classics' management has acted in accordance with the principle of properly integrating into its business strategy the principles of corporate social responsibility, which call on businesses above all to assume responsibility 'for their impact on society'?

— What action will it take to ensure compliance with Directive 2002/14/EC establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees and facilitating a necessary dialogue between management and employees' representatives?

— Does it believe that transferring and relocating leading manufacturing companies, such as Marlboro Classics, which have close ties with the areas in which they are based and which are the cornerstones of major business networks crucial to the prosperity and development of the region, is compatible with the revival of the manufacturing sector and of the European economy?

— What action has it taken or does it intend to take to prevent the impoverishment of the European manufacturing sector — and the associated serious economic and social consequences — as a result of ever more frequent relocation processes?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The Commission has no powers to interfere in specific company's decisions. It urges them, however, to follow good practices of anticipation and socially responsible management of restructuring. Following its January 2012 Green Paper ([1]) and the adoption by the European Parliament on 15 January 2013 of the Cercas report, the Commission will put forward by the end of 2013 a communication establishing a Quality Framework for Restructuring will outline the EU legislation and initiatives relevant to restructuring and present the best practices to be implemented by all stakeholders.

It is up to the competent national authorities, including the courts, to ensure that the national legislation transposing the EU Directive to which the Honourable Member refers is correctly and effectively applied by the employer concerned, having regard to the specific circumstances of the case.

As mentioned above, the Commission has no powers to interfere in specific company's decisions. It believes that the best chances for a revival of the manufacturing sector, especially of the textile and clothing sector, lie in innovation, creativity, sustainability and skills development.

The Commission is pursuing the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy in the field of industrial policy, which aims to increase the share of manufacturing to over 20% of GDP. The Commission is disseminating the use of competiveness proofing of new legislation and the use of fitness checks on existing legislation to evaluate their impact. It is also looking at how public administration could be made more effective, how the problems of specific industries could be alleviated and how the Commission and the Member States can best integrate their policies to achieve growth and jobs.

([1]) See the replies and a summary under http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8908&langId=en.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-007804/13
aan de Commissie
Judith A. Merkies (S&D)
(2 juli 2013)

Betreft: Transparantie in belkosten

Gezamenlijk Europees beleid rondom mobiele telefonie staat nog in de kinderschoenen. Terwijl burgers in de hele EU overal vrij kunnen reizen en werken, stuit een telefoontje over de grens nog steeds op hoge roamingkosten. Ook over de precieze samenstelling van hun telefoonrekening tasten burgers vaak nog in het duister.

In 2012 lanceerde de Commissie een werkgroep die publieke en private spelers verbond om samen na te denken over hun energiekosten die in heel Europa beter in kaart gebracht konden worden. Deze „Working Group on Transparency in EU Retail Energy Markets" kwam vervolgens met een aantal aanbevelingen om Europeanen meer wegwijs te maken in de wereld van energie. Geconcludeerd werd dat — in het algemeen — consumenten vooral simpele en begrijpelijke informatie moeten krijgen op het moment dat ze zoeken naar de voor hun beste optie.

Inmiddels staan telefoonbedrijven niet stil, ook niet in het creëren van nieuwe bedrijfsmodellen. Steeds vaker zien we bijvoorbeeld dat de mogelijkheid geboden wordt toestellen te leasen. Transparantie van telefoonrekeningen is van vitaal belang om klanten niet verdwaald te laten raken.

1. Richt de Commissie om transparantie van telefoonrekeningen te verhogen een werkgroep op, zoals die bestaat voor energierekeningen?

2. Welke acties onderneemt de Commissie om informatie over de hoogte van telefoontarieven die aanbieders bieden, transparant te maken en deze op eenvoudige manier toegankelijk te maken voor consumenten?

3. Wat doet de Commissie om consumenten meer inzicht te geven in roamingkosten?

4. Betekent de verlaging van de roamingtarieven op 1 juli een eerste stap naar de afschaffing van roaming? Op welke termijn kan deze plaatsvinden?

Antwoord van mevrouw Kroes namens de Commissie
(9 augustus 2013)

De mobiele markt biedt de consument een waaier aan diensten en tarieven aan, zowel afzonderlijk als in bundels, waardoor de consument zelf kan beslissen welke dienst het best aan zijn eisen voldoet. Overeenkomstig de telecommunicatieregels van de EU moeten de lidstaten erop toezien dat in contracten voor de levering van diensten op een heldere, begrijpelijke en gemakkelijk toegankelijke manier wordt gespecificeerd welke diensten de beheerder levert.

Om te zorgen voor meer transparantie en tevens om roamingklanten in staat te stellen geïnformeerde beslissingen te nemen, moeten dienstverleners hun roamingklanten gratis informeren over de roamingkosten die van toepassing zijn. Net als voor alle telecomaanbiedingen moet deze informatie duidelijk en begrijpelijk zijn, vergelijking toelaten en transparant zijn wat de prijzen en kenmerken van de diensten betreft.

De nieuwe roamingregels schrijven daarnaast expliciet voor dat de reclame voor en marketing van roamingaanbiedingen moet voldoen aan Richtlijn 2005/29/EG betreffende oneerlijke handelspraktijken van ondernemingen jegens consumenten op de interne markt. Specifiek voor dataroaming moet elke dienstverlener zijn roamingklanten de mogelijkheid bieden om te kiezen voor een faciliteit waarmee zij kosteloos informatie kunnen ontvangen over de stand van hun rekening, en die waarborgt dat de totale kosten voor gereguleerde dataroamingdiensten een bepaald maximumbedrag niet overschrijden zonder de uitdrukkelijke toestemming van de klant.

De Commissie is voornemens begin september 2013 een wetgevingsinitiatief voor een werkelijk eengemaakte telecommarkt voor te stellen. De Commissie wenst voort te bouwen op de concurrentiebevorderende maatregelen van de roamingverordening van 2012 en overweegt om ook roaming in het aangekondigde wetgevingsinitiatief op te nemen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007804/13
to the Commission
Judith A. Merkies (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Call charge transparency

A common European policy on mobile telephony is still in its infancy. While citizens are free to travel and work anywhere in the EU, a cross-border telephone call still results in high roaming costs. Likewise, citizens are often still in the dark about the precise composition of their telephone bill.

In 2012 the Commission launched a working group which brought together public and private players to jointly consider how they could better map their energy costs throughout Europe. This 'Working Group on Transparency in EU Retail Energy Markets' subsequently came up with a number of recommendations to make Europeans more streetwise when it comes to the energy sector. The conclusion was that — in general — consumers should above all receive simple and understandable information at the point when they are seeking out the best option for themselves.

Meanwhile, telephone companies have not been idle and have also been busy creating new business models. More and more often, for example, we are seeing the option being offered to lease handsets. Transparency of telephone bills is vitally important so as not to leave customers feeling lost.

1. Is the Commission setting up a working group, like the existing one for energy bills, to increase the transparency of telephone bills?

2. What action is the Commission taking to make information about providers' telephone charges transparent and easily accessible for consumers?

3. What is the Commission doing to give consumers a better understanding of roaming costs?

4. Is the reduction of roaming charges on 1 July the first step towards abolishing roaming? What is the possible timeframe for this to take place?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

Mobile market offers its customers a variety of services and tariffs, both as a stand alone or in bundles that allow consumers to choose services that best correspond to their needs. The EU telecom rules require Member States to ensure that the contracts for the provision of services specify in a clear, comprehensive and easily accessible format the services provided by the operator.

In order to improve the transparency and to help roaming customers to make informed decisions, providers are required to supply roaming customers with information free of charge on the roaming charges applicable. As for all telecommunications offers, this information has to be clear, understandable, permit comparison and be transparent with regard to prices and service characteristics.

The new roaming rules further requires explicitly that advertising and marketing of roaming offers to consumers comply with Directive 2005/29/EC concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market. Specifically for data roaming, each roaming provider shall grant its roaming customers the opportunity to opt free of charge for a facility which provides information on the accumulated consumption and which guarantees that, without the customer's explicit consent, the accumulated expenditure for regulated data roaming services does not exceed a specified financial limit.

The Commission intends presenting in early September 2013 a legislative initiative to create a true Telecoms Single Market. Building on the pro-competitive measures of the 2012 Roaming Regulation, the Commission is considering to also address roaming as part of the forthcoming legislative initiative.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007805/13
to the Commission
Fiona Hall (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Commission declaration in the Energy Efficiency Directive

In the Energy Efficiency Directive adopted in 2012, the EU institutions declared that they would apply the same requirements to the buildings they own and occupy as those applicable to the Member States under Articles 5 and 6 of Directive 2012/27/EU.

1. Will the Commission confirm that it intends, as of 1 January 2014, to renovate, to at least the minimum energy performance requirements, 3% of the total floor area of heated and/or cooled buildings owned and occupied by the Commission each year?

2. Is there an overarching authority responsible for the implementation of the abovementioned requirement across all the EU institutions? If yes, with whom does this responsibility lie? If not, who is responsible for this policy within each institution?

3. What are the estimated energy savings from the application by the EU institutions of the above measures, up until 2020?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

In line with the statement made by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission when the Energy Efficiency Directive was adopted, the European Commission confirms its intention to apply to the buildings it owns and occupies the same requirements applicable to the buildings of Member States' central governments under Articles 5 and 6 of Directive 2012/27/EU. In the case of the Commission, the responsible department for the implementation of these requirements is the Office for Infrastructure and Logistics, in Brussels (OIB) and in Luxembourg (OIL). The Commission is currently carrying out estimates of the targeted energy savings and possible options to realise them (*i.e.* renovations to cost-optimal levels or alternatives).

Independently, the Commission continues with its efforts to reduce the energy consumption of its buildings. With the measures implemented during the last five years the Commission has improved the energy performance of the Commission's building portfolio by almost 20%.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007806/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiona Hall (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Political prisoners in West Papua

The Indonesian Government has denied the existence of political prisoners in West Papua, despite a significant increase in the numbers of political arrests and convictions in recent months. Political prisoners are often tortured, abused and subject to unfair trials by security forces.

The Indonesian Government's strict and militarised control over West Papua criminalises political activity in order to suppress ongoing struggles for independence. According to a recent report by TAPOL (a UK-based NGO campaigning for human rights, peace and democracy in Indonesia), the government keeps Papua closed to the international community to prevent foreigners from monitoring the human rights situation.

Considering the EU-Indonesian dialogue on human rights, how does the European External Action Service (EEAS) intend to address the actions of Indonesian security forces against Papuans who are arrested and imprisoned for political offences?

What action is the EEAS taking to curb political arrests in Indonesia?

What action is the EEAS taking to encourage Indonesia to provide legitimate freedom of speech and democratic space in West Papua?

Will the EEAS be encouraging the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression to prioritise the situation in West Papua during his visit to Indonesia this year?

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

The EU raised concerns about reports of excessive use of force by security forces against demonstrators in Papua during the 3rd session of the EU-Indonesia Human Rights Dialogue. The EU also raised blockages to visits to Papua by NGOs, international organisations and journalists.

The EU would encourage Indonesia to accept a request for a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression which would include the situation in Papua.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007807/13
an die Kommission
Herbert Reul (PPE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Neuregulierung der Entsorgungswirtschaft in Ungarn (Gesetz CL XXXV/2012 (AbfG))

Das neue Abfallgesetz Ungarns, welches am 26. November 2012 vom ungarischen Parlament endgültig verabschiedet wurde und am 1. Januar 2013 in Kraft getreten ist, enthält Regelungen, die massive Auswirkungen für die privaten, gemischten und kommunalen Entsorgungsunternehmen haben.

Folgende Klauseln sollten auf eine Konformität mit dem europäischen Recht geprüft werden:

§ 81 Mehrheitsbeteiligung

Beantragung neuer Lizenzen bis zum 30. Juni 2013 für die Bewirtschaftung von Haushaltsabfällen. Voraussetzung: Staat oder Gemeinde als Mehrheitseigentümer des Unternehmens

Non-Profit Status

Gewinne der Unternehmen dürfen künftig nicht erwirtschaftet und an Gesellschafter ausgeschüttet werden.

§ 68 Deponieabgabe

10 EUR pro Tonne ab dem 1. Januar 2013 mit einer Erhöhung um 10 EUR jährlich bis 2016.

§ 49 Energiepauschale

Ab Januar 2013 müssen Unternehmen eine Energiepauschale von 0,34 EUR pro Tonne für jeden Einwohner an das Energieamt zahlen.

§ 91 Gebührenerhöhung

Abfallgebühren dürfen im Jahr 2013 um höchstens 4,2 % gegenüber den Gebühren von 2012 erhöht werden.

Diese Regelungen führen zwangsweise zu Verlusten, da die um circa ein Drittel steigenden Kosten nicht an den Verursacher weitergegeben werden dürfen.

Außerdem ist zu prüfen, ob die Mehrheitsbeteiligung (§ 81) gegen die Niederlassungsfreiheit, die im Artikel 49 S. 1 AEUV festgelegt ist, verstößt. Außerdem sollte ein Verstoß gegen die Wettbewerbsvorschriften des Artikels 106 Absatz 1 AEUV durch diese Regelungen geprüft werden.

Kann die Kommission diese Angelegenheit untersuchen und die Konformität des ungarischen Abfallgesetzes mit dem europäischen Recht überprüfen?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(28. August 2013)

Die Kommission führt zurzeit eine Konformitätsprüfung der nationalen Rechtsvorschriften durch, die in den Mitgliedstaaten zur Umsetzung der Abfallrahmenrichtlinie ([1]) erlassen wurden. Die Anliegen des Herrn Abgeordneten werden in diesem Kontext geprüft werden. Des Weiteren sind bei der Kommission Beschwerden eingegangen, in denen geltend gemacht wird, dass neue Abfallbeseitigungsregelungen in Ungarn nicht mit der Niederlassungsfreiheit (Artikel 49 AEUV) und den Wettbewerbsvorschriften (Artikel 106 AEUV) vereinbar sind. Diesen Beschwerden wird zurzeit nachgegangen.

([1]) Richtlinie 2008/98/EG, ABl. L 312 vom 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007807/13
to the Commission
Herbert Reul (PPE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: New waste disposal regulations in Hungary (Law CL XXXV/2012 (Waste Disposal Act))

The new Hungarian waste law, which was finally passed by the Hungarian Parliament on 26 November 2012 and entered into force on 1 January 2013, contains regulations that have a massive impact on private, mixed and communal disposal firms.

The following sections should be checked for conformity with European law:

Section 81 Majority holding

Applications for new household waste management licences must be filed by 30 June 2013. Criterion: the State or commune must have a majority holding in the firm.

Non-profit status

Firms must not realise a profit for their shareholders.

Section 68 Landfill tax

EUR 10 per tonne from 1 January 2013, to rise by EUR 10 per annum up to 2016.

Section 49 Energy fee

As of January 2013, firms must pay the Energy Office an energy tax of EUR 0.34 per tonne per resident.

Section 91 Increases in charges

Waste disposal charges may be increased in 2013 by no more than 4.2% as compared with the charges for 2012.

These regulations will necessarily result in losses, because costs, which have risen by approximately one-third, cannot be passed on to the source.

Furthermore, it should be determined whether the majority holding requirement (Section 81) contravenes freedom of establishment as set out in Article 49(1) of the TFEU. It should also be determined whether these regulations contravene the competition rules in Article 106(1) of the TFEU.

Can the Commission investigate these matters and verify that the Hungarian waste law complies with European law?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 August 2013)

The Commission is currently carrying out a conformity check of national legislation transposing the Waste Framework Directive ([1]) in all Member States. The concerns of the Honourable Member will be examined within this exercise. The Commission has also received complaints claiming incompatibility of new waste disposal regulations in Hungary with freedom of establishment (Article 49 TFEU) and competition rules (Article 106 TFEU). These complaints are under examination.

([1]) Directive 2008/98/EC, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007808/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Inwigilacja elektroniczna PRISM

Ujawniono informacje na temat prowadzonej na wielką skalę inwigilacji elektronicznej w USA przez Narodową Agencję Bezpieczeństwa za pomocą programu PRISM. Ściśle tajny amerykański program PRISM daje amerykańskiemu wywiadowi dostęp do wszystkich prywatnych danych internautów (plików audio i wideo, maili, fotografii czy dokumentów) zgromadzonych na serwerach największych usługodawców Internetowych takich jak: Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, YouTube, Skype, AOL i Apple.

Pytania:

1. Czy Komisja posiada informacje, jaki jest zasięg inwigilacji prowadzonej w ramach tego programu; czy dotyczy on wyłącznie obywateli USA, czy obejmuje też cudzoziemców?

2. Czy Komisja dostrzega zagrożenie dla ochrony prywatności obywateli UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(2 września 2013 r.)

Komisja uprzejmie prosi szanownego Pana Posła o zapoznanie się z odpowiedzią na pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi na piśmie nr E-007934/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007808/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: PRISM electronic surveillance programme

New information has emerged about the mass electronic surveillance of US citizens by the country's National Security Agency through the PRISM programme. The top secret PRISM programme gives the US secret service access to all of the personal data (audio and video files, emails, photographs and documents) stored by Internet users on the servers of the largest Internet service providers such as Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, YouTube, Skype, AOL and Apple.

I would like to ask the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the scope of the surveillance carried out through this programme, and does it know whether the programme is targeted only at US citizens or also at foreigners?

2. Does the Commission believe there is any threat to the privacy of EU citizens?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Commision would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007934/2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007809/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Les États-Unis se moquent du respect de la protection des données

Dernier rebondissement en date dans l'affaire Snowden: les États-Unis espionnent l'Union européenne. Courriers électroniques, documents internes, conversations téléphoniques, rien n'échappe à l'œil de Washington. Selon les révélations du journal allemand *Der Spiegel*, le document de la NSA, daté de 2010, explique comment l'agence de sécurité s'y est prise pour espionner son allié européen. Le dispositif a permis d'infiltrer les réseaux informatiques de l'Union européenne à Bruxelles, et de placer des systèmes d'écoute dans ses bureaux, y compris dans l'immeuble du Conseil européen où les chefs d'État disposent de lignes téléphoniques sécurisées. Des écoutes qui concernent également les représentations de Bruxelles à Washington et à l'ONU.

1. Comptez-vous réagir fermement à ces pratiques indignes?

2. Comment?

3. Partagez-vous l'avis qu'une des actions prioritaires à mener est de geler les négociations sur un accord de libre-échange avec les États-Unis, lancées lors du G8 en Irlande, tant que les Européens n'obtiennent pas des garanties suffisantes sur la protection des données des citoyens?

4. Rejoignez-vous notre position qui est de dévoiler le mandat de négociation de cet accord transatlantique, puisque Washington a déjà certainement dû en prendre connaissance via ses services secrets?

Réponse
(16 septembre 2013)

1. Dans la mesure où des États membres auraient été espionnés, il appartient à chacun d'entre eux de décider de la manière de réagir.

2. C'est aux institutions de l'UE qu'il incombe d'aborder avec les autorités américaines, le cas échéant, les questions ayant trait à la surveillance dont auraient fait l'objet des institutions de l'UE.

3. Le Conseil n'a pas demandé que les négociations relatives à l'accord de libre-échange avec les États-Unis soient gelées.

4. Quant au mandat de négociation de cet accord, il restera classifié «restreint» conformément aux règles applicables.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007809/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: The United States is disregarding respect for data protection

The latest development in the Snowden case to date: the United States is spying on the European Union. E-mails, internal documents, telephone conversations, nothing escapes Washington's watchful eye. According to revelations in the German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, the National Security Agency (NSA) document, dated 2010, explains how the security agency was tasked with spying on its European ally. The order allowed it to infiltrate the EU's IT networks in Brussels and to place tapping systems in its offices, including in the European Council building, where the Heads of State or Government have secure telephone lines. Representations from Brussels in Washington and at the UN are also being tapped.

1. Do you intend to react strongly to these disgraceful practices?

2. How do you intend to react?

3. Do you share the opinion that one of the priority actions to be taken is to freeze the negotiations on a free trade agreement with the United States launched during the G8 in Ireland until Europeans are given sufficient assurances about the protection of citizens' data?

4. Do you share our belief that we should disclose the negotiating mandate for this transatlantic agreement, since Washington is undoubtedly already aware of it thanks to its secret services?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

1. In as far as Member States have allegedly been spied upon, it is for each Member State to decide how to react.

2. It is the competence and responsibility of EU institutions to raise with the US authorities, if appropriate, issues related to the alleged surveillance of EU institutions.

3. The Council has not asked that the negotiations on a free trade agreement with the United States be frozen.

4. As to the negotiation mandate for the negotiation of this agreement, it shall remain classified as restricted in accordance with the applicable rules.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007810/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Les États-Unis se moquent du respect de la protection des données

Dernier rebondissement en date dans l'affaire Snowden: les États-Unis espionnent l'Union européenne. Courriers électroniques, documents internes, conversations téléphoniques, rien n'échappe à l'œil de Washington. Selon les révélations du journal allemand Der Spiegel, le document de la NSA, daté de 2010, explique comment l'agence de sécurité s'y est prise pour espionner son allié européen. Le dispositif a permis d'infiltrer les réseaux informatiques de l'Union européenne à Bruxelles, et de placer des systèmes d'écoute dans ses bureaux, y compris dans l'immeuble du Conseil européen où les chefs d'État disposent de lignes téléphoniques sécurisées. Des écoutes qui concernent également les représentations de Bruxelles à Washington et à l'ONU.

1. Comptez-vous réagir fermement à ces pratiques indignes?

2. Comment?

3. Partagez-vous l'avis qu'une des actions prioritaires à mener est de geler les négociations sur un accord de libre-échange avec les États-Unis, lancées lors du G8 en Irlande, tant que les Européens n'obtiennent pas des garanties suffisantes sur la protection des données des citoyens?

4. Rejoignez-vous notre position qui est de dévoiler le mandat de négociation de cet accord transatlantique, puisque Washington a déjà certainement dû en prendre connaissance via ses services secrets?

Réponse donnée par la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante Ashton au nom de la Commission
(24 septembre 2013)

La Commission a exprimé sa profonde inquiétude et a demandé des éclaircissements complets et immédiats de la part des États-Unis au sujet des activités de renseignement révélées par M. Snowden dans la mesure où elles concernent les citoyens européens et les bureaux de l'UE. Dès le 1er juillet 2013, Catherine Ashton a personnellement abordé la question avec le secrétaire d'État M. Kerry au Brunei, et par téléphone avec la conseillère du président Obama pour la sécurité nationale, Mme Susan Rice.

Le projet ambitieux de partenariat transatlantique sur le commerce et l'investissement (PTCI) en cours de négociation revêt une grande importance pour la croissance et l'économie de l'UE. La Commission a clairement fait savoir que, bien que les négociations commerciales entre l'Union européenne et les États-Unis ne devraient pas être affectées par ces révélations, l'aboutissement de négotiations aussi globales et ambitieuses exige de la confiance, de la transparence et de la clarté entre les partenaires de négociation. À cet égard, un groupe de travail ad hoc UE/États-Unis sur la protection des données a été mis en place pour examiner ces questions de manière plus approfondie. La Commission a été soutenue dans cette approche par les autres institutions européennes et les États membres. Elle fera rapport au Parlement européen et au Conseil de l'Union européenne.

Les directives adoptées pour la négociation du PTCI se présentent sous la forme d'un document du Conseil. La décision politique de lancer une procédure de déclassification du document incombe aux États membres.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007810/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: The United States is disregarding respect for data protection

The latest development in the Snowden case to date: the United States is spying on the European Union. E-mails, internal documents, telephone conversations, nothing escapes Washington's watchful eye. According to revelations in the German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, the National Security Agency (NSA) document, dated 2010, explains how the security agency was tasked with spying on its European ally. The order allowed it to infiltrate the EU's IT networks in Brussels and to place tapping systems in its offices, including in the European Council building, where the Heads of State or Government have secure telephone lines. Representations from Brussels in Washington and at the UN are also being tapped.

1. Do you intend to react strongly to these disgraceful practices?

2. How do you intend to react?

3. Do you share the opinion that one of the priority actions to be taken is to freeze the negotiations on a free trade agreement with the United States launched during the G8 in Ireland until Europeans are given sufficient assurances about the protection of citizens' data?

4. Do you share our belief that we should disclose the negotiating mandate for this transatlantic agreement, since Washington is undoubtedly already aware of it thanks to its secret services?

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

The Commission has expressed its strong concerns and has sought a full and immediate clarification from the United States on the intelligence activities reported by Mr Snowden to the extent that they concern EU citizens and premises. As early as 1 July 2013, the HRVP raised the issue personally with Secretary of State Kerry in Brunei, and by phone with President Obama's National Security Advisor Susan Rice.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) represents an ambitious negotiation of major importance for the EU growth and economy. The Commission has made clear that, whilst the EU/US trade negotiations should not be affected by these revelations, there needs to be confidence, transparency and clarity among the negotiating partners for such a comprehensive and ambitious negotiation to succeed. In this regard, an ad-hoc EU-US working group on data protection has been set up to examine these issues further. In pursuing this approach, the Commission has been supported by other European institutions and by the Member States. The Commission will report back to Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

The adopted negotiating directives for the TTIP are a Council document. The political decision to start a procedure of declassification of the document has to be taken by Member States.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007811/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: La Russie viole les Droits de l'homme

Le président russe Vladimir Poutine a promulgué dimanche deux lois controversées punissant tout acte de «propagande» homosexuelle devant mineur et réprimant les «offenses aux sentiments religieux», dénoncées comme liberticides par les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme.

Aux termes de la première loi, la «propagande pour les relations sexuelles non traditionnelles devant mineur» est passible d'amendes de 4 000 à 5 000 roubles (125-160 dollars) pour une personne physique. Une personne dépositaire de l'autorité publique risque une amende allant jusqu'à 1 700 dollars et une personne morale, de 26 000 à 32 000 dollars.

Les sanctions sont encore plus sévères si cette «propagande» est effectuée sur Internet, les organisations et autres entités juridiques risquant par exemple dans ce cas d'être fermées jusqu'à 90 jours.

Les étrangers, quant à eux, risquent une amende pouvant aller jusqu'à 100 000 roubles (3 200 dollars), et pourront en outre être détenus 15 jours et expulsés.

Le président a par ailleurs promulgué une loi réprimant les «offenses aux sentiments religieux des croyants» par une peine pouvant aller jusqu'à trois ans de prison.

Ce texte a été rédigé à la suite de l'affaire des Pussy Riot, un groupe contestataire dont deux membres purgent une peine de deux ans de camp de travail pour avoir chanté une prière contre Vladimir Poutine dans la cathédrale de Moscou.

Le groupe est devenu depuis un symbole de la protestation contre le régime de M. Poutine, revenu au Kremlin en mai 2012 pour un troisième mandat de président et accusé par l'opposition d'atteintes aux libertés.

Ces derniers mois, ONG et défenseurs des Droits de l'homme n'ont cessé de dénoncer l'adoption de lois jugées répressives en Russie.

1. Partagez-vous l'avis d'après lequel les deux lois promulguées dimanche ont un caractère idéologique et sont contraires à la liberté de parole et à la liberté de conscience?

2. Quelle est votre réaction?

3. Comptez-vous entamer des pourparlers avec les autorités russes pour qu'elles reviennent à des positions plus en adéquation avec les valeurs européennes et surtout avec les Droits de l'homme?

Réponse
(28 octobre 2013)

Le Conseil est pleinement informé des développements évoqués par l'Honorable Parlementaire. L'Union européenne suit la situation très attentivement et la Haute Représentante pour les affaires étrangères et la politique de sécurité s'est déclarée publiquement déçue par l'adoption, d'abord au niveau régional, puis maintenant également au niveau national, d'une législation interdisant la «propagande homosexuelle».

En ce qui concerne la loi réprimant les «offenses aux sentiments religieux des croyants», le Conseil, dans ses conclusions de novembre 2009, s'est déclaré vivement préoccupé par le fait que les pays qui disposent d'une législation relative à la diffamation des religions ont souvent recours à celle-ci pour brimer les minorités religieuses et limiter la liberté d'expression, ainsi que la liberté de religion ou de conviction. Il a également souligné que ces droits ne peuvent faire l'objet d'aucune restriction imposée au nom de la religion et que cette dernière ne peut en aucun cas servir à justifier ou à tolérer la restriction ou la violation de droits individuels.

L'Union européenne a mis à profit les deux derniers cycles de consultations régulières sur les Droits de l'homme qu'elle a tenus avec la Fédération de Russie (en décembre 2012 et en mai 2013) pour obtenir des éclaircissements sur la compatibilité de ces lois avec les engagements internationaux pris par la Russie, notamment dans le cadre de la convention européenne des Droits de l'homme, et elle a invité ce pays à faire en sorte que ces textes soient conformes à ses engagements. L'Union européenne suit attentivement cette question, notamment en ce qui concerne les incidences de cette législation sur la situation des Droits de l'homme en Russie, et continuera à la soulever dans le cadre de toutes les enceintes appropriées.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007811/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Human rights violations in Russia

On Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin passed two controversial laws punishing any act of homosexual 'propaganda' towards minors and punishing 'insults to religious feelings', denounced by human rights defenders as being anti-freedom.

Under the first law, 'propaganda for non-traditional sexual relationships to children' is punishable by a fine of 4 000 to 5 000 roubles (USD 125-160) for a natural person. Public authorities risk fines of up to USD 1 700 while for legal entities the figure is between USD 26 000 and 32 000.

The sanctions are even more severe if this 'propaganda' is disseminated over the Internet, with organisations and other legal entities risking for example being closed for up to 90 days in such cases.

Foreigners face a fine of up to 100 000 roubles (USD 3 200) and could also be imprisoned for 15 days and deported.

The President has also passed a law punishing 'insults to believers' religious feelings' by penalty of up to three years in prison.

This text was drafted following the case of the anti-establishment group Pussy Riot, two of the members of which are serving two-year sentences in a labour camp for singing a prayer against Vladimir Putin in Moscow cathedral.

The group has since become a symbol of protest against the regime led by Mr Putin, who returned to the Kremlin in May 2012 for a third presidential term and whom the opposition accuse of attacking freedoms.

In recent months, NGOs and human rights defenders have tirelessly denounced the adoption of laws considered to be repressive in Russia.

1. Do you share the opinion that the two laws passed on Sunday are of an ideological nature and contradict freedom of speech and freedom of conscience?

2. What is your reaction?

3. Do you intend to enter into talks with the Russian authorities in order that they return to positions which are more in line with European values and especially with human rights?

Reply
(28 October 2013)

The Council is fully aware of the developments referred to by the Honourable Member. The European Union has been following these developments very closely, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy has publicly expressed her disappointment at the adoption, first at regional, and now also at national level, of legislation prohibiting 'homosexual propaganda'.

Regarding the law on 'insulting religious feelings of believers', in its November 2009 conclusions the Council expressed its deep concern that in countries that have legislation on defamation of religions, such legislation had often been used to mistreat religious minorities and to limit freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. The Council furthermore underlined that no restrictions in the name of religion may be placed on those rights and that religion may never be used to justify or condone the restriction or violation of individual rights.

The European Union has used the last two rounds of its regular human rights consultations with the Russian Federation (December 2012 and May 2013) to enquire about the compatibility of these laws with Russia's international commitments, in particular with the European Convention on Human Rights, and to invite Russia to ensure that the laws comply with its commitments. The European Union is monitoring this issue closely, in particular the impact of this legislation on the human rights situation in Russia. The European Union will continue to raise it in all appropriate fora.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007812/13
à la Commission (Vice-Présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — La Russie viole les Droits de l'homme

Le président russe Vladimir Poutine a promulgué dimanche deux lois controversées punissant tout acte de «propagande» homosexuelle devant mineur et réprimant les «offenses aux sentiments religieux», dénoncées comme liberticides par les défenseurs des Droits de l'homme.

Aux termes de la première loi, la «propagande pour les relations sexuelles non traditionnelles devant mineur» est passible d'amendes de 4 000 à 5 000 roubles (125-160 dollars) pour une personne physique. Une personne dépositaire de l'autorité publique risque une amende allant jusqu'à 1 700 dollars et une personne morale, de 26 000 à 32 000 dollars.

Les sanctions sont encore plus sévères si cette «propagande» est effectuée sur Internet, les organisations et autres entités juridiques risquant par exemple dans ce cas d'être fermées jusqu'à 90 jours.

Les étrangers, quant à eux, risquent une amende pouvant aller jusqu'à 100 000 roubles (3 200 dollars), et pourront en outre être détenus 15 jours et expulsés.

Le président a par ailleurs promulgué une loi réprimant les «offenses aux sentiments religieux des croyants» par une peine pouvant aller jusqu'à trois ans de prison.

Ce texte a été rédigé à la suite de l'affaire des Pussy Riot, un groupe contestataire dont deux membres purgent une peine de deux ans de camp de travail pour avoir chanté une prière contre Vladimir Poutine dans la cathédrale de Moscou.

Le groupe est devenu depuis un symbole de la protestation contre le régime de M. Poutine, revenu au Kremlin en mai 2012 pour un troisième mandat de président et accusé par l'opposition d'atteintes aux libertés.

Ces derniers mois, ONG et défenseurs des Droits de l'homme n'ont cessé de dénoncer l'adoption de lois jugées répressives en Russie.

1. Partagez-vous l'avis d'après lequel les deux lois promulguées dimanche ont un caractère idéologique et sont contraires à la liberté de parole et à la liberté de conscience?

2. Quelle est votre réaction?

3. Comptez-vous entamer des pourparlers avec les autorités russes pour qu'elles reviennent à des positions plus en adéquation avec les valeurs européennes et surtout avec les Droits de l'homme?

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

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante est pleinement consciente des évènements récents évoqués par l'Honorable Parlementaire, comme indiqué dans les réponses aux questions E-005738/13 et E-006792/2013 ([1]) qu'il a déjà posées cette année. Elle s'est intéressée de très près à ces évènements et a exprimé publiquement sa déception face à ces projets de lois interdisant la «propagande homosexuelle», qui sont à présent adoptés au niveau national, après l'avoir été au niveau régional.

S'agissant de la loi sur les «offenses aux sentiments religieux», le Conseil a indiqué dans ses conclusions de novembre 2009 qu'il était profondément préoccupé par le fait que, dans les pays qui disposent de lois sur la diffamation des religions, celles-ci ont souvent été utilisées pour maltraiter les minorités religieuses et limiter la liberté d'expression et la liberté de religion ou de conviction. Il a en outre souligné que ces droits ne pouvaient faire l'objet d'aucune restriction au nom de la religion, et que celle-ci ne saurait en aucun cas être invoquée pour justifier ou tolérer la restriction ou la violation des droits individuels.

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

L'Union européenne a profité de ses deux derniers exercices périodiques de consultation sur les Droits de l'homme avec la Fédération de Russie (décembre 2012 et mai 2013) pour tenter de savoir si les lois en cause étaient conformes aux obligations internationales de la Russie, en particulier la Convention européenne des Droits de l'homme, et inviter ce pays à mettre lesdites lois en conformité avec les engagements qu'il a pris. Elle suit de près cette question, notamment les conséquences de ces lois sur la situation des Droits de l'homme en Russie, et continuera à la soulever dans tous les contextes appropriés.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007812/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights violations in Russia

On Sunday, Russian President Vladimir Putin passed two controversial laws punishing any act of homosexual 'propaganda' towards minors and punishing 'insults to religious feelings', denounced by human rights defenders as being anti-freedom.

Under the first law, 'propaganda for non-traditional sexual relationships to children' is punishable by a fine of 4 000 to 5 000 roubles (USD 125-160) for a natural person. Public authorities risk fines of up to USD 1 700 while for legal entities the figure is between USD 26 000 and 32 000.

The sanctions are even more severe if this 'propaganda' is disseminated over the Internet, with organisations and other legal entities risking for example being closed for up to 90 days in such cases.

Foreigners face a fine of up to 100 000 roubles (USD 3 200) and could also be imprisoned for 15 days and deported.

The President has also passed a law punishing 'insults to believers' religious feelings' by penalty of up to three years in prison.

This text was drafted following the case of the anti-establishment group Pussy Riot, two of the members of which are serving two-year sentences in a labour camp for singing a prayer against Vladimir Putin in Moscow cathedral.

The group has since become a symbol of protest against the regime led by Mr Putin, who returned to the Kremlin in May 2012 for a third presidential term and whom the opposition accuse of attacking freedoms.

In recent months, NGOs and human rights defenders have tirelessly denounced the adoption of laws considered to be repressive in Russia.

1. Do you share the opinion that the two laws passed on Sunday are of an ideological nature and contradict freedom of speech and freedom of conscience?

2. What is your reaction?

3. Do you intend to enter into talks with the Russian authorities in order that they return to positions which are more in line with European values and especially with human rights?

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

The HR/VP is fully aware of the developments referred to by the Honourable Member, as indicated in the answers to questions E-005738/13 and E-006792/2013 ([1]) he asked earlier this year. She has been following these developments very closely, expressing publically her disappointment with the bills, first adopted at regional and now also at national level, prohibiting 'homosexual propaganda'.

On the law on 'insulting religious feelings of believers', the Council expressed in its November 2009 conclusions its deep concern that in countries that have legislation on defamation of religions, such legislation has often been used to mistreat religious minorities and to limit freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. The Council furthermore underlined that no restrictions in the name of religion may be placed on those rights and that religion may never be used to justify or condone the restriction or violation of individual rights.

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

The European Union has used the last two recent rounds of its regular Human Rights Consultations with the Russian Federation (December 2012 and May 2013) to enquire about the conformity of these laws with Russia's international commitments, in particular with the European Convention on Human Rights, and to invite Russia to put them in conformity with its committments.The European Union is closely monitoring this issue and notably the impact of this legislation on the situation of human rights in Russia. The European Union will continue to raise it in all appropriate formats.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007813/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Des cybermilitants condamnés à 10 ans de prison

Sept cybermilitants saoudiens ont été condamnés à des peines de 5 à 10 ans de prison pour «incitation à des manifestations» sur Facebook.

1. Comment se positionne la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante sur cette décision qui va totalement à l'encontre de la liberté d'expression?

2. L'Union européenne va-t-elle dénoncer ces mesures?

3. L'Union européenne compte-t-elle entamer des pourparlers avec les autorités du pays sur cette violation?

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

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a connaissance de l'affaire évoquée par l'Honorable Parlementaire concernant l'Arabie saoudite.

Les déclarations publiques, bien que nécessaires dans certains cas, ne sont qu'une forme d'action diplomatique. Les préoccupations de l'UE en matière de violation des Droits de l'homme dans les pays tiers sont exprimées sans relâche par les représentations diplomatiques et les États membres de l'Union présents dans la région. La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante continuera d'utiliser tout l'éventail de possibilités et d'instruments dont elle dispose pour mettre régulièrement en avant la question des Droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales dans ses échanges tant formels qu'informels avec les autorités saoudiennes.

Bien qu'il n'existe encore aucun accord bilatéral entre l'UE et l'Arabie saoudite et, par conséquent, aucun dialogue politique bilatéral au niveau institutionnel sur les Droits de l'homme, l'UE continuera d'aborder ces questions avec ses interlocuteurs saoudiens en exploitant pleinement les occasions qui se présenteront.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007813/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Cyber activists sentenced to 10 years in prison

Seven Saudi Arabian cyber activists have been sentenced to between five and 10 years in prison for 'inciting protests' on Facebook.

1. What is the Vice-President/High Representative's position on this decision, which is in complete violation of the freedom of expression?

2. Will the European Union denounce these measures?

3. Does the European Union intend to enter into talks with the country's authorities with regard to this violation?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the case raised by the Honourable Member of the European Parliament with regards to Saudi Arabia.

The issuance of public statements, while necessary in some instances, is only one form of diplomatic action. EU diplomatic representations, as well as EU Member States in the region, discuss the EU's concern on Human Rights violations in third countries on a continuous basis. The HR/VP will continue to use the full range of opportunities and instruments available to raise Human Rights and fundamental freedoms regularly both in public and outside the public eye in their contacts with Saudi authorities.

While there are currently no bilateral agreement between the EU and Saudi Arabia and thus no institutional bilateral political dialogue on Human Rights with Saudi Arabia, the EU will continue to raise these issues with its Saudi interlocutors, making full use of the opportunities at its disposal.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007814/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Accord aérien UE-Brésil

1. La Commission est-elle en train de marchander des négociations sur des accords aériens globaux avec le Brésil?

2. Si oui, que contiennent ces négociations et quels sont les objectifs poursuivis par la Commission?

3. Si non, est-il dans les objectifs de la Commission de le faire?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(21 août 2013)

1. Oui, la Commission négocie actuellement un accord global dans le domaine des transports aériens avec le Brésil. En octobre 2010, le Conseil «Transports» l'a autorisée à entamer des négociations avec le Brésil en vue d'un accord global dans ce domaine.

2. Les négociations engagées par la Commission en vue d'un accord aérien global avec le Brésil ont pour objectif l'ouverture progressive et réciproque des marchés et la convergence des réglementations dans un cadre garantissant des conditions de concurrence loyale et des normes élevées de sécurité, de sûreté et de protection de l'environnement, ainsi que la résolution des problèmes liés à la conduite des affaires pour les opérateurs. Un projet d'accord a été paraphé par les deux parties en mars 2011. Par la suite, le Brésil a demandé que certaines dispositions de ce projet soient réexaminées. La Commission étudie actuellement les demandes du Brésil en coopération avec les États membres. Lors du sommet UE-Brésil qui s'est tenu le 24 janvier 2013, les dirigeants européens et brésiliens ont confirmé leur intérêt pour une conclusion des négociations dans les meilleurs délais, compte tenu des avantages économiques considérables que l'accord conférera aux deux parties.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007814/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: EU-Brazil aviation agreement

1. Is the Commission currently negotiating comprehensive aviation agreements with Brazil?

2. If so, what is included in these negotiations and what are the Commission's objectives?

3. If not, does the Commission intend to do so?

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

1. Yes, the Commission is currently negotiating a comprehensive aviation agreements with Brazil. The Transport Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with Brazil on a comprehensive air transport agreement in October 2010.

2. The Commission's objectives in negotiating a comprehensive aviation agreement with Brazil aim at a gradual and reciprocal opening of market access and regulatory convergence within a framework that ensures fair competition and high standards of safety, security, environmental protection and resolution of 'doing business issues' for the operators. A draft agreement was initialled by both sides in March 2011. Brazil has subsequently requested a review of certain provisions of the draft agreement. The Commission is currently considering the Brazilian requests for renegotiation in liaison with EU Member States. At the EU-Brazil Summit on 24 January 2013 the Leaders of both the EU and Brazil confirmed their interest in concluding the negotiations as soon as possible in view of the significant economic benefits that it will generate for both sides.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007815/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Remplacement du règlement (CE) nº 868/2004

La Commission est-elle en faveur de la demande du Parlement européen qui désire qu'il soit procédé d'urgence à la révision ou au remplacement du règlement (CE) nº 68/2004 concernant la protection contre les subventions et les pratiques tarifaires déloyales causant un préjudice aux transporteurs aériens communautaires?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(7 août 2013)

La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à la communication «La politique extérieure de l'UE dans le domaine de l'aviation — Anticiper les défis à venir» [COM(2012) 556 final ([1])], dans laquelle elle affirme, au point 57, que «[l]e règlement (CE) nº 868/2004 s'est révélé complexe et peu pratique pour le secteur des services aériens. Sous réserve d'une évaluation complète de son impact, il sera réexaminé par la Commission qui proposera, le cas échéant, des mesures plus adaptées une fois que tous les acteurs concernés auront été consultés».

À la suite de cette communication, le Conseil a marqué son appui à ce réexamen dans ses conclusions du 20 décembre 2012 (point 22). La Commission a d'ores et déjà commencé le réexamen du règlement.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/international_aviation/external_aviation_policy/doc/comm(2012)556_fr.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007815/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Replacement of Regulation (EC) No 868/2004

Is the Commission in favour of the request from the European Parliament which calls for an urgent revision or replacement of Regulation (EC) No 868/2004 concerning protection against subsidisation and unfair pricing practices causing injury to Community air carriers?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its communication 'The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challenges' [COM(2012) 556 final ([1])], which states in paragraph 57 that 'Regulation 868/2004 has proven complex and impracticable for the aviation services industry and, subject to a full assessment of its impact, the Commission will review and as necessary make proposals for more appropriate measures once all the stakeholders concerned have been consulted.'

Following this communication, the Council expressed its support for such review in its conclusions of 22 December 2012 (paragraph 22). The Commission has started this review process.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/air/international_aviation/external_aviation_policy/doc/comm(2012)556_fr.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007816/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Réciprocité UE-Russie dans le secteur aérien

La Fédération de Russie refuse de respecter l'accord sur la suppression progressive des droits imposés pour le survol de la Sibérie convenu dans le cadre de l'adhésion de la Fédération de Russie à l'OMC en 2011.

1. Étant donné que les transporteurs de l'Union sont soumis à des conditions discriminatoires à long terme en raison de ces frais de transit illégaux, l'Union ne devrait-elle pas être en mesure d'adopter des mesures de réciprocité en refusant ou en limitant le transit sur son territoire, ou, de manière générale, en instaurant des mesures relatives à l'utilisation de l'espace aérien de l'Union pour les transporteurs aériens de la Fédération de Russie afin d'inciter cette dernière à supprimer les frais susmentionnés qui sont illégaux car contraires aux accords internationaux (convention de Chicago)?

2. Le Conseil compte-t-il examiner, comme l'y invite le Parlement, de possibles mesures visant à garantir la réciprocité en ce qui concerne l'utilisation de l'espace aérien entre la Fédération de Russie et l'Union?

Réponse
(21 octobre 2013)

Le Conseil a été informé de ces questions par une note d'information de la Commission lors de sa session du 29 octobre 2012 ([1]). Il a pris note des informations communiquées par la Commission et a pleinement approuvé les dispositions prises par cette dernière à l'égard de la Russie, telles qu'elles sont énoncées au dernier paragraphe de la note d'information.

([1]) Doc. 14838/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007816/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: EU-Russia reciprocity in the aviation sector

The Russian Federation refuses to respect the agreement on the progressive elimination of the fees imposed for flying over Siberia signed within the framework of the Russian Federation's accession to the WTO in 2011.

1. Given that EU carriers are subject to discriminatory conditions in the long term due to these illegal transit costs, should the EU not be able to adopt reciprocal measures by refusing or limiting transit within the Union or, more generally, by establishing measures relating to the use of EU airspace for Russian air carriers in order to encourage Russia to eliminate the costs referred to above, which are illegal given that they contradict international agreements (Chicago Convention)?

2. Does the Council intend to examine, as requested by Parliament, possible measures aimed at ensuring reciprocity with regard to the use of airspace between the Russian Federation and the EU?

Reply
(21 October 2013)

The Council was informed about these issues by means of a Commission Information Note at the Council meeting on 29 October 2012 ([1]). The Council took note of the information provided by the Commission and fully endorsed the Commission's actions with respect to Russia, as set out in the last paragraph of that Information Note.

([1]) 14838/12.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007817/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Réciprocité UE-Russie dans le secteur aérien

La Fédération de Russie refuse de respecter l'accord sur la suppression progressive des droits imposés pour le survol de la Sibérie convenu dans le cadre de l'adhésion de la Fédération de Russie à l'OMC en 2011.

1. Étant donné que les transporteurs de l'Union sont soumis à des conditions discriminatoires à long terme en raison de ces frais de transit illégaux, l'Union ne devrait-elle pas être en mesure d'adopter des mesures de réciprocité en refusant ou en limitant le transit sur son territoire, ou, de manière générale, en instaurant des mesures relatives à l'utilisation de l'espace aérien de l'Union pour les transporteurs aériens de la Fédération de Russie afin d'inciter cette dernière à supprimer les frais susmentionnés qui sont illégaux car contraires aux accords internationaux (convention de Chicago)?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle examiner, comme l'y invite le Parlement, de possibles mesures visant à garantir la réciprocité en ce qui concerne l'utilisation de l'espace aérien entre la Fédération de Russie et l'Union?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(8 octobre 2013)

Pour l'instant, la Russie n'a pas respecté les délais transitoires fixés dans l'accord auquel fait référence l'Honorable parlementaire («principes agréés»). De ce fait, l'UE s'interroge sérieusement sur la volonté de la Russie de respecter le délai final convenu pour l'abolition de l'ensemble du système (1er janvier 2014). Pour l'heure, il est difficile de déterminer quel est le degré de préparation de la Fédération de Russie pour tenir ce délai.

Cela étant dit, il convient d'étudier les réponses appropriées possibles dans le contexte plus large des relations entre l'UE et la Russie dans le domaine de l'aviation. La Commission prépare actuellement une communication ouvrant des pistes pour le développement des relations entre les deux parties dans ce domaine. Toutes les options politiques sont examinées.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007817/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: EU-Russia reciprocity in the aviation sector

The Russian Federation refuses to respect the agreement on the progressive elimination of the fees imposed for flying over Siberia signed within the framework of the Russian Federation's accession to the WTO in 2011.

1. Given that EU carriers are subject to discriminatory conditions in the long term due to these illegal transit costs, should the EU not be able to adopt reciprocal measures by refusing or limiting transit within the Union or, more generally, by establishing measures relating to the use of EU airspace for Russian air carriers in order to encourage Russia to eliminate the costs referred to above, which are illegal given that they contradict international agreements (Chicago Convention)?

2. Does the Commission intend to examine, as requested by Parliament, possible measures aimed at ensuring reciprocity with regard to the use of airspace between the Russian Federation and the EU?

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

So far, Russia has not respected the transitory deadlines contained in the agreement to which the Honourable Member referred to ('Agreed Principles'). On the side of the EU this has raised serious concerns about Russia's commitment to ensure that the final deadline for the dismantling of the overall system (1 January 2014) will be respected. However, for the time being the situation is unclear as to the preparedness of the Russian Federation to respect this ultimate deadline.

This being said, it is important to analyse possible and adequate responses in the context of the broader EU-Russia aviation relationship. The Commission is currently preparing a communication laying out its ideas to develop EU-Russia aviation relations. All relevant policy options are under consideration.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007818/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Création zone franche attractive

Il faut tenir compte des conditions de crise économique et des problèmes sociaux qui touchent de nombreuses régions, notamment les îles (surtout de la Méditerranée), et plus particulièrement celles qui sont éloignées du continent.

La périphéricité des îles par rapport au marché unique expose ces dernières à une stagnation économique et industrielle ainsi qu'à un dépeuplement qui doit faire l'objet de mesures spécifiques de la part des institutions de l'Union.

Que pense le Commission de la proposition de créer de zones franches qui, en réduisant la pression fiscale et en attirant des investissements extérieurs directs, seraient en mesure de freiner la spirale récessive qui frappe les régions insulaires, en apportant à ces régions croissance et développement?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(3 septembre 2013)

Les zones franches sont des parties du territoire douanier de l'Union au sens de l'article 166 du code des douanes. Elles doivent être clôturées et surveillées par les autorités douanières.

La Commission ne peut intervenir dans le cadre de demandes concernant la création de zones franches. En effet, c'est aux États membres (article 167, paragraphe 1, du code des douanes ([1])) qu'il appartient de créer ces zones.

Les autorités douanières des États membres doivent, toutefois, communiquer à la Commission la liste des zones franches existantes et en fonction (article 802 des dispositions d'application du code des douanes ([2])). La liste des zones franches existantes est disponible sur la page web suivante:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/customs/procedural_aspects/imports/free_zones/list_freezones.pdf

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992R2913:20070101:FR:PDF
([2]) Règlement (CEE) n° 2454/93 de la Commission du 2 juillet 1993 fixant certaines dispositions d'application du règlement (CEE) n° 2913/92 du Conseil établissant le code des douanes communautaire (JO L 253 du 11.10.1993, p. 1).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007818/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Creation of an attractive free zone

We must take into account the economic crisis conditions and social problems which are affecting many regions, particularly the islands (especially in the Mediterranean), and more specifically those which are far from the continent.

The peripheral nature of these islands in relation to the single market leaves them vulnerable to economic and industrial stagnation and depopulation which should be tackled with specific measures from the EU institutions.

What does the Commission think about the proposal to create free zones which, by reducing tax pressures and attracting foreign direct investment, could curb the spiral of recession which is hitting the island regions by bringing growth and development to these regions?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

Within the meaning of Article 166 of the Customs Code, free zones are part of the customs territory of the Union. They must be enclosed and subject to supervision by the customs authorities.

The Commission can have no involvement with requests regarding the designation of free zones. Indeed it is up to the Member States (Article 167(1) of the Customs Code ([1])) to designate free zones.

However, the list of free zones in existence and in operation must be communicated to the Commission by the customs authorities of the Member States (Article 802 of the implementing provisions of the Customs Code ([2])). The list of existing free zones is available on the following web page:

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/customs/procedural_aspects/imports/free_zones/list_freezones.pdf

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:1992R2913:20070101:EN:PDF.
([2]) Commission Regulation (EEC) No 2454/93 of 2 July 1993 laying down provisions for the implementation of Council Regulation (EEC) No 2913/92 establishing the Community Customs Code (OJ L 253, 11.10.1993, p. 1).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007819/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Navigation de plaisance

On ne peut nier l'importance du secteur de la navigation de plaisance pour le tourisme maritime.

La Commission compte-t-elle examiner, dans le cadre de sa prochaine communication sur le tourisme maritime, l'impact social et économique de ce secteur, les possibilités d'harmoniser et de simplifier, au niveau de l'Union, les règles de délivrance des autorisations d'exploitation, les conditions de navigation et d'utilisation, les exigences en matière de sécurité, l'entretien et la réparation des bateaux de plaisance ainsi que la reconnaissance mutuelle des qualifications professionnelles dans ce secteur?

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

La Commission reconnaît l'importance de la navigation de plaisance pour le tourisme maritime et examine actuellement avec soin les incidences économiques et sociales de ce sous-secteur et les défis auxquels il est confronté. Elle étudie les moyens de relever ces derniers, notamment la délivrance d'agréments et les exigences de sécurité, les qualifications professionnelles ou les conditions d'utilisation, d'entretien et de réparation. Il est toutefois important de souligner que différentes actions couvrant la plupart des points évoqués ci-dessus sont déjà en cours et qu'elles pourraient être davantage rationalisées.

Ainsi, le certificat international de compétence de la Commission économique pour l'Europe des Nations unies ([1]) prévoit une attestation internationale uniforme en ce qui concerne la compétence des conducteurs de bateaux de plaisance naviguant dans les eaux de pays étrangers.

En outre, la directive 2005/36/CE ([2]) relative aux qualifications professionnelles, en cours de révision ([3]), devrait contribuer à favoriser la libre circulation des professionnels dans l'UE ([4]).

Dernier point, mais non le moindre, la directive 94/25/CE ([5]) établit des catégories pour les bateaux de plaisance et fixe des exigences de sécurité pour leur conception et construction, ainsi que des exigences environnementales concernant leurs émissions gazeuses et sonores. Cette directive, dont la révision touche à sa fin ([6]), a notamment pour but de simplifier le cadre réglementaire en ce qui concerne les prescriptions relatives à la sécurité et à l'environnement applicables aux bateaux de plaisance et d'harmoniser les limites des émissions des moteurs.

([1]) Résolution nº 40 adoptée par le groupe de travail des transports par voie navigable de la Commission économique pour l'Europe des Nations unies (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2013/sc3wp3/ECE-TRANS-SC3-147-rev3f.pdf).

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/index_fr.htm

([3]) Voir le communiqué de presse du 13.6.2013 à l'adresse suivante: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/fr/pressroom/content/20130612IPR11615/html/Reconnaissance-mutuelle-des-qualifications-professionnelles

([4]) Il appartient aux États membres de décider, dans le respect des principes de non-discrimination et de proportionnalité, de réglementer l'accès à une profession dans le secteur de la navigation de plaisance. Les États membres qui prennent cette décision devraient appliquer le principe de la reconnaissance mutuelle des qualifications requises. La directive 2005/36/CE établit des délais et des règles concernant la reconnaissance mutuelle des qualifications professionnelles acquises dans d'autres États membres. Dans le cadre du «système général de reconnaissance», l'État membre d'accueil est tenu de procéder à une comparaison entre les qualifications professionnelles que possède le demandeur, comprenant toute expérience professionnelle pertinente, et celles qu'il exige de ses propres ressortissants. Ce n'est qu'en cas de différences substantielles que des mesures de compensation peuvent être imposées sous la forme d'une épreuve d'aptitude ou d'un stage d'adaptation. En outre, la directive 2005/36/CE prévoit un dispositif allégé lorsqu'il s'agit d'une prestation temporaire ou occasionnelle de services.

([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/maritime/documents/recreational-craft/

([6]) COM(2011)456 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007819/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Pleasure boating

We cannot deny the importance of the pleasure boating sector for maritime tourism.

Does the Commission intend to study, within the framework of its next communication on maritime tourism, the social and economic impact of the sector, possible ways of harmonising and simplifying it at EU level, the rules on issuing operational authorisations, boating and usage conditions, safety requirements, maintenance and repairs of pleasure boats and mutual recognition of professional qualifications in this sector?

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

The Commission acknowledges the importance of pleasure boating for maritime tourism and is carefully analysing the economic and social impacts of this sub-sector and the challenges that the recreational boating industry is facing. The Commission is looking at possible ways to tackle these challenges, including, amongst others, licensing and safety requirements, professional qualifications or usage, maintenance and repair conditions. It is however important to underline that, on most of the above issues, different actions exist already and could be further streamlined.

For example, the International Competence Certificate of the UN Economic Commission for Europe ([1]) provides for a uniform international certificate concerning the competence of operators of pleasure craft bound for the waters of foreign countries.

Furthermore, the Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC ([2]) currently under revision ([3]) will help to facilitate the free movement of professionals in the EU ([4]).

Last but not least, the Recreational Crafts Directive 94/25/EC ([5]) classifies recreational craft and lays down safety requirements for their design and construction, as well as environment requirements regarding their exhaust and noise emissions. The directive which is in its final stages of revision ([6]) aims mainly at simplifying the regulatory framework regarding safety and environmental requirements for pleasure boats and at harmonising the emission limits for engines.

([1]) Resolution 40 of the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Working Party on Inland Water Transport http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2013/sc3wp3/ECE-TRANS-SC3-147-rev3e.pdf

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/policy_developments/index_en.htm

([3]) See EP press release of 13.06.2013: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/pressroom/content/20130612IPR11615/html/Mutual-recognition-of-professional-qualifications-MEPs-strike-deal-with-Council.

([4]) It is up to Member States to decide, within the limits of the principle of non-discrimination and the principle of proportionality, where the access to a profession in the pleasure boating sector is regulated. If so, Member States should apply the principle of mutual recognition of the required qualifications. Directive 2005/36/EC sets deadlines and rules on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications obtained in other Member States. Under the so-called 'general system of recognition', the host Member State has to compare the professional qualifications of the applicant, including any relevant professional experience, with it requires from its own nationals. Only in case of substantial differences may a compensatory measure be imposed in the form of an aptitude test or an adaptation period. Moreover, Directive 2005/36/EC sets an even lighter regime in cases of temporary and occasional provision of services.

([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/maritime/documents/recreational-craft/.

([6]) COM(2011)0456.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007820/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Analyse d'impact de la directive 2006/123/CE

1. La Commission compte-t-elle procéder à une analyse d'impact afin de déterminer si la directive 2006/123/CE peut avoir des retombées négatives sur les PME de ce secteur?

2. La Commission compte-t-elle proposer des mesures destinées à atténuer ces répercussions et à garantir que les spécificités de cette activité professionnelle sont prises en considération dans l'application de la directive?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(10 septembre 2013)

L'objectif de la directive «services» (directive) est de réduire les obstacles à la liberté d'établissement et de prestation de services. En de hors de l'obligation de mettre certaines informations à disposition des destinataires de services, la directive n'impose pas d'obligations ou de charges aux prestataires de services.

La Commission a récemment évalué la mise en œuvre de la directive ([1]). Les effets économiques fondés sur la mise en œuvre des mesures adoptées à ce jour par les États membres ont été estimés à 0,81 % du PIB de l'UE. Supprimer quasiment toutes les barrières commerciales restantes pourrait avoir une incidence positive supplémentaire de 1,8 % sur le PIB.

Comme il est souligné dans l'analyse d'impact approfondie publiée parallèlement à la proposition de la Commission du 13 janvier 2004 ([2]), les avantages économiques escomptés de la directive sont particulièrement importants pour les PME, qui sont plus susceptibles que les grandes entreprises de refuser des opportunités transfrontalières en raison de la complexité des exigences juridiques et administratives, et qui sont prédominantes dans le secteur des services. Les mesures de simplification administrative sont particulièrement importantes pour les PME. L'augmentation de la confiance dans les services transfrontaliers résultant de l'harmonisation des exigences de qualité et de l'amélioration de la coopération administrative entre les États membres devrait également être particulièrement intéressante pour ces entreprises, qui n'ont pas les moyens de consentir les investissements nécessaires à la création et à la promotion de marques internationales.

La Commission n'a pas l'intention de mener à bien une nouvelle évaluation d'impact spécifique axée sur les PME et au-delà de ce qui a été examiné dans l'analyse d'impact de 2004, dont les conclusions restent valables, y compris parce qu'un amendement à la directive n'est pas prévu à court terme.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/implementation/report/SWD_2012_148_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/impact/2004-impact-assessment_en.pdf (voir en particulier le point 7.2.2.).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007820/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Impact assessment of Directive 2006/123/EC

1. Does the Commission intend to carry out an impact assessment in order to determine whether Directive 2006/123/EC could have a negative impact on SMEs in this sector?

2. Does the Commission intend to propose measures aimed at mitigating these repercussions and ensuring that the specific characteristics of this professional activity are taken into consideration in the application of this directive?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The objective of the Services Directive (Directive) is to reduce obstacles to the freedom of establishment and to provide services. Apart from the obligation to make available some information to service recipients, the directive does no impose obligations or burdens on service providers.

The Commission has recently assessed the implementation of the directive ([1]). The economic effects were estimated to be 0.81% of EU GDP based on the implementation measures adopted so far by Member States. Close to full elimination of remaining market barriers could have an additional positive impact of 1.8% of GDP.

As is underlined in the extended impact assessment published alongside the Commission's proposal on 13 January 2004 ([2]), the expected economic benefits of the directive are particularly important for SMEs, who are more likely than larger firms to turn down cross-border opportunities because of complex legal and administrative requirements, and who are predominant in the services sector. Administrative simplification measures are particularly important to SMEs. The increase in trust and confidence in cross-border services resulting from harmonisation of quality requirements and enhanced administrative cooperation between Member States should also be of particular benefit for these firms, which are unable to afford the required investment to create and promote international brands.

The Commission does not intend to carry out a further impact assessment specifically focused on SMEs and beyond what was examined in the impact assessment of 2004, whose conclusions remain valid, also because an amendment to the directive is not foreseen in the short term.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/implementation/report/SWD_2012_148_en.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/docs/services-dir/impact/2004-impact-assessment_en.pdf, see in particular point 7.2.2.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007821/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Aquaculture offshore

1. La Commission prévoit-elle de promouvoir, dans ses prochaines orientations stratégiques pour l'aquaculture dans l'Union, l'aquaculture offshore, qui peut être combinée à des infrastructures d'énergie bleue, afin de réduire les pressions exercées par l'aquaculture hyperintensive sur les écosystèmes côtiers et sur d'autres activités?

2. Compte-t-elle alléger les charges administratives et réserver au développement de cette activité des espaces adéquats dans les plans d'aménagement intégré des États membres?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Damanaki au nom de la Commission
(17 septembre 2013)

L'intégration de l'aquaculture dans les autres activités économiques constitue l'un des moyens permettant d'améliorer la compétitivité de l'industrie aquacole de l'Union européenne. La combinaison de l'aquaculture au large des côtes et d'infrastructures permettant de produire de l'énergie bleue offre un exemple de ce genre d'intégration.

La réduction des charges administratives est, en effet, importante pour tous les types d'aquaculture durable, y compris l'aquaculture au large des côtes. Avec le soutien du groupe de haut niveau sur les charges administratives, entre autres, la Commission aidera les États membres à déterminer les meilleures pratiques et les améliorations possibles en vue de l'organisation d'échanges d'expérience dans l'ensemble de l'Union européenne.

Si la Commission encourage les États membres à mettre en place la coordination de la planification de l'espace, y compris la planification de l'espace maritime, le contenu et les priorités de ces exercices relèvent de la compétence des États membres. À ce titre, il revient à chaque État membre de décider de réserver ou non certaines zones à l'aquaculture au large des côtes.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007821/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Offshore aquaculture

1. Does the Commission intend to promote, in its forthcoming strategic guidelines for aquaculture in the EU, offshore aquaculture, which can be combined with blue energy infrastructures, in order to reduce the pressures of hyper intensive aquaculture on coastal ecosystems and on other activities?

2. Does it plan to reduce administrative burden and reserve suitable areas for the development of this activity in Member States' integrated management plans?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2013)

Integrating aquaculture with other economic activities is one of the possible ways to enhance the competitiveness of EU aquaculture. The combination of offshore aquaculture with blue energy infrastructure represents an example of this kind of integration.

Reducing administrative burdens is indeed important for all types of sustainable aquaculture, including offshore. Amongst others, with the support of the High Level Group on Administrative Burdens the Commission will help Member States identify best practices and margins for improvement in view of the organisation of exchanges of experience across the EU.

While the Commission encourages Member States to put in place coordinated spatial planning, including maritime spatial planning, the contents and priorities of such exercises are the competence of the Member States. As such, it is up to each Member State to decide whether to reserve specific areas to offshore aquaculture.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007822/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Biotechnologie bleue

1. La Commission va-t-elle définir clairement les problèmes et défis liés à la biotechnologie bleue (par exemple la bionanotechnologie, les biomatériaux et l'introduction de poissons, mollusques et micro-organismes génétiquement modifiés)?

2. Dans ce domaine, la Commission prône-t-elle une approche scientifiquement saine basée sur le principe de précaution afin de recenser, d'évaluer et de gérer les risques connexes pour l'environnement et pour la santé?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(29 août 2013)

1-2. L'Union européenne a établi dans sa législation ses propres critères de sécurité stricts pour l'évaluation des risques et l'autorisation des OGM, en application du principe de précaution, afin de recenser, d'évaluer et de gérer les risques que ces organismes présentent pour l'environnement et pour la santé. Aucun OGM ne peut être importé et utilisé dans l'UE s'il n'a pas été préalablement autorisé, après avoir subi avec succès cette évaluation rigoureuse des risques.

En ce qui concerne plus particulièrement les animaux génétiquement modifiés, l'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments élabore actuellement, en prévision d'éventuelles demandes de ce genre, un document d'orientation sur la santé humaine et animale et sur l'évaluation des risques environnementaux associés aux animaux génétiquement modifiés ([1]), y compris les poissons.

1. S'agissant de la biotechnologie bleue, tout travail de recherche financé par la Commission comporte une évaluation des risques éventuels pour l'environnement et la santé.

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/fr/press/news/120621.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007822/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Blue biotechnology

1. Does the Commission plan to clearly define the problems and challenges associated with blue biotechnology (for example, bionanotechnology, biomaterials and the introduction of genetically modified fish, molluscs and micro-organisms)?

2. In this area, does the Commission recommend a scientifically sound approach based on the precautionary principle in order to identify, evaluate and manage the related risks for the environment and for health?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2013)

1-2. The European Union has set in law its own strict safety criteria for risk assessment and authorisation of GMOs on the basis of a precautionary principle in order to identify, evaluate and manage the related risks for the environment and for health. No GMO can be imported and used in the EU if it has not been granted an authorisation first, after successful completion of this stringent risk assessment process.

As regards GM animals in particular, in order to prepare for possible future applications of this kind, the European Food Safety Authority is developing guidance on human and animal health and environmental risk assessment for GM animals ([1]), including fish.

1. On blue biotechnology any research which is funded by the Commission always contains a risk assessment on potential risks for the environment and health.

([1]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/120621.htm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007823/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Accord aérien UE-Australie

1. La Commission est-elle en train de négocier des accords aériens globaux avec l'Australie?

2. Si oui, que contiennent ces négociations et quels sont les objectifs poursuivis par la Commission?

3. Si non, la Commission a-t-elle l'intention d'ouvrir de telles négociations?

Réponse donnée par M. Kallas au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2013)

1. Oui, la Commission négocie actuellement un accord aérien global avec l'Australie. Le Conseil «Transports» a autorisé la Commission à engager des négociations avec l'Australie en vue d'un accord aérien global le 13 juin 2008. L'ouverture des négociations a eu lieu les 27-28 novembre 2008 à Bruxelles.

2. Le 29 avril 2008 déjà, l'Australie a signé un accord avec l'UE sur certains aspects des services aériens, qui est entré en vigueur le 2 juillet 2009. Cet accord supprime notamment les restrictions en matière de nationalité contenues dans les accords conclus entre les États membres et l'Australie. Les négociations engagées par la Commission en vue d'un accord aérien global avec l'Australie ont pour objectif l'ouverture réciproque des marchés dans un cadre garantissant des conditions de concurrence loyale et des normes élevées de sécurité, de sûreté et de protection de l'environnement. Bien que des progrès satisfaisants aient été accomplis pendant les cycles de négociation en 2008 et 2009 sur des volets importants de l'accord, deux questions clés (les droits de trafic de cinquième liberté et la libéralisation des règles en matière de propriété et de contrôle des compagnies aériennes) restent en suspens. Dans ses conclusions de décembre 2012 sur «La politique extérieure de l'UE dans le domaine de l'aviation — Anticiper les défis à venir», le Conseil soutient l'appel de la Commission à intensifier les efforts pour mener à bien les négociations en cours dans ce domaine.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007823/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: EU-Australia aviation agreement

1. Is the Commission currently negotiating comprehensive aviation agreements with Australia?

2. If so, what is included in these negotiations and what are the Commission's objectives?

3. If not, does the Commission intend to enter into such negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

1. Yes, the Commission is currently negotiating a comprehensive aviation agreements with Australia. The Transport Council authorised the Commission to open negotiations with Australia on a comprehensive air transport agreement on 13 June 2008. The negotiations were opened on 27-28 November 2008 in Brussels.

2. On 29 April 2008 already, Australia has signed an agreement with the EU on certain aspects of air services, which entered into force on 2 July 2009. The agreement notably removes nationality rectrictions contained in the agreements between Member States and Australia. The Commission's objectives in negotiating a comprehensive aviation agreement with Australia aim at a reciprocal opening of market access within a framework that ensures fair competition and high standards of safety, security and environmental protection. Good progress was made during the negotiating rounds in 2008 and 2009 on large parts of an agreement, however two key issues (5th freedom traffic rights and liberalisation of ownership and control of airlines) were not resolved. The December 2012 Council conclusions on The EU's External Aviation Policy — Addressing Future Challenges supported the Commission's call to intensify efforts to finalise ongoing negotiations in this area.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007826/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: L'e-cigarette devient plus un problème qu'une solution

Réunis à Luxembourg, les ministres de la santé de l'Union ont entériné dans les grandes lignes les propositions de la Commission européenne pour renforcer la lutte contre le tabagisme, tout en atténuant sa sévérité. Sur un point toutefois, ils ont été incapables de trancher: l'avenir des cigarettes électroniques. Destinées en théorie à aider à arrêter de fumer, elles connaissent un essor rapide, alors même qu'on ne connaît pas bien leurs composants ni leurs effets.

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission sur ce dossier?

2. Dans plusieurs rapports au niveau national, les experts estiment qu'il faut interdire les cigarettes électroniques dans les lieux publics et prohiber leur vente aux mineurs. La Commission partage-t-elle cet avis?

3. Actuellement, l'e-cigarette est en vente libre dans certains pays, interdite ailleurs, bannie des lieux publics chez les uns, autorisée chez les autres, louée par certains pneumologues enthousiastes et décriée par d'autres. Ne faudrait-il pas plus de cohérence?

4. La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis selon lequel l'engouement qu'elle suscite est inquiétant et qu'elle pourrait être un point de départ qui va créer de nouveaux fumeurs?

5. Ne faut-il pas dès lors promulguer des règles strictes afin que ce produit soit exclusivement réservé aux fumeurs qui veulent décrocher?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(13 août 2013)

Quant à l'impact des cigarettes électroniques et à la proposition de règlement à ce sujet, la Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se reporter à ses réponses aux questions écrites E-6410/2013 de M. Motti et E-3368/2013 de M. Kaczmarek ([1]).

L'utilisation des cigarettes électroniques dans les lieux publics n'entre pas dans le champ d'application de la proposition de révision de la directive sur les produits du tabac, pour laquelle une approche générale a été adoptée par les ministres de la santé lors du Conseil EPSCO du 21 juin.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007826/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: E-cigarettes are becoming more of a problem than a solution

At a meeting in Luxembourg, EU health ministers approved the broad lines of the Commission's proposals to strengthen the fight against smoking while limiting its severity. There was, however, one point on which they failed to reach a decision: the future of electronic cigarettes. Aimed, in theory, at stopping smoking, they have experienced rapid success, even though little is known about their ingredients or their side effects.

1. What is the Commission's opinion on the matter?

2. In several national reports, experts have stated that electronic cigarettes should be banned in public places and that it should be prohibited to sell them to minors. Does the Commission share this view?

3. At present, e-cigarettes are sold over the counter in some countries, banned elsewhere, banned from public places in some, allowed in others, lauded by some enthusiastic pulmonary specialists and criticised by others. Should there not be greater coherence?

4. Does the Commission share the view that the e-cigarette craze is worrying and that it could be a starting point for creating new smokers?

5. Should we not therefore adopt strict rules so that this product is reserved exclusively for smokers who want to quit?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

On the impact and the proposed regulation of electronic cigarettes, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-6410/2013 by Mr Motti and E-3368/2013 by Mr Kaczmarek ([1]).

The use of electronic cigarettes in public places does not fall within the scope of the proposal for the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive, for which a general approach was adopted by Health Ministers at the EPSCO Council on 21 June.

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007827/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Pas assez de débit pour le consommateur européen

Selon l'Union européenne, les internautes situés n'atteignent en moyenne que 74 % du débit proposé par leur fournisseur d'accès Internet (FAI). Par contre, le taux est meilleur pour le téléchargement (88 %). L'édition du rapport, réalisé par SamKnows en mars dernier dans 9 104 foyers, a été rendue possible en faisant appel aux internautes eux-mêmes. Ces derniers peuvent demander à s'équiper d'une Whitebox, le boîtier va alors enregistrer des informations sur leur débit pour ensuite les rapporter.

Premier constat, les réseaux DSL (ADSL, VDSL…) n'atteignent que 63,3 % du débit promis alors que le câble pointe à 91,4 % et la fibre à 84,4 %. Autre enseignement, le débit moyen en téléchargement des pays de l'Union européenne (toutes technologies confondues) atteint 19,47 Mbits/s. La fibre atteint en moyenne 41,02 Mbits/s en moyenne, le câble 33,10 Mbits/s alors que les réseaux xDSL atteignent 7,2 Mbits/s en moyenne.

1. La Commission rejoint-elle l'idée que les consommateurs européens ne reçoivent pas assez de débit en fonction de ce qu'ils payent?

2. La Commission estime-t-elle que les consommateurs ont besoin de davantage d'informations afin qu'ils puissent faire leur choix en connaissance de cause?

3. Comment la Commission compte-t-elle s'y prendre pour pallier à cela?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2013)

La Commission européenne est consciente des différences existant entre le débit annoncé par un fournisseur d'accès Internet (FAI) et celui effectivement fourni à l'utilisateur final, différences également mises en évidence par les résultats de l'étude SamKnows. Pour la Commission, il est inacceptable que les consommateurs n'obtiennent pas toujours le débit pour lequel ils payent ([1]). Les consommateurs doivent disposer de plus d'informations sur les débits et la qualité réellement fournis afin de pouvoir faire un choix éclairé et opter pour l'offre d'accès Internet qui répond le mieux à leurs besoins. Il faut aussi leur permettre de changer plus aisément de FAI si celui-ci ne fournit pas le débit annoncé.

C'est pourquoi la Commission envisage de prendre des mesures spécifiques concernant la transparence et le changement de fournisseur au titre de la prochaine initiative législative sur le marché unique des télécommunications. Grâce à ces mesures, l'utilisateur final aura accès à des informations claires et précises sur le service qui lui est fourni et sur toute circonstance pouvant affecter ou limiter la fourniture de ce service.

([1]) Cela a été souligné par M^me^ Kroes, Vice-présidente de la Commission, dans un récent discours prononcé le 4 juin 2013 au Parlement européen: (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-498_en.htm).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007827/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Insufficient Internet speeds for European consumers

According to the European Union, Internet users within the EU only reach on average 74% of the Internet speeds offered by their Internet service providers (ISP). In contrast, the rate is better for downloads (88%). The publication of the report, carried out by SamKnows in March 2013 in 9 104 households, was made possible thanks to Internet users themselves. Users can ask to be fitted with a Whitebox équiper d'une Whitebox, the box will then record information about their Internet speed and report back to them.

The first finding was that DSL networks (ADSL, VDSL, etc.) only reach 63.3% of the speed promised while cable connections achieve 91.4% and fibre-optic connections 84.4%. Another finding showed that the average download speed in EU countries (for all technologies) is 19.47 Mbits/s. Fibre-optic connections achieve an average of 41.02 Mbits/s, cable connections 33.10 Mbits/s and xDSL networks 7.2 Mbits/s on average.

1. Does the Commission share the view that European consumers do not receive fast enough Internet speeds considering what they are paying?

2. Does the Commission believe that consumers need more information so as to enable them to make an informed choice?

3. What does the Commission intend to do to make up for this?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The European Commission is aware of discrepancies between advertised Internet speeds and what is actually delivered to end-users that is also shown by the results of the Samknows study. The Commission finds it unacceptable that consumers are not always getting the speeds they pay for ([1]). Consumers need more information about actual speeds and quality in order to make informed choices and to be able to select the Internet access offer that best suits their needs. It must also be made easier for them to switch provider if their ISP is not delivering the advertised speed.

For these reasons the Commission considers including specific measures on transparency and on switching in the forthcoming legislative initiative on the Telecoms Single Market. These measures will ensure access to clear and precise information for end users on the service that they receive and on any conditions that may affect or limit that service.

([1]) This was emphasised by Vice-President Kroes in a recent speech (04 June 2013) delivered at the European Parliament (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-498_en.htm).

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007828/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Accès groupe d'experts 112

Avec plusieurs autres députés européens, nous avons demandé à deux reprises d'assister en tant qu'observateurs aux réunions du groupe d'experts sur le numéro d'urgence (EGEA). Nous n'avons reçu aucune réponse. Nous avons aussi remarqué que vos services ont programmé la dernière réunion de l'EGEA pendant la dernière session plénière du Parlement européen et au moment même où se tenait à Paris la plus grande conférence mondiale dédiée aux communications d'urgence. En conséquence, plusieurs représentants d'États membres ont été incapables d'assister à la dernière réunion de l'EGEA.

Nous avons finalement été invités à la réunion après avoir communiqué avec vos services, mais notre invitation a été annulée assez mystérieusement quelques jours plus tard.

1. La Commission a-t-elle des choses à cacher en ce qui concerne le 112?

2. Peut-elle confirmer que les réunions de l'EGEA seront dorénavant organisées en-dehors des semaines de sessions plénières et que nous bénéficierons d'une invitation à y assister?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(5 août 2013)

La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à sa réponse à la question E-006118/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2013-006118 %2b0 %2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0 %2f%2fEN&language=EN

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007828/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Access to the 112 Expert Group

Together with several other MEPs, we have twice asked to attend the meetings of the Expert Group on Emergency Access (EGEA) as observers. We have not received any response. We have also noted that your services scheduled the last EGEA meeting during Parliament's last plenary session and at the same time as the biggest worldwide conference on emergency communication was being held in Paris. Consequently, several Member State representatives were unable to attend the EGEA's last meeting.

We were finally invited to the meeting after having communicated with your services, but our invitation was rather mysteriously withdrawn several days later.

1. Does the Commission have something to hide with regard to 112?

2. Can it confirm that the EGEA meetings will from now on be organised outside of the weeks when plenary sessions are being held and that we will be invited to attend?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answer given in reply to Question E-006118/2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bE-2013-006118%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007830/13
à la Commission (Vice-Présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Bédouins du Néguev

Aux termes du projet de loi de 2012 relatif à la régularisation des habitations bédouines dans le Néguev, adopté par le précédent gouvernement israélien, au moins 30 000 Bédouins vivant dans le désert du Néguev/Naqab, dans le sud du pays, sont menacés d'être expulsés de leurs villages, qui n'ont jamais été officiellement reconnus par le gouvernement israélien. Expulser de force des dizaines de milliers de Bédouins des villages où ils vivent depuis des générations ne peut se justifier au nom du développement économique ni de tout autre motif. Les nouveaux dirigeants d'Israël doivent avoir le courage de s'aventurer là où leurs prédécesseurs ont ignoré les normes relatives aux Droits de l'homme. Dans les faits, ce projet de loi envoie les communautés bédouines dans un désert des Droits de l'homme, en privant des citoyens déjà vulnérables des garanties juridiques contre les démolitions de logements et les expulsions forcées. Le projet de loi est toujours sur la table, en dépit des nombreuses objections soulevées lors des consultations avec les populations bédouines et les organisations locales de défense des Droits de l'homme, et de deux lettres d'Amnesty International restées sans réponse. Les Bédouins en Israël sont confrontés à une discrimination endémique et, depuis des années, les démolitions traumatisantes préfigurent les expulsions forcées. Si le projet de loi est adopté, il ouvrira la porte au renforcement de ces pratiques. Toutefois, au lieu de renoncer complètement aux projets d'expulsion, la loi propose simplement d'échelonner dans le temps les ordres de démolition. Loin de fournir une garantie juridique aux Bédouins, ce projet de loi ne fait qu'aggraver la situation.

Wadi Naam compte parmi des dizaines de villages de Bédouins qui seraient concernés par les projets de développement actuels.

1. La Vice-Présidente/Haute Représentante compte-t-elle inviter le nouveau gouvernement israélien à abandonner un projet de loi qui engendrerait des expulsions forcées massives de Bédouins et, en revanche, adopter une loi qui protège leur droit au logement?

2. La Vice-Présidente/Haute Représentante n'estime-t-elle pas qu'il s'agit là d'un cas manifeste de violation flagrante du droit international?

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

L'UE suit de près la situation à laquelle l'Honorable Parlementaire fait référence et elle a exprimé ses inquiétudes, auprès d'Israël, dans le cadre du dialogue régulier sur les Droits de l'homme, mené au sein du groupe de travail informel sur les Droits de l'homme UE-Israël. Plus précisément, l'UE a invité les autorités israéliennes à recourir à des formes appropriées de dialogue non seulement avec les représentants des villes ou des villages bédouins du Néguev qui sont reconnus par l'État mais aussi avec ceux des villages non reconnus. En outre, l'UE a fait valoir que, bien que le plan comprenne un volet développement, elle estime que les représentants officiels israéliens devraient rester ouverts à d'autres propositions émanant notamment de la communauté bédouine. En tout état de cause, l'UE est d'avis que l'État israélien devrait veiller à ce que les Bédouins jouissent des mêmes droits que les autres citoyens israéliens.

L'UE continuera de suivre ce dossier de près par l'intermédiaire de sa délégation à Tel Aviv et de faire part de ses inquiétudes quant à la situation des Bédouins, dans le cadre de ses relations bilatérales avec Israël.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007830/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Negev Bedouins

Under the 2012 draft law on regularising Bedouin housing in the Negev adopted by the previous Israeli Government, at least 30 000 Bedouins living in the Negev-Naqab desert in the south of the country are at risk of being evicted from their villages, which have never been officially recognised by the Israeli Government. Forcibly evicting tens of thousands of Bedouins from villages where they have lived for generations cannot be justified in the name of economic development, or for any other reason. The new Israeli leaders must have the courage to venture into an area in which their predecessors ignored human rights legislation. In fact, this draft law sends Bedouin communities into a human rights desert, depriving already vulnerable citizens of legal safeguards against the destruction of their homes and forced evictions. The draft law is still on the table, despite numerous objections raised at consultations with the Bedouin population and local human rights organisations and two letters from Amnesty International which have been left unanswered. The Bedouins in Israel are faced with endemic discrimination and for years traumatising demolitions have served as precursors to forced evictions. If the draft law is adopted, it will pave the way for strengthening these practices. However, instead of completely renouncing the eviction plans, the law simply proposes staggering the demolition orders over a period of time. Far from providing a legal safeguard for the Bedouins, this draft law only serves to make the situation worse.

Wadi Naam is one of dozens of Bedouin villages which will be affected by the current development plans.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to urge the new Israeli Government to abandon a draft law which will lead to mass forced evictions of Bedouins and instead to adopt a law which protects their right to housing?

2. Does the Vice-President/High Representative not consider that this is a clear case of flagrant violation of international law?

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

The EU follows closely the situation to which your Honourable Member is referring and has expressed its concerns to Israel in the framework of the regular human rights dialogue, within the Informal EU-Israel Working Group on Human Rights. More specifically, the EU has called on the Israeli authorities to resort to appropriate forms of dialogue with representatives not only of the Bedouin villages/towns in the Negev that are recognised by the state, but also of the non-recognised villages. In addition to that, the EU has shared its view that, although the plan contains some developmental components, official Israeli representatives should remain open to consider alternative proposals that may come from the Bedouin community. In all cases, according to the EU's views, the Israeli state should ensure that Bedouins enjoy equal rights with other Israeli citizens.

The EU will continue to monitor this issue closely via its Delegation in Tel Aviv and will further raise its concerns on the situation of the Bedouins in the framework of its bilateral relations with Israel.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007831/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Colza OGM

La société Bayer CropScience veut mettre sur le marché des denrées et ingrédients alimentaires contenant les colzas génétiquement modifiés Ms8, Rf3 et Ms8 x Rf3.

1. Quelle est/sera la décision de la Commission? Sur quel argumentaire est-elle basée?

2. Par là-même, la Commission peut-elle s'engager à ce que ces OGM ne présentent aucun danger pour le citoyen sur le long terme?

3. Ces produits sont soumis à des exigences d'étiquetage? Lesquelles?

4. La société bénéficiaire de l'autorisation doit également établir un plan de surveillance des effets sur l'environnement et remettre des rapports annuels à la Commission. Le plan de surveillance est-il public? Où le citoyen peut-il en prendre connaissance?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(14 août 2013)

1-2. En vertu de la législation sur les OGM ([1]), les OGM ne peuvent être autorisés à être mis sur le marché dans l'Union européenne qu'après avoir été soumis à une évaluation approfondie des risques, réalisée par l'EFSA ([2]), démontrant leur innocuité pour la santé humaine et animale et pour l'environnement.

Le 26 septembre 2012, l'EFSA a publié un avis scientifique positif concernant la demande d'autorisation du colza Ms8, Rf3 et Ms8xRf3 ([3]), introduite par Bayer CropScience. Le 26 avril 2013, suivant la procédure prévue dans le règlement (CE) n° 1829/2003, la Commission a présenté au CPCASA ([4]) un projet de décision autorisant ces OGM, mais aucune majorité qualifiée n'a pu être obtenue pour ou contre le projet de décision. Conformément à la procédure fixée à l'article 6 du règlement (CE) nº 182/2011, le projet de décision a été présenté à un comité d'appel, qui n'est pas non plus parvenu à un avis. La Commission a adopté la décision autorisant la mise sur le marché de ces OGM le 27 juin 2013 ([5]).

3. L'article 12 du règlement (CE) nº 1829/2003 prévoit que les consommateurs doivent être pleinement informés de la présence d'OGM autorisés dans les aliments pour animaux et dans les denrées alimentaires. Le colza Ms8, Rf3 et Ms8xRf3 est donc couvert par cette obligation relative à l'étiquetage.

4. La Commission publie un registre de tous les OGM autorisés sur son site internet ([6]), y compris les exigences de surveillance postérieure à la mise sur le marché, le cas échéant. Ces exigences pour le colza Ms8, Rf3 et Ms8xRf3 sont publiées sur ce même site.

([1]) Règlement (CE) nº 1829/2003 concernant les denrées alimentaires et les aliments pour animaux génétiquement modifiés; directive 2001/18/CE relative à la dissémination volontaire d'organismes génétiquement modifiés dans l'environnement.
([2]) L'Autorité européenne de sécurité des aliments.
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2875.htm
([4]) Comité permanent de la chaîne alimentaire et de la santé animale.
([5]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:175:0057:0060:FR:PDF
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/gm_register/index_en.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007831/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: GMO rapeseed

The company Bayer CropScience wants to place on the market food and food ingredients which contain genetically modified rapeseed Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8 x Rf3.

1. What is or what will be the Commission's decision? What is it based on?

2. Can the Commission then ensure that these GMOs do not represent any danger for citizens in the long term?

3. Are these products subject to labelling requirements? Which ones?

4. The authorisation holder should also establish a monitoring plan for environmental effects and submit annual reports to the Commission. Is the monitoring plan public? Where can citizens learn more about it?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

1-2. According to the GMO legislation ([1]), GMOs can be authorised for marketing in the EU only after having been subject to a thorough risk assessment, performed by EFSA ([2]), demonstrating their safety for human and animal health and for the environment.

EFSA published a positive scientific opinion on the application by Bayer CropScience for authorisation of the rapeseed Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8xRf3 on 26 September 2012 ([3]). According to the procedure set in Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003, the Commission presented a draft decision for authorisation of these GMOs to the SCFCAH ([4]) on 26 April 2013, where no qualified majority could be reached in favour or against the draft decision. According to the procedure set in Article 6 of Regulation (EC) No 182/2011, the draft decision was presented to an appeal committee, which did not deliver an opinion either. The Commission adopted the decision of marketing of these GMOs on 27 June 2013 ([5]).

3. Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 ensures that consumers are comprehensively informed on the presence of authorised GMOs in feed and in food. The rapeseed Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8xRf3 is therefore covered by this obligation of labelling.

4. The Commission publishes a register of all authorised GMOs on its website ([6]) including the post market monitoring requirements where appropriate. The post market monitoring requirements of the rapeseed Ms8, Rf3 and Ms8xRf3 are published on this website.

([1]) Regulation (EC) No1829/2003 on genetically modified food and feed; Directive 2001/18/EC on the release of genetically modified organisms in the environment.
([2]) The European Food Safety Authority.
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2875.htm
([4]) Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health.
([5]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:175:0057:0060:EN:PDF
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/dyna/gm_register/index_en.cfm

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007832/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Dangerosité de l'huile de palme

L'huile de palme est peu coûteuse. Résultat, elle intervient dans la composition de 80 % des produits alimentaires à travers le monde: chips, croutons, soupes en sachet, le fameux Nutella et autres pâtes à tartiner, biscuits, mayonnaise, céréales, chocolat, sardines en boîtes… L'huile de palme est partout!

On la retrouve également dans 20 % environ des produits de beauté, principalement les savons solides et les crèmes hydratantes.

Mais l'huile de palme est utilisée massivement par les industriels de l'agroalimentaire et de la beauté parce qu'elle est très peu coûteuse par rapport aux autres huiles. Le problème, c'est qu'elle n'a presque que des défauts. D'abord, elle est dangereuse pour la santé: elle contient en effet 50 % d'acides gras saturés (contre 15 % pour l'huile d'olive, par exemple). Des acides gras qui augmentent les risques de maladies cardiovasculaires. À la clé: crises cardiaques, artères bouchées, obésité, cholestérol… Ensuite — et on néglige souvent ce point pourtant fondamental! —, elle est ultra-nocive pour l'environnement: peu coûteuse, elle est massivement utilisée par l'industrie agro-alimentaire. Des centaines de milliers d'hectares de forêt tropicale disparaissent dans les principales régions productrices (Indonésie, Malaisie, Bornéo et Sumatra) au profit de la culture de palmiers à huile. Conséquence: 90 % des forêts des principaux pays producteurs sont décimées au profit de la culture du palmier. Conséquence: augmentation des rejets de gaz à effet de serre, destruction de l'habitat de nombreuses espèces d'animaux, pollution. Enfin, elle a des répercussions sociales graves. Les petits producteurs chargés de la récolte des fruits du palmier à huile sont exploités et vivent dans une misère extrême. Ils travaillent de surcroît dans des conditions pénibles, voire périlleuses.

1. Quelle est la position de la Commission sur l'huile de palme?

2. Que compte-t-elle faire, à la lumière des conséquences désastreuses de son utilisation pour le citoyen européen?

3. La Commission peut-elle faire un état des lieux de l'évolution du droit des travailleurs dans les différents pays de production?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(4 septembre 2013)

La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à ses réponses aux questions écrites E-011112/2012, E-008395/13 et E-008455/13 ([1]).

1. La Commission n'a pas de position générale sur l'huile de palme. Elle est toutefois consciente des inquiétudes suscitées par l'impact social et environnemental de la production d'huile de palme dans certains endroits.

2. Dans le contexte de la stratégie européenne pour les problèmes de santé liés à la nutrition, la surcharge pondérale et l'obésité ([2]), la Commission coopère avec les États membres et les parties prenantes pour améliorer la nutrition et prévenir la surcharge pondérale et l'obésité, y compris par des activités ciblant l'apport en graisses alimentaires. En outre, conformément au règlement (UE) n° 1169/2011 ([3]) concernant l'information des consommateurs sur les denrées alimentaires, les huiles et les graisses raffinées d'origine végétale figurant dans la liste des ingrédients devront être suivies de l'indication de leurs origines végétales spécifiques à partir du 13 décembre 2014. La Commission envisage les questions de durabilité de l'huile de palme dans le contexte des biocarburants, le caractère «durable» de cette huile pouvant être reconnu à condition d'être certifié par un système volontaire d'établissement de la conformité approuvé par la Commission.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) COM(2007)279 final.
([3]) JO L 304 du 22.11.2011.

3. La Commission soutient la coopération bilatérale permanente avec les pays partenaires de l'UE dans un certain nombre de domaines concernés, notamment celui de la santé et de la sécurité au travail ([4]), où l'UE encourage les pays partenaires à ratifier et à appliquer dans tous les secteurs les normes de travail internationales consacrées par les conventions de l'Organisation internationale du travail.

([4]) Sécurité et santé au travail.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007832/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: The hazards associated with palm oil

Palm oil is cheap, which means that it is used as an ingredient in 80% of food products worldwide: crisps, croutons, packet soups, the famous Nutella and other spreads, biscuits, mayonnaise, breakfast cereals, chocolate, tinned sardines — palm oil is everywhere.

It is also found in around 20% of beauty products, mainly bars of soaps and hydrating creams.

The reason why palm oil is used on such a massive scale by manufacturers in the agri-food and beauty industries is because it is extremely cheap compared to other oils, yet it presents almost nothing but problems. Firstly, it is hazardous to health: it has a saturated fatty acid content of 50%, compared to a figure of 15% for olive oil, for example. These fatty acids increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, which means heart attacks, clogged arteries, obesity and high cholesterol levels. Secondly — and this key point is often ignored — it is incredibly harmful to the environment. Since it is cheap, it is used on a massive scale by the agri-food industry, and hundreds of thousands of hectares of tropical forest are disappearing in the main producing regions (Indonesia, Malaysia, Borneo and Sumatra) to make way for oil palm plantations. This has led to the decimation of 90% of forests in the main producing countries so that oil palm trees can be grown, the result of which is an increase in greenhouse gas emissions, the destruction of many animal habitats and pollution. Finally, palm oil has major social impacts. The small-scale producers who harvest the oil palm fruits are exploited and live in extreme poverty, as well as working in difficult or even dangerous conditions.

1. What is the Commission's position on palm oil?

2. What action does it intend to take in view of the fact that its use has such disastrous consequences for European citizens?

3. Can the Commission provide an update on the current situation as regards workers' rights in the various producing countries?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

The European Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-011112/2012 as well as questions E-008395/13 and E-008455/13 ([1]).

1. The Commission has no general position on palm oil. The Commission is however aware of concerns about the social and environmental impacts of the palm oil industry in some places.

2. In the context of the strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health issues ([2]), the Commission is working with Member States and stakeholders to improve nutrition and prevent overweight and obesity, including through activities addressing dietary fat intake. In addition, in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 ([3]) on the provision of food information to consumers, as from 13 December 2014 refined oils and fats of vegetable origin included in the list of ingredients must be followed by an indication of their specific vegetable origin. The Commission considers sustainability aspects of palm oil in the context of biofuels, where is can recognise palm oil as 'sustainable', as long as it is certified by a voluntary scheme approved by the Commission.

3. The Commission supports ongoing bilateral cooperation with EU partner countries in a number of relevant areas including occupational safety and health ([4]), where the EU encourages partner countries to ratify and implement international labour standards across all sectors, embodied in International Labour Organisation conventions.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) COM(2007)279 final.
([3]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011.
([4]) Occupational Safety and Health.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007833/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Gestion du 112 par la Commission Européenne

J'ai suivi avec attention le sujet du numéro d'urgence 112 depuis 2009. Les problèmes n'ont pas été résolus: la connaissance du numéro112 par la population stagne (seul 1 citoyen européen sur 4 connaît le 112), les critères de précision de localisation des appels au numéro 112 n'ont pas été demandés et le fonctionnement du système dans son ensemble est encore imparfait dans de nombreux États membres.

A contrario, le système pan-européen d'alerte d'urgence intégré aux véhicules automobiles, eCall, qui repose sur le numéro 112, a été développé beaucoup plus rapidement. J'ai pu observer les efforts de la Commission sur ce sujet, notamment plusieurs projets législatifs, des efforts de standardisation et le financement de projets de développement. J'ai également remarqué la collaboration intense entre différentes DG à la Commission et différentes commissions législatives au Parlement européen.

Ceci m'amène aux questions suivantes:

1. Quel budget annuel affectez-vous au numéro d'urgence européen 112? Considérez-vous que les ressources dédiées actuellement sont suffisantes pour assurer une politique efficace sur le numéro 112?

2. Quelle est la structure destinée à favoriser la coopération entre différents services de la Commission sur le sujet? Quelle est la fréquence des réunions ou des échanges entre la DG Connect et les autres DG impliquées dans le développement du numéro112, telles que SANCO, ECHO et Home Affairs?

3. Quel budget affectez-vous chaque année au financement de projets sur le numéro112? Combien de projets sur le numéro 112 sont actuellement financés, en dehors de ceux relatifs à eCall?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(14 août 2013)

En vertu du cadre réglementaire sur les communications électroniques, le rôle principal de la Commission concernant le numéro 112 est de garantir la mise en œuvre effective des dispositions légales de l'UE. La Commission s'est servie notamment du comité des communications comme d'une plateforme pour inciter les États membres à mettre en œuvre de manière efficace le 112. La Commission a contribué, avec les ressources dont elle disposait, à sensibiliser les citoyens à ce numéro d'urgence, notamment par le financement de l'enquête Eurobaromètre et la participation active de nos experts aux réunions de la CEPT sur la précision et la fiabilité de la localisation de l'appelant, ainsi qu'à des événements en lien avec le 112 organisés par les États membres et les acteurs concernés.

Les services de la DG CNECT, de la DG ECHO, de la DG ENTR, de la DG SANCO et de la DG JUST de la Commission travaillent de concert sur différents aspects de la promotion du 112, notamment sur les politiques à mener et sur la gestion de projets. Par exemple, la coopération entre la DG CNECT et la DG ENTR se trouve actuellement renforcée en vue d'étudier des possibilités de projets liés au numéro 112 dans le cadre du défi de société no 7 du programme Horizon 2020 : «Sociétés sûres — Protéger la liberté et la sécurité de l'Europe et de ses citoyens».

Concernant le prétendu décalage entre la gestion du service eCall et celle du numéro 112, il convient de souligner que le système eCall présente un champ d'application beaucoup plus restreint que l'accès aux services d'urgence par le 112. Il convient également d'observer que le cadre réglementaire sur le système eCall n'est pas encore en place, ce qui explique qu'une coordination et une consultation plus étroites soient organisées sur cette question avec les États membres et les acteurs concernés. D'autre part, la législation européenne comporte déjà des dispositions concernant les appels d'urgence et le numéro 112 qui spécifient clairement les responsabilités pour les États membres le suivi dont elles font l'objet par la Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007833/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: The Commission's management of 112

I have been closely following the story of the 112 emergency number since 2009. The problems have not been resolved: people's knowledge of the 112 number has stagnated (only one in four European citizens knows about 112), accuracy criteria for locating calls to the 112 number have not been requested and the functioning of the system as a whole is still flawed in many Member States.

In contrast, the pan-European integrated in-vehicle emergency call system eCall, which is based on the 112 number, has been developed much more quickly. I have seen the efforts the Commission has made on this issue, including several legislative drafts, standardisation efforts and financing for development projects. I have also taken note of the intense collaboration between different DGs in the Commission and different legislative committees in Parliament.

This leads me to the following questions:

1. What is the annual budget allocated to the 112 European emergency number? Do you believe that the resources currently dedicated to it are sufficient for ensuring an effective policy on the 112 number?

2. What is the structure aimed at promoting cooperation between different services of the Commission on this subject? How often are meetings or exchanges held between DG CONNECT and the other DGs involved in the development of the 112 number, such as SANCO, ECHO and HOME AFFAIRS?

3. What budget is allocated each year to financing 112 projects? How many 112 projects are currently being financed aside from those relating to eCall?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

Under the regulatory framework on electronic communications the main role of the Commission with regard to 112 is to ensure effective implementation of the EU legal provisions. The Commission has in particular used the communications Committee as a platform to push Member States to effectively implement 112. The Commission has, with the resources available, contributed to raising citizens' awareness of 112. This includes the financing of the Eurobarometer survey, and the active participation of our experts in CEPT meetings on caller location accuracy and reliability and in 112 related events organised by Member States and stakeholders.

The Commission services of DG CONNECT, DG ECHO, DG ENTR, DG SANCO and DG JUST are cooperating on different aspects of the promotion of 112, including on policy issues and project management. For instance, currently there is intensified cooperation between DG CONNECT and DG ENTR on identifying possible projects related to 112 for Horizon 2020 societal challenge 7 on 'Secure Societies — Protecting freedom and security of Europe and its citizens'.

Concerning the alleged 'difference' between the management of the eCall file and 112, it should be pointed out that eCall is a much more defined area in comparison to the broad scope of emergency access to 112. It has to be noted that the regulatory framework on eCall is not yet in place. Therefore more intensive coordination and consultation is organised on this issue with Member States and relevant stakeholders. On the other hand EU legislation contains already provisions on emergency calls and 112 with clearly defined responsabilities for Member States which are monitored by the Commission.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-007835/13
alla Commissione
Clemente Mastella (PPE)
(2 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Intervento UE a tutela della sicurezza dei piloti di Formula Uno

Nell'ultima gara di Formula Uno a Silverstone si sono registrati numerosi ed inquietanti episodi di scoppio di pneumatici durante la gara, anche in pieno rettilineo: momenti di vera e propria paura con safety cars in azione per le troppe contestuali forature, che hanno costretto ad una momentanea sospensione della gara.

Una serie impressionante di cedimenti strutturali senza precedenti hanno messo in stato di agitazione sia i piloti sia la stessa FIA, massima istituzione dello sport motoristico la cui principale missione dovrebbe essere quella di tutelare e promuovere la sicurezza sulle strade e non solo sui circuiti, che ha deciso di muoversi convocando un vertice con tutti i direttori sportivi. Non è la prima volta che vengono sollevati dubbi su test delle gomme sospetti.

Può, pertanto, la Commissione far sapere se alla luce dei fatti sopra esposti ritiene opportuno, in attesa delle necessarie verifiche tecniche, verificare la possibilità di intervenire per ottenere la sospensione del Gran Premio a partire dalla prossima gara prevista a Nürburgring in Germania, in quanto l'esigenza pur legittima di continuare con le gare non può assolutamente mettere a rischio la sicurezza dei piloti (un caso del genere si verificò nel 2005 a Minneapolis, quando la Michelin si rifiutò di correre in quanto non garantiva l'incolumità dei piloti)?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(12 agosto 2013)

Le norme di sicurezza applicabili al campionato di Formula 1, in particolare in materia di pneumatici per automobili, rientrano nell'esclusiva responsabilità dell'organizzatore privato della manifestazione, ossia della FIA. La Commissione non intende pertanto proporre un intervento dell'UE in questo campo.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007835/13
to the Commission
Clemente Mastella (PPE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: EU action to ensure the safety of Formula One drivers

The latest Formula One Grand Prix at Silverstone was overshadowed by an alarming number of blowouts occurring even on the straight, making the race terrifyingly dangerous at certain moments, necessitating the deployment of safety cars and a briefly bringing the event to a halt.

This unprecedented series of tyre structural failures has been causing great concern, not only among drivers but within the FIA, the governing body of motor sport worldwide, whose principal function should be to protect and promote road safety both on and off the circuit. Events have now prompted it to hold a meeting with all team managers so as to address the doubts which have been raised, not for the first time, concerning procedures for testing the suspect tyres.

In view of this:

Does the Commission consider it appropriate to seek the suspension of Grand Prix events, the next of which is scheduled to take place on the Nürburgring circuit in Germany, pending the results of technical inspections, given that it is totally inadmissible to risk sacrificing the lives of drivers to the continued demands of the competition, however legitimate they may be (a question which arose at the Indianapolis event in 2005 when the Michelin teams withdrew on safety grounds)?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

Safety standards applying to the Formula One Championship, in particular as regards car tyres, are under the sole responsibility of the private event organiser, namely the FIA. The Commission therefore does not intend to propose an EU action in this field.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007836/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Europaweiter Hochwasserschutz

In den letzten Wochen wurden mehrere Länder der Europäischen Union von Hochwasser und Überschwemmungen heimgesucht; es sind Schäden in Milliardenhöhe entstanden, und die Aufräumarbeiten dauern immer noch an.

1. Sind — nach den Ereignissen der vergangenen Wochen — erweiterte europaweite Sofortmaßnahmen geplant, die in Gang gesetzt werden, sobald meteorologische Frühwarnsysteme Alarm schlagen?

2. Gibt es bereits EU-weite Programme und Initiativen zur Mobilisierung von Freiwilligen und generellen Einbindung ziviler Verbände in die Katastrophenhilfe, wenn ja, haben sie sich bewährt?

3. Werden die sozialen Medien zur Mobilisierung und Koordination von Rettungskräften und Freiwilligen und zur Information der Bevölkerung eingesetzt? Wenn ja, gibt es bereits eine Evaluierung von Wirkung und Reichweite?

4. Schätzt die Kommission den bereits vorhandenen Hochwasserschutz als ausreichend ein?

5. Wie weit ist die Arbeit an den Gefahrenzonenplänen und an den Hochwassermanagementplänen gediehen; ist mit einer termingerechten Fertigstellung zu rechnen?

6. Wie ist die Praktikabilität der „Hochwasserrichtlinie“ nach den Ereignissen der vergangenen Wochen zu bewerten?

7. Sind im Hinblick auf die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels weitere Maßnahmen nötig?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(27. August 2013)

In den vergangenen zehn Jahren wurden in der EU umfangreiche Hochwasserschutzmaßnahmen ergriffen, und viele davon wurden aus EU-Mitteln finanziert. Durch die Umsetzung der Hochwasserschutzrichtlinie ([1]) werden zusätzliche Maßnahmen vorgesehen, um Hochwasserschäden zu verhindern.

Bei akuten Notfällen können die Mitgliedstaaten auf Hilfe und Unterstützung durch das Notfallabwehrzentrum (Emergency Response Centre — ERC) der Kommission zurückgreifen. Das ERC verfolgt Krisen und Katastrophen auf der ganzen Welt, gibt Frühwarninformationen heraus und dient als Informationsknotenpunkt.

Die GD ECHO und Kommissionsmitglied Georgieva geben über Twitter und Facebook regelmäßig Informationen, etwa aktuelle Meldungen und Karten, weiter. Die Zivilschutzbehörden in den Mitgliedstaaten verfolgen diese Informationen und fungieren durch die Weitergabe an ihre Partner vor Ort als Multiplikatoren.

Gemäß der Hochwasserschutzrichtlinie müssen die Mitgliedstaaten bis zum 22. Dezember 2011 vorläufige Bewertungen des Hochwasserrisikos vornehmen. Bis zum 22. Dezember 2013 sind Hochwassergefahrenkarten und Hochwasserrisikokarten zu erstellen, auf deren Grundlage bis zum 22. Dezember 2015 Hochwasserrisikomanagementpläne ausgearbeitet werden müssen.

Alle Mitgliedstaaten haben der Kommission ihre vorläufigen Hochwasserrisikobewertungen gemeldet oder mitgeteilt, Übergangsmaßnahmen nach Artikel 13 der Hochwasserschutzrichtlinie anzuwenden. Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt wird für die anschließenden Durchführungsphasen mit keiner größeren Verzögerung gerechnet.

In Anbetracht des Durchführungszeitplans ist es verfrüht, die Wirksamkeit der Hochwasserschutzrichtlinie zu bewerten. Die Kommission will 2018 einen Bericht über die Durchführung der Richtlinie veröffentlichen (Artikel 16).

Die kürzlich angenommene EU-Strategie zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel sieht einen Rahmen und verschiedene Mechanismen vor, um die Vorbereitung der EU auf aktuelle und künftige Folgen des Klimawandels zu intensivieren.

([1]) Richtlinie 2007/60/EG, ABl. L 288 vom 6.11.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007836/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Europe-wide flood prevention

In recent weeks, several Member States of the European Union have been hit by flooding; the damage has cost billions of euros and the clean-up operations are still going on.

1. Following the events of recent weeks, are there plans to implement extended Europe-wide measures that would come into operation as soon as meteorological early warning systems sound the alarm?

2. Are EU-wide programmes and initiatives already in place for mobilising volunteers and generally involving civilian groups in disaster relief? If so, have these proven to be effective?

3. Are social media being used to mobilise and coordinate rescue services and volunteer organisations and to keep the public informed? If so, have the effectiveness and range of such programmes already been evaluated?

4. Does the Commission consider the existing flood prevention measures to be adequate?

5. What progress has been made in the work on the danger zone plans and the flood management plans; can we expect these plans to be completed promptly?

6. Given the events of recent weeks, how practicable can the Floods Directive be considered to be?

7. Is there any need for further measures in view of the impact of climate change?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

Significant flood prevention measures have been taken in the past decade in the EU, many of them funded by EU funds. This has helped to reduce the impact of the recent floods. The implementation of the Floods Directive ([1]) will provide additional measures to prevent the adverse impacts of floods.

During an acute emergency, Member States can rely on support and assistance by the Commission's Emergency Response Centre (ERC). The ERC closely monitors crises and disasters around the world, provides early warning information and acts as an information hub.

DG ECHO as well as Commissioner Georgieva maintain both Twitter and Facebook accounts via which information such as updates and maps are regularly shared. Civil Protection Agencies in the Member States follow these and act as multipliers, disseminating the information to relevant partners on the ground.

The Floods Directive required Member States to undertake a preliminary flood risk assessment (PFRA) by 22 December 2011. Flood hazard and risk maps have to be prepared by 22 December 2013 and, on that basis, flood risk management plans by 22 December 2015.

All Member States have reported to the Commission the PFRA or have communicated the application of transitional measures under Article 13 of the Floods Directive. At this stage no major delay is expected in the subsequent implementation stages.

Given the timetable of implementation, it is too early to make judgments about the effectiveness of the Floods Directive. The Commission intends to publish an implementation report in 2018 (Article 16).

The recently adopted EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change sets out a framework and mechanisms for bringing the EU's preparedness for the current and future impacts of climate change up to a new level.

([1]) Directive 2007/60/EC, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007837/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Natura-2000-Gebiete in Salzburg

Angesichts des geplanten Baus der 380 kV-Leitung unter anderem im direkten Einzugsgebiet der Stadt Salzburg stellt sich die Frage, inwiefern (künftige) Natura-2000-Gebiete davon betroffen sein können.

1. Wann wurde das Land Salzburg zuletzt zur Darstellung bzw. Auflistung der genauen Ausweisung von Natura-2000-Gebieten aufgefordert? (Mit der Bitte um Übermittlung der Auflistung.)

2. Wie weit ist die Ausweisung der Natura-2000-Gebiete in Salzburg aus Sicht der Kommission zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt vorangeschritten? Sind die Ausweisungen sach- und fristgerecht erfolgt?

3. Gibt es bisher Versäumnisse oder Verzögerungen bei der Ausweisung dieser Gebiete? Wenn ja, welche Gebiete im Land Salzburg sind davon betroffen?

4. Ist Salzburg bisher bestimmten Forderungen zur Ausweisung von Natura-2000-Gebieten nicht nachgekommen? Wenn ja, um welche Gebiete handelt es sich dabei?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(12. August 2013)

Am 30. Mai 2013 hat die Kommission die Republik Österreich mit einem Fristsetzungsschreiben aufgefordert, ihren Verpflichtungen aus der Richtlinie 92/43/EWG (FFH-Richtlinie) ([1]) nachzukommen und ihr nationales Natura-2000-Netz zu vervollständigen. Diesem Schreiben lag eine Liste von rund 180 Gebieten in Österreich bei, die sich nach Auffassung der Kommission für die Aufnahme in das Natura-2000-Netz eignen würden. Einige dieser Gebiete sind im Land Salzburg gelegen.

Das Ersuchen um Zugang zu der Gebietsliste in der Anlage zum Fristsetzungsschreiben wurde als Antrag auf Zugang zu einem Dokument registriert und wird als solcher bearbeitet.

Da die Kommission noch keine förmliche Antwort auf ihr Fristsetzungsschreiben erhalten hat, sind ihr die weiteren Absichten des Landes Salzburg nicht bekannt.

Der Kommission liegen keine konkreten Informationen über frühere Versäumnisse des Landes Salzburg bei der Ausweisung von Natura-2000-Gebieten vor, die über den Fall hinausgehen, der Gegenstand des laufenden Vertragsverletzungsverfahrens ist.

([1]) ABl. L 206 vom 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007837/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Natura 2000 areas in Salzburg

In view of the plans to install a 380 kV cable within the catchment area of the Salzburg, among other places, the question arises of the extent to which (future) Natura 2000 sites may be affected by this.

1. When was the State of Salzburg last required to identify or list the precise designation of Natura 2000 sites? (A copy of the list is also requested.)

2. From the Commission's perspective, what progress has been made so far on the designation of Natura 2000 sites in Salzburg? Have the areas been designated correctly and on time?

3. Have there been any omissions or delays in identifying these sites? If so, which sites in the State of Salzburg are affected?

4. Has Salzburg failed in the past to meet specific requirements in relation to the designation of Natura 2000 sites? If so, which are the sites in question?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

On 30 May 2013, the Commission has sent a Letter of Formal Notice to the Republic of Austria, asking it to comply with its obligations under Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive) ([1]) by completing its national network of Natura 2000 sites. This letter was accompanied by an annex listing approximately 180 sites in Austria, which the Commission considers suitable to be added to the Natura 2000 network. Some of these sites are located in the Region of Salzburg.

The request for access to the list of sites attached to the Letter of Formal Notice has been registered as a request for access to documents and will be dealt with in this context.

Since the Commission has not yet received any formal reply to its Letter of Formal Notice, it is not yet aware about the further intentions of the Region of Salzburg.

The Commission has no specific information about any previous failure of the region of Salzburg with regard to the designation of Natura 2000 sites, other than what is dealt with in the current infringement case.

([1]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007838/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: (Zwangs-)Prostitution in der Europäischen Union

In der Europäischen Union sind die Gesetze zur Verhinderung und Bekämpfung von Zwangsprostitution je nach Staat verschieden ausgestaltet und strategisch unterschiedlich ausgerichtet; hauptsächlich stehen sich zwei Konzepte gegenüber: Verfolgung/Bestrafung der Freier und Verfolgung/Bestrafung der Prostituierten (Verfolgung/Bestrafung der Zuhälter ist fast immer enthalten). Eine nachhaltige Eindämmung von Zwangsprostitution und Menschenhandel wird durch beide Methoden nicht erreicht; inwieweit positive Effekte zu verzeichnen sind, wurde noch nicht festgestellt. In den Medien wird der Anteil der Zwangsprostitution (ausgehend von der Gesamtzahl der Prostituierten) mit 50-90 % angegeben; die Datenlage ist in höchstem Maße unklar.

1. Sind der Kommission die oben genannten Daten und Fakten bekannt?

2. Gibt es — insbesondere im Fall von noch minderjährigen Mädchen — EU-weite grenzüberschreitende Projekte in Zusammenarbeit mit den Polizeikräften, die bei einem Ausstieg hilfreich zur Seite stehen?

3. Gibt es bereits EU-weite Pläne zur automatischen Verleihung eines Aufenthaltsrechtes, sofern es sich um einen Fall von Zwangsprostitution handelt?

4. Wie steht es mit der Umsetzung der EU-Richtlinie zur Bekämpfung des Menschenhandels, und wie lassen sich Verzögerungen begründen (insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Tatsache, dass nur 6 von 27 Mitgliedstaaten vor dem Fristablauf im April 2013 eine Umsetzung vorgenommen haben)?

5. Welche Auffassung vertritt die Kommission zum Thema Politikkonzepte gegen Zwangsprostitution, Verfolgung/Bestrafung Prostituierter oder Freier, und aus welchen Gründen?

Antwort von Cecilia Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(30. August 2013)

Aus dem ersten durch Statistiken untermauerten Bericht über Menschenhandel in der EU ([1]) geht hervor, dass die häufigste Form von Menschenhandel auf die sexuelle Ausbeutung abstellt (62 %) und die überwiegende Mehrzahl der Opfer Frauen und Mädchen sind (96 %).

Für die Stakeholder, u. a. Strafverfolgungsbehörden und die Gesellschaft, gibt es verschiedene Möglichkeiten der finanziellen Unterstützung, etwa im Rahmen des Programms ISEC (Programm zur Kriminalprävention und Kriminalitätsbekämpfung) ([2]).

Die Richtlinie 2004/81/EG ([3]) sieht die Erteilung von Aufenthaltstiteln für Opfer des Menschenhandels, die mit den Behörden kooperieren, vor. Die Kommission überprüft derzeit die Umsetzung der Richtlinie.

Bislang haben dreizehn Mitgliedstaaten ([4]) die vollständige Umsetzung und drei Mitgliedstaaten ([5]) die teilweise Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2011/36/EU ([6]) mitgeteilt. Die Kommission hat mit der Analyse der übermittelten Informationen begonnen und wird alle Maßnahmen ergreifen, um die ordnungsgemäße Anwendung des EU-Rechts zu gewährleisten. Dazu leitet sie gegebenenfalls auch Vertragsverletzungsverfahren ein. Dreizehn Mitgliedstaaten, die am 29. Mai 2013 noch keine Umsetzungsmaßnahmen notifiziert hatten, erhielten Fristsetzungsschreiben ([7]). Seitdem haben zwei Mitgliedstaaten den Wortlaut ihrer nationalen Vorschriften zur Umsetzung der Richtlinie mitgeteilt.

([1]) Von Eurostat und der GD Inneres veröffentlicht, siehe: http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?breadCrumbReset=true&path=EU+Policy%2FReport_DGHome_Eurostat
([2]) Eine Datenbank der EU-finanzierten Projekte ist auf der EU-Website zum Thema Bekämpfung von Menschenhandel zu finden: http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/section.action?sectionPath=Group+of+Experts
([3]) ABl. L 261 vom 6.8.2004, S. 19.
([4]) CZ, EE, HR, LV, LT, HU, AT, PL, RO, SK, FI, SE, UK.
([5]) BE, BG, SI.
([6]) ABl. L 101 vom 15.4.2011, S. 1.
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/eu_law/eulaw/decisions/dec_20130603.htm

Die Kommission hat den Auftrag, sich mit dem Thema Prostitution zu befassen, sofern diese mit sexueller Ausbeutung und Menschenhandel in Zusammenhang steht; politische Maßnahmen im Bereich Prostitution fallen jedoch nach wie vor in den Zuständigkeitsbereich der Mitgliedstaaten. Mit Artikel 18 der Richtlinie 2011/36/EU werden die Mitgliedstaaten aufgefordert, die Einleitung von Maßnahmen zu erwägen, mit denen die Inanspruchnahme von Diensten, bei denen bekannt ist, dass die betreffende Person Opfer von Menschenhandel ist, als strafbare Handlung eingestuft wird. Wie in Artikel 23 der Richtlinie festgelegt, berichtet die Kommission bis 2016 darüber, wie sich die bestehenden nationalen Rechtsvorschriften auswirken, und unterbreitet erforderlichenfalls geeignete Vorschläge zur strafrechtlichen Verfolgung von Personen, die von Opfern erbrachte Dienste nutzen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007838/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: (Forced) prostitution in the EU

The laws designed to prevent and combat forced prostitution vary from country to country within the EU and differ in their strategy. In essence, there are two contrary approaches: prosecuting/penalising clients and prosecuting/penalising prostitutes (the prosecution/penalising of pimps is almost always included). Neither of these methods will succeed in permanently suppressing forced prostitution and trafficking in human beings; the extent to which positive changes have been achieved is not yet clear. The media states that the rate of forced prostitution (calculated on the basis of the total number of prostitutes) is 50-90%; the quality of the data is largely uncertain.

1. Is the Commission aware of the abovementioned facts and figures?

2. Are there any EU-wide cross-border projects involving cooperation with police authorities to help prostitutes, particularly underage girls, to get out of prostitution?

3. Do EU-wide plans already exist for the automatic granting of residency rights in cases of forced prostitution?

4. What is the situation concerning the transposition of the EU directive on combating trafficking in human beings, and what are the reasons for delays (particularly with respect to the fact that only six out of 27 Member States transposed the directive by the April 2013 deadline)?

5. What is the Commission's view on policy approaches to forced prostitution and the prosecution/penalising of prostitutes or clients, and what are the reasons for this view?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

According to the first EU statistical data, the most widespread form of trafficking is for the purpose of sexual exploitation (62%), of which the overwhelming majority of victims are women and girls (96%) ([1]).

There are several funding opportunities for stakeholders, including law enforcement authorities and the society, from the ISECProgramme among others ([2]).

Directive 2004/81/EC ([3]) provides for the issuance of residence permits to victims of trafficking in human beings who cooperate with the authorities. The Commission is reviewing its implementation.

To date, thirteen Member States ([4]) have notified complete transposition and three partial transposition ([5]) of Directive 2011/36/EU ([6]). The Commission has started analysing this information and will take all measures to ensure correct application of EC law, including by launching infringement procedures where necessary. Letters of formal notice were sent to 13 Member States who had not notified transposition on 29 May 2013 ([7]). Since then, two Member States have submitted the text of the provisions transposing the directive into their national law.

The Commission has a mandate to address prostitution in so far as this relates to sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings, but policy on prostitution as such remains a matter for the Member States. Article 18 of the directive 2011/36/EU urges Member States to consider measures for criminalising the use of services with the knowledge that the person is a victim of human trafficking. As required by Article 23 of the directive, the Commission will submit a report by 2016 assessing the impact of existing national laws accompanied, if necessary, by appropriate proposals on the criminalisation of users of services of victims.

([1]) Published by Eurostat and DG Home Affairs, available at http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?breadCrumbReset=true&path=EU+Policy%2FReport_DGHome_Eurostat.
([2]) A database of EU funded projects is available on the EU Anti-Trafficking website: http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/section.action?sectionPath=Group+of+Experts.
([3]) OJ L 261, 6.8.2004, p. 19.
([4]) CZ, EE, HR, LV, LT, HU, AT, PL, RO, SK, FI, SE, UK.
([5]) BE, BG, SI.
([6]) OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/eu_law/eulaw/decisions/dec_20130603.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007839/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Steigende Arbeitslosigkeit in Österreich

Österreich verzeichnet im Juni einen Anstieg der Arbeitslosigkeit, insbesondere unter den Ausländern. Besonders im Bundesland Salzburg stieg die Arbeitslosenquote auf 16 %; auffällig ist dabei der Anstieg unter den ohnehin schon sozial benachteiligten Personen.

1. Ist der Kommission der Anstieg der Arbeitslosigkeit in Österreich bekannt? Wenn ja, wie stuft sie die Prognose — sowohl kurz- als auch langfristig — ein?

2. Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission Österreich zu empfehlen, um den Weg anderer Mitgliedstaaten (Stichwort: Spanien, Portugal) zu vermeiden beziehungsweise zu verhindern?

3. Welche Maßnahmen könnten hier gerade angesichts des Anstiegs des Ausländeranteils ergriffen werden? Gibt es hierzu ähnliche Werte in den anderen Mitgliedstaaten?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2013)

In ihrer jüngsten Wirtschaftsprognose von Mai 2013 gab die Europäische Kommission an, dass in Österreich in den Jahren 2013 und 2014 ein Anstieg der Arbeitslosigkeit auf 4,7 % zu erwarten ist, da sich die Wirtschaft weniger günstig entwickelt und die Zahl der Arbeitskräfte zunimmt ([1]). Die beiden größten österreichischen Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitute HIS und WIFO kommen in ihren Prognosen von Juni zu ähnlichen Ergebnissen ([2]).

In den aktuellen länderspezifischen Empfehlungen, die im Rahmen des Europäischen Semesters angenommen wurden, hält die Kommission fest, dass Österreich insbesondere die Erwerbsbeteiligung von älteren Arbeitskräften, Migrantinnen und Migranten sowie Frauen erhöhen sollte, um sein Beschäftigungsziel im Sinne von Europa 2020 zu erreichen. Das kürzlich angekündigte österreichische Konjunkturprogramm ist eine willkommene Maßnahme, um den unmittelbaren Auswirkungen der derzeit steigenden Arbeitslosigkeit zu begegnen ([3]).

Die Kommission stellt insbesondere fest, dass nichtösterreichische Staatsbürgerinnen und -bürger größere Schwierigkeiten auf dem österreichischen Arbeitsmarkt haben und deutlich stärker von Arbeitslosigkeit betroffen sind als österreichische Staatsbürgerinnen und -bürger (8,8 % gegenüber 3,7 % im Jahr 2012); zudem ist bei Ersteren die Beschäftigungsquote niedriger (64,9 % gegenüber 73,7 %). Weiterhin ist eine Beschäftigung und Bezahlung unter dem Qualifikationsniveau bei Personen mit Migrationshintergrund dreimal häufiger als bei der einheimischen Bevölkerung (27,5 % gegenüber 9,7 % im Jahr 2008). Daher wird in den länderspezifischen Empfehlungen von 2013 betont, dass das Arbeitsmarktpotenzial von Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund durch eine bessere Anerkennung ihrer Qualifikationen und ihrer Bildungsergebnisse vollständig ausgeschöpft werden sollte ([4]). Im diesjährigen Europäischen Semester erhielten neben Österreich auch Belgien, Dänemark und Schweden eine Empfehlung bezüglich der Beschäftigung von Migrantinnen und Migranten.

([1]) Europäische Wirtschaftsprognose, Frühling 2013:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2013/pdf/ee2_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.wifo.ac.at/jart/prj3/wifo/resources/person_dokument/person_dokument.jart?publikationsid=46852&mime_type=application/pdf
http://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/lib/prognose28061 3.pdf
([3]) http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Presse/AktuellePresseMeldungen/Seiten/MitterlehnerKonjunkturjetztstärken,WachstumundBeschäftigungsichern.aspx
([4]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/de/13/st10/st10666.de13.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007839/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Rising unemployment in Austria

Austria recorded a rise in unemployment levels in June, particularly among non-Austrian nationals. The State of Salzburg was hit particularly hard, with unemployment rising to 16%; the increase is particularly noticeable among those already experiencing social disadvantage.

1. Is the Commission aware of the rise in unemployment in Austria? If so, what is its assessment of the forecasts, both short-term and long-term?

2. What measures would the Commission recommend to Austria in order to avoid taking the same path as other Member States (specifically Spain and Portugal)?

3. What steps could be taken here, specifically in view of the rise in unemployment among non-Austrian nationals? Are there similar figures in other Member States?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The European Commission stated in its last Economic Forecast of May 2013 that unemployment in Austria is expected to rise to 4.7% in 2013 and 2014, due to less favourable economic developments and because of the increase in the size of the labour force ([1]). The forecasts of the two major Austrian economic research institutes IHS and WIFO in June come to similar results ([2]).

As indicated in the latest country specific recommendations adopted under the European Semester, the Commission considers that Austria should increase labour market participation especially of older workers, migrants and women in order to reach its employment target under the Europe 2020 process. The recently announced Austrian economic recovery plan is a welcome measure to tackle the immediate effects of currently rising unemployment ([3]).

The Commission notes in particular that non-nationals in Austria face more difficulties on the labour market and have significantly higher unemployment rates than Austrian nationals (8.8% vs. 3.7% in 2012) and lower employment rates (64.9% vs.73.7%). Additionally, people with a migration background are three times more often employed and paid below their actual qualification levels than Austrians (27.5% vs. 9.7% in 2008). Therefore the 2013 country specific recommendations emphasise that the labour market potential of migrants should be fully tapped by improving the recognition of their qualifications and their education outcomes ([4]). In addition to Austria, Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden received a recommendation concerning the employment of migrants in this year's European Semester.

([1]) European Economic Forecast, Spring2013: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2013/pdf/ee2_en.pdf
([2]) http://www.wifo.ac.at/jart/prj3/wifo/resources/person_dokument/person_dokument.jart?publikationsid=46852&mime_type=application/pdf and http://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/lib/prognose280613.pdf
([3]) http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Presse/AktuellePresseMeldungen/Seiten/MitterlehnerKonjunkturjetztstärken,WachstumundBeschäftigungsichern.aspx
([4]) http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st10/st10666.en13.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007840/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Einseitiges wie auch gegenseitiges Ausspionieren (Überwachung von internationalen Partnern)

Einseitiges wie gegenseitiges Ausspionieren ist für bi- und multilaterales Vertrauen, welches die Basis für politische Zusammenarbeit, insbesondere aber jene für die Verhandlungen zum Abkommen EU-USA sein sollte, nicht gerade förderlich.

1. Inwieweit war die Kommission von diesen Vorgängen informiert?

2. Wer hatte Zugang zur Infrastruktur, um derartige Geräte zu installieren? Gab es bereits eine rückwirkende Personenüberprüfung?

3. Wie ist der Standard der Sicherheitsvorkehrungen in den betroffenen Gebäuden? Inwieweit gab es hierzu nach Bekanntwerden der Überwachung bereits Überprüfungen und Verbesserungen? Ist die lückenlose Sicherheit mittlerweile gewährleistet?

4. Welche unmittelbaren wie auch langfristigen Erkenntnisse und politische Überlegungen ergeben sich hierzu?

5. Welche möglichen Konsequenzen sieht die Kommission insbesondere in der Zusammenarbeit mit Großbritannien und generell auf internationaler Ebene? Welche Erkenntnisse hat die Kommission hierzu gewonnen, und wie wirken sich diese auf ihre zukünftige strategische Ausrichtung aus?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(24. September 2013)

Nach Ansicht der EU geben die Medienberichte über Programme wie PRISM, die es ermöglichen, in großem Umfang auf die Daten von Europäern zuzugreifen und diese auszuwerten wie auch über die angebliche Überwachung der Räumlichkeiten der EU in Europa und in EU-Delegationen im Ausland Anlass zur Sorge.

Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin hat die Besorgnis der EU am 1. Juli 2013 gegenüber US-Außenminister Kerry und der Nationalen Sicherheitsberaterin des amerikanischen Präsidenten, Susan Rice, zur Sprache gebracht.

Am 9. Juli hat der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst dem Auswärtigen Ausschuss des Europäischen Parlaments in einer Sicherheitsauflagen unterliegenden Sitzung mitgeteilt, welche Sicherheitsmaßnahmen infolge der Presseberichte über die US-Überwachung der Räumlichkeiten von EU-Delegationen getroffen wurden. Informationen über die Sicherheitsmaßnahmen der Organe unterliegen der Geheimhaltung.

Die Kommission hat die britischen Behörden schriftlich ersucht, den Geltungsbereich des sogenannten „Tempora-Programms“, dessen Verhältnismäßigkeit und den Umfang der geltenden gerichtlichen Aufsicht klarzustellen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007840/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Unilateral and mutual surveillance (monitoring of internal partners)

Unilateral and mutual surveillance is not exactly encouraging for bilateral and multilateral trust as the basis for political cooperation, in particular concerning negotiations on agreements between the EU and the USA.

1. To what extent was the Commission aware of these activities?

2. Who had access to the infrastructure that allowed them to install such devices? Has a retrospective personnel check already taken place?

3. How stringent are security precautions in the relevant buildings? To what extent have checks and improvements been implemented since the surveillance was revealed? Can comprehensive security now be assured?

4. What immediate and long-term insights and political considerations have arisen as a result?

5. What potential consequences does the Commission envisage, in particular concerning cooperation with the United Kingdom, as well as internationally? What insights has the Commission gained and how will these affect future strategy?

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

The EU is concerned about the media reports of programmes such as PRISM which appear to enable access and processing, on a large scale, of data of Europeans, as well as about the alleged surveillance of EU premises in Europe and EU delegations abroad.

In particular, the HR/VP raised the EU's concerns with Secretary of State Kerry and with the US President's National Security Advisor Susan Rice on 1 July 2013.

On 9 July, the European External Action Service briefed the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament on the security measures taken in the aftermath of the press reports about US surveillance of EU delegation premises, in a restricted session. The institutions do not publicly disclose the details of their security measures.

The Commission has requested the UK authorities in writing to clarify the scope of the so-called 'Tempora programme', its proportionality, and the extent of judicial oversight that applies.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007841/13
an die Kommission
Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Teilnahme von Bediensteten der Kommission an einer exklusiven Konferenz zu Schiefergas, die vom Industriesektor organisiert wird und bei der die Teilnahmegebühr 4 000 EUR beträgt

Die Konferenz „The European Retreat", die vom Veranstalter CWC organisiert wird, sollte ursprünglich am 21./22. Mai stattfinden und ist nun für den 25./26. September geplant. Die Veranstaltung gilt als „exklusive zweitägige Veranstaltung, zu der sich führende politische Entscheidungsträger und Branchenführer zur eingehenden Erörterung der Zukunft von Schieferöl und Schiefergas in Europa zusammenfinden". Im Programm sind Themen wie „Welche Auswirkung wird die unkonventionelle Revolution auf Europa haben?", „Sind die notwendigen Regelungen zur Verringerung der Umweltrisiken bereits in den Rechtsvorschriften der EU enthalten?" und „Reichen die gegenwärtigen EU-Verordnungen wie die REACH-Verordnung und die Wasserrahmenrichtlinie aus?" vorgesehen.

Die Teilnahme an dieser zweitägigen Veranstaltung kostet rund 4 000 EUR. Die Teilnehmer werden in einem 5-Sterne-Hotel in Brügge untergebracht.

Hat die Kommission ihre Teilnahme an dieser Konferenz bestätigt? Falls ja, bezahlen die Bediensteten der Kommission die Teilnahmegebühr von 4 000 EUR? Oder wurde ihnen die Teilnahmegebühr erlassen?

Wenn letzterer Fall zutrifft, wie lässt sich die Gratis-Teilnahme an einer 4 000 Euro-Veranstaltung mit der im Kodex für gute Verwaltungspraxis eingegangenen Verpflichtung der Kommission vereinbaren, nach der ihre Bediensteten „[…] stets objektiv und unparteiisch [handeln]" (S. 4)?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2013)

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage P-003199-13 ([1]) und bestätigt, dass sie keine Pläne für die Teilnahme an der Konferenz hat, auf die sich die Frau Abgeordnete bezieht.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007841/13
to the Commission
Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Participation of Commission officials in exclusive EUR 4 000 industry gathering on shale gas

The events company CWC Group is organising 'The Europe Retreat' (originally planned for 21 to 22 May 2013, now scheduled for 25 to 26 September 2013), presented as 'an exclusive two-day gathering of senior policy-makers and industry leaders convening for in-depth discussion on the future of Europe's shale oil and gas'. The programme will address issues such as 'What impact will the unconventional revolution have on Europe?', 'Are the necessary regulations to mitigate any environmental risks already part of European legislation?' and 'Do current European regulations such as REACH and the Water Framework Directive suffice'?

Participation in the two-day event costs around EUR 4 000. Participants are hosted in a five-star hotel in Bruges.

Has the Commission confirmed its attendance at this meeting? If so, are Commission officials paying the EUR 4 000 fee or will the fee be waived?

If the latter is the case, how does a 'free' EUR 4 000 event square with the Commission's commitment that its civil servants 'shall always act objectively and impartially' (p. 4 of its Code of Good Administrative Behaviour)?

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

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question P-003199-13 ([1]) and confirms that it has no plans to attend the particular meeting to which the Honourable Member refers.

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007842/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D) und Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Arbeitsschutzstrategie 2013-2020

Die letzte „Gemeinschaftsstrategie für Gesundheit und Sicherheit am Arbeitsplatz 2007-2012" ist 2012 ausgelaufen. Die Kommission hat bereits seit längerem eine Arbeitsschutzstrategie für den Zeitraum 2013-2020 angekündigt. Bisher lässt diese Strategie — obwohl auch die irische Ratspräsidentschaft die Gemeinschaftsstrategie angekündigt hat — weiterhin auf sich warten.

Die Kommission hat bis jetzt noch keine klaren Antworten darauf gefunden, wie diese Strategie aussehen soll und welche Inhalte und Schwerpunkte in der Strategie enthalten sein sollen. Die Haltung der Kommission ist daher nicht nachvollziehbar.

1. Wann wird die Strategie für 2013-2020 vorgelegt werden? Sollte keine Strategie vorgelegt werden, wird um Begründung und um Information ersucht, welche Ersatzstrategie bzw. -kampagne auf den Weg gebracht werden soll.

2. Welche Schwerpunkte werden dem Thema Prävention und der Verbesserung der Strukturen von Präventionsmaßnahmen gewidmet?

3. Welche Maßnahmen in der Strategie sind dem Thema Demografieentwicklung und dem besonderen Schutz von älteren ArbeitnehmerInnen gewidmet? (Motto: Bessere Arbeitsbedingungen für ein längeres Arbeitsleben.)

4. Welche Maßnahmen im Rahmen der Strategie sind für Informations- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit auf europäischer und nationaler Ebene geplant?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(14. August 2013)

Die Kommission verweist die Damen Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-006795/2013.

Bei der Ausarbeitung der in der obigen Antwort genannten Kommissionsmitteilung werden in der Tat spezifische Themen wie die demografische Entwicklung und besondere Schutzmaßnahmen für ältere Arbeitskräfte berücksichtigt werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007842/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D) and Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Health and safety strategy 2013-2020

The last 'Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work' lapsed in 2012. The Commission has been promising a worker protection strategy for 2013-2020 for some time now. So far there is no sign of this strategy, despite the fact that the Irish Presidency of the European Union has announced a Community strategy.

So far, the Commission has failed to provide a clear answer regarding the nature of this strategy, or what its content and key points should be. The Commission's position is therefore incomprehensible.

1. When will the strategy for 2013-2020 be presented? If no strategy is to be presented, could the Commission please explain why and indicate what alternative strategy or campaign is to be pursued?

2. What will be the key points in relation to prevention and improving the structures of preventative measures?

3. What measures in the strategy deal with demographic development and special protection for older workers ? (the motto here being: better working conditions for a longer working life)?

4. What measures are planned within the framework of the strategy for information and publicity at European and national level?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-006795/2013.

In the preparation of the Commission Communication mentioned in the above answer, specific issues such as demographic development and special protection for older workers will indeed be considered.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007843/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(2 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Οικονομική βιωσιμότητα νέων ανθρακικών μονάδων και κλιματικοί στόχοι

Μία από τις σημαντικότερες αλλαγές πολιτικής που ανακοίνωσε πρόσφατα ο πρόεδρος Ομπάμα είναι οι αυστηρότατοι περιορισμοί στη χρηματοδότηση νέων ανθρακικών μονάδων σε τρίτες χώρες ([1]). Στο ίδιο μήκος κύματος, η Παγκόσμια Τράπεζα σχεδιάζει να περιορίσει τη χρηματοδότηση νέων ανθρακικών μονάδων μόνο σε «σπάνιες περιπτώσεις», αντικατοπτρίζοντας την πολιτική της να αμβλύνει τις επιπτώσεις της κλιματικής αλλαγής ([2]). Αντιθέτως η πολιτική δανεισμού της Ευρωπαϊκής Τράπεζας Επενδύσεων σε μονάδες ηλεκτροπαραγωγής δε δείχνει συμβατή με το στόχο περιορισμού της ανόδου της θερμοκρασίας του πλανήτη κάτω από τους 2 °C ([3]), πράγμα που προκαλεί απορίες, δεδομένου κιόλας ότι η οικονομική βιωσιμότητα νέων λιγνιτικών σταθμών που θα τεθούν σε λειτουργία μετά το 2020 δείχνει να έρχεται σε σύγκρουση με τους διακηρυχθέντες κλιματικούς στόχους της ΕΕ για μείωση των εκπομπών CO_2 το 2050 κατά 80-95% σε σχέση με το 1990 ([4]) ([5]). Όπως δείχνει επιστημονική έκθεση του WWF Ελλάς ([6]) η επένδυση της ΔΕΗ σε δύο νέες λιγνιτικές μονάδες (Πτολεμαΐδα-5 και Μελίτη-2) αποδεικνύεται ζημιογόνα και με οικονομικούς όρους, αρκεί η Ελλάδα να παραμείνει πιστή στις δικές της δεσμεύσεις ως προς την ενεργειακή της πολιτική για τις επόμενες τρεις δεκαετίες. Σημειώνεται ότι οι τιμές δικαιωμάτων εκπομπών που χρησιμοποιήθηκαν σε αυτή τη μελέτη, όπως άλλωστε και στον Οδικό Χάρτη 2050 του ΥΠΕΚΑ, είναι αυτές που αντιστοιχούν στο «σενάριο αναφοράς» του Οδικού Χάρτη για την Ενέργεια 2050 της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής. Το σενάριο αυτό θα οδηγήσει σε μείωση εκπομπών CO_2 το 2050 σε σχέση με το 1990, κατά 40%, ποσοστό πολύ χαμηλότερο του 80-95%, για το οποίο έχει δεσμευτεί η ΕΕ.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Με δεδομένες τις δεσμεύσεις της ΕΕ για μείωση των εκπομπών CO_2 ως το 2050, σκοπεύει να εκπονήσει μελέτη που θα εκτιμά την οικονομική βιωσιμότητα νέων ανθρακικών μονάδων ηλεκτροπαραγωγής που θα τεθούν σε λειτουργία μετά το 2020;

2. Θεωρεί πως η συνεχιζόμενη χρηματοδότηση ανθρακικών μονάδων από την ΕΤΕπ είναι συμβατή με την επίτευξη των κλιματικών στόχων της ΕΕ;

3. Εξετάζει το ενδεχόμενο να ακολουθήσει το σχετικό παράδειγμα του προέδρου Ομπάμα και να ζητήσει τον τερματισμό της διάθεσης κοινοτικών πόρων για την χρηματοδότηση ανθρακικών μονάδων σε τρίτες χώρες;

Απάντηση της κ. Hedegaard εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. Η οικονομική αποδοτικότητα των νέων μονάδων ηλεκτροπαραγωγής με καύση άνθρακα θα εξαρτηθεί από διάφορους παράγοντες, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της τιμής του άνθρακα στο σύστημα εμπορίας εκπομπών της ΕΕ. Μία εύρυθμη αγορά εκπομπών άνθρακα, με την τιμή του άνθρακα να αντικατοπτρίζει μια φιλόδοξη πολιτική για το κλίμα, είναι σημαντικό να ενθαρρύνει επενδύσεις με χαμηλές εκπομπές άνθρακα. Η ανάλυση κόστους-οφέλους της ΕΤΕπ λαμβάνει ήδη υπόψη το κόστος των εξωτερικών συνιστωσών όσον αφορά τις εκπομπές άνθρακα, σύμφωνα με τους στόχους του χάρτη πορείας για το 2050.

2. Η Επιτροπή εκφράζει την ικανοποίησή της για τη νέα ενεργειακή στρατηγική της ΕΤΕπ και υπογραμμίζει τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η ΕΤΕπ είναι ο πρωτοπόρος στη δράση για το κλίμα μεταξύ διεθνών χρηματοδοτικών οργανισμών με σκοπό να καθορίσει τα πρότυπα για το κλίμα και να υιοθετήσει μια επιλεκτική προσέγγιση για την παραγωγή ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας με καύση άνθρακα.

Τα πρόσφατα αναθεωρημένα κριτήρια ελέγχου και αξιολόγησης για ενεργειακά έργα δίνουν επιπλέον έμφαση σε ζητήματα ενεργειακής απόδοσης, ανανεώσιμων πηγών ενέργειας και δικτύων. Οι προδιαγραφές εκπομπών της ΕΤΕπ που θεσπίστηκαν πρόσφατα για έργα παραγωγής ορυκτών καυσίμων είναι ένα ακόμη βήμα προς τη σωστή κατεύθυνση, το οποίο η Επιτροπή ελπίζει ότι θα αποτελέσει πηγή έμπνευσης για άλλες τράπεζες. Η αξία τους, η οποία είναι ήδη αρκετά κάτω από την ένταση άνθρακα των μονάδων παραγωγής ηλεκτρικής ενέργειας με καύση άνθρακα στην Ευρώπη, θα επανεξεταστεί το 2014.

([1]) http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/25/fact-sheet-president-obama-s-climate-action-plan
([2]) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-06-26/world-bank-to-limit-coal-power-financing-to-rare-circumstances.html
([3]) http://www.wwf.eu/index.cfm?209179/EIB-Supports-for-fossil-fuel
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy2020/roadmap/index_en.htm
([5]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/110889.pdf
([6]) http://www.wwf.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1038:2013-06-26-09-21-09&catid=70:2008-09-16-12-10-46&Itemid=90

3. Οι προδιαγραφές της ΕΤΕπ εφαρμόζονται επίσης στα σχέδια εκτός της ΕΕ και εξαιρέσεις επιτρέπονται μόνο στις φτωχότερες χώρες, όπου το έργο συμβάλλει σημαντικά στη μείωση της φτώχειας και στην οικονομική ανάπτυξη. Τα αναθεωρημένα κριτήρια της ΕΤΕπ για την ενέργεια ισχύουν τόσο για τις νέες μονάδες όσο και για την ανακαίνιση των υφιστάμενων. Η Επιτροπή εκφράζει την ικανοποίησή της για τη δέσμευση του Προέδρου Ομπάμα και ελπίζουμε ότι θα εφαρμόζεται με συνέπεια σε όλα τα χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα στα οποία οι ΗΠΑ είναι μέλος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007843/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Economic viability of new coal-fired power plants and climate targets

The stiff restrictions on financing for new coal-fitted power plants in third countries are one of the most important policy changes recently announced by President Obama ([1]). Along the same lines, the World Bank is planning to restrict its financing of new coal-fired power plants to 'rare circumstances', reflecting its focus on mitigating the effects of climate change ([2]). By contrast, the European Investment Bank's policy of lending to power plants does not appear to support the objective of limiting the rise in temperature of the planet to 2°C. ([3]) This is giving rise to questions, given that the economic viability of new lignite-fired power plants to be commissioned after 2020 appears to conflict with the EU's stated climate objectives of reducing CO_2 emissions to 80-95% below 1990 levels by 2050 ([4]) ([5]). According to a scientific report by WWF Greece ([6]), the Greek PPC's investment in two new lignite-fired power plants (Ptolemaida V and Meliti II) will make a loss, even in economic terms, if Greece abides by its energy policy commitments for the next three decades. It should be noted that the emission allowances prices used in that report and in the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change's Roadmap 2050 are the prices in the 'reference scenario' of the European Commission's Energy Roadmap 2050. That scenario will reduce CO_2 emissions to 40% below 1990 levels by 2050, which is well below the 80-95% to which the EU is committed.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. In the light of the EU's undertaking to reduce CO_2 emissions by 2050, does the Commission intend to draw up a study estimating the economic viability of new coal-fired power plants to be commissioned after 2020?

2. Does it consider that continued financing for coal-fired power plants by the European Investment Bank is compatible with the EU's climate targets?

3. Is it considering following President Obama's example and calling for an end to the use of Community resources to finance coal-fired power plants in third countries?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2013)

1. The economic efficiency of new coal-fired power plants will depend on various factors, including the carbon price in the EU Emissions Trading System. A well-functioning carbon market, with a carbon price that reflects an ambitious climate policy, is essential to encourage low carbon investments. The EIB cost benefit analysis already takes into account carbon cost externalities, in line with the 2050 roadmap targets.

2. The Commission welcomes the new EIB Energy Strategy and highlights how the EIB is the front-runner in climate action among International Finance Institutions in view of defining climate standards and adopting a selective approach on coal fired power generation.

Its recently revised screening and assessment criteria for energy projects further focus on energy efficiency, renewables and networks. The EIB's newly introduced Emissions Performance Standard for fossil fuel generation projects is a further step in the right direction which the Commission hopes will inspire other banks. Its value, already well below the carbon intensity of coal-fired power generation plants in Europe, will be reviewed in 2014.

([1]) http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/25/fact-sheet-president-obama-s-climate-action-plan
([2]) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-06-26/world-bank-to-limit-coal-power-financing-to-rare-circumstances.html
([3]) http://www.wwf.eu/index.cfm?209179/EIB-Supports-for-fossil-fuel
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/energy/energy2020/roadmap/index_en.htm
([5]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/110889.pdf
([6]) http://www.wwf.gr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1038:2013-06-26-09-21-09&catid=70:2008-09-16-12-10-46&Itemid=90

3. The EIB standards also apply to projects outside the EU and exceptions are only allowed in the poorest countries, where the project makes a substantial contribution to poverty alleviation and economic development. The revised EIB energy criteria apply both to new plants and to the refurbishment of existing ones. The Commission welcomes President Obama's pledge and hope it will be applied consistently to all financial institutions in which US is a shareholder.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007844/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(2 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Διαδικασία επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας για τις ώρες εργασίας των γιατρών στις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες υγείας

Στις 29.9.2011, η Επιτροπή είχε ξεκινήσει διαδικασία επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας για τις ώρες εργασίας των γιατρών στις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες υγείας. Συγκεκριμένα στην ανακοίνωσή της (IP/11/1121 ([1])), η Επιτροπή είχε τονίσει ότι «στην Ελλάδα, οι γιατροί που εργάζονται σε κρατικά νοσοκομεία και κέντρα υγείας πρέπει συχνά να εργάζονται κατά μέσο όρο τουλάχιστον 64 ώρες την εβδομάδα και πάνω από 90 ώρες σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, χωρίς να υπάρχει νόμιμο μέγιστο όριο. Δεν υπάρχει νόμιμο ανώτατο όριο όσον αφορά τον αριθμό των συνεχόμενων ωρών που μπορεί να τους ζητηθεί να εργαστούν στη θέση εργασίας, και συχνά πρέπει να εργάζονται χωρίς τα δέοντα διαλείμματα ανάπαυσης και ύπνου. Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί την κατάσταση αυτή σοβαρή παράβαση της οδηγίας της ΕΕ σχετικά με τον χρόνο εργασίας. Υπερβολικές ώρες εργασίες, σε συνδυασμό με την έλλειψη ελάχιστης ανάπαυσης, αποτελούν ευρέως αναγνωρισμένους κινδύνους για την υγεία και την ασφάλεια των εργαζομένων. Επίσης, γιατροί με υπερκόπωση διατρέχουν τον κίνδυνο να κάνουν λάθη τα οποία μπορεί να έχουν σοβαρές επιπτώσεις για τους ασθενείς τους».

Σε πρόσφατη ανακοίνωσή της η Ομοσπονδία Ενώσεων Νοσοκομειακών Γιατρών Ελλάδας καταγγέλλει ότι «η υποστελέχωση και τα μειωμένα κονδύλια εφημέρευσης έχουν δημιουργήσει ασφυκτικές και οριακά επικίνδυνες συνθήκες λειτουργίας των νοσοκομείων, ιδιαίτερα αυτών της περιφέρειας» και ζητάει την «καθιέρωση ασφαλούς, δίκαιου και ποιοτικού συστήματος εφημεριών, με επαρκή κονδύλια. Ανθρώπινες συνθήκες εργασίας, 5νθήμερο, 6ωρο, 1 εφημερία την εβδομάδα, με κάλυψη των κενών θέσεων».

Με δεδομένο ότι οι περικοπές του προσωπικού έχουν εφαρμοστεί στο δημόσιο τομέα κατ' εφαρμογή του Μνημονίου και έχουν χειροτερέψει τις συνθήκες εργασίας των ιατρών με ενδεχόμενες επιπτώσεις και στους ασθενείς και ότι, στις 30.5.2013, η Επιτροπή απέστειλε αιτιολογημένη γνώμη στην Ιταλία για τις ώρες εργασίας των γιατρών στα δημόσια νοσοκομεία,

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή: ποια είναι η πορεία της διαδικασίας επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας για την παραπάνω υπόθεση; Γιατί δεν εμφανίζεται πρόοδος στην υπόθεση, αφού υπάρχει σαφής παράβαση της κοινοτικής νομοθεσίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή έχει πλήρη επίγνωση της κατάστασης σχετικά με τις ώρες εργασίας των γιατρών στις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες υγείας στην Ελλάδα.

Στις 30 Σεπτεμβρίου 2011 απέστειλε αιτιολογημένη γνώμη στην Ελλάδα όσον αφορά τη μη συμμόρφωση με τις απαιτήσεις της οδηγίας για τον χρόνο εργασίας ([2]). Το συναφές δελτίο τύπου είναι αυτό στο οποίο αναφέρεται ο κ. βουλευτής.

Η Επιτροπή συμμετείχε σε εκτενείς συζητήσεις με τις εθνικές αρχές, κατά τις οποίες επανειλημμένως υπογράμμισε τη σημασία λήψης των αναγκαίων μέτρων ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί ότι οι εθνικές υπηρεσίες υγείας εδραιώνονται με μακροπρόθεσμο και βιώσιμο τρόπο που θα είναι προς όφελος τόσο των γιατρών όσο και των χρηστών των υπηρεσιών υγείας.

Προς το παρόν, η Επιτροπή επιφυλάσσεται του δικαιώματος να λάβει όλα τα περαιτέρω μέτρα που ενδέχεται να χρειαστούν για να εξασφαλιστεί η συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1121_el.htm
([2]) Οδηγία 2003/88/ΕΚ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου, της 4ης Νοεμβρίου 2003, σχετικά με ορισμένα στοιχεία της οργάνωσης του χρόνου εργασίας, ΕΕ L 299 της 18.11.2003.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007844/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Infringement proceedings against Greece for working times of doctors in public health services

On 29 September 2011, the Commission initiated infringement proceedings against Greece in connection with the working hours of doctors in public health services. In its press release (IP/11/1121 ([1])), the Commission stated that 'For Greece, doctors working in public hospitals and health centres often have to work a minimum average of 64 hours per week and over 90 hours in some cases, with no legal maximum limit. There is no legal ceiling to how many continuous hours they can be required to work at the workplace, and they often have to work without adequate intervals for rest or sleep. The Commission considers this situation a serious infringement of the EU's Working Time Directive. Excessive working hours, combined with lack of minimum rest, create well-established risks for workers' health and safety. Over-tired doctors also risk making mistakes which can have serious consequences for their patients'.

In a recent announcement, the Federation of Unions of Hospital Doctors in Greece complained that 'understaffing and reduced funds for standby duty have created suffocating hospital environments that are verging on dangerous, especially in the regions' and called for 'the introduction of an adequately funded, safe, fair and quality system of standby duty, decent working conditions and a 6-hour, 5-day week with 1 standby duty a week and for vacancies to be filled'.

In view of the fact that staff cuts have been made in the public sector in application of the Memorandum and working conditions for doctors have deteriorated, with potential consequences for patients, and in view of the fact that, on 30 May 2013, the Commission sent Italy a reasoned opinion on the working times of doctors in public hospitals,

Will the Commission say: what stage has been reached in the above infringement proceedings against Greece? Why has there been no progress in this case, given that Greece is clearly in breach of Union law?

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

The Commission is well aware of the situation regarding working hours of doctors in public health services in Greece.

It sent a reasoned opinion to Greece on 30 September 2011 about the failure to comply with the requirements of the Working Time Directive ([2]). The relevant press release is that quoted by the Honourable Member.

The Commission has been engaged in extensive discussions with the national authorities, during which it has repeatedly underlined the importance of taking the necessary measures to ensure that the national health services are placed on a sustainable long-term footing which will be in the interests both of doctors and of health service users.

At this stage, the Commission reserves the right to take all further measures which may be necessary to ensure compliance with the directive.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1121_en.htm
([2]) Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, OJ L 299, 18.11.2003.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007845/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Białoruś

W niedawnym projekcie sprawozdania Parlamentu Europejskiego w sprawie sytuacji na Białorusi stwierdzono, że w ostatnich latach nastąpiła poprawa sytuacji w zakresie praw człowieka na Białorusi. Wezwano również do intensyfikacji kontaktów z rządem białoruskim.

1. Czy wiceprzewodnicząca / Wysoka Przedstawiciel zgadza się z opinią, że nastąpiła „dostrzegalna poprawa" w zakresie praw człowieka?

2. Czy UE zamierza zintensyfikować kontakty z Białorusią?

3. Czy w następstwie niedawnego sprawozdania na temat wpływu działań UE na prawa człowieka, w którym stwierdzono, że system sankcji wobec Białorusi został osłabiony z powodu braku konsekwencji, Wiceprzewodnicząca / Wysoka Przedstawiciel zastanawiała się nad tym, by dążyć do nałożenia surowszych sankcji?

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

1. UE podziela pogląd specjalnego sprawozdawcy ONZ na temat sytuacji w zakresie praw człowieka na Białorusi, który w swoim pierwszym raporcie ocenił, że prawa człowieka są systematycznie ograniczane – dotyczy to przede wszystkim wolności zrzeszania się, wolności zgromadzeń, wolności wypowiedzi i wyrażania opinii oraz prawa do rzetelnego i sprawiedliwego procesu sądowego.

2. UE będzie nadal stosować politykę krytycznego zaangażowania wobec Białorusi. Polityka ta obejmuje współpracę poprzez wielostronny wymiar Partnerstwa Wschodniego i dialog techniczny na temat kwestii będących przedmiotem wspólnego zainteresowania oraz wspieranie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego i ogółu obywateli. Wsparcie dla społeczeństwa obywatelskiego wzrosło sześciokrotnie w odpowiedzi na prześladowanie opozycji po wyborach prezydenckich w 2010 r. Jednocześnie UE stosuje środki ograniczające wobec prezydenta Łukaszenki oraz osób prywatnych i przedsiębiorstw go wspierających.

3. Środki ograniczające stosowane przez UE zostają poddane corocznej kontroli. Następna taka kontrola zostanie przeprowadzona w październiku 2013 r.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007845/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Belarus

A recent European Parliament draft report on the situation in Belarus claimed that there has been an improvement in human rights in Belarus over the last year. It also called for increased engagement with the Belarusian government.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that there has been a 'discernible improvement' in human rights?

2. Does the EU plan to increase engagement with Belarus?

3. Has the VP/HR considered pushing for the imposition of tougher sanctions following on from the recent report on the impact of EU activities in human rights, which found that the sanctioning system against Belarus has been weakened by lack of consistency?

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

1. The EU shares the assessment of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Belarus, who assessed in his first report that human rights remain systematically restricted, especially freedom of association, assembly, and of expression and opinion, as well as the guarantees of due process and fair trial.

2. The EU's policy of critical engagement towards Belarus remains valid. This policy includes cooperation through the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership and technical dialogues on specific topics of common interest, as well as support to civil society and to the population at large. Support to civil society has increased six-fold since the 2010 post presidential election crackdown on the opposition. At the same time, the EU applies restrictive measures against President Lukashenka and individuals and companies supporting him.

3. The EU's restrictive measures are reviewed on a yearly basis. The next annual review is foreseen for October 2013.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007846/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – dyskryminacja ze względu na przynależność kastową a UE

W niedawnym sprawozdaniu dziennikarze i niezależne organizacje praw człowieka zauważyli, że UE w jej stosunkach z innymi krajami w sposób niekonsekwentny traktuje kwestię dyskryminacji ze względu na przynależność kastową. W sprawozdaniu w szczególności podkreślono, że o ile w krajowych dokumentach strategicznych dotyczących Indii i Nepalu wspomina się o dyskryminacji ze względu na przynależność kastową, kwestii tej nie porusza się w żadnych innych dokumentach ani w umowach z tymi krajami. Nie ma również odniesień do takiej dyskryminacji w dokumentach dotyczących Bangladeszu, Jemenu czy Pakistanu. Dyskryminacja ze względu na przynależność kastową nadal stanowi problem, który dotyczy prawie 260 milionów ludzi w różnych krajach na całym świecie.

1. Dlaczego dyskryminacja ze względu na przynależność kastową jest pomijana w stosunkach między organami UE a tymi krajami?

2. Czy dyplomaci UE zamierzają włączyć tę kwestię do przyszłych umów lub wspólnych oświadczeń z tymi krajami?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(6 września 2013 r.)

UE zwraca szczególną uwagę na konieczność ochrony praw człowieka i podstawowych wolności; niedyskryminacja, traktowanie mniejszości, zagadnienia dotyczące płci społeczno-kulturowej i praw kobiet oraz wolności religii i przekonań są jednymi z najważniejszych tematów regularnie omawianych z państwami, które wymienił szanowny Pan Poseł. Kwestie te przedyskutowano również w kontekście regularnych dialogów dotyczących praw człowieka prowadzonych z Indiami i Pakistanem.

W Indiach i Nepalu problem dyskryminacji kastowej i jego skutki objęto również środkami wsparcia finansowego ze strony UE, zarówno za pomocą instrumentów geograficznych (strategii dla kraju lub regionu), jak i tematycznych (w szczególności za pomocą Europejskiego Instrumentu na rzecz Wspierania Demokracji i Praw Człowieka). Dokumenty strategiczne Europejskiego Instrumentu na rzecz Wspierania Demokracji i Praw Człowieka na lata 2011-2013 zawierają wyraźne odniesienie do dyskryminacji na tle przynależności kastowej.

W Jemenie UE wspiera proces dialogu narodowego, w ramach którego w świetle planowanego przeglądu konstytucji zwrócono uwagę na promowanie równego obywatelstwa. Dzięki Europejskiemu Instrumentowi na rzecz Wspierania Demokracji i Praw Człowieka Unia pomaga również organizacjom społeczeństwa obywatelskiego działającym na rzecz propagowania równego obywatelstwa, tolerancji religijnej, równości szans i niedyskryminacji.

UE prowadzi aktywne działania w ramach Organizacji Narodów Zjednoczonych i wniosła swój wkład w prace byłej Podkomisji ONZ ds. Popierania i Ochrony Praw Człowieka, w tym w sprawozdanie końcowe dotyczące dyskryminacji ze względu na pracę i pochodzenie. UE przyczyniła się również do uwzględnienia kwestii dyskryminacji kastowej w powszechnym okresowym przeglądzie dotyczącym Indii, Pakistanu, Sri Lanki, Nepalu i Bangladeszu.

Prawa człowieka i podstawowe wolności nadal będą istotnym elementem dialogu UE z tymi krajami, w tym także w odniesieniu do przyszłych porozumień dwustronnych i wspólnych deklaracji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007846/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Caste-based discrimination and the EU

In a recent report, journalists and independent human rights organisations noted that caste-based discrimination is an issue that the EU has addressed inconsistently in its dealings with other countries. In particular the report highlighted that while caste-based discrimination has been mentioned in the Country Strategic Papers for India and Nepal, it was not addressed in any other documents, or in agreements with those countries. There were also no references to such discrimination in any documents relating to Bangladesh, Yemen or Pakistan. Caste-based discrimination remains a problem which affects close to 260 million people worldwide spread across several countries.

1. Why has caste-based discrimination been neglected in relations between EU bodies and these countries?

2. Do EU diplomats intend to include the issue in further agreements or joint statements with these countries?

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

The EU pays great attention to the necessity of protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms; non-discrimination, the treatment of minorities, gender issues and women's rights, freedom of religion and belief are some of the most important topics regularly discussed with the countries mentioned by the Honourable Member. These matters are also discussed in the context of the EU's regular Human Rights Dialogues with India and Pakistan.

In India and Nepal, caste discrimination and its effects have also been targeted by the EU financial support, both through geographic instruments (Country or Regional Strategies) and thematic instruments, in particular EIDHR (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights). The EIDHR strategy documents for 2011-2013 contain an explicit reference to caste-based discrimination.

In Yemen the EU's is supporting the National Dialogue Process which has brought to the forefront the promotion of equal citizenship, ahead of the constitutional review. Through the EIDHR the EU also assists civil society organisations active in promoting equal citizenship, religious tolerance, equal opportunities and anti-discrimination.

The EU is active in the UN context and has contributed to the work of the former UN Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, including the final report on Discrimination based on Work and Descent. The EU has also contributed in including caste-based discrimination issues in the Universal Periodic Review process regarding India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms will continue to be an essential element of the EU's dialogue with these countries, including as regards future bilateral agreements and joint statements.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007847/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – UE a Irak

Na niedawnym posiedzeniu parlamentarnej Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych (AFET) Martin Kobler, specjalny przedstawiciel ONZ ds. Iraku, zasygnalizował, że pragnąłby, aby UE bardziej zaangażowała się w poszukiwanie politycznego rozwiązania sytuacji w Iraku. W szczególności wspomniał o tym, że we wzajemnych relacjach między UE a Irakiem musi nastąpić przejście od dobrze znanych spraw, takich jak obóz Ashraf i kara śmierci, do poważniejszych kwestii takich jak podstawowe funkcje irackiego rządu. Bezpośrednio zaapelował do UE i jej instytucji o przyjęcie aktywniejszej roli w Iraku.

1. Co do tej pory uczynili dyplomaci UE, aby wesprzeć ONZ w Iraku?

2. W jaki sposób Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel zamierza nadal pomagać ONZ w negocjowaniu politycznego rozwiązania w Iraku?

3. Czy Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel uważa, że UE musi bardziej się zaangażować w Iraku?

4. Czy Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel zgadza się z ambasadorem Koblerem, że sprawy takie jak obóz Ashraf zajmują zbyt wysoką pozycję w stosunkach dyplomatycznych między UE a Irakiem?

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

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca z uwagą śledzi sytuację w Iraku. Zainicjowała ona dyskusję dotyczącą Iraku na lutowych i marcowych posiedzeniach Rady do Spraw Zagranicznych, gdzie ministrowie spraw zagranicznych UE zgodnie uznali znaczenie promowania politycznej stabilizacji w Iraku oraz zwiększenia zaangażowania UE w tym państwie. W konsekwencji na kwietniowym posiedzeniu Rady do Spraw Zagranicznych przyjęto konkluzje dotyczące sytuacji w Iraku.

Siedemnastego czerwca Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca złożyła wizytę w Iraku i wezwała wszystkie zaangażowane strony do współpracy mającej na celu rozwiązanie poprzez dialog problemów politycznych i kwestii związanych ze sprawowaniem rządów. Zachęciła ona także do wzmocnienia demokracji poprzez silne i efektywne instytucje, które są kluczowym elementem każdego ustroju demokratycznego.

UE stale wspierała odbudowę Iraku i wprowadzenie demokracji w tym kraju, przekazując środki unijne w wysokości 1 mld EUR w okresie od 2003 r. W praktyce UE zapewnia wsparcie techniczne w zakresie praworządności i praw człowieka, które są ważnym elementem w rozwiązywaniu problemów mniejszości religijnych, a także pomaga w rozwoju instytucjonalnym, m.in. w pracach niezależnej wysokiej komisji praw człowieka. UE działa na rzecz zwiększenia swojego zaangażowania w Iraku i obecnie oczekuje na wprowadzenie w życie umowy o partnerstwie i współpracy, mając nadzieję, że stworzy ona pozytywną dynamikę w stosunkach dwustronnych.

W odniesieniu do kwestii osób przebywających w obozie Ashraf, UE wspiera starania społeczności międzynarodowej o znalezienie trwałego i pokojowego rozwiązania problemów humanitarnych. W związku z tym wspiera ona działania ONZ, przeznaczając na ten cel 14 mln EUR. UE współpracuje z misją pomocy ONZ w Iraku, w szczególności ze specjalnym przedstawicielem Martinem Koblerem.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007847/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU and Iraq

At a recent hearing of Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Martin Kobler, the UN Special Representative for Iraq, indicated that he wished to see more involvement from the EU in finding a political solution for Iraq. Specifically, he mentioned how EU interaction with Iraq needed to move beyond well-known issues such as Camp Ashraf and the death penalty to bigger issues such as the basic functionality of the Iraqi government. He directly appealed to the EU and its institutions to take a more active role in Iraq.

1. What have EU diplomats been doing up to the present to assist the UN in Iraq?

2. How does the Vice-President/High Representative plan to further assist the UN in brokering a political solution in Iraq?

3. Is the Vice-President/High Representative of the view that the EU needs to be more engaged in Iraq?

4. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree with Ambassador Kobler that issues like Camp Ashraf have been too prominent in diplomatic relations between the EU and Iraq?

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

The HR/VP follows the situation in Iraq very closely. She initiated a discussion on Iraq at the February and March Foreign Affairs Council meetings where EU Foreign Ministers agreed on the importance of promoting political stability in Iraq and enhancing EU's engagement with the country. Consequently, April Foreign Affairs Council adopted conclusions specifically on the situation in Iraq.

The HR/VP visited Iraq on 17 June and urged all parties to work together to address political and governance issues through dialogue. She also encouraged the consolidation of democratic gains through strong and efficient institutions — a key element in any democratic system.

The EU has consistently supported Iraq's reconstruction and transition towards democracy, with EU funds totalling over 1 billion euro since 2003. In practical terms, the EU provides technical assistance in the area of rule of law and human rights, which are key elements for addressing the challenges of religious minorities and continues to assist with institutional building, such as to the Independent High Commission for Human Rights. The EU has been committed to enhancing its engagement with Iraq and now looks forward to the implementation of the partnership and cooperation agreement, hoping that it will create a positive momentum in the bilateral relationship.

As regards the issue of Camp Ashraf residents, the EU has supported the efforts of the international community to find a durable and peaceful solution to what is a humanitarian issue. This is why it fully supported the process faciliated by the UN, with a contribution of 14 million euro. The EU has very closely cooperated with the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, and in particular with the Special Representative Kobler.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007848/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Google i polityka prywatności w sieci

Urzędy ochrony danych kilku krajów członkowskich organizują wspólną akcję wobec koncernu Google, mającą na celu zmianę reguł dotyczących prywatności danych użytkowników serwisów tej firmy. Jest to niewątpliwie działanie zgodne z interesem obywateli, wynikające także z konieczności ochrony konsumentów. Ci ostatni najczęściej nie dysponują bowiem nawet wiedzą odnośnie tego, jakie dane na ich temat przetwarzane i przechowywane są przez koncern Google.

Liczę, że zagrożony dotkliwą karą finansową potentat Internetowy dostosuje swoją politykę prywatności do wymogów wynikających z unijnych dyrektyw.

Celem zasięgnięcia dodatkowych informacji zwracam się prośbą o odpowiedź:

1. Czy Komisja monitoruje sprawę podjęcia kroków prawnych przez krajowe instytucje ochrony danych względem firmy Google, bądź planuje włączyć się do akcji?

2. Czy w rezultacie podjętych działań, dostosowanie polityki prywatności przez Google, obejmie wszystkie kraje członkowskie Wspólnoty?

3. Czy w przedmiotowej kwestii podejmowane, bądź planowane są podobne działania ze strony instytucji europejskich, celem zagwarantowania ochrony prywatności również przez inne funkcjonujące koncerny Internetowe, na obszarze całej Wspólnoty?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarz Viviane Reding w imieniu Komisji
(10 września 2013 r.)

Zgodnie z dyrektywą 95/46/WE ([1]) i bez uszczerbku dla uprawnień Komisji stojącej na straży Traktatów zapewnienie prawidłowego wdrożenia i egzekwowania unijnych przepisów w zakresie ochrony danych względem podmiotów publicznych i prywatnych w Unii Europejskiej leży w gestii krajowych organów nadzorczych w dziedzinie ochrony danych.

Komisja z zadowoleniem przyjmuje działania podejmowane przez CNIL oraz inne organy nadzorcze państw UE w celu egzekwowania tych przepisów. Podkreśla ona możliwości współpracy krajowych organów nadzorczych w Europie w celu skutecznego podjęcia ogólnoświatowego wyzwania, jakim jest ochrona prywatności, oraz wskazuje na korzyści ze zgodnego działania. W dzisiejszej cyfrowej rzeczywistości decyzje organu nadzorczego w jednym państwie mają bowiem znaczenie dla obywateli w całej Europie.

We wniosku Komisji dotyczącym ogólnego rozporządzenia o ochronie danych ([2]) z dnia 25 stycznia 2012 r. proponuje się zniesienie rozdrobnienia prawnego w 27 państwach członkowskich. Jednocześnie we wniosku tym postuluje się zwiększenie uprawnień krajowych organów nadzorczych w dziedzinie ochrony danych oraz zacieśnienie współpracy między tymi organami w celu zapewnienia spójnego egzekwowania i, docelowo, jednolitego stosowania przepisów w całej UE.

Wnioski Komisji są obecnie przedmiotem dyskusji w Parlamencie Europejskim i Radzie Ministrów UE.

([1]) Dyrektywa 95/46/WE Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady z dnia 24 października 1995 r. w sprawie ochrony osób fizycznych w zakresie przetwarzania danych osobowych i swobodnego przepływu tych danych.
([2]) COM(2012) 11 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007848/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Google and Internet privacy policy

The Data Protection Offices of several Member States are running a joint campaign to challenge the Internet company Google in an effort to amend the rules on the privacy of data relating to people who use Google's services. There is no doubt that this is in the interest of ordinary people, and that it is also necessary to protect consumers. This is because most consumers do not even know what information Google processes and stores about them.

I sincerely hope that, faced with the threat of a heavy fine, the Internet giant will bring its privacy policy into line with the requirements of EU directives.

To obtain more information about this, I should like to ask the following questions:

1. Is the Commission monitoring the matter of the legal steps being taken by national data protection institutions in relation to Google, or is it planning to join this campaign?

2. As a result of the action taken, will the amendment of privacy policy by Google apply to all EU Member States?

3. Is similar action in this matter being taken or planned by European institutions to ensure that throughout the European Union, protection of privacy is also guaranteed by other Internet companies?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

Pursuant to Directive 95/46/EC ([1]), and without prejudice to the powers of the Commission as the guardian of the Treaties, it is for national data protection supervisory authorities (DPA) to ensure the correct implementation and enforcement of EU data protection legislation vis-à-vis public and private bodies in the European Union.

The Commission welcomes the enforcement actions taken by CNIL and the other national DPAs in the EU. It highlights the potential for national DPAs in Europe to work together to successfully address global privacy challenges and the benefits of being able to speak with one voice. This reflects the reality of today's digital world, in which the decisions of one DPA are relevant for citizens all across Europe.

The Commission's proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation ([2]) of 25 January 2012 will do away with the fragmentation of legal regimes across 27 Member States. At the same time the powers of national data protection supervisory authorities will be reinforced and their cooperation strengthened to guarantee the consistent enforcement and, ultimately, uniform application of rules across the EU.

The Commission's proposals are currently being discussed by the European Parliament and EU Council of Ministers.

([1]) Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.
([2]) COM(2012)11 final.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007849/13
do Komisji
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Certyfikat produktu regionalnego dla obwarzanka

Obwarzanek krakowski znajduje się od roku 2010 na unijnej liście produktów regionalnych. W następstwie niedawnej decyzji prokuratorskiej – umorzenia sprawy jednego z piekarzy oskarżonego o niezgodną z procedurą produkcję i obrót tym wyrobem – produktowi grozi wycofanie z ogromnym trudem uzyskanego certyfikatu. Media informują o planowanej inspekcji Komisji Europejskiej w związku z tą sprawą.

Proszę o informacje:

1. Jak Komisja ustosunkowuje się do stanowiska polskiej prokuratury, wskazującej na wiele istotnych różnic charakteryzujących zaskarżony produkt, czym uzasadniono decyzję o umorzeniu postępowania?

2. Czy stanowisko polskiej prokuratury w sposób znaczący determinuje kroki, jakie zamierzają podjąć instytucje podległe Komisji?

3. Czy zdaniem Komisji istnieje realne zagrożenie utraty certyfikatu przez obwarzanka i jakie działania ze strony polskich instytucji powinny zostać podjęte, aby temu zapobiec?

4. Kiedy miałaby się odbyć wspomniana inspekcja przedstawicieli Komisji i jaki dokładnie będzie zakres jej działania?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Daciana Cioloşa w imieniu Komisji
(6 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Nazwa „obwarzanek krakowski" została zarejestrowana jako chronione oznaczenie geograficzne (ChOG) na mocy rozporządzenia Komisji (UE) nr 977/2010 ([1]) w dniu 29 października 2010 r. Zgodnie z art. 12 ust. 1 rozporządzenia (UE) nr 1151/2012 w sprawie systemów jakości produktów rolnych i środków spożywczych ([2]), chronione oznaczenie geograficzne „Obwarzanek krakowski" może być wykorzystywane przez każde przedsiębiorstwo wprowadzające na rynek produkt zgodny z odpowiednią specyfikacją produktu. Nieprzestrzeganie wymienionego rozporządzenia przez jeden podmiot nie może przeszkodzić podmiotom gospodarczym przestrzegającym rozporządzenia w dalszym wykorzystywaniu danego chronionego oznaczenia geograficznego.

Zgodnie z art. 13 ust. 3 wymienionego rozporządzenia, każde państwo członkowskie powinno podjąć odpowiednie kroki administracyjne i sądowe, aby zapobiec niezgodnemu z prawem stosowaniu chronionych nazw pochodzenia produktów produkowanych lub wprowadzanych do obrotu w tym państwie członkowskim lub uniemożliwić je. Kroki te powinny być zgodne z procedurami ustanowionymi przez każde państwo członkowskie w jego zakresie.

Komisja nie otrzymała żadnych informacji o konkretnym przypadku opisanym przez Szanownego Pana Posła w odniesieniu do „Obwarzanka krakowskiego" i nie może zajmować stanowiska w sprawie decyzji podejmowanych przez polską prokuraturę. W odniesieniu do omawianej sprawy Komisję nie planuje żadnej kontroli.

([1]) Dz.U. L 285 z 30.10.2010.
([2]) Dz.U. L 343 z 14.12.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007849/13
to the Commission
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Regional product certification for the *obwarzanek krakowski*

The *obwarzanek krakowski* has been included in the EU list of regional products since 2010. Following a recent decision by the public prosecution service in Poland to discontinue the prosecution of a baker who was facing charges of not following the approved procedure regarding the production and sale of this product, there is now a danger that the regional product certification, which was obtained with great difficulty, will be withdrawn. There have been reports in the press about a planned inspection by the Commission as a result of the case.

I should like to ask the following questions:

1. How does the Commission respond to the Polish prosecution service, which pointed out that many significant differences exist between the contested product and the officially recognised one and used them to justify the decision to discontinue the prosecution?

2. Does the position of the Polish prosecution service significantly affect the steps which the Commission's institutions intend to take?

3. In the opinion of the Commission, is there a genuine risk that the *obwarzanek krakowski* will lose its certificate, and what action should be taken by Polish institutions to prevent this?

4. When might this inspection by representatives of the Commission take place, and what exactly will be the scope of its work?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(6 August 2013)

The name 'Obwarzanek krakowski' was registered as a protected geographical indication (PGI) under Commission Regulation (EU) No 977/2010 ([1]) on 29 October 2010. According to Article 12 (1) of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ([2]), the protected geographical indication 'Obwarzanek krakowski' may be used by any operator marketing a product in conformity with the corresponding product specification. Non-compliance with the said Regulation by one operator cannot result in preventing those operators who comply with the regulation to continue using the protected geographical indication.

According to Article 13 (3) of the said Regulation, Member States should take appropriate administrative and judicial steps to prevent or stop unlawful use of protected designations of origin that are produced or marketed in that Member States. These steps should be in accordance with procedures determined by each individual Member State.

The Commission has not been informed about the concrete case with regard to 'Obwarzanek krakowski' described in the Honourable Member's question and cannot comment on the decisions taken by the Polish public prosecution service. No inspection has been planned by the Commission with regard to this case.

([1]) OJ L 285, 30.10.2010.
([2]) OJ L 343, 14.12.2012.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007851/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Rosyjska baza wojskowa na Białorusi

Według informacji naczelnego dowództwa Rosyjskich Wojsk Powietrznych, jeszcze w bieżącym roku uruchomiona zostanie baza lotnicza w Lidzie. Ta białoruska miejscowość znajduje się w niedalekiej odległości (ok. 120 km) od wschodniej granicy Polski, będącej jednocześnie granicą Unii Europejskiej. Minister Obrony Rosji – gen. Siergiej Szojgu – już w kwietniu zapowiedział rozmieszczenie na Białorusi pułku wojsk lotniczych oraz dostarczenie czterech dywizjonów rakietowych systemów przeciwlotniczych S-300, zdolnych do zwalczania taktycznych rakietowych pocisków balistycznych. Baza w Lidzie zostanie prawdopodobnie objęta całkowitą kontrolą rosyjskiego dowództwa, co pozostaje w sprzeczności również z oczekiwaniami władz białoruskich, w tym prezydenta Łukaszenki.

W trosce o bezpieczeństwo krajów członkowskich zwracam się z prośbą o informacje:

1. Czy Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel zna szczegóły rosyjskich planów uruchomienia bazy lotniczej w Lidzie i czy nie godzą one w interesy Wspólnoty?

2. Czy w opinii Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel wspomniana baza rosyjskich wojsk powietrznych może stanowić realne zagrożenie dla bezpieczeństwa sąsiednich państw Unii Europejskiej?

3. Czy obecność rosyjskich wojsk na Białorusi powinna podlegać zwierzchnictwu władz w Mińsku? Jeżeli tak, to czy w przeciwnej sytuacji ESDZ podejmie stosowne kroki dyplomatyczne?

4. Czy i jakie działania dyplomatyczne zostaną podjęte przez ESDZ w sytuacji całkiem możliwego naruszenia przez stacjonujące na Białorusi rosyjskie samoloty wojskowe przestrzeni powietrznej UE?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Komisji Catherine Ashton
w imieniu Komisji
(18 września 2013 r.)

Unia Europejska jest świadoma istnienia współpracy wojskowej pomiędzy Białorusią i Rosją oraz planów utworzenia nowej wojskowej bazy lotniczej w Lidzie, położonej 160 km na zachód od Mińska. Według publicznych zapowiedzi nowa baza ma rozpocząć działalność jesienią 2013 r.

Współpraca wojskowa pomiędzy suwerennymi państwami oraz warunki takiej współpracy pozostają w gestii tychże państw. Unia Europejska i jej państwa członkowskie na bieżąco dokonują oceny i przeglądu sytuacji w zakresie bezpieczeństwa. Na każdy incydent, który stałby w sprzeczności z postanowieniami umów międzynarodowych, w tym na przypadki naruszenia przestrzeni powietrznej, należy reagować zgodnie z prawem międzynarodowym i ustaloną praktyką.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007851/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Russian military base in Belarus

According to information provided by the commander-in-chief of the Russian Air Force, before the end of the year, an air base is to begin operations in Lida. Lida is a city in Belarus, and it lies at a short distance (approximately 120 km) from Poland's eastern border, which is also the border of the European Union. In April, Russia's Minister for Defence, General Sergei Shoigu, announced the deployment of an air force regiment in Belarus and the supply of four divisions of S-300 surface-to-air missiles, which have the capability to intercept tactical ballistic missiles. The Lida base will probably be placed under overall Russian command, something which the Belarusian authorities too, including President Lukashenko, do not want.

Out of concern for the security of the Member States, I should like to ask for the following information:

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative know the details of the Russian plans to open an air base in Lida, and do they jeopardise the interests of the European Union?

2. In the opinion of the Vice-President/High Representative, can this Russian air force base pose a genuine threat to the security of neighbouring European Union Member States?

3. Should the Russian military presence in Belarus be under the control of the authorities in Minsk? If so, then if this turns out not to be the case, will the European External Action Service take the appropriate diplomatic steps?

4. Will diplomatic action be taken by the EEAS in the very likely event of a violation of EU airspace by Russian military aircraft stationed in Belarus, and what will this action entail?

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

The European Union is aware of Belarus-Russia military cooperation and of plans to establish a new military air base in Lida, 160 km west of Minsk. The new base is expected to start operating, as publicly announced, in the autumn of 2013.

Military cooperation between sovereign states and the modalities of such cooperation are at the discretion of these states. The European Union and its Member States assess and review security on a continuous basis. Any incident which would run counter to international agreements, including violations of air space, should be handled according to international law and established practice.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-007852/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 lipca 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Wyrok dla Polaków na Białorusi za upamiętnienie oficera AK

Dwoje Polaków: szef Związku Polaków na Białorusi Mieczysław Jaśkiewicz i prezes Stowarzyszenia Żołnierzy AK Weronika Sebastianowicz zostało skazanych na kary grzywny z oskarżenia o zorganizowanie nielegalnego zgromadzenia. Sprawa dotyczy uroczystości upamiętnienia zamordowanego przez NKWD żołnierza Armii Krajowej Anatola Radziwonika. Poświęcony oficerowi krzyż został ustawiony na terenie prywatnym po uprzednim uzyskaniu zgody właściciela. W uroczystości wziął udział m.in. konsul generalny RP w Grodnie.

Polskie Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych zajęło krytyczne stanowisko wobec procesu oskarżonych Polaków.

Mając na względzie prawo każdego narodu, w tym mniejszości narodowych, do kultywowania swojej tradycji i historii zwracam się z prośbą o odpowiedź:

1. Czy Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel znany jest przytoczony wyżej przypadek dyskryminacji praw mniejszości polskiej na Białorusi?

2. Czy europejska dyplomacji rozważy wyrażenie stanowiska w tej sprawie w bezpośrednich relacjach z przedstawicielami białoruskich władz?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg w imieniu Komisji
(23 października 2013 r.)

Unia Europejska jest świadoma tego przypadku dyskryminacji i przy każdej okazji zgłasza kwestie budzące jej obawy władzom Białorusi. Należą do nich zagadnienia dotyczące praw mniejszości oraz inne kwestie i przypadki związane z przestrzeganiem praw człowieka i zasad demokracji we wszelkich kontaktach z administracją Białorusi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007852/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Fines handed down to Poles in Belarus for commemorating a Home Army officer

Two members of the Polish minority in Belarus — Mieczysław Jaśkiewicz, President of the Union of Poles in Belarus, and Weronika Sebastianowicz, President of the Association of Home Army Soldiers — have been fined for the indictable offence of organising an illegal assembly. The matter concerns a ceremony to commemorate Home Army soldier Anatol Radziwonik, who was murdered by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. A cross in memory of the officer was put up on private land, after permission had been obtained from the owner. Among those who attended the ceremony was the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Grodno.

Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has criticised the trial and the charges brought against its citizens.

In view of the right of every nation, including national minorities, to maintain their traditions and recount their history, I should like to ask the Vice-President/High Representative the following questions:

1. Is she aware of this case of discrimination and the restriction of the rights of the Polish minority in Belarus?

2. Is the European Union's diplomatic service considering expressing an opinion on this matter directly with representatives of the Belarusian authorities?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(23 October 2013)

The European Union is aware of this case of discrimination and takes every opportunity to raise its concerns with the Belarusian authorities. This includes the questions related to the rights of minorities as well as other issues and cases related to respect of human rights and democracy in any contacts with the Belarusian administration.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007853/13
to the Commission
Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Online safety and cyber-bullying

Can the Commission identify the specific funding programmes that are available at EU level to help schools and pupils with online safety and to counteract cyber-bullying?

Can the Commission also provide information on upcoming calls for proposals and relevant deadlines for applications?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2013)

Cyber-bullying is one of the priorities of the DAPHNE III programme. Projects on this issue have been financed in since 2008. Children as victims of bullying at school is one of the priorities in the 2013 Annual work programme for Daphne III where the Commission targets projects that develop and roll out, or roll out previously developed and piloted, anti-bullying policy and programmes in schools, involving children and teachers in a participatory manner. Bullying at school projects may also cover social networking sites as an extension of bullying in schools. Projects under this priority may allow for adaptations or customisation in line with the situation in individual Member States, but the overall objectives and methods must be the same for all participating Member States. The call for 2013 will be launched end of July/beginning of August with a deadline on the 30 October 2013.

The Safer Internet Programme ([1]), which promotes safer use of online technologies by children, co-funds Safer Internet Centres in all Member States. These Centres run helplines for children encountering problems online. There are no further calls under this Programme, but a follow-up is foreseen as one of the digital services of the Connecting Europe Facility proposed by the Commission for 2014-2020 ([2]).

Furthermore, the Rights and Citizenship Programme, proposed by the Commission for 2014-2020, will be the successor of the current Daphne III programme. Its funds will be supplemented by the funds of the proposed Justice Programme, especially for funding activities in the area of victims' rights. The combination of these two funds would result in a budget comparable to the current budget of the Daphne III Programme.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/documents/com2011_0665_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007854/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D) und Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Vorschlag eines Europäischen Themenjahres der ArbeitnehmerInnen in der Europäischen Union

Jedes Jahr schlägt die Kommission ein „Europäisches Jahr" zu einem zentralen gesellschaftlichen Thema vor, über welches der Rat anschließend abstimmt. Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer tragen ganz wesentlich dazu bei, dass die Europäische Union und insbesondere der Europäische Wirtschaftsraum funktionieren. Es wäre daher an der Zeit, dass auch vonseiten der Europäischen Union eine höhere Wertschätzung von ArbeitnehmerInnen mit der Ausrufung eines Themenjahres erfolgt. Es gab zwar 2006 bereits ein „Europäisches Jahr der Mobilität von ArbeitnehmerInnen". Dennoch sollte der Faktor Arbeit, vor allem im Hinblick auf die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit, die momentan das größte Problem in Europa darstellt, höhere Anerkennung genießen. Es ist sehr wichtig, gute und sichere Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen. Daher wird vorgeschlagenen, ein Themenjahr „Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer in der Europäischen Union" bzw. „Gesundheit und Sicherheit für die Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer in der Europäischen Union" zu planen.

1. Was hält die Kommission von diesem Vorschlag?

2. Zieht die EU in Erwägung, ein „Europäisches Jahr der ArbeitnehmerInnen" vorzuschlagen?

3. Welches Jahr könnte infrage kommen?

Antwort von Herrn László Andor im Namen der Kommission
(29. August 2013)

Zu 1. Die Belange der Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer stehen im Mittelpunkt der europäischen politischen Agenda. Im Rahmen ihres Beschäftigungs- und Jugendpakets legte die Kommission eine Agenda für einen beschäftigungsintensiven Aufschwung fest und verstärkte somit die Bedeutung des Faktors Arbeit für ein intelligentes, inklusives und nachhaltiges Wachstum. Die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen, vor allem für junge Menschen, und die Bewältigung der sozialen Folgen der Krise ist eine Schlüsselpriorität auf EU-Ebene. Die EU hat jüngst wichtige Initiativen eingeleitet, wie etwa die Empfehlungen zur Einführung einer Jugendgarantie und zur Europäischen Ausbildungsallianz. Der Sozialfonds und der Globalisierungsfonds sind wesentliche Finanzierungsinstrumente zur Unterstützung der Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer.

Zu 2. und 3. Seit 1983, als erstmals ein Europäisches Jahr abgehalten wurde, waren mehrere Themen den Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmern gewidmet, beispielsweise 1992 das Europäische Jahr für Sicherheit, Arbeitshygiene und Gesundheitsschutz am Arbeitsplatz, 1996 das Europäische Jahr des lebensbegleitenden Lernens oder 2006 das Europäische Jahr der Mobilität der Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer.

Die Kommission wird Ihre Anregung bei der Prüfung der Themenvorschläge für die kommenden Jahre gebührend berücksichtigen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007854/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D) and Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Proposal for a European Year of the Worker in the European Union

Each year, the Commission proposes a 'European Year' for an important social issue, on which the Council subsequently votes. Workers play an extremely important role in ensuring that the European Union, and in particular the European Economic Area, work effectively. Thus, it is high time for the European Union to give greater recognition to workers by designating a year in their honour. We have already had a 'European Year of Workers' Mobility', in 2006. Nonetheless, greater recognition should be given to work, particularly in view of the high unemployment that is currently the greatest problem facing Europe. It is very important to create good, secure jobs. It is for this reason that I propose planning a 'Year of the Worker in the European Union' or a 'Year of Health and Safety for Workers in the European Union'.

1. What is the Commission's view of this proposal?

2. Would the EU consider proposing a 'European Year of the Worker'?

3. Which year could be chosen?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2013)

1. Workers are at the centre of the European policy agenda. The Commission reinforced the importance of work for a smart, inclusive and sustainable growth in its Employment and Youth Packages laying down an agenda for a job-rich recovery. Creating jobs, in particular for young people, and tackling the social consequences of the crisis is a key priority at EU level. The EU has recently taken major initiatives, such as the recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, and on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.The European Social Found and the European Globalisation Found are key financial instruments for supporting workers.

2 & 3. Since 1983, the year in which the first European Year took place, several topics were dedicated to workers, for example in 1992, the European Year of Safety, Hygiene and health Protection at Work, in 1996 the European Year of Lifelong Learning, or in 2006 the European Year of Worker's mobility.

The Commission will take your suggestion into due account when deciding the proposals for a theme in the forthcoming years.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007855/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D) und Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Psychische Belastungen und Gewalt am Arbeitsplatz in der Arbeitsschutzstrategie 2013-2020

Unstrittig ist, dass psychische Belastungen an Arbeitsplätzen in allen Branchen zunehmen. Arbeit darf nicht krank machen! Belastungen durch Stress, physische und psychische Gewalt sind für unzählige Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer in Europa größer geworden.

Was unternimmt die Kommission im Hinblick auf die zunehmende Anzahl von psychosozialen Problemen am Arbeitsplatz, bedingt durch Stress, Arbeitsdruck, schlechte Arbeitsbedingungen und Arbeitsorganisation sowie schlechten Führungsstil? Die jährlichen Wirtschaftskosten in Verbindung mit Stress sind enorm.

Immer mehr Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer werden Opfer von Gewalt und Belästigung am Arbeitsplatz. In unzähligen Branchen, insbesondere im Dienstleistungssektor, sind ArbeitnehmerInnen von Gewalt am Arbeitsplatz durch Dritte betroffen. Welche Schwerpunkte plant die Kommission in der Strategie im Hinblick auf den Abbau von Gewalt am Arbeitsplatz durch KundInnen, KlientInnen, PatientInnen und Fahrgäste?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(25. Juli 2013)

Die Kommission möchte die Damen Abgeordneten auf ihre Antworten auf die Fragen E-4077/2013, E-1739/2013 und E-9004/2011 bezüglich Stress am Arbeitsplatz und E-2970/2013 zum Thema Gewalt am Arbeitsplatz aufmerksam machen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007855/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D) and Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Psychological stresses and violence in the workplace in the health and safety strategy 2013-2020

There is no disputing that psychological stresses in the workplace are increasing in all sectors. We must not allow work to make people ill. The strain caused by stress and physical or psychological violence has grown for countless workers in Europe.

What is the Commission doing in relation to the increasing number of psychosocial problems in the workplace caused by stress, work pressures, poor working conditions, poor organisation of work and bad management practices? The annual economic costs resulting from stress are enormous.

An increasing number of workers are finding themselves victims of violence and harassment in the workplace. In countless sectors, but particularly in the service sector, workers are affected by violence in the workplace from third parties. What key steps is the Commission planning in its strategy in relation to combating violence in the workplace by customers, clients, patients and passengers?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

The Commission wishes to draw the attention of the Honourable Member to its replies to questions E-4077/2013, E-1739/2013 and E-9004/2011 regarding stress at work and E-2970/2013 on violence at work.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007856/13
an den Rat
Evelyn Regner (S&D) und Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Vorschlag eines Europäischen Themenjahres der ArbeitnehmerInnen in der Europäischen Union

Jedes Jahr schlägt die Kommission ein „Europäisches Jahr" zu einem zentralen gesellschaftlichen Thema vor, über welches der Rat anschließend abstimmt. Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer tragen ganz wesentlich dazu bei, dass die Europäische Union und insbesondere der Europäische Wirtschaftsraum funktionieren. Es wäre daher an der Zeit, dass auch vonseiten der Europäischen Union eine höhere Wertschätzung von ArbeitnehmerInnen mit der Ausrufung eines Themenjahres signalisiert wird. Es gab zwar 2006 bereits ein „Europäisches Jahr der Mobilität von ArbeitnehmerInnen". Dennoch sollte der Faktor Arbeit, vor allem im Hinblick auf die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit, die momentan das größte Problem in Europa darstellt, höhere Anerkennung genießen. Es ist sehr wichtig, gute und sichere Arbeitsplätze zu schaffen. Daher wird vorgeschlagenen, ein Themenjahr „Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer in der Europäischen Union" bzw. „Gesundheit und Sicherheit für die Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer in der Europäischen Union" zu planen.

1. Was hält der Rat und insbesondere der litauische Ratsvorsitz von diesem Vorschlag?

2. Zieht die EU in Erwägung, ein „Europäisches Jahr der ArbeitnehmerInnen" vorzuschlagen?

3. Welches Jahr könnte infrage kommen?

Antwort
(16. September 2013)

Dem Rat ist bewusst, dass die Bekämpfung der Arbeitslosigkeit und die Bewältigung der sozialen Folgen der Krise zu den Herausforderungen, mit denen Europa konfrontiert ist, und zu seinen zentralen gemeinsamen Prioritäten gehören ([1]), doch hat er noch nicht über etwaige Themen für künftige Europäische Jahre beraten, da die Kommission bislang keine Vorschläge hierzu vorgelegt hat.

([1]) Dok. 6936/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007856/13
to the Council
Evelyn Regner (S&D) and Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Proposal for a European Year of the Worker in the European Union

Each year, the Commission proposes a 'European Year' for an important social issue, on which the Council subsequently votes. Workers play an extremely important role in ensuring that the European Union, and in particular the European Economic Area, work effectively. Thus, it is high time for the European Union to signal greater recognition for workers by designating a year in their honour. We have already had a 'European Year of Workers' Mobility', in 2006. Nonetheless, greater recognition should be given to work, particularly in view of the high unemployment that is currently the greatest problem facing Europe. It is very important to create good, secure jobs. It is for this reason that I propose planning a 'Year of the Worker in the European Union' or a 'Year of Health and Safety for Workers in the European Union'.

1. What is the view of the Council, and in particular the Lithuanian Presidency, on this proposal?

2. Would the EU consider proposing a 'European Year of the Worker'?

3. Which year could be chosen?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The Council recognises that tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis is one of Europe's challenges and key common priorities ([1]), but it has not discussed the issue of possible subjects for future European Years pending relevant Commission proposals on the issue.

([1]) 6936/13.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007857/13
an den Rat
Evelyn Regner (S&D) und Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Arbeitsschutzstrategie 2013-2020

Die letzte „Gemeinschaftsstrategie für Gesundheit und Sicherheit am Arbeitsplatz 2007-2012" ist 2012 ausgelaufen. Die Kommission hat bereits seit längerem eine Arbeitsschutzstrategie für den Zeitraum 2013-2020 angekündigt. Bisher lässt diese Strategie — obwohl auch der irische Ratsvorsitz die Gemeinschaftsstrategie angekündigt hat — weiterhin auf sich warten. Nachdem seit dem heutigen Tag Litauen den Ratsvorsitz übernommen hat, wäre es wichtig zu wissen, welche Priorität der litauische Vorsitz der Ausarbeitung einer neuen Arbeitsschutzstrategie einräumen wird.

Bis jetzt wurden noch keine klaren Antworten darauf gefunden, wie diese Strategie aussehen soll und welche Inhalte und Schwerpunkte in der Strategie enthalten sein sollen.

1. Wann wird die Strategie für 2013-2020 vorgelegt werden, und welche Priorität wird diese Strategie unter litauischem Ratsvorsitz haben? Sollte keine Strategie vorgelegt werden, wird um Begründung und um Information ersucht, welche Ersatzstrategie bzw. -kampagne auf den Weg gebracht werden soll.

2. Welche Schwerpunkte werden dem Thema Prävention und der Verbesserung der Strukturen von Präventionsmaßnahmen gewidmet? Wie steht der litauische Ratsvorsitz zum Thema Prävention?

3. Welche Maßnahmen in der Strategie sind dem Thema Demografieentwicklung und dem besonderen Schutz von älteren ArbeitnehmerInnen gewidmet (Motto: Bessere Arbeitsbedingungen für ein längeres Arbeitsleben)? Wie steht der litauische Ratsvorsitz zu dem Thema, und sind dazu Aktionen geplant?

4. Welche Maßnahmen im Rahmen der Strategie sind für Informations- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit auf europäischer und nationaler Ebene geplant?

Antwort
(16. September 2013)

Im Einklang mit der Strategie der Europäischen Kommission für Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz am Arbeitsplatz 2007-2012 teilt der Rat die Auffassung, dass durch die Förderung von Verhaltensänderungen und einer Präventionskultur in allen Teilen der Gesellschaft ein wesentlicher Beitrag zum Hauptziel der Strategie, d. h. einer kontinuierlichen, nachhaltigen und homogenen Verringerung der Arbeitsunfälle, geleistet wird. Unternehmen, insbesondere KMU, sollten Zugang zu technischen Hilfs- und Beratungsangeboten zur Förderung des Schutzes der Gesundheit von Arbeitnehmern haben, da KMU besonders von diesem Problem betroffen sind und 82 % aller Arbeitsunfälle und 90 % aller Unfälle mit tödlichem Ausgang verzeichnen. Unterweisungen und Informationen über die Sicherheit und den Gesundheitsschutz am Arbeitsplatz und Sensibilisierungskampagnen kommt diesbezüglich besondere Bedeutung zu, insbesondere in Bezug auf bestimmte Kategorien von Arbeitnehmern (Frauen, Migranten, ältere Arbeitnehmer, Arbeitnehmer mit Behinderungen usw.) oder in Bezug auf Arbeitnehmer in Wirtschaftszweigen, in denen das Risiko besonders hoch ist (z. B. Baugewerbe). Konkret waren für den Rat der Zugang der Arbeitnehmer zu Informationen und deren Unterweisung, insbesondere derjenigen, die besonders gefährdet sind (Arbeitnehmer mit Herzschrittmacher, schwangere Frauen), und ein präventiver Ansatz der treibende Grundsatz für die Annahme der Richtlinie 2013/35/EU über die Gefährdung der Arbeitnehmer durch elektromagnetische Felder.

Ein anderes Thema, das immer mehr an Bedeutung gewinnt, ist — wie die Frauen Abgeordneten richtig hervorheben — der besondere Schutz einer ansteigenden Zahl älterer Arbeitnehmer in den kommenden Jahren, da die Zahl junger Menschen, die eine Beschäftigung aufnehmen, aufgrund der jüngsten demografischen Trends drastisch sinken dürfte. Folglich wird ein wesentlicher Anstieg des Anteils älterer Menschen am Arbeitsplatz zu verzeichnen sein, und die Arbeitgeber werden zunehmend auf ältere Arbeitnehmer zurückgreifen müssen. Der Rat hat am 21. Juni 2012 Schlussfolgerungen angenommen, in denen er den Rat und die Kommission aufforderte, flexiblere Arbeitsbedingungen für ältere Menschen zu schaffen, die deren speziellen Bedürfnissen Rechnung tragen sowie sichere, gesunde und zugängliche Arbeitsplätze fördern.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007857/13
to the Council
Evelyn Regner (S&D) and Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Health and safety strategy 2013-2020

The last 'Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work' lapsed in 2012. The Commission has been promising a worker protection strategy for 2013-2020 for some time now. So far there is no sign of this strategy, despite the fact that the Irish Presidency of the European Union has announced a Community strategy. Now that Lithuania has taken over the Presidency of the European Union, it is important for us to know what priority the Lithuanian Presidency will give to developing a new health and safety strategy.

So far, there has been no clear answer regarding the nature of this strategy, or what its content and key points should be.

1. When will the strategy for 2013-2020 be presented and what priority will this strategy have under the Lithuanian Presidency? If no strategy is to be presented, could the Council please explain why and indicate what alternative strategy or campaign is to be pursued?

2. What will be the key points in relation to prevention and improving the structures of preventive measures? What is the position of the Lithuanian Presidency concerning prevention?

3. What measures in the strategy deal with demographic development and special protection for older workers (the motto here being: better working conditions for a longer working life)? What is the position of the Lithuanian Presidency concerning this topic, and are there plans for any related campaigns?

4. What measures are planned within the framework of the strategy for information and publicity at European and national level?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

In line with the European Commission Strategy on Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) 2007-2012, the Council shares the view that encouraging changes in behaviour and promoting a preventative culture in all parts of society contributes substantially to the main objective of OSH, namely an ongoing, sustainable and uniform reduction in accidents at the workplace. Companies, and in particular the SMEs, should be provided with technical assistance and advice concerning the promotion of workers' health, as the SMEs are particularly exposed to this problem, accounting for 82% of all occupational injuries and 90% of all fatal accidents. Training and information on occupational health and safety and awareness-raising campaigns are crucial here, in particular in relation to specific groups of workers (women, migrant workers, ageing workers, workers with disabilities, etc.) or workers in specific high-risk sectors (e.g. construction). More concretely, the provision of information to and training of workers, and in particular those who are at particular risk (workers with pacemakers, pregnant women), and a preventative approach was the driving principle in the Council when adopting Directive 2013/35/EU on the exposure of workers to electromagnetic fields.

Another topic with increasing importance, as the Honourable Members rightly mentions, is the specific protection of an increasing number of older workers expected in the coming years, as the number of young people entering employment is set to fall dramatically due to the recent demographic trends. Hence, there will be a significant increase in the proportion of older people in the workforce and employers will have to rely increasingly on ageing workers. On 21 June 2012, the Council adopted Conclusions where it invited the Council and the Commission to create more flexible working conditions for older persons, taking into account their special needs, and to promote safe, healthy and accessible workplaces.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007859/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Extraction minière chinoise au Congo

Nous avons mis la main sur un nouveau rapport intitulé «Pertes et profits. Exploitation minière et droits humains dans le Katanga, en République démocratique du Congo» rendu public ce mercredi 19 juin 2013 et qui étudie les conséquences de l'industrie minière dans le sud-est de la RDC.

Ce document rassemble des informations sur un certain nombre d'atteintes graves aux droits humains dans lesquelles sont impliquées des entreprises locales et étrangères, notamment des expulsions forcées — prohibées par le droit international — et l'imposition de conditions de travail dangereuses et constituant des formes d'exploitation. Il accorde une attention particulière au rôle des compagnies chinoises, qui sont en passe de devenir les acteurs économiques étrangers les plus puissants et les plus influents du secteur de l'extraction minière en RDC, pays qui possède une partie des réserves minières les plus importantes au monde.

La Chine importe en outre de gros volumes de cobalt et de cuivre de la RDC, dont une grande partie est toujours extraite par des petits exploitants artisanaux — également appelés creuseurs — qui travaillent avec des outils manuels et dans des conditions souvent extrêmement difficiles. Depuis plusieurs dizaines d'années, l'exploitation minière en RDC donne lieu à des atteintes aux droits fondamentaux des mineurs artisanaux et des communautés voisines des mines. Non seulement les autorités congolaises n'ont rien fait pour empêcher les compagnies minières et les marchands de bafouer les droits fondamentaux de la personne, elles ont-elles-mêmes commis des violations de ces droits afin de faciliter les opérations d'extraction.

1. La Commission compte-t-elle s'entretenir avec les autorités congolaises d'une part, chinoises d'autre part, sur le sujet?

2. La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis que si toutes les entreprises impliquées dans l'industrie extractive veillaient à effectuer de temps en temps des contrôles de diligence raisonnables pour veiller à ne pas acquérir du minerai et des minéraux extraits dans des conditions dégradantes ou d'exploitation, un grand pas serait fait vers un assainissement du commerce des produits miniers?

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

L'Union européenne est membre du «groupe de travail thématique relatif à l'extraction minière en République démocratique du Congo (RDC)» qui rassemble autorités congolaises, partenaires internationaux (dont la Chine) et représentants de la société civile. L'aide de l'UE vise à renforcer la capacité des autorités congolaises à résoudre les questions relatives à «l'extraction minière à petite échelle» ainsi qu'à améliorer la collecte des recettes générées par le secteur minier. Dans ce contexte, les conditions de travail et de vie des exploitants-artisans sont régulièrement examinées.

En juin 2013, les dirigeants du G8 se sont engagés à accroître la transparence du secteur extractif et ont rappelé que les minerais devraient être extraits en toute légalité — et non pillés dans des zones de conflits. L'Union européenne soutient pleinement cet engagement et a l'intention de promouvoir le programme en faveur de l'approvisionnement responsable. L'UE soutient la mise en œuvre de l'initiative régionale de la Conférence internationale sur la région des Grands Lacs relative aux ressources naturelles ainsi que de l'initiative pour la transparence des industries extractives. Elle contribue aux travaux du Forum plurilatéral de l'OCDE ([1]) sur le devoir de diligence dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement en étain, tantale, tungstène et or, auquel participent les autorités congolaises et des entreprises chinoises.

L'UE attire l'attention sur sa feuille de route globale intitulée «Initiative globale de l'UE relative à la chaîne d'approvisionnement en faveur de l'approvisionnement responsable en minerais provenant de zones de conflits ou à haut risque». Ce document consigne certains points de réflexion préliminaires de la Commission qui seront examinés à l'occasion du prochain rapport d'analyse d'impact.

([1]) Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques.

Dans ce contexte, les résultats de la récente consultation publique contribueront à l'élaboration de la position de l'UE, notamment en ce qui concerne la RDC et la coopération avec d'autres partenaires, dont les autorités chinoises.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007859/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Chinese mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo

A new report, published on Wednesday 19 June 2013 and entitled 'Profits and Loss. Mining and Human Rights in Katanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo', examines the consequences of the mining industry on the South East of the DRC.

The report documents a number of serious human rights abuses involving local and foreign companies including forced evictions — illegal under international law — and dangerous and exploitative working conditions. The report pays particular attention to the role of Chinese companies, which are on course to become the most influential and powerful foreign economic actors in the extractive sector in the DRC — a country with some of the world's most important mineral reserves.

China also imports significant amounts of cobalt and copper from the DRC, much of which continues to be extracted by small-scale miners — also known as artisanal miners — using handheld tools, and often working in terrible conditions. Mining operations in the DRC have resulted in decades of abuse against artisanal miners and the neighbouring communities. The DRC authorities have not only failed to prevent mining companies and traders abusing rights, they have themselves violated human rights to facilitate mining operations.

1. Does the Commission intend to discuss this issue with the DRC and Chinese authorities?

2. Does it share the view that if all the companies involved in the mining industry carried out reasonably diligent checks from time to time to ensure that ores and minerals are not being mined under degrading or dangerous conditions, it would be a major step towards cleaning up the mineral products trade?

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

The EU is a member of the 'Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Mining Thematic working group' which gathers DRC authorities, international partners (including China) and civil society. The EU support aims at reinforcing the capacity of the DRC authorities to address 'small-scale mining' related issues as well as to improve collection of revenues from the mining sector. In this context, the working and living conditions of artisan miners are regularly discussed.

In June 2013 the G8 leaders expressed their commitment to increase transparency in extractives and recalled that minerals should be sourced legitimately — not plundered from conflict zones. The EU fully upholds this commitment and is willing to promote the responsible sourcing agenda. The EU supports the implementation of the International Conference for the Great Lakes Regional Initiative on Natural Resources (including certification) as well as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. It contributes to the work of the OECD ([1]) Multi-Stakeholder Forum on due diligence of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold supply chains, where both DRC authorities and Chinese companies participate.

The EU draws attention to the roadmap entitled 'A comprehensive EU supply chain initiative for responsible sourcing of minerals originating in conflict-affected and high-risk areas'. This document registers preliminary indications about the Commission's thinking which will be considered in the forthcoming impact assessment report.

In this context, the results of the recent public consultation will be instrumental in shaping the position of the EU including in relation to the DRC and to the cooperation with other partners, including the Chinese authorities.

([1]) Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007860/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Expulsion de Roms en Roumanie

Amnesty international émet un document, intitulé *Une marginalisation forcée: Cinq cas d'expulsion forcée de Roms en Roumanie* qui décrit ce qu'ont vécu des personnes chassées de leur logement et de leur quartier, et repoussées à la périphérie de leur ville. Il suit le parcours de cinq personnes originaires de trois villes roumaines différentes, après qu'elles ont été expulsées de leur domicile et ont tout fait pour échapper à une réinstallation. Il met en lumière les profondes répercussions qu'ont sur la vie des gens la perte de leur logement et de leurs moyens de subsistance, la coupure des cercles sociaux, la réprobation sociale, les difficultés d'accès à l'éducation et à la santé, et le traumatisme de l'expulsion en elle-même. Nous assistons, dans la Roumanie du XXIe siècle, au bannissement délibéré, hors de la société, de personnes vulnérables vivant à la limite du seuil de pauvreté ou en-dessous, et dont les conditions de logement sont inadéquates. La législation en vigueur en Roumanie est loin d'être conforme aux normes internationales adoptées par le gouvernement roumain. En particulier, elle ne garantit pas le droit à un logement convenable à tous les citoyens et n'interdit pas les expulsions.

Les lacunes de la loi permettent aux autorités locales, sous prétexte de «rénovation et aménagement des centres urbains», de chasser des communautés roms entières établies de longue date et de les transférer dans des logements inappropriés, hors de la vue du reste de la population. Ces mesures de réinstallation ont souvent pour résultats une marginalisation et une pauvreté accrues, et vont à l'encontre des politiques gouvernementales visant à lutter contre l'exclusion sociale des Roms et d'autres groupes vulnérables.

1. Que des autorités locales mènent ce type d'action est illégal et inacceptable. Elles brisent des vies et rendent vaines les politiques d'inclusion des Roms. Le Conseil compte-t-il inviter le gouvernement roumain à agir de toute urgence pour mettre fin à ces violations?

2. Le Conseil partage-t-il l'avis que les autorités doivent doit faire peser leur autorité sur les responsables locaux afin que ceux-ci protègent, respectent et concrétisent les droits au logement de tous et mettent fin aux expulsions forcées?

Réponse
(21 octobre 2013)

Il n'appartient pas au Conseil de porter une appréciation sur les actions menées par les autorités locales de l'un ou l'autre État membre.

Toutefois, s'agissant du cadre législatif et politique général, le Conseil rappelle que toutes les personnes, y compris les Roms, sont protégées par les dispositions de la directive 2000/43/CE, qui interdit la discrimination fondée sur la race ou l'origine ethnique ([1]). Ces dispositions régissent les domaines de l'emploi, de la protection sociale, y compris la sécurité sociale et les soins de santé, les avantages sociaux, l'éducation, l'accès aux biens et aux services, y compris en matière de logement.

En outre, le Conseil a souligné à plusieurs reprises qu'il convenait de protéger les droits des Roms et d'agir en vue d'améliorer leur inclusion sociale et économique ([2]). En 2011, le Conseil a adopté des conclusions ([3]) intitulées «Un cadre de l'UE pour les stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms jusqu'en 2020», soulignant que «la protection des droits fondamentaux, notamment par la lutte contre les discriminations et contre la ségrégation, conformément à la législation existante de l'UE et aux engagements internationaux des États membres, est essentielle pour améliorer la situation des communautés marginalisées, y compris celle des Roms». Le Conseil a également invité les États membres à «améliorer la situation sociale et économique des Roms en intégrant cette problématique dans toutes les politiques de l'éducation, de l'emploi, du logement et des soins de santé» et à fixer des objectifs dans ces domaines (ou à continuer d'œuvrer à leur réalisation), conformément à leurs politiques nationales.

([1]) Directive 2000/43/CE, JO L 180 du 19.7.2000, p. 22.
([2]) Doc. 15976/1/08 REV 1, 10394/09 + COR 1, 10058/10 + COR 1.
([3]) JO C 258 du 2.9.2011, p. 6.

Dans le cadre de ces conclusions du Conseil, la Commission a récemment présenté une proposition de recommandation du Conseil ([4]) relative à des mesures efficaces d'intégration des Roms dans les États membres. Cette proposition est actuellement à l'examen des instances préparatoires du Conseil. Le Conseil n'est pas en mesure d'anticiper l'issue ni la durée des négociations sur cette proposition.

([4]) Doc. 12346/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007860/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Evictions of Roma in Romania

Amnesty International has published a report entitled *Five stories of Roma — forced evictions in Romania,* which describes the experiences of people driven from their homes and neighbourhoods to the outskirts of their cities. The report follows the journeys of five people from three Romanian cities after they have been forcibly evicted from their homes and their resistance to relocation. It exposes the profound impact on people's lives of lost homes and livelihoods, disconnection from social circles, stigma, difficulties in accessing education or healthcare and the trauma of eviction itself. What we see in 21st century Romania is the deliberate expulsion from society of vulnerable people who live below or on the poverty line in inadequate housing conditions. The current legislation in Romania falls far short of the international standards adopted by the Romanian Government. In particular, it fails to ensure the right to adequate housing for all its citizens and to prohibit forced evictions.

Legislative flaws allow local authorities to sweep away Roma communities entirely, under the pretext of 'inner-city regeneration and development', and to relocate them to inadequate housing out of sight of the rest of the population. Such relocations often result in further marginalisation and poverty and go against government policies to combat social exclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups.

1. It is illegal and unacceptable for local authorities to act in this way. They are ruining lives and rendering Roma inclusion policies useless. Will the Council call on the Romanian Government to take urgent action to end these violations?

2. Does it agree that the authorities should use their power to ensure that local officials protect, respect and implement housing rights for all and put an end to forced evictions?

Reply
(21 October 2013)

It is not for the Council to comment on the actions of local authorities in a particular Member State.

However, as regards the general legislative and political framework, the Council recalls that all persons, including Roma, are protected by the provisions of Directive 2000/43/EC prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin ([1]). These provisions cover the fields of employment, social protection including social security and healthcare, social advantages, education and access to goods and services, including housing.

Moreover, the Council has repeatedly affirmed the rights of Roma and called for action to advance their social and economic inclusion ([2]). In 2011, the Council adopted a set of Conclusions ([3]) on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, stressing that 'the protection of fundamental rights, notably by combating discrimination and segregation, in accordance with existing EU legislation and the international commitments of the Member States, is essential for improving the situation of marginalised communities, including Roma.' The Council also invited the Member States 'to improve the social and economic situation of Roma by pursuing a mainstreaming approach in the fields of education, employment, housing, and healthcare' and to set (or continue working towards) goals in these fields, in accordance with their national policies.

In the context of these Council Conclusions, the Commission recently submitted a proposal for a Council Recommendation ([4]) on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States. This proposal is currently being examined by the Council's preparatory bodies. The Council is not in a position to anticipate the outcome or duration of the negotiations on this proposal.

([1]) Directive 2000/43/EC. OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22.
([2]) 15976/1/08 REV 1, 10394/09 + COR 1, 10058/10 + COR 1.
([3]) OJ C 258, 2.9.2011, p. 6.
([4]) 12346/13.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007862/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Dangers des teintures pour cheveux

Dans un rapport rendu au Comité scientifique pour la sécurité des consommateurs, 36 substances potentiellement dangereuses ont en effet été identifiées dans les teintures pour cheveux.

Le dermatologue au St Thomas' Hospital à Londres, qui est à l'origine de ce rapport, met en garde contre les substances utilisées pour les colorations châtain ou brune qui promettent de durer jusqu'à six semaines. Celles-ci peuvent entraîner des démangeaisons, des sensations de brûlures, la chute des cheveux et, dans le pire des cas, déclencher des problèmes respiratoires.

Depuis 2011, deux cas de décès de femmes britanniques ont été associés à la toxicité des ingrédients utilisés dans les colorations, mais sans certitudes. En novembre 2011 une mère de 38 ans, est morte d'une crise cardiaque après avoir passé un an dans le coma. Elle avait été transportée à l'hôpital car elle souffrait d'un problème respiratoire qui avait commencé juste après l'utilisation d'une coloration. Un mois plus tôt un demoiselle de17 ans a été prise de vomissements soudains et d'évanouissements après s'être teint les cheveux. Elle est décédée quelques heures plus tard à l'hôpital.

Comment réagit la Commission? Compte-t-elle prendre des mesures?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(14 octobre 2013)

Les teintures capillaires sont régies par le règlement (CE) n° 1223/2009 ([1]), qui précise qu'un produit cosmétique mis à disposition sur le marché est sûr pour la santé humaine lorsqu'il est utilisé dans des conditions d'utilisation normales ou raisonnablement prévisibles, compte tenu de sa présentation, des instructions concernant son utilisation et son élimination et de toute autre indication ou information émanant de la personne responsable.

Sur demande de la Commission, le Comité scientifique pour la sécurité des consommateurs de l'Union européenne a récemment examiné 114 substances utilisées dans les teintures capillaires commercialisées dans l'Union ([2]). Il en a classé trente-six dans la catégorie des substances extrêmement ou fortement sensibilisantes, dont vingt-neuf peuvent néanmoins être utilisées sans danger dans les teintures capillaires dans certaines conditions. La Commission a réglementé vingt-cinq de ces substances et en a autorisé l'utilisation à des concentrations limitées. Quatre autres substances suivront bientôt. Les sept substances restantes font encore l'objet d'un examen approfondi de la part du Comité.

La Commission n'a pas connaissance d'éléments prouvant l'existence d'un lien de cause à effet entre ces substances chimiques spécifiques et les cas auxquels se réfère l'auteur de la question.

Étant donné que certaines substances, même déclarées sûres, peuvent provoquer des réactions allergiques en raison de leur potentiel sensibilisant, le règlement relatif aux produits cosmétiques prévoit l'apposition obligatoire d'avertissements et d'instructions d'emploi sur l'emballage et le contenant du produit.

([1]) JO L 342 du 22.12.2009, p. 59.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_s_007.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007862/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Dangers of hair dyes

In a report presented to the Commission's Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety, 36 potentially dangerous chemicals were found to be contained in hair dye.

The dermatologist at St Thomas' Hospital in London who is behind the report, warns against the use of chemicals in brown or dark hair dyes that promise to last for up to six weeks. These dyes can lead to itching, a burning sensation, hair loss and, in the worst case, breathing problems.

Since 2011, two British women have died in cases linked to the toxic ingredients used in hair dyes, although it has not been officially proven that these chemicals were the cause of death. In July 2011, A 38-year-old mother, died of heart failure after a year spent in a coma. She had been taken to hospital suffering from respiratory problems, which started just after she had dyed her hair. A month earlier a young woman, just 17 years old, suddenly started vomiting and passed out after dying her hair. She died a few hours later in hospital.

What is the Commission's reaction? Will it take any action?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(14 October 2013)

Hair dyes are regulated by Cosmetics Regulation 1223/2009 ([1]) which stipulates that a cosmetic product placed on the EU market must be safe for human health when used under normal or reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, taking into account its presentation, instructions for use and disposal, and any other indication or information provided by the responsible person.

On request of the Commission, the EU's Scientific Committee on Consumers Safety recently assessed 114 substances used in hair dyes marketed in the EU. ([2]) The Committee classified 36 substances as extreme or strong sensitizers, but concluded that 29 of those substances are nevertheless safe for use in hair dye products under certain conditions. The Commission regulated 25 of those substances and allowed for use under maximum concentration limits. Four will soon be regulated. The remaining seven substances are still being assessed in more detail by the Committee.

Regarding the cases referred to by the Honourable Member, the Commission is not aware of evidence proving a causal link to specific chemicals.

As certain substances, even though found safe, may cause allergic reactions in certain individuals due to their sensitizing potential, the Cosmetics Regulation provides for obligatory warnings and instructions for use are necessary to be labelled on the product packaging and container.

([1]) OJ L 342, 22.12.2009; p.59.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/consumer_safety/docs/sccs_s_007.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007863/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 juillet 2013)

Objet: Déchets de sacs plastiques

Des substances toxiques présentes dans des déchets plastiques de taille microscopique peuvent s'insérer dans la chaîne alimentaire par l'ingestion d'organismes de la faune marine, comme l'holothurie, le plancton et les moules.

La Commission prépare-t-elle un plan d'action pour contrer cela?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2013)

Différentes mesures ont été prises pour remédier à ces problèmes de pollution marine par les matières plastiques. La Commission a publié un rapport [SWD(2012) 365] ([1]) qui donne un aperçu des politiques, de la législation et des initiatives de l'Union en ce qui concerne les déchets marins.

Un programme de recherche au titre du 7e programme-cadre a été lancé début 2013 qui traitera, entre autres, des incidences physiques et chimiques des déchets marins, et en particuliers des microplastiques, sur les organismes marins. Aucune mesure spécifique n'est encore envisagée pour remédier au problème de la présence de microplastiques dans les denrées alimentaires.

La Commission a également lancé un vaste processus de consultation concernant son Livre vert sur une stratégie européenne en matière de déchets plastiques dans l'environnement ([2]). Il a pour objectifs de définir une nouvelle politique plus cohérente orientée sur des produits en matières plastiques plus durables et permettant un usage plus rationnel des ressources ainsi que d'améliorer globalement les conditions (techniques et économiques) de recyclage.

De plus, dans le cadre du réexamen permanent des objectifs dans la directive-cadre sur les déchets ([3]), dans la directive relative aux emballages ([4]) et la directive concernant la mise en décharge ([5]) il sera envisagé de détourner les matières plastiques de la mise en décharge ainsi que définir des objectifs plus stricts en matière de recyclage des emballages plastiques. À partir de 2015, la directive-cadre sur les déchets imposera une collecte sélective des déchets plastiques dans l'Union européenne.

La Commission renvoie également l'Honorable Parlementaire aux réponses qu'elle a données aux questions écrites E-009859/2012 et E-006982/2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/pdf/SWD_2012_365.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/green_paper/green_paper_fr.pdf
([3]) JO L 312 du 22.11.2008.
([4]) JO L 365 du 31.12.1994.
([5]) JO L 182 du 16.7.1999.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007863/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Plastic bag waste

Toxic substances contained in micro-plastic waste could enter the food chain through ingestion by marine fauna such as sea cucumbers, plankton and mussels.

Has the Commission prepared an action plan to combat this problem?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

Different actions have been taken to address these problem of plastic marine pollution. The Commission published a Commission report (SWD(2012) 365) ([1]) which gives an overview of EU policies, legislation and initiatives related to marine litter.

A research project under the 7th Framework Programme started early 2013 which, amongst others, will address physical and chemical impacts of marine litter, especially microplastics, on marine organisms. No specific action is envisaged yet to tackle the issue of microplastics in food.

The Commission has also started a broad consultation process with its Green Paper ([2]) on a strategy on plastic waste in the environment. The objective is to define a new and more coherent policy towards more sustainable and resource efficient plastic products as well as improving overall (technical and economic) conditions for recycling.

Furthermore, the ongoing review of targets in the Waste Framework Directive ([3]), the Packaging Directive ([4]) and the Landfill Directive ([5]) will consider a diversion of plastics from landfills as well as stricter targets on plastic packaging recycling. As of 2015, the Waste Framework Directive requires separate collection of plastic waste in the EU.

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Member to its answers to questions E-009859/2012 and E-006982/2013.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/pdf/SWD_2012_365.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/pdf/green_paper/green_paper_en.pdf
([3]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([4]) OJ L 365, 31.12.1994.
([5]) OJ L 182, 16.7.1999.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007864/13
al Consejo
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(2 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Ibex 35 y paraísos fiscales

La lucha contra los paraísos fiscales es un elemento clave para superar la crisis económica. Por eso, diversas instituciones y organizaciones han enviado, desde hace más de una década, sus recomendaciones al Gobierno español en un intento de hacerlo reaccionar. Entre ellas destacan las recomendaciones de la unidad de la Agencia Tributaria adscrita a la Fiscalía Anticorrupción y la Organización Profesional de Inspectores de Hacienda del Estado ([1]).

El pasado 7 de mayo, el Observatorio de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa presentó la 9ª edición de su estudio titulado «La RSC en las memorias anuales de las empresas del IBEX 35». Este pone de manifiesto el aumento de las sociedades domiciliadas en paraísos fiscales durante el ejercicio 2011 y el retroceso en la información que las empresas proporcionan en sus memorias anuales de RSC. Treinta y tres de las treinta y cinco empresas del Ibex 35 tenían presencia en paraísos fiscales el año 2011. El dinero procedente de entidades y fortunas españolas residentes en paraísos fiscales estaría alrededor de los 550 000 millones de euros, según la organización independiente Tax Justice Network.

¿Qué opina el Consejo de estas recomendaciones? ¿Cree que la ignorancia de las mismas por parte del Gobierno español no es un signo de terrible irresponsabilidad? ¿Exigirá a España reformas legales en las próximas recomendaciones específicas del Semestre Europeo para evitar que las empresas del Ibex 35, y otras, estén domiciliadas en paraísos fiscales? ¿Cooperará con la regulación europea necesaria en este sentido? ¿Impulsará para que todos los miembros de la Comisión participen en la tasa de transacciones financieras?

¿Pretende tipificar como delito el blanqueo de capitales y equipararlo a cualquier actuación de evasión fiscal? ¿Cree que la denuncia tributaria o el pago por informaciones sería un instrumento útil? ¿Podría aplicar dicho instrumento a nivel comunitario? ¿Qué opina de la imposibilidad de recibir bonificaciones o incentivos para entidades con presencia en paraísos fiscales? ¿Cómo valoraría la creación de un impuesto unitario a nivel comunitario que gravase a las empresas multinacionales para evitar los incentivos de evasión fiscal? ¿Existen o se plantean mecanismos para controlar la figura del testaferro? ¿Qué opinión tiene el Consejo respecto al intercambio automático de información con terceros estados, como el Convenio de FACTA?

Respuesta
(5 de noviembre de 2013)

El tratamiento del fraude y la evasión fiscales hace tiempo que constituye una prioridad del Consejo. El tema también se está tratando activamente durante la Presidencia lituana, que además de los debates en los órganos preparatorios del Consejo, ha organizado recientemente un debate ministerial sobre la cuestión en la reunión informal de ministros de Hacienda que tuvo lugar en Vilnius, los días 14 y 15 de septiembre de 2013.

En los informes periódicos del Consejo figura una visión general de las actividades que éste ha llevado a cabo en este ámbito, la última de ellas durante el mes de junio de 2013 ([2]). En el informe al Consejo Europeo de diciembre de 2013 podrá disponerse de un panorama general de la labor del Consejo en este ámbito durante la Presidencia lituana.

([1]) http://www.inspectoresdehacienda.org/images/stories/pdf/documentos/documento_encuentrostributarios2013.pdf
([2]) doc. 11507/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007864/13
to the Council
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Ibex 35 and tax havens

The fight against tax havens is a key element in overcoming the economic crisis. Various institutions and organisations have been submitting their recommendations to the Spanish Government for more than 10 years in an attempt to persuade it to react. By way of example, attention might be drawn to the recommendations made by the tax agency assigned to the anti-corruption office and the professional organisation of government tax inspectors ([1]).

On 7 May 2013, the Observatory for Corporate Social Responsibility presented the ninth edition of its study on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the annual reports for IBEX 35 companies. The study shows that the number of companies based in tax havens rose in the 2011 financial year, while the amount of information which companies provided in their annual CSR reports declined. Of the 35 Ibex 35 companies, 33 were operating in tax havens in 2011. According to the independent organisation Tax Justice Network, money from Spanish businesses and wealth based or held in tax havens stood at around EUR 550 billion.

What is the Council's view on these recommendations? Does it not believe that the Spanish government's disregard for these recommendations is a sign of breathtaking irresponsibility? Will it call for legal reforms in Spain in the next European Semester specific recommendations in order to avoid a situation where Ibex 35 and other companies are based in tax havens? Will it cooperate on the requisite European regulation in this regard? Will it push for all members of the Commission to play a part in the financial transactions tax?

Will it designate money laundering as a criminal offence on a par with all activities linked to tax evasion? Does it believe that whistleblowing or payment for information in relation to tax evasion would be a useful tool? Could it apply such a tool at Community level? What is its view on the idea of making it impossible for entities operating in tax havens to receive bonuses or incentives? What would be its view on the creation of a unitary tax at Community level, to be imposed on multinational companies in order to remove any incentive for tax evasion? Are any mechanisms in place to curb the development of front companies, or are there plans to create such mechanisms? What is the Council's view on the automatic exchange of information with third countries, such as the FACTA agreement?

Reply
(5 November 2013)

Addresssing tax fraud and tax evasion has been a long-standing priority of the Council. It is also being actively addressed under the Lithuanian Presidency, which, in addition to discussions in the Council's preparatory bodies, recently organised a ministerial discussion on this issue at the informal meeting of Finance Ministers in Vilnius on 14-15 September 2013.

An overview of the Council's activities in this area can be found in the regular Council reports to the European Council, the latest of which dates from June 2013 ([2]). An overview of the Council's work in this area under the Lithuanian Presidency will be available in the report to the European Council in December 2013.

([1]) http://www.inspectoresdehacienda.org/images/stories/pdf/documentos/documento_encuentrostributarios2013.pdf
([2]) doc. 11507/13.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007865/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
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Respuesta del Sr. Šemeta en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión es consciente del gran número de empresas que opera en los llamados paraísos fiscales. Esta cuestión se aborda en la iniciativa de la Comisión de 6 de diciembre de 2012: un plan de acción para reforzar la lucha contra el fraude fiscal y la evasión fiscal ([2]) y en dos recomendaciones ([3]). La Plataforma de Buena Gobernanza Fiscal ([4]) ayuda a establecer nuevas iniciativas para promover la buena gobernanza en materia fiscal, que se podrían incorporar a un enfoque de la UE más coordinado y eficaz.

Las recomendaciones específicas por país de 2013 dirigidas a España incluyen la recomendación de revisar sistemáticamente su sistema fiscal, que será evaluado por la Comisión en el contexto del Semestre Europeo de 2014.

La Comisión y los Estados miembros que participan en la aplicación de un ITF común en el marco del procedimiento de cooperación reforzada ([5]) deberán garantizar que procuran fomentar la participación del mayor número posible de Estados miembros.

La propuesta de una cuarta Directiva contra el blanqueo de capitales ([6]) incluye específicamente los «delitos fiscales relacionados con los impuestos directos e indirectos» en el ámbito de aplicación de la «actividad delictiva» ([7]) y reforzará el intercambio de información sobre el titular real. La propuesta de modificación de la Directiva comunitaria sobre la fiscalidad del ahorro incluye disposiciones específicas para abordar las sociedades tapadera.

([1]) http://www.inspectoresdehacienda.org/images/stories/pdf/documentos/documento_encuentrostributarios2013.pdf
([2]) COM(2012) 722 final.
([3]) Sobre la planificación fiscal agresiva y las medidas destinadas a alentar a los terceros Estados a aplicar normas mínimas de buena gobernanza en el ámbito fiscal; C (2012) 8806; C (2012) 8805.
([4]) C (2013) 2236.
([5]) Artículo 328, apartado 1, del TFUE; COM(2013) 71 final.
([6]) COM(2013) 45 final de 5.2.2013.
([7]) Esto es, según lo anunciado en el Plan de Acción de 6 de diciembre (Acción 18), una ampliación de la definición en consonancia con las recomendaciones del Grupo de Acción Financiera.

La Comisión ha propuesto un sistema común para el cálculo de la base imponible de las empresas que operan en la EU (base consolidada común del impuesto de sociedades) ([8]).

La Comisión apoya firmemente el intercambio automático de información para luchar contra el fraude y la evasión fiscales. Por lo tanto, el intercambio automático de información es deseable siempre que cumpla la normativa europea de protección de datos y sea coherente con los actuales sistemas de intercambio automático de información en vigor en la EU ([9]).

([8]) C (2011) 121.

([9]) La mayoría de los Estados miembros de la UE ya proceden al intercambio automático de información entre sí y con determinadas jurisdicciones extranjeras sobre las rentas del ahorro con arreglo a la Directiva sobre el ahorro y acuerdos conexos — DO L 157 de 26.6.2003, p. 38. El mismo enfoque se adoptará por lo que se refiere a otras categorías de renta y de patrimonio a partir de 2015 en virtud de la Directiva sobre cooperación administrativa — DO L 64 de 11.3.2011, p. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007865/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(2 July 2013)

Subject: Ibex 35 and tax havens

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Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the substantial number of companies operating in so-called tax havens. This issue is dealt with in the Commission's initiative of 6 December 2012: an Action Plan to strengthen the fight against tax fraud and tax evasion ([2]) and in two recommendations ([3]). The Platform for Tax Good Governance ([4]) assists in developing further initiatives to promote good governance in tax matters which can feed into a more coordinated and effective EU approach.

The 2013 country specific recommendations directed to Spain include a recommendation to review systematically its tax system and this will be assessed by the Commission in the context of the 2014 European semester.

The Commission and the Member States participating in the implementation of a common FTT under the procedure of enhanced cooperation ([5]) shall ensure that they promote participation by as many Member States as possible.

The proposal for a Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive ([6]) makes specific reference to 'tax crimes related to direct taxes and indirect taxes' as being included in the scope of 'criminal activity' ([7]) and will enhance the exchange of beneficial ownership information. The Amending proposal of the EU Savings Taxation Directive has specific provisions to tackle front companies.

([1]) http://www.inspectoresdehacienda.org/images/stories/pdf/documentos/documento_encuentrostributarios2013.pdf
([2]) COM(2012) 722 final.
([3]) On aggressive tax planning and regarding measures intended to encourage third countries to apply minimum standards of good governance in tax matters; C(2012)8806; C(2012)8805.
([4]) C (2013) 2236.
([5]) Article 328(1) TFEU; COM(2013) 71 final.
([6]) COM(2013) 45 final, 5.2.2013.
([7]) This is, as announced in the 6 December Action Plan (Action 18), an extension of the definition in line with the Financial Action Task Force Recommendations.

The Commission has proposed a common system for calculating the tax base of businesses operating in the EU (Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base) ([8]).

The Commission strongly supports automatic exchange of information to combat tax fraud and evasion. Automatic information exchange is, therefore, to be welcomed once it complies with EU data protection law and is consistent with existing automatic information exchange arrangements in force in the EU ([9]).

([8]) C (2011) 121.

([9]) Most EU Member States already exchange information automatically with each other and with certain foreign jurisdictions on savings income under the Savings Directive and related agreements — OJ L 157, 26.6.2003, p. 38. They will do so on certain other categories of income and capital from 2015 under the directive on Administrative Cooperation — OJ L 64, 11.3.2011, p.1.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007866/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Devolución de incentivos fiscales del sector naval español

El pasado 27 de junio el Comisario Joaquín Almunia confirmó *en unas declaraciones realizadas en el Foro Nueva Economía en Madrid que el sector naval deberá devolver los incentivos fiscales cobrados desde 2005 por haberse facilitado dichas ayudas sin adecuarse a la normativa europea de la competencia.*

La cantidad exigida por la Unión Europea asciende a 2 800 millones euros y se debe a los incentivos fiscales garantizados en forma de «*tax lease*» *para la adquisición de buques producidos en España a precios entre un 20 y un 30 % inferiores a los del mercado. Dicho incentivo fiscal ha sido declarado ilegal por la UE, decisión que obliga a España a devolver las cantidades facilitadas a través de este mecanismo por resultar un caso de dumping fiscal con otros astilleros del mercado único.*

El Comisario ha insistido que los armadores no deberán devolver los fondos y que serán los inversores que resultaron beneficiados de los incentivos fiscales los que deban devolver dichos fondos. Portavoces del sector han calificado la noticia como «*la muerte del sector*» *puesto que supondrá problemas de seguridad jurídica para los clientes del sector y lo hará aún menos atractivo para los inversores internacionales. Este sector, con una importante presencia económica y laboral en determinadas comarcas del país, lleva sufriendo amenazas de desaparición desde la entrada en la EU y esta decisión está bastante lejos de mejorar la situación.*

La decisión tomada por la Comisión no considera las externalidades positivas que el sector produce en las comarcas donde aún existe actividad, donde son los principales motores económicos y emplean a miles de personas. Los astilleros han tenido una importancia económica fundamental para determinadas comarcas principalmente en términos de empleo, factor fundamental teniendo en cuenta la gravísima situación de desempleo que atraviesa el país.

¿Dispone la Comisión de información sobre las externalidades positivas que esta industria ha producido en las comarcas donde se localizan? ¿Ha evaluado el impacto directo e indirecto de dicha decisión supondrá en el sector?

¿Considera que las empresas del sector se verán forzadas a su cierre? ¿Ha estimado el coste que la posible desaparición tendrá en las comarcas donde se localizan estas industrias? ¿Qué alternativas plantea la Comisión para la actividad económica de las citadas comarcas?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(21 de agosto de 2013)

El 17 de julio de 2013, la Comisión adoptó una decisión final ([1]) en relación con el sistema español de arrendamiento fiscal, en la que concluyó que la medida constituía una ayuda estatal parcialmente incompatible con el mercado interior. Aunque el sistema español de *arrendamiento fiscal se ha utilizado como un mecanismo de apoyo a la compra de buques, la Comisión no ordena la recuperación de la ayuda reclamándosela a los astilleros o las compañías marítimas que eran sus clientes, sino a los miembros de las agrupaciones de interés económico que se habían acogido a una reducción de la base imponible a efectos del impuesto sobre los beneficios.*

El Tratado prohíbe las ayudas estatales que puedan distorsionar la competencia como una cuestión de principio. No obstante, siempre que el Estado miembro cumpla su obligación de notificar sus proyectos de ayuda, las ayudas que persiguen objetivos de interés común pueden ser autorizadas por la Comisión. A este respecto, los efectos externos positivos como la contribución de la ayuda al desarrollo regional se tienen en cuenta en la evaluación de la Comisión. De hecho, los astilleros españoles, igual que los astilleros de otros Estados miembros, puedan seguir acogiéndose a ayudas si estas se conceden en virtud de regímenes aprobados por la Comisión, especialmente si persiguen fines de innovación o desarrollo regional.

Por supuesto, de conformidad con normas bien asentadas de la UE, la concesión de ayudas estatales sin autorización previa por parte de la Comisión entraña el riesgo de que se puedan considerar incompatibles con el mercado interior y de que se ordene su recuperación de los beneficiarios.

([1]) Aún no publicada en el Diario Oficial.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007866/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Repayment of tax incentives in the Spanish shipbuilding sector

On 27 June 2013, Commissioner Joaquín Almunia confirmed in statements made at the New Economy Forum in Madrid that the shipbuilding sector would have to repay tax incentives received since 2005, as this aid was not granted in accordance with European competition law.

The amount that the European Union is requesting comes to EUR 2.8 billion and relates to guaranteed tax incentives in the form of 'tax leases' for purchasing Spanish-built ships at between 20% and 30% below market price. The EU has declared this tax incentive illegal, a decision which obliges Spain to repay the sums allocated through this scheme because it amounts to fiscal dumping with other shipyards in the single market.

The Commissioner stressed that shipowners would not have to repay the money and that it would be the investors who benefitted from the tax incentives who would have to repay it. Representatives from the sector have dubbed the announcement 'a fatal blow for the sector' as it will lead to problems of legal certainty for the sector's customers and will make it even less attractive to international investors. This sector, which has a considerable presence in terms of the economy and employment in some areas of the country, has been at risk of disappearing since Spain joined the EU and this decision will do little to improve the situation.

The Commission's decision does not take into account the positive externalities that the sector has in the areas where this activity still takes place, where it is the main driving force of the economy and employs thousands of people. Shipyards have been of fundamental economic importance for some areas, mainly in terms of employment, a key factor considering the serious unemployment situation throughout the country.

Does the Commission have any information about the positive externalities that this industry has had in the areas in which it is located? Has it evaluated the direct and indirect impact that this decision will have on the sector?

Does it believe that companies in the sector will be forced to close? Has it estimated the cost to the areas in which these industries are located were this sector to disappear? What alternative economic activities does the Commission propose for these areas?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(21 August 2013)

On 17 July 2013, the Commission adopted a final decision[1] with respect to the Spanish Tax Lease system, concluding that it constitutes state aid that is partly incompatible with the internal market. Even if the Spanish Tax Lease system has been used as a support mechanism for the purchase of ships, the Commission does not order the recovery of the aid either from the shipyards or from the shipping companies that were their customers, but from the members of Economic Interest Groupings which have benefited from a reduction of their tax base for income tax purposes.

The Treaty prohibits state aid which may distort competition as a matter of principle. However, provided that the Member State respects its obligation to notify its aid projects, aid that pursues objectives of common interest can be authorised by the Commission. In that context, positive externalities such as the aid's contribution to regional development are taken into account in the Commission's assessment. In fact, Spanish shipyards — like the shipyards of other Member States — may continue to benefit from aid if it is granted under schemes approved by the Commission, notably if they pursue innovation or regional development objectives.

Of course, in accordance with well-established EU rules, granting state aid without prior authorisation by the Commission entails the risk that it might be found incompatible with the internal market and that its recovery from the beneficiaries will be ordered.

(1) Not yet published in the Official Journal.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007867/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Food Supplements Directive

The Food Supplements Directive aims to set maximum permitted levels (MPLs) for vitamins and minerals, with the possibility of extending such limits to botanical substances, fish and animal sources. Setting a low dose across the market will threaten consumer choice and jobs. An impact assessment conducted recently in the UK it concluded that over 700 independent health food stores could close, with the loss of 4 000 jobs. Any approach which ignores evidence and common sense will impose an unnecessary burden on the market and impede the freedom of individuals to take safe nutritional supplements.

— With this in mind, will the Commission outline the specific measures it plans to include under the Food Supplements Directive?

— Does the Commission agree that any approach to limiting levels should be based on science and safety?

— Further, will the Commission detail the legislative timetable to which the Food Supplements Directive will be subject?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

A report ([1]) was transmitted to the Council and the European Parliament on the use of substances other than vitamins and minerals in food supplements in December 2008 which concluded that 'laying down specific rules applicable to substances other than vitamins and minerals for use in food supplements is not justified. Moreover, the Commission doubts the feasibility of such a measure, which, in any case, is not necessary in the short term'. At this stage there is no change of position regarding that conclusion.

Article 5 of Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements ([2]) foresees that the maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals present in food supplements will be established on a safety basis taking into account scientific assessment carried out by the European Food Safety Authority ([3]) and by other recognised scientific assessment bodies. Those criteria listed in Article 5 include:

— upper safe levels of vitamins and minerals established by scientific risk assessment (UL, the maximum level of total chronic intake of a nutrient judged to be unlikely to pose a risk of adverse health effects to humans);

— intake of vitamins and minerals from other dietary sources.

Furthermore, due account will be taken of reference intakes of vitamins and minerals for the population as a whole.

Work on setting maximum amounts is ongoing. The Commission has consulted extensively with Member States and interested stakeholders on this issue. All the available data on the potential effects of the setting of maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals in food supplements on economic operators and consumers will be taken into account in preparing the relevant legislative measure. However, the Commission is not in a position, at this stage, to provide a timetable for this.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/supplements/documents/COMM_PDF_COM_2008_0824_F_EN_RAPPORT.pdf
([2]) OJ L 183, 12.7.2002, p. 51.
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178633962601.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007868/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Donaciones a WikiLeaks a través de tarjetas de crédito y negativa de VISA a procesar las donaciones a WikiLeaks en violación de la Directiva europea sobre los derechos de los consumidores

A finales de 2009, DataCell ehf puso en funcionamiento sus servicios ecológicos de alojamiento de sitios web y centros de datos. Con el fin de recaudar dinero, abrió una pasarela para tarjetas de crédito con el proveedor de pagos Teller para procesar los pagos a principios de 2010. DataCell se puso en contacto con WikiLeaks y en ese momento se acordó que DataCell comenzaría a procesar las donaciones a través de su pasarela para tarjetas de crédito existente ([1]).

El 7 de diciembre de 2010, la pasarela para tarjetas de crédito de DataCell ehf fue cerrada porque las compañías internacionales de tarjetas de créditos decidieron de forma unilateral que las donaciones a WikiLeaks eran ilegales, sin indicar comunicar ninguna infracción específica o razonamiento alguno. DataCell se opuso firmemente a esta decisión y luchó contra ella.

En junio de 2011, DataCell pudo abrir de nuevo su pasarela a través del procesador de pagos Valitor, en Islandia, solo para que fuera cerrada otra vez siete horas más tarde.

DataCell llevó el caso ante los tribunales de Reikiavik. El 12 de julio de 2012, el tribunal de distrito de Reikiavik falló que el cierre era ilegal y ordenó a Valitor que abriera de nuevo la pasarela o pagara una elevada multa diaria. Valitor recurrió esta sentencia y apeló al Tribunal Supremo de Islandia. El Tribunal Supremo dictó sentencia el 24 de abril de 2013 respaldando la sentencia del tribunal de distrito.

En consecuencia, Valitor abrió de nuevo la pasarela de pago que permitía procesar pagos para los servicios propios de DataCell y para las donaciones a WikiLeaks, pero anuló inmediatamente después los contratos, con dos meses de preaviso. En otras palabras, la pasarela solo estuvo abierta durante varias semanas, período demasiado breve para promocionar su apertura. Por otro lado, la anulación generó otro problema jurídico, dado que, si DataCell no puede procesar pagos por tarjeta de crédito con fines legales a través de ninguno de los procesadores de pagos, se trata de una situación de abuso de posición dominante.

Hace varios meses, American Express hizo una declaración en la que afirmaba que en ningún momento dio instrucciones a Valitor para que cerrara y no tuviera problemas con DataCell ni WikiLeaks. Por su lado, MasterCard ha comunicado recientemente a Valitor que ya no se opone al procesamiento de las donaciones a WikiLeaks a través de tarjetas de crédito. VISA Europe simplemente no ha respondido.

Habida cuenta de lo anterior, ¿no cree la Comisión que la negativa de VISA es contraria a la Directiva europea sobre los derechos de los consumidores e infringe la Directiva sobre las prácticas comerciales desleales?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de septiembre de 2013)

La Directiva 2011/83/CE, sobre los derechos de los consumidores, y la Directiva 2005/29/CE, relativa a las prácticas comerciales desleales, no son aplicables a los temas abordados. Estas Directivas contemplan la relación entre las empresas y los consumidores, y estos se definen como personas físicas que actúan con fines ajenos a su actividad comercial, empresa, oficio o profesión. En cambio, lo planteado en la pregunta se refiere a la relación entre los diferentes profesionales (operadores comerciales), a saber, una empresa de alojamiento de datos y sus proveedores de servicios de pago.

La Directiva 2007/64/CE, sobre servicios de pago en el mercado interior, aborda la cuestión de los contratos marco entre proveedores de servicios de pago (como Valitor) y sus usuarios. El artículo 45, apartado 3, de la Directiva especifica que, de acordarse así en el contrato marco, el proveedor de servicios de pago podrá rescindir un contrato marco celebrado si avisa con una antelación mínima de dos meses al usuario del servicio de pago. Parece que Valitor invocó esta cláusula.

([1]) https://www.datacell.com/news/victory-over-credit-card-companies-wikileakes-donations-possible-again/

En julio de 2011, DataCell presentó una denuncia ante la Comisión en la que alegaba que la conducta de los regímenes de pago infringía las normas de la UE en materia de defensa de la competencia. La Comisión está acabando de evaluar la denuncia y otros datos reunidos al efecto con vistas a la adopción de una decisión final sobre si existen motivos suficientes para incoar el procedimiento. La Comisión informó a DataCell de su evaluación preliminar en noviembre de 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007868/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Credit card donations to Wikileaks and VISA's refusal to process the donations potentially in breach of EU Consumer Rights Directive

In late 2009, the data hosting company DataCell ehf established its operations offering green hosting and data centre services. In early 2010, it opened up a credit card gateway with the payment provider Teller to process payments for its services. DataCell contacted Wikileaks and it was then agreed that the company would also start processing donations to the organisation via this credit card gateway ([1]).

On 7 December 2010, DataCell's credit card gateway was shut down because the international credit card companies had unilaterally decided that donations to Wikileaks were illegal, without stating any exact violations or their reasoning. DataCell strongly opposed this decision and fought against it.

In June 2011, DataCell was able to reopen the gateway with the payment processor Valitor in Iceland, only to then be shut down again seven hours later.

DataCell filed a court case in Reykjavik against Valitor, and the Reykjavik district court decided on 12 July 2012 that the closure was illegal and ordered Valitor to reopen the gateway or pay substantial fines on a daily basis. Valitor objected to this ruling and appealed to the Supreme Court of Iceland. On 24 April 2013 the Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the district court.

As a consequence, Valitor reopened the payment gateway to process payments for DataCell's own services and donations to Wikileaks, then immediately cancelled the contract with two months' notice. The gateway was thus open for only a couple of weeks, which meant that it was not worth the effort to promote it. Secondly, the cancellation created another legal issue, since it is an abuse of market power if DataCell are unable to process credit card payments for a legal purpose through any of the payment processors.

American Express issued a statement several months ago saying that they had never instructed Valitor to close the gateway and that they had no problems with DataCell or Wikileaks. MasterCard International has recently notified Valitor that they no longer oppose processing credit card donations to Wikileaks. VISA Europe has simply not answered.

In the light of the above, does the Commission not believe that VISA's refusal goes against the EU Consumer Rights Directive and violates the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Consumer Rights Directive 2011/83/EC and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive 2005/29/EC are not applicable to the issues at stake. These Directives address business-to-consumer relationship and the 'consumer' is defined as a natural person who is acting for purposes outside his trade, business, craft or profession. On the contrary, the issues raised in the question concern the relationship between different professionals (traders), namely a data hosting company and its payment service providers.

Directive 2007/64/EC on payment services in the internal market addresses the issue of framework contracts between payment service providers (such as Valitor) and payment service users. Article 45(3) of the directive specifies that a payment service provider may terminate a contract by giving at least two months' notice to the payment service user, if such possibility was agreed in the contract. It appears that Valitor made use of this clause.

In July 2011, DataCell filed a complaint with the Commission alleging the payment schemes' conduct is in violation of EU antitrust rules. The Commission is currently in the final stages of assessing the complaint and other information gathered in relation to it, with a view to adopting a final decision as to whether there are sufficient grounds to open proceedings. The Commission informed DataCell of its preliminary assessment in November 2012.

([1]) https://www.DataCell.com/news/victory-over-credit-card-companies-Wikileaks-donations-possible-again/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007869/13
to the Commission
Vicky Ford (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Invasive species

The invasive shrimp *Dikerogammarus villosus* was first reported in the UK on 3 September 2010 in Grafham Water reservoir in my constituency. This species is an aggressive predator with a high rate of reproduction, making it an extremely successful invasive species with the potential to spread quickly and to cause harm to many freshwater ecosystems. The 'killer shrimp' has since been found in Cardiff Bay and Eglwys Nunydd in South Wales, and in March 2012 a further population was found at Barton Broad, in the Norfolk Broads in my constituency.

The shrimp had already colonised parts of Western Europe, killing and outcompeting native freshwater shrimps and even very young fish, and altering the ecology of the habitats it had invaded.

The Commission's long-delayed legislative proposals to tackle the impacts of invasive alien species might have helped slow the spread of *Dikerogammarus villosus* across the EU and may have even halted it before it arrived in the UK.

Can the Commission please advise when we can expect to see this draft legislative proposal?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2013)

As outlined in the communication on an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 ([1]), the Commission is considering a legislative proposal for the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

([1]) COM(2011)244 final.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007870/13
a la Comisión
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Sergio Berlato (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Patrizia Toia (S&D) y Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Inclusión de Pakistán en el SPG+

Próximamente expirarán las medidas adoptadas por la UE relativas a la concesión de la exención de derechos a Pakistán: se nos ha informado que la Comisión está procurando reintroducir una concesión generalizada y sin caducidad del tipo cero a los productos procedentes de Pakistán que entran en Europa. Además, tenemos conocimiento del hecho de que entre los países contemplados para beneficiarse del SPG+ también se encuentra Pakistán, que presentó su solicitud a pesar de la falta de control sobre la aplicación efectiva de los convenios en los que se basa la aceptación de un tercer país.

La Comisión también ha elaborado un acto delegado que incluye todas las solicitudes de los países candidatos a la SGP+, de tal manera que el rechazo de una única solicitud pondría en peligro todas las demás. A nuestro entender, las razones de la Comisión no se basan en la falta de aplicación de los convenios y convenciones sobre los derechos humanos y las normas ambientales y sociales, sino en la mera falta de informes e indicaciones que prueben lo contrario.

— ¿No considera la Comisión que debe asegurarse de la aplicación efectiva de los convenios y convenciones sobre los derechos humanos y del respeto de las normas sociales y medioambientales en Pakistán?

— En caso de que ya lo hubiera hecho, ¿cuáles son los resultados de las investigaciones?

— ¿Sobre qué hipotéticos informes externos basa la Comisión su opinión sobre la inclusión de Pakistán en el programa SPG+?

— ¿No cree la Comisión que es inadecuado utilizar la promulgación de un acto delegado, que dificulta los procedimientos de examen, ya que si se rechazara la solicitud de un país, decaerían también todas las demás, incluso las de los países que cumplen con los requisitos establecidos?

Respuesta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de agosto de 2013)

Según la legislación de la UE [Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 ([1])], la Comisión ha de analizar el cumplimiento los requisitos legales por parte de los países candidatos al Sistema de Preferencias Generalizadas Plus (SPG+). La evaluación efectuada por la Comisión de la aplicación de los convenios se basa en los informes de los órganos de seguimiento correspondientes a dichos convenios, de conformidad con el artículo 9, apartado 1, letra b). Tales informes no indican ningún incumplimiento grave de las disposiciones pertinentes de dichos convenios por parte de Pakistán.

La utilización de un único acto delegado está previsto en el Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 y garantiza la máxima coherencia al analizar las solicitudes. Limita también la existencia de posibles discriminaciones, que son contrarias a las obligaciones de la UE en el marco de la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC).

La Comisión también remite a Sus Señorías a la respuesta dada a la pregunta E-004904/2013 ([2]).

([1]) Reglamento (UE) n° 978/2012 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 25 de octubre de 2012 , por el que se aplica un sistema de preferencias arancelarias generalizadas y se deroga el Reglamento (CE) n° 732/2008 del Consejo (DO L 303 de 31.10.2012, p. 1).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/es/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007870/13
alla Commissione
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Sergio Berlato (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Patrizia Toia (S&D) e Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Ingresso del Pakistan nel SPG+

A breve scadranno le misure adottate dall'UE relativamente al rilascio dell'atto di esonero sui dazi pakistani: la Commissione si starebbe adoperando per reintrodurre una concessione generalizzata e senza scadenza del dazio zero ai prodotti che dal Pakistan entrano in Europa. Inoltre, sembrerebbe che tra i paesi in lista per godere del SPG + vi sia anche il Pakistan, che ha inviato la propria applicazione nonostante la mancanza di controllo sull'effettiva attuazione delle convenzioni su cui si basa l'accettazione di un paese terzo.

La Commissione ha inoltre emanato un atto delegato che comprende tutte le applicazioni dei paesi candidati al SPG+, sicché il rigetto di una sola applicazione comprometterebbe tutte le altre. A quanto risulta, le motivazioni attribuite dalla Commissione sono basate non sulla mancata applicazione delle convenzioni sui diritti umani e sulle norme ambientali e sociali, ma sulla semplice mancanza di riferimenti e segnalazioni che provino il contrario.

Può la Commissione precisare:

— se ritiene di dovere accertarsi dell'effettiva attuazione delle convenzioni sui diritti umani e del rispetto delle norme sociali e ambientali in Pakistan;

— nel caso in cui avesse già provveduto, quali sono gli esiti delle indagini;

— su quali eventuali riferimenti esterni basa il proprio giudizio quanto all'ingresso del Pakistan nel programma SPG+;

— se ritiene inopportuno utilizzare l'emanazione di un atto delegato che rende più difficili le procedure di esame, dal momento che in caso di rigetto della domanda di un paese decadrebbero anche tutte le altre, magari presentate da paesi adempienti ai requisiti richiesti?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(12 agosto 2013)

Nel diritto dell'UE [Regolamento (UE) n. 978/2012 ([1])], la Commissione ha il compito di analizzare la conformità ai pertinenti requisiti giuridici dei paesi che richiedono il sistema di preferenze generalizzate plus (SPG+). La valutazione della Commissione sull'attuazione delle convenzioni si basa sulle relazioni degli organi di controllo competenti per tali convenzioni, a norma dell'articolo 9, paragrafo 1, lettera b). Tali relazioni non evidenziano gravi carenze nell'attuazione delle pertinenti disposizioni delle convenzioni da parte del Pakistan.

Il ricorso ad un unico atto delegato è stabilito dal regolamento (UE) n. 978/2012 e garantisce la massima coerenza nell'analisi delle candidature. Tale strumento limita inoltre le potenziali discriminazioni che sarebbero in ogni caso contrarie agli obblighi che incombono all'UE nell'ambito dell'Organizzazione mondiale del commercio (OMC).

La Commissione rimanda inoltre l'onorevole deputato alla sua risposta alla precedente interrogazione scritta E-004904/2013 ([2]).

([1]) Regolamento (UE) n. 978/2012 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 25 ottobre 2012, relativo all'applicazione di un sistema di preferenze tariffarie generalizzate e che abroga il regolamento (CE) n. 732/2008 del Consiglio (GU L 303 del 31.10.2012, pag.1).
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007870/13
to the Commission
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR), Sergio Berlato (PPE), Salvatore Tatarella (PPE), Patrizia Toia (S&D) and Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Entry of Pakistan into the GSP plus

The EU's measures granting Pakistan relief from tariff duties will expire shortly and the Commission is apparently making every effort to reintroduce a generalised zero rate of duty, without a time limit, on products entering the European Union from Pakistan. It would seem, moreover, that Pakistan may also be on the list of countries that will benefit from the GSP plus, having applied for this even though effective implementation of the Conventions on which admission of third countries is based has not been monitored.

Furthermore, the Commission has enacted a delegated act which covers applications from all the countries applying to join the GSP plus. As a result, rejection of any one application would compromise all the others. The grounds given by the Commission are not, it would seem, based on a failure to apply the Conventions on human rights and environmental and social standards, but on a simple absence of references and notifications proving the contrary.

— Does the Commission believe it should check that the Conventions on human rights and on compliance with social and environmental standards have been effectively implemented in Pakistan?

— If it has already done so, what was the outcome?

— Which external references might it draw on in its own assessment of whether Pakistan should enter the GSP plus programme?

— Use of a delegated act will make the examination procedures more difficult since the rejection of one country's application would mean that all the other countries' applications lapse too, even when they have been submitted by countries that meet the requirements. Does the Commission consider the use of a delegated act inappropriate?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

In EC law (Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 ([1])), the Commission has to analyse the compliance of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) applicant countries with the legal requirements. The Commission's assessment of the implementation of the conventions is based on the reports of the monitoring bodies which are relevant to those conventions, according to Article 9.1(b). Those reports did not show any serious failure to implement the relevant provisions of those conventions by Pakistan.

The use of a single delegated act is provided for in Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 and ensures a maximum of consistency in the analysis of the applications. It limits also potential discriminations that would be contrary to the EU's World Trade Organisation (WTO) obligations

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Members to its answer to previous Written Question E-004904/2013 ([2]).

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of Parliament and the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008, OJ L 303/1, 31.10.2012.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html?tabType=wq#sidesForm

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007871/13
ao Conselho
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(3 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Espionagem dos EUA às instituições UE

Têm vindo a ser divulgados detalhes sobre programas de espionagem dos cidadãos de países da UE (incluindo em sedes diplomáticas dos Estados-Membros e em sedes das instituições da UE), que incluem alegadas escutas telefónicas e outros tipos de escutas, interceção de mensagens eletrónicas, registo de consultas de sítios na internet, perfis de utilização da internet, etc.:

1. Tem o Conselho conhecimento da existência destes programas? Em caso afirmativo, de que informação dispõe sobre os mesmos?

2. Caso o Conselho não tenha conhecimento da sua existência, que medidas estão a ser tomadas para obter informações e apurar os seus contornos de forma a permitir um esclarecimento cabal sobre a situação?

3. Dispõe o Conselho de informações sobre a aplicação destes programas aos Estados-Membros e/ou sobre o seu envolvimento neste processo, nomeadamente de Portugal?

4. Que ilações retira daqui o Conselho para as negociações entre a UE e os EUA, nomeadamente no que se refere ao acordo comercial em negociação?

Resposta
(7 de outubro de 2013)

1. O Conselho gostaria de informar os Senhores Deputados de que não teve qualquer conhecimento dos programas antes das revelações da imprensa.

2. Em 18 de julho de 2013, o Coreper deu o seu acordo ao mandato da parte UE para a criação de um grupo de trabalho ad hoc UE-EUA sobre a proteção de dados, que se esforçará por analisar o impacto desses programas de vigilância dos EUA no que respeita à proteção dos dados pessoais e da privacidade dos cidadãos da UE. A primeira reunião do grupo de trabalho ad hoc UE-EUA sobre a proteção de dados teve lugar em 22 e 23 de julho de 2013, em Bruxelas.

3. O Conselho não sabe se esses programas foram implementados em algum Estado-Membro. Nos termos do direito da União, a segurança nacional é da exclusiva responsabilidade de cada Estado-Membro.

4. O Conselho gostaria de chamar a atenção dos Senhores Deputados para o facto de que, em junho de 2013, o Conselho mandatou a Comissão para negociar um acordo de comércio e de investimento transatlântico UE-EUA. A Comissão acaba de dar início às negociações.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007871/13
to the Council
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: US spying on EU institutions

Details have been leaking out about surveillance programmes (extending even into Member States' embassy offices and the premises of EU institutions) in which citizens of EU countries are being targeted by means of alleged wire-tapping and other types of eavesdropping and the interception of emails, and through Internet search histories and user profiles, and so on.

1. Is the Council aware that there are such programmes? If so, what information does it have about them?

2. If the Council has hitherto failed to realise that these programmes exist, what steps are being taken to obtain information and explore their ramifications in order to shed full light on the situation?

3. Does the Council know how these programmes are implemented in Member States and/or in what ways Member States — Portugal included — are involved in that process?

4. What, in the Council's opinion, are the implications for EU-US negotiations, especially as regards the trade agreement now being negotiated?

Reply
(7 October 2013)

1. The Council would like to inform the Honourable Member that it was not informed of the programs prior to the press revelations.

2. On 18 July 2013, Coreper agreed on the remit for the EU side of an ad hoc EU-US working group on data protection, which will endeavour to look at the impact of such US surveillance programmes on the protection of EU citizens' personal data and privacy. The first meeting of the ad hoc EU-US working group on data protection took place on 22/23 July 2013 in Brussels.

3. The Council does not know whether these programmes have been implemented in any Member State. According to Union law, national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State.

4. The Council would like to point out to the Honourable Member that in June 2013 the Council mandated the Commission to negotiate an EU-US transatlantic trade and investment pact. The Commission has just started these negotiations.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-007872/13
à Comissão
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(3 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Espionagem dos EUA às instituições da UE

Têm vindo a ser divulgados detalhes sobre programas de espionagem dos cidadãos de países da UE (incluindo em sedes diplomáticas dos Estados-Membros e em sedes das instituições da UE), que incluem alegadas escutas telefónicas e outros tipos de escutas, interceção de mensagens eletrónicas, registo de consultas de sítios na internet, perfis de utilização da internet, etc.:

1. Tem a Comissão conhecimento da existência destes programas? Em caso afirmativo, de que informação dispõe sobre os mesmos?

2. Caso a Comissão não tenha conhecimento da sua existência, que medidas estão a ser tomadas para obter informações e apurar os seus contornos de forma a permitir um esclarecimento cabal sobre a situação?

3. Dispõe a Comissão de informações sobre a aplicação destes programas aos Estados-Membros e/ou sobre o seu envolvimento neste processo, nomeadamente de Portugal?

4. Que ilações retira daqui a Comissão para as negociações entre a UE e os EUA, nomeadamente no que se refere ao acordo comercial em negociação?

Resposta dada por Viviane Reding em nome da Comissão
(15 de outubro de 2013)

A Comissão está preocupada com as notícias transmitidas pelos meios de comunicação social acerca de programas como o PRISM, que parece permitir o acesso e o tratamento, em grande escala, dos dados dos cidadãos europeus, bem como com a alegada vigilância das instalações das instituições da UE e das delegações da UE no estrangeiro.

A Comissão suscitou as questões relacionadas com a proteção de dados junto do Procurador-Geral norte-americano Eric Holder em 14 de junho de 2013 e em 1 de julho de 2013 a Comissão solicitou esclarecimentos sobre as alegadas espionagens ao Secretário de Estado Kerry e à Conselheira Nacional de Segurança do Presidente Obama, Susan Rice.

A Parceria Transatlântica de Comércio e Investimento (TTIP) representa uma negociação ambiciosa, de grande importância para o crescimento económico da UE. Embora as questões de proteção dos dados e de privacidade não integrem o âmbito das negociações da TTIP com os EUA, a Comissão deixou claro que é necessário que exista confiança, transparência e clareza entre as partes contratantes para que tal negociação tão abrangente e ambiciosa possa ter êxito. Por conseguinte, a Comissão espera que o debate em curso entre a UE e os EUA, que se realiza paralelamente a nível do grupo de trabalho ad hoc recentemente criado, possa ainda trazer os necessários esclarecimentos no que concerne às questões relacionadas com a proteção de dados, contribuindo para reforçar a confiança mútua. Neste contexto, a Comissão conta com o apoio de outras instituições europeias e dos Estados-Membros da UE. A Comissão apresentará um relatório a este respeito ao Parlamento Europeu e ao Conselho.

A Comissão solicitou ainda esclarecimentos às autoridades britânicas sobre o âmbito de aplicação do denominado «Programa Tempora», a sua proporcionalidade e o grau de controlo jurisdicional aplicável.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007872/13
to the Commission
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: US spying on EU institutions

Details have been leaking out about surveillance programmes (extending even into Member States' embassy offices and the premises of EU institutions) in which citizens of EU countries are being targeted by means of alleged wire-tapping and other types of eavesdropping and the interception of emails, and through Internet search histories and user profiles, and so on.

1. Is the Commission aware that there are such programmes? If so, what information does it have about them?

2. If the Commission has hitherto failed to realise that these programmes exist, what steps are being taken to obtain information and explore their ramifications in order to shed full light on the situation?

3. Does the Commission know how these programmes are implemented in Member States and/or in what ways Member States — Portugal included — are involved in that process?

4. What, in the Commission's opinion, are the implications for EU-US negotiations, especially as regards the trade agreement now being negotiated?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(15 October 2013)

The Commission is concerned about the media reports of programmes such as PRISM which appear to enable access and processing, on a large scale, of data of Europeans, as well as about the allgeged surveillance of EU institutions' premises and EU delegations abroad.

The Commission raised the data protection-related issues with the US Attorney General Eric Holder on 14 June 2013, and on 1 July 2013, it requested clarifications on the spying allegations from Secretary of State Kerry and President Obama's National Security Advisor Susan Rice.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) represents an ambitious negotiation of major importance for economic growth in the EU. While data protection and privacy issues are not part of the scope of TTIP negotiations with the US, the Commission has made clear there needs to be confidence, transparency and clarity among the negotiating partners for such a comprehensive and ambitious negotiation to succeed. It therefore expectes that the discussions taking place in parallel in the EU-US Ad Hoc Working Group, which was recently set up, sill bring the necessary clarifications regarding data protection issues and contribute to mutual conidence. In pursuing this approach, the Commission is supported by other European institutions and by the EU Member States. The Commission will report back to the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission has also asked the UK authorities to clarify the scope of the so-called 'Tempora programme', its proportionality, and the extent of judicial oversight that applies.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-007873/13
komissiolle
Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE)
(3. heinäkuuta 2013)

Aihe: Pippuri- ja kaasusumuttimien myynnin ja hallussapidon rajoittaminen

Euroopan unionin direktiivi aseiden hankinnan ja hallussapidon valvonnasta vuodelta 1991 rajoittaa perustellusti tuliaseiden myyntiä, mikä lisää eurooppalaisten turvallisuutta. Direktiivissä ei ole kuitenkaan määritelty aseiksi pippuri- tai kaasusumuttimia. Joillakin pippuri- ja kaasusumutinmalleilla voidaan kuitenkin vahingoittaa toista henkilöä, joten niiden myynnin ja hallussapidon rajoittaminen EU-lainsäädännöllä olisi perusteltua. Nyt kansalliset määräykset vaihtelevat paljon. Monessa jäsenvaltiossa on sallittua vapaasti myydä hyvinkin voimakkaita sumuttimia, joilla on mahdollista vahingoittaa ihmistä. Niiden laiton maahantuonti sellaisiin maihin, joissa niiden käyttöä ja hallussapitoa rajoitetaan, on aivan liian helppoa.

Onko komissio tietoinen ongelmasta ja onko komissio harkinnut pippuri- ja kaasusumuttimien säätelyä EU-direktiivillä tai asetuksella?

Antonio Tajanin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(16. elokuuta 2013)

Komissiolle ei ole ilmoitettu pippuri- ja kaasusumuttimia koskevista erityiskysymyksistä. Sen vuoksi komissio ei aio ehdottaa uutta oikeudellista välinettä kyseisten sumuttimien hallussapidon, käytön tai tuonnin sääntelemiseksi.

Pippuri- ja kaasusumuttimet eivät kuulu direktiivin 91/477/ETY, sellaisena kuin se on muutettuna, soveltamisalaan. Direktiivin soveltamisala määritellään sen 1 artiklassa seuraavasti: ”tuliaseella” tai ”ampuma-aseella” tarkoitetaan kannettavaa piipulla varustettua asetta, jolla voidaan ampua hauleja, luoteja tai muita ammuksia, joka on tarkoitettu niiden ampumiseen tai joka voidaan muuntaa ampumakelpoiseksi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007873/13
to the Commission
Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Restricting the sale and possession of pepper and gas sprays

The 1991 EU Directive on the control of the acquisition and possession of weapons strictly limits sales of firearms, thus enhancing the safety of European citizens. However, the directive does not classify pepper and gas sprays as weapons. And yet all pepper or gas sprays can be used to harm other people, and accordingly there is cause to restrict their sale and possession by EU legislation. At present national rules vary widely. In several Member States even very powerful sprays, with which people can be harmed, may be freely sold. The illegal import of such sprays into countries which restrict their use and possession is far too easy.

Is the Commission aware of this problem, and has it considered regulating pepper and gas sprays in an EU directive or regulation?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(16 August 2013)

No specific issues related to pepper and gas sprays have been brought to the Commission's attention. It does therefore not plan to propose a new legal instrument to regulate their possession, use or import.

Directive 91/477/EEC as amended does not cover pepper and gas sprays. Its scope as set out in Article 1 is 'firearms' defined as any portable barelled weapon that expels, is designed to expel or may be converted to expel a shot, bullet or projectile.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007874/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Líbano

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Líbano en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría la Comisión informar del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Líbano? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

Las relaciones entre la UE y el Líbano en el marco de la Política Europea de Vecindad se han desarrollado intensamente. En cuanto expiró el primer plan de acción de la PEV entre la UE y el Líbano en 2012, ambas partes entablaron negociaciones para un segundo plan de acción. En octubre de 2012 se alcanzó un acuerdo político. Aunque su ejecución no ha sido refrendada oficialmente por el Consejo de Asociación por retrasos relacionados con cuestiones de procedimiento en la adopción de la posición de la Unión, la UE y el Líbano coinciden en estimar que el plan de acción está siendo aplicado desde principios de 2013.

Por lo que se refiere al desarrollo del diálogo entre la UE y el Líbano, el Consejo de Asociación se reunió en octubre de 2012, el Comité de Asociación en febrero de 2013, y todos salvo uno de los subcomités especializados, han mantenido reuniones recientemente. El Comisario Füle visitó Líbano en marzo de 2013 y la Alta Representante/vicepresidenta en junio de 2013.

La Alta Representante/vicepresidenta está trabajando junto con la Comisión para abordar el reto de que la ayuda de la UE al Líbano responda eficazmente a la grave situación de crisis en el Líbano ocasionada por el conflicto sirio.

En el informe intermedio publicado el 20 de marzo como parte de la revisión anual de la PEV se hace una evaluación detallada de la situación de las relaciones bilaterales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007874/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Lebanon

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Lebanon in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Lebanon? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

The EU-Lebanon relations under the European Neighbourhood Policy have been developing intensively. Upon the expiry in 2012 of the first EU-Lebanon ENP Action Plan, both sides engaged in negotiations of a second Action Plan. Political agreement was reached in October 2012. While its implementation has not been formally endorsed by the assocation Council due to delays related to procedural issues in the adoption of the Union position, the EU and Lebanon share the understanding that the action plan is being implemented as from the beginning of 2013.

As regards the development of the EU-Lebanon dialogue, the Association Council met in October 2012, the Association Committee in February 2013, and all but one of the specialised subcommittees had recent meetings. Commissioner Füle visited Lebanon in March 2013 and the HR/VP in June 2013.

The HR/VP alongside the Commission is currently working to address the challenge of the EU assistance to Lebanon to effectively respond to the serious crisis situation in Lebanon resulting from the Syrian conflict.

A detailed assessment of the state of play of bilateral relations can be found in the progress report published on 20 March as part of the annual review of ENP.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007875/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Ucrania

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Ucrania en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría la Comisión informar del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Ucrania? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de septiembre de 2013)

Las Conclusiones del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de 10 de diciembre de 2012 sobre Ucrania reafirmaron el compromiso de la UE con este país, en el marco de la Asociación Oriental, de cara a una asociación política e integración económica basadas en el respeto de valores comunes. Asimismo, expusieron una serie de criterios de referencia para evaluar la actuación decidida y los progresos tangibles de Ucrania para poder firmar el Acuerdo de asociación y su zona de libre comercio de alcance amplio y profundo posiblemente con ocasión de la Cumbre de la Asociación Oriental que se celebrará en noviembre de 2013 en Vilna. Esta estrategia se encuentra en fase de ejecución.

Además, se han iniciado los primeros contactos con las autoridades ucranianas para determinar las futuras prioridades en materia de asistencia de cara al período 2014/2017 de las próximas perspectivas financieras plurianuales, lo que debería traducirse en un documento de programación, esto es, un marco único de apoyo en los próximos meses, una vez realizadas todas las consultas pertinentes y adoptada una base jurídica para el Instrumento Europeo de Vecindad.

Se puede encontrar más información sobre la política de la UE en relación con Ucrania en la página siguiente: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/ukraine

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007875/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Ukraine

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Ukraine in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Ukraine? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2013)

The 10 December 2012, the Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions on Ukraine reaffirmed the EU's engagement with Ukraine, in the context of the Eastern Partnership, towards political association and economic integration based on the respect for common values. They outlined a series of benchmarks for assessing Ukraine's determined action and tangible progress in order to enable the signing of the Association Agreement and its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area possibly by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2013 in Vilnius. This policy is being implemented.

Moreover, initial contacts have been undertaken with the Ukrainian authorities to identify future priorities for assistance for the 2014/2017 period of the next multi-annual financial perspective. This should lead to a programming document, i.e. a Single Support Framework in the coming months, once all necessary consultations have taken place, and a legal basis for the European Neighbourhood Instrument has been adopted.

More details on the EU's policy towards Ukraine can be found on the following link:
http://www.eeas.europa.eu/ukraine.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007876/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Túnez

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Túnez en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría la Comisión informar del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Túnez? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

En los tres últimos años, la UE ha tratado de velar por el éxito del proceso de transición democrática iniciado en Túnez. Basándose en el nuevo planteamiento respecto de los países vecinos del sur que se expone en las dos Comunicaciones conjuntas de 8 de marzo y 25 de mayo de 2011, la UE ha intensificado el diálogo político, incrementado su apoyo financiero y propuesto nuevas iniciativas para profundizar las relaciones bilaterales, en particular la negociación de una zona de libre comercio profunda y completa, una asociación para la movilidad, un acuerdo de liberalización del espacio aéreo y un acuerdo de liberalización del comercio de productos agrícolas.

En la reunión de noviembre de 2012 del Consejo de Asociación, la UE y Túnez alcanzaron un acuerdo político en torno a un nuevo plan de acción bilateral UE-Túnez que fijará las prioridades en materia de cooperación bilateral durante los próximos cinco años. El proceso formal de adopción del plan de acción está en marcha.

Desde 2011, el apoyo financiero global de la UE ha aumentado, pasando de un importe previsto de 240 millones de euros a más de 440 millones de euros. Reconociendo los progresos registrados desde la revolución, la UE convirtió a Túnez en el primer beneficiario de ayuda financiera al amparo del programa Spring (*Support for Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth*). Este programa ofrece un apoyo financiero adicional a aquellos países socios que demuestren un compromiso constante con las reformas y avancen en esa vía, en consonancia con el principio «más por más».

La UE ha incrementado también sustancialmente el apoyo directo a las organizaciones locales de la sociedad civil y otros agentes no gubernamentales.

En el informe de situación publicado el 20 de marzo, en el marco de la evaluación anual de la política europea de vecindad, puede hallarse un análisis pormenorizado del estado de las relaciones bilaterales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007876/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Tunisia

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Tunisia in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Tunisia? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

Over the last three years, the EU has aimed to ensure the success of the democratic transition process started by Tunisia. On the basis of the new approach to its Southern neighbours highlighted in the two joint Communications of 8 March 2011 and 25 May 2011, the EU has increased political dialogue, step up its financial support and proposed new initiatives to deepen bilateral relations, including in particular the negotiations of a deep and comprehensive free trade area, a mobility partnership, an open sky agreement and an agreement on liberalisation of trade in agricultural products.

At the November 2012 Association Council, the EU and Tunisia reached a political agreement on a new bilateral EU-Tunisia Action Plan which sets the priorities for the bilateral cooperation over the next 5 years. Formal adoption of the action plan is ongoing.

Since 2011, overall EU financial support has increased from a planned amount of EUR 240 million to more than EUR 440 million. In recognition of the progress made since the revolution, the EU made Tunisia the first beneficiary of financial support under the SPRING programme (Support for Partnership, Reforms and Inclusive Growth). This programme makes available additional financial support to partners demonstrating sustained commitment and progress on reforms in line with the 'more for more' principle.

The EU has also significantly increased direct support to local civil society organisations and other non-state actors.

A detailed assessment of the state of play of bilateral relations can be found in the progress report published on 20 March as part of the annual review of ENP.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007877/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Moldavia

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Moldavia en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría la Comisión informar del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Moldavia? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(20 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión y la Alta Representante y vicepresidenta presentan un Informe intermedio anual sobre la República de Moldavia en el que se describe el grado de aplicación de la PEV en ese país. El último informe se publicó el 20 de marzo de 2013 ([1]). Las siguientes etapas previstas son la celebración de un Acuerdo de Asociación UE-Moldavia, que profundizará considerablemente las relaciones entre ambas partes merced a la asociación política y a la integración económica en un espacio de libre comercio amplio y sustancial, por un lado, y al proceso de liberalización de los visados iniciado en enero de 2011, por otro. La negociación del futuro Acuerdo de Asociación culminó desde el punto de vista técnico en junio de 2013 y el texto del Acuerdo está siendo preparado para su rúbrica en la próxima Cumbre de la Asociación que se celebrará en Vilna. Además, en el marco del Diálogo sobre visados UE-Moldavia y de la Asociación para la movilidad UE-Moldavia, ambas partes cooperan muy activamente en cuestiones de migración y movilidad.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-252_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007877/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Moldova

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Moldova in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Moldova? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

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

The Commission and the HR/VP issue annually an ENP Country progress report on the Republic of Moldova presenting the state of play with regard to the implementation of the ENP in relation with that country. The latest report was issued on 20 March 2013 ([1]). The next envisaged stages are the conclusion of an EU-Moldova Association Agreement, which will create a significantly deepened relationship by means of political association and economic integration in a deep and comprehensive free trade area, and of the visa liberalisation process, launched in January 2011. The negotiation of the future Association Agreement was technically completed in June 2013, and the text of the Agreement is being prepared for its initialling at the next Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. In addition, the EU and Moldova cooperate very actively on migration and mobility issues in the framework of the EU-Moldova Visa Dialogue and in the framework of the EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership.

([1]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-252_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007878/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Israel

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Israel en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría informar la Comisión del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Israel? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

A raíz de la decisión de paralizar la «profundización» de las relaciones UE-Israel, adoptada por la UE en 2009, las relaciones bilaterales entre ambas partes se han desarrollado con relación a los objetivos fijados en el Plan de Acción de 2005 de la PEV con Israel. Muchos de los objetivos en él recogidos siguen sin cumplirse, pero la UE ha manifestado su firme compromiso con su consecución. Dos de los logros emblemáticos más recientes son el Acuerdo sobre evaluación de la conformidad y aceptación de productos industriales, que favorece claramente el acceso de los productos farmacéuticos israelíes a la UE y viceversa (vigente desde enero de 2013) y el Acuerdo «de cielos abiertos» en el sector de la aviación civil (firmado el 10 de junio de 2013). Israel, por su parte, otorga gran prioridad a su participación en el programa de investigación e innovación Horizonte 2020, cuyas negociaciones arrancarán el 14 de agosto de 2013.

En aplicación de las conclusiones del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de diciembre de 2012, la UE prosigue además su labor destinada a asegurar la inaplicabilidad de los acuerdos entre Israel y la UE en los territorios ocupados por Israel en 1967. La UE también ha reiterado además su compromiso con la plena, continuada y efectiva aplicación de la legislación vigente de la Unión Europea y de los acuerdos bilaterales aplicables a los productos procedentes de los asentamientos.

En el informe intermedio publicado el 20 de marzo como parte de la revisión anual de la PEV se hace una evaluación detallada de la situación de las relaciones bilaterales.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007878/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Israel

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Israel in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Israel? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

Following the EU decision in 2009 to freeze the 'upgrading' of EU-Israel relations, bilateral relations are developed based on the objectives set out in the 2005 ENP Action Plan with Israel. There are still numerous objectives set out in that document which remain to be fulfilled and the EU is fully committed to taking these forward. Two of the latest landmark successes include the Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance of industrial products giving improved marked access to both Israeli pharmaceuticals in the EU market and EU pharmaceuticals in Israel (in force since January 2013) and the 'Open Sky' agreement in the civil aviation area (signed on 10 June 2013). Israel gives high priority to its participation in the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, on which negotiations will start on 14 August 2013.

The EU also continues the work, based on the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council of December 2012, to ensure the inapplicability of agreements between Israel and the EU to the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. The EU has also reiterated its commitment to ensure continued, full and effective implementation of existing European Union legislation and bilateral arrangements applicable to settlement products.

A detailed assessment of the state of play of bilateral relations can be found in the progress report published on 20 March as part of the annual review of ENP.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007879/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Azerbaiyán

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Azerbaiyán en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría la Comisión informar del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Azerbaiyán? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta de la Alta Representante y Vicepresidenta Ashton en nombre de la Comisión
(22 de agosto de 2013)

Las relaciones bilaterales entre Azerbaiyán y la UE se basan en el Acuerdo de Colaboración y Cooperación entre la UE y Azerbaiyán (AAC) en vigor desde julio de 1999.

Los avances globales registrados en la aplicación de la política europea de vecindad en Azerbaiyán se recogen en el informe anual de situación, cuya edición más reciente se puede consultar en:
http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_azerbaijan_en.pdf

En el marco de la Asociación Oriental, la UE ofreció a Azerbaiyán la perspectiva de negociar un acuerdo marco bilateral mejorado, esto es, un acuerdo de asociación. Las negociaciones subsiguientes se entablaron en Bakú el 16 de julio de 2010. Las negociaciones actuales sobre ese acuerdo no abordan la cuestión de una zona de libre comercio de alcance amplio y profundo, ya que Azerbaiyán no es aún miembro de la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC).

Por otra parte, han concluido las negociaciones sobre un acuerdo de facilitación de visados y están muy avanzadas las negociaciones paralelas sobre un acuerdo de readmisión, de manera que ambos acuerdos se deberían firmar a más tardar a finales de 2013.

También se va a poner en marcha próximamente una asociación de movilidad con varios Estados miembros.

Además, se han iniciado los primeros contactos con las autoridades azerbaiyanas para definir las futuras prioridades de asistencia de cara al período 2014-2017 de las próximas perspectivas financieras plurianuales. Esto se debería traducir en un documento de programación, es decir, un marco único de apoyo, en los próximos meses, una vez realizadas todas las consultas pertinentes y adoptada la base jurídica para el Instrumento Europeo de Vecindad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007879/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Azerbaijan

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Azerbaijan in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Azerbaijan? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

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

The EU-Azerbaijan bilateral relations are based on the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in force since July 1999.

Overall progress in implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Azerbaijan is reflected in the annual progress report of which the most recent edition is available at

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_azerbaijan_en.pdf.

In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the EU offered to Azerbaijan the prospect of negotiating an enhanced bilateral framework agreement — an Association Agreement. Subsequently the negotiations were launched in Baku on 16 July 2010. The current Agreement negotiations do not include negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, as Azerbaijan is not yet a World Trade Organisation (WTO) member.

On the other hand, negotiations on a Visa Facilitation Agreement have been finalised and parallel negotiations on a Readmission Agreement are very advanced, so both Agreements should be signed before the end of 2013.

A Mobility Partnership is also close to being launched with a number of Member States.

Moreover, initial contacts have been undertaken with the Azerbaijani authorities to identify future priorities for assistance for the 2014/2017 period of the next multi-annual financial perspective. This should lead to a programming document, i.e. a Single Support Framework in the coming months, once all necessary consultations have taken place, and a legal basis for the European Neighbourhood Instrument has been adopted.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007880/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Georgia

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces la Unión Europea ha desarrollado diferentes iniciativas con Georgia en el desarrollo de la PEV. Entre otros, cabe destacar el Documento estratégico 2007-2013 y el Programa indicativo nacional 2007-2010.

¿Podría informar la Comisión del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Georgia? ¿Cuáles son las medidas que tiene pensadas llevar a cabo a corto y medio plazo?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de septiembre de 2013)

Los avances en la aplicación de la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en Georgia figuran cada año en el informe de situación de la PEV ([1]).

La UE y Georgia han concluido negociaciones importantes sobre un acuerdo marco bilateral mejorado, a saber, un Acuerdo de Asociación que incluye una zona de libre comercio de alcance amplio y profundo. La UE y Georgia esperan poder rubricar este Acuerdo en la Cumbre de la Asociación Oriental que se celebrará en Vilna en noviembre de 2013. El Acuerdo de Asociación se aplicará a través de un programa de asociación que se negociará en los próximos meses.

La UE también ha presentado un plan de acción de liberalización de visados para Georgia, que se está aplicando actualmente.

La UE está manteniendo consultas con las autoridades georgianas para definir las prioridades de cooperación y asistencia entre la UE y Georgia durante el próximo marco financiero plurianual (2014-2017). Se va a elaborar en los próximos meses un documento de marco único de apoyo, una vez celebradas todas las consultas pertinentes y adoptada la base jurídica del Instrumento Europeo de Vecindad.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_georgia_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007880/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Georgia

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, the European Union has developed several initiatives with Georgia in the course of implementing the ENP. Of these, it is worth highlighting the strategy paper 2007-2013 and the national indicative programme 2007-2010.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Georgia? What steps does it plan to take in the short and medium term?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

Progress in implementing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in Georgia is set out each year in the ENP Progress Report ([1]).

The EU and Georgia have completed substantive negotiations on an enhanced bilateral framework agreement: an Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. The EU and Georgia expect to be able to initial this Agreement at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013. The Association Agreement will be implemented through an Association Agenda to be negotiated in the coming months.

The EU has also delivered a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan to Georgia; this is currently being implemented.

The EU is consulting the Georgian authorities to identify priorities for EU-Georgia cooperation and assistance during the next multi-annual financial framework (2014-2017). A Single Support Framework document will be prepared during the coming months, once all necessary consultations have taken place and a legal basis for the European Neighbourhood Instrument has been adopted.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/docs/2013_enp_pack/2013_progress_report_georgia_en.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007881/13
a la Comisión
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Política Europea de Vecindad con Libia

Con el objetivo de fomentar las relaciones con los vecinos fronterizos de la Unión y evitar la aparición de nuevas líneas divisorias, así como de fomentar la estabilidad y la seguridad entre unos y otros, en 2004 se diseñó la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) en el contexto de la ampliación de la UE.

Desde entonces se han desarrollado Planes de Acción de la PEV con Israel, Jordania, Moldavia, Marruecos, Armenia, Azerbaiján, entre otros.

¿Podría informar la Comisión del estado en el que se encuentra esta Política Europea de Vecindad en relación con Libia?

Respuesta del Sr. Füle en nombre de la Comisión
(4 de septiembre de 2013)

La celebración de un acuerdo bilateral con Libia y la plena participación de ese país en la Política Europea de Vecindad (PEV) son dos importantes objetivos que la UE persigue alcanzar en sus relaciones con Libia.

A pesar de las numerosas urgencias a que se enfrenta el país en la fase actual de su transición, las autoridades libias han expresado su voluntad de fortalecer las relaciones con la UE y están avanzando gradualmente hacia una mayor integración regional. Por ejemplo, en febrero de 2013 Libia participó por primera vez, en calidad de observador, en una reunión de la Unión por el Mediterráneo.

A nivel bilateral, durante su reciente visita a Bruselas (27 de mayo de 2013), el primer ministro libio, Ali Zeidan, expresó la voluntad de su país de avanzar en el proceso destinado a entablar negociaciones para la celebración de un acuerdo bilateral con la UE. Esa declaración fue acogida favorablemente por la UE y se prevé que las discusiones prosigan en el futuro próximo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007881/13
to the Commission
Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Neighbourhood Policy with Libya

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004 in the context of EU enlargement, with the objective of fostering relations with countries bordering the EU and avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines, as well as to encourage stability and security for all.

Since then, ENP Action Plans have been developed with Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, Armenia and Azerbaijan, among others.

Could the Commission say what stage the European Neighbourhood Policy is at in relation to Libya?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

The conclusion of a bilateral agreement with Libya and Libya's full participation in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), are two important objectives which the EU is trying to achieve in its relations with Libya.

Despite the numerous urgencies faced by the country in the current phase of its transition, the Libyan authorities have expressed their will to strengthen relations with the EU and are gradually moving towards greater regional integration. For instance, in February 2013 Libya participated for the first time in a meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean (as observer).

On the bilateral side, during his recent visit to Brussels (27 May 2013), Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan expressed Libya's will to move forward with the process aiming at launching negotiations for the conclusion of a bilateral agreement with the EU. This announcement was positively welcomed by the EU side and discussions will continue in the near future.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-007882/13
an die Kommission
Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Aufnahme des im Natura 2000-Gebiets „Ötztaler Alpen" gelegenen Krafwerksprojekts Kaunertal auf die Liste der Union im Rahmen von VO 347/2013

Das Ruhegebiet „Ötztaler Alpen" ist seit 1995 ein Natura 2000-Gebiet und damit als europäisches Schutzgebiet nach der Habitat-Richtlinnie und der Vogelschutz-Richtlinie ausgewiesen. Der Staubereich des Kraftwerks Kaunertal reicht bis ins Schutzgebiet. Die Tiroler Wasserkraft AG (TIWAG) plant den Ausbau des genannten Kraftwerks. Vier Wildflüsse und -bäche sollen über Rohr- und Stollensysteme quer durch das Natura 2000-Gebiet in den Speicher umgeleitet werden, gleichzeitig soll ein neuer Speichersee im Platzertal, am Rande der Schutzgebiete, errichtet werden. Der Bau und das Betreiben der Tunnelsysteme werden das Natura 2000-Gebiet Ötztaler Alpen bedrohen und damit gegen Unionsrecht verstoßen. Die im Juli 2012 eingeleitete Umweltverträglichkeitsprüfung (UVP) stellte nun grobe Mängel des Projekts fest.

Im Rahmen der Verordnung „Leitlinien für die transeuropäische Energieinfrastruktur" (VO 347/2013) sollen Vorhaben von gemeinsamem Interesse identifiziert und von den jeweiligen Korridoren betroffenen regionale Gruppen der Kommission für eine Liste der Union vorgeschlagen werden. Um einen breiten Konsens sicherzustellen, sollten diese regionalen Gruppen nach der genannten VO für eine enge Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten, nationalen Regulierungsbehörden, Vorhabenträgern und maßgeblichen betroffenen Kreisen sorgen.

Welche natürlichen und juristischen Personen befinden sich in der regionalen Gruppe, welche das Kraftwerkprojekt Kaunertal vorgeschlagen hat, und welche Kontakte bestanden im Nominierungsverfahren mit dem Projektbetreiber? Was sind die ausschlaggebenden Kriterien dafür, dass das Kraftwerk Kaunertal in die Liste aufgenommen wurde, und inwiefern trägt das Kraftwerksprojekt zu den gemeinsamen Interessen bei?

Wie kommt ein in einem Natura 2000-Gebiet gelegenes Kraftwerksprojekt auf die Liste der Union bzw. wie wurden seine umweltpolitischen Auswirkungen geprüft und wäre das aufgenommene Projekt im Falle einer negativen UVP trotzdem genehmigungsfähig bzw. umsetzungspflichtig?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(12. August 2013)

Die im Rahmen der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 347/2013 errichteten regionalen Gruppen setzen sich aus Vertretern der Mitgliedstaaten, der nationalen Regulierungsbehörden, der Übertragungsnetzbetreiber sowie der Kommission, der Agentur für die Zusammenarbeit der Energieregulierungsbehörden und des Europäischen Verbunds der Übertragungs- und Fernleitungsnetzbetreiber für Strom und Gas zusammen. Betreiber von Vorhaben, die als Vorhaben von gemeinsamem Interesse ausgewählt werden könnten, wurden ebenfalls zur Mitwirkung aufgefordert.

Die regionalen Gruppen erstellten die jeweiligen regionalen Listen vorgeschlagener Vorhaben von gemeinsamem Interesse, indem sie den Beitrag der eingereichten Projektvorschläge zu den energiepolitischen Zielen der Verordnung prüften.

Die Habitatrichtlinie schließt Vorhaben in einem Natura-2000-Gebiet nicht automatisch aus, doch erfordern Vorhaben, die ein Natura-2000-Gebiet erheblich beeinträchtigen könnten, gemäß Artikel 6 Absatz 3 der Richtlinie eine Verträglichkeitsprüfung. Bei einem negativen Ergebnis der Prüfung könnte das Vorhaben nur im Rahmen der in Artikel 6 Absatz 4 beschriebenen Ausnahmen genehmigt werden.

Um den Status als Vorhaben von gemeinsamem Interesse behalten und in die EU-weite Liste von Vorhaben von gemeinsamem Interesse aufgenommen werden zu können, müssen alle Vorhaben mit dem EU-Recht und insbesondere dem Umweltrecht im Einklang stehen.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007882/13
to the Commission
Eva Lichtenberger (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Inclusion of the Kaunertal power plant project located in the 'Ötztaler Alpen' Natura 2000 area in the Union list under Regulation 347/2013

The *Ruhegebiet 'Ötztaler Alpen'* (Ötztal Alps protected area) has been a Natura 2000 area since 1995 and thus designated as a European protected area under the Habitats and Birds Directives. The reservoir area for the Kaunertal power plant extends into this protected area. The Tiroler Wasserkraft AG (TIWAG) is planning to extend this power plant. Four mountain rivers and streams are to be diverted into the reservoir via pipe and tunnel systems straight through the Natura 2000 area, whilst a new reservoir is to be constructed in Platzertal, on the edge of the protected area. The construction and operation of the tunnel systems will pose a threat to the Ötztal Alps Natura 2000 area and violate EC law. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which began in July 2012 has now found major deficiencies in the project.

Under the regulation on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure (Regulation 347/2013), projects of common interest are to be identified and regional groups affected by the corridors concerned are to make proposals to the Commission for a Union list. In order to ensure broad consensus, these regional groups should, in accordance with the regulation, ensure close cooperation between Member States, national regulatory authorities, project promoters and relevant stakeholders.

Which natural and legal persons make up the regional group that proposed the Kaunertal power plant project and what contacts existed in the nomination procedure with the project promoter? What are the key criteria for adding the Kaunertal power plant to the list, and to what extent does the power plant project contribute to the common interest?

How does a power plant project located in a Natura 2000 area come to appear on the Union list, how was its environmental impact assessed and, if the EIA is negative, would the project still be eligible for approval or have to be implemented?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

The regional groups, established under Regulation (EU) 347/2013, are composed of representatives of the Member States, national regulatory authorities, transmission system operators (TSO), as well as the Commission, the Agency for Coordination of Energy Regulators and the European Network of TSOs for electricity and gas. Promoters of a project potentially eligible for selection as a project of common interest were also invited.

The regional groups drew up the respective regional lists of proposed projects of common interest (PCI) by assessing the contribution of the submitted project proposals to the energy policy objectives as defined in the regulation.

The Habitats Directive does not automatically exclude projects inside a Natura 2000 site but, according to Article 6.3 of the directive, any project likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site has to be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications. In case of a negative assessment, the project might still be authorised only under the exceptions described in Article 6.4.

In order to be able to keep the PCI status and to be included in the Union-wide PCI-list, due to be adopted early October 2013, all projects have to be compliant with the EU legislation, including environmental legislation.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007883/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EC and human rights issues in Kashmir

My research has shown that the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights has not once addressed the human rights issues in Kashmir since his appointment in July 2012.

Could the Commission explain why this is?

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

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights is a new post in the EU architecture with a broad thematic and geographic mandate, covering the whole world. Consequently, there are a number of geographic and thematic human rights-related issues that, while closely monitored, the Special Representative has not personally addressed during his first 10 months in office. The human rights situation in Kashmir is being followed in close coordination by the HR/VP, the EU delegations, and by Member States' embassies in India and Pakistan.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-007884/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 juli 2013)

Betreft: Organisatie havenarbeid in België, verstorende werking van dit systeem op de interne markt. Belemmering vrij verkeer

Op 20 juni 2013 werd Spanje door de Europese Commissie doorverwezen naar het Europese Hof van Justitie voor haar organisatie van de havenarbeid. De organisatie van het Spaans systeem van havenarbeid is niet in lijn met het Europees recht. In verschillende Spaanse havens kunnen goederenafhandelingsbedrijven hun werknemers niet via de markt aanwerven, maar moeten ze financieel participeren in het kapitaal van private bedrijven die dan werknemers ter beschikking stellen. Volgens de Commissie hindert dit systeem de toegang tot de markt voor nieuwkomers.

In haar aanbevelingen over het nationale hervormingsprogramma 2013 van België wees de Commissie ook op de rigide organisatie van de havenarbeid in België. In België geldt sinds 1972 de „Wet Major" (Wet betreffende havenarbeid, 1972). Door het werken met geregistreerde havenarbeiders en pools van havenarbeiders wordt een „closed shop" gecreëerd die de marktwerking in de Belgische havens sterk verstoort.

Recent ontstond in België een sociaal conflict rond de firma Katoen Natie in de haven van Antwerpen, waarbij de vakbonden het bedrijf verwijten niet volgens de „Wet Major" (Wet betreffende havenarbeid, 1972) te handelen door te werken met werknemers die geen geregistreerde havenarbeiders zijn.

Professor Van Hooydonk heeft in opdracht van de Commissie een studie gemaakt over de verschillende systemen van havenarbeid in de EU. Daaruit bleek dat België het meest rigide systeem in de EU heeft, alsook een duur systeem, dat niet veiliger is dan in andere lidstaten.

Vandaar mijn vragen aan de Commissie:

Welke concrete aspecten van de huidige wetgeving inzake havenarbeid in België veroorzaken voor de Commissie de grootste problemen? Is de Commissie van plan om ook België voor het Hof van Justitie te dagen met betrekking tot de organisatie van haar havenarbeid? Indien niet, kan de Commissie verduidelijken waarom zij geen actie onderneemt tegen de marktverstorende organisatie van de Belgische havenarbeid?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(29 juli 2013)

De Commissie deelt de mening van het geachte Parlementslid: regelingen in verband met havenarbeid mogen niet worden gebruikt om de levering van goederenafhandelingsdiensten door adequaat gekwalificeerde individuen of ondernemingen te verhinderen of om aan werkgevers personeel op te dringen dat zij niet nodig hebben. Dergelijke praktijken kunnen onder bepaalde omstandigheden immers haaks staan op de in het Verdrag vastgestelde voorschriften inzake de interne markt, met name artikel 49 over het recht van vestiging.

In de „Study on Port Labour, health, safety and qualifications" waaraan het geachte Parlementslid refereert, wordt een overzicht gegeven van de systemen van havenarbeid die momenteel in de lidstaten van kracht zijn ([1]). Hierbij dient te worden beklemtoond dat de juridische analyse in het verslag de standpunten van de auteur weergeeft en niet die van de Commissie. Een bijgewerkte versie van de studie, inclusief eventuele correcties en een beschrijving van de situatie in Kroatië, zal uiterlijk eind 2013 beschikbaar zijn.

Wat Spanje betreft, heeft de Commissie aan het Hof een aantal bepalingen van de Spaanse havenarbeidsregeling voorgelegd waarop haar aandacht was gevestigd naar aanleiding van een klacht over misbruiken op het gebied van de arbeidsregelgeving. In dit verband is in 2011 een aanmaningsbrief aan Spanje toegezonden en heeft de Commissie in 2012 een met redenen omkleed advies vastgesteld.

Wat België betreft, is de Commissie onlangs voorafgaand informatie begonnen uit te wisselen met de Belgische autoriteiten. Zodra de nodige informatie is verzameld, zal de Commissie zich beraden over passende maatregelen. Als de Commissie tot de conclusie komt dat het Belgische havenarbeidssysteem in strijd is met het Verdrag, kan zij een aanmaningsbrief aan de Belgische autoriteiten toezenden overeenkomstig artikel 258 VWEU.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/maritime/studies/maritime_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007884/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Organisation of port labour in Belgium — distorting effect of this system on the internal market — barriers to free movement

On 20 June 2013, the European Commission referred Spain to the EU Court of Justice over its organisation of port labour, as the Spanish system is not in line with European law. In several Spanish ports, cargo-handling companies cannot employ their workers via the labour market, but have to participate financially in the capital of private companies, which in turn provide them with their workforce. According to the Commission, this system hampers access to the market for newcomers.

In its recommendations on Belgium's 2013 National Reform Programme, the Commission also noted the rigid organisation of port labour in Belgium. In Belgium the 'Wet Major' (law on port labour) has been in force since 1972. By working with registered dockers and pools of port workers, a 'closed shop' has been created that greatly distorts the operation of the market in Belgian ports.

A social conflict recently arose in Belgium around the firm Katoen Natie in the port of Antwerp, with the unions accusing the company of not operating in accordance with the 'Wet Major' by working with employees who are not registered dockers.

Professor Van Hooydonk was commissioned by the Commission to conduct a study on the different systems of port labour in the EU. This showed that the system in Belgium is the most rigid in the EU, as well as expensive, and that it is not safer than in other Member States.

What specific aspects of the current legislation on port labour in Belgium cause the biggest problems for the Commission? Does the Commission intend to also take Belgium to the Court of Justice with regard to the organisation of its port labour? If not, can the Commission explain why it is not taking any action against the market-distorting organisation of Belgian port labour?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(29 July 2013)

The Commission agrees with the Honourable Member, that port labour arrangements should not be used to prevent suitably qualified individuals or undertakings from providing cargo-handling services, or to impose, on employers, workforce that they do not need, since this could under certain circumstances fall foul of the Treaty rules on the internal market, and in particular of Article 49 on freedom of establishment.

The 'Study on Port Labour, health, safety and qualifications' referred to by the Honourable Member provides an overview of the current port labour practices in the Member States ([1]). However it should be stressed that the legal analysis contained in the report reflect the own views of its author and not the ones of the Commission. An updated version of the study, including possible corrections and a description of the situation in Croatia, will be available before the end of 2013.

In the case of Spain, the Commission has referred to the Court of Justice certain provisions of the Spanish Port Labour regime that were brought to its attention following a complaint regarding abusive labour practices. A letter of formal notice was addressed to Spain in this respect in 2011 and in 2012 a reasoned opinion was adopted by the Commission.

As regards Belgium, the Commission has recently engaged in a preliminary exchange of information with the Belgian authorities. Once all the required information on this matter is gathered, the Commission will consider appropriate action. In case the Commission comes to the conclusion that the Belgian port labour system is in breach of the Treaty's rules, it may send a letter of formal notice to the Belgian authorities, in accordance with Article 258 TFEU.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/maritime/studies/maritime_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007886/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Planta de Gas Reganosa

La planta de Gas Natural Licuado de Reganosa, situada en el municipio gallego de Mugardos, localizada en el privilegiado paraje natural de la Ría de Ferrol provoca una impacto ambiental muy fuerte en contra del cual se ha movilizado, durante los últimos años, buena parte de los habitantes de la localidad para exigir su traslado a una zona donde no ponga en riesgo a los habitantes ni al medio ambiente.

Durante años, la sociedad civil del municipio se ha organizado para luchar contra dicha planta de gas a través del Comité Ciudadano de Emergencias. Dicha acumulación de años de lucha ha producido significativos éxitos, incluso legales, como la sentencia del 11 de mayo de 2012 de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, que declaró nulo el Plan General de Ordenación Municipal (PXOM). Dicha declaración de nulidad supone que todas las actuaciones posteriores a la misma son igualmente nulas, desde la licencia de obra, hasta la autorización de la puesta en marcha de la planta.

La Ría de Ferrol, de una gran importancia paisajística, tiene una importante producción de recursos pesqueros que dependen de la calidad de las aguas de la ría, que se ve inevitablemente afectada por la actividad de la planta que contamina importantes cantidades de agua. La población local se ve forzada a vivir a escasos metros de una planta que implica riesgos muy altos al estar situada demasiado cerca de zonas residenciales. Se incumple toda la normativa de seguridad, puesto que aparte de viviendas, se encuentra cerca del Arsenal Militar de Ferrol, lo cual incrementa aún más los riesgos potenciales.

Según diversas fuentes, el promotor de esta planta, autorizada bajo el Gobierno de un ex ministro de la dictadura franquista, firmó un acuerdo secreto con el mismo. Dicho acuerdo ignoraba no solo la normativa ambiental y la seguridad de la población, sino que tampoco se trata de una actividad que produzca beneficios.

— ¿Considera la Comisión que dicha planta de gas supone un riesgo potencial para la población del municipio de Mugardos?

— ¿Considera que la contaminación del agua de la ría supone externalidades negativas cuyo coste termina asumiendo la población local?

— La Comisión sostuvo que no había incumplimiento de normativa alguna en el trámite de las peticiones sobre el tema. ¿Considera que la citada sentencia que declara nulo el PXOM no es un incumplimiento?

— ¿Asume la responsabilidad por no haber considerado el emplazamiento de la planta contrario a la normativa?

— ¿Piensa abrir expediente a España hasta que se cierre dicha planta?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

La evaluación a la que sometió la Comisión la información recabada durante la tramitación de varias peticiones, preguntas parlamentarias y quejas registradas en el Parlamento Europeo a propósito de este asunto no desveló ninguna prueba de que se hubiera infringido la normativa medioambiental de la UE. Es preciso señalar, no obstante, que la Comisión no examinó ninguno de los aspectos del proyecto que no están cubiertos por la normativa de la Unión. En concreto, la sentencia que declaró nulo el plan de ordenación es materia que corresponde a la competencia exclusiva del Estado miembro y que ha de tratarse empleando los medios previstos en la legislación española.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007886/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Reganosa Gas Plant

The Reganosa Liquefied Natural Gas plant, in the Galician municipality of Mugardos, is located in the privileged natural area of Ría de Ferrol. The plant is having a very heavy impact on the environment, and in recent years, many residents have mobilised in response, demanding that the plant be moved to a place where it will not threaten the inhabitants or the environment.

For years, the municipality's civil society has organised to fight the gas plant through the Citizens' Committee on Emergencies. Significant successes have been achieved over the course of those years, including legal victories, such as the judgment of 11 May 2012 by the Supreme Court of Justice, which declared the General Municipal Planning Document (PXOM) to be null and void. This invalidation of the planning document means that all actions subsequent to it, from the plant's construction permit to its start-up authorisation, are likewise null and void.

The Ría de Ferrol is of great scenic importance and has significant fish stocks, which depend on the quality of the waters of the ria. Those waters are inevitably affected by the plant's activity, which contaminates large quantities of water. The local population is forced to live within metres of a plant that poses very high risks, since it is located too close to residential areas. All of the safety standards are being violated, since in addition to being near residential areas, the plant is also close to the Ferrol Military Arsenal, increasing the potential risks even more.

According to various sources, the developer of this plant, which was authorised by a government headed by a former minister in Franco's dictatorship, signed a secret agreement with that government. Not only did this agreement disregard environmental regulations and the safety of the population; it also involved an activity that produced no profits.

— Does the Commission believe that this gas plant poses a potential risk to the population of the municipality of Mugardos?

— Does it believe that the contamination of the water of the ria has negative external consequences, the cost of which is ultimately borne by the local population?

— The Commission took the view that no regulations had been violated in the handling of the petitions about this issue. Does it believe that the aforementioned judgment declaring the PXOM null and void is not a violation?

— Does it take responsibility for having failed to deem the plant's location to be contrary to the regulations?

— Does it plan to initiate proceedings on Spain until this plant is closed?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

The assessment by the Commission of the information gathered during the handling of various petitions to the European Parliament, parliamentary questions and complaints about this issue did not reveal any evidence of a possible violation of EU environmental legislation. It must be stressed, however, that the Commission did not examine any of the aspects of this project that are not covered by EU legislation. In particular, the judgment declaring the planning document is a matter that falls within the exclusive competence of the Member State, and should be addressed according to the means provided for in Spanish legislation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007887/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Abusos en relación al Euribor

Considerando, entre otras, la *Directiva* 2005/29/CE relativa a las prácticas comerciales desleales de las empresas en sus relaciones con los consumidores en el mercado interior, la Directiva 2008/48/CE relativa a los contratos de crédito al consumo, la Directiva 93/13/CEE sobre las cláusulas abusivas en los contratos celebrados con los consumidores y la Directiva sobre contratos de crédito para bienes inmuebles de uso residencial, que establecen la exigencia de que los prestamistas actúen de forma honesta, imparcial y profesionalmente, en el mejor interés de los consumidores, cuando concedan créditos a éstos y que, tal como se establece en el Libro Blanco de la Comisión, sobre la integración del mercado europeo de crédito hipotecario, el tipo de interés, y por tanto el European Interbank Offered Rate, es un elemento esencial de la información al consumidor;

Considerando que el índice Euribor, que debería indicar el tipo de interés promedio al que las entidades financieras se prestan dinero en el mercado interbancario del euro, viene siendo publicado diariamente por la Federación Bancaria Europea sin control institucional alguno;

Considerando que las entidades bancarias, a través de la Federación Bancaria Europea, han llevado a cabo una manipulación de dicho índice al que están sometidos la mayoría de préstamos hipotecarios europeos y que ello implica una clara manipulación del mercado, al haberse manipulado artificialmente los precios de los instrumentos financieros mediante prácticas como la comunicación de operaciones ficticias (Expediente de la Comisión Memo 11/711 de 19 de octubre de 2011, la Comisión del Mercado de Valores de Canadá demanda a HSBC Holdings, JPMorgan Chase, Royal Bank of Scotland, UBS, Citigroup y Deutsche Bank, entre otros);

¿Comparte la Comisión que la manipulación del índice Euribor por parte de las entidades de la Federación Bancaria Europea constituye una manipulación del mercado prohibida en el Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo sobre las operaciones con información privilegiada y la manipulación del mercado (abuso de mercado, COM(2011)0651)? Y, en su caso, ¿qué medidas piensa adoptar al respecto? ¿Cree la Comisión que la imposibilidad de acceder a las operaciones interbancarias comunicadas diariamente y sobre las que se calcula el índice European Interbank Offered Rate por la Federación Bancaria Europea es contrario a los extremos planteados por el Consejo de Asuntos Económicos y Financieros de 9 de octubre de 2007, en particular por lo que atañe a la transparencia, y que atenta al Derecho de acceso sin discriminación de los prestamistas a las bases de datos sobre el crédito?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

Los índices de referencia son fundamentales para la fijación de los precios de numerosos instrumentos financieros y otros contratos, como las hipotecas. En respuesta a la supuesta manipulación del LIBOR y el Euribor, la Comisión ha modificado sus propuestas de Reglamento ([1]) y de Directiva ([2]) sobre el abuso del mercado para aclarar que cualquier manipulación de los índices de referencia es ilegal y punible.

Los prestatarios necesitan tener información sobre los tipos de interés al estudiar si suscriben un crédito. El acuerdo político sobre la Directiva relativa a los créditos hipotecarios ([3]) incluye obligaciones específicas de información en materia de préstamos con tipos de interés variable ([4]). Los índices o tipos de referencia utilizados para calcular el tipo acreedor tendrán que ser claros, comprensibles, objetivos y comprobables por las partes en el contrato de crédito y las autoridades competentes,

Además, la Directiva 2005/29/CE, relativa a las prácticas comerciales desleales, prohíbe la transmisión de información inexacta sobre las condiciones del mercado con la intención de inducir al consumidor a adquirir un producto en condiciones menos favorables que las condiciones normales de mercado ([5]).

([1]) Propuesta modificada de Reglamento sobre las operaciones con información privilegiada y la manipulación del mercado (abuso de mercado), COM(2012) 2011/0295 (COD). http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_es.htm
([2]) Propuesta modificada de Directiva sobre las sanciones penales aplicables a las operaciones con información privilegiada, COM(2012) 2011/0297 (COD). http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_es.htm
([3]) COM(2011) 142.
([4]) Por ejemplo, carácter del tipo, frecuencia de los cambios, existencia de límites a la variabilidad del tipo, fórmula utilizada para revisar el tipo, advertencias claras del riesgo e hipótesis alternativas que indiquen los efectos de un incremento del tipo de interés.
([5]) Anexo I, 18.

El derecho de acceso, por parte de los acreedores, a las bases de datos de forma no discriminatoria se establece en la Directiva 2008/48/CE, relativa a los contratos de crédito al consumo y solo se refiere al uso de bases de datos para evaluar la solvencia de los consumidores. Una disposición similar se prevé en la futura Directiva relativa a los créditos hipotecarios. Como parte de su próxima iniciativa legislativa sobre los índice de referencia, la Comisión estudiará la necesidad de un acceso público a los datos utilizados a efectos de la fijación de los índices de referencia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007887/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Abuses related to the Euribor

Directive 2005/29/EC concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market, Directive 2008/48/CE on credit agreements for consumers, Directive 93/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts, and the directive on credit agreements relating to residential property, among others, require lenders to act honestly, fairly, and professionally, in accordance with consumers' best interests, when granting consumers credit, and -as the Commission's White Paper on the Integration of EU Mortgage Credit Markets establishes-the interest rate, and therefore the European Interbank Offered Rate, is an essential component of consumer information.

The Euribor, which is supposed to indicate the average interest rate at which financial institutions are lending money to one another in the euro interbank market, is published daily by the European Banking Federation without any institutional control whatsoever.

Banking institutions, through the European Banking Federation, have rigged the Euribor rate, to which the majority of European mortgage loans are tied, and the rigging of this rate is a clear case of market rigging, since the prices of financial instruments were rigged by such practices as reporting fictitious transactions (Commission File, Memo 11/711 of 19 October 2011. The Canadian Securities Commission has brought a case against HSBC Holdings, JPMorgan Chase, the Royal Bank of Scotland, UBS, Citigroup, and Deutsche Bank, among others.

Does the Commission share the view that the rigging of the Euribor rate by the institutions belonging to the European Banking Federation constitutes market rigging, prohibited in the regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on insider dealing and market manipulation (market abuse, COM(2011) 0651)? If so, what action does it intend to take on this issue? Does the Commission believe that the lack of access to the interbank transactions that are reported daily, and on the basis of which the European Banking Federation calculates the European Interbank Offered Rate, is contrary to the conclusions of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council on 9 October 2007, as regards transparency in particular, and is a violation of creditors' right of to non-discriminatory access to credit databases?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

Benchmarks are critical to the pricing of many financial instruments and other contracts, such as mortgages. In response to the alleged manipulation of LIBOR and EURIBOR, the Commission has amended its proposals for a market abuse Regulation ([1]) and Directive ([2]) to clarify that any manipulation of benchmarks is illegal and subject to sanctions.

Borrowers need information on interest rates when considering taking out a credit. The political agreement on the directive on mortgage credits ([3]) includes specific information obligations in relation to variable interest loans ([4]). Indexes or reference rates used to calculate the borrowing rate will have to be clear, accessible, objective and verifiable by the parties to the credit agreement and the competent authorities.

Furthermore, Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices prohibits passing on inaccurate information on market conditions with the intention of inducing the consumer to acquire a product at conditions less favourable than normal market conditions ([5]).

([1]) Amended proposal for a regulation on insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2012) 2011/0295 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_en.htm
([2]) Amended proposal for a directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2012) 2011/0297 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_en.htm
([3]) COM(2011)142.
([4]) e.g. nature of the rate, frequency of changes, existence of limits to the rate variability, formula used to revise the rate, clear risk warnings and alternative scenario showing the effects of a rise in the interest rate.
([5]) No 18 of Annex I.

The right of access by creditors to credit databases on a non-discriminatory basis is established in Directive 2008/48/EC on consumer credits. It concerns the use of databases for assessing consumers' creditworthiness only. A similar provision is foreseen in the future Directive relating to mortgage credits. As part of its forthcoming legislative initiative on benchmarks, the Commission will consider the need for public access to input data used in the benchmark setting process.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007888/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Manipulación del Euribor

Considerando que las importantes irregularidades en el cálculo de dicho índice Euribor (European Interbank Offered Rate) llevaron a la Comisión Europea (Memo 11/711 de 19 de octubre de 2011) a abrir un expediente para investigar las presuntas irregularidades cometidas por las entidades bancarias en su confección y que funcionarios de la Comisión llevaron a cabo inspecciones en las instalaciones empresas activas en el sector de productos financieros derivados vinculados a la Euro Interbank Offered Rate (Euribor) para la comprobación de que las empresas en cuestión podían haber violado las normas comunitarias de defensa de la competencia que prohíben los carteles y las prácticas comerciales restrictivas;

Considerando que la Comisión del Mercado de Valores de Canadá ha demandado a seis grandes bancos (HSBC Holdings, JPMorgan Chase, Royal Bank of Scotland, UBS, Citigroup y Deutsche Bank) por manipular el índice Euribor y que también la Fiscalía de Nueva York y Connecticut ha requerido a Barclays, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan Chase, HSBC, Royal Bank of Scotland y UBS entregar información;

Considerando que la entidad Barclays ha reconocido la manipulación del índice Euribor aceptando el pago de una sanción mediante un acuerdo con el Departamento de Justicia americano, y que también el Banco suizo UBS y el escocés Royal Bank of Scotland han sido ya multados por la autoridad de Servicios Financieros inglesa por haber manipulado los índices Libor y Euribor, en una investigación que afecta igualmente a Lloyds, Citigroup, Bank of America, Jp Morgan Chase, Deutche Bank, Credit Agricole, Societe Generale, Credit Suisse y HSBC entre otros y que, en definitiva, toda la propia Federación Bancaria Europea está seriamente afectada;

— ¿Cree la Comisión que, a raíz de la manipulación del índice Euribor por parte de entidades bancarias pertenecientes a la Federación Bancaria Europea, se hace necesaria la inmediata actuación del Grupo de Expertos sobre Titulización, —previsto en el Libro Blanco de la Comisión, de 18 de diciembre de 2007, sobre la integración del mercado europeo de crédito hipotecario— al objeto de responder a los complejos problemas que plantea esa manipulación sobre la titulización?

— ¿Cuáles son las labores concretas realizadas y los resultados obtenidos en la investigación sobre las prácticas desleales en el ámbito de los servicios financieros minoristas, incluido el crédito hipotecario, tras casi seis años desde que la Comisión anunció su intención de investigar dichas prácticas en noviembre de 2007?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007889/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Investigaciones en relación a la fijación del Euribor

Considerando que las importantes irregularidades en el cálculo del índice Euribor (European Interbank Offered Rate) llevaron a la Comisión (Memo 11/711 de 19 de octubre de 2011) a abrir un expediente para investigar las presuntas irregularidades cometidas por las entidades bancarias en su confección y que funcionarios de la Comisión llevaron a cabo inspecciones en las instalaciones de empresas activas en el sector de productos financieros derivados vinculados a la Euro Interbank Offered Rate (Euribor) para la comprobación de que las empresas en cuestión podían haber violado las normas comunitarias de defensa de la competencia que prohíben los carteles y las prácticas comerciales restrictivas (artículo 101 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea, y el artículo 53 del Acuerdo sobre el Espacio Económico Europeo);

¿Cuál es el estado actual del expediente abierto por la Comisión, según la Memo 11/711 de 19 de octubre de 2011, sobre las irregularidades cometidas por las entidades bancarias? ¿Por qué no se han hecho públicos los resultados habiendo pasado casi dos años desde su público anuncio?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(25 de septiembre de 2013)

Desde 2011 la Comisión ha estado investigando las supuestas infracciones a las normas de defensa de la competencia, que prohíben los carteles y las prácticas comerciales restrictivas, en relación con índices de referencia del sector financiero como el LIBOR —norma de Londres— , el Euribor o el TIBOR —índice de Tokio—, y de cierto número de divisas como el euro, el yen o el franco suizo. Las investigaciones se centran en el comportamiento de algunos bancos respecto a algunos de sus productos derivados de tipos de interés vinculados al Euribor y al LIBOR/TIBOR. En octubre de 2011, funcionarios de la Comisión efectuaron inspecciones por sorpresa en los locales de las empresas que tienen actividades en el sector de los derivados vinculados al Euribor.

Es importante subrayar que las investigaciones de la Comisión sobre el LIBOR, el Euribor y el TIBOR no se extienden a las disposiciones relativas al crédito a la vivienda, las hipotecas o actividades similares. Se centran exclusivamente en los productos derivados sobre los tipos de interés vinculados a esos índices de referencia.

Estas investigaciones están en curso y constituyen para la Comisión una prioridad absoluta. Si bien en esta fase de las investigaciones la Comisión no puede comentar su alcance exacto, la duración de las mismas o cualquier detalle concreto relacionado con ellas, sí que puede indicar que están avanzando.

A este respecto, cabe destacar también que el procedimiento de la Comisión en virtud del artículo 101 del TFUE se diferencia de los de otras autoridades de defensa de la competencia y reguladores financieros por el hecho de que se actúa a la vez contra todos los participantes en un cartel y no solo contra una de las partes.

Si se confirman sus sospechas, la Comisión adoptará las medidas necesarias para sancionar a los infractores de las normas de competencia de la UE y disuadir de que se produzcan comportamientos similares en el futuro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007888/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Rigging of the Euribor

The significant irregularities in the calculation of the Euribor rate (the European Interbank Offered Rate) led the European Commission (Memo 11/711 of 19 October 2011) to initiate proceedings to investigate the suspected irregularities committed by banking institutions in setting the rate. Commission officials conducted inspections at the premises of companies operating in the field of financial derivative products linked to the Euribor rate, in order to determine whether the companies in question had violated Community antitrust rules, which prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices.

The Canadian Securities Commission has brought a case against six major banks (HSBC Holdings, JPMorgan Chase, Royal Bank of Scotland, UBS, Citigroup and Deutsche Bank) for rigging the Euribor rate, and the Attorneys General of New York and Connecticut have subpoenaed Barclays, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan Chase, HSBC, Royal Bank of Scotland and UBS.

In an agreement with the United States Department of Justice, Barclays has admitted that it rigged the Euribor rate and has agreed to pay a penalty. Swiss bank UBS and the Royal Bank of Scotland have already been fined by Britain's Financial Services Authority for manipulating the Libor and Euribor rates, in an investigation that also includes Lloyds, Citigroup, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, Deutsche Bank, Crédit Agricole, Société Générale, Crédit Suisse and HSBC, among others, and, in short, the entire European Banking Federation itself is seriously affected.

— Does the Commission believe that, following the rigging of the Euribor rate by banking institutions belonging to the European Banking Federation, immediate action by the Expert Group on Securitisation—discussed in the Commission's White Paper of 18 December 2007 on the Integration of EU Mortgage Credit Markets—is needed in order to address the complex problems created by this rigging of securitisation?

— What specific work has been done and what results have been achieved in the investigation into unfair practices in the field of retail financial services, including mortgage credit, during the nearly six years that have elapsed since November 2007, when the Commission announced its intention to investigate such practices?

Question for written answer E-007889/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Investigation into the rigging of the Euribor

The significant irregularities in the calculation of the Euribor rate (the European Interbank Offered Rate) led the European Commission (Memo 11/711 of 19 October 2011) to initiate proceedings to investigate the suspected irregularities committed by banking institutions in setting the rate. Commission officials conducted inspections at the premises of companies operating in the field of financial derivative products linked to the Euribor rate, in order to determine whether the companies in question had violated Community antitrust rules, which prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Article 53 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area).

What is the current status of the proceedings that the Commission initiated, according to Memo 11/711 of 19 October 2011, regarding the irregularities committed by the banking institutions? Why have the results not been made public, given that nearly two years have passed since the proceedings were publicly announced?

Joint answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

Since 2011, the Commission has been investigating alleged violations of the antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices, in relation to benchmark rates in the financial sector including LIBOR — London rules — EURIBOR or TIBOR — Tokyo rate -, and for a number of currencies such as the Euro, the Yen or the Swiss franc. The investigations concern the conduct of certain banks active in interest-rate derivative products linked to the EURIBOR and the LIBOR/TIBOR. In October 2011, Commission officials undertook unannounced inspections at the premises of companies active in the sector of derivatives linked to the EURIBOR.

It is important to underline that the Commission investigations of LIBOR, EURIBOR and TIBOR do not extend to provisions for housing credit, mortgages or similar activities. They focus only on interest-rate derivative products linked to these benchmark rates.

These investigations are ongoing and constitute a top priority for the Commission. While at this stage of the investigations, the Commission cannot comment on the exact scope, duration of the investigations or any concrete detail related to them, the Commission can however indicate that they are progressing.

In this regard, it is also important to underline that the Commission's proceedings under Article 101 TFEU differ from those of other antitrust authorities and financial regulators in the sense that action is taken against all participants of a cartel at the same time and not only against one party.

If its concerns are confirmed, the Commission will take the necessary actions to punish the infringers of EU competition rules, and to deter such behaviour in future.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007890/13
a la Comisión
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Sanciones en relación a la manipulación del Euribor

Considerando que las entidades bancarias en su conjunto, a través de la Federación Bancaria Europea han llevado a cabo una manipulación del índice de referencia (European Interbank Offered Rate) al que están sometidos la mayoría de préstamos hipotecarios europeos y que ello implica una clara manipulación del mercado, al haberse manipulado artificialmente los precios de los instrumentos financieros mediante prácticas como la comunicación de operaciones ficticias;

Teniendo en cuenta que las sanciones deberán establecerse en relación directa con los perjuicios ocasionados y con los beneficios obtenidos por las entidades bancarias, ¿se ha calculado el montante de dichos perjuicios para la población y el de los beneficios para las entidades bancarias? Y, en su caso, ¿a cuánto ascienden provisionalmente esos perjuicios ocasionados al mercado hipotecario europeo a través del pago de cuotas por los ciudadanos y en cuánto se cifran los beneficios obtenidos por los prestamistas gracias a la manipulación del European Interbank Offered Rate?

Respuesta del Sr. Barnier en nombre de la Comisión
(2 de septiembre de 2013)

La integridad de los índices de referencia es fundamental para la fijación de los precios de numerosos instrumentos financieros y para los contratos comerciales y no comerciales, como las hipotecas. La primera parte de la respuesta de la Comisión a la supuesta manipulación del LIBOR y el Euribor consistió en modificar las propuestas existentes de Reglamento sobre el abuso del mercado ([1]) y de Directiva sobre las sanciones penales aplicables al abuso de mercado ([2]) para aclarar que la manipulación de índices de referencia es clara e inequívocamente ilegal y da lugar a sanciones administrativas o penales. La Comisión presentará sus propuestas para abordar las cuestiones restantes relativas a los índices de referencia en septiembre de 2013. En cuanto a los asuntos concretos sometidos a los órganos jurisdiccionales nacionales, estos son los responsables de su evaluación y de la posible imposición de las sanciones correspondientes.

Según la respuesta del Banco Central Europeo (BCE) ([3]) a la consulta de la Comisión sobre una posible normativa que regule los índices de referencia ([4]), el porcentaje de préstamos a los hogares de tipos variables se estimó en un 40 % en 2012. Las hipotecas a tipo variable representarían un alto porcentaje de los préstamos a tipo variable a los hogares y la mayoría está referenciada al Euribor ([5]).

Para ilustrar mejor estas cifras, se puede señalar que 18 millones de hipotecas en España y muchos otros préstamos a particulares, empresas y organismos públicos se calcula que están referenciados al Euribor ([6]). Las agrupaciones de consumidores italianas Adusbef y Federconsumatori han presentado denuncias en las que indican que la manipulación del Euribor ha afectado a unos 2,5 millones de hogares italianos a través de hipotecas basadas en el Euribor, lo que les ha supuesto un coste de 3 000 millones de euros ([7]).

([1]) Propuesta modificada de Reglamento sobre las operaciones con información privilegiada y la manipulación del mercado (abuso de mercado), COM(2012) 2011/0295 (COD). http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_es.htm

([2]) Propuesta modificada de Directiva sobre las sanciones penales aplicables a las operaciones con información privilegiada, COM(2012) 2011/0297 (COD). http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_es.htm

([3]) http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pubbydate/2012/html/index.en.html?skey=public

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/benchmarks_en.htm

([5]) Según el informe «Financiación de la vivienda en la zona del euro» (Housing Finance in the Euro Area) del BCE (marzo de 2009, cuadro 2, gráfico 7), el 43 % de los nuevos préstamos hipotecarios en la zona del euro en 2007 estaba referenciado a tipos de interés variables. El informe indica que, en los once países de la zona del euro en que predominan los tipos variables (todos excepto Alemania, Bélgica, Francia y los Países Bajos), el Euribor con el vencimiento correspondiente es el que se suele utilizar para ajustar los tipos de interés: http://www.ecb.int/pub/pdf/scpops/ecbocp101.pdf

([6]) http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/03/euribor-under-scrutiny-by-peoples-campaign-in-spain/

([7]) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-31/barclays-documents-seized-in-italy-in-euribor-fraud-probe-1-.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007890/13
to the Commission
Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Sanctions related to rigging of the Euribor

Banking institutions as a whole, through the European Banking Federation, have rigged the reference rate (the European Interbank Offered Rate) to which the majority of European mortgage loans are tied. The rigging of this rate is a clear case of market rigging, since the prices of financial instruments were rigged by such practices as reporting fictitious transactions.

Bearing in mind that sanctions must be established that are directly related to the damage caused and the benefits obtained by the banking institutions, have the sums of the damage inflicted on people and the benefits obtained by the banking institutions been calculated? If so, what is the provisional total of the damage caused to the European mortgage market through the payment of fees by citizens, and what is the total of the benefits obtained by lenders as a result of this rigging of the European Interbank Offered Rate?

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

The integrity of benchmarks is critical to the pricing of many financial instruments, and for commercial and non-commercial contracts, such as mortgages. The first part of the Commission's response to the alleged manipulation of LIBOR and EURIBOR, was to amend the existing proposals for a market abuse Regulation (MAR) ([1]) and criminal sanctions for market abuse Directive (CSMAD) ([2]) to clarify that any manipulation of benchmarks is clearly and unequivocally illegal and subject to administrative or criminal sanctions. The Commission will present its proposals to deal with the remaining issues regarding benchmarks in September 2013. Concerning the specific cases that have been brought to the attention of the national courts, national courts are the ones responsible for the assessment of the cases and possible establishment of the relevant sanctions.

According to the ECB response ([3]) to the Commission Consultation on a Possible Framework for the regulation of Reference Indices ([4]), the percentage of loans to households based on floating rates is estimated at 40% in 2012. Variable rate mortgages would represent an important part of the variable rate loans to households and most of them would be referred to EURIBOR ([5]).

To further illustrate these numbers, it can be noted that 18 million mortgages in Spain and many other loans to individuals, companies and public bodies are estimated to be referenced to EURIBOR ([6]). Italian consumer groups Adusbef and Federconsumatori have filed complaints in which they estimate that the manipulation of EURIBOR affected 2.5 million Italian households through EURIBOR based mortgages, costing them EUR 3 billion ([7]).

([1]) Amended proposal for a regulation on insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2012) 2011/0295 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_en.htm

([2]) Amended proposal for a directive on criminal sanctions for insider dealing and market manipulation, COM(2012) 2011/0297 (COD): http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/securities/abuse/index_en.htm

([3]) http://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pubbydate/2012/html/index.en.html?skey=public.

([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2012/benchmarks_en.htm

([5]) According to the Housing Finance in the Euro Area report by the ECB, (March 2009, Table 2, chart 7), 43% of new mortgage loans in the Euro area in 2007 were referenced to variable interest rates. The report states that in the eleven Euro area countries where variable rates dominate (all except Belgium, Germany, France and the Netherlands), 'predominantly the EURIBOR with the corresponding maturity is used for adjusting the interest rates': http://www.ecb.int/pub/pdf/scpops/ecbocp101.pdf

([6]) http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/03/euribor-under-scrutiny-by-peoples-campaign-in-spain/.

([7]) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-31/barclays-documents-seized-in-italy-in-euribor-fraud-probe-1-.html

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007891/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(3 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Άσυλο στον Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν

Ο Έντουαρντ Τζόζεφ Σνόουντεν, ο οποίος εργαζόταν για την NSA και την CIA, αποφάσισε να διαρρεύσει στον τύπο απόρρητες πληροφορίες σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα μαζικής παρακολούθησης που εφαρμόζουν η αμερικανική και Βρετανική κυβέρνηση. Ο Σνόουντεν αποκάλυψε πληροφορίες για μία σειρά από απόρρητα προγράμματα των μυστικών υπηρεσιών, όπως για παράδειγμα των προγραμμάτων παρακολούθησης PRISM και Tempora. Όπως δήλωσε οι διαρροές ήταν μια προσπάθεια «να ενημερωθεί το κοινό ως προς το τι συμβαίνει στο όνομά του και εναντίον του».

Στις 14 Ιουνίου 2013, οι αμερικανοί ομοσπονδιακοί εισαγγελείς κατέθεσαν μια σφραγισμένη μήνυση, η οποία δημοσιοποιήθηκε στις 21 Ιουνίου, κατηγορώντας τον Σνόουντεν για κλοπή κυβερνητικής ιδιοκτησίας, κυκλοφορία πληροφοριών εθνικής άμυνας χωρίς άδεια, και σκόπιμη διαβίβαση απόρρητων εγγράφων των μυστικών υπηρεσιών σε μη εξουσιοδοτημένους αποδέκτες.

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

Δεν θα έπρεπε να προστατεύονται όσοι αποφασίζουν να υπηρετήσουν την ανθρωπότητα αποκαλύπτοντας περιπτώσεις καταπάτησης βασικών δικαιωμάτων;

Μήπως η ενέργεια αυτή είναι που οδήγησε και στην αποκάλυψη ότι πιθανόν η NSA να παρακολουθούσε και θεσμούς της ίδιας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης;

Θα μπορούσε η ΕΕ να προσφέρει πολιτικό άσυλο στον Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν, ο οποίος είχε το θάρρος να αποκαλύψει μια τόσο οργανωμένη και συστηματική παραβίαση των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων;

Απάντηση
(16 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Το Συμβούλιο δεν σχολιάζει μεμονωμένες περιπτώσεις όσον αφορά την άσκηση των αρμοδιοτήτων που φέρουν τα κράτη μέλη.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007891/13
to the Council
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Asylum for Edward Snowden

Edward Joseph Snowden, who worked for the NSA and the CIA, decided to leak confidential information about mass surveillance by the US and British governments to the press. Snowden disclosed information on a series of confidential programmes of the secret services, such as the PRISM and Tempora surveillance programmes. He stated that the leaks were an effort 'to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them'.

On 14 June 2013, the US federal prosecutors filed a sealed complaint, which was made public on 21 June, charging Snowden with theft of government property, unauthorised communication of national defence information and wilful communication of classified intelligence to unauthorised persons.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

Should those who decide to serve humanity by disclosing violations of basic rights not be protected?

Perhaps it was this action which also resulted in the disclosure that the NSA was also monitoring the institutions of the European Union?

Could the EU offer political asylum to Edward Snowden, who had the courage to disclose such organised and systematic infringements of human rights?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The Council does not comment on individual cases concerning the exercise of responsibilities incumbent upon Member States.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007892/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(3 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Άσυλο στον Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν

Ο Έντουαρντ Τζόζεφ Σνόουντεν, ο οποίος εργαζόταν για την NSA και την CIA, αποφάσισε να διαρρεύσει στον τύπο απόρρητες πληροφορίες σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα μαζικής παρακολούθησης που εφαρμόζουν η αμερικανική και βρετανική κυβέρνηση. Ο Σνόουντεν αποκάλυψε πληροφορίες για μία σειρά από απόρρητα προγράμματα των μυστικών υπηρεσιών, όπως για παράδειγμα των προγραμμάτων παρακολούθησης PRISM και Tempora. Όπως δήλωσε οι διαρροές ήταν μια προσπάθεια «να ενημερωθεί το κοινό ως προς το τι συμβαίνει στο όνομά του και εναντίον του».

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Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Δεν θα έπρεπε να προστατεύονται όσοι αποφασίζουν να υπηρετήσουν την ανθρωπότητα αποκαλύπτοντας περιπτώσεις καταπάτησης βασικών δικαιωμάτων;

Μήπως η ενέργεια αυτή είναι που οδήγησε και στην αποκάλυψη ότι πιθανόν η NSA να παρακολουθούσε και θεσμούς της ίδιας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης;

Θα μπορούσε η ΕΕ να προσφέρει πολιτικό άσυλο στον Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν, ο οποίος είχε το θάρρος να αποκαλύψει μια τόσο οργανωμένη και συστηματική παραβίαση των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η νομοθεσία της ΕΕ ([1]) προβλέπει τους λόγους για τους οποίους πρέπει να χορηγείται διεθνής προστασία σε υπήκοο τρίτης χώρας που ζητεί άσυλο. Εντούτοις, η αρμοδιότητα χορήγησης διεθνούς προστασίας σε μεμονωμένες περιπτώσεις εναπόκειται στα κράτη μέλη και όχι στα όργανα της ΕΕ.

([1]) Οδηγία 2004/83/ΕΚ και οδηγία 2011/95/ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007892/13
to the Commission
Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Asylum for Edward Snowden

Edward Joseph Snowden, who worked for the NSA and the CIA, decided to leak confidential information about mass surveillance by the US and British governments to the press. Snowden disclosed information on a series of confidential programmes of the secret services, such as the PRISM and Tempora surveillance programmes. He stated that the leaks were an effort 'to inform the public as to that which is done in their name and that which is done against them'.

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In view of the above, will the Commission say:

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Perhaps it was this action which also resulted in the disclosure that the NSA was also monitoring the institutions of the European Union?

Could the EU offer political asylum to Edward Snowden, who had the courage to disclose such organised and systematic infringements of human rights?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

EC law ([1]) regulates the grounds on which international protection must be granted to a third-country national seeking asylum. The competence to grant international protection in individual cases, however, lies with the Member States, not with the EU institutions.

([1]) Directive 2004/83/EC and Directive 2011/95/EU.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007893/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
David Martin (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights in the Gambia

I have heard from the UK Campaign for Human Rights in the Gambia that the Gambian Government, following its withdrawal from the EU Article 8 Political Dialogue in 2012, has said that it will not enter discussions with the EU unless human rights is off the agenda. It has come to my attention, through the British and German delegates to the EU, that the EU will resume political dialogue with the Gambia government in July 2013, but that human rights will be relegated to the sidelines.

Can you confirm that this is not true and state what the EU will do to put pressure on the Gambia to improve its human rights record?

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

The Gambia resumed political dialogue with the EU on 11 July 2013. The issue of Human Rights was not relegated to the sidelines but was indeed dealt with under the governance point of the agenda. It was also raised directly and extensively in the meeting between the President Yahya Jammeh of The Gambia and the European External Action Service (EEAS) Managing Director for Africa that took place on 8 July 2013.

In the political dialogue meeting, the EU offered support and expertise to enhance good governance and stated to the Gambian authorities its expectations in terms of improving the situation of human rights in the country.

The EU is supporting The Gambia with an important governance project implemented under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), which includes actions aimed, *inter alia*, at improving ccess to justice and the effective exercise of press freedom. Moreover, following the conclusion of the 10th EDF mid-term review in 2010, which highlighted concerns about democracy, human rights and the general absorption capacity of The Gambia, the budget earmarked for the governance focal sector was increased from EUR 11 to EUR 13 million and the intended general budget support programme was cut.

The possibility to start Article 96 procedures under the Cotonou Agreement (potentially leading to suspension of EU aid to The Gambia, where it is the largest donor) was specifically mentioned should violations to governance, human rights and the rule of law continue.

The EU raised several specific issues related to human rights, including: womens' rights, trafficking in human beings, migration, death penalty, freedom of the media and expression, the rights of L*esbian*, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) and several recent cases of arrests and detentions.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007894/13
à la Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Possible appui passif à l'exploitation humaine de diverses compagnies aériennes

Le 26 Juin 2013, la revue «Australian financial review» annonçait que plusieurs grandes compagnies aériennes, parmi lesquelles l'australienne Qantas, la britannique British Airways et la qatarienne Fly Emirates, auraient utilisé des écouteurs fabriqués dans une prison chinoise, située à Dongguan, dans la province de Guangdong au sud du pays.

Les témoignages d'anciens détenus semblent converger sur les conditions déplorables de détention (usage de la torture et de violences physiques et morales). D'après le journaliste, les détenus concernés seraient payés 8 yuans (1 euro) par mois et travailleraient plus de 70 heures par semaine. Si les faits étaient avérés, il s'agirait là d'un véritable cas d'exploitation humaine, dont les compagnies aériennes seraient finalement complices.

D'une part, la torture est fermement prohibée à la fois par le droit international et par l'article 4 du chapitre 1 de la Charte européenne des droits fondamentaux. D'autre part, les valeurs de l'Union vont clairement à l'encontre d'un appui, qu'il soit passif ou non, à l'exploitation humaine.

La compagnie British Airways nie cette révélation et rappelle avec quelle rigueur elle choisit ses fournisseurs.

Concernant cette possible provenance douteuse de matériel pour les compagnies aériennes, en particulier en Europe:

1. La Commission entend-t-elle vérifier ces informations?

2. Si ces informations étaient confirmées, la Commission envisagerait-t-elle d'accroître les contrôles de provenance pour les fournitures à destination de compagnies aériennes opérant en Europe? La Commission entend-t-elle lutter plus activement contre l'encouragement passif de l'exploitation humaine?

3. Dans le cadre du dialogue ouvert avec les autorités chinoises sur les échanges commerciaux entre les deux partenaires, la Commission entend-t-elle rappeler l'attachement de l'Union au respect des valeurs fondamentales des Droits de l'homme?

Réponse donnée par M. De Gucht au nom de la Commission
(30 août 2013)

L'article 207 du Traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne dispose que la politique commerciale commune de l'UE est fondée sur les principes et les objectifs d'action externe de l'Union, au nombre desquels figurent les Droits de l'homme.

Dans ce contexte, des questions relatives au respect des valeurs fondamentales et des Droits de l'homme sont régulièrement soulevées auprès des autorités chinoises dans le cadre des dialogues biannuels sur les Droits de l'homme et du séminaire annuel sur les Droits de l'homme. L'Union continue d'aborder la situation des Droits de l'homme en Chine au sein des instances concernées des Nations unies, en particulier dans le cadre du Conseil des Droits de l'homme et de l'Assemblée générale. Des questions relatives aux Droits de l'homme sont également soulevées à différents niveaux et à l'occasion de divers contacts avec la Chine, comme lors du 15e sommet entre l'UE et la Chine.

Selon les informations disponibles publiquement, la compagnie aérienne australienne «Qantas» a suspendu son contract avec un fournisseur vietnamien qui avait sous-traité des travaux à une entreprise chinoise. Quantas a lancé une enquête interne.

Compte tenu d'allégations précédentes concernant des importations dans l'UE de biens fabriqués dans le cadre du travail forcé de détenus, la Commission a établi un groupe interservices chargé d'étudier s'il est possible de passer une législation interdisant de telles importations. Ce groupe poursuit ses travaux.

La Commission continuera d'étudier de près les allégations de recours au travail forcé dans la prison de Dongguan.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007894/13
to the Commission
Christine De Veyrac (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Possible passive support by several airlines of human exploitation

On 26 June 2013, the *Australian Financial Review* reported that several major airlines, including the Australian airline Qantas, British Airways and the Dubai-based Emirates, had used headphones manufactured in Dongguan prison, located in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong.

The testimonies of former inmates seem to focus on the appalling conditions in the prison (torture is used along with physical and mental abuse). According to the reporter, the inmates involved were paid eight yuan (EUR 1) per month and worked more than 70 hours a week. Were these claims found to be true, this would be a genuine case of human exploitation, in which the airlines would ultimately be complicit.

Torture is strictly prohibited both by international law and by Article 4 of Chapter 1 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Moreover, the EU's values are clearly incompatible with supporting human exploitation, passively or otherwise.

British Airways denies the claims and stresses that its suppliers are subject to a rigorous selection process.

In view of the potentially questionable provenance of equipment supplied to airlines, particularly in Europe:

1. Does the Commission plan to get to the bottom of these claims?

2. Were these claims proved to be true, would the Commission consider stepping up checks on the provenance of equipment supplied to airlines operating in Europe? Does the Commission intend to be more proactive in combating the passive support of human exploitation?

3. As part of the open dialogue with the Chinese authorities on trade between the two partners, does the Commission intend to reiterate the EU's commitment to respect for the fundamental values of human rights?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

Article 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states the the EU common commercial policy shall be conducted in the context of the principles and objectives of the Unions external action, which include human rights.

In this context, issues related to the respect of fundamental values and human rights are raised regularly with the Chinese authorities in the framework of the bi-annual human rights dialogues and yearly human rights seminar. The EU continues to address the human rights situation in China in the appropriate UN fora, especially the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. Human rights concerns are also raised at different levels and in the framework of various contacts with China, as was the case during the 15th EU-China summit.

According to publicly available information, the Australian airline Qantas has suspended its contract with a Vietnamese supplier who had subcontracted work to a Chinese company. Quantas has launched its own investigation.

In the light of previous allegations of imports into the EU of goods made by forced prison labour, the Commission has established an inter-service group to study the feasibility of legislation prohibiting such imports; this group is continuing its work.

The Commission will continue to keep under close review developments related to the alleged claims of the use of forced prison labour in Dongguan prison.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007895/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Détection des fraudes

Une plus grande transparence permettant un contrôle effectif est essentielle pour détecter la fraude.

Les années précédentes, le Parlement a demandé instamment à la Commission d'œuvrer pour garantir la transparence complète des bénéficiaires des fonds européens.

1. Pourquoi cette mesure n'a-t-elle pas été mise en œuvre?

2. Quand et comment la Commission va-t-telle élaborer des mesures destinées à accroître la transparence des dispositifs juridiques?

3. La Commission va-t-elle mettre au point un système qui répertorie tous les bénéficiaires des fonds européens sur un seul et même site Internet, quelle que soit l'identité de l'administrateur des fonds, sur la base de catégories-types d'information fournies par tous les États membres dans au moins une des langues de travail de l'Union?

4. La Commission envisage-t-elle d'évaluer le système de «gestion partagée» et de présenter en priorité un rapport à ce sujet?

Réponse donnée par M. Lewandowski au nom de la Commission
(26 août 2013)

1. Cette mesure a été mise en œuvre par l'intermédiaire d'un site web dédié renseignant les citoyens sur les personnes et les projets bénéficiant de fonds européens ([1]).

2. La publication d'informations sur les bénéficiaires est réglée par l'article 35 du règlement financier ([2]). Cette disposition est complétée sur de nombreux points par les articles 21 et 22 du règlement délégué de la Commission nº 1268/2012 ([3]) qui précisent le niveau de détails des informations.

À la lumière de la jurisprudence, les règles de publication adoptées tiennent compte des intérêts légitimes des bénéficiaires en matière de confidentialité et de sécurité et, quand il s'agit de personnes physiques, de leur droit au respect de leur vie privée et de la protection de leurs données à caractère personnel.

3. La Commission, via le système de transparence financière (STF), publie des informations sur les bénéficiaires des fonds européens qu'elle gère directement ([4]). En ce qui concerne les fonds européens administrés conjointement avec les États membres en gestion partagée, le règlement financier oblige ces derniers à assurer la publication *ex post* des noms des bénéficiaires de fonds. Quant aux fonds européens que la Commission gère indirectement, les partenaires chargés de la mise en œuvre sont responsables de la mise à disposition d'informations concernant les bénéficiaires. La Commission considère que cette situation doit rester inchangée, car les États membres et les autres partenaires chargés de la mise en œuvre sont les mieux à même d'obtenir des informations complètes et fiables.

4. En 2006, la Commission a évalué les systèmes de mise en œuvre de la politique de cohésion dans le cadre de l'évaluation ex post pour la période 2000-2006 ([5]). La programmation de l'évaluation ex post pour la période 2007-2013 est en cours et s'achèvera avant la fin 2015.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/beneficiaries_fr.htm
([2]) JO L 298 du 26.10.2012.
([3]) JO L 362 du 31.12.2012.
([4]) Article 35 du règlement financier et article 21 des règles d'application: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index_fr.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2006/wp11_executive_summary_fr.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007895/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Fraud detection

Greater transparency allowing for proper scrutiny is key in order to detect fraud.

In previous years Parliament has urged the Commission to take action to ensure one-stop transparency as regards the beneficiaries of EU funds.

1. Why has this measure not been implemented?

2. When and how will the Commission design measures to increase the transparency of legal arrangements?

3. Will the Commission develop a system which lists all beneficiaries of EU funds on the same website, regardless of who administers the funds, and is based on standard categories of information to be provided by all Member States in at least one working language of the Union?

4. Does the Commission plan to evaluate the system of 'shared management' and provide a report as a matter of priority?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

1. The measure has been implemented through a dedicated website informing citizens of who or what is being financed from EU funds ([1]).

2. The publication of information on beneficiaries is governed by Article 35 of the Financial Regulation ([2]). This provision is extensively supplemented by Articles 21 and 22 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012, which specify the degree of detail to be used ([3]).

In the light of the case-law, the rules adopted on publication take into account the legitimate interests of beneficiaries with respect to confidentiality and security and, as far as natural persons are concerned, their right to privacy and the protection of their personal data.

3. The Commission's Financial Transparency System (FTS) publishes information on beneficiaries of EU funds implemented under direct management ([4]). As regards EU funds implemented under shared management with Member States, the Financial Regulation obliges them to ensure *ex post* publication of the beneficiaries of funds. For EU funds implemented indirectly, the implementing partners are responsible for the provision of information on beneficiaries. The Commission considers that this should remain so, as Member States and other implementing partners are best placed to have full and reliable information.

4. In 2006, the Commission evaluated the implementation systems for Cohesion Policy as part of the *ex post* evaluation of the 2000-2006 period ([5]). Planning for the *ex post* evaluation of the 2007-2013 period has started. It will be completed by the end of 2015.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/beneficiaries_en.htm
([2]) OJ L 298, 26.10.2012.
([3]) OJ L 362, 31.12.2012.
([4]) Article 35 FR and Article 21 RAP: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/fts/index_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2006/wp11_executive_summary_en.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007896/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Disposition antifraude dans les accords bilatéraux

Dans le contexte de la mondialisation, la dimension internationale de la fraude prend une importance croissante.

Il est donc primordial de disposer d'un cadre juridique solide, incluant des engagements clairs des pays partenaires.

Nous pouvons nous féliciter de l'incorporation de dispositions antifraude dans les accords bilatéraux nouveaux ou renégociés, y compris dans les projets d'accords avec l'Afghanistan, le Kazakhstan, l'Arménie, l'Azerbaïdjan et la Géorgie, ainsi que d'une version simplifiée dans les accords avec l'Australie.

La Commission compte-t-elle élaborer une clause standard via laquelle ces dispositions seraient incorporées dans tous les accords bilatéraux et multilatéraux nouveaux ou renégociés conclus avec des pays tiers?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(11 septembre 2013)

La Commission a l'intention de proposer l'inclusion systématique de dispositions anti-fraude appropriées dans les accords commerciaux et de coopération qu'elle négociera; ces dispositions devront probablement évoluer afin de prendre en considération les enseignements du passé ou les spécificités de l'accord en question.

Les conventions de financement avec des pays tiers dans le domaine du développement et de la coopération comprennent déjà une clause type sur la prévention des irrégularités, de la fraude et de la corruption impliquant, de la part des pays partenaires, un engagement clair à contrôler la bonne mise en œuvre des fonds de l'Union européenne, à prendre des mesures pour éviter les irrégularités et la fraude et pour y remédier, y compris le recouvrement des fonds indûment versés, et à informer l'Union européenne des mesures mises en place. Ces conventions de financement comprennent également des clauses imposant à nos partenaires d'autoriser la Cour des comptes européenne et l'Office européen de lutte anti-fraude (OLAF) à procéder à des contrôles et à des vérifications.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007896/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Anti-fraud provisions in bilateral agreements

In a globalised world, fraud is increasingly being committed across international borders.

It is therefore vital to have a strong legal framework with clear commitments from the partner countries.

We can be pleased about the inclusion of anti-fraud provisions in new or renegotiated bilateral agreements, including the draft agreements with Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and, in a more streamlined version, with Australia.

Does the Commission plan to develop a standard clause whereby these provisions are included in all new or renegotiated bilateral and multilateral agreements with third countries?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2013)

The Commission intends to propose to include systematically appropriate anti-fraud provisions in the trade and cooperation agreements it will negotiate; such provisions may need to evolve to take into account any lessons learnt over time or specific features of the agreement in question.

The Financing Agreements with third countries in the field of development and cooperation already include a standard clause on the prevention of irregularities, fraud and corruption with clear commitments from the partner countries to control the proper implementation of EU funds, take action in terms of preventing and remediating irregularities and fraud, including the recovery of the funds unduly paid, and to inform the EU of the actions taken. These Financing Agreements also include clauses obliging our partners to allow checks and verifications by the European Court of Auditors and the European Anti-Fraud Office OLAF.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007897/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Code des douanes modernisé

Force est de constater que la Commission n'est pas en mesure d'assurer la mise en œuvre prompte du code des douanes modernisé (CDM).

Les avantages financiers perdus en raison du retard dans la mise en œuvre du nouveau code des douanes sont estimés à quelque 2,5 milliards d'euros d'économies d'exploitation annuelles sur les coûts de mise en conformité à plein régime, et à pas moins de 50 milliards d'euros sur le marché des échanges internationaux élargi.

À combien la Commission évalue-t-elle le coût du report de la pleine application du CDM afin d'en quantifier les conséquences budgétaires?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2013)

La date d'application du code des douanes modernisé (CDM) a été différée pour deux raisons:

— la première est d'ordre institutionnel: la Commission était dans l'obligation légale d'aligner le CDM sur les exigences du traité de Lisbonne en ce qui concerne l'utilisation par la Commission soit des pouvoirs délégués soit des pouvoirs d'exécution pour permettre l'application du CDM, conformément aux articles 290 et 291 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne et au nouveau règlement (UE) n° 182/2011 du Parlement Européen et du Conseil du 16 février 2011 établissant les règles et principes généraux relatifs aux modalités de contrôle par les États membres de l'exercice des compétences d'exécution par la Commission, dit règlement «Comitologie»;

— la seconde est d'ordre pratique: il était nécessaire de reporter la date d'application du CDM afin de laisser aux administrations et aux opérateurs économiques des États membres suffisamment de temps pour entreprendre les investissements nécessaires et assurer une mise en œuvre progressive, contraignante mais réaliste, des processus électroniques.

Dans ces circonstances, les économies escomptées grâce à l'application du CDM ne peuvent être considérées comme génératrices de coûts supplémentaires, étant donné qu'il n'y a pas de vide juridique dans le fonctionnement de l'union douanière.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007897/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Modernised Customs Code

Clearly the Commission has been unable to ensure timely implementation of the Modernised Customs Code (MCC).

The financial benefits estimated to have been forgone owing to the delay in implementing the new customs code amount to some EUR 2.5 billion in annual operational savings in compliance costs at full regime, and to as much as EUR 50 billion in the expanded international trade market.

What is the Commission's estimate of the cost of postponing full application of the MCC, quantifying the budgetary consequences of such postponement?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

The reasons for the postponement of the date of application of the MCC were twofold:

— Institutional: The Commission had the legal obligation to align the MCC on the requirements of the Lisbon Treaty, as regards the use by the Commission of either delegated or implementing powers to allow the MCC to be applied, in accordance with Articles 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the new 'Comitology' Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission's exercise of implementing powers;

— Practical: It was necessary to postpone the date of application of the MCC to give Member States administrations and economic operators adequate time to undertake the necessary investments and ensure a phased, binding but realistic implementation of electronic processes.

Under these circumstances the intended savings through the MCC cannot be considered as generating supplementary costs, since there is no legal gap to the functioning of the Customs Union.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007899/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Prêt relationnel

1. La Commission songe-t-elle, comme le lui suggère le Parlement, à trouver des modalités permettant d'encourager et de favoriser le «prêt relationnel» ou le «prêt fondé sur la connaissance» dans les initiatives législatives?

2. La Commission ne trouve-t-elle pas que cette approche devrait avoir pour objectif d'éviter une approche du type «case à cocher» et se concentrer, au contraire, sur la promotion de la formation professionnelle et sur l'éthique des personnes qui servent d'intermédiaires et qui prêtent aux entreprises?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(10 septembre 2013)

L'accroissement de l'étendue et de la nature des activités bancaires au cours des dernières décennies a entraîné une augmentation disproportionnée des affaires purement financières souvent prometteuses d'une meilleure rentabilité pour le secteur que d'autres activités. Le bilan des banques a augmenté nettement plus que leurs activités traditionnelles de services aux clients (les prêts aux clients et les dépôts par exemple) ([1]).

En ce sens, la réforme structurelle du secteur bancaire est une occasion pour le secteur bancaire de se recentrer sur ses rôles traditionnels compte tenu de ses compétences en matière d'évaluation des risques et de sa connaissance du terrain et de ses liens avec les entreprises.

Si elle est d'accord avec l'abondante littérature ([2]) montrant que l'établissement d'une relation de prêt entre une banque et son emprunteur permet de réduire les asymétries d'information et crée de la valeur pour l'emprunteur, la Commission, en particulier dans le cadre du suivi de la consultation publique concernant le livre vert sur le financement à long terme de l'économie européenne ([3]), examinera également toute suggestion susceptible de résoudre le problème fondamental d'asymétrie de l'information, qui affecte particulièrement l'accès au financement pour les PME.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/docs/high-level_expert_group/report_en.pdf
([2]) Voir par exemple: http://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/Publications/Discussion_Paper_2/2007/2007_12_03_dkp_14.pdf?__blob=publicationFile
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0150:REV1:FR:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007899/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Relationship lending

1. Is the Commission considering finding ways to encourage and promote 'relationship lending' or 'knowledge-based lending' in legislative initiatives, as suggested by Parliament?

2. Does the Commission not believe that this approach should aim to avoid a 'tick box' approach and focus instead on promoting vocational and ethical training for those who mediate and lend capital to businesses?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The increase in the extent and nature of bank activities in recent decades has led to a disproportional increase in intra-financial business often promising higher returns for the industry than other activities. Banks' balance sheets have increased much more than their traditional customer-facing activities (e.g. customer loans and deposits) ([1]).

In this sense, the structural reform of the banking sector is an opportunity for the banking sector to refocus on its traditional role given its risk assessment skills and local knowledge of and relationships with enterprises.

Whilst it agrees with the abundant literature ([2]) showing that establishing a lending relationship between a bank and its borrower helps reducing asymmetries of information and creates value to the borrower, the Commission, in particular in the follow-up to the public consultation on the Green Paper on the long term financing of the European economy ([3]), will also examine any suggestion which can potentially tackle the root-issue of asymmetry of information, which affects particularly access to finance for SMEs.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/bank/docs/high-level_expert_group/report_en.pdf
([2]) See for example http://www.bundesbank.de/Redaktion/EN/Downloads/Publications/Discussion_Paper_2/2007/2007_12_03_dkp_14.pdf?__blob=publicationFile
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0150:REV1:EN:PDF

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007900/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Droits de douane norvégiens frappant les produits agricoles

Concernant les droits de douane norvégiens frappant les produits agricoles:

Quelle est la position de la Commission?

A-t-elle ou compte-t-elle évaluer les conséquences, potentiellement négatives, de cette augmentation des droits de douane sur les exportateurs et les agriculteurs de l'Union?

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(13 août 2013)

Le 1er juillet 2012, la Norvège a reclassé *Hydrangea macrophylla* (l'hortensia des jardins) et, ce faisant, a porté les droits à l'importation sur cette espèce de 0 à 72 %. En septembre 2012, elle a annoncé son intention d'augmenter les droits à l'importation frappant six lignes tarifaires (pour le fromage, la viande bovine et la viande d'agneau) en imposant non plus des droits spécifiques, mais des droits ad valorem. Ces augmentations sont importantes et sont entrées en vigueur le 1er janvier 2013.

Selon la Commission, ces mesures sont contraires aux objectifs de l'article 19 de l'accord EEE et du dernier accord bilatéral conclu en vertu dudit article, qui prévoient tous deux une libéralisation progressive des échanges. Elles sont cependant conformes aux engagements contractés par la Norvège dans le cadre de l'OMC.

La Commission a également examiné les effets sur les échanges de ces hausses de droits. Elle estime qu'à court et moyen terme, l'impact économique global du remplacement des droits spécifiques par des droits ad valorem sera limité, les importations pouvant être couvertes par les contingents à droits nuls historiques attribués à l'UE. Des informations détaillées sur les concessions applicables aux échanges de produits agricoles entre l'UE et la Norvège figurent dans les accords bilatéraux conclus sur la base de l'article 19 de l'accord EEE ([1]).

Toutefois, à plus long terme, les nouveaux tarifs pourraient limiter la croissance des exportations de l'Union vers la Norvège pour les produits concernés.

La Commission étudie les mesures qui pourraient être prises au niveau bilatéral pour contrer ce changement de politique et en tiendra compte également dans ses relations avec la Norvège dans d'autres domaines.

([1]) Accord le plus récent: «Accord sous forme d'échange de lettres entre l'Union européenne et le Royaume de Norvège concernant l'octroi de préférences commerciales supplémentaires pour des produits agricoles, sur la base de l'article 19 de l'accord sur l'Espace économique européen», JO L 327 du 9.12.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007900/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Norwegian duties increase on agricultural products

Norwegian customs duties on imports of EU agricultural products have increased.

What is the Commission's position on this issue?

Has the Commission assessed the potential negative effects of the increased duties on EU exporters and farmers or does it intend to do so?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

On 1 July 2012 Norway reclassified Hydrangea macrophylla (garden type of hortensia) and by doing so increased the import duty from 0 to 72%. In September 2012 Norway announced its intention to increase import duties for six tariff lines (for cheese, beef and lamb meat) by switching from specific to ad-valorem duties. The increases are significant and entered into force on 1 January 2013.

In the Commission's view the measures are contrary to the objectives of Art. 19 of the EEA Agreement and the latest bilateral Agreement under Article 19 of the EEA Agreement, which both foresee progressive trade liberalisation. However, they are within Norway's WTO commitments.

The Commission has also assessed the effects on trade of the duty increases. The Commission estimates that in the short to medium term the overall economic impact of the switch of duties will be limited as imports can be accommodated under historical duty free quotas attributed to the EU. Details on the concessions applying for trade in agricultural products between the EU and Norway can be found in the bilateral agreements reached on the basis of Article 19 of the EEA Agreement ([1]).

However, in the longer term the new tariffs could put a limit to the growth of EU exports to Norway for the products concerned.

The Commission is considering what can be done bilaterally to counter this policy change and will also take it into account in other areas of our relations with Norway.

([1]) Most recent agreement: 'Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway concerning additional trade preferences in agricultural products reached on the basis of Article 19 of the Agreement on the European Economic Area', OJ L 327, 9.12.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007901/13
alla Commissione
Lara Comi (PPE) e Susy De Martini (ECR)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Implicazioni europee per il programma PRISM

L'esistenza di un programma, noto con il nome di PRISM, dell'Agenzia per la Sicurezza Nazionale (NSA) statunitense, che prevedeva l'accesso a dati personali in nome della sicurezza, è ormai nota a tutti. Secondo fonti giornalistiche, pare anche che siano stati controllati cittadini europei.

Per quanto di sua conoscenza, può la Commissione riferire:

— se tali notizie corrispondono al vero;

— se in caso affermativo si tratta di comportamenti giustificati da norme che l'UE riconosce e che si applicano anche a cittadini europei;

— se sta conducendo ulteriori indagini;

— se è possibile conoscerne i risultati e in caso negativo se può fornire spiegazioni?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(2 settembre 2013)

La Commissione rinvia l'onorevole parlamentare alla propria risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-007934/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007901/13
to the Commission
Lara Comi (PPE) and Susy De Martini (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Implications of the Prism programme for Europe

The existence of the Prism surveillance programme, which was set up by the US National Security Agency (NSA) with the aim of gaining access to personal data in the interests of security, is now known to all. According to press reports, EU citizens also appear to have been targeted.

Can the Commission say whether this is indeed the case?

If it is, can it say whether such activities are permitted under any EU-recognised provisions that apply to EU citizens?

Is the Commission looking further into the matter?

If so, will its findings be published, and if not, why not?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Commision would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007934/2013.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007903/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Nuevas revelaciones de Edward Snowden

El periplo de Edward Snowden por el continente asiático buscando asilo político ante la persecución del país más poderoso del mundo continúa produciendo noticias de impacto con la revelación de nuevos datos e información sobre los excesos y violaciones del Derecho internacional que los servicios de espionaje de los Estados Unidos han cometido en los últimos años.

El ciudadano norteamericano se encuentra ahora mismo en Moscú a la espera de encontrar asilo político en alguno de los 21 países donde lo ha solicitado, donde el ex espía pretende escapar de la persecución a la que está siendo sometido por sus revelaciones sobre el programa de escuchas internacionales de la Agencia de Seguridad Nacional (NSA). En las últimas revelaciones que Snowden realizó al periódico Alemán *Der Spiegel* se afirma que EE.UU. está espiando a la mayoría de sus aliados europeos e incluso a la propia delegación de la Unión Europea en Washington.

Las nuevas filtraciones de los documentos que se encuentran en poder de Snowden muestran una situación de auténtica guerra fría donde los propios Estados miembros de la Unión Europea han recibido el trato de enemigos. Los servicios secretos de EE.UU. llevan espiando durante años la propia sede del Consejo desde una sección especial del propio cuartel de la OTAN reservada para los agentes del NSA.

La Comisaria de Justicia y Derechos Fundamentales, Viviane Reding, ha exigido que EE.UU. dé explicaciones por la violación masiva de derechos de ciudadanos europeos. El Presidente del Parlamento Europeo ha sostenido que, de confirmarse, las revelaciones del informático de la CIA tendrán un grave impacto en las relaciones entre la UE y EE.UU. y se siguen sumando declaraciones indignadas de altos cargos de la UE, pero no se plantea ninguna contrapartida.

— ¿Considera que se deben detener las negociaciones del Acuerdo de Asociación Transatlántico hasta que se esclarezcan las responsabilidades de las violaciones cometidas por la NSA y el Gobierno de los EE.UU. y explique su comportamiento?

— ¿Considera adecuado, teniendo en cuenta los intereses de los Estados miembros de la UE, firmar un Acuerdo de Asociación con un país que considera a la Unión Europea como «objetivo» de su espionaje?

— ¿Controlará y dará seguimiento de forma más exigente a los ciudadanos estadounidenses que formen parte de cuerpos diplomáticos y militares en territorio europeo para garantizar que no se traten de agentes especializados de la NSA u otros servicios secretos estadounidenses?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. De Guchten en nombre de la Comisión
(3 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión está preocupada por las noticias aparecidas en los medios de comunicación según las cuales las autoridades de los Estados Unidos acceden a datos y han intervenido las comunicaciones de los ciudadanos europeos que utilizan los principales proveedores estadounidenses de servicios en línea. La Comisión ha solicitado aclaraciones del Gobierno de los Estados Unidos en lo que respecta a los programas mencionados en los medios de comunicación y sus posibles consecuencias para los derechos fundamentales de los ciudadanos de la UE.

La Asociación Transatlántica de Comercio e Inversión (ATCI) constituye una ambiciosa negociación de enorme importancia para la UE y su economía. La Comisión ha dejado claro que, aunque las negociaciones comerciales entre la UE y los EE.UU. no deben verse afectadas por estas revelaciones, tiene que haber confianza, transparencia y claridad entre los socios para que esta negociación tan global y ambiciosa tenga éxito. A este respecto, la Comisión ha puesto en marcha, en paralelo, un grupo de trabajo *ad hoc* UE-EE.UU. sobre protección de datos encargado de examinar detenidamente estos asuntos. De esta manera, la Comisión ha recibido el apoyo de otras instituciones europeas y de los Estados miembros. La Comisión informará de nuevo al Parlamento Europeo y al Consejo.

El 9 de julio de 2013, el Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior informó a la Comisión de Asuntos Exteriores del Parlamento Europeo sobre las medidas de seguridad adoptadas como consecuencia de lo que ha manifestado la prensa sobre la vigilancia por parte de los EE.UU. de los locales diplomáticos de la UE, en una sesión restringida. Las instituciones no revelan públicamente los detalles de sus medidas de seguridad.

(Slovenské znenie)

Otázka na písomné zodpovedanie E-008998/13
Komisii
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(23. júla 2013)

Vec: Vzťahy medzi EÚ a USA

Vzťahy medzi Európskou úniou a Spojenými štátmi americkými sú napäté po odhalení rozsiahleho odpočúvania priestorov európskych inštitúcií americkou tajnou službou NSA. Ak by sa potvrdili tieto informácie, znamenalo by to vážne narušenie priateľských vzťahov medzi EÚ a USA. V konečnom dôsledku by mohlo dôjsť k ohrozeniu pripravovaných rokovaní o vytvorení zóny voľného obchodu. Zóna voľného obchodu by vytvorila tisíce nových pracovných miest a podporila rast. Týkala by sa viac ako 800 miliónov ľudí. Práve v čase krízy je potrebné hľadať efektívne a účinné riešenia na boj s nezamestnanosťou a všetkými dostupnými prostriedkami podporovať opatrenia v záujme rastu. Lídri zúčastnených strán by mali promptne reagovať a vyriešiť nezodpovedané otázky, pretože vznik zóny voľného obchodu je obrovskou šancou na zlepšenie životnej úrovne miliónov ľudí.

Je podľa názoru Komisie v súvislosti s kauzou NSA ohrozené vytvorenie zóny voľného obchodu medzi EÚ a USA?

Spoločná odpoveď pána de Guchta v mene Komisie
(3. septembra 2013)

Komisia je znepokojená mediálnymi správami, že Spojené štáty získavajú a spracúvajú údaje európskych občanov, ktorí využívajú hlavných poskytovateľov online služieb USA. Komisia požiadala vládu USA o vysvetlenie, pokiaľ ide o programy uvedené v mediálnych správach a ich potenciálny dosah na základné práva občanov EÚ.

Transatlantické partnerstvo v oblasti obchodu a investícií (TTIP) predstavuje ambiciózne vyjednávanie, ktoré je mimoriadne dôležité pre EÚ a jej hospodárstvo. Komisia jasne deklarovala, že hoci obchodné rokovania medzi EÚ a USA by nemali byť dotknuté týmito odhaleniami, medzi partnermi musí panovať dôvera, transparentnosť a jasné vzťahy, aby bolo toto komplexné a ambiciózne vyjednávanie úspešné. V tejto súvislosti Komisia zároveň zriadila pracovnú skupinu EÚ-USA pre ochranu údajov, ktorá má bližšie preskúmať tieto záležitosti. V rámci tohto postupu Komisiu podporili aj ostatné európske inštitúcie a členské štáty. Komisia zasa následne podá správu Európskemu parlamentu a Rade.

Dňa 9. júla 2013 Európska služba pre vonkajšiu činnosť na neverejnom stretnutí podala krátku informáciu Výboru Európskeho parlamentu pre zahraničné veci (AFET Committee) o bezpečnostných opatreniach prijatých v reakcii na podozrenia zverejnené v tlači o sledovaní diplomatických priestorov EÚ zo strany USA. Inštitúcie však nezverejňujú podrobnosti o svojich bezpečnostných opatreniach.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007903/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: New revelations by Edward Snowden

Edward Snowden's journey around the Asian continent seeking political asylum from pursuit by the most powerful country in the world continues to hit the headlines as he reveals new data and information on how US espionage services have abused and breached international law in recent years.

Snowden is now in Moscow hoping to find political asylum in one of the 21 countries to which he has applied and where the US citizen and former CIA computer expert and spy hopes to escape the pursuit caused by his revelations about the National Security Agency's (NSA) international surveillance programme. In Snowden's latest revelations, published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, he states that the US is spying on most of its European allies and even on the EU's delegation in Washington.

The latest leaks from documents in Snowden's possession reveal a situation reminiscent of the cold war, in which even EU Member States have been treated as enemies. The US's secret services have been spying on the Council's seat for years from a special section of the NATO building that is reserved for NSA agents.

The Commissioner for Justice and Fundamental Rights, Viviane Reding, has demanded that the US explain the massive violation of EU citizens' rights. Parliament's President has declared that, if confirmed, Snowden's revelations will have a serious impact on EU-US relations. Senior EU officials continue to issue indignant statements. But none of these have met with any response.

— Does the Commission believe negotiations on the Transatlantic Partnership Agreement should be halted until it becomes clear where responsibility lies for the NSA's violations and the US Government has explained its behaviour?

— Bearing in mind EU Member States' interests, does the Commission consider it appropriate to sign a partnership agreement with a country that views the European Union as a 'target' for its espionage?

— Will there be more stringent checks and monitoring of US citizens who are on EU territory as members of the diplomatic corps and the military, in order to ensure that they are not specialist agents working for the NSA or any of the US's other secret services?

Question for written answer E-008998/13
to the Commission
Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)
(23 July 2013)

Subject: Relations between the EU and the USA

Relations between the European Union and the United States have been strained since the revelation of widespread eavesdropping on the premises of European institutions by the American secret service, the National Security Agency (NSA). If this information were confirmed, it would mean a serious disruption of the friendly relations between the EU and the USA. Ultimately, it could endanger the negotiations under way on the creation of a free trade zone. The free trade zone would create thousands of new jobs and foster growth. It would involve more than 800 million people. It is precisely in times of crisis that effective and efficient solutions must be sought to combat unemployment and to support measures for growth using all available means. The leaders of the parties involved should react promptly and resolve unanswered questions, because the creation of a free trade area is a huge opportunity to improve the living standards of millions of people.

With regard to the NSA case, is it the Commission's view that the creation of the EU-US free trade zone has been jeopardised?

Joint answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(3 September 2013)

The Commission is concerned about media reports that United States authorities are accessing and processing data of European citizens using major US online service providers. The Commission has requested clarification from the US Government regarding the programmes reported in the media and their potential impact on the fundamental rights of EU citizens.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) represents an ambitious negotiation of major importance for the EU and its economy. The Commission has made clear that while EU/US trade negotiations should not be affected by these revelations, there needs to be confidence, transparency and clarity between partners for such a comprehensive and ambitious negotiation to succeed. In this regard, the Commission has set up, in parallel, an ad-hoc EU-US working group on data protection to examine these issues further. In pursuing this approach, the Commission has been supported by other European institutions and by the Member States.The Commission will report back to the European dParliament and the Council.

On 9 July 2013, the European External Action Service briefed the AFET Committee of the European Parliament on the security measures taken in the aftermath of the press allegations about US surveillance of EU diplomatic premises, in a restricted session. The institutions do not publicly disclose the details of their security measures.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-007905/13
adresată Comisiei
Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D)
(3 iulie 2013)

Subiect: Supraviețuitorii Thalidomidei

Thalidomida este un medicament puternic, care a fost prescris femeilor însărcinate în perioada 1950-1960, contra grețurilor matinale. Acest medicament a condus la decesul a mii de copii și la nașterea unui mare număr de copii cu brațe și picioare scurte și cu alte malformații congenitale grave. Toți copiii supraviețuitori, în prezent cvincvagenari, au dus o existență marcată de suferințe și stigmatizare.

Grunenthal GmbH, întreprinderea germană care a produs acest medicament, și-a prezentat scuze victimelor thalidomidei de abia la 50 de ani de la comiterea greșelii. Grunenthal și-a exprimat regretele de abia în septembrie 2012.

Consider că este corect să se plătească compensații financiare tuturor acestor persoane și familiilor acestora. Grunenthal nu poate să le redea o viață normală, dar poate, măcar acum, să ia măsurile pe care ar fi trebuit să le ia acum 50 de ani și să furnizeze compensații financiare victimelor thalidomidei.

Având în vedere că drepturile unor mii de persoane de a trăi o viață normală au fost răpite de acest medicament și de cei care au făcut posibilă introducerea pe piață a unui produs care nu era testat suficient și adecvat, aș dori să adresez următoarea întrebare:

Ce măsuri a luat Comisia în sprijinul victimelor thalidomidei și al familiilor acestora, pentru a le ajuta să facă față acestei poveri? Ce măsuri intenționează Comisia să ia pentru a convinge întreprinderea Grunenthal de datoria pe care o are de a oferi compensații financiare victimelor sale?

Răspuns dat de dl Borg în numele Comisiei
(5 august 2013)

Tragedia thalidomidei a fost unul dintre principalele motive pentru elaborarea legislației farmaceutice a UE, care a fost îmbunătățită de atunci pentru a garanta că medicamentele introduse pe piață respectă standarde înalte de calitate și de siguranță.

Comisia are cunoștință de faptul că unele state membre au instituit sisteme de compensare pentru cetățenii care au fost afectați de utilizarea thalidomidei.

Definirea politicii de sănătate, precum și organizarea și prestarea de servicii de sănătate și de îngrijire medicală, inclusiv gestionarea acestora și repartizarea resurselor care le sunt alocate constituie o competență a statelor membre, în conformitate cu articolul 168 din TFUE. Ca atare, sistemele de compensare a daunelor nu țin de competența UE. Prin urmare, Comisia nu este în măsură să stabilească un cadru de compensare la nivel european.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007905/13
to the Commission
Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Thalidomide survivors

Thalidomide is a powerful drug prescribed during the 1950s and 1960s to pregnant women for morning sickness. This drug has led to the deaths of tens of thousands of babies and a wave of babies born with shortened arms and legs and other serious birth defects. All the survivor babies, now in their 50s, have had to struggle with a life of pain and stigmatisation.

Grunenthal GmbH, the German company that produced this drug, came forward and apologised to the thalidomide victims only 50 years after the mistake was made. Grunenthal expressed their regrets only in September 2012.

I think it is right that financial compensation should be paid to all these people and their families. Grunenthal cannot bring back their normal lives, but it can, at least now, take the measures it should have taken 50 years ago and provide financial compensation for the victims of thalidomide use.

Given that the right of thousands of people to live a normal life has been taken away by this medication and by those that made it possible to put a product on the market that was not sufficiently and adequately tested, I would like to ask the following question:

What measures has the Commission taken to support the victims of thalidomide and their families to help them cope with their burden? What measures is the Commission going to take in order to convince Grunenthal of its duty to offer financial compensation to its victims?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The Thalidomide tragedy was one of the main reasons for setting up the EU pharmaceutical legislation, which has been improved ever since to ensure that medicinal products that are placed on the market have high standards of quality and safety.

The Commission is aware that some Member States have established compensation schemes for citizens that have been affected by the use of thalidomide.

The definition of health policy, as well as the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care, including their management and the allocation of the resources assigned to them, is a Member State competence under Article 168 of the TFEU. As such, injury compensation schemes are not a matter of EU competence. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to establish a framework for compensation at European level.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007906/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Faillite du secteur automobile européen

L'inquiétude va rester très forte concernant l'avenir des sites industriels liés au secteur automobile en Europe, après la publication de la dernière étude du cabinet AlixPartners. Selon ses estimations de l'an dernier, 40 % des usines européennes avaient tourné sous leur seuil de rentabilité en 2011. Mais, cette année, la situation s'est encore aggravée, puisque 58 des 100 principales chaînes de production seront sous-utilisées en 2013. La situation est d'autant plus inquiétante que l'étude table sur une poursuite de la dégradation du marché jusqu'en 2014, où le point bas devrait être touché, et surtout ne voit pas de reprise avant 2019. Au final, cela fait encore six années de vaches maigres sur le Vieux Continent. Certains parviennent toutefois à tirer leur épingle du jeu. La Grande-Bretagne ou l'Allemagne affichent ainsi des taux d'utilisation de 86 % et 81 %, respectivement, quand le seuil de sous-utilisation est de 75 %. Ces deux pays bénéficient du succès de quelques usines de très grande capacité (Nissan, Volkswagen) mais également de leur capacité à remplir des petites unités avec des modèles premium (Land Rover-Jaguar, Audi ou BMW). En revanche, la situation est très difficile en Espagne (taux d'utilisation de 67 %), en France (62 %) et surtout en Italie où la situation devient critique avec un niveau d'utilisation des usines d'à peine 46 %.

Conséquence: l'écart se creuse entre les constructeurs qui s'en sortent et ceux qui sont en difficulté. Ces derniers n'ont plus les moyens financiers d'innover dans le segment haut de gamme, le plus attractif. En revanche, ils sont contraints, afin de renouveler leur gamme, de dépenser de l'argent dans le segment à fort volume, qui souffre le plus.

La faiblesse des ventes en Europe représente également une menace pour les réseaux de distribution. L'étude estime que 75 % des distributeurs italiens sont dans le rouge et qu'une réduction de 10 % à 40 % des points de vente sera nécessaire dans les prochaines années.

1. Quelle est la réaction de la Commission?

2. À combien estime-t-elle les pertes d'emplois?

3. N'estime-t-elle pas que les accords passés avec les concurrents asiatiques portent une part de responsabilité dans ce douloureux constat?

Réponse donnée par M. Tajani au nom de la Commission
(4 septembre 2013)

La situation difficile de l'industrie automobile en Europe est une source de vive préoccupation pour la Commission. Le secteur, ainsi que l'ensemble de sa chaîne d'approvisionnement et de distribution, revêt une importance stratégique pour la prospérité, la R&D et l'emploi. Dans le plan d'action CARS 2020 ([1]), la Commission a présenté un certain nombre d'actions concrètes (financement de la recherche, amélioration des conditions du marché, internationalisation et promotion de l'investissement dans les compétences) en faveur de la compétitivité à long terme et de la croissance durable du secteur.

Ces initiatives ne sauraient remplacer la nécessité éventuelle d'une adaptation à court terme des capacités de production et de distribution en Europe, ce qui a été reconnu par les parties prenantes. La baisse continue des ventes, qui n'a pu être totalement compensée par les exportations, a entraîné des diminutions de la production. Plusieurs entreprises ont engagé des processus de restructuration qui aboutiront à une réduction définitive des capacités de production en Europe. Les estimations fluctuantes relatives à la surcapacité structurelle concluent à l'existence de cinq à dix sites «redondants» en Europe.

([1]) COM(2012) 636 final.

En ce qui concerne les accords commerciaux avec les pays asiatiques, le seul accord finalisé à ce jour, conclu avec la Corée du Sud, est suivi de près par la Commission. Selon les premières indications, il ne saurait être tenu pour responsable de l'état actuel des choses. Le plan d'action CARS 2020 a souligné que l'industrie de l'UE occupait une position très forte dans le commerce international et tirait parti des débouchés commerciaux offerts par les pays tiers. En 2012, l'UE a enregistré un excédent d'exportation de 84 milliards d'euros pour les voitures et de 130 milliards d'euros pour l'ensemble du secteur. Étant donné que cette situation ne peut cependant pas être considérée comme acquise, la Commission s'emploie à garantir des conditions de concurrence équitables par des mesures de politique commerciale (accès au marché et harmonisation de la réglementation).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007906/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Collapse of the European car industry

Serious concerns continue to hang over the future of car plants in Europe, following the publication of the latest study by the consultancy firm AlixPartners. According to the firm's estimates from last year, 40% of European plants had operated under their profitability threshold in 2011. However, the situation is even worse this year, as 58 of the top 100 production lines will be underutilised in 2013. The situation is all the more worrying given that the study expects the market to continue declining until 2014, when it should bottom out, and, in particular, does not foresee the market recovering until 2019 at the earliest. Ultimately, that means six more lean years for Europe. Some, however, have managed to perform well. The United Kingdom and Germany have utilisation rates of 86% and 81%, respectively; the underutilisation threshold is 75%. Both countries benefit from the success of a few very large plants (Nissan, Volkswagen) and their capacity to fill small units with premium models (Land Rover-Jaguar, Audi and BMW). Conversely, the situation is very challenging in Spain (utilisation rate of 67%), in France (62%) and particularly in Italy, where the situation is becoming critical with a plant utilisation level of barely 46%.

The result of all this is that the gap is widening between those manufacturers that are getting by and those that are in difficulty. Those that are in difficulty can no longer afford to innovate at the top of the range, which is the most attractive segment. Instead, in order to renew their range, they are forced to spend money in the high-volume segment, which is suffering the most.

Weak sales in Europe also pose a threat to distribution networks. According to the study, an estimated 75% of Italian distributors are in the red and between 10% and 40% of sales outlets will have to close in the next few years.

1. What does the Commission have to say in response to this?

2. How many jobs does it think will be lost?

3. Does it not think that agreements concluded with Asian competitors are partly to blame for this sorry state of affairs?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

The difficult situation of the automotive industry in Europe is of deep concern to the Commission. The sector, with its entire supply and distribution chain, is of strategic importance for prosperity, R&D and jobs. In the CARS 2020 Action Plan ([1]), the Commission presented a number of concrete actions (financing of research, improvement of market conditions, internationalisation and promoting investments in skills), for the long-term competitiveness and sustainable growth of the sector.

This work cannot replace the possible need for short term adaptation of the production and distribution capabilities in Europe, and this has been recognised by stakeholders. The continued decline of sales that could not be fully compensated by exports has led to reductions in production. Several companies have embarked on restructuring processes, which will lead to a permanent reduction of production capacity in Europe. While estimations vary, in terms of structural overcapacity, there are between 5 and 10 'redundant' sites in Europe.

As for trade agreements with Asian countries, the only finalised agreement, with South Korea, is being closely monitored by the Commission. First indications are that it cannot be blamed for the current state of affairs. The CARS 2020 Action Plan highlighted the very strong position of EU industry in international trade and the benefits from market opportunities in third markets. In 2012, the EU had an export surplus of EUR 84 billion in cars and of EUR 130 billion for the sector as a whole. Given that this situation cannot be taken for granted however, the Commission is committed to ensuring a level playing field via trade policy (market access and regulatory harmonisation).

([1]) COM(2012) 636 final.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007907/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Conséquences de la disparition de l'itinérance

Le Parlement européen et de nombreux collègues se sont réjouis que la commissaire chargée des nouvelles technologies se fasse l'écho de leurs demandes d'abolir les tarifs d'itinérance en Europe dès 2014.

1. La Commission peut elle confirmer que le paquet législatif sera bien proposé en juillet comme annoncé?

2. Planche-t-elle déjà pour empêcher les opérateurs de compenser par d'autres augmentations de tarif le manque à gagner sur les frais perçus pour l'instant grâce à l'itinérance?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(9 août 2013)

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se reporter à la réponse apportée à la question E-006758/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007907/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Consequences of an end to roaming

Parliament and a great many colleagues were delighted to hear the Commissioner with responsibility for new technologies repeat their calls for roaming charges to be abolished in Europe as from 2014.

1. Can the Commission confirm that the legislative package will indeed be proposed in July as announced?

2. Is it already working on preventing operators from offsetting the loss of current earnings from roaming by increasing other charges?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answer given in reply to Question E-006758/2013 ([1]).

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

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007908/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Déclaration de guerre et gaz sarin

«Si l'Europe livre des armes aux rebelles, elle en paiera le prix». C'est la dernière déclaration choc du président syrien Bachar el-Assad qui devrait aller droit au cœur de ses plus chauds partisans.

Dans une interview au quotidien allemand *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, le chef de l'État enfonce le clou: en armant les insurgés, «l'Europe verra son arrière-cour devenir un terrain pour le terrorisme et ce terrorisme s'exportera en Europe».

Bachar el-Assad rejette par ailleurs les accusations occidentales concernant l'usage de gaz sarin.

1. Comment le Conseil réagit-il face aux propos du chef de l'État syrien tant sur la vente d'armes que sur le terrorisme?

2. Quels éléments permettent à l'Europe d'être sûre que les autorités syriennes disposent du gaz sarin? Même si les actes du gouvernement el-Assad sont intolérables, ne faut-il pas tout faire pour que notre réaction se base sur des raisons légitimes (et elles ne manquent pas)? En Irak, on cherche encore les armes de destruction massive de Saddam Hussein.

Réponse
(16 septembre 2013)

Le Conseil n'a pas adopté de position spécifiquement en réponse aux propos cités par l'Honorable Parlementaire. La question de l'éventuelle exportation d'armes à destination de la Syrie est traitée dans les conclusions que le Conseil a adoptées lors de sa session du 27 mai 2013. Dans ces même conclusions, le Conseil s'est vivement inquiété de l'utilisation possible d'armes chimiques en Syrie et a déclaré que l'utilisation de ces armes par quiconque et en quelque circonstance que ce soit est totalement inacceptable. D'une manière générale, l'UE attache de l'importance à la mission chargée par le Secrétaire général des Nations unies d'enquêter sur l'utilisation présumée d'armes chimiques dans le pays et elle a engagé les autorités syriennes à coopérer pleinement à l'enquête et à permettre aux enquêteurs d'accéder sans délai, sans restrictions et sans entraves à l'ensemble du pays.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007908/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Declaration of war and the use of sarin gas

'Europe will pay the price if it delivers arms to rebel forces in Syria'. This is the latest shocking remark from the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, which is likely to stir up emotions amongst his staunchest supporters.

In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a German daily newspaper, the leader drove his point home by saying that if Europe arms the rebels, Europe's backyard will become a haven for terrorists and this terrorism will spread to Europe.

In other respects, Bashar al-Assad denies Western allegations that his forces have used sarin gas.

1. What position does the Council take on the remarks made by the Syrian leader concerning the sale of arms and the spread of terrorism?

2. How can Europe be sure that the Syrian Government's forces are equipped with sarin gas? Even though the acts committed by the al-Assad government are intolerable, should every effort not be made to ensure that our response is based on legitimate grounds (and there are many)? In Iraq, the search goes on for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The Council has not adopted any position in response specifically to the remarks quoted by the Honourable Member. The question relating to the possible export of arms to Syria is dealt with in the position of the Council set out in the conclusions adopted at its meeting on 27 May 2013. In those same conclusions the Council expressed its great concern regarding the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria, and stated that the use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is completely unacceptable. In general the EU attaches importance to the role of the fact-finding mission established by the UN Secretary-General to investigate the allegations of use of chemical weapons in Syria, and has called on the Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with the investigation and allow it full and unfettered access throughout the country without delay.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007909/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Gaz sarin

«Si l'Europe livre des armes aux rebelles, elle en paiera le prix». C'est la dernière déclaration choc du président syrien Bachar el-Assad qui devrait aller droit au cœur de ses plus chauds partisans.

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

Depuis le 1er juin 2013, l'éventualité d'exportations d'armes vers la Syrie relève de la politique nationale des États membres. Il convient de noter à cet égard que, le 27 mai 2013, les États membres ont fait savoir, dans une déclaration du Conseil sur la Syrie, qu'ils mèneront leur politique nationale sur la base de critères stricts, conformément à l'actuel code de conduite en matière d'exportation d'armements. Ces exportations concernent uniquement la coalition de l'opposition syrienne, elles viseront à protéger les civils et seront assorties de garanties sur l'identité des utilisateurs finaux. Aucun État membre n'a déclaré publiquement avoir exporté ou avoir l'intention d'exporter des armes destinées à l'opposition syrienne dans un avenir proche.

La Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante est tout à fait consciente du fait que des citoyens de l'Union rejoignent les groupes armés en Syrie. Le coordinateur de l'UE pour la lutte contre le terrorisme a amélioré la coordination entre les États membres sur le suivi de la situation et sur la manière d'associer autrement les recrues potentielles à l'aide apportée aux Syriens dans le besoin. Les recommandations sont nombreuses et la Commission, la haute représentante/vice-présidente et le Conseil continueront d'œuvrer à leur élaboration correcte.

La Syrie a annoncé publiquement qu'elle disposait d'un programme d'armes chimiques, mais elle n'a pas précisé qu'elle possédait du gaz sarin. Le porte-parole de la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante a publié une déclaration sur l'évaluation par les États-Unis de l'utilisation d'armes chimiques en Syrie ([1]).

À l'heure actuelle, faute de déploiement réussi d'une mission de vérification des Nations unies, il est difficile de confirmer la possession et l'utilisation d'armes chimiques, y compris de gaz sarin, par l'une ou l'autre partie. L'UE continuera à encourager vivement la Syrie à adhérer à la convention sur les armes chimiques et à ratifier la convention sur les armes biologiques de toute urgence.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137474.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007909/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Use of sarin gas

'Europe will pay the price if it delivers arms to rebel forces in Syria'. This is the latest shocking remark from the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, which is likely to stir up emotions amongst his staunchest supporters.

In an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a German daily newspaper, the leader drove his point home by saying that if Europe arms the rebels, Europe's backyard will become a haven for terrorists and this terrorism will spread to Europe.

In other respects, Bashar al-Assad denies Western allegations that his forces have used sarin gas.

1. What position does the Commission take on the remarks made by the Syrian leader concerning the sale of arms and the spread of terrorism?

2. How can Europe be sure that the Syrian Government's forces are equipped with sarin gas? Even though the acts committed by the al-Assad government are intolerable, should every effort not be made to ensure that our response is based on legitimate grounds (and there are many)? In Iraq, the search goes on for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction.

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

Since 1 June 2013 possible export of arms to Syria has been a matter of Member States' national policies. It is noted in this respect that Member States on 27 May 2013 in a Council Declaration on Syria have declared that they will proceed in their national policies on the basis of strict criteria, in accordance with the existing Code of Conduct for control of arms exports, only for the Syrian Opposition Coalition and for the protection of civilians and with guarantees about who the end-users will be. No Member State has publicly stated that it has exported or has plans to export arms to Syrian opposition in near future.

The HR/VP is very well aware of the fact that EU citizens join armed groups in Syria. The EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator has improved coordination among Member States on monitoring the situation and ways to involve potential recruits in alternative ways to assist Syrians in need. The recommendations are numerous and the work on their proper elaboration will continue by the Commission, the HR/VP, and the Council.

Syria has publicly announced that it has a chemical weapons programme but it had not specifically mentioned possessing sarin. The HR/VP Spokesperson has released a statement on the US assessment of chemical weapons use in Syria ([1]).

At this time, without a successful deployment of a UN verification mission, it is difficult to confirm the possession and use of chemical weapons, including sarin, by either side. The EU will continue to urge Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to ratify the Biological Weapons Convention as a matter of urgency.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137474.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007910/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Contraction en zone euro

Selon les principaux résultats des enquêtes Markit menées auprès des directeurs d'achat du secteur en Europe en mars, publiés jeudi, en version flash, la contraction de l'activité du secteur privé de la zone euro s'est atténuée plus que prévu en juin, mais la baisse continue des nouvelles commandes suggère que la reprise de la région est encore loin. L'indice PMI flash composite est remonté à 48,9 contre 47,7, au plus haut depuis mars 2012, dépassant le consensus Reuters qui le donnait à 48,1. Le tableau le plus encourageant ne concerne ni la France ni l'Allemagne, le reste de la région montrant le plus faible rythme de contraction depuis deux ans, et cette contraction n'est que modeste.

1. La Commission partage-t-elle cette analyse?

2. La Commission confirme-t-elle qu'à ce rythme, nous devrions assister à une stabilisation au troisième trimestre et à un retour de la croissance au quatrième trimestre?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(31 juillet 2013)

La Commission surveille de près l'évolution d'un nombre important d'indicateurs à court terme permettant d'analyser la situation économique de l'UE et de la zone euro. L'indice PMI composite Markit relatif à l'activité de la zone euro et ses composantes figurent parmi ces indicateurs.

Cet indice a connu une hausse de 0,8 point en mai et d'un point en juin (atteignant respectivement 47,7 et 48,7). L'indicateur de climat économique mis au point par la Commission pour la zone euro a également enregistré des augmentations (de respectivement 0,9 et 1,8 point, pour atteindre 91,3 en juin). Ces chiffres confirment les prévisions de la Commission du printemps 2013 selon lesquelles l'économie de la zone euro devrait connaître une reprise très lente cette année et la croissance du PIB devrait devenir positive durant la seconde moitié de l'année.

Selon ces mêmes prévisions (publiées le 3 mai 2013), le PIB annuel dans la zone euro devrait reculer de ½ % en 2013. En 2014, la croissance du PIB dans la zone euro devrait atteindre 1¼ %.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007910/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Contraction in the eurozone

Data from Markit's Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) surveys released on Thursday show that, contrary to forecasts, the decline in private sector output in the eurozone eased off in June, but falling numbers of new orders suggest that recovery is still some way off. The Flash Eurozone PMI Composite Output Index reached 48.9 in June (its highest point since March 2012), as opposed to 47.7 in May, and exceeded the Reuters consensus level of 48.1. The most encouraging figures are for eurozone countries excluding France and Germany, which saw output falling at its slowest rate for two years, signifying a marked easing in the rate of contraction.

1. Would the Commission agree with this analysis of the situation?

2. Would the Commission say that at this rate we should see a stabilisation over the third quarter and a return to growth in the fourth quarter of this year?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(31 July 2013)

The Commission monitors closely the evolution of a large number of short-term indicators to assess the economic situation of the EU and the euro area. Markit's Composite Output PMI for the euro area and its components are among these indicators.

The increases in the Composite Output PMI in May (up 0.8 pt. to 47.7) and June (up 1.0 pt. to 48.7), but also the increases in the Commission's Economic Sentiment Indicator for the euro area (up 0.9 and 1.8 pt. to 91.3 in June) confirm the Commission's spring 2013 forecast of the euro area economy picking up speed very slowly in the course of this year with GDP growth turning positive in the second half of the year.

According to the Commission's spring 2013 forecast (released on 3 May 2013), annual GDP in 2013 is projected to contract by ½ % in the euro area. For 2014, GDP growth is forecast at 1¼ % in the euro area.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007911/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: L'économie numérique européenne à la traîne

L'Europe est très à la traîne: elle a accumulé un immense retard face aux États-Unis qui, eux, stimulent énormément leur économie numérique.

Il s'agit là d'un marché très dynamique et en très forte croissance.

1. La Commission partage-t-elle cet avis?

2. Quelles parades l'Union européenne compte-t-elle mettre en place face à la Silicon Valley pour attirer des talents?

3. Comment la Commission explique-t-elle et compte-t-elle résoudre le fait qu'il y ait si peu de start-up tournées vers la toile en Europe, que les entrepreneurs doivent se débrouiller tout seuls et que seulement 20 % des projets peuvent être considérés comme rentables?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Kroes au nom de la Commission
(12 août 2013)

La Commission estime elle aussi que l'Europe ne bénéficie pas suffisamment de l'évolution du numérique et qu'il faudrait déployer plus d'efforts pour stimuler l'économie numérique. C'est pourquoi la Commission a proposé plusieurs actions transformatrices clés dans le cadre de l'examen de la stratégie numérique ([1]). La Silicon Valley est un pôle d'innovation unique en son genre, dont le succès dépend notamment de trois facteurs importants : l'esprit d'entreprise, l'accès aux financements et les compétences. La Commission prend des mesures visant à renforcer ces éléments, voir à ce sujet la communication intitulée «Plan d'action «Entrepreneuriat 2020» ([2]). Ce plan d'action prévoit notamment des mesures spécifiques pour soutenir les entrepreneurs du web dans la création de leur entreprise et leur permettre de prospérer en Europe. Plus de précisions à ce sujet figurent dans le document de travail des services de la Commission ([3]). Élaborées dans le cadre de l'initiative «Startup Europe » ([4]), ces mesures visent à faciliter l'accès aux ressources par les entrepreneurs du web (mise en réseau, parrainage, accélération des démarches, financements), à promouvoir la culture de l'entrepreneuriat grâce à des modèles et des exemples de réussite, ainsi qu'à renforcer les compétences en matière d'Internet.

Par ailleurs, le programme «Horizon 2020» prévoit l'accès au financement en vue de favoriser la croissance des jeunes pousses. Il introduit également un nouvel instrument consacré aux PME, qui leur permet de solliciter un financement pour des projets de faisabilité et des activités de prototypage et de commercialisation.

En ce qui concerne les compétences et la valorisation des talents, la Commission a récemment lancé une grande coalition en faveur de l'emploi dans le secteur du numérique ([5]), qui devrait permettre de garantir qu'un nombre suffisant de personnes possède les compétences en TIC requises afin d'occuper les emplois créés dans le domaine de l'économie numérique.

([1]) COM(2012) 784 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 795 final du 9.1.2013.
([3]) SWD(2013)142 final du 11.4.2013 «Strengthening the environment for Web entrepreneurs in the EU».
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/startup-europe.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-digital-jobs-0.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007911/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Europe's digital economy is lagging behind

Europe is lagging far behind other economies, especially the USA, which is doing all it can to stimulate its digital economy.

The US market is very dynamic and is experiencing exceedingly strong growth.

1. Does the Commission share this view?

2. Faced with the strength of Silicon Valley, what does the EU intend to do in order to attract talent?

3. How does the Commission explain the fact that there are so few web start-ups in Europe, that entrepreneurs have to cope on their own, and that just 20% of projects are deemed profitable? What does the Commission intend to do to remedy this situation?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(12 August 2013)

The Commission shares the view that Europe is not benefiting sufficiently from digital developments and that more should be done to stimulate the digital economy. Therefore a number of key transformative actions have been proposed in the Digital Agenda Review ([1]). Silicon Valley is a unique innovation pool. Three elements are important contributors to its success: Entrepreneurial spirit, access to finance and skills. For all of these, the Commission is taking action, see also the communication on the 'Entrepreneurship 2020 Action plan' ([2]). It also includes specific actions for Web entrepreneurs to start their business in Europe and let them flourish in Europe. This is further detailed in the Staff working document ([3]). Placed under the Startup Europe initiative ([4]), the measures aim to facilitate access to resources for web entrepreneurs (networking, mentoring, acceleration, finance), promote the culture of entrepreneurship through role models and success stories, as well as increase Web skills.

In addition to this, Horizon 2020 will provide access to finance for further growth of the startups. It will introduce a new SME instrument, for SMEs to apply for funding for feasibility projects, prototyping and commercialisation.

Regarding skills and talent, the Commission has recently launched a 'Grand Coalition on Digital Skills and Jobs' ([5]). This should make sure that there will be enough people with ICT skills to fill in the jobs created by the digital economy.

([1]) COM(2012) 784 final.
([2]) COM(2012) 795 final of 9 January 2013.
([3]) SWD(2013)142 final of 11.04.2013 'Strengthening the environment for Web entrepreneurs in the EU'.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/startup-europe.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-digital-jobs-0.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007912/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Soupçons dans le domaine du fret ferroviaire

La Commission européenne a annoncé mercredi avoir procédé la veille à des inspections inopinées dans plusieurs entreprises opérant dans le secteur du fret ferroviaire dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe, qu'elle soupçonne d'entente illicite.

1. Est-il vrai que certaines entreprises ont pu violer les règles européennes interdisant les pratiques anticoncurrentielles, telles que la fixation des prix ou la répartition de la clientèle?

2. Quelles sont les entreprises et les États concernés?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(9 août 2013)

La Commission a confirmé que des inspections inopinées avaient débuté le 18 juin 2013 dans les locaux de certains prestataires de services de transport ferroviaire de marchandises vers l'Europe du Sud-Est (voir MEMO/13/586). Ces inspections étaient fondées sur des informations selon lesquelles les entreprises concernées pourraient être impliquées dans des pratiques visant à la fixation des prix et à la répartition des clients.

Les inspections surprises constituent une étape préliminaire dans les enquêtes sur des ententes présumées. Le fait que la Commission européenne organise de telles inspections ne signifie pas que les entreprises concernées sont coupables d'agissements anticoncurrentiels et ne préjuge pas de l'issue de l'enquête proprement dite.

Habituellement, la Commission ne rend pas publics le nom et l'adresse des entreprises concernées. Toutefois, Schenker AG et Rail Cargo Austria AG (filiale: Express Interfracht Internationale Spedition GmbH) ont confirmé à la presse que leurs entreprises faisaient l'objet d'une inspection ([1]).

([1]) Voir notamment http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/kartellverdacht-razzia-bei-bahnunternehmen-a-906789.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007912/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Suspicions in the rail freight sector

On Wednesday the Commission announced that it had conducted unannounced inspections the previous day on several rail freight companies in south-eastern Europe, which it suspected of being part of a conspiracy.

1. Is it true that some companies may have violated EU rules that prohibit anti-competitive practices, such as price-fixing or market-sharing?

2. Which companies and which Member States are involved?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The Commission has confirmed that unannounced inspections started on 18 June 2013 at the premises of certain providers of rail cargo transport services to south-eastern Europe (see MEMO/13/586). The inspections were based on information that the companies concerned might be involved in price-fixing and customer allocation.

Surprise inspections are a preliminary step in investigations into suspected cartels. The fact that the European Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour; nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation itself.

The Commission does not normally make public the names and locations of the companies involved. However, Schenker AG and Rail Cargo Austria AG (subsidiary: Express Interfracht Internationale Spedition GmbH) have confirmed to the press that their undertakings were inspected ([1]).

([1]) E.g. http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/kartellverdacht-razzia-bei-bahnunternehmen-a-906789.html

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007913/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Shisha stylo

Afin de plus ou moins maintenir le niveau du tabagisme parmi la population de fumeurs jeunes et adultes, les cigarettiers lancent de temps à autre des produits qui peuvent inciter les jeunes à fumer. Un de ces nouveaux produits est le shisha stylo: un narguilé en format de poche qui apprend aux enfants à fumer.

1. La Commission n'estime-t-elle pas qu'il s'agit d'une incitation à fumer?

2. La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis selon lequel ce produit devrait être retiré du marché, comme le sont les cigarettes en chocolat par exemple?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(8 août 2013)

La Commission a été informée de la mise sur le marché de «shisha stylos» dans certains États membres et considère en effet que cette situation doit faire l'objet d'une surveillance étroite étant donné que le produit pourrait encourager les jeunes à commencer à fumer.

La recommandation 2003/54/CE du Conseil ([1]) incite les États membres à interdire les confiseries et les jouets ayant l'apparence d'un type de produit du tabac. De la même manière, l'article 16 de la convention-cadre de l'OMS pour la lutte antitabac (CCLAT) ([2]) invite chaque partie à interdire la vente de confiseries, de jouets ou d'autres objets ayant la forme de produits du tabac attrayants pour les mineurs.

([1]) JO L 22/31 du 25.1.2003.
([2]) http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241591013.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007913/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Shisha pen

In order keep the number of young people and adults who smoke at roughly the same level, from time to time tobacco companies launch products that can encourage young people to smoke. One such new product is the shisha pen: a pocket-sized hookah pipe that teaches children how to smoke.

1. Does the Commission not think that this is encouraging people to smoke?

2. Does the Commission agree that this product should be taken off the market, just as chocolate cigarettes have been, for example?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2013)

The Commission has been informed about the placing on the market of so-called sisha pens in some Member States and agrees that this development needs to be monitored closely as the product could potentially encourage young people to take up smoking.

Council Recommendation 2003/54/EC ([1]) recommends Member States to prohibit sweets and toys resembling in appearance a type of tobacco product. Also Article 16 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) ([2]) calls on each Party to prohibit the sales of sweets, toys or other objects in the form of tobacco products which appeal to minors.

([1]) OJ L 22/31, 25.1.2003.
([2]) http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241591013.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007914/2013
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: eCall: appel 112 automatique

La mesure est passée grâce à deux propositions adoptées par la Commission européenne. Elle vise à permettre aux véhicules d'appeler automatiquement, dans l'Union européenne, les services d'urgence en cas d'accident grave de la circulation.

En cas d'accident grave, le système, appelé eCall, pourra composer automatiquement le 112, le numéro d'appel d'urgence unique européen, en indiquant la localisation exacte du véhicule accidenté.

1. Quelles sont les prévisions en termes de vies sauvées?

2. La Commission confirme-t-elle le chiffre d'une réduction de 50 % du délai d'intervention dans les zones rurales et de 40 % dans les zones urbaines?

Réponse donnée par Mme Kroes au nom de la Commission
(14 août 2013)

Grâce au système eCall, le temps de réaction des services d'urgence peut être réduit de 50 % dans les zones rurales et de 40 % dans les zones urbaines[1], entraînant ainsi une réduction de la mortalité estimée entre 1 % et 10 %, ainsi qu'une réduction de la gravité des blessures estimée entre 2 % et 15 %[2], en fonction des pays. Au terme de son déploiement, le système eCall pourrait permettre de sauver jusqu'à 2 500 vies par an et de réduire la gravité des lésions dues aux accidents de la route.

([1]) Analyse d'impact du système eCall, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0316:FIN:FR:PDF.

([2]) "Impact assessment on the introduction of the eCall service in all new type-approved vehicles in Europe, including liability/ legal issues", SMART 2008/55, http://www.esafetysupport.info/download/ecall_final_report.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007914/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: eCall: automatic 112 call

This measure has been approved thanks to two proposals adopted by the Commission. It aims to enable vehicles, within the European Union, to call the emergency services automatically in the event of a serious accident.

In the event of a serious accident, the system, known as eCall, will be able automatically to call 112, Europe's single emergency number, indicating the exact location of the vehicle involved in the accident.

1. How many lives is this system expected to save?

2. Can the Commission confirm that it will speed up response times by 50% in rural areas and 40% in urban areas?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

With eCall, the response time of emergency services may be reduced by 50% in rural areas and 40% in urban areas ([1]), leading to a reduction of fatalities estimated to be between 1% and 10%, and reduction of severity of injuries ([2]) between 2% and 15%, depending on the country considered. When fully deployed, eCall can save up to 2500 lives a year and alleviate severity of road injuries.

([1]) eCall Impact assessment, . http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0316:FIN:EN:PDF

([2]) 'Impact assessment on the introduction of the eCall service in all new type-approved vehicles in Europe, including liability/ legal issues', SMART 2008/55, http://www.esafetysupport.info/download/ecall_final_report.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007915/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Préserver le savoir-faire européen

1. L'Europe fait des efforts pour renforcer son attractivité. N'y a-t-il pas une forme de naïveté à accepter n'importe quel investisseur?

2. Ne faudrait-il pas une Agence européenne, comme aux États-Unis, qui effectuerait un contrôle sur les investissements et leur destination, car même si on peut accepter des investissements extra-européens, se faire voler notre savoir-faire ou fermer nos usines n'est pas acceptable?

Réponse donnée par M. Barnier au nom de la Commission
(27 août 2013)

Il est important que le marché unique de l'UE reste ouvert aux investissements car ceux-ci peuvent avoir un effet positif sur l'économie de l'État membre destinataire et de l'UE dans son ensemble. Cela est explicitement reconnu dans le traité qui, en principe, met sur un pied d'égalité les investissements en provenance de pays tiers et ceux qui proviennent de l'UE. Cependant, le traité prévoit certaines mesures restreignant les investissements pour des raisons d'ordre public et de sécurité publique, pour autant que ces mesures restent dans les limites de ce qui est propre à garantir la réalisation de l'objectif qu'elles poursuivent, n'excèdent pas ce qui est nécessaire pour l'atteindre et soient non discriminatoires.

La Commission examine actuellement différentes possibilités pour renforcer la compétitivité de l'UE pour ce qui est d'attirer les investissements étrangers tout en protégeant ses principaux intérêts en matière d'ordre public et de sécurité publique.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007915/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Safeguarding European knowhow

1. Europe is trying hard to be more attractive as a location for investment, but is it not somewhat naïve to welcome any and every investor with open arms?

2. Ought there not to be a European agency, along the lines of that in the USA, for monitoring investments and how they are targeted? Investment from third countries may be acceptable but it is not acceptable to see our knowhow plundered and our factories closed?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

It is important for the EU Single Market to stay open to investments since these may have a positive effect on the economy of the receiving Member State and of the EU as a whole. The Treaty explicitly recognises this, and in principle treats third country investments on an equal footing with those within the EU. However, the Treaty allows for certain measures restricting investment on grounds of public policy and public security, provided that the measures remain within the limits of what is suitable for securing the objective which they pursue, do not go beyond what is necessary in order to attain the pursued objective, and are non-discriminatory.

The Commission is currently considering different options on how to strengthen the EU's competitiveness in attracting foreign investment while protecting its essential public policy and public security interests.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007916/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Pas de liberté d'expression en Lybie

Les autorités libyennes doivent abandonner les charges retenues contre deux hommes politiques qui ont publié un dessin humoristique sur les droits des femmes, considéré par certains comme insultant envers l'islam, a déclaré Amnesty International vendredi 14 juin.

Ce dessin représente un groupe d'hommes débattant du rôle des femmes dans la société libyenne, dont l'un est barbu. Ce même personnage est réapparu sous les traits du prophète Mahomet trois mois plus tard dans une bande dessinée anti-islamique sujette à controverse, publiée par le magazine satirique français Charlie Hebdo en septembre 2012. Toutefois, le dessin original ne faisait aucune référence au prophète Mahomet ni à l'islam.

Les deux hommes sont inculpés d'une série de charges au titre d'articles du Code pénal qui ont été fréquemment invoqués pour réprimer l'opposition politique et la liberté d'expression sous l'ère de Mouammar Kadhafi. Ils sont accusés de semer la discorde parmi les Libyens et de chercher à faire «modifier les principes de base» de la Constitution, ainsi que d'insulter l'islam et d'inciter à la haine. Deux de ces chefs d'inculpation sont passibles de la peine de mort.

1. Quelle est la position du Conseil en l'espèce?

2. Compte-t-il utiliser ses relations diplomatiques pour se faire l'écho de cette violation du droit?

Réponse
(25 novembre 2013)

Le Conseil attache une grande importance à la liberté d'expression, comme en témoignent, entre autres, le cadre stratégique de l'UE en matière de Droits de l'homme et de démocratie et le plan d'action de l'UE, adoptés par le Conseil en juin 2012, qui prévoient l'élaboration par l'UE d'orientations sur la liberté d'expression en ligne et hors ligne. Le 22 juillet 2013, le Conseil a réaffirmé qu'il était attaché à œuvrer en faveur de la pleine mise en œuvre du cadre stratégique et des actions spécifiques mentionnés dans le plan d'action.

En outre, le Conseil a adopté, le 24 juin 2013, les priorités de l'UE pour la 68e session de l'Assemblée générale des Nations unies, qui comportent une référence à la liberté d'expression, y compris sur l'Internet, dans le cadre des priorités de l'UE en matière de Droits de l'homme à l'égard des États tiers.

L'UE a connaissance du cas évoqué par l'Honorable Parlementaire. La délégation de l'UE en Libye le suit de près, en liaison avec les ambassades des États membres de l'UE et des organisations internationales telles qu'Amnesty International et Human Rights Watch. Le chef de la délégation de l'UE en Libye a abordé la question avec le ministre de la justice, M. Salah Bashir Margani, qui a pris acte des préoccupations de l'UE et a promis d'assurer le suivi de ce cas.

L'UE est préoccupée par les récentes informations faisant état d'une détérioration des conditions dans lesquelles le peuple libyen peut exprimer ses opinions. Dans le cadre du dialogue politique qu'elle mène avec les autorités, l'UE continuera à préconiser la nécessité pour la Libye de respecter ses obligations nationales et internationales en matière de liberté d'expression et d'information.

De plus, la délégation de l'UE en Libye a mis en place une cellule permettant de coordonner une action rapide dans le domaine des Droits de l'homme afin de pouvoir réagir dans les meilleurs délais aux cas de violation des Droits de l'homme dans le pays.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007916/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: No freedom of expression in Libya

On 14 June 2013 Amnesty International said that the Libyan authorities must drop charges against two politicians who published a cartoon about women's rights which some consider to be insulting to Islam.

The cartoon shows a group of men discussing the role of women in Libyan society. One of the men has a beard. The same character reappeared three months later as the prophet Muhammad in a controversial anti-Islamist cartoon published by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in September 2012. However, there was no reference to the prophet Muhammad or to Islam in the original cartoon.

The two men stand accused of a series of charges under articles in the penal code which were frequently used to suppress political opposition and freedom of expression in the time of Muammar Gaddafi. They are accused of sowing discord among Libyans and seeking 'to change the fundamental principles' of the Constitution, as well as of insulting Islam and inciting hatred. Two of these charges are punishable by the death penalty.

1. What is the Council's position in the case in point?

2. Does it plan to use its diplomatic relations to make this violation of rights more widely known?

Reply
(25 November 2013)

The Council attaches great importance to freedom of expression. This is shown, *inter alia*, by the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy, adopted by the Council in June 2012, which provide for the EU to develop guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline. On 22 July 2013, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to work towards full implementation of the Strategic Framework and of the specific actions contained in the action plan.

Additionally, on 24 June 2013, the Council adopted the EU Priorities for the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which include a reference to freedom of expression, including on the Internet, in the context of the EU's human rights priorities vis-à-vis third states.

The EU is aware of the case mentioned by the Honourable Member of the European Parliament. The EU Delegation in Libya is following this case closely in liaison with embassies of EU Member States and international organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The Head of Delegation of the European Union in Libya raised the issue with the Minister of Justice, Mr Salah Bashir Margani, who took note of the EU's concern and promised to follow up on the case.

The EU is concerned about the recent reports which indicate a deterioration in the conditions under which the Libyan people can express their views. Through its political dialogue with the authorities the EU will continue to advocate for the need for Libya to comply with its national and international obligations regarding freedom of expression and information.

Moreover, the EU Delegation in Libya has created a Human Rights quick reaction coordination cell to be able to respond swiftly to cases involving violation of human rights in Libya.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007917/13
à la Commission (Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: VP/HR — Pas de liberté d'expression en Lybie

Les autorités libyennes doivent abandonner les charges retenues contre deux hommes politiques qui ont publié un dessin humoristique sur les droits des femmes, considéré par certains comme insultant envers l'islam, a déclaré Amnesty International le vendredi 14 juin.

Ce dessin représente un groupe d'hommes débattant du rôle des femmes dans la société libyenne, dont l'un est barbu. Ce même personnage est réapparu sous les traits du prophète Mahomet trois mois plus tard dans une bande dessinée anti-islamique sujette à controverse, publiée par le magazine satirique français Charlie Hebdo en septembre 2012. Toutefois, le dessin original ne faisait aucune référence au prophète Mahomet ni à l'islam.

Les deux hommes sont inculpés d'une série de charges au titre d'articles du Code pénal qui ont été fréquemment invoqués pour réprimer l'opposition politique et la liberté d'expression sous l'ère de Mouammar Kadhafi. Ils sont accusés de semer la discorde parmi les Libyens et de chercher à faire «modifier les principes de base» de la Constitution, ainsi que d'insulter l'islam et d'inciter à la haine. Deux de ces chefs d'inculpation sont passibles de la peine de mort.

1. Quelle est la position de la Vice-présidente/Haute Représentante en l'espèce?

2. Compte-t-elle utiliser ses relations diplomatiques pour se faire l'écho de cette violation du droit?

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

L'UE a connaissance du cas mentionné par l'Honorable Parlementaire. La délégation de l'UE en Libye a rencontré les deux hommes politiques libyens à plusieurs reprises, et elle suit cette affaire de près en liaison avec les ambassades des États membres de l'UE et les organisations internationales comme Amnesty International et Human Rights Watch. Le chef de la délégation de l'Union européenne en Libye a soulevé la question avec le ministre de la justice, M. Salah Bashir Margani, qui a pris note des inquiétudes de l'Union et s'est engagé à suivre l'affaire.

L'UE est préoccupée par les récents rapports qui font état d'une forte détérioration des conditions dans lesquelles les citoyens libyens peuvent exprimer leurs opinions politiques. Dans le cadre de son dialogue politique avec les autorités, l'UE continuera à insister sur la nécessité que la Libye respecte ses obligations nationales et internationales en matière de liberté d'expression et d'information.

De plus, la délégation de l'UE en Libye est en train de mettre la dernière main à la première stratégie locale de l'UE en matière de Droits de l'homme, et a créé une cellule de coordination destinée à permettre une réaction rapide en cas de violation des Droits de l'homme en Libye.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007917/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — No freedom of expression in Libya

On 14 June 2013 Amnesty International said that the Libyan authorities must drop charges against two politicians who published a cartoon about women's rights which some consider to be insulting to Islam.

The cartoon shows a group of men discussing the role of women in Libyan society. One of the men has a beard. The same character reappeared three months later as the prophet Muhammad in a controversial anti-Islamist cartoon published by the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in September 2012. However, there was no reference to the prophet Muhammad or to Islam in the original cartoon.

The two men stand accused of a series of charges under articles in the penal code which were frequently used to suppress political opposition and freedom of expression in the time of Muammar Gaddafi. They are accused of sowing discord among Libyans and seeking 'to change the fundamental principles' of the Constitution, as well as of insulting Islam and inciting hatred. Two of these charges are punishable by the death penalty.

1. What is the Vice-President/High Representative's position in the case in point?

2. Does she plan to use her diplomatic relations to make this violation of rights more widely known?

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

The EU is aware of the case mentioned by the Honourable Member of the European Parliament. The EU Delegation in Libya has met with the two Libyan politicians on several occasions and is following this case closely in liaison with embassies of EU Member States and international organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. The Head of Delegation of the European Union in Libya raised the issue with the Minister of Justice, Mr Salah Bashir Margani, who took note of the EU's concern and promised to follow up on the case.

The EU is concerned about the recent reports which indicate a steep deterioration in the conditions whereby the Libyan people can express their political views. Through its political dialogue with the authorities the EU will continue to advocate for the need for Libya to comply with its national and international obligations regarding freedom of expression and information.

Moreover, the EU Delegation in Libya is finalising the drafting of the first EU Human Rights Country Strategy, and has created a Human Rights quick reaction coordination cell to be able to respond swiftly to cases involving violation of human rights in Libya.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007919/13
to the Commission
Sir Graham Watson (ALDE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Continuity of the rule of law in Member States

On various occasions, Parliament has expressed its concern in relation to the compliance of some Member States with the principles laid down in Article 2 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), calling for continuity in the degree to which Member States abide by the Copenhagen criteria (see Parliament's resolution of 16 February 2012 on recent political developments in Hungary ([1]) and the Tavares report of 3 July 2013 ([2])).

Parliament has also reiterated that the independence of the judiciary, required by Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, is an essential component of the democratic principle of separation of powers, which is derived from Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union ([3]).

To uphold these core principles and to tackle the so-called 'Copenhagen dilemma', Parliament has called for the establishment of the 'Copenhagen Commission', a new mechanism to ensure the compliance by all Member States with the common values enshrined in Article 2 ([4]).

Considering the future role of the (European) Commission and the EU agencies in assisting the setup and/or shaping of such a 'Copenhagen Commission':

1. does the Commission envisage that this new mechanism will be set up to monitor the compliance by all Member States with Article 2 of the TFEU and with the Copenhagen criteria?

2. should such a mechanism be established, what kind of cooperation does the Commission envisage between the 'Copenhagen Commission' and the Venice Commission, as well as between Parliament and the Council of Europe (CoE) Parliamentary Assembly, given the relevant work of the CoE in this area ([5])?

3. in terms of guaranteeing the principle of independence of the judiciary ([6]), does the Commission think it would be appropriate to draw on the benchmarks of Cooperation and Verification Mechanisms (CVMs) used for Bulgaria and Romania as well as to produce similar yearly reports?

4. Will the Commission also look into the training of judges to facilitate the Member States' cooperation with the 'Copenhagen Commission', for example under the European Judicial Training programme or in cooperation with the CoE, by establishing a (joint) programme on transparency, independence and efficiency of judicial systems in the EU?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(4 September 2013)

Concerning questions 1, 2 and 3, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-7606/2013.

As far as question 4 is concerned, the Commission considers quality, efficiency and independence of judicial systems in the EU of utmost importance, and will continue providing support to training programmes for the judiciary in Member States, including through the European Judicial Training Network.

([1]) Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0053.
([2]) Texts adopted, P7_TA-PROV(2013)0315.
([3]) Tavares report, paragraph 26.
([4]) Tavares report of 3 July 2013.
([5]) For example, the Venice Commission recommendations on Hungary, the Motion for a resolution concerning the prosecution of the Labour Party in Lithuania of 29 April 2013.
([6]) In particular in view of the measures adopted in Hungary, the proceedings against Viktor Uspaskich in Lithuania and/or the procedures used in the Slovak Republic to nominate the Attorney General.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita P-007920/13
à Comissão
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(3 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Surto de sarampo com origem na Alemanha

Tendo em conta que:

— Na primeira semana de junho, as autoridades de saúde alemãs reportaram cerca de 100 novos casos de sarampo, sendo que o surto em curso naquele país já afetou 220 pessoas com idade entre os 15 e os 45 anos,

— Aparentemente, e segundo notícias divulgadas em órgãos de comunicação social, existem outros Estados-Membros onde foram já sinalizadas pessoas a quem foi diagnosticada esta doença infetocontagiosa,

— Estamos perante uma doença infetocontagiosa para a qual existe proteção através de vacinação, e que é de declaração obrigatória,

Pergunta-se à Comissão:

1. Pode a Comissão confirmar a existência de um surto de sarampo com origem na Alemanha?

2. Em caso afirmativo, que medidas foram tomadas no sentido de precaver uma situação de contágio generalizado?

3. Que medidas de informação e de prevenção foram empreendidas pela Comissão no sentido de acautelar uma situação de perigo iminente para a saúde pública à escala europeia?

Resposta dada por Tonio Borg em nome da Comissão
(25 de julho de 2013)

A Comissão confirma que, até ao momento, vários Estados-Membros da UE (Suécia, Dinamarca, Alemanha, Itália, Reino Unido, Lituânia e Países Baixos) comunicaram surtos de sarampo em 2013. No se refere à Alemanha, desde 17 junho, foram comunicados 905 casos de sarampo. Este valor é cinco vezes superior ao dos casos comunicados durante todo o ano de 2012. A maior parte dos casos dizia respeito a pessoas não vacinadas, tendo algumas destas pessoas desenvolvido complicações graves.

Embora a responsabilidade da vacinação se insira na esfera de competências das autoridades nacionais, estão em curso diversas iniciativas da UE. Em junho de 2011, foram adotadas conclusões do Conselho sobre imunização infantil, tendo em vista reforçar os esforços no sentido de melhorar a cobertura em matéria de imunização, no que diz respeito às doenças que podem ser prevenidas por vacinação, incluindo o sarampo. Em outubro de 2012, a Comissão organizou uma conferência internacional sobre imunização infantil, que se centrou em especial na vacinação contra o sarampo, tendo sido apresentadas a uma larga audiência mensagens específicas e boas práticas no domínio da prevenção do sarampo. Além disso, o Centro Europeu de Prevenção e Controlo das Doenças desenvolveu uma estratégia de cinco anos para a eliminação do sarampo. O referido plano inclui uma série de instrumentos, com base em provas, que irão apoiar os Estados-Membros no domínio da comunicação destinada a reforçar e promover a cobertura em matéria de vacinação, visando o mais recente a melhoria da cobertura em matéria de vacinação dos grupos populacionais dificilmente acessíveis nos países europeus.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007920/13
to the Commission
Nuno Teixeira (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Measles outbreak in Germany

The health authorities in Germany reported around 100 new cases of measles in the first week of June, and the current outbreak in Germany has already affected 220 people aged between 15 and 45. According to media reports, further cases of this highly infectious disease have been diagnosed in other Member States. There is a vaccine available to protect against measles, which is a notifiable disease.

1. Can the Commission confirm the existence of a measles outbreak in Germany?

2. If so, what preparations have been made to prevent the possible spread of this disease?

3. What information and preventive measures has the Commission taken to safeguard against an imminent threat to public health at European level?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

The Commission confirms that several EU Members States (Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the UK, Lithuania and the Netherlands) have reported measles outbreaks so far in 2013. Concerning Germany, as of 17 June, 905 cases of measles were reported. These figures are five times more if compared to the cases reported in the whole year of 2012. The majority of cases were observed in non-vaccinated persons and some of them developed very important complications.

Although the responsibility for vaccination is under national competence, a number of EU initiatives are currently ongoing. Council conclusions on childhood immunisation have been adopted in June 2011 to strengthen the efforts to improve immunisation coverage for vaccine preventable diseases, including measles. In October 2012, the Commission organised an international conference on childhood immunisation and a special focus was put in particular on measles vaccination with the presentation to a very large audience of specific messages and good practice materials for measles prevention. In addition, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has developed a five-year strategy for measles elimination. This plan includes a number of evidence-based tools aimed at providing support to Member States in the area of communication for strengthening and promoting vaccination coverage, the most recent one targeted at improving vaccination coverage among hard-to-reach population groups in European countries.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007921/13
a la Comisión
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Derecho a votar, a presentarse a elecciones y a desempeñar un cargo público

El derecho al voto es el componente esencial de las sociedades democráticas. **El principio del sufragio universal no se aplica sistemáticamente. A las personas con problemas de salud mental o discapacidad intelectual se les niega el derecho a voto, en la mayoría de los casos, como consecuencia de haber tenido restringida o eliminada su capacidad jurídica.**

Considerando que las personas con discapacidad tienen derecho a disfrutar, de manera libre e independiente, del derecho al voto y del derecho a ser elegidos a los cargos públicos, tanto en la Unión Europea como en cualquier Estado miembro;

Considerando que el artículo 29 de la Convención de Naciones Unidas de los derechos de las personas con discapacidad establece el derecho a que las personas con discapacidad puedan participar plena y efectivamente en la vida política y pública en igualdad de condiciones con las demás, directamente o a través de representantes libremente elegidos, incluidos el derecho y la posibilidad de las personas con discapacidad a votar y ser elegidas;

Considerando que el artículo 12 de la Convención de Naciones Unidas dice que las personas con discapacidad tienen derecho en todas partes al reconocimiento de su personalidad jurídica;

Considerando que la accesibilidad al voto para facilitar el ejercicio de los derechos electorales que asisten a los ciudadanos de la UE, es parte del objetivo «Participación» de la Estrategia Europea de Discapacidad 2010-2020;

— ¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión para garantizar la igualdad jurídica de las personas con discapacidad?

— ¿Cree la Comisión que en todos los países de la UE se defiende el sufragio universal, sin que exista ningún tipo de discriminación?

— A la vista de las disposiciones de la Convención de Naciones Unidas, ¿considera la Comisión oportuno tomar medidas a fin de cumplir con los acuerdos asumidos de cara a garantizar el derecho al voto y a ser elegidas de las personas con discapacidad?

Respuesta de la Sra. Reding en nombre de la Comisión
(26 de agosto de 2013)

La UE no tiene competencia general para regular la cuestión de la capacidad jurídica ni para armonizar los regímenes electorales de los Estados miembros. La Comisión conoce la complejidad de aplicar el artículo 12 de la Convención Internacional sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad (CRDP) de las Naciones Unidas y ha abordado periódicamente este tema en el Grupo de Alto Nivel sobre Discapacidad alentando a los Estados miembros de la UE a compartir sus mejores prácticas en la materia ([1]).

La Comisión también apoya a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil que representan a las personas con discapacidad a escala de la UE y que realizan actividades relacionadas con el artículo 12 de la CRDP. En concreto, la Comisión cofinanció un proyecto sobre la participación activa en las elecciones europeas llevado a cabo por Inclusion Europe. El proyecto se tradujo en recomendaciones relativas a la supresión de las barreras a la accesibilidad y a las restricciones en los derechos de voto debidas a la legislación en materia de capacidad jurídica ([2]).

El estudio sobre los retos y buenas prácticas en la aplicación de la CRDP ([3]) ha puesto de manifiesto que, si bien algunos Estados miembros han reformado la legislación pertinente, adoptando modelos de apoyo a la toma de decisiones conformes con el artículo 12 de la CRDP, muchos Estados miembros siguen aplicando leyes y políticas restrictivas en materia de tutela. También hay dificultades en los Estados miembros que intentan apartarse de la tutela.

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta a la pregunta escrita E-001154/2013.

([1]) Véanse, en particular, las reuniones del Grupo de Alto Nivel sobre Discapacidad de 2008 y 2009.
([2]) Inclusion Europe, Recommendations for Accessible Elections in Europe (Recomendaciones en relación con unas elecciones accesibles en Europa), Bruselas, 2011.
http://inclusion-europe.org/images/stories/documents/Project_ADAP/index.html
([3]) VC/2008/1214, informe final de febrero de 2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007921/13
to the Commission
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Right to vote, stand for election and hold public office

People's right to vote is the essential component of democratic society. The principle of universal suffrage, however, is not applied consistently. People with mental health problems or disabilities of an intellectual nature may be denied the right to vote, in most cases because their legal capacity has been restricted or removed.

Persons with disabilities are entitled to enjoy, freely and independently, their right to vote and to stand for election to public office, both in the European Union and in any Member State.

Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities establishes the right of persons with disabilities to effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and stand for election.

Article 12 of the convention provides that 'persons with disabilities have the right to recognition everywhere as persons before the law'.

The issue of addressing voting accessibility with a view to facilitating the exercise by EU citizens of their electoral rights is covered under the 'Participation' objective of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

— What measures does the Commission intend to take in order to safeguard the legal equality of persons with disabilities?

— Does it think that the principle of universal suffrage is upheld in all Member States, and that there is no discrimination of any kind against persons with disabilities?

— In the light of the provisions of the UN Convention, does it think that measures should be taken to ensure that disabled persons' right to vote and to stand for election is safeguarded, in accordance with the relevant agreements in this area?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

The EU has no general competence to regulate the question of legal capacity nor to harmonise Member States' election rules. The Commission is aware that the implementation of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRDP) is complex, and has regularly addressed this issue in the Disability High Level Group encouraging EU Member States to share good practices on the subject ([1]).

The Commission also supports civil society organisations representing persons with disabilities at EU level which carry out activities related to Article 12 CRPD. In particular the Commission co-funded a project on active participation in European elections which was carried out by Inclusion Europe. The project resulted in recommendations for the removal of accessibility barriers and restrictions to voting rights due to legislation on legal capacity ([2]).

The Study on challenges and good practices in the implementation of the UNCRPD ([3]) has revealed that while some Member States have reformed relevant legislation, embracing supported decision making models in line with Article 12 UNCRPD, many Member States continue to operate restrictive guardianship laws and policies. Challenges also exist in Member States that are attempting to move away from guardianship.

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-001154/2013.

([1]) See in particular Disability High Level Group of 2008 and 2009.
([2]) Inclusion Europe, Recommendations for Accessible Elections in Europe (Brussels, 2011) . http://inclusion-europe.org/images/stories/documents/Project_ADAP/index.html
([3]) VC/2008/1214, final report of February 2010.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007922/13
an die Kommission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Mehr BenutzerInnenfreundlichkeit bei öffentlichen Konsultationen/online-Befragungen der Europäischen Kommission

Die Europäische Kommission holt im Rahmen der 2001 gestarteten Initiative zur „Interaktiven Politikgestaltung" (IPM) mittels öffentlicher Konsultationen/online-Befragungen regelmäßig die Meinungen von Bürgern und Bürgerinnen sowie interessierten Kreisen ein, bevor sie neue politische Maßnahmen und Rechtsvorschriften entwickelt. Diese öffentlichen Konsultationen sind grundsätzlich als sehr gutes Instrument zu bewerten, um den BürgerInnen Europa näher zu bringen.

Vor kurzem wurde jedoch Kritik bezüglich der BenutzerInnenfreundlichkeit der öffentlichen Konsultationen geäußert. Konkret geht es um die „Öffentliche Konsultation zum neuen strategischen Rahmen der EU im Bereich Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz am Arbeitsplatz". Um alle Fragen gewissenhaft beantworten zu können, braucht es im Normalfall ein wenig Zeit. Wenn der Fragebogen jedoch online ausgefüllt wird und man dabei ein Zeitlimit von ca. 90 Minuten überschreitet, werden die Antworten vor dem Abschicken des Fragebogens gelöscht. Es gibt zwar die Möglichkeit, den Fragebogen als pdf-Dokument herunterzuladen. Auf der Website wird aber nirgends darauf hingewiesen, dass die Fragen nur ca. 90 Minuten gespeichert werden können und dass es daher empfehlenswert wäre, das gesamte Dokument am eigenen PC abzuspeichern, um bei Überschreiten des Zeitlimits einen Datenverlust zu vermeiden.

Nachdem nicht davon ausgegangen werden kann, dass alle Bürger und Bürgerinnen den Fragebogen gleich schnell ausfüllen und dafür nicht länger als 90 Minuten brauchen, ist das als nicht sehr benutzerInnenfreundlich zu bewerten. Ein BürgerInnennahes Europa sollte sich aber dadurch auszeichnen, dass der Unterschiedlichkeit der BürgerInnen Rechnung getragen wird.

1. Was erwägt die Kommission angesichts dieses Mangels an BenutzerInnenfreundlichkeit bei ihren öffentlichen Konsultationen zu tun?

2. Wie könnte gewährleistet werden, dass sich an derartigen online-Befragungen alle Bürger und Bürgerinnen beteiligen können?

3. Wie möchte die Kommission der Unterschiedlichkeit der europäischen BürgerInnen Rechnung tragen? Ist es z. B. vorstellbar, im Rahmen des IPM auch andere Erhebungsinstrumente einzusetzen, um so die Menschen erreichen zu können, die weniger PC-affin sind und/oder kein Internet haben?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(8. August 2013)

Die Kommission bemüht sich kontinuierlich um die Verbesserung der Benutzerfreundlichkeit ihrer Plattform zur interaktiven Politikgestaltung (IPM) sowie darum, dass dieses Instrument für Online-Umfragen intuitiv gehandhabt werden kann und dem Stand der Technik entspricht.

Einige IPM-Nutzer hatten das Zeitlimit von 90 Minuten bereits als Problem benannt; 2012 wurde die Anwendung als Reaktion auf diese Rückmeldung angepasst. Seitdem gibt es kein Zeitlimit für die Beantwortung von Umfragen mehr, sofern die Verbindung zum IPM-Server nicht unterbrochen wird. Das IPM-Unterstützungsteam hat von diesem Zeitpunkt an keine Kenntnis von neuen Problemen im Zusammenhang mit Zeitlimits erhalten; sollten solche jedoch auftreten, sind die Nutzer unbedingt aufgefordert, um Unterstützung zu bitten (siehe Hinweis im Rahmen der Anwendung).

Zur weiteren Verbesserung des Komforts der Nutzer bei IPM-Umfragen überprüft die Kommission regelmäßig die Benutzeroberfläche, das Gesamtkonzept für die Interaktionen während einer Umfrage und den Prozess der Konzipierung einer Umfrage. Aufgrund der jüngsten Ergebnisse dieser Überprüfung wird es eine neue Version des IPM (Code „EU-Umfrage"/„EU Survey") geben, die bis Ende 2013 eingeführt werden soll. Diese wird über zusätzliche Funktionen und eine verbesserte Funktionsweise verfügen. Zum Beispiel

— wird es die Möglichkeit geben, Umfragen „offline" zu beantworten (abgesehen von der Übermittlung der Antworten) und

— es wird das Niveau AA der Leitlinien für den Zugang zu Webinhalten (WCAG AA — Web Content Accessibility Guidelines level AA) ([1]) eingehalten.

Weniger Internetversierte Bürger und Bürgerinnen können die Fragebogen der IPM ausdrucken, so dass sie die Fragen wie gewohnt auf Papier beantworten können.

Schließlich können Personen ohne Internetzugang ihre Antworten auf Papier, CD oder USB-Stick per Post einreichen.

([1]) Weitere Einzelheiten sind der Antwort der Kommission auf die Anfrage E-005219/2013 zu entnehmen: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007922/13
to the Commission
Evelyn Regner (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Making public consultations/online surveys conducted by the European Commission more user-friendly

In the course of its 'Interactive Policy Making' (IPM) initiative launched in 2001, the European Commission makes regular use of public consultations and online surveys to seek the opinions of citizens and stakeholders before it develops new policies and legislation. These public consultations are, in principle, a very good tool for bringing Europe closer to its citizens.

There has, however, been recent criticism about the user-friendliness of the public consultations, and more specifically the public consultation on the new EU occupational safety and health policy framework. It normally takes a bit of time to be able to answer all the questions carefully. When the questionnaire is completed online, however, and the respondent goes over the time limit of around 90 minutes, the answers are deleted before the questionnaire can be submitted. While it is possible to download the questionnaire as a pdf document, it is not mentioned anywhere on the website that the answers can only be saved for around 90 minutes and that it would therefore be advisable for respondents to save the whole document on their own PC in order to avoid losing data when the time limit is exceeded.

Since it cannot be assumed that all citizens fill out the questionnaire at the same speed and need no longer than 90 minutes to do so, the consultation does not appear to be very user-friendly. One of the features of a citizen-friendly Europe should, however, be that it takes the diversity of its citizens into account.

1. What does the Commission intend to do about this lack of user-friendliness in its public consultations?

2. What could be done to ensure that all citizens are able to take part in such online surveys?

3. How would the Commission envisage taking the diversity of European citizens into account? Would it be possible, for example, to make use of other survey instruments for IPM exercises so as to reach people who are less computer savvy and/or have no Internet access?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(8 August 2013)

The Commission constantly strives to improve the user-friendliness of its Interactive Policy Making (IPM) platform and to ensure that it is an intuitive and state-of-the-art online survey tool.

In the past, some IPM users had reported the '90 minutes timeout' as an issue which should be addressed, and in 2012 the application was modified in response to this feedback. Since then, there is no time limit to answer a survey, provided that the connection to the IPM server remains available. Thereafter, the IPM support team is not aware of any problems related to timeouts, but should there be any, users are encouraged and welcomed to log a call for support (cf. message in the application).

To further improve the user experience in IPM surveys, the Commission reviews regularly the user interface, the global approach to interactions during a survey and the process of creating a survey. The latest results of this review will lead to a new version of IPM (codenamed 'EU Survey'). This version is scheduled for deployment by end 2013. It will offer additional features and improved functionality. For example:

— possibility to answer the surveys 'offline' (except for effective submission); and

— compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines level AA (WCAG AA) ([1]).

For less computer savvy people, IPM allows printing the questionnaire on paper in order to answer surveys in the classical paper-based way.

Lastly, people without Internet access can submit answers by post on mediums ranging from paper to CDs and USB sticks.

([1]) For further details, see the Commission's answer to Question E-005219/2013 at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007923/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(3 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εξελίξεις για την παραχώρηση παραλίας και αιγιαλού στον Άγιο Μάμα Χαλκιδικής

Η απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής ([1]) σε προηγούμενη γραπτή ερώτησή μου στις 5.12.2012 [E-011109-12], αναφέρει ότι για τη λιμνοθάλασσα του Αγίου Μάμα Χαλκιδικής, η οποία είναι ενταγμένη στο Δίκτυο Natura 2000, «θα ζητήσει σχετικές πληροφορίες από τις ελληνικές αρχές, μεταξύ άλλων και για συναφείς αποφάσεις και παραχωρήσεις που έχουν εγκριθεί». Στις 20.5.2013 το ΥΠΕΚΑ εξέδωσε απόφαση ([2]) με την οποία παρέχει σύμφωνη γνώμη για την παραχώρηση απλής χρήσης αιγιαλού και παραλίας στην ακτή της παραλίας του Αγίου Μάμα για την τουριστική περίοδο του 2013. Με βάση, όμως, την ΚΥΑ Δ10 Β1053970/1672ΕΞ2013/2013 (άρθρο 4) ([3]) από την παραχώρηση της απλής χρήσης του αιγιαλού και της παραλίας εξαιρούνται οι χώροι όπου έχουν εκτελεσθεί έργα άνευ αδείας ή καθ' υπέρβαση αυτής. Για το έτος 2012 υπήρξε σωρεία παραβάσεων εντός της προστατευόμενης περιοχής, όπως αποδεικνύουν οι εκθέσεις αυτοψίας της Υπηρεσίας Δόμησης του Δήμου Ν. Προποντίδας, ενώ το Τμήμα Περιβάλλοντος και Υδροοικονομίας της Περιφερειακής Ενότητας Χαλκιδικής έχει εισηγηθεί ([4]) την παύση της παραχώρησης της χρήσης του αιγιαλού κατά τα επόμενα (συμπεριλαμβανουμένου και του τρέχοντος) έτη. Για τη φετινή τουριστική περίοδο λειτουργούν πολλά beach bar εντός της περιοχής Natura, πάνω στο αμμοθινικό οικοσύστημα, χωρίς να έχει γίνει η απαραίτητη δημοπρασία από το δήμο και η σύναψη συμβάσεων μίσθωσης, και σε συνδυασμό με τα συνοδά έργα (χώροι υποδοχής λουομένων, πάρκινγκ, φυτεύσεις ξένης προς το οικοσύστημα βλάστησης δίχως μελέτη), καταστρέφουν το οικοσύστημα της προστατευόμενης περιοχής.

Σε αυτό το πλαίσιο, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι ικανοποιημένη από τις απαντήσεις που πήρε από τις αρμόδιες αρχές;

2. Με βάση αυτές τις απαντήσεις και το δεδομένο των επί σειρά ετών αυθαιρεσιών που οδηγούν στην καταστροφή του περιβάλλοντος, θεωρεί ότι υπήρξε παραβίαση της ελληνικής και κοινοτικής νομοθεσίας;

3. Θεωρεί ότι η πρόσφατη απόφαση του ΥΠΕΚΑ είναι συμβατή με τις υποχρεώσεις του να εξασφαλίζει τους απαραίτητους όρους για την προστασία της περιοχής και τη συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία 92/43/ΕΟΚ;

4. Τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει προκειμένου να προστατεύσει τον υγρότοπο του Αγίου Μάμα, με βάση και την πρόσφατη επιστολή ([5]) της Γενικής Διεύθυνσης Περιβάλλοντος της ΕΕ και το γεγονός ότι δεν υπάρχει Ειδική Περιβαλλοντική Μελέτη για την περιοχή;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Αυγούστου 2013)

Σε απάντηση των ερωτημάτων που είχε θέσει η Επιτροπή, οι ελληνικές αρχές την ενημέρωσαν σχετικά με τα μέτρα που έλαβαν το 2012 οι εθνικές και τοπικές αρχές με σκοπό τη διασφάλιση της ελεγχόμενης πρόσβασης και χρήσης της παραλίας και της ακτής του Αγ. Μάμα Χαλκιδικής. Τα μέτρα αυτά περιλάμβαναν ειδικούς όρους για τη λειτουργία κινητών καντινών και εξοπλισμού ακτής, τις επιθεωρήσεις και πρόστιμα που επιβάλλονται σε περίπτωση μη συμμόρφωσης, καθώς και την αποκατάσταση των περιοχών που έχουν πληγεί από τις παράνομες δραστηριότητες. Επιπλέον, η μελέτη που πραγματοποιήθηκε από την τοπική αρχή (Δήμος Νέας Προποντίδας) με συγκεκριμένες προτάσεις για τον καθορισμό ζωνών και τη διαφύλαξη του φυσικού περιβάλλοντος, θα ενσωματωθεί στην Ειδική Περιβαλλοντική Μελέτη (ΕΠΜ) που σχεδιάζεται από το Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος, Ενέργειας και Κλιματικής Αλλαγής (ΥΠΕΚΑ) για τη διαχείριση της εν λόγω περιοχής του δικτύου Natura 2000.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-011109&language=EL
([2]) Το υπ' αριθμ. 13169/453/20.05.2013 έγγραφο του ΥΠΕΚΑ: http://static.diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/%CE%92%CE%95%CE%9D80-%CE%924%CE%A7
([3]) ΚΥΑ Δ10Β1053970/1672ΕΞ2013/29.03.2013: http://static.diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/%CE%92%CE%95%CE%91%CE%98%CE%9D-%CE%A7%CE%9F3
([4]) Το υπ' αριθμ. 143751(6478)/21.05.2012 έγγραφο του τμήματος Περιβάλλοντος και Υδροοικονομίας της Π.Ε. Χαλκιδικής.
([5]) http://dasarxeio.com/2013/06/10/435/

Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι τα εν λόγω μέτρα, καθώς και η σχετική απόφαση που έλαβε το ΥΠΕΚΑ το 2013, συμβάλλουν στην παροχή κατάλληλης προστασίας στην περιοχή, και σε αυτή τη βάση δεν μπορεί να εντοπίσει παράβαση της σχετικής νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ σε αυτό το στάδιο. Ωστόσο, υπό το φως των πρόσθετων πληροφοριών που παρέχονται από το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, θα προβεί σε περαιτέρω έρευνες, ζητώντας από τις ελληνικές αρχές στοιχεία σχετικά με τα μέτρα επιβολής που είχαν ληφθεί για τη θερινή περίοδο 2013 στην παραλία και στην ακτή, καθώς και για την προετοιμασία και την υλοποίηση Ειδικής Περιβαλλοντικής Μελέτης για την περιοχή.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007923/13
to the Commission
Nikos Chrysogelos (Verts/ALE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Developments in connection with permission to use the beach and shore in Agios Mamas Chalkidikis

The reply by Mr Potočnik, on behalf of the Commission ([1]), to a previous written question tabled by me on 5 December 2012 [E-011109-12] states that he will request information from the Greek authorities, including on related decisions and permissions, in connection with the marsh in Agios Mamas Chalkidikis, which forms part of the Natura 2000 network. On 20 May 2013, the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change adopted a decision ([2]) granting permission for simple use of the beach and seashore in Agios Mamas for the 2013 tourist season. However, under Joint Ministerial Decision D10 B1053970/1672EX2013/2013 (Article 4) ([3]), areas in which works have been carried out without planning permission or in breach of planning permission are excluded from simple use of the beach and seashore. A series of infringements within the protected zone were committed in 2012, as evidenced by eye witness reports by the Planning Office of the Municipality of Nea Propontida, and the Department of the Environment and Water Economy of the Region of Chalkidiki ([4]) has recommended that permission to use the shore be withdrawn for the current and forthcoming years. For this year's tourist season, numerous beach bars are operating within the Natura area, on the dune ecosystem, without any competition having been held by the municipality and without any leases having been signed and which, in conjunction with flanking works (areas for bathers, car park, planting of vegetation foreign to the ecosystem without any study), are destroying the ecosystem in the protected area.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it satisfied with the replies received from the competent authorities?

2. Based on those replies, and in view of the structures which have been erected over many years without planning permission and which are destroying the environment, does it consider that Greek and Union law have been infringed?

3. Does it consider that the recent reply from the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change is in keeping with its duty to impose the terms necessary in order to protect the area and comply with Directive 92/43/EEC?

4. What measures does it intend to take in order to protect the Agios Mamas marsh, based on the recent letter from the EU Environment Directorate General ([5]) and the fact that no special environmental study has been carried out for the area?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

Further to the Commission queries the Greek authorities informed of measures taken in 2012 by national and local authorities with a view to ensuring controlled access and use of the beach and shore of Ag. Mamas Chalkidikis. These measures included specific conditions for the operation of mobile canteens and beach furniture, inspections and fines imposed in case of non-compliance, and restoration of areas affected by illegal activities. Furthermore, a study carried out by the local authority (Municipality of Nea Propontida) with concrete zoning and nature conservation proposals will be incorporated in the Specific Environmental Study (SES) planned by the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) for the management of the Natura 2000 site in question.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-011109&language=EN.
([2]) Letter no 13169/453/20.05.2013 from the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change. http://static.diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/%CE%92%CE%95%CE%9D80-%CE%924%CE%A7.
([3]) Joint Ministerial Decision D10B1053970/1672EX2013/29.03.2013:. http://static.diavgeia.gov.gr/doc/%CE%92%CE%95%CE%91%CE%98%CE%9D-%CE%A7%CE%9F3.
([4]) Letter no 143751(6478)/21.05.2012 from the regional Department of the Environment and Water Economy of Chalkidiki.
([5]) http://dasarxeio.com/2013/06/10/435/.

The Commission considers that these measures, as well as the relevant 2013 decision of the MEECC, contribute to affording adequate protection to the site, and on that basis cannot identify an infringement of relevant EU legislation at this stage. However, in the light of additional information provided by the Honourable Member, it will further inquire with Greek authorities about enforcement measures taken for the 2013 summer period on the beach and shore as well as about the preparation and implementation of the SES for the site.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-007924/13
komissiolle
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(3. heinäkuuta 2013)

Aihe: Jäteöljyjen erilliskeräys

Direktiivin 2008/98/EY (jätepuitedirektiivi) mukaan ”jäteöljyhuolto olisi toteutettava jätehierarkian ensisijaisuusjärjestyksen mukaisesti ja etusija olisi annettava vaihtoehdoille, joilla päästään ympäristön kannalta parhaaseen mahdolliseen kokonaistulokseen. Jäteöljyjen erilliskeräys on edelleen erittäin tärkeää asianmukaisen jäteöljyhuollon kannalta ja jäteöljyjen epäasianmukaisesta loppukäsittelystä aiheutuvien ympäristövahinkojen estämiseksi.” Tämän perusteella jäsenvaltioilla on oltava käytössä jäteöljyjen erilliskeräystä koskeva järjestelmä, mikäli tällainen järjestelmä on teknisesti mahdollinen.

Jäsenvaltioiden jäteöljyjen erilliskeräyksen järjestämistä koskevissa käytännöissä on merkittäviä eroja, vaikka on runsaasti näyttöä siitä, että erilliskeräys on teknisesti toteutettavissa. Lisäksi joissakin jäsenvaltioissa jäteöljyt on tapana polttaa sen sijaan, että ne kierrätettäisiin.

Toisistaan eroavista käytännöistä on haittaa jäteöljyjen erilliskeräyksen käyttöönottaneille jäsenvaltioille esimerkiksi merenkulkualalla. Se on haitallista ympäristölle eikä se kannusta jätepuitedirektiivin säännösten toteuttamiseen, koska erilliskeräys kustannetaan yleensä perimällä korkeampia satamamaksuja satamissa, jotka noudattavat direktiivin säännöksiä. Kyseiset satamat saattavat tämän vuoksi joutua epäedulliseen kilpailuasemaan. Erilliskeräyksen olisi oltava normi EU:n satamissa, mutta tämän toteutuminen on vielä kaukana.

Onko komissio tehnyt tutkimuksia jäteöljyjen keräyksen tilanteesta unionin satamissa? Aikooko komissio puuttua näihin täytäntöönpanoeroihin tekemällä erilliskeräyksestä sitovan jätepuitedirektiivin tulevassa uudelleentarkastelussa?

Janez Potočnikin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(30. elokuuta 2013)

Komissio ei ole tehnyt erityisiä tutkimuksia satamien jäteöljyhuollosta. Komissio kuitenkin seuraa jatkuvasti EU:n jätelainsäädännön täytäntöönpanoa – mihin kuuluu myös jäteöljyjen erilliskeräystä koskevan velvoitteen noudattaminen. Eurostatin vuodelta 2010 olevien tuoreimpien lukujen mukaan jäteöljyt käsitellään yleensä jätehierarkian mukaisesti: kierrätys on vallitseva käsittelyvaihtoehto (81 %).

Aluksella syntyvän jätteen ja lastijäämien huoltoa merellä säännellään MARPOL-yleissopimuksella, jossa myös edellytetään sopimuspuolten järjestävän vastaanottolaitteistot satamiin aluksella syntyvän jätteen ja lastijäämien keräämiseksi (kuten myös aluksella syntyvän jätteen ja lastijäämien vastaanottolaitteista satamissa annetussa direktiivissä 2000/59/EY ([1]), sellaisena kuin se on muutettuna, säädetään). Kun aluksella syntyvät jätteet on tarkoitus toimittaa maihin, MARPOL-yleissopimuksessa edellytetään, että ne erotellaan aluksella ja valmistellaan toimitettaviksi satamiin joko putkiyhteyden kautta (käymäläjätevesi, lastitilassa olevat pesuvedet jne.) tai pakattuina muovisiin jätesäkkeihin tai säiliöihin (öljypitoinen jäte, elintarvikejäte, muovi jne.).

([1]) EYVL L 332, 28.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007924/13
to the Commission
Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Separate collection of waste oils

According to Directive 2008/98/EC (the Waste Framework Directive), '[t]he management of waste oils should be conducted in accordance with the priority order of the waste hierarchy, and preference should be given to options that deliver the best overall environmental outcome. The separate collection of waste oils remains crucial to their proper management and the prevention of damage to the environment from their improper disposal.' In line with this, Member States are required to have in place a system for the separate collection of waste oils, provided that such a system is technically possible.

However, practices vary significantly among Member States when it comes to the organisation of separate collection of waste oils — even though there is abundant evidence that this is technically feasible. In addition, in some Member States the norm seems to be to burn the waste oils rather than recycle them.

For example, in the area of shipping the diverging practices are to the detriment of the Member States that have introduced separate collection of waste oils. This is not only damaging for the environment, but creates a disincentive to fulfilling the provisions of the Waste Framework Directive, as separate collection is usually paid for through higher primages at the harbours which implement the letter of the directive — and might thus lead to competitive disadvantage for these harbours. Separate collection should be the norm across EU harbours, but we are still far from that being accomplished.

Has the Commission conducted any studies as to the situation of waste oil collection in European harbours? Is it planning to address the situation of this uneven implementation through making separate collection binding in the upcoming review of the Waste Framework Directive?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

The Commission has not conducted specific studies on the management of waste oils at harbours. The Commission continues to monitor implementation of EU waste legislation, including the obligation to collect waste oils separately. According to the latest Eurostat figures of 2010, waste oils are generally treated according to the waste hierarchy: recycling is the predominant treatment option (81%).

The management of ship-generated waste and cargo residues at sea is regulated by the MARPOL convention, which also requires Parties to provide reception facilities in ports to collect ship-generated waste and cargo residues (as reflected in Directive 2000/59/EC [1] on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues, as amended). When intended to be delivered ashore, ship-generated wastes are required by the MARPOL convention to be separated on-board and prepared for delivery in ports, either through pipe connection (sewage, cargo hold washwaters…) or packaged in dedicated plastic bags or containers (oily waste, food waste, plastic…).

[1] OJ L 332, 28.12.2000.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007925/13
to the Commission
Stephen Hughes (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Asbestos

The UK's Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is opening a consultation on proposals to give the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) the power to grant exemptions from the EU regulation aimed at restricting the supply of second-hand articles (including rolling stock) containing asbestos. The ORR is aiming to consult, at the same time, on a draft exemption for the rail sector.

Would such exemptions require the approval of the Commission? What steps would be involved in this process?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

Entry 6 of Annex XVII to Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 prohibits the manufacture, placing on the market or use of articles containing intentionally added asbestos fibres.

However, the continued use of such articles which were already installed or in service prior to 1 January 2005 is permitted until they are disposed of or reach the end of their service life.

Additionally, in order to allow those articles (already installed or in service prior to 1 January 2005) to continue to change hands as well as be used, Member States may allow their placing on the market in their entirety and under specific conditions ensuring a high level of protection of public health. The purpose of introducing this provision was to allow Member States to mitigate the effects of a total prohibition of trade in second hand goods, which could have led to severe impacts for certain specific situations: for example airplanes, ships or historic objects in museums containing asbestos could no longer be sold or even leased. Member States were required to communicate these national measures to the Commission by 1 June 2011, in order for the Commission to make this information publicly available. There are no provisions that such exemptions require the approval of the Commission.

The United Kingdom communicated to the Commission on 8 November 2011 that it intended to adopt national measures to give effect to the derogation in entry 6 for certain articles already installed or in service prior to 1 January 2005, including railway rolling stock.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007926/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Recouvrement des paiements indus pour le budget de l'Union

Les États membres ne transmettent pas toujours les données à temps ou fournissent des données inexactes.

Il est impossible de les comparer et de faire une évaluation objective de l'étendue de la fraude dans les États membres de l'Union européenne, ce qui constitue un réel problème.

Par conséquent, le Parlement européen, la Commission et l'OLAF ne peuvent pas remplir leurs fonctions convenablement pour ce qui est d'évaluer la situation et de présenter des propositions. Cela doit changer.

Comment la Commission va-t-elle assumer l'entière responsabilité du recouvrement des paiements indus pour le budget de l'Union?

La Commission compte-t-elle établir des principes uniformes de présentation de déclaration dans tous les États membres et assurer la collecte de données comparables, fiables et adéquates?

Réponse donnée par M. Šemeta au nom de la Commission
(23 septembre 2013)

Environ 80 % des fonds de l'Union européenne sont dépensés dans le cadre de la gestion partagée, dont les principes sont établis par le règlement financier. Ce dernier prévoit clairement que les États membres sont responsables en premier lieu de la prévention, de la détection et de la correction des erreurs, des irrégularités et des cas de fraude présumée, y compris de la correction de tout montant indûment dépensé. Ces montants sont corrigés soit par le retrait immédiat du programme des dépenses affectées, soit par compensation, en déduisant les montants irréguliers d'une nouvelle déclaration de dépenses, une fois que le recouvrement auprès du bénéficiaire sur le terrain a été totalement exécuté. La Commission reçoit des rapports annuels de la part des États membres sur ces retraits et recouvrements ainsi que sur l'état des recouvrements en cours. À la clôture du programme, la Commission s'assure que toutes les irrégularités ont été dûment corrigées par l'État membre, ce qui signifie que le budget de l'Union européenne a été protégé.

La question de la comparabilité des données nous préoccupe depuis des années. Il convient de souligner que le problème résulte non seulement de l'application divergente des règlements de notification, mais aussi des approches différentes adoptées par les États membres au niveau législatif, organisationnel et administratif pour lutter contre les irrégularités et la fraude. Ces dernières années, la Commission a déployé des efforts considérables afin de fournir aux États membres des solutions techniques, des formations, des orientations et des instructions dans le but d'accroître l'uniformité dans la communication des informations relatives aux irrégularités et à la fraude, ainsi que pour le recouvrement des montants indûment dépensés.

La Commission renvoie l'Honorable Parlementaire à son récent rapport annuel pour 2012 sur la protection des intérêts financiers de l'Union européenne — lutte contre la fraude ([1]), ainsi qu'à la note n° 6 des comptes annuels consolidés pour 2012 ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/reports/communities-reports/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_fr.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007926/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Recovering unduly paid funds for the EU budget

The Member States do not always transmit their data on time or provide accurate information.

It is therefore impossible to make comparisons or an objective assessment of the scale of fraud in the EU's Member States, which poses a real problem.

As a result, Parliament, the Commission and OLAF are unable to do their job properly in terms of assessing the situation and putting forward proposals. That must change.

How does the Commission intend to assume full responsibility for recovering unduly paid funds for the EU budget?

Does it intend to establish uniform reporting principles in all Member States and to ensure the collection of comparable, reliable and adequate data?

Answer given by Mr Šemeta on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

Around 80% of EU funds are spent under shared management and its principles are laid down in the Financial Regulation, which clearly states that the Member States are in the first instance responsible for prevention, detection and correction of errors, irregularities and suspected fraud, including the correction of any amounts unduly spent. Amounts are corrected either by immediate withdrawal of the affected expenditure from the programme or by offsetting the irregular amounts against a new expenditure claim, once the recovery from the beneficiary on the ground has been completed. The Commission receives annual reports from the Member States on these withdrawals, recoveries and on the situation of pending recoveries. At programme closure, the Commission satisfies itself that all irregularities have been duly corrected by the Member State, which means that the EU budget has been protected.

Concerning comparability of data, this issue has been a concern for years. It should be emphasised that it is the result not only of a divergent application of the reporting regulations, but also of the different legal, organisational and administrative approaches that Member States have in relation to the fight against irregularities and fraud. In recent years, great efforts have been deployed by the Commission to provide Member States with technical solutions, training, guidelines and instructions to improve the uniformity in the reporting of information concerning irregularities and fraud, and for the recovery of sums unduly spent.

The Commission would also refer the Honourable Member to its recent annual Report for 2012 on the Protection of the EU financial interests-fight against fraud ([1]), as well to note 6 of the 2012 consolidated annual accounts. ([2])

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/reports/communities-reports/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/budget/biblio/documents/2012/2012_en.cfm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007927/13
a la Comisión
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Contaminación del agua por exceso de nitratos en L'Eliana

El municipio valenciano de L'Eliana está reconocido como zona vulnerable a la contaminación de las aguas por nitratos procedentes de la agricultura según el Decreto 13/2000 del Gobierno de la Comunidad Valenciana, en aplicación del artículo 3 de la Directiva 91/76 y del Real Decreto de transposición de la misma 261/1996.

Los últimos análisis de calidad del agua realizados en el municipio de L'Eliana por la empresa concesionaria del Servicio de Agua Potable Aquagest Levante indican unos niveles de concentración de nitratos superiores al máximo de 50 miligramos por litro que marca la Directiva 98/83 relativa a la calidad de las aguas destinadas al consumo humano. Incluso se han detectado en algunos puntos más de 100 miligramos de nitratos por litro. Además, la misma empresa concesionaria señala que durante la época estival la concentración es más elevada debido a la necesidad de utilizar los pozos cuya agua contiene una mayor concentración.

En 2011 se concluyó la construcción de una planta desnitrificadora financiada en un 20 % por los fondos FEDER para solucionar los graves problemas de exceso de nitratos en el agua del municipio. Sin embargo, la planta continúa cerrada desde esa fecha y sin actividad debido a un conflicto entre la administración local, la administración autonómica y la empresa pública estatal Aguas de las Cuencas Mediterráneas (Acuamed) responsable de la gestión y explotación de la infraestructura.

Ante los hechos aquí descritos, se formulan las siguientes preguntas:

¿Puede garantizar la Comisión que se está cumpliendo la legislación de la UE relativa a la calidad de las aguas para el consumo humano en L'Eliana?

¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión para instar a España a solucionar el problema del exceso de nitratos en el agua de L'Eliana y garantizar la salud de las poblaciones abastecidas?

¿Qué medidas piensa adoptar la Comisión para instar a España a poner en funcionamiento la planta desnitrificadora de L'Eliana financiada por los fondos FEDER?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(5 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión está analizando la situación reinante en L'Eliana y, cuando concluya esa investigación, decidirá sobre los posibles pasos a seguir.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007927/13
to the Commission
Andrés Perelló Rodríguez (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Water pollution caused by excess nitrates in L'Eliana

The Valencian municipality of L'Eliana is recognised as a vulnerable zone at risk of water pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources according to Decree No 13/2000 of the Valencian Regional Government, in accordance with Article 3 of Directive 91/676 and Royal Decree No 261/1996 transposing the directive.

The latest water quality analyses carried out in L'Eliana by the drinking water services operator Aquagest Levante show nitrate concentration levels which are above the maximum of 50 milligrams per litre set out in Directive 98/83 on the quality of water intended for human consumption. In some areas, more than 100 milligrams per litre have been detected. Moreover, according to the same operator, the concentration is higher during the summer due to the need to use wells where the water has a higher concentration.

In 2011, the construction of a denitrification plant was completed, which was 20% financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as a solution to the serious problem of excess nitrates in the local water. However, the plant remains closed to this day and is still not in operation due to a dispute between the local government, the regional government and the State public company Aguas de las Cuencas Mediterráneas (Acuamed), which is in charge of the management and operation of the infrastructure.

Can the Commission ensure that EU legislation on the quality of water for human consumption is being complied with in L'Eliana?

What steps does the Commission plan to take to encourage Spain to resolve the problem of excess nitrates in L'Eliana's water and to safeguard the health of those to whom it is supplied?

What steps does the Commission plan to take to encourage Spain to put L'Eliana's ERDF-funded denitrification plant into operation?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2013)

The Commission is looking into the situation in L'Eliana. Once these investigations have been completed, the Commission will decide on possible next steps.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-007928/13
a la Comisión
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Cierre de la fábrica Mondelez en Ateca

A finales de abril, la multinacional estadounidense Mondelez International (antes Kraft Foods) propietaria de la fábrica Mondelez, antiguamente bajo propiedad de Chocolates Hueso y situada en el municipio aragonés de Ateca, decidió terminar su actividad dejando en la calle a 230 trabajadores.

La empresa Chocolates Hueso tenía presencia en la comarca de Calatayud desde su fundación hace 151 años y fue adquirida por la citada multinacional hace 3 años, el tiempo que ha tardado en desmantelar la planta. Resulta meridianamente claro cómo esta empresa está deslocalizando su producción hacia otras plantas, situadas en Valladolid y Polonia, por sus intereses financieros a costa de la actividad económica de las comarcas donde se van instalando. Arruinar en tres años una fábrica con 151 años de historia es una muestra del capitalismo vampírico de este tipo de multinacionales que se instala en diferentes lugares para apoderarse de marcas y patentes y luego continúa su marcha sin mirar atrás.

El caso de esta fábrica es uno más dentro de las miles de deslocalizaciones de la actividad que se han producido en España. Se trata de una actividad habitual: el incentivar con recursos públicos la instalación de multinacionales que en escasos años quiebran, eliminando de esta forma las empresas que podrían resultar su potencial competencia. Esta actividad se une a la también reciente decisión de la multinacional Kimberly de cerrar su fábrica de pañales (Huggies), confirmando la destrucción de más de 500 empleos estables en la comarca. Desactivar el tejido industrial del país, para ser dependientes de estas multinacionales, es el objetivo consciente que ocultan estas compañías cuando operan de esta forma.

El caso de la fábrica Mondelez es un expediente más que tiene gravísimas consecuencias para la vida de los 230 trabajadores y que dilapida la actividad productiva de la comarca, produciendo un impacto económico muy importante en toda la zona.

¿Está la Comisión al tanto del cierre de la citada planta? ¿Considera que este cierre obedece ciertamente a las necesidades del mercado o puede suponer una maniobra para garantizar una posición dominante en el mercado de la multinacional? ¿Se están utilizando instrumentos para evitar el uso no adecuado de las legislaciones concursales nacionales derivadas del Reglamento (CE) n° 1346/2000, de 29 de mayo de 2000, del Consejo de la Unión Europea sobre procedimientos transfronterizos de insolvencia? ¿Puede entenderse, a juicio de la Comisión, que la actuación de la empresa matriz ha atentado contra el principio de libre competencia en el mercado único? ¿Se han empleado fondos públicos para atraer a la firma a Ateca?

Respuesta del Sr. Almunia en nombre de la Comisión
(12 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión se ha enterado por la prensa del cierre de la fábrica de Mondelez International situada en Ateca (Zaragoza, España). Este cierre se debe a una decisión empresarial adoptada por sus propietarios y la Comisión no opina al respecto.

Sobre la base de la información disponible, nada sugiere que el cierre de la fábrica por su sociedad matriz sea contraria al principio de libre competencia en el mercado interior. En lo referido a la cuestión de si se invirtieron fondos públicos para que la empresa se estableciera en Ateca, la Comisión no tiene conocimiento de ningún fondo proporcionado a dicha empresa por las autoridades españolas.

El Reglamento (CE) n° 1346/2000 del Consejo establece una serie de normas comunes en materia de insolvencias transfronterizas entre los Estados miembros. Sin embargo, no es aplicable a este caso, ya que la sociedad matriz se registró fuera de la UE. Uno de los principales problemas detectados en un informe de la Comisión sobre el funcionamiento de este Reglamento es que se orienta hacia la liquidación y no contempla claramente las medidas nacionales para reestructurar las empresas, de forma que puedan seguir funcionando. Por lo tanto, la Comisión propuso enmiendas el 12 de diciembre de 2012 a fin de tener en cuenta los nuevos tipos de procedimiento de preinsolvencia que persiguen salvar las empresas, mejorar la cooperación entre los tribunales, crear un marco jurídico para los grupos de empresas internacionales y garantizar la publicación en los registros de insolvencia. Los cambios propuestos contribuirán a mejorar la eficacia y efectividad de los procedimientos de insolvencia transfronterizos, que afectan a 50 000 empresas al año.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007928/13
to the Commission
Willy Meyer (GUE/NGL)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Closure of the Mondelez factory in Ateca

At the end of April, the US multinational Mondelez International (formerly Kraft Foods) which owns the Mondelez factory, previously owned by Chocolates Hueso and located in the municipality of Ateca in Aragon, decided to cease operations, leaving 230 workers out of a job.

The company Chocolates Hueso had been in the Calatayud area since it was founded 151 years ago and was acquired by the multinational three years ago, the amount of time it has taken to dismantle the plant. It has become abundantly clear how this company is moving its production to other plants in Valladolid and Poland because of its financial interests, at the expense of the economic activity of the areas in which it is established. Destroying a factory with 151 years of history in three years is an example of the blood-sucking capitalism practised by these kinds of multinationals, which set themselves up in different places to take over brands and patents and then continue on their way without a backward glance.

The case of this factory is one of thousands of cases throughout Spain in which production has been relocated. This is standard practice: using public resources as an incentive for multinationals to set up shop only to go bankrupt a few years down the line, getting rid of companies that could fulfil their competitive potential in the process. This goes hand in hand with the recent decision of the multinational Kimberly to close its nappy factory (Huggies), taking with it more than 500 stable jobs in the area. When they operate in this way, these companies' hidden agenda is clearly to dismantle the country's industrial fabric so that it becomes dependent on these multinationals.

The case of the Mondelez factory is another case with serious consequences for the lives of the 230 workers and will destroy production in the area, having a very considerable economic impact on the whole region.

Is the Commission aware of the closure of this plant? Does it believe that this closure is truly in line with market needs or could it be a manoeuvre to secure the multinational a dominant position in the market? Are instruments being used to prevent the inappropriate use of national competition legislation based on Council Regulation (EC) No 1346/2000 of 29 May 2000 on cross-border insolvency proceedings? In the Commission's opinion, can the parent company's actions be seen as an attack on the principle of free competition in the single market? Were public funds used to attract the firm to Ateca?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the closure of the Mondelez International plant in Ateca (Zaragoza, Spain) on the basis of information publicly available in the press. The decision to close the plant is an entrepreneurial decision taken by its owners and the Commission does not have a view on this decision.

On the basis of the information available, nothing suggests that the closure of the Mondelez International plant by its parent company goes against the principle of free competition in the internal market. As regards the question whether public funds were used to attract the firm to Ateca, the Commission is not aware of any public funds that the Spanish authorities might have provided to the firm.

Regulation (EC) No 1346/2000 provides common rules for cross-border insolvencies between Member States. However, it does not apply to this case as the parent company was registered outside the EU. One of the main problems identified in a Commission report on the operation of the regulation was that it is oriented towards liquidation and does not clearly accommodate national arrangements to restructure companies so they can stay in business. Therefore the Commission proposed, on 12 December 2012, amendments to cover the new types of pre-insolvency proceedings which aim at rescuing businesses, improve cooperation between courts, create a legal framework for cross-border groups of companies and ensure publication in insolvency registers. The proposed changes will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-border insolvency proceedings, affecting 50,000 businesses a year.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007929/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Spionage in Gebäuden des Rates

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden vor fünf Jahren aus einem auf dem Brüsseler NATO-Komplex gelegenen Gebäude heraus interne Überwachungssysteme des Justus Lipsius-Gebäudes des Rats angegriffen oder angezapft.

1. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass auch andere Geheimdienste versucht haben Gebäude des Rates auszuspionieren? Wenn ja, welche?

2. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass auch andere Gebäude des Rates außer dem Justus-Lipsius-Gebäude von der Spionage betroffen waren? Wenn ja, welche?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007930/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: US-Spionage im Justus Lipsius-Gebäude

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden vor fünf Jahren aus einem auf dem Brüsseler NATO-Komplex gelegenen Gebäude heraus interne Überwachungssysteme des Justus Lipsius-Gebäudes des Rates angegriffen und versucht das Gebäude abzuhören.

1. Warum war dies möglich?

2. In welchem Zeitraum fand die Spionage statt?

3. Welche Systeme waren betroffen, und auf welche Informationskanäle konnten die US-Geheimdienste zugreifen?

4. Welche Räumlichkeiten waren betroffen?

5. Welche Treffen waren betroffen, und wer nahm an diesen Treffen teil?

6. Welche Schutzvorkehrungen wurden inzwischen getroffen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007935/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Reaktionen auf US-Spionage im Justus Lipsius-Gebäude

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden vor fünf Jahren aus einem auf dem Brüsseler NATO-Komplex gelegenen Gebäude heraus interne Überwachungssysteme des Justus Lipsius-Gebäudes des Rates angegriffen und versucht, das Gebäude abzuhören.

1. Seit wann war dem Rat die Spionagetätigkeit der USA im Justus Lipsius-Gebäude bekannt?

2. Welche Maßnahmen hat der Rat als Reaktion auf die Spionage im Justus Lipsius-Gebäude gegen die USA ergriffen?

3. Welche Maßnahmen hat der Rat als Reaktion auf die Spionage im Justus Lipsius-Gebäude gegenüber der NATO ergriffen?

4. Wurde von EU-Staaten mitfinanzierte NATO-Infrastruktur für die Attacken verwendet?

Gemeinsame Antwort
(16. September 2013)

Der Rat verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf seine Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage P-007958/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007929/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Espionage in Council buildings

According to information published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, five years ago the US authorities attacked or bugged internal monitoring systems in the Council's Justus Lipsius building from a building in the NATO complex in Brussels.

1. Are there any indications that other intelligence services have also attempted to spy on Council buildings? If so, which?

2. Are there any indications that other Council buildings besides the Justus Lipsius building were also affected? If so, which?

Question for written answer E-007930/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: US espionage in the Justus Lipsius building

According to information published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, five years ago the US authorities attacked and attempted to bug internal monitoring systems in the Council's Justus Lipsius building from a building in the NATO complex in Brussels.

1. Why was this possible?

2. Over what period did the espionage take place?

3. Which systems were affected, and which information channels were the US intelligence services able to access?

4. Which parts of the building were affected?

5. Which meetings were affected, and who attended these meetings?

6. What security precautions have been taken in the interim?

Question for written answer E-007935/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Reactions to US espionage in the Justus Lipsius building

According to information published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, five years ago the US authorities attacked and attempted to bug internal monitoring systems in the Council's Justus Lipsius building from a building in the NATO complex in Brussels.

1. When did the Council become aware of the espionage activities by the USA in the Justus Lipsius building?

2. What action has the Council taken against the USA in response to espionage activities in the Justus Lipsius building?

3. What action has the Council taken against NATO in response to espionage activities in the Justus Lipsius building?

4. Was any NATO infrastructure co-funded by EU Member States used for the attacks?

Joint reply
(16 September 2013)

The Council would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to his Written Question P-007958/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007931/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Spionage in Gebäuden der Kommission

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel“ haben US-Behörden vor fünf Jahren aus einem auf dem Brüsseler NATO-Komplex gelegenen Gebäude heraus interne Überwachungssysteme des Justus Lipsius-Gebäudes des Rates angegriffen und versucht, das Gebäude abzuhören. Zudem wurden EU-Vertretungen in den USA abgehört und ausspioniert.

1. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass US-Geheimdienste auch versucht haben, Gebäude der Kommission auszuspionieren?

2. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass auch die Geheimdienste anderer Drittstaaten oder die Geheimdienste von EU-Staaten wie Großbritannien versucht haben, Gebäude der Kommission auszuspionieren?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(10. September 2013)

Die Kommission hat die jüngsten Medienberichte über US-Überwachungsprogramme wie Prism, durch die offenbar persönliche Daten europäischer Bürger in großem Maßstab zugänglich gemacht und verarbeitet werden können, sowie über die mutmaßliche Abhörung der Räumlichkeiten von EU-Organen in Brüssel und von EU-Vertretungen in den USA mit Besorgnis registriert.

Auch die in diesem Zusammenhang in den Medien geäußerten Vorwürfe gegen die USA hat die Kommission zur Kenntnis genommen. Aus Sicherheitsgründen kann die Kommission keine Angaben darüber machen, ob Versuche zur Ausspionierung von Gebäuden der Kommission untergenommen wurden.

Am 9. Juli hat der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst dem AFET-Ausschuss des Europäischen Parlaments in einer Sicherheitsauflagen unterliegenden Sitzung mitgeteilt, welche Sicherheitsmaßnahmen infolge der Pressemeldungen über die Überwachung von diplomatischen Einrichtungen der EU getroffen wurden. Informationen über die Sicherheitsmaßnahmen der Organe unterliegen der Geheimhaltung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007931/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Espionage in Commission buildings

According to information published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, five years ago the US authorities attacked and attempted to bug internal monitoring systems in the Council's Justus Lipsius building from a building in the NATO complex in Brussels. In addition, EU missions in the USA have been bugged and monitored.

1. Are there any indications that US intelligence services have also attempted to spy on Commission buildings?

2. Are there any indications that the intelligence services of other third countries or the intelligence services of EU Member States such as the United Kingdom have also attempted to spy on Commission buildings?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The Commission is concerned about the recent media reports of US surveillance programmes such as PRISM which appear to enable access and processing, on a large scale, of personal data of Europeans, as well as on the alleged surveillance of EU institutions' premises in Brussels and EU Delegationsin the US.

The Commission took notice of the allegations against the US published in the media. Due to security concerns, the Commission cannot provide any further information on whether attempts to spy on Commission buildings have been made.

On 9 July, the European External Action Service briefed the AFET Committee of the European Parliament on the security measures taken in the aftermath of the press allegations about US surveillance of EU diplomatic premises, in a restricted session. The institutions do not publicly disclose the details of their security measures.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007932/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Verhinderung der Spionage bei der EU-Vertretung bei den Vereinten Nationen

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden die EU-Vertretung bei den Vereinten Nationen abgehört und systematisch ausspioniert. Die Europäische Union wird in den von „Der Spiegel" eingesehenen Dokumenten explizit als Spionageziel genannt.

1. Warum wurden die Wanzen und andere Spionageangriffe nicht entdeckt?

2. Warum waren die Sicherheitsvorkehrungen nicht ausreichend, um solche Spionagemaßnahmen zu verhindern?

3. Gibt es Hinweise, dass EU-Beamte, Zeitbedienstete oder Praktikanten als Agenten angeheuert, bestochen oder erpresst wurden?

4. Gibt es Hinweise, dass lokale Dienstleister die Spionagetätigkeiten durchführten?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007938/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Verhinderung der Spionage in der EU-Vertretung in Washington D.C.

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden die EU-Vertretung in Washington D.C. abgehört und systematisch ausspioniert. Die Europäische Union wird in den von „Der Spiegel" eingesehenen Dokumenten explizit als Spionageziel genannt.

1. Warum wurden die Wanzen und andere Spionageangriffe nicht entdeckt?

2. Warum waren die Sicherheitsvorkehrungen nicht ausreichend, um solche Spionagemaßnahmen zu verhindern?

3. Gibt es Hinweise, dass EU-Beamte, Zeitbedienstete oder Praktikanten als Agenten angeheuert, bestochen oder erpresst wurden?

4. Gibt es Hinweise, dass lokale Dienstleister die Spionagetätigkeiten durchführten?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007939/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Spionage bei der EU-Vertretung bei den Vereinten Nationen

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden die EU-Vertretung bei den Vereinten Nationen abgehört und systematisch ausspioniert. Die Europäische Union wird in den von „Der Spiegel" eingesehenen Dokumenten explizit als Spionageziel genannt.

1. Welche Systeme wurden nach Wissen der Hohen Vertreterin abgehört?

2. Wird der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst seine Beteiligung an UN-Treffen reduzieren?

3. Welche anderen Maßnahmen wird der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst als Reaktion auf die Spionage durch die USA ergreifen?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007940/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Weitergehende Spionage bei den EU-Vertretungen in den USA

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden sowohl die EU-Vertretung in Washington D.C. als auch die EU-Vertretung bei den Vereinten Nationen in New York verwanzt und systematisch ausspioniert. Die Europäische Union wird in den von „Der Spiegel" eingesehenen Dokumenten explizit als Spionageziel genannt.

1. Gibt es Belege, Hinweise oder Vermutungen, dass US-Behörden auch persönliche Geräte wie Computer, Telefone und Mobiltelefone von Angestellten der Vertretungen abgehört haben?

2. Gibt es Belege, Hinweise oder Vermutungen, dass die US-Behörden auch Dokumente aus den EU-Vertretungen kopiert oder entwendet haben?

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007999/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin / Hohe Vertreterin)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(4. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Spionage in der EU-Vertretung in Washington D.C.

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden die EU-Vertretung in Washington (D.C.) abgehört. Unter dem Codenamen „Dropmire" wurde sogar eine Wanze am verschlüsselten Faxgerät der Vertretung angebracht. Die Europäische Union wird in den von „Der Spiegel" eingesehenen Dokumenten explizit als Spionageziel genannt.

1. Welche Systeme wurden nach Wissen der Hohen Vertreterin abgehört?

2. Welche Konsequenzen zieht der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst aus dem Vorfall in Bezug auf die diplomatischen Kontakte zu den Vereinigten Staaten?

3. Welche anderen Maßnahmen wird der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst als Reaktion auf die Spionage durch die USA ergreifen?

Gemeinsame Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(22. August 2013)

Der Kommission ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass verschiedene Nachrichtendienste von Drittländern Interesse an den Tätigkeiten der EU-Organe sowie der EU-Delegationen in Drittländern und bei internationalen Organisationen haben und dass daraus eine potenzielle Bedrohung ihrer Gebäude und Kommunikations- und Informationssysteme resultiert.

Der Europäische Auswärtige Dienst (EAD) ist für die Gewährleistung der Sicherheit der EU-Delegationen zuständig.

Aus praktischen Erwägungen kann sich die Kommission weder zu spezifischen oder potenziellen nachrichtendienstlichen Tätigkeiten äußern, die den EU-Interessen entgegenstehen, noch zur Art der getroffenen Gegenmaßnahmen. Der Sicherheitsdienst des EAD sorgt in dieser Hinsicht für eine routinemäßige Koordinierung und Zusammenarbeit mit seinen Partnern in den EU-Organen.

Der EAD hat keinen Grund zu der Annahme, dass seine derzeitigen Systeme der gesicherten Kommunikation gefährdet sind.

Der EAD verfügt über Verfahren zur Anwendung von Sicherheitsstandards, die von den EU-Organen und den Mitgliedstaaten einvernehmlich festgelegt wurden und eine angemessene Gewähr dafür bieten, dass von seinen Bediensteten und Auftragnehmern keine sensiblen oder vertraulichen Informationen offen gelegt werden.

Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin und die Kommission bemühen sich bei den US-Behörden um nähere Informationen zu den vom Herrn Abgeordneten genannten mutmaßlichen Überwachungstätigkeiten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007932/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Prevention of the surveillance of the EU Delegation to the United Nations

According to information received by German magazine *Der Spiegel*, US authorities have bugged and systematically spied on the EU Delegation to the United Nations. The European Union is expressly identified as a target for surveillance in the documents seen by *Der Spiegel*.

1. Why did the bugs and other surveillance attacks go undetected?

2. Why were the security measures ineffective in preventing such surveillance?

3. Does any evidence exist to indicate that EU officials, temporary staff or interns were recruited as agents, bribed or blackmailed?

4. Does any evidence exist to suggest that local service providers carried out the surveillance activities?

Question for written answer E-007938/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Prevention of espionage affecting the EU mission in Washington, D.C.

According to information received by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, US authorities have bugged and systematically spied on the EU mission in Washington, D.C. The European Union is expressly identified as a target for surveillance in the documents seen by *Der Spiegel*.

1. Why did the bugs and other espionage attacks go undetected?

2. Why were security measures ineffective in preventing such espionage?

3. Is there any evidence that EU officials, temporary staff or interns were recruited as agents, bribed or blackmailed?

4. Is there any evidence that local service providers carried out the espionage activities?

Question for written answer E-007939/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Espionage affecting the EU mission to the United Nations

According to information received by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, US authorities have bugged and systematically spied on the EU mission to the United Nations. The European Union is expressly identified as a target for espionage in the documents seen by *Der Spiegel*.

1. Which systems have been bugged, to the High Representative's knowledge?

2. Will the European External Action Service reduce its attendance at UN meetings?

3. What other steps will the European External Action Service take in reaction to espionage activities by the USA?

Question for written answer E-007940/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Ongoing espionage affecting EU missions in the USA

According to information received by the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, US authorities have bugged and systematically spied on both the EU mission in Washington, D.C. and the EU mission to the United Nations in New York. The European Union is expressly identified as a target for espionage in the documents seen by *Der Spiegel*.

1. Is there any indication, evidence or suspicion that US authorities have also bugged personal equipment belonging to staff at the missions, such as computers, telephones and mobile phones?

2. Is there any indication, evidence or suspicion that US authorities have also copied or misappropriated documents from the EU missions?

Question for written answer E-007999/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Espionage in the EU representation in Washington D.C.

According to information in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, US agencies have bugged the EU representation in Washington D.C. As part of a programme code-named 'Dropmire', even the representation's encrypted fax machine has been bugged. In documents seen by *Der Spiegel*, the European Union is expressly referred to as an espionage target.

1. To the High Representative's knowledge, what systems have been bugged?

2. What steps are being taken by the European External Action Service (EEAS), in the light of the incident, with regard to diplomatic contacts with the US?

3. What other measures will the EEAS be taking in response to the US espionage?

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

The Commission is fully aware of the interest of various, third-country intelligence services in the activities of the EU institutions and Delegations to third countries and international organisations, and of the resulting threats potentially affecting its buildings and, communication and information systems.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) is responsible for ensuring the security of the EU Delegations.

For operational reasons, the Commission can neither comment on specific or potential intelligence activities against the EU interests nor on the nature of the counter-measures taken. The EEAS security service routinely coordinates and cooperates with its counterparts in the EU institutions in that regard.

The EEAS has no reason to believe that its current systems of secure communication have been compromised.

The EEAS has procedures in place applying security standards mutually agreed among EU institutions and Member States that offer reasonable assurance that no sensitive or classified information is disclosed by its staff and contractors.

The HR/VP and the Commission are seeking clarifications from the US as regards the alleged surveillance activities referred to by the Honourable Member.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007933/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Spionage in Gebäuden der EU-Agenturen

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden vor fünf Jahren aus einem auf dem Brüsseler NATO-Komplex gelegenen Gebäude heraus interne Überwachungssysteme des Justus Lipsius-Gebäudes des Rates angegriffen und versucht, das Gebäude abzuhören. Zudem wurden EU-Vertretungen in den USA abgehört.

1. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass US-Geheimdienste auch versucht haben, Gebäude von EU-Agenturen auszuspionieren?

2. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass auch die Geheimdienste anderer Drittstaaten oder die Geheimdienste von EU-Staaten wie Großbritannien versucht haben, Gebäude von EU-Agenturen auszuspionieren?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(10. September 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-007931/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007933/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Espionage in EU Agency buildings

According to information published in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, five years ago the US authorities attacked and attempted to bug internal monitoring systems in the Council's Justus Lipsius building from a building in the NATO complex in Brussels. In addition, EU missions in the USA have been bugged.

1. Are there any indications that US intelligence services have also attempted to spy on EU Agency buildings?

2. Are there any indications that the intelligence services of other third countries or the intelligence services of EU Member States such as the United Kingdom have also attempted to spy on EU Agency buildings?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-007931/13.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007934/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Rechtliche Schritte gegen PRISM

Durch das US-Überwachungssystem PRISM wurden mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit Millionen europäischer E-Mails, Webseitenaufrufe, Telefonate und mehr durch US-Behörden abgefangen und womöglich eingesehen oder gespeichert.

Welche rechtlichen Schritte können die EU, ihre Mitgliedstaaten, europäische Unternehmen und Organisationen oder einzelne EU-Bürger gegen die Spionage der US-Regierung ergreifen?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(2. September 2013)

Die Kommission ist besorgt über die jüngsten Medienberichte über Programme wie PRISM, die es offenbar ermöglichen, in großem Stila auf Daten von Europäern zuzugreifen und sie zu verarbeiten.

Die Kommission hat die Regierung der Vereinigten Staaten um Aufklärung gebeten in Bezug auf die Programme, über die in den Medien berichtet wurde, und die möglichen Konsequenzen für die Grundrechte von Europäern. Die für Justiz, Grundrechte und Bürgerschaft zuständige Vizepräsidentin der Kommission hat diese Frage anlässlich des Treffens der Justiz- und Innenminister der EU und der Vereinigten Staaten am 14. Juni 2013 in Dublin persönlich mit US-Justizminister Eric Holder erörtert. Im Anschluss an dieses Treffen wurde in einem Schreiben an die amerikanischen Behörden um weitere Klarstellungen ersucht, u. a. betreffend den Umfang der gesammelten Daten, den Anwendungsbereich der Programme und die justizielle Kontrolle für die Europäer. Außerdem hat die Kommission zusammen mit dem EU-Ratsvorsitz eine Ad-hoc-Arbeitsgruppe EU-USA „Datenschutz“ zur näheren Prüfung dieser Sache eingesetzt. Auf der Grundlage der eingeholten Informationen wird die Kommission dem Europäischen Parlament und dem Rat im Oktober Bericht erstatten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007934/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Legal action against PRISM

The US surveillance system PRISM has most probably enabled US authorities to intercept and possibly view or store millions of European e-mails, website visits, phone calls and more.

What legal action can the EU, its Member States, European businesses and organisations or individual EU citizens take against the espionage activities of the US Government?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Commission is very concerned regarding the recent media reports about programmes such as PRISM which appear to enable access and processing, on a large scale, of data of Europeans.

The Commission has requested clarifications from the US Government regarding the programmes reported in the media and the potential impact on the fundamental rights of Europeans. The Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship raised this issue directly with US Attorney-General Eric Holder at the EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial in Dublin on 14 June 2013. Following this meeting, further clarifications have been requested writing to the US authorities, including on the volume of the data collected, the scope of the programmes and the judicial oversight available to Europeans. In addition, the Commission has set up, together with the Presidency of the Council of the EU, an ad-hoc high-level EU-US working group on data protection to examine these issues further. Based on the information gathered, the Commission will report back to the European Parliament and the Council in October.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007936/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Möglichkeiten der Kommission, gegen PRISM vorzugehen

Durch das US-Überwachungssystem PRISM wurden mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit Millionen europäischer E-Mails, Webseitenaufrufe, Telefonate und mehr durch US-Behörden abgefangen und womöglich eingesehen oder gespeichert.

Welche Möglichkeiten sieht die Kommission, um weitere Spionagemaßnahmen dieser Art zu unterbinden?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(2. September 2013)

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-007934/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007936/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: The options open to the Commission for taking action against PRISM

The US PRISM surveillance system has most probably enabled US authorities to intercept and possibly view or store millions of European e-mails, website visits, phone calls and more.

What options does the Commission see for preventing further espionage of this kind?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Commision would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007934/2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007937/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: An PRISM-Spionage beteiligte Unternehmen

Am 6. Juni 2013 wurde durch einen Whistleblower ein weitreichendes Spionageprogramm der US-amerikanischen „National Security Agency" (NSA) öffentlich bekannt. Durch das Programm mit dem Codenamen PRISM hatten US-Geheimdienste ohne gerichtliche oder anderweitige Kontrolle Zugang zu mindestens den bei den Unternehmen Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, AOL, Skype, YouTube und Apple gelagerten oder durch die Server dieser Unternehmen verarbeiteten Daten.

1. Haben sich seit Bekanntwerden des PRISM-Spionageprogramms weitere Unternehmen gemeldet, die an dem Programm beteiligt waren? Gibt es sonstige Hinweise darauf, dass weitere Unternehmen daran beteiligt waren?

2. Haben sich EU-Unternehmen gemeldet, die von US-Behörden aufgefordert wurden, Nutzerdaten zu übergeben oder den US-Behörden Zugriffsmöglichkeiten zu ermöglichen?

3. Hat die Kommission bei wichtigen Internet-Unternehmen der EU entsprechende Umfragen durchgeführt?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(29. August 2013)

Die Kommission ist besorgt über neue Medienberichte über Programme wie PRISM, die anscheinend in großem Umfang den Zugriff auf die Daten europäischer Bürger und die Verarbeitung dieser Daten ermöglichen.

Die Kommission hat von der US-amerikanischen Regierung Aufklärung im Hinblick auf die in den Medien genannten Programme und ihre möglichen Auswirkungen auf die Grundrechte der europäischen Bürger erbeten. Am 14. Juni 2013 hat die für Justiz, Grundrechte und Bürgerschaft zuständige Vizepräsidentin der Kommission das Thema bei der EU-US-Tagung der Justiz- und Innenminister in Dublin direkt mit dem amerikanischen Justizminister Eric Holder angesprochen. Im Anschluss an dieses Treffen wurden die amerikanischen Behörden schriftlich um weitere Präzisionen gebeten, u. a. zu der Menge der gesammelten Daten, dem Umfang der Programme und der juristischen Aufsicht durch die Europäer. Darüber hinaus hat die Kommission in Zusammenarbeit mit dem litauischen Ratsvorsitz eine hochrangige Ad-hoc-Arbeitsgruppe zum Datenschutz ins Leben gerufen, die diese Fragen eingehender prüfen soll. Auf der Grundlage der bis dahin gesammelten Informationen wird die Kommission dem Europäischen Parlament und dem Rat im Oktober berichten.

Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt wurden noch keine Umfragen bei Internetunternehmen durchgeführt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007937/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Companies involved in PRISM espionage

On 6 June 2013, a whistleblower exposed an extensive espionage programme conducted by the US National Security Agency (NSA). Under the programme, codenamed PRISM, US security services had access (unmonitored, judicially or otherwise) to data stored by (at the very least) Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, AOL, Skype, YouTube and Apple or processed by the servers of these companies.

1. Have other companies that were involved in the PRISM espionage programme made themselves known since the programme came to light? Are there any other indications that other companies were involved?

2. Have any EU companies made themselves known that were requested by the US authorities to hand over user data or to allow the US authorities to access such data?

3. Has the Commission conducted relevant surveys among significant Internet businesses within the EU?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2013)

The Commission is concerned regarding the recent media reports about programmes such as PRISM which appear to enable on a large scale access to and processing of data of Europeans.

The Commission has requested clarifications from the US Government regarding the programmes reported in the media and the potential impact on the fundamental rights of Europeans. The Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship raised this issue directly with the US Attorney-General Eric Holder at the EU-US Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial in Dublin on 14 June 2013. Following this meeting, further clarifications were requested by writing to the US authorities, including on the volume of the data collected, the scope of the programmes and the judicial oversight available to Europeans. In addition, the Commission has set up, together with the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU, an ad-hoc high-level EU-US working group on data protection to examine these issues further. Based on the information gathered, the Commission will report back to the European Parliament and the Council in October.

No survey amongst Internet companies has been conducted at this stage.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007941/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Abfangen der Telefon- und Internetkommunikation von EU-Vertretern durch Großbritannien

Laut Informationen, die der britischen Tageszeitung „The Guardian" vorliegen, haben britische Geheimdienste während der G20-Gipfeltreffen des Jahres 2009 widerrechtlich die Telefon- und Internetkommunikation der Gipfelteilnehmer anderer Länder abgefangen. Dadurch verhoffte sich die Regierung unter Gordon Brown Verhandlungsvorteile gegenüber den anderen Teilnehmern.

Teilnehmer der G20-Treffen sind neben britischen Vertretern auch Delegierte der EU sowie der EU-Mitgliedsländer Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien. Zudem sind Vertreter der EU als Gäste bei G20-Treffen anwesend. Teilnehmer bei den G20-Treffen waren somit unter anderem auch der Präsident der EU-Kommission sowie der EU-Ratspräsident.

1. Verfügt der Rat über Informationen darüber, ob die britische Regierung bei den G20-Gipfeltreffen des Jahres 2009 auch die Kommunikation von EU-Vertretern oder von Vertretern anderer EU-Mitgliedsländer abgefangen hat?

2. Informierte Großbritannien den Rat vor Juni 2013 über die britische Spionage bei den G20-Gipfeltreffen des Jahres 2009?

3. Wird der Rat Großbritannien um Erklärung und Entschuldigung für die widerrechtlichen Maßnahmen ersuchen?

4. Wann wird der Rat das Thema erörtern?

5. Wird der Rat wegen des illegalen Abfangens von Kommunikation von Vertretern der EU und ihrer Mitgliedstaaten bei den G20-Treffen des Jahres 2009 rechtliche oder sonstige Maßnahmen gegenüber Großbritannien ergreifen?

Antwort
(21. Oktober 2013)

Es ist nicht Sache des Rates, zu Presseberichten Stellung zu nehmen.

Der Rat hat keine der vom Herrn Abgeordneten aufgeworfenen spezifischen Fragen erörtert.

Der Rat möchte ferner darauf hinweisen, dass gemäß Artikel 4 Absatz 2 EUV die nationale Sicherheit weiterhin in die alleinige Verantwortung der einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten fällt.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007941/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Interception of telephone and Internet communications by EU representatives carried out by the United Kingdom

According to information available to the British newspaper *The Guardian*, UK intelligence services illegally intercepted the telephone and Internet communications of summit participants from other countries during the G20 Summit in 2009. The UK Government under Gordon Brown hoped that this would give it a negotiating edge over the other participants.

In addition to the UK representatives, the participants at G20 summits include delegates from the EU and from the EU Member States of Germany, France and Italy. Since EU representatives are also present as guests at G20 summits, the participants at that Summit also included the EU Commission President and the EU Council President.

1. Does the Council have any information about whether the UK Government also intercepted communications by EU representatives or representatives of other EU Member States at the G20 Summit in 2009?

2. Did the United Kingdom inform the Council before June 2013 about UK espionage at the G20 Summit in 2009?

3. Will the Council seek an explanation and apology from the United Kingdom for its illegal activities?

4. When will the Council raise this matter?

5. Will the Council take legal or other action against the United Kingdom for the illegal interception of communications by representatives of the EU and its Member States at the G20 Summit in 2009?

Reply
(21 October 2013)

It is not for the Council to comment on articles appearing in the press.

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

The Council would also point out that, in accordance with Article 4(2) TEU, national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-007942/13
an die Kommission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Abfangen der Telefon- und Internetkommunikation von EU-Vertretern durch Großbritannien

Laut Informationen, die der britischen Tageszeitung „The Guardian" vorliegen, haben britische Geheimdienste während der G20-Gipfeltreffen des Jahres 2009 widerrechtlich die Telefon- und Internetkommunikation der Gipfelteilnehmer anderer Länder abgefangen. Dadurch verhoffte sich die Regierung unter Gordon Brown Verhandlungsvorteile gegenüber den anderen Teilnehmern.

Teilnehmer der G20-Treffen sind neben britischen Vertretern auch Delegierte der EU sowie der EU-Mitgliedsländer Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien. Zudem sind Vertreter der EU als Gäste bei G20-Treffen anwesend. Teilnehmer bei den G20-Treffen waren somit unter anderem auch der Präsident der EU-Kommission sowie der EU-Ratspräsident.

1. Verfügt die Kommission über Informationen darüber, ob die britische Regierung bei den G20-Gipfeltreffen des Jahres 2009 auch die Kommunikation von EU-Vertretern oder von Vertretern anderer EU-Mitgliedsländer abgefangen hat?

2. War die Kommission vor Juni 2013 über die britische Spionage bei den G20-Gipfeltreffen des Jahres 2009 informiert?

3. Hat die Kommission Großbritannien um Erklärung und Entschuldigung für die widerrechtlichen Maßnahmen ersucht?

4. Wird die Kommission wegen des illegalen Abfangens von Kommunikation von Vertretern der EU und ihrer Mitgliedstaaten bei den G20-Treffen des Jahres 2009 rechtliche oder sonstige Maßnahmen gegenüber Großbritannien ergreifen?

Antwort von Herrn Barroso im Namen der Kommission
(16. September 2013)

Die Europäische Kommission hat die jüngsten Medienberichte über Überwachungsprogramme, durch die offenbar persönliche Daten europäischer Bürger in großem Maßstab zugänglich gemacht und verarbeitet werden können, sowie über die mutmaßliche Abhörung der Räumlichkeiten von EU-Organen in Brüssel und von EU-Vertretungen im Ausland zur Kenntnis genommen.

Zu den einzelnen Fragen des Herrn Abgeordneten liegen der Kommission keine Informationen vor.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007942/13
to the Commission
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Interception of telephone and Internet communications by EU representatives carried out by the United Kingdom

According to information available to the British newspaper '*The Guardian*', UK intelligence services illegally intercepted the telephone and Internet communications of summit participants from other countries during the G20 Summit in 2009. The UK Government under Gordon Brown hoped that this would give it a negotiating edge over the other participants.

In addition to the UK representatives, the participants at G20 summits include delegates from the EU and from the EU Member States of Germany, France and Italy. Since EU representatives are also present as guests at G20 summits, the participants at that Summit also included the EU Commission President and the EU Council President.

1. Does the Commission have any information about whether the UK Government also intercepted communications by EU representatives or representatives of other EU Member States at the G20 Summit in 2009?

2. Was the Commission informed before June 2013 about UK espionage at the G20 Summit in 2009?

3. Has the Commission sought an explanation and apology from the United Kingdom for its illegal activities?

4. Will the Commission take legal or other action against the United Kingdom for the illegal interception of communications by representatives of the EU and its Member States at the G20 Summit in 2009?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

The European Commission took notice of the recent media reports about surveillance programs which appear to enable access and processing, on a large scale, of data of Europeans, as well as on the alleged surveillance of EU institutions' premises and delegations abroad.

The Commission has no information concerning the specific points raised by the Honourable Member.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007943/13
à la Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(3 juillet 2013)

Objet: Consultation publique sur les énergies non-conventionnelles

La Commission vient de publier le résultat d'une consultation publique sur les énergies non-conventionnelles, notamment le gaz de schiste.

À voir le questionnaire mis en ligne, il est difficile de se départir de l'impression que celui-ci était plus explicite sur les problèmes environnementaux liés à l'exploitation éventuelle du gaz de schiste que sur les bénéfices économiques et l'impact positif de l'utilisation du gaz de schiste pour produire une électricité plus économe en émissions de CO^2, comme vient de le relever le président Obama dans son plan d'action climatique de juin 2013.

Le résultat de cette consultation ne semble pas très probant, ni très représentatif, avec plus de la moitié des 22 800 réponses provenant de la Pologne. Un tiers des 696 organisations ayant répondu sont des ONG sociales et environnementales, dont le parti pris contre le gaz de schiste est bien documenté.

Pourquoi la Commission se satisfait-elle d'une consultation «citoyenne» impliquant en fait moins de 0,005 % de la population européenne?

Pourquoi, pour ce genre de consultations, la Commission charge-t-elle toujours des organisations, qui se sont données comme objet premier et unique la défense de l'environnement? Selon quels critères le «BIO Intelligence Service» fut-il sélectionné? Quel est le coût budgétaire de l'opération?

Pourquoi ne pas avoir recours pour ce genre de consultations à des organisations moins doctrinaires, plus objectives et plus réceptives aux nouvelles technologies?

Réponse donnée par M. Potočnik au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2013)

Cette consultation publique s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un processus plus vaste visant à faire participer les particuliers et les parties prenantes intéressés aux travaux en cours de la Commission et porte sur les possibilités offertes par les combustibles fossiles non conventionnels tels que le gaz de schiste ainsi que sur les risques qu'ils présentent. Le questionnaire a été élaboré par les services de la Commission et a été publié sur le site web de la Commission. Compte tenu du nombre exceptionnellement élevé de réponses, l'analyse statistique des réponses a été réalisée par un bureau d'études. Les tâches de ce bureau se limitaient au traitement des données et à la présentation des résultats de l'analyse.

Le bureau d'études a été sélectionné au titre du contrat-cadre ENV.F.1/FRA/2010/0044. L'offre gagnante a été sélectionnée sur la base des critères définis dans ce contrat-cadre. La consultation en ligne a été organisée par les services de la Commission selon une procédure standard et relève donc des dépenses de fonctionnement normales de la Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007943/13
to the Commission
Robert Goebbels (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Public consultation on unconventional fuels

The Commission recently released the results of its public consultation on 'Unconventional fossil fuels (e.g. shale gas) in Europe'.

Judging by the online questionnaire that was used, it is hard not to conclude that the environmental problems associated with any shale gas extraction operations were flagged up to a greater degree than the economic benefits of using shale gas to generate electricity or the resultant lower level of CO_2 emissions — aspects highlighted by US President Obama in his June 2013 Climate Action Plan.

The outcome of the Commission's consultation seems neither very conclusive nor very representative, as more than half of the 22 800 replies received came from Poland. A third of the 696 organisations that replied were social and environmental NGOs with a well documented bias against shale gas.

How can the Commission be satisfied with a 'citizens' consultation' that actually involves less than 0.005% of the Union's population?

Why does the Commission always entrust consultation exercises of this kind to organisations whose one and only purpose is to protect the environment? What criteria were used to select 'BIO Intelligence Service', and how much did the whole consultation cost?

Why are consultation exercises of this kind not entrusted to less doctrinaire, more objective organisations with a more open attitude to new technology?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

This public consultation is part of a broader process designed to involve interested individuals and stakeholders in the Commission's ongoing work and addresses the opportunities as well as the risks of unconventional fossil fuels such as shale gas. The questionnaire was developed by the Commission services and was launched on the website of the Commission. In view of the exceptionally high number of responses, the statistical analysis of the replies was carried out by a consultancy. The tasks of the consultant were limited to data processing and the presentation of the results of the analysis.

The consultancy was selected under framework contract ENV.F.1/FRA/2010/0044. The selection of the winning bid was based on the criteria set out in that framework contract. The online consultation was organised in a standardised way by the Commission services, and therefore lies within the normal operating expenses of the Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007944/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: The Skouries gold mine in Halkidiki, North Greece

I have been contacted by a constituent regarding the Skouries gold mine in Halkidiki, North Greece.

She tells me that a large part of the forest, where the mine is situated, was sold to a Canadian company and that the mining is causing environmental issues, including deforestation.

Could the Commission indicate what revenues the Greek Government is receiving from mining operations and whether an audit has been undertaken by any public authority as to the environmental cost of the mine's presence?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(28 August 2013)

As to the amount of revenues received by the Greek Government from the Skouries mining operations, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-5340/2013 ([1]).

As to whether an audit has been undertaken regarding the 'environmental cost of the mine's presence', the Commission is not aware of such audit. However, as set out in the Commission's answer to question 4129/2012 ([2]), the gold mine project was made subject to an environmental impact assessment in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2011/92/EU ([3]), which was concluded by the adoption of a Joint Ministerial Decision (201745/26.7.11).

Directive 2011/92/EU does not refer to the 'environmental cost of projects', but requires that the assessment shall identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner, in the light of each individual case and in accordance with Articles 4 to 12, the direct and indirect effects of a project on:

(a) human beings, fauna and flora;

(b) soil, water, air, climate and the landscape;

(c) material assets and the cultural heritage;

(d) the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a), (b) and (c).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-005340&language=EN
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-004129&language=EN
([3]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007945/13
to the Commission
Syed Kamall (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: EU-funded projects in Cagliari, Sardinia

I have been contacted by a constituent who tells me that he has recently been on a trip to Cagliari, Sardinia, and that he witnessed what he believes to be three clear examples of how the EU wastes money on its funded projects.

My constituent tells me that he visited the Molentargius Saline Nature Reserve to do some bird-watching. He says that EU money was used to turn an abandoned industrial site into the nature reserve and that it includes a well constructed two-storey bird-watching tower at gate 34, which is firmly locked and inaccessible. He tells me that his local guide said that the tower is never open.

My constituent's second concern is regarding the Cittadella dei Musei, which is a group of several art and antiquity museums, which he also says are funded by the EU. He tells me that, although entrance fees are charged, none of the museums have public toilets and that the only one available is a single primitive stall near the archaeological museum.

My constituent's final concern is that none of the museums have a shop which sells food or drinks, cards or books etc. He believes that this is causing the loss of valuable revenue.

Could the Commission confirm:

1. whether any of the above concerns are in breach of the criteria required to receive EU funding?

2. whether it plans to raise these issues with the Italian Government or the relevant organisations, if this is the case?

3. whether it is concerned that the museums are losing the opportunity to increase their revenue by not having a gift or food shop?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

The Commission contacted the managing authority of the Sardinia regional programme which is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund. No breach of the criteria required to receive EU funding was found resulting from these contacts.

According to the information provided by the managing authorities, the bird-watching tower at the Molentargius Saline Nature Reserve may be temporarily closed depending on the day, season and number of visitors. The Reserve authority has set specific rules establishing when and where visitors can bird-watch in order to protect the welfare of the birds and other forms of wildlife in line with the Reserve's mission. Time schedules may vary according to the previously mentioned factors.

As concerns the Cittadella dei Musei, the level of the current provision of services for the public might indeed hamper the economic opportunities of the Cittadella. Therefore in December 2012, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the parties involved (the university of Cagliari, the municipality of Cagliari, the Italian culture ministry and other Sardinian bodies), in order to provide public services and improving the overall management of the site. On the basis of this memorandum, a call for tender for the assignment of public services will be published in September. The Sardinian authorities will select the winner and assign the public services provisions by the end of 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007946/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: British staff in the EU institutions

Having regard to the report published by the UK House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on 'The UK staff presence in the EU institutions', and to the numerous legislative proposals of the Commission that call for equality and non-discrimination, could the Commission advise what measures are being taken to increase the number of British staff so that it is proportional to the UK's share of the population of the EU as a whole?

Could the Commission explain the decrease of British staff members from 25% to 4.6% within the past seven years, and could it explain why it has not acted to maintain a fair representation?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2013)

According to the current legal framework, recruitments should primarily be based on merit. While there is an obligation to recruit on the broadest geographical basis ([1]), 'no posts shall be reserved for nationals of any specific Member State' ([2]). The General Court stated that nationality is a preferential criterion only when the candidates' merit is equal ([3]).

In this context, the Commission proposed an additional paragraph to Article 27 of the Staff Regulations (SR) in order to cope with possible serious imbalances between nationalities: 'the principle of the equality of Union's citizens shall allow each institution to adopt appropriate measures following the observation of a significant imbalance between nationalities among officials which is not justified by objective criteria. These appropriate measures must be justified and shall never result in recruitment criteria other than those based on merit'. The Parliament and the Council are in favour of this amendment which should therefore enter into force on 1 January 2014.

The number of British officials and temporary agents ([4]) in the Commission decreased from 6.4% (and not: 25%) in June 2006 ([5]) to 4.6% in July 2013, i.e. from 1,445 to 1,070. This may be linked to a number of political, economic and socio-cultural factors. Competitiveness of national salaries and careers is also one of the reasons. The decrease can also be linked to the accessions of new Member States and subsequent recruitment of staff from these Member States.

The Commission supports a fair representation of British nationals (e.g. through recent information measures in the UK about EU careers). .

([1]) Article 27 of the Staff Regulations.
([2]) As above, second sentence.
([3]) e.g. Case T-586/93.
([4]) Geographical balance is assessed by reference to the number of officials and temporary agents.
([5]) No data available for July 2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007947/13
to the Commission
Stephen Hughes (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Opinion to the Commission on new rules to limit pilots' hours of duty

The EASA has been tasked with producing an Opinion on new rules to limit pilots' hours of duty. The EASA published its Opinion in this regard on 1 October 2012, and it was debated in a Parliament hearing on 18 June 2013. Rules on pilots' duty hours have an important role in the competing interests of both the safety and the profitability of the aviation industry. At the hearing on 18 June a member of the EASA rule-making group from the UK Civil Aviation Authority (UK CAA) gave the view of the UK CAA on the proposals and in so doing described the UK CAA as 'independent'.

With regard to the EASA's practice of using seconded representatives from national aviation authorities for its rule making tasks, and for the purposes of highlighting any possible risks in assuming that national aviation authorities are independent from the industries that they regulate:

1. Can the Commission confirm that the UK CAA is funded by the UK aviation industry and that on this basis the UK CAA does in fact have a dependent interest in the profitability of the UK aviation industry?

2. Can the Commission confirm that the UK CAA owns CAA international (CAAi), that CAAi receives profit from the commercial sale of pilot fatigue management products such as the 'SAFE' computer model and that on this further basis the UK CAA does in fact have a dependent interest in the form that pilot fatigue regulations may take?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(25 July 2013)

The matters mentioned under questions 1 and 2 are not within the Commission's remit. The Commission would therefore suggest to the Honourable Member to contact directly the United Kingdom Government.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007948/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(3 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Εξ αποστάσεως διασυνοριακές πωλήσεις προϊόντων καπνού

Η αξιολόγηση αντίκτυπου από την Επιτροπή όσον αφορά στην προσέγγιση των νομοθετικών, κανονιστικών και διοικητικών διατάξεων των κρατών μελών σχετικά με τη κατασκευή, παρασκευή και την πώληση προϊόντων καπνού και συναφών προϊόντων, συμπεραίνει ότι το κίνητρο για τις διασυνοριακές πωλήσεις μέσω διαδικτύου βρίσκεται 1) στην προσφορά χαμηλότερων τιμών για προϊόντα λαθρεμπορίου ή αποτίμησης ή 2) στην παράνομη αξιοποίηση των διαφορών που υφίστανται μεταξύ των φορολογικών κανόνων των κρατών μελών. Αυτό έχει ως αποτέλεσμα τη στρέβλωση του ανταγωνισμού διότι τόσο οι παραδοσιακοί έμποροι λιανικής όσο και οι εγκατεστημένοι σε κράτη μέλη με υψηλή φορολογία αντιμετωπίζουν ανταγωνισμό από παράνομους (ως επί το πλείστον) διαδικτυακούς εμπόρους λιανικής πώλησης, καθιστώντας την πρόσβαση σε τσιγάρα από ανηλίκους πολύ πιο εύκολη. Τα περισσότερα προϊόντα καπνού που πωλούνται μέσω διαδικτύου δεν συμμορφώνονται προς τις προειδοποιήσεις για την υγεία και τις απαραίτητες ενδείξεις για τα συστατικά, ενώ παράλληλα, δεν υπάρχει τρόπος ελέγχου της ηλικίας των καταναλωτών/αγοραστών.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή προτείνει ένα νέο πλαίσιο για τις εξ αποστάσεως διασυνοριακές πωλήσεις που να σέβεται τόσο την Οδηγία 2000/31/ΕΚ και την Οδηγία 97/7/ΕΚ, η οποία πρόκειται να αντικατασταθεί από την Οδηγία 2011/83/ΕΕ.

Ωστόσο, δεν κρίνεται καλύτερο να απαγορευτούν οι εξ αποστάσεως διασυνοριακές πωλήσεις προϊόντων καπνού, σύμφωνα με τη σύμβαση πλαίσιο για τον έλεγχο προϊόντων καπνού του Παγκόσμιου Οργανισμού Υγείας, καθώς διευκολύνουν την πρόσβαση των νέων σε προϊόντα καπνού και ενδέχεται να υπονομεύουν την τήρηση των απαιτήσεων της παρούσας οδηγίας;

Όσον αφορά στη δωρεάν διανομή προϊόντων καπνού μέσω διαδικτυακών καταστημάτων λιανικής πώλησης και σε δημόσιους χώρους, η οποία πραγματοποιείται σε αρκετά κράτη μέλη, δεν κρίνεται ότι θα πρέπει να απαγορευτεί, δεδομένου ότι απευθύνεται σε νέους και έχει τη δυνατότητα να προσελκύσει νέους καπνιστές; Πώς σχολιάζει η Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(29 Αυγούστου 2013)

Ο προτεινόμενος κανονισμός για τις εξ αποστάσεως διασυνοριακές πωλήσεις προϊόντων καπνού έχει σκοπό να αποτρέψει την πώληση προϊόντων που δεν συμμορφώνονται με τις απαιτήσεις της οδηγίας περί προϊόντων καπνού (TPD) ([1]). Ειδικότερα, θα πρέπει να εξασφαλίζει ότι τηρούνται οι κανόνες σχετικά με τη γλώσσα που χρησιμοποιείται στις προειδοποιήσεις για την υγεία και σχετικά με τα συστατικά. Η πρόταση της Επιτροπής, επομένως, παρέχει ένα νομικό πλαίσιο για τις εξ αποστάσεως διασυνοριακές πωλήσεις χωρίς να αφαιρεί εξ ολοκλήρου το δίκτυο πωλήσεων. Δεδομένου ότι η πρόταση στοχεύει στη μείωση της διαθεσιμότητας φθηνότερων προϊόντων που δεν συμμορφώνονται με εθνικές πολιτικές τιμών, η Επιτροπή θεώρησε ότι δεν θα ήταν κατάλληλο να προτείνει γενική απαγόρευση των εξ αποστάσεως διασυνοριακών πωλήσεων. Το θέμα βρίσκεται προς το παρόν υπό συζήτηση στο Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο και η Επιτροπή παραμένει ανοιχτή στην εξέταση όλων των διαθέσιμων στοιχείων.

Η δωρεάν διανομή δειγμάτων προϊόντων καπνού, μεταξύ άλλων μέσω διαδικτυακών καταστημάτων λιανικής πώλησης και σε δημόσιους χώρους, αποτελεί σαφώς πηγή ανησυχίας όσον αφορά τη δημόσια υγεία. Το γεγονός αυτό διευκολύνει την πρόσβαση, ιδιαίτερα των νέων, σε προϊόντα καπνού· αυτό δεν αποτελεί ζήτημα κανονιστικής ρύθμισης του προϊόντος, αλλά της προώθησης και της διαφήμισης των προϊόντων καπνού, θέματα τα οποία ρυθμίζονται από διαφορετική νομοθεσία. Και αυτό το θέμα είναι υπό συζήτηση στο Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο.

([1]) COM(2012)788.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007948/13
to the Commission
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Cross-border distance sales of tobacco products

The impact assessment by the Commission of the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products concludes that the incentive for cross-border online sales lies 1) in the lower price charged for contraband or counterfeit products or 2) in the illegal exploitation of the differences in the tax laws of the Member States. This is distorting competition, because both traditional retailers and persons established in Member States with high tax rates face competition from (mostly) illegal online retailers who make it much easier for minors to obtain cigarettes. Most tobacco products sold online do not carry the mandatory health warnings and other information required on their composition and, at the same time, it is impossible to check the age of consumers/customers.

The European Commission has proposed a new framework for cross-border distance sales in keeping with Directive 2000/31/EC and Directive 97/7/EC, which is to replace Directive 2011/83/EU.

However, would it not be better to ban cross-border distance sales of tobacco products in accordance with the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as they make it easy for young people to obtain tobacco products and may undermine compliance with the requirements of the present directive?

As regards the distribution of free tobacco products via online retail shops and in public spaces, which is taking place in several Member States, should it not be banned, given that it is directed at young people and may attract new smokers? What are the Commission's comments?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2013)

The proposed regulation of cross border sales of tobacco products should prevent the purchasing of products not complying with requirements of the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) ([1]). In particular it should ensure that the language of the health warnings and ingredients rules are respected. The Commission proposal thus provides a legal framework for cross border distance sales without removing the sales channel altogether. As the proposal should reduce the availability of cheaper products not respecting national price policies, the Commission did not consider it appropriate to propose a complete ban of cross border distance sales. The issue is currently under discussion in the Parliament and Council and the Commission remains open to looking at all the available evidence.

The free distribution of tobacco product samples, including via online retail shops and in public spaces, is clearly a concern from a public health perspective. This facilitates access to tobacco products, particularly for young people. Rather than being an issue of product regulation, it is one of promotion and advertising of tobacco products, which is regulated under different legislation. Again this issue is currently under discussion in the Parliament and Council.

([1]) COM(2012)788.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007949/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(3 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ηλεκτρονικά τσιγάρα

Με την εμφάνιση των ηλεκτρονικών τσιγάρων (e-cigarettes) το 2001, μιας εναλλακτικής μορφής καπνίσματος, πολλοί ακτιβιστές για την υγεία φαίνεται να είναι εξαιρετικά ενθουσιασμένοι με την αυξανόμενη χρήση τους από καπνιστές-καταναλωτές που προσπαθούν να σταματήσουν το κάπνισμα.

Το ηλεκτρονικό τσιγάρο ουσιαστικά, επιτρέπει στον εθισμένο καπνιστή να διατηρήσει τη συνήθεια του καπνίσματος, επιτρέποντας του να εισπνεύσει μια δόση νικοτίνης, χωρίς όμως τη παρουσία πίσσας, μέσω του ατμού που παράγεται από το μηχανισμό του ηλεκτρονικού τσιγάρου.

Ωστόσο, προκύπτουν ορισμένα σημαντικά ζητήματα αναφορικά με την εμφάνιση και χρήση του ηλεκτρονικού τσιγάρου.

Από τη στιγμή που δεν υπάρχουν επαρκείς μελέτες και ενδείξεις για την αποτελεσματικότητα του ηλεκτρονικού τσιγάρου ως αντικαταστάτη του «παραδοσιακού» τσιγάρου, πώς επιτρέπεται η ανεξέλεγκτη προσφορά του στην αγορά; Ποια μέτρα προτίθεται να πάρει η Επιτροπή όσον αφορά στην παραγωγή και πώληση αυτών των τσιγάρων, τα οποία εμπίπτουν μόνο στην Γενική Οδηγία για την ασφάλεια προϊόντων (2001/95/EC) και πώς, προτίθεται να αντιμετωπίσει την ανεξέλεγκτη προσφορά τους μέσω διαδικτύου, όπου η γνησιότητα τους μπορεί να είναι αμφισβητούμενη;

Επίσης, η πώληση ηλεκτρονικών τσιγάρων επιτρέπεται σε ανήλικους και έφηβους. Πώς διασφαλίζεται ότι δεν θα γίνεται διαφήμιση και προώθηση του ηλεκτρονικού τσιγάρου ως «υγιούς» τρόπου καπνίσματος και, ως εκ τούτου, τα εν λόγω τσιγάρα να αποτελέσουν «πρόδρομο» για τους νέους ώστε να ξεκινήσουν, σε μεταγενέστερο στάδιο, το κάπνισμα;

Επιπλέον, η εμφάνιση των ηλεκτρονικών τσιγάρων υπονομεύει ουσιαστικά την ύπαρξη της ισχύουσας νομοθεσίας για απαγόρευση του καπνίσματος σε δημόσιους χώρους. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να συμπεριλάβει συγκεκριμένες διατάξεις στην αναθεωρημένη οδηγία για να προχωρήσουμε προς μια κοινή προσέγγιση στην Ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία όσον αφορά στα ηλεκτρονικά τσιγάρα;

Τέλος, σε πολλά από τα κράτη μέλη η νικοτίνη χρησιμοποιείται ως φάρμακο, άρα και το ηλεκτρονικό τσιγάρο θα έπρεπε να παρέχεται μόνο αν η χρήση του κρίνεται καθαρά φαρμακευτική. Πώς σχολιάζει η Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(14 Αυγούστου 2013)

Σχετικά με τον αντίκτυπο και την προτεινόμενη κανονιστική ρύθμιση των ηλεκτρονικών τσιγάρων, η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να παραπέμψει τον κύριο βουλευτή στις απαντήσεις της στις γραπτές ερωτήσεις E-6410/2013 του κ. Motti και E-3368/2013 του κ. Kaczmarek ([1]).

Η Επιτροπή δεν έχει, στο στάδιο αυτό, την πρόθεση να τροποποιήσει τη σύσταση για περιβάλλον χωρίς καπνό ([2]), αλλά παρακολουθεί εκ του σύνεγγυς τις εξελίξεις όσον αφορά τα ηλεκτρονικά τσιγάρα.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Σύσταση του Συμβουλίου, της 30ής Νοεμβρίου 2009, για περιβάλλον χωρίς καπνό, ΕΕ C 296 της 5.12.2009, 4-14.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007949/13
to the Commission
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Electronic cigarettes

With the advent in 2001 of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), which represent an alternative form of smoking, numerous health activists appear to be delighted with their increasing popularity among smokers/consumers trying to quit smoking.

Basically, electronic cigarettes allow habitual smokers to maintain their smoking habit, by enabling them to inhale a dose of tar-free nicotine through the steam produced by the electronic cigarette mechanism.

However, a number of important issues have arisen following the advent and use of electronic cigarettes.

Given that there are no adequate studies or information available as to the efficacy of electronic cigarettes as a substitute for 'traditional' cigarettes, why are they being sold on the market without any form of control? What measures does the Commission intend to take in connection with the production and sale of these cigarettes, which only come under the General Product Safety Directive (Directive 2001/95/EC), and how does it intend to deal with uncontrolled online sales of these cigarettes, which may be of dubious authenticity?

Also, electronic cigarettes can be sold to minors and teenagers. What is it doing to ensure that electronic cigarettes are not advertised and promoted as a 'healthy' form of smoking, thereby 'paving the way' for young people to start smoking further down the line?

Furthermore, electronic cigarettes seriously undermine current legislation banning smoking in public places. Does the Commission intend to include specific provisions in the recast directive, so that we can move towards a joint approach to electronic cigarettes in European legislation?

Finally, in many of the Member States, nicotine is used as a medicinal product; thus electronic cigarettes should be provided for medicinal use only. What are the Commission's comments?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

On the impact and the proposed regulation of electronic cigarettes, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-6410/2013 by Mr Motti and E-3368/2013 by Mr Kaczmarek ([1]).

The Commission has at this stage no intention to amend the recommendation on smoke-free environments ([2]), but is closely monitoring developments with regard to electronic cigarettes.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Council Recommendation of 30 November 2009 on smoke-free environments, OJ C 296, 5.12.2009, 4-14.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007950/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(3 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παραχώρηση «υπηκοοτήτων» στα κατεχόμενα

Όπως καταγγέλλει η «υπουργός» εσωτερικών της ψευδοκυβέρνησης στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο, η «κυβέρνηση» Κουτσιούκ, το τελευταίο δίμηνο της εξουσίας της, διαμοίρασε «υπηκοότητες» κατά εκατοντάδες ενόψει «εκλογών». Συγκεκριμένα η Γκιουλσιούν Γιουτζέλ ανέφερε ότι από την 1η Απριλίου μέχρι τις 31 Μαΐου 2013 η «κυβέρνηση» Κουτσιούκ είχε παραχωρήσει την «υπηκοότητα» του ψευδοκράτους σε 823 άτομα.

Όπως αναφέρουν στοιχεία, τα οποία είδαν το φως της δημοσιότητας στο πρόσφατο παρελθόν, το Κόμμα Εθνικής Ενότητας διά της ψευδοκυβέρνησης παραχώρησε «υπηκοότητα» σε 5 617 άτομα. Με βάση τον σχεδιασμό, ο αριθμός των 5 617 θα έφθανε στις 10 000 μέχρι το τέλος του τρέχοντος έτους. Την τελευταία περίοδο στον Τύπο των κατεχομένων δημοσιεύονται ονόματα ατόμων που παρουσιάζονται γεννηθέντες στην Τουρκία, δηλαδή είναι έποικοι.

Είναι ξεκάθαρο πως το καθοδηγούμενο από την Τουρκία καθεστώς του ψευδοκράτους στα κατεχόμενα, βάσει ολοκληρωμένου σχεδίου, προσπαθεί να αλλοιώσει τον δημογραφικό χαρακτήρα του νησιού και να χρησιμοποιήσει αυτούς τους αριθμούς προς όφελός της στις μελλοντικές διαπραγματεύσεις για λύση του Κυπριακού προβλήματος. Βάσει του Διεθνούς Δικαίου, οι ανωτέρω κινήσεις της Τουρκίας αποτελούν έγκλημα κατά της ανθρωπότητας.

Αφού η Επιτροπή επανειλημμένα υπογράμμισε την θέλησή της να συμβάλει στο θέμα των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων στην Κύπρο, τόσο για τους Τουρκοκύπριους όσο και για τους Ελληνοκύπριους, θα πρέπει το ζήτημα της δημογραφικής αλλοίωσης στο βόρειο τμήμα της Κύπρου να αποτελέσει προτεραιότητα για την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και να πάρει ουσιαστικά μέτρα επί του θέματος.

— Ως εκ τούτου ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή: Προτίθεται να ασκήσει πίεση στην Τουρκία ούτως ώστε να πραγματοποιηθεί στα κατεχόμενα μια αντικειμενική δημογραφική έρευνα στα κατεχόμενα;

— Ποια μέτρα προτίθεται να πάρει επί του θέματος;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-008075/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Παράνομη παραχώρηση ιθαγένειας από το κατοχικό καθεστώς στην Κύπρο σε γνωστές προσωπικότητες της Τουρκίας

Σύμφωνα με στοιχεία που περιέχονται στην τουρκοκυπριακή εφημερίδα KIBRIS (1.7.2013), η υποτελής διοίκηση της Τουρκίας στο κατεχόμενο τμήμα της Κύπρου παραχωρεί κατά συρροή τη λεγόμενη τουρκοκυπριακή ιθαγένεια σε τούρκους πολίτες, γνωστές προσωπικότητες από τον πολιτικό, καλλιτεχνικό, αθλητικό και δημοσιογραφικό χώρο της Τουρκίας, με αποτέλεσμα τα άτομα αυτά, παράνομα, να αποκτούν δικαίωμα ψήφου στις προσεχείς λεγόμενες εκλογές της 28ης Ιουλίου 2013 στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο. Μεταξύ αυτών περιλαμβάνονται ο υιός του πρώην πρωθυπουργού της Τουρκίας Μουράτ Μεχμέτ Οζάλ, πρώην βουλευτές και υπουργοί του κυβερνώντος τουρκικού κόμματος του πρωθυπουργού Ταγίπ Ερτογάν και άλλες γνωστές προσωπικότητες.

Είναι φανερό ότι οι ενέργειες αυτές εντάσσονται στα πλαίσια των παράνομων προσπαθειών της Τουρκίας να αλλοιώσει το δημογραφικό χαρακτήρα της Κύπρου, να καθυποτάξει πλήρως πολιτικά και οικονομικά την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα και να αποκομίσει πολιτικά οφέλη για την ίδια και την υποτελή της διοίκηση στην Κύπρο.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Είναι ενήμερη αυτών των ενεργειών της Τουρκίας και του παράνομου καθεστώτος στην κατεχόμενη Κύπρο;

— Θεωρεί ότι οι ενέργειες αυτές συνάδουν με το διεθνές και ευρωπαϊκό δίκαιο, καθώς και με τις σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας που πρέπει να διέπουν τις σχέσεις μιας υπό ένταξη χώρας με ένα κράτος μέλος της Ένωσης;

— Ποιους μοχλούς πίεσης διαθέτει η ΕΕ ώστε να αναγκάσει την Τουρκία και το κατοχικό καθεστώς να τερματίσουν τις παράνομες και αυθαίρετες αυτές ενέργειες;

— Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή για τον τερματισμό της απαράδεκτης αυτής κατάστασης σε βάρος της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει τα Αξιότιμα Μέλη στην απάντηση που έδωσε στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-000535/2013 και στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-011505/2011 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007950/13
to the Commission
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: 'Citizenships' handed out in occupied territories

According to a complaint by the 'Minister' of the Interior of the pseudo-state in occupied Cyprus, the Kuchiuk 'administration' handed out 'citizenships' by the hundred during its last two months in office in the run-up to the 'elections'. In fact, he stated that, between 1 April and 31 May 2013, the Kuchiuk 'government' handed out 'citizenships' of the pseudo-state to 823 people.

According to information published recently, the National Unity Party granted 'citizenship' to 5 617 persons through the pseudo-government. Had things gone according to plan, that figure of 5 617 would have been 10 000 by the end of this year. The names of persons who appear to have been born in Turkey, and who are therefore settlers, were recently published in the press of the occupied territory.

Clearly, the regime of the pseudo-state instructed by Turkey in the occupied territory has adopted an integrated plan to alter the demography of the island and to use those figures to its advantage in future negotiations to resolve the Cyprus problem. Under international law, the above moves by Turkey are a crime against humanity.

As the Commission has repeatedly emphasised its intention to assist with the matter of human rights in Cyprus, for both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, the question of the altered demography of the northern part of Cyprus should be a priority for the European Commission and it should adopt substantive measures on the matter.

— In view of the above, will the Commission say if it intends to put pressure on Turkey to carry out an objective demographic survey of the occupied territory?

— What measures does it intend to take in the matter?

Question for written answer E-008075/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 July 2013)

Subject: Citizenship illegally granted to famous Turks by occupying regime in Cyprus

According to information published in the Turkish Cypriot newspaper *Kibris* on 1 July 2013, the Turkish puppet administration in the occupied part of Cyprus keeps granting so-called Turkish Cypriot citizenship to famous Turkish politicians, artists, athletes and journalists. As a result, these people have illegally acquired the right to vote in the forthcoming elections in occupied Cyprus to be held on 28 July 2013. They include the son of the former Turkish Prime Minister, Murat Mehmet Ozal, former members of parliament and ministers of the governing Turkish party of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and other famous people.

Obviously this action forms part of Turkey's illegal efforts to alter the demography of Cyprus, to fully subjugate the Turkish Cypriot community politically and economically and to derive political capital for itself and its puppet administration in Cyprus.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Is it aware of this action on the part of Turkey and the illegal regime in occupied Cyprus?

— Does it consider that this action is in keeping with international and European law and with the good neighbourly relations that should govern relations between a candidate country and a Member State of the Union?

— What pressure can the EU bring to bear on Turkey and the occupying regime to stop this unlawful and arbitrary action?

— What does the Commission intend to do to put a stop to this unacceptable situation which is damaging the Republic of Cyprus?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(5 September 2013)

The Commission would kindly refer the Honourable Members to its answer to Written Question E-000535/2013 and to Written Question E-011505/2011 ([1]).

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

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007951/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Militanza estremista in Nigeria settentrionale

Nel giugno 2013 nella parte nord-orientale della Nigeria sono stati segnalati numerosi casi di violenze commesse dal gruppo estremista jihadista Boko Haram, collegato ad al-Qaeda. Migliaia di persone sono fuggite dai villaggi di Borno, Yobe e Adamawa, e molti hanno raggiunto la parte settentrionale del Camerun. I membri di Boko Haram hanno inviato lettere ai dipendenti del governo e ai dipendenti pubblici intimando loro di dimettersi e minacciandoli con la pena di morte. Inoltre hanno saccheggiato le abitazioni del distretto di Gwoza, dove è ubicato il governo locale dello stato di Borno. In risposta agli attacchi i soldati e la polizia hanno dato via a bombardamenti con l'ausilio di aerei ed elicotteri armati per allontanare gli insorti, anche se questi ultimi, stando a fonti locali, si starebbero raggruppando nelle colline di Gwoza.

Secondo altre informative i militanti di Boko Haram avrebbero recentemente ucciso 16 studenti di scuole superiori e due insegnanti in due attacchi ai danni di scuole. Il responsabile delle scuole primarie dello stato di Borno afferma che l'anno scorso sono state date alle fiamme 50 scuole primarie. Il gruppo ha inoltre preso di mira gli agricoltori nella parte nord-orientale della Nigeria e 19 000 di essi hanno abbandonato le loro colture a causa del rischio di attacchi da parte di Boko Haram. Secondo il responsabile dell'agricoltura dello stato ciò provocherà una carenza di alimenti.

Attualmente la parte nord-orientale della Nigeria si trova in uno stato di emergenza, in vigore da maggio, mentre il governo nigeriano sta tentando di trovare una soluzione politica. È stata introdotta un'amnistia, ma i rappresentanti di Boko Haram si rifiutano di parlare con il governo.

1. In che modo viene assegnato alla Nigeria il 10° Fondo europeo di sviluppo (FES) per affrontare il problema delle insurrezioni nel nord-est del paese?

2. Come valuta l'AR/VP i tentativi del governo nigeriano di istituire un'amnistia per i militanti di Boko Haram? Vi è il rischio che questa possa includere i crimini di guerra o i crimini contro l'umanità?

3. In considerazione dello stato di emergenza dichiarato in Nigeria a maggio, come valutano i funzionari dell'UE di stanza ad Abuja gli sforzi del governo di allontanare le insurrezioni del nord?

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

1. L'Unione europea sta adottando un approccio globale in materia di sicurezza, governance e sviluppo per affrontare il problema delle insurrezioni nel nord-est della Nigeria. Il 10° Fondo europeo di sviluppo (FES) sta finanziando diversi programmi per l'approvvigionamento idrico e la fornitura di servizi igienico-sanitari, attività di sostegno all'assistenza sanitaria per madri e neonati, comprese le vaccinazioni, e un'ampia gamma di progetti relativi alla governance. Nel dicembre 2012 una missione dell'UE in Nigeria ha esaminato le specifiche forme di sostegno alla lotta al terrorismo. Sarà pertanto attuato molto presto un pacchetto di misure, a titolo dello strumento per la stabilità, intese a sostenere attività nel campo della sicurezza e dello Stato di diritto.

2. Il governo nigeriano ha dichiarato di voler concedere l'amnistia ai ribelli disposti a rinunciare alla violenza. La definizione delle modalità con cui verrà concessa fa parte del mandato del Comitato di presidenza sul dialogo e sulla risposta alla sfide in materia di sicurezza nel nord. Tuttavia, i beneficiari dell'amnistia sono tenuti innanzitutto ad accettare le condizioni previste. Le informazioni attualmente disponibili sulla possibile accettazione e sulle condizioni di un programma di amnistia non sono sufficienti per effettuare una valutazione adeguata.

3. Entrambe le parti, ossia l'esercito nigeriano e i ribelli, sostengono che le operazioni da loro svolte sortiscono gli effetti desiderati. Tuttavia, poiché l'accesso alle regioni del nord-est resta molto limitato, è difficile ottenere informazioni indipendenti per valutare l'effettiva efficacia degli sforzi del governo nigeriano nel soffocare l'insurrezione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007951/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Extremist militancy in northern Nigeria

In June 2013, there have been numerous reports of violence in northeastern Nigeria, perpetrated at the hands of the al-Qaeda-linked extremist jihadi group Boko Haram (BH). Thousands of people have fled villages in states such as Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. Many of them have moved into northern Cameroon. Members of BH have written letters warning government workers or civil servants to resign under the threat of death. They have ransacked the homes of people in Gwoza district, which is the local government area of Borno state. In response to attacks, soldiers and the police have launched bombing raids with jet fighters and helicopter gunships in order to dislodge insurgents, but locals say that they are regrouping in the hills of Gwoza.

According to other reports, Boko Haram militants recently killed 16 high school students and two teachers in two school attacks. Borno state's commissioner for primary schools says that 50 primary schools in the past year have been burnt down. Also, the group has targeted farmers in northeast Nigeria and at least 19 000 farmers have abandoned tending their crops because of the risk of attacks by Boko Haram. This is due to result in food shortages according to the state's agricultural commissioner.

There is currently a state of emergency in northeastern Nigeria, which was introduced in May, and the Nigerian government is attempting to find a political solution. An amnesty has been introduced, but Boko Haram representatives are refusing to talk to the government.

1. How is the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for Nigeria being allocated to address the problem of insurgency in the northeast of the country?

2. What is the assessment of the HR/VP regarding the Nigerian Government's attempts to set up an amnesty for Boko Haram militants? Is there a danger this might include war crimes or crimes against humanity?

3. Since a state of emergency was declared in Nigeria in May, what has been the assessment of EU officials in Abuja towards government efforts to dislodge the insurgency in the north?

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

1. The European Union is adopting a comprehensive security/governance/development approach to address the problem of insurgency in the North-East of Nigeria. The 10th EDF is funding several water and sanitation programmes, support to maternal and newborn health, including immunisation, and also a broad range of governance related projects. In December 2012 an EU mission went to Nigeria to examine specific forms of support to fight terrorism. As a result, a package under the Instrument for Stability will start implementation very soon to support activities in the areas of security and the rule of law.

2. It is true that the Nigerian Government has stated it would grant amnesty to members of the insurgency who renounce violence. Working out modalities for the amnesty is part of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Resolution of the Security Challenges in the North. However, those for whom amnesty is being proposed have to accept it first. So far there is too little information available on possible acceptance and conditions of an amnesty programme to allow for a proper assessment.

3. Both sides, the Nigerian army and the insurgents, claim that their operations are succesful. However, since access to the North-Eastern regions remains very limited it is difficult to obtain independent information to verify to what degree the Nigerian Government's efforts to dislodge the insurgency are successful.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007952/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Scontri in Libano

Alla fine di giugno 2013 a Sidon, città meridionale del Libano, sono scoppiati violenti combattimenti dopo che le truppe avevano tentato di arrestare un seguace dello sciecco Ahmed al-Assir e religioso sunnita radicale. Successivamente, stando a quanto sostenuto dai militari, i sostenitori del religioso hanno aperto il fuoco senza alcuna provocazione colpendo un posto di blocco dell'esercito. Nell'ambito di un'operazione delle forze libanesi, volta ad allontanare i sostenitori di al-Assir da un complesso di edifici ubicati a Sidon, controllati dal predicatore da circa due anni, sono stati uccisi almeno 17 soldati e almeno 50 hanno riportato ferite. I soldati libanesi sono stati costretti a far esplodere una serie di trappole esplosive posizionate all'interno degli edifici.

Fonti di stampa libanesi hanno riferito che il procuratore militare Saqr Saqr ha chiesto ai servizi militari di intelligence di aprire un'indagine sugli scontri avvenuti a Sidon. Fino a poco tempo addietro in città regnava una relativa calma, anche se il conflitto della vicina Siria ha ripercussioni sul Libano. Molti residenti sono fuggiti dalla città e alcuni sarebbero stati utilizzati come scudi umani dai sostenitori di al-Assir. Secondo il Guardian britannico, il luogo è diventato una «zona di guerra».

Al-Assir è uno strenuo oppositore di Hezbollah e sostiene gli insorti sunniti che puntano alla destituzione di Bashar al-Assad, minacciando altresì di ampliare la portata degli scontri all'interno del Libano. *Gulf News* riporta che al-Assir ha chiesto ai suoi sostenitori di organizzare una «vera sommossa» contro Hezbollah. «Il porco miserabile di un progetto iraniano ci sta massacrando e sta violentando le nostre donne; a capo di questo progetto c'è [il leader di Hezbollah] Hassan Nasrallah», ha detto al-Assir.

1. Quali misure è disposto ad adottare l'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente per sorvegliare le attività dello sceicco Ahmed al-Assir e dei suoi sostenitori, i quali stanno minacciando di creare una nuova instabilità settaria nel Libano?

2. È l'AR/VP disposto a fornire eventualmente assistenza al governo libanese nelle sue indagini sugli scontri di Sidon e su altri incidenti di natura settaria?

3. Qual è la valutazione dei funzionari dell'UE ubicati nella regione in merito alla crescente popolarità dello sceicco al-Assir? Ritengono che stia diventando una figura di primo piano come il leader di Hezbollah Hassan Nasrallah?

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

L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente segue da vicino le vicende in Libano, soprattutto mediante la delegazione dell'UE a Beirut. Le azioni di Ahmed Assir e dei suoi sostenitori sono state accuratamente documentate.

Dal 2007 l'UE fornisce assistenza al governo libanese in materia di sicurezza, mediante lo strumento per la stabilità e lo strumento europeo di vicinato e partenariato. L'assistenza ha aiutato le agenzie di sicurezza libanesi, fra cui le forze di sicurezza interne, la sicurezza generale e le forze armate libanesi, a mantenere l'ordine e la stabilità nel paese. Attualmente sono in corso di valutazione possibilità di ulteriori forme di assistenza da parte dell'UE.

Ahmed al-Assir non appartiene a istituzioni governative o partiti politici del Libano. Ha un seguito informale di sostenitori, noti per il ricorso illegale all'uso delle armi e per minacce all'ordine pubblico e alla sicurezza. Il governo libanese sta affrontando il problema. Sarebbe difficile paragonare questa situazione con quella di Hassan Nasrallah, il leader di Hezbollah, un'organizzazione costituita formalmente e attiva in diversi settori.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007952/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Clashes in Lebanon

In late June 2013, intense fighting erupted in the southern Lebanese town of Sidon after troops tried to arrest a follower of the radical Sunni cleric Sheikh Ahmed al-Assir. After this, the military reported that supporters of the cleric opened fire without provocation on an army checkpoint. At least 17 soldiers have been killed and at least fifty wounded as Lebanese forces have worked to remove al-Assir supporters from a complex inside Sidon, which has been under the control of the preacher for approximately two years. Lebanese soldiers were obliged to detonate a series of booby traps found inside the complex.

Lebanese news sources have reported that the military's prosecutor Saqr Saqr has asked military intelligence to open an investigation into the clashes that took place in Sidon. Until recently, the city was relatively quiet, even though the conflict from neighbouring Syria had spilled over into Lebanon. Many of the residents have fled the city and there have been reports that some have been used as human shields by al-Assir's supporters. It has become a 'war zone' according to the UK's *Guardian*.

Al-Assir is a strong opponent of Hezbollah and supports the Sunni rebels who are working for the removal of Bashar al-Assad. He has also threatened to widen the scale of the clashes inside Lebanon. *Gulf News* reports that al-Assir called on his supporters to stage 'a real uprising' against Hezbollah. 'There is a miserable swine of an Iranian project that is slaughtering us and raping our women, and heading this project is [Hezbollah chief] Hassan Nasrallah,' al-Assir said.

1. What steps is the High Representative / Vice-President prepared to take to monitor the activities of Sheikh Ahmed al-Assir and his supporters, who are threatening to create further sectarian instability inside Lebanon?

2. Is the HR/VP prepared to offer any assistance to the Lebanese Government as they carry out investigations into the clashes at Sidon and other incidents which are sectarian in nature?

3. What is the assessment of EU officials based in the region regarding the growing popularity of Sheik al-Assir? Do they think he is becoming as powerful a figure as Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah?

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

The HR/VP is closely following developments in Lebanon, especially through the EU Delegation in Beirut. The actions of Ahmed Assir and his supporters have been thoroughly reported on.

The EU has been providing support to the Lebanese Government in the security sector since 2007, through the Instrument for Stability as well as the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). That support has benefited Lebanese security agencies engaged in maintaining order and stability in the country, including Internal Security Forces, General Security, and Lebanese Armed Forces. Possibilities of additional EU assistance are currently being actively explored.

Ahmed al-Assir does not belong to any governmental institution or a political party in Lebanon. He has informal followership that has been noted for their illegal recourse to arms and threats to public order and security. The Lebanese Govenrment has been addressing the challenge. It would be difficult to make a comparison with Hassan Nasrallah who heads Hizbullah, a formalised organisation active in a variety of fields.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007953/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Preoccupazioni del re della Giordania riguardo alla Siria

In un'intervista pubblicata il 25 giugno 2013 dal giornale *Asharq Al-Awsat* con sede a Londra, il re della Giordania Abdullah II ha ammonito che la guerra in Siria potrebbe dare inizio a un conflitto settario regionale, se le potenze occidentali non intervengono per aiutare ad avviare i colloqui di pace. A suo parere, se la Siria dovesse spaccarsi per motivi religiosi, le conseguenze sarebbero devastanti. Il monarca ha inoltre messo in guardia che una Siria divisa rappresenta un conflitto aperto che minaccerebbe la stabilità della regione e il futuro del suo popolo per le generazioni a venire. Secondo le stime, sono già 500 000 i rifugiati siriani presenti in Giordania che, nella sua parte settentrionale, ospita due campi profughi. La Giordania continua a ricevere circa 3 000 rifugiati al giorno, mentre altre centinaia sono bloccate alla frontiera del paese.

Recentemente Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Segretario generale aggiunto per gli affari politici delle Nazioni Unite, ha dichiarato che la continua tragedia della Siria sta avendo ripercussioni umanitarie sull'intera regione, colpendo in particolare il Libano e la Giordania. Quest'ultima teme di essere trascinata nel conflitto poiché sono state ricevute segnalazioni riguardo al fatto che alcuni estremisti militanti giordani sono andati in Siria per unirsi ai ribelli. Nell'intervista il re della Giordania ha dichiarato: «Ci troviamo di fronte a una situazione in cui sia i sunniti che gli sciiti ritengono inevitabile una guerra settoriale devastante in Siria».

1. Quali provvedimenti sta adottando il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante per sostenere il lancio di colloqui di pace tra il governo e l'opposizione in Siria per contribuire a risolvere il conflitto?

2. Qual è il sostegno che l'UE fornisce, o è disposta a fornire, per assistere le autorità giordane a far fronte al crescente numero di rifugiati siriani?

3. È disposto il Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante ad avviare un dialogo con il re Abdullah per discutere sui modi migliori in cui l'UE può sostenere gli sforzi profusi dalla Giordania per gestire la crisi alle frontiere del paese?

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

1. L'Alta Rappresentante/Vicepresidente ha ripetutamente sostenuto che il conflitto in Siria necessita di una soluzione negoziata. Essa ribadisce il proprio sostegno al piano per una conferenza di pace a Ginevra. L'AR/VP ha preso contatto con le Nazioni Unite e il Rappresentante speciale Lakhdar Brahimi, nonché con gli Stati Uniti, la Russia e altri attori chiave ed è pronta a sostenere la Conferenza nella pratica. Nei suoi contatti con l'opposizione, l'AR/VP ha chiaramente affermato che sono necessari unità, inclusività e rappresentatività. L'UE continuerà a collaborare con i nuovi dirigenti della coalizione che raggruppa l'opposizione siriana, con l'obiettivo di pervenire a una soluzione pacifica.

2. Finora la Commissione ha stanziato 61,5 milioni di EUR in aiuti umanitari alla Giordania, gran parte dei quali a sostegno del campo profughi di Zaatari. L'assistenza è destinata *in primis* agli interventi medici di emergenza per salvare vite umane, alla fornitura di prodotti alimentari e nutrizionali, acqua potabile, impianti igienico-sanitari, strutture di protezione, alla distribuzione di prodotti di base non alimentari e agli interventi a favore delle persone più vulnerabili. In termini di aiuto allo sviluppo, la Commissione ha stanziato 23,8 milioni di EUR a favore dell'accesso all'istruzione, di programmi di mentoring e per lo sviluppo delle competenze, destinati ai profughi siriani nonché a sostegno delle comunità di accoglienza interessate. Nel giugno 2013 la Commissione ha messo a disposizione della Giordania un ulteriore importo di 60 milioni di EUR a favore di programmi di istruzione, per servizi sanitari e per sostenere le comunità di accoglienza con una forte concentrazione di rifugiati.

3. L'AR/VP si è recata in Giordania il 16 giugno 2013 per colloqui con il re Abdullah II e con il ministro degli Affari esteri Judeh, ha riconosciuto il ruolo essenziale che la Giordania sta svolgendo nel fornire sostegno e ospitalità ai rifugiati siriani e sottolineato il maggiore sostegno finanziario dell'UE per assistere il governo giordano nella sua risposta alla crisi dei profughi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007953/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Jordanian monarch's concerns regarding Syria

In an interview published by London-based newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* on 25 June 2013, Jordan's King Abdullah II warned that the war in Syria could spark a regional sectarian conflict unless Western powers helped convene peace talks. If Syria were to fracture along religious lines, he said, it would 'have devastating consequences'. The King also warned: 'A divided Syria means an open-ended conflict that would undermine the stability of the region and the future of its people for generations to come'. According to estimates, there are already 500 000 Syrian refugees in Jordan, which hosts two refugee camps in the north of the country. Jordan still receives almost 3 000 refugees each day, and hundreds more are stranded at the country's border.

United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Oscar Fernandez-Taranco has recently said that the continuing tragedy in Syria is having a humanitarian impact on the entire region, with Jordan and Lebanon bearing the brunt of it. The fear for Jordan is that the country could be dragged into the conflict, as there are reports that a number of Jordanian militant extremists have gone into Syria to join the rebels. Jordan's monarch said in the interview: 'We are facing a situation where both Sunnis and Shiites believe that a devastating sectarian war in Syria is inevitable'.

1. What steps is the Vice-President/High Representative taking to support the launch of peace talks between Syria's opposition and government in order to help bring about a resolution to the conflict?

2. What support is the EU giving, or is prepared to give, to help the Jordanian authorities cope with the growing Syrian refugee population?

3. Is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to talk with King Abdullah to discuss the best ways for the EU to support Jordanian efforts to deal with the crisis on the country's border?

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

1. The HR/VP has stated repeatedly that the conflict in Syria needs a negotiated solution. She maintains her support to the plan for the peace conference in Geneva. She has been in contact with the UN and Special Representative Brahimi, as well as with the USA, Russia and other key actors. The HR/VP is ready to support the conference practically. In the HR/VP's contacts with the opposition, she has been clear that there is need for unity, inclusiveness, and representativeness. The EU will continue to work with the new leadership of the Syrian Opposition Coalition toward the goal of making a peaceful solution possible.

2. The Commission has so far allocated EUR 61.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Jordan, a large proportion of which supports projects in the Zaatari refugee camp. This assistance primarily supports life-saving medical emergency responses, the provision of food and nutritional items, safe water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter, distribution of basic non-food items and protection to help the most vulnerable. In terms of development assistance, the Commission provided EUR 23.8 million to support access to education, mentoring and skills development for Syrian refugees as well as for host communities affected. In June 2013 the Commission made available to Jordan a further EUR 60 million to support education, health services and host communities with a high concentration of refugees.

3. The HR/VP travelled to Jordan on 16 June 2013 where she held talks with King Abdullah II and Foreign Minister Judeh. She acknowledged the vital role Jordan is *playing in providing support and hospitality to the Syrian refugees* and highlighted the EU's increased financial support in *assisting the Jordanian Government in its response to the refugee crisis*.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007955/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) e Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Truppe americane in Iraq

Il 28 giugno 2013, il quotidiano britannico *Times* ha riferito che gli Stati Uniti invieranno nuovamente truppe in Iraq, sebbene la data ufficiale del loro ritiro fosse già stata stabilita nel 2011. L'obiettivo del nuovo dispiegamento è quello di tagliare il sostegno ai combattenti islamici nella vicina Siria. Il Pentagono intende inviare truppe di addestramento speciali per aiutare i militari iracheni a fermare le forze affiliate ad Al Qaeda che forniscono armi ai gruppi di estremisti oltre il confine. Tuttavia, ribadisce il fatto che le truppe saranno presenti con funzioni di addestramento e non prenderanno parte a nessun combattimento diretto.

Secondo il quotidiano, si ritiene che il governo iracheno abbia richiesto un'assistenza specifica per questo compito. Il piano di inviare truppe di addestramento in Iraq sarebbe inoltre in linea con un programma analogo per il Libano che, sotto la direzione del comando centrale statunitense, dovrebbe prendere effetto nelle prossime settimane.

Il generale Martin Dempsey, capo dello Stato maggiore congiunto delle forze armate statunitensi, ha dichiarato di voler inviare squadre di addestramento e che le forze di sicurezza irachena hanno bisogno di aiuto «con il riemergere di Al Qaeda». Ha sottolineato inoltre che la missione è intesa a fornire assistenza ai paesi partner che devono far fronte alle ricadute del conflitto siriano. Il governo americano teme che Al Qaeda si stia avvalendo delle sue risorse interne all'Iraq per inviare armi e combattenti ai gruppi islamici estremisti in Siria, come *Jabhat al-Nusra*.

1. Qual è l'opinione dell'Alto Rappresentante/Vicepresidente in merito alla notizia di un nuovo dispiegamento di truppe americane in Iraq?

2. Durante la sua recente visita in Iraq, il VP/AR ha discusso con il primo ministro Nouri al-Maliki il problema dei gruppi di estremisti sunniti iracheni che trasferiscono armi e combattenti a gruppi analoghi in Siria?

3. Quale aiuto può offrire l'AR/VP all'Iraq per affrontare il problema dell'assistenza fornita da Al Qaeda ai suoi affiliati in Siria?

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

L'AR/VP è seriamente preoccupata per l'aumento della violenza in Iraq e accoglie con favore tutti gli sforzi prodigati dal governo iracheno per farvi fronte. L'AR/VP ha esortato a più riprese il governo iracheno e tutti i leader politici ad adoperarsi con il massimo impegno per porre fine a questo ciclo di violenza. L'AR/VP è estremamente preoccupata anche per le ricadute del conflitto siriano e durante la sua recente visita in Iraq ha discusso con il primo ministro iracheno Maliki della situazione in Siria e del suo impatto. Per quanto riguarda l'eventuale assistenza statunitense all'Iraq a cui fanno riferimento gli onorevoli deputati, spetta all'Iraq e agli Stati Uniti decidere se intendono intensificare ulteriormente la cooperazione bilaterale in materia di sicurezza.

L'UE ha sempre sostenuto gli sforzi dell'Iraq volti a migliorare lo Stato di diritto e la situazione dei diritti umani nel paese. Attraverso la missione EUJUSTLEX sullo Stato di diritto e l'assistenza bilaterale, l'Unione ha fornito un notevole sostegno per lo sviluppo delle capacità nel settore della giustizia penale iracheno, compresa la polizia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007955/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Fiorello Provera (EFD) and Charles Tannock (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — US Troops in Iraq

On 28 June 2013, the UK's *Times* newspaper reported that the United States would be sending forces back to Iraq, even though an official date for withdrawal had been established in 2011. The aim of the redeployment is to cut off support for Islamist fighters in neighbouring Syria. The Pentagon plans to send specialist training troops to help Iraq's military stop al-Qaeda-aligned forces which are arming extremist groups over the border. However, it insists that troops will be there in a training capacity and will not take part in any direct fighting.

The newspaper reported that it is believed that the Iraqi government had asked for specific assistance in this task. The plan to send training troops to Iraq would also be aligned with a similar scheme for Lebanon under the direction of the US Central Command that is expected to take effect in the coming weeks.

General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that he was planning to send training teams and that Iraqi security forces needed help 'with a re-emerging al-Qaeda'. He has also stressed that the purpose of this mission is to assist partner countries dealing with the spill-over of the Syrian conflict. The US Government is concerned that al-Qaeda is using its assets inside Iraq to send fighters and arms to extremist Islamist groups in Syria such as Jabhat al-Nusra.

1. What is the position of the Vice-President/High Representative regarding the news that the US will redeploy troops to Iraq?

2. During the VP/HR's recent visit to Iraq, did she discuss with Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki the problem of Iraqi Sunni extremist groups funnelling arms and fighters to similar groups in Syria?

3. What help can the VP/HR offer Iraq to tackle the problem of al-Qaeda assisting its affiliates in Syria?

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

The HR/VP is seriously concerned by the increase in violence in Iraq and welcomes all efforts by the Iraqi government to address this. She has repeatedly called on the Iraqi government and all political leaders to make all efforts to end this cycle of violence. She is also very concerned by the spill-over effects of the Syrian conflict and did discuss the situation in Syria and its impact on Iraq with Prime Minister Maliki during her recent visit to Iraq. As regards possible US assistance to Iraq that the honorable members are referring to, it is for Iraq and the US to decide if they wish to further enhance their bilateral security cooperation.

The EU has consistently supported Iraq's efforts to improve the rule of law and the human rights situation in the country.Through its Rule of Law EUJUSTLEX mission as well as bilateral assistance the EU has provided extensive capacity building support to the Iraqi criminal justice sector, including the police.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007957/13
to the Commission
Vicky Ford (ECR)
(3 July 2013)

Subject: Ban on neonicotinoids

Can the Commission summarise the research evidence obtained by it prior to its decision to ban neonicotinoids for a two-year period?

Can the Commission also divulge the way in which the analysis has taken account of the consequences of such a ban for food production and the environment?

I understand that the Commission ban is only for two years, in order for it to analyse the impact on the bee population in particular. How does the Commission intend to gather evidence of the impact of neonicotinoids during this period? Are any field trials to be permitted? What other research is intended to be undertaken? What criteria will be used by the Commission to form the basis of a future decision?

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

1-4) The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-001351/2013, E-000450/2013, E-001323/2013, E-2012/2013 and E-7011/2013 ([1]).

5) As regards field trials and research, as laid down in Recital 19 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 485/2013 ([2]), seeds treated with plant protection products containing clothianidin, imidacloprid or thiamethoxam, which are subject to the restrictions laid down in Article 1 of that regulation, may be used for experiments or tests for research or development purposes pursuant to Article 54 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market ([3]).

6) The criteria for approval or review of the approval of active substances are laid down in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html .
([2]) OJ L 139, 25.05.2013, p. 12.
([3]) OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p.1.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-007958/13
an den Rat
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(4. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Spionage in Gebäuden des Rats

Nach Informationen des deutschen Magazins „Der Spiegel" haben US-Behörden vor fünf Jahren aus einem auf dem Brüsseler NATO-Komplex gelegenen Gebäude heraus interne Überwachungssysteme des Justus Lipsius-Gebäudes des Rates angegriffen oder angezapft.

1. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass auch andere Geheimdienste versucht haben, Gebäude des Rates auszuspionieren? Wenn ja, welche?

2. Gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass auch andere Gebäude des Rates außer dem Justus-Lipsius-Gebäude von der Spionage betroffen waren? Wenn ja, welche?

Antwort
(16. September 2013)

Der Rat ist sich der Bedrohungen, die die Infrastruktur des Rates (Gebäude, Kommunikations- und Informationssysteme) betreffen könnten, voll und ganz bewusst. Es werden Maßnahmen getroffen, um sie entsprechend zu schützen.

Der Rat äußert sich weder zu konkreten oder potenziellen nachrichtendienstlichen Tätigkeiten gegen den Rat noch dazu, welche Art von Gegenmaßnahmen ergriffen werden.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007958/13
to the Council
Hans-Peter Martin (NI)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Espionage in Council buildings

According to information in the German *Der Spiegel* magazine, five years ago US authorities attacked or tapped internal maintenance systems in the Council's Justus Lipsius building from a building in NATO's Brussels complex.

1. Is there any evidence that other intelligence agencies have also tried to spy on Council buildings? If so, what are the facts?

2. Is there any evidence that Council buildings other than the Justus Lipsius building have also been spied on? If so, what are the facts?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

The Council is fully aware of threats potentially affecting the Council's infrastructure (buildings and communication and information systems). Steps are taken to protect the Council's infrastructure accordingly.

The Council does not comment on specific or potential intelligence activities targeting the Council nor on the nature of the counter-measures taken.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-007959/13
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(4. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Stellungnahme der Europäischen Agentur für Flugsicherheit (EASA) für die Kommission zu den neuen Regeln bezüglich der Dienstzeiten von Piloten (Flugzeitbeschränkungen)

Die Kommission wird in Bezug auf die Stellungnahme der EASA zu Flugzeitbeschränkungen und den erwarteten Kommissionsentwurf um die Beantwortung der folgenden Fragen gebeten:

— Kann die Kommission erläutern, auf welcher Grundlage sie und die EASA große Teile der wissenschaftlichen Empfehlungen dreier Wissenschaftler aus dem Jahr 2011 sowie von sechs akademischen Sachverständigen aus dem jüngsten Positionspapier des Europäischen Rates für Verkehrssicherheit und von Dr. Gundel in der Anhörung des TRAN-Ausschusses zu Flugzeitbeschränkungen vom 18. Juni 2013 umgedeutet bzw. abgelehnt haben?

— Kann die Kommission darlegen, warum sie auf einer Beschränkung der Nachtflugzeit von elf Stunden besteht — eine Einschätzung, die offenkundig auf einer irrigen Interpretation wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse beruht — wohingegen die Nachtflugzeit aus Sicherheitsgründen nach Expertenmeinung und gestützt auf Forschungsergebnisse auf zehn Stunden beschränkt werden sollte?

— Kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass sie dafür Sorge tragen wird, dass die Gesamtdauer der Bereitschaft auf dem Flughafen mit einem anschließendem Flugdienst 18 Stunden nicht überschreitet, damit gewährleistet ist, dass Besatzungen ein Flugzeug nicht nach 20 oder 22 Dienststunden landen müssen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(30. Juli 2013)

Die Gewährleistung der Sicherheit ist für die Kommission ein absolut vorrangiges Ziel, und sie hat nicht die Absicht, ein System einzuführen, das mit diesem Grundsatz unvereinbar sein könnte.

Die von der Frau Abgeordneten erwähnten wissenschaftlichen Empfehlungen erleichtern zwar das Verständnis bestimmter Elemente des Systems für Flug- und Dienstzeitbeschränkungen, eignen sich aber nicht dazu, die Wirksamkeit einer neuen Kombination von Sicherheitsmaßnahmen insgesamt zu beurteilen. Weitere Informationen zur Berücksichtigung wissenschaftlicher Empfehlungen finden sich auch in der Antwort der Kommission auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-009003/2012.

Nach derzeitigen EU-Vorschriften ([1]) ist eine Nachtflugzeit von bis zu 11:45 Stunden zulässig. Unter Berücksichtigung wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnisse schlägt die Europäische Agentur für Flugsicherheit (EASA) ([2]) auf diesem Gebiet strengere Schutzvorschriften vor, die folgende vier Maßnahmen umfassen: 1. Beschränkung der Nachtflugzeit auf elf Stunden, 2. Zulässigkeit von Nachtdienstzeiten von mehr als zehn Stunden nur bei aktiver Anwendung der Grundsätze des Ermüdungsrisikomanagements durch die Unternehmen, 3. Erweiterung des Zeitfensters, in dem die maximale Flugdienstzeit elf Stunden beträgt, 4. Vorschriften über zusätzliche Ruhezeiten. Dieser Vorschlag der EASA entspricht den strengsten nationalen Schutzvorschriften, wird von den Mitgliedstaaten befürwortet und durch betriebliche Erfahrung gestützt und kann dazu beitragen, Sicherheit und Arbeitsbedingungen der Besatzungsmitglieder in angemessener Weise zu verbessern. Die von Gewerkschaften zitierten wissenschaftlichen Studien, wonach eine maximale Dienstzeit von 10 Stunden empfohlen wird, beziehen sich auf eine sehr spezielle Kombination von Umständen und rechtfertigen es daher nach Ansicht der EASA nicht, die Flugdienstzeit bei allen EU-Nachtflügen grundsätzlich auf 10 Stunden zu begrenzen.

Nach Angaben der EASA darf die aus der Bereitschaftszeit am Flughafen und dem anschließenden Flugdienst bestehende Gesamtdauer 16 Stunden — zwei Stunden weniger als die von der Frau Abgeordneten genannte Gesamtdauer — nicht überschreiten. Der Kommission liegen keine Hinweise vor, dass dies infrage gestellt werden könnte.

([1]) Anhang III Abschnitt Q der Verordnung (EWG) Nr. 3922/91: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:010:0001:0206:DE:PDF

([2]) Stellungnahme 04/2012: http://www.easa.europa.eu/agency-measures/docs/opinions/2012/04/translations/EASA_2012_00120000_DE_TRA.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-007959/13
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Opinion for the Commission on new rules to limit pilots' hours of duty (Flight Time Limitations — FTL)

Regarding the opinion of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) on Flight Time Limitation (FTL) rules and the forthcoming Commission proposal, can the Commission:

— Explain on what grounds the EASA and the Commission reinterpret and reject large parts of the scientific advice provided by three scientists in 2011, by six scientific experts in the recent European Transport Safety Council position paper, and by Dr Gundel at the TRAN Committee FTL Hearing on 18 June 2013?

— Explain why it sticks to a night flight limit of 11 hours, based on an apparently erroneous interpretation of scientific research, whilst scientific research and experts established 10 hours to be the safe limit?

— Confirm that it will make sure that the total period of airport standby followed by a flight duty will not exceed 18 hours, to ensure that crews do not have to land an aircraft after 20 or 22 hours on duty?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(30 July 2013)

The Commission is committed to safety, which is paramount, and does not intend to put in place any system which might go against this principle.

The scientific advice mentioned by the Honourable Member, while valuable to understand specific elements of the FTL system, is not suitable for assessing the overall effectiveness of a new combination of safety measures. Further information concerning the consideration given to scientific advice has been provided by the Commission in its answer to Written Question E-009003/2012.

Current EU rules ([1]) allow up to 11:45 hours of flight duties during the night. Taking into consideration the scientific advice, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) proposes ([2]) more protective rules on this area using 4 mitigating measures: (1) reducing night flights to 11 hours; (2) allowing night duties longer than 10 hours only if operators manage them actively using fatigue risk management principles; (3) extending the time window when the maximum flight duty is 11 hours; (4) requiring additional rest. This EASA proposal equals the most protective national rules, is supported by Member States, by operational experience and has the potential of improving safety and working conditions of crew members in a proportionate manner. The scientific studies mentioned by unions as recommending a maximum duty limit of 10 hours concerned a very specific combination of circumstances that are not considered relevant by EASA for justifying a general limit of 10 hours to all EU night flights.

EASA has indicated that the total period of airport standby followed by a flight duty shall not exceed 16 hours, which is two hours less than mentioned by the Honourable Member. The Commission has no indication that this figure will be called into question.

([1]) Subpart Q of Annex III to Regulation (EEC) 3922/91, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:010:0001:0206:EN:PDF
([2]) Opinion 04/2012, http://www.easa.europa.eu/agency-measures/opinions.php

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007960/13
à la Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Réaction à l'espionnage de l'Union européenne par les États-Unis d'Amérique

Le journal allemand *Der Spiegel*, publiant des informations transmises par Edward Snowden, révèle que les États-Unis d'Amérique espionnent l'Union européenne. Ce système d'espionnage est très élaboré. Il frappe les bureaux de l'Union européenne à Washington et à Bruxelles, les conversations téléphoniques des dirigeants européens, les systèmes et documents informatiques internes à l'Union. Cet acte d'espionnage est absolument inadmissible. Il intervient après plusieurs actes du même type, notamment l'affaire d'espionnage des comptes bancaires des citoyens européens par les États-Unis avec l'aide de la société Swift.

La Commission européenne compte-elle réagir à cette agression des États-Unis d'Amérique?

La Commission doit stopper immédiatement les négociations avec les États-Unis en vue d'un accord transatlantique sur le commerce et l'investissement, puisque les États-Unis d'Amérique connaissent le texte du mandat de négociations confié par le Conseil européen à la Commission.

Pourquoi les citoyens et les parlementaires européens sont-ils dorénavant les seuls à ne pas connaître le contenu de ce document?

La Commission entend-elle proposer aux États membres que l'un d'entre eux offre à Edward Snowden l'asile politique qu'il mérite pour avoir fait connaître le complot des États-Unis d'Amérique contre l'Union européenne?

Réponse donnée par M^me^ Reding au nom de la Commission
(10 septembre 2013)

La Commission invite l'Honorable Parlementaire à se reporter à sa réponse à la question écrite E-007934/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007960/13
to the Commission
Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Reaction to the spying perpetrated on the EU by the USA

The German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, in publishing information provided by Edward Snowden, has revealed that the USA has set up an elaborate spying system targeting the EU's offices in Washington and Brussels, the telephones of European leaders and the EU's internal systems and computerised documents. This espionage is absolutely unacceptable and comes as the latest in a line of other such criminal acts, including cases of spying on EU citizens' bank accounts with the aid of the 'SWIFT' company.

How does the Commission intend to react to this attack from the USA?

The Commission must put an immediate stop to negotiations with the USA on the transatlantic trade and investment partnership because the USA is aware of the details of the negotiating mandate given to the Commission by the Council.

Whey are Europe's citizens and elected representatives now the only ones unaware of the content of this mandate?

Does the Commission intend to encourage any Member State to grant Mr Snowden the political asylum he deserves for revealing the plot the USA has hatched against the EU?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007934/13.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007962/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Révision de la directive média

1. La Commission compte-t-elle réévaluer et réviser la directive «Services de médias audiovisuels» concernant la réglementation relative à l'internet et aux médias (par exemple, le paquet «Télécommunications») et plus spécifiquement les dispositions sur la possibilité de trouver les contenus et l'accès non discriminatoire aux plateformes, tant pour les fournisseurs et créateurs de contenus que pour les utilisateurs?

2. Compte-t-telle élargir la notion de plateforme, et adapter les instruments existants aux nouvelles circonstances?

3. La Commission partage-t-elle également l'idée que l'on devrait veiller à ce que les utilisateurs bénéficient d'un choix et d'un accès accrus aux services de médias audiovisuels et à ce que les fournisseurs de contenus puissent bénéficier d'un plus grand choix pour la diffusion de leurs contenus tout en maintenant le contact avec leur public?

Réponse donnée par M[me] Kroes au nom de la Commission
(14 août 2013)

En mai 2012, la Commission a publié le premier rapport sur l'application de la directive «Services de médias audiovisuels» ([1]). Elle note dans ce rapport que l'apparition des dispositifs connectés marque une nouvelle étape dans la convergence de la télévision et d'internet et annonce une consultation publique sur ce sujet. La consultation, qui a été lancée avec la publication du livre vert «Se préparer à un monde audiovisuel totalement convergent» ([2]), est ouverte jusque fin août 2013.

Sans préjuger des résultats de cet exercice et tout en restant ouverte au suivi à donner, la Commission souligne que la directive «Services de médias audiovisuels» s'applique déjà pleinement, dans sa forme actuelle, à la distribution de ces services sur tous les types de réseaux de communications électroniques au sens de la directive-cadre ([3]). La notion de plateforme ne figure ni dans la directive «Services de médias audiovisuels», ni dans le cadre réglementaire applicable aux communications électroniques. S'agissant de l'accès au contenu, le livre vert pose toutefois la question de savoir si l'évolution actuelle pourrait avoir une incidence sur le champ d'application des règles en vigueur, notamment en matière d'obligations de diffusion ([4]).

La Commission est décidée à améliorer l'accès aux services de médias audiovisuels et leur distribution dans l'Union. La définition d'options possibles pour élargir encore la liberté de choix des utilisateurs et des fournisseurs de services dans le domaine audiovisuel sera facilitée par les résultats de la consultation et les propositions prochaines visant à établir le marché unique des technologies de l'information et des communications, conformément à la demande du Conseil européen de printemps.

([1]) COM(2012) 203 du 4.5.2012.
([2]) COM(2013) 231 du 24.4.2013.
([3]) Article 2, point a), de la directive 2002/21/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil du 7 mars 2002 relative à un cadre réglementaire commun pour les réseaux et services de communications électroniques (directive «cadre»), JO L 108 du 24.4.2002, p. 33, modifiée par le règlement (CE) n° 544/2009, JO L 167 du 29.6.2009, p. 12.
([4]) Question n° 16 du COM(2013) 231 du 24/4/2013, p. 14.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007962/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive

1. Does the Commission intend to reassess and revise the Audiovisual Media Services Directive with regard to the rules governing the Internet and the media (e.g. in the Telecoms Package) and in particular the stipulations on findability and non-discriminatory access to platforms, for content providers and content developers as well as for users?

2. Does it intend to expand the concept of platforms and to adapt the existing instruments to new circumstances?

3. Does the Commission agree that care should be taken to afford users a choice and ensure that they have greater access to audiovisual media services, and to give content providers a wider choice as to the dissemination of their content while staying in touch with their audience?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The Commission in May 2012 published the first report on the application of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive ([1]). In this report, the Commission noted that the advent of connected devices marked a new stage in the convergence of Internet and TV and announced a public consultation on this subject. The consultation was launched with the publication of the Green Paper 'Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World' ([2]) and is open until the end of August 2013.

Being open-minded as to the follow up and without anticipating the results of this exercise, the Commission emphasises that the Audiovisual Media Services Directive already in its current form is fully applicable to the distribution of audiovisual media services on any type of electronic communications network in the sense of the framework Directive ([3]). Neither the Audiovisual Media Services Directive nor the regulatory framework for electronic communications currently contains a concept of platforms. As regards access to content, the Green Paper however inquires whether current developments might have an impact on the scope of applicable rules, notably on 'must carry' ([4]).

The Commission is committed to enhancing distribution of and access to audiovisual media services across the Union. The development of possible options to further strengthen both users' and service providers' freedom of choice in the audiovisual domain will be aided by the results of the consultation and the forthcoming proposals to establish the Single Market in Information and Communications Technology as requested by the spring European Council.

([1]) COM(2012) 203, 4.5.2012.
([2]) COM(2013) 231, 24.4.2013.
([3]) Article 2 point a of Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive), OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 33, as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 544/2009, OJ L 167, 29.6.2009, p. 12.
([4]) Question 16 in COM(2013) 231, 24.4.2013., p. 14.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007963/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Jauger l'austérité

La Commission va-t-elle, comme le lui demande le Parlement, exiger des États membres qu'ils fournissent des informations sur les mesures d'austérité mises en œuvre et qu'ils réalisent des analyses des incidences sociales des mesures d'austérité et va-t-elle inclure, dans ses recommandations par pays, des recommandations visant à faire face aux incidences sociales de ces mesures?

La Commission compte-t-elle faire régulièrement des rapports de synthèse de ces analyses et les communiquer au Parlement?

La Commission partage-t-elle l'avis selon lequel le processus du semestre européen ne se concentre pas seulement sur la viabilité financière des systèmes de sécurité sociale mais tient aussi compte des incidences possibles sur la dimension de l'accessibilité et de la qualité des services de soins?

Comment la Commission compte-t-elle encourager et promouvoir l'investissement social dans les services sociaux tels que les secteurs de la santé et des soins et dans le secteur social, qui sont des secteurs essentiels compte tenu des évolutions démographiques et des conséquences sociales de la crise et qui présentent un fort potentiel en termes de création d'emplois?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(26 septembre 2013)

L'évolution de la situation du marché du travail, la pauvreté, les inégalités et l'inclusion sociale font l'objet d'un suivi régulier de la part de la Commission et sont dûment prises en considération dans les orientations politiques générales au niveau de l'Union européenne, comme cela a été souligné dans les examens annuels de la croissance 2012 et 2013.

Dans ce contexte, la Commission recommande aux États membres de mener des stratégies sélectives d'assainissement budgétaire compatibles avec la croissance, afin de préserver les investissements dans l'éducation, la recherche et l'innovation, et de renforcer les services sociaux essentiels et les dispositifs de protection sociale. Quant au «paquet investissements sociaux» ([1]), il encourage les États membres à investir de manière plus efficace et efficiente pour garantir l'adéquation et la viabilité des systèmes de protection sociale, en mettant l'accent sur leur volet relatif aux investissements sociaux.

Des réformes bien conçues, notamment dans le domaine des retraites et des soins de santé, peuvent contribuer à lutter contre les conséquences sociales de la crise et à permettre aux citoyens de contribuer à l'économie et de participer à la société. La Commission attend des États membres qu'ils rendent compte de ces réformes et renforcent l'accent mis sur les investissements sociaux dans leurs programmes nationaux de réforme dans le cadre du semestre européen. La Commission a également proposé de fixer le pourcentage des fonds du FSE destinés aux investissements dans le capital humain, à l'emploi et aux réformes sociales à au moins 25 % du budget de la politique de cohésion.

La Commission suit et évalue la situation sociale et de l'emploi dans les États membres à intervalles réguliers, par exemple dans le cadre de la Revue trimestrielle sur l'emploi et la situation sociale dans l'Union européenne ([2]), qui s'intéresse en particulier aux répercussions de l'assainissement budgétaire sur la croissance, l'emploi et les conditions de vie.

([1]) COM(2013)83 final, du 20 février 2013.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=fr&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007963/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Gauging austerity

Will the Commission require Member States to provide information on the austerity measures being implemented and to carry out social impact assessments of austerity measures, and will it include recommendations tackling the social impact of such measures in its country-specific recommendations, as requested by Parliament?

Does the Commission plan to produce regular summary reports of such assessments and forward them to Parliament?

Does the Commission agree that the European Semester process should not only focus on the financial sustainability of social security systems but also take into account possible impacts on the accessibility and quality dimension of care services?

How does the Commission intend to encourage and promote social investment in social services such as the health, care and social sectors, sectors which are essential in view of demographic changes and of the social consequences of the crisis, and have great potential for job creation?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

Developments in labour market conditions, poverty, inequality and social inclusion are being regularly monitored by the Commission, and duly taken into consideration in the overall policy guidance at EU level, as stressed in the 2012 and 2013 Annual Growth Surveys.

In this context, the Commission recommends Member States to pursue selective growth-friendly fiscal consolidation strategies, aimed at preserving investment in education, research and innovation, and at reinforcing essential social services and safety nets. From its part, the Social Investment Package ([1]) invites Member States to spend more effectively and efficiently to ensure adequate and sustainable social protection systems, with a focus on their social investment component.

Well-designed reforms including in the field of pensions and healthcare help to tackle the social consequences of the crisis and to enable people to contribute to the economy and to participate in society. The Commission expects Member States to report on these reforms and to enhance the focus on social investment in their national reform programmes as part of the European Semester. The Commission also proposed to set the percentage of ESF funding for human capital investment and employment and social reforms to at least 25% of the cohesion policy budget.

The Commission is monitoring and evaluating employment and social situation in Member States at regular intervals for example in the Quarterly review on EU employment and social situation ([2]), which features a special focus on impact of fiscal consolidation on growth, employment and living conditions.

([1]) COM(2013) 83 final February 2013.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007964/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Garanties sociales dans les accords conclus avec les pays bénéficiant d'une aide financière

1. La Commission compte-t-elle inclure des garanties sociales protégeant les services de soins, les services sociaux et les systèmes de protection sociale dans les accords conclus avec les pays bénéficiant d'une aide financière, comme le lui demande le Parlement?

2. La Commission envisage-t-elle de développer l'usage des nouvelles technologies comme la télémédecine pour faciliter l'accès aux soins?

Réponse donnée par M. Rehn au nom de la Commission
(26 août 2013)

1. Lorsqu'il a été convenu des efforts d'assainissement à mettre en œuvre dans les pays de l'Union européenne soumis à un programme d'ajustement économique, des considérations d'équité sociale ont été prises en compte afin d'atténuer les répercussions sur les plus vulnérables et d'éviter les effets distributifs défavorables. Voici quelques exemples parmi les efforts réalisés: les ajustements en matière de transferts sociaux ont été très progressifs, en épargnant davantage, voire totalement, les revenus les plus modestes, et de nouveaux transferts sociaux sont en cours de création (en Grèce notamment); les réductions de dépenses dans le domaine des soins de santé ont essentiellement visé des gains d'efficacité plutôt qu'une réduction des services ou une augmentation des frais à la charge des patients; la viabilité des régimes de retraite est au centre des préoccupations en vue de garantir le niveau des revenus et le bien-être des personnes retraitées actuelles et à venir.

2. La Commission encourage et aide les États membres à adopter des services de santé en ligne interopérables et rentables, comme la télémédecine, car ils permettent de réduire les obstacles à l'accès aux soins de santé, tout en contribuant à diminuer les coûts.

Il existe différents instruments promouvant l'utilisation des services de santé en ligne dans l'Union européenne. En 2008, la Commission a présenté une communication concernant la télémédecine ([1]) et, en 2012, le document de travail des services de la Commission concernant l'applicabilité de l'actuel cadre juridique de l'UE aux services de télémédecine ([2]) et le «plan d'action pour la santé en ligne 2012-2020» ([3]) ont tous deux été adoptés.

Le plan d'action pour la santé en ligne propose des mesures visant précisément à réduire les obstacles à l'adoption généralisée des services de santé en ligne. Le réseau stratégique «Santé en ligne» joue un rôle important à cet égard.

([1]) COM(2008)689 Communication concernant la télémédecine au service des patients, des systèmes de soins de santé et de la société.
([2]) SWD(2012)414 Commission Staff Working Document on the applicability of the existing EU legal framework to telemedicine services.
([3]) COM(2012)736 Communication relative au plan d'action pour la santé en ligne 2012-2020 — des soins de santé innovants pour le XXI^{e} siècle.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007964/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Social safeguards in agreements with countries in receipt of financial assistance

1. Does the Commission plan to include social safeguards protecting care and social services and social protection systems in agreements with countries in receipt of financial assistance, as requested by Parliament?

2. Does the Commission plan to develop the use of new technologies such as telemedicine in order to facilitate access to care?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

1. When agreeing on the consolidation efforts in the EU countries with an economic adjustment programme, social fairness considerations have been included with a view to alleviate the compact on the more vulnerable and to avoiding adverse distributional effects. Just as examples of those efforts, one could list the following: adjustments in social transfers have been largely progressive, sparing more or even entirely the low incomes, and new social transfers are being created (for instance, in Greece); expenditure savings in the area of healthcare have largely focused on efficiency gains, rather than on services reduction or on higher patient co-payments; sustainability of the pension systems has been sought in order to guarantee the income and well-being of present and future pensioners.

2. The Commission stimulates and assist Member States to adopt interoperable and cost-effective 'eHealth services', such as telemedicine, as it helps to reduce the barriers to access healthcare while contributing to reduce the costs.

Several instruments are in place to promote the use of eHealth within the EU. In 2008 the Commission put forward a 'Communication on telemedicine' ([1]), and in 2012 both the 'Staff Working Document on existing EU legal framework to telemedicine services' ([2]) and the 'eHealth Action Plan 2012 — 2020' ([3]) were adopted.

The eHealth Action Plan specifically proposes actions to address the barriers that exist for the widespread uptake of eHealth. The strategic eHealth Network plays an important role in this.

([1]) COM(2008) 689 Communication on telemedicine for the benefit of patient, healthcare systems and society.
([2]) SWD(2012) 414 Commission Staff Working Document on the applicabilityof the existing EU legal framework to telemedicine services.
([3]) COM(2012) 736 Communication on eHealth Action Plan 2012-2020 — Innovative healthcare for the 21st century.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007965/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Disparité de l'accès aux soins de santé

La Commission compte-t-elle, comme le lui suggère le Parlement, fixer des priorités pour éliminer les disparités et fournir un accès effectif aux services de santé dans le cadre de la protection sociale de la santé pour les groupes vulnérables, y compris les femmes pauvres, les migrants et les Roms, en garantissant le caractère abordable, la disponibilité et la qualité des soins de santé, ainsi qu'une organisation efficiente et efficace et un financement adéquat dans toutes les zones géographiques?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(20 août 2013)

Selon le traité ([1]), les États membres sont responsables en ce qui concerne la définition de leur politique de santé, ainsi que l'organisation et la fourniture de services de santé et de soins médicaux.

La communication de la Commission sur la réduction des inégalités en matière de santé dans l'UE ([2]) présente des actions visant à soutenir les États membres et les parties intéressées dans leurs efforts pour améliorer ou maintenir l'accès à des soins de santé de qualité et pour réduire les inégalités en matière de santé. Dans le cadre du semestre européen, les recommandations spécifiques par pays proposées par la Commission sont axées sur la durabilité des systèmes de santé et l'accès à des soins de santé de qualité et reflètent les priorités de l'examen annuel de la croissance 2013; les recommandations pour la Roumanie et la Bulgarie incluent une amélioration de l'accès aux soins de santé.

Le Cadre de l'UE pour les stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms pour la période allant jusqu'à 2020 ([3]) comporte l'objectif d'améliorer l'accès des Roms aux soins de santé et de combler l'écart existant entre les Roms et le reste de la population. Les États membres ont mis en œuvre des stratégies nationales d'intégration des Roms, qui ont été commentées par la Commission ([4]). Le programme ROMED ([5]) a formé des médiateurs de santé qui font participer activement les communautés roms à l'amélioration de leur santé.

La Commission a adopté en 2013 un document intitulé «Investir dans la santé» ([6]) dans le cadre du «paquet Investissement social» ([7]), qui souligne le besoin d'investir dans des systèmes de santé durables pour renforcer la cohésion sociale et stimuler la croissance économique en réduisant les inégalités en matière de santé.

Dans le cadre de la programmation future, les États membres peuvent utiliser les Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens pour améliorer l'accès aux soins de santé et aider à réduire les inégalités en matière de santé, et mettre l'accent sur l'aspect territorial de ces inégalités en se référant à la cartographie de la pauvreté, qui définit les zones les plus affectées par la pauvreté.

([1]) TFUE, article 168.
([2]) COM(2009)567.
([3]) COM(2011)173.
([4]) COM(2013)454.
([5]) http://coe-romed.org/
([6]) SWD(2013)43.
([7]) COM(2013)83.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007965/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Inequality in access to healthcare

Does the Commission plan to set priorities to close gaps and provide effective access to health services for vulnerable groups including poor women, migrants and Roma in the area of social health protection, by ensuring the affordability, availability and quality of healthcare, as well as efficient and effective organisation and adequate financing in all geographical areas, as suggested by Parliament?

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

Under the Treaty ([1]) Member States are responsible for the definition of their health policy and for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care.

The Commission Communication on reducing health inequalities in the EU ([2]) sets out actions to support Member States and stakeholders in their efforts to increase or maintain access to quality healthcare and to reduce health inequalities. In the framework of the European Semester, the 2013 Country Specific Recommendations proposed by the Commission focus on sustainability of health systems and access to high quality healthcare, reflecting the Annual Growth Survey 2013 priorities; the recommendations for Romania and Bulgaria include improved access to healthcare.

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 ([3]) includes the objective of improving the access of Roma to healthcare and closing the gap between Roma and the general population. Member States have developed national Roma strategies on which the Commission commented ([4]). The ROMED Programme ([5]) has been training health mediators which involve Roma communities in actively taking part in improving their health.

The Commission adopted in 2013 a document on 'Investing in Health' ([6]) as part of the 'Social Investment Package' ([7]) which highlights the need to invest in sustainable health systems to improve cohesion and boost economic growth by reducing health inequalities.

In the context of future programming Member States can use European Structural and Investment Funds to improve access to healthcare and to help reduce health inequalities and may reinforce the focus on the territorial aspect of health inequalities by referring to the poverty mapping, which identifies the areas most affected by poverty.

([1]) TFEU Article 168.
([2]) COM(2009)567.
([3]) COM(2011) 173.
([4]) COM(2013) 454.
([5]) http://coe-romed.org/.
([6]) SWD(2013)43.
([7]) COM(2013)83.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007966/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Aide maternelle et néonatale

1. Comment se positionne la Commission face à l'aide maternelle et néonatale?

2. Est-elle en faveur ou en défaveur d'une reconnaissance de l'aide maternelle et néonatale, en particulier dans les cas de naissances prématurées, comme étant une des priorités en matière de santé publique qu'il y a lieu d'intégrer dans les stratégies européennes et nationales en matière de santé publique? Pourquoi?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(13 août 2013)

L'organisation et la fourniture des services de santé et des soins médicaux relèvent de la compétence exclusive des États membres.

La Commission a cofinancé, par l'intermédiaire du deuxième programme d'action communautaire dans le domaine de la santé (2008-2013), un rapport sur la santé périnatale en Europe, qui a été publié en mai 2013 ([1]).

([1]) www.europeristat.com/images/European%20Perinatal%20Health%20Report_2010.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007966/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Maternity and neonatal care

1. What is the Commission's position on maternity and neonatal care?

2. Is it in favour of treating maternity and neonatal care, especially in cases of premature birth, as a public health priority that should be incorporated into European and national public health strategies, or not? Why?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

The organisation and delivery of health services and medical care is the exclusive competence of Member States.

The Commission has, through the Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health 2008-2013, co-financed a European Perinatal Health Report, which was published in May 2013 ([1]).

([1]) www.europeristat.com/images/European%20Perinatal%20Health%20Report_2010.pdf

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007967/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 juillet 2013)

Objet: Image des soins de santé

La Commission compte-t-elle, comme le suggère le Parlement, promouvoir une campagne dans le but de recruter des jeunes et d'améliorer l'image du secteur des soins en tant qu'employeur?

Réponse donnée par M. Borg au nom de la Commission
(13 août 2013)

Le plan d'action de la Commission pour le personnel du secteur de la santé au sein de l'UE ([1]) propose des mesures pratiques pour aider les États membres à relever les défis auxquels est confronté le secteur de la santé de l'UE et à stimuler l'emploi à moyen et à long terme. Lors du Conseil de juillet 2012, les ministres de la santé de l'UE ont discuté du besoin d'approches et de stratégies innovantes pour attirer les jeunes et les munir des qualifications appropriées pour le secteur de la santé. Le plan d'action de la Commission comporte une étude sur des stratégies de recrutement et de fidélisation innovatrices et efficaces dans le cadre du programme santé 2013 afin d'aider les États membres à élaborer des mesures politiques spécifiques pour assurer la pérennité du personnel de santé.

La mise en œuvre du plan d'action et les résultats de cette étude contribueront à approfondir la réflexion sur des éventuelles actions futures dans le domaine du recrutement et de la fidélisation. Il sera envisagé de lancer une campagne dans l'objectif de recruter des jeunes et d'améliorer l'image publique du secteur des soins de santé.

([1]) Le document de travail des services de la Commission SWD(2012) 93 final du 18 avril 2012 fait partie du paquet emploi, qui est disponible à l'adresse: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2012/04/20120418_fr.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007967/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Image of healthcare

Does the Commission intend to promote a campaign with the aim of recruiting young people and improving the public image of the care sector as an employer, as suggested by Parliament?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

The Commission Action Plan for the EU Health Workforce ([1]) proposes practical measures to help Member States tackle the challenges facing the EU healthcare sector and boost employment in the medium to long term. At their Council meeting in July 2012, EU health Ministers discussed the need for innovative approaches and strategies to attract and equip young people with the right skills for the health sector. The Commission's Action Plan includes a study of innovative and effective recruitment and retention strategies under the 2013 Health Programme with a view to assisting Member States in developing specific policy measures to ensure a sustainable health workforce.

The implementation of the action plan and the results of this study will contribute towards deepening the reflection on potential future action on recruitment and retention. Carrying out a campaign with the aim of recruiting young people and improving the public image of the care sector will be considered.

([1]) Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2012) 93 final of 18 April 2012 is part of the Employment Package, which is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/headlines/news/2012/04/20120418_en.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007968/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(4 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Salvaguardia e tutela della denominazione Abbacchio romano IGP

L'abbacchio romano IGP prodotto nel territorio della Regione Lazio ha ottenuto il riconoscimento europeo con il regolamento (CE) n. 507/2009. Tale traguardo è stato raggiunto grazie alle peculiarità del prodotto stesso, alla sua storica e antica produzione nel territorio laziale, nonché alla reputazione e alla fama che la denominazione «abbacchio romano» ha dimostrato di possedere presso il consumatore.

«Abbacchio» è un termine storico e romanesco che risulta essere unico nella Regione Lazio, tant'è vero che non ha riscontro nel gergo delle altre Regioni italiane. Fin dal passato, infatti, era ben chiara e definita la distinzione fra il prodotto «abbacchio» e il prodotto agnello che rappresenta la denominazione di vendita usuale. Tradizionalmente nel Lazio, fin dalle prime fasi di allevamento, l'allevatore chiama gli agnelli appena nati e destinati alla macellazione «abbacchi» fino alla fase di commercializzazione.

Purtroppo può accadere che, in fase di vendita, il termine «abbacchio» venga erroneamente apposto in etichetta e/o in volantini pubblicitari e attribuito ai tagli anatomici derivanti dalla macellazione di agnelli che non presentano le caratteristiche merceologiche e di produzione tipiche del vero «abbacchio» o che addirittura provengono da altri Paesi. Per questi motivi, il Consorzio di tutela abbacchio romano IGP, sulla stregua di quanto già accaduto per la mozzarella di bufala campana DOP (DM 21 luglio 1998), ha chiesto l'emanazione di opportune disposizioni normative affinché l'utilizzo del termine «Abbacchio», sia riferito solo ed esclusivamente all'abbacchio romano IGP, come già accaduto con il caso Tokai: ciò, al fine di tutelare l'uso della denominazione protetta, ma soprattutto di assicurare il diritto all'informazione al consumatore finale in fase di acquisto, nonché prevenire ed inibire pratiche commerciali sleali.

Pertanto, gli agnelli macellati e destinati alla vendita che non presentano le caratteristiche merceologiche e di produzione tradizionale dell'abbacchio, non derivano dal processo di controllo operato dall'ente autorizzato e non sono stati certificati come abbacchio romano IGP, dovranno essere denominati ed etichettati con il generico termine di vendita agnello.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. come intende tutelare il Consorzio di tutela per prevenire le pratiche commerciali sleali e garantire una corretta informazione al consumatore finale;

2. in che modo può essere inibito l'uso del termine per non essere oggetto di contraffazione;

3. se è in grado di fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloș a nome della Commissione
(7 agosto 2013)

Il regolamento (UE) n.1151/2012 ([1]), che ha sostituito e abrogato il regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006, ai sensi del quale è stata registrata come indicazione geografica protetta la denominazione «Abbacchio Romano», all'articolo 13 prevede fra l'altro che i nomi registrati siano protetti contro qualsiasi impiego commerciale diretto o indiretto per prodotti che non sono oggetto di registrazione; contro qualsiasi usurpazione, imitazione o evocazione; contro qualsiasi altra indicazione falsa o ingannevole relativa all'origine, alla natura o alle qualità essenziali del prodotto, usata sulla confezione o sull'imballaggio, nella pubblicità o sui documenti relativi al prodotto considerato.

Ai sensi del predetto regolamento gli Stati membri sono tenuti ad adottare le misure amministrative o giudiziarie adeguate per prevenire o far cessare l'uso illecito delle denominazioni di origine protette e delle indicazioni geografiche protette, prodotte o commercializzate sul loro territorio.

È disponibile l'elenco delle autorità competenti dei controlli sul mercato ([2]).

([1]) GU L 343 del 14.12.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/authorities_compliance.pdf

Il regolamento prescrive inoltre che i gruppi possono contribuire a garantire la qualità, la notorietà e l'autenticità dei propri prodotti sul mercato monitorando l'uso del nome negli scambi commerciali e, se necessario, informando le autorità competenti e adottando provvedimenti intesi a garantire la protezione giuridica adeguata dei nomi registrati e dei diritti di proprietà intellettuale ad essi collegati.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007968/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Safeguarding and protecting the name Abbacchio Romano (PGI)

'Abbacchio Romano' is a type of lamb produced in the Lazio region, which was awarded Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status under Regulation (EC) No 507/2009 on the basis of its specific features and the fact that it is a traditional product of the Lazio region and the name 'Abbacchio Romano' is well-known to and has a good reputation among consumers.

'Abbacchio' is a historic Roman term which is unique to the Lazio region. It is not used in any other Italian region. There has long been a clear distinction between Abbacchio lamb and other types of lamb. Farmers in Lazio have traditionally called newborn lambs, intended for slaughter, 'abbacchi'.

However, the term 'Abbacchio' is sometimes incorrectly used in labelling and/or advertising to designate cuts of lamb that do not have the features specific to 'Abbacchio' lamb and were not produced according to the traditional method. In some cases, it is even used for lamb from other countries. For these reasons, the Cooperative for the Protection of Abbacchio Romano PGI — in the same way as for Mozzarella di bufala PDO from the Campania region (Ministerial Decree of 21 July 1998) — requested that legal provisions be introduced to ensure that the term 'Abbacchio' is used only with reference to Abbacchio Romano PGI. As in the case of Tocai wine, this request was made in order to protect the use of a protected designation and more importantly, to uphold consumers' right to information and put a stop to unfair trade practices.

Accordingly, the generic term 'lamb' must be used for all lamb that does not have the traditional features of Abbacchio lamb, has not been produced in the traditional way, has not been checked by the relevant monitoring body and has not been certified as Abbacchio Romano PGI.

1. How does the Commission intend to help the Cooperative safeguard Abbacchio Romano against unfair trade practices and ensure that consumers are properly informed?

2. How can the improper use of this PGI designation be prevented?

3. What is the general situation in this area?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(7 août 2013)

L'article 13 du règlement(UE) n°1151/2012 ([1]) qui a remplacé et abrogé le règlement n° 510/2006 sur base duquel la dénomination « Abbacchio Romano » a été enregistrée en tant qu'indication géographique protégée, prévoit notamment que les dénominations enregistrées sont protégées contre toute utilisation commerciale directe ou indirecte d'une dénomination enregistrée à l'égard des produits non couverts par l'enregistrement ; toute usurpation, imitation ou évocation ; toute autre indication fausse ou fallacieuse quant à la provenance, l'origine, la nature ou les qualités essentielles du produit qui figure sur le conditionnement ou l'emballage, sur la publicité ou sur des documents afférents au produit concerné,

Conformément audit règlement, les États membres sont tenus de prendre les mesures administratives ou judiciaires appropriées pour prévenir ou arrêter l'utilisation illégale des appellations d'origine protégées ou indications géographiques protégées qui sont produites ou commercialisées sur leur territoire.

Une liste des autorités compétentes pour les contrôles sur le marché est disponible ([2]).

([1]) JO L 343 du 14.12.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/schemes/authorities_compliance.pdf

Ce règlement prévoit également que les groupements sont habilités à contribuer à garantir la qualité, la réputation et l'authenticité de leurs produits sur le marché en assurant le suivi de l'utilisation de la dénomination dans le commerce et, si nécessaire, en informant les autorités compétentes, et en agissant pour assurer la protection juridique adéquate des dénominations enregistrées et des droits de propriété intellectuelle qui leur sont liés.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-007969/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(4 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per l'ADSI (Associazione dimore storiche italiane)

Il patrimonio culturale ricomprende tutta una serie di beni che hanno una particolare rilevanza storica, artistica o culturale. In questa categoria rientrano anche le cosiddette «dimore storiche», ossia i beni immobili, palazzi e ville, di proprietà privata, di interesse storico ed artistico, che rappresentano una categoria ben circoscritta all'interno del patrimonio culturale italiano.

Al fine di agevolare la conservazione, la valorizzazione e la gestione delle dimore storiche italiane, è stata costituita nel 1977 l'ADSI (Associazione dimore storiche italiane) con lo scopo di tutelare un patrimonio culturale d'interesse mondiale.

Tale associazione ha principalmente il compito di:

— favorire la consulenza e l'assistenza giuridica, amministrativa e tributaria, oltre ad informare i propri soci sulla salvaguardia, conservazione e valorizzazione delle dimore storiche;

— collaborare con analoghe associazioni internazionali, in particolare con quelle europee aventi gli stessi scopi;

— favorire un maggior scambio di informazioni sia sulle legislazioni che sulle reciproche tecniche di conservazione e restauro all'interno dell'UEHHA (Union of European Historic Houses Associations) di cui fa parte;

— promuovere studi, ricerche e convegni diretti alla valorizzazione delle dimore storiche.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione far sapere:

1. se vi sono finanziamenti per sostenere le attività promosse dall'Associazione dimore storiche italiane;

2. se esistono finanziamenti che possono essere destinati alla conservazione, alla valorizzazione e alla gestione delle dimore storiche italiane;

3. se è in grado di fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(20 agosto 2013)

Nel periodo 2007-2013 gli investimenti a favore della cultura e della salvaguardia del patrimonio culturale sono ammissibili al cofinanziamento del Fondo europeo per lo sviluppo regionale (FESR).

Nelle zone di «convergenza» il FESR può cofinanziare gli investimenti a favore della cultura, comprese la protezione, la promozione e la salvaguardia del patrimonio culturale, lo sviluppo delle infrastrutture culturali a sostegno dello sviluppo socioeconomico e il contributo al miglioramento dell'erogazione di servizi culturali tramite nuove prestazioni con più alto valore aggiunto.

Nelle zone rientranti nell'obiettivo di «competitività regionale e occupazione» il FESR può cofinanziare la tutela e la valorizzazione del patrimonio naturale e culturale a sostegno dello sviluppo socioeconomico e della promozione dei beni naturali e culturali in quanto potenzialità di sviluppo del turismo sostenibile.

I progetti riferiti a questo campo vanno concepiti quale parte di una strategia integrata basata sul territorio per la valorizzazione delle risorse culturali, in modo da conseguire risultati tangibili. I beneficiari sono, in linea di principio, gli enti pubblici.

In base al principio di gestione condivisa applicato all'amministrazione della politica di coesione, la determinazione dei criteri specifici relativi alla selezione e all'attuazione dei progetti compete alle autorità nazionali. La Commissione invita pertanto l'onorevole deputata a contattare direttamente le autorità di gestione:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=IT&pay=it#1

Per una panoramica generale dei progetti UE finanziati dalla politica di coesione in Italia in tutti i settori, la Commissione invita l'onorevole deputata a consultare il sito web www.opencoesione.gov.it. Informazioni a livello di UE sono disponibili al seguente indirizzo:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_it.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007969/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Possible funding for the Italian Historic Dwellings Association (ADSI)

Cultural heritage encompasses a whole range of assets which have particular historic, artistic or cultural value. Historic dwellings — privately owned castles, mansions and villas of historic and artistic interest — form a key part of Italy's cultural heritage.

In 1977 the Italian Historic Dwellings Association (*Associazione dimore storiche italiane) -ADSI*, was set up to facilitate the conservation, promotion and management of Italian historic dwellings with a view to protecting these globally important assets.

The association's main aims are to:

— promote the provision of legal, administrative and tax advice and assistance, and give its members information on saving, conserving and promoting historic dwellings;

— work together with other associations around the world, in particular in Europe, which have the same aims;

— improve the exchange of information on both legislation and conservation and restoration techniques within the Union of European Historic Houses Association (UEHHA), of which it is a member;

— foster studies, research and meetings aimed at promoting historic dwellings.

1. Can the Commission say whether funding is available to support the work of the ADSI?

2. Is funding available for efforts to conserve, promote and manage Italian historic dwellings?

3. What is the general situation in this area?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(20 August 2013)

In 2007-2013, investments in favour of culture and preservation of the cultural heritage are eligible for co-financing from the European Regional Development fund (ERDF).

In 'Convergence' areas, ERDF can co-finance investments in favour of culture, including the protection, promotion and preservation of cultural heritage; the development of cultural infrastructure in support of socioeconomic development and aid to improve the supply of cultural services through new higher added-value services

In 'Regional competitiveness and employment' areas ERDF can co-finance the protection and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage in support of socioeconomic development and the promotion of natural and cultural assets as potential for the development of sustainable tourism.

Projects in this field should be conceived as part of an integrated, place-based strategy for the exploitation of cultural resources so as to achieve tangible results. The beneficiaries are, in principle, public bodies.

In line with the shared management principle used for the administration of cohesion policy, the specific criteria for project selection and implementation are the responsibility of the national authorities. Therefore, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the managing authorities:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&pay=it#1

For a general overview of EU projects funded by cohesion policy in Italy in all fields, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member consult the website www.opencoesione.gov.it . Information at EU level is available here:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/projects/stories/index_en.cfm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007970/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Antimicrobial resistance

How is the Commission responding to Parliament's resolution of 11 December 2012 on rising threats from antimicrobial resistance (P7_PROV(2012)0483), most notably to paragraph 3 which called on it to produce an integrated roadmap outlining relevant policy responses, including possible legislative action, to implement the measures recommended in the 2011 Action Plan; and paragraph 17, which called on it to follow up its AMR Action Plan with concrete initiatives to implement the 12 actions and to publish its progress report on implementation of the AMR Action Plan by the end of 2013?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

The Commission has already published the Road Map on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) ([1]). The Honourable Member is referred to Written Question E-006941/2013 ([2]).

A conference on AMR, which will include a mid-term review of the action plan and discussions on the challenges ahead, is planned for the end of this year (2013). The conclusions of this conference will be taken on board in the progress report on the implementation of the action plan to be published early next year (2014).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/antimicrobial_resistance/policy/index_en.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/antimicrobial_resistance/index_en.htm
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007971/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Diaspora bonds

Further to Commissioner Malmström's speech on 'Migration is an opportunity, not a threat' at the Global Hearing on Refugees and Migration on 5 June 2012, what initiatives has the Commission taken or is it considering to take in relation to facilitating the use of remittances for national development purposes, specifically by helping to develop 'diaspora bonds' which would enable migrants to use their savings to finance public and private sector projects in their countries of origin, as suggested by Commissioner Malmström in this speech?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2013)

Promoting development contributions from diaspora is firmly incorporated in the EU's comprehensive policy framework for migration, including the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, and the EU Agenda for Change ([1]). Within these frameworks, the EU continues to facilitate remittance transfers and promote diaspora initiatives both in Europe and in countries of origin, following a variety of different approaches.

As an example of measures taken within the EU, the Commission has supported the setting up of the 'European-wide African Diaspora Platform', implemented by the African Policy Diaspora Centre, which promotes the contribution of the African diaspora to the development of their continent.

In countries of origin, the EU is working to improve the capacity of national authorities to strengthen links with their diasporas, in view of ensuring a productive partnership for development. In this context, the Commission recognises the value which initiatives by partner countries to issue diaspora bonds can play in unlocking the development potential of migration.

One example of a relevant initiative in this area is the 'African Institute for Remittances (AIR)', which is currently being set up with EU support. The AIR has as one of its objectives to develop innovative and creative measures to utilize remittances as a development tool, enhance their impact on poverty reduction and improve the livelihoods of both senders and recipients. One of the expected results of the AIR initiative is to provide technical support to these governments for issuing diaspora bonds to harness the potentials of remittances for accelerated and sustained local development.

([1]) COM(2011)637 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007972/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Directive 2011/92/EU

What is the current situation with regard to Commission correspondence, if any, with the Irish authorities regarding compliance with Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011, on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification), specifically with regard to oil and gas pipeline infrastructure projects, as set out in Annex II (10)(i) thereto?

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

There are no ongoing investigations concerning Ireland with regard to the implementation of the directive 2011/92/EU ([1]) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (codification), specifically with regard to oil and gas pipeline infrastructure projects, as set out in Annex II (10)(i).

([1]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007973/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: EU assistance in taking legal action in another Member State

I have been in contact with a constituent who suffered a serious shoulder injury in a fall whilst visiting a dentist when on holiday in Spain over two years ago. As a result of this injury, she has been unable to work and is still undergoing physiotherapy. My constituent is currently engaged in legal action in Spain but is facing difficulty in meeting her legal bills.

Could the Commission indicate which EU programmes, if any, have been established or are being considered to support EU citizens taking such legal action in another Member State and indicate what provisions exist, if any, under EC law to ensure that EU citizens in such situations can avail themselves of complete or partial legal aid in another Member State on the same basis as nationals of that Member State?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

In order to support European citizens and to facilitate and improve access to justice in disputes having a cross-border context, the directive 2003/8/EC of 27 January 2003 on legal aid in cross-border issues was adopted establishing minimum common rules relating to legal aid for cross-border disputes. It covers pre-litigation advice with a view to reaching a settlement prior to bringing legal proceedings; legal assistance in bringing a case before the court and representation by a lawyer in court and assistance with, or exemption from, the cost of proceedings.

Since legal aid is given by the Member State in which the court is sitting or where enforcement is sought, except pre-litigation assistance if the applicant is not domiciled or habitually resident in the Member State where the court is sitting, that Member State must apply its own legislation, in compliance with the principles of the Legal Aid Directive. When making the assessment of whether legal aid is to be granted on this basis, the authorities of the Member State where the court is sitting may take into account information as to the fact whether the applicant satisfies criteria in respect of financial eligibility in the Member State of the domicile or habitual residence.

Further relevant information with regard to the Legal Aid Directive can be found on the following websites:
http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/judicialatlascivil/html/la_information_en.htm and
https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_legal_aid-55-en.do

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007974/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: EU-funded programmes of interest to child-minding NGO

What EU-funded programmes and EU initiatives would be of interest to an Irish NGO which promotes and supports quality, home-based childcare for families and which assists parents in finding childminders? Could the Commission also indicate when the next call for proposals under these programmes will be made?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 August 2013)

The responsibility for the organisation of childcare is with the Member States.

The European Social Fund (ESF), the European Union's main financial instrument for supporting employment and social inclusion, may co-fund care services with the aim to improve employment opportunities.

However, the ESF Operational programme in Ireland does not foresee any support for childcare as its main target is the support of unemployed people and those who face barriers to employment, in particular by improving their skills levels.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007975/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: EU funding to improve general health of construction workers

International studies show that manual workers develop serious illnesses up to 20 years ahead of white collar workers and that construction workers are a particularly vulnerable group in this regard.

What, if any, EU funding programmes would be of interest to a charitable trust established to improve the health of, and to promote healthier lifestyles among, construction workers, specifically by supporting health screening, GP consultations and counselling, and research on this topic?

When will the next call for proposal(s) under these programmes be made?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(29 August 2013)

Support for preventative health measures among a vulnerable occupational group can be provided under operational programmes of the European Social Fund (ESF) as well as under other existing EU financial instruments, e.g., FP7 or LIFE+.In 2007-13, EUR 1.5 billion of ESF support has been allocated to the priority 'innovative and more productive forms of work organisation, including better health and safety at work'. Detailed information on available support and its conditions can be obtained from the managing authorities of the ESF co-financed programmes ([1]). ESF support in this area will also be available in 2014-20, through the investment priorities of adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change and active and healthy ageing ([2]).

'Health, demographic change and well-being' is one of the societal challenges highlighted in the next framework programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon 2020 (2014-2020), which should be adopted by the Council and European Parliament in the coming months. Research relevant to the charitable trust mentioned in the enquiry might be covered under this societal challenge as well as other, thematically open parts of Horizon 2020 with a bottom-up approach. The Work Programme of the calls for proposals is still under discussion. The Horizon 2020 website http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm presents the original Commission proposal and includes a timeline.

([1]) Their contact can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en
([2]) See the Commission's Proposal (COM(2011) 607) for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007976/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: EU regulation of charities

Could the Commission indicate what, if any, EC laws regulate charities in the EU, specifically whether EC law requires companies that raise funds on behalf of a stated cause to publicly reveal what percentage of the monies raised actually reaches the charity in question?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(14 August 2013)

The Commission is not aware of any EC law that has the specific objective of regulating charities in the EU, nor it is aware of any EC law that would require companies that raise funds on behalf of a stated cause to publicly reveal what percentage of the money raised actually reaches the charity in question. The Commission did propose on 8 February 2012 the Council to adopt a regulation on the Statute for a European Foundation (FE), which would be a public benefit purpose entity ([1]). This proposal, while not containing a specific rule in the abovementioned sense, provides for high standards of accountability and aims at ensuring that FEs spend their funds on public benefit purposes.

([1]) COM/2012/035 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007977/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: EU support for 'tidy towns'

Which EU budget programmes would be of relevance and interest to community groups in the Member States involved in the 'tidy towns' movement, and when will the next call for proposals be made under these programmes?

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

The Commission's support for community-led local development (CLLD), or Leader in case of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), may be of interest to these community groups. This approach aims to facilitate integrated area-based strategies, designed and implemented by local action groups (LAGs). These groups bring together local public, private and civil stakeholders, and the strategies could include the issue of physical improvement of the local area.

In the 2014-2020 period, CLLD can benefit from the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the EAFRD and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). In relation to the EAFRD in rural areas, the approach will be maintained as obligatory, while the approach will be optional in urban areas and will depend on how the Member State wishes to organise local development. The cooperation tool of the approach — which is already available under the EAFRD and EMFF — is an additional element, which can be used for common actions between LAGs in different regions or countries.

Member States will need to specify in their Partnership Agreement how they intend to support CLLD and indicate the funds and areas where CLLD may be used. If they intend to use the CLLD approach in urban areas, it will be for the Member States and managing authorities to organise the call for CLLD strategies. The first round of selection of these strategies shall be completed within two years from the date of the approval of the Partnership Agreement (likely in late 2013/early 2014).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007978/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Fluoridation of drinking water

The drinking water directive (Directive 98/83/EC) of 5 December 1998 sets a quality standard of 1.5 mg per litre for fluoride. Under this directive, the Commission is obliged to review on a regular basis the quality standards set down in the directive in light of scientific and technical development, and where necessary and in accordance with Article 11(1) of the directive, to propose changes to the directive to Parliament and the Council.

The 2008 guidelines for drinking water quality published by the World Health Organisation concluded, in relation to fluoride, that there 'is no evidence to suggest that the guideline value of 1.5 mg/litre set in 1984 and reaffirmed in 1993 needs to be revised'.

In its answer to Written Question E-004949/2011 on 24 June 2011, the Commission said that considering fluoride exposure can come from a range of sources, it had requested that the EU Scientific Committee on Health and the Environment Risks (SCHER) deliver an opinion for an updated assessment of the potential risks associated with the intake of fluoride by the public.

The final SCHER opinion, adopted on 16 May 2011, stated that 'The cariostatic effect of topical fluoride application, e.g. fluoridated toothpaste, is to maintain a continuous level of fluoride in the oral cavity. Scientific evidence for the protective effect of topical fluoride application is strong, while the respective data for systemic application via drinking water are less convincing. No obvious advantage appears in favour of water fluoridation as compared with topical application of fluoride. However, an advantage in favour of water fluoridation is that caries prevention may reach disadvantaged children from the lower socioeconomic groups' (p.2).

What action has the Commission taken or is it considering to take on foot of the SCHER final opinion? Does the Commission think it is necessary to prepare specific proposals to revise the drinking water directive, in light of this opinion? If not, why not?

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

For details concerning the Commission's views on this aspect, the Honourable Member is invited to consult the latest communication to the EP Petition Committee on the subject of fluoridation of drinking water (Petition 0210/2007 by Robert Pocock (Irish), on behalf of Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment, on concerns regarding the addition of the hydrofluosilicic acid (H2SiF6) into drinking water in Ireland) at:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/peti/documentssearch.html?linkedDocument=true&ufolderComCode=PETI&ufolderLegId=7&ufolderId=06263&urefProcYear=&urefProcNum=&urefProcCode= .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007979/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Homelessness

On 14 September 2011, Parliament adopted a resolution (P7_TA(2011)0383) calling on the Union to develop an ambitious, integrated EU strategy, underpinned by national and regional strategies, with the long-term aim of ending homelessness within the broader social inclusion framework.

The Social Investment Package and, in particular, the Commission staff working document (CSWD) 'Confronting Homelessness in the European Union' issued by the Commission in February 2013, identified EU-wide trends in homelessness and proposed that the Member States undertake comprehensive reforms to implement integrated, housing-led, preventive strategies against homelessness, to revise the regulatory framework for evictions, and to mobilise EU funds, in line with the guidance provided in the CSWD.

What action has already been taken by the Commission or is under consideration by it in order to give practical effect to the recommendations set out in the abovementioned resolution of Parliament and in its CSWD, and to the six principles for informing homelessness policy across Europe, as agreed at the meeting on 1 March 2013 of EU Ministers responsible for homelessness policy with the Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, László Andor, convened by the Irish Presidency of the Council?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(27 August 2013)

The Commission Staff Working Document (CSWD) on Confronting homelessness in the European Union as part of the Social Investment Package ([1]) calls on Member States — who are primarily in charge of tackling homelessness — to put into place integrated, housing-led strategies to prevent and tackle homelessness and to revise their legal and regulatory framework on evictions. As set out in the CSWD, the Commission will continue supporting Member States at targeting homelessness through the relevant EU sectorial policies and EU funds.

A number of actions are foreseen or have already been ongoing regarding the implementation of the homelessness-related provisions of the Social Investment Package, which will also contribute to bringing forward the conclusions ([2]) of the Roundtable of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU. For example, the Commission expects to have the results of the Housing First Europe ([3]) and the Work in Stations ([4]) PROGRESS pilot projects as well as the study on Mobility, Migration and Destitution ([5]) by the end of this year. Two relevant calls for tenders have just been launched; one focuses on homelessness prevention in the context of evictions ([6]), the other will help Member States to develop a methodology for reference budgets ([7]). In November 2013 an SPC peer review of the Danish homelessness strategy is planned. The Commission cooperates with EU-level networks, the OECD and Eurofound on homelessness and housing related issues. Besides, the Commission is in the process of finalising the priorities for the EU Funds for the next financial framework of 2014-2020 and revising the EU SILC housing indicators.

([1]) Commission Staff Working Document SWD (2013) 42 final on Confronting homelessness in the European Union.
([2]) See at http://eu2013.ie/news/news-items/20130301post-homelessnessroundtablepr/.
([3]) Open call for tender VT/2010/007.
([4]) Pilot project VP/2010/014.
([5]) Open call for tender VT/2011/064.
([6]) Open call for tender VT/2013/056.
([7]) Open call for tender VT/2013/041.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007980/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Human trafficking

Which Member States have yet to inform the Commission of their transposition into domestic legislation of the anti-trafficking directive (Directive 2011/36/EU), which should have been transposed by all Member States by 6 April 2013?

What action has the Commission taken or will it consider taking in order to ensure that this legislation is fully transposed by all Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The European Commission is paying particular attention to the transposition of the directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims. The deadline for the transposition expired on 6 April 2013. If fully implemented, the directive has a potential to make a real difference to the lives of victims and also increase number of convictions.

To date, thirteen Member States (Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and UK) have notified complete transposition and three (Belgium, Bulgaria, Slovenia) partial transposition. The Commission has now started to analyse the information transmitted by these Member States.

The Commission will take all necessary measures to ensure the correct application of EC law, in accordance with its role under the Treaties, including by launching infringement procedures where necessary.

Letters of formal notice (Article 258) were sent to thirteen Member States who had not notified transposition on 29 May 2013. The list is available online ([1]). Since then, two Member States have submitted the text of the provisions transposing the directive into their national law.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/eu_law/eulaw/decisions/dec_20130603.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007981/13
to the Council
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Implementation of the Aarhus Convention

Further to the European Parliament resolution of 20 April 2012 on the review of the 6th Environment Action Programme and the setting of priorities for the 7th Environment Action Programme — A better environment for a better life (P7_TA(2012)0147), what action is the Council taking in respect of Paragraph 68, which underlined that the 7th Environment Action Programme should provide for the full implementation of the Aarhus Convention, in particular regarding access to justice, and which stressed, in this connection, the urgent need to adopt the directive on access to justice and which also called on the Council to respect its obligations resulting from the Aarhus Convention and to adopt a common position on the corresponding Commission proposal (before the end of 2012)?

Reply
(16 September 2013)

Well ahead of the expiry of the 6th Environment Action Programme and the subsequent presentation by the Commission of its proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet', the Council had underlined on a number of occasions the need for the future 7th EAP to address the issues covered by the Aarhus Convention in an appropriate manner. In this regard, the Council conclusions of 11 June 2012 on Setting the framework for a Seventh EU Environment Action Programme ([1]) stress the need to improve access to justice in line with the Aarhus Convention.

In June 2013, the European Parliament and the Council reached an overall agreement on the 7th EAP, which is expected to be formally adopted in the Autumn. The new Environment Action Programme contains a number of provisions and concrete commitments relating to the topics covered by the Aarhus Convention.

([1]) Doc. 11186/12.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007982/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Mandatory marking of origin

What action has the Commission taken or is it considering taking in response to the European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2013 on the indication of country of origin for certain products entering the EU from third countries (P7_TA-PROV(2013)0029)? Particular attention is drawn to paragraph 1, which condemns the Commission's intention to withdraw its 2006 proposal for a regulation on the indication of the country or origin for certain products imported from third countries; paragraph 2, which calls on the Commission to reconsider this decision; paragraph 3, which urges the Commission, alternatively, to propose new WTO-compatible legislation that would allow the EU to deal with those issued originally targeted by the initial proposal; and paragraph 5, which calls on the Commission to undertake a comparative study of WTO-member countries' legislative regulations on origin markings?

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

The Commission gave due consideration to the Parliament resolution of 17 January 2013 on the indication of country of origin for certain products entering the EU from third countries (P7_TA-PROV(2013)0029). The Commission provided its analysis and response in a follow-up document circulated to Parliament on 19 June 2013.

As mentioned in that context, the list of Commission proposals withdrawn, including the so-called 'made in' proposal ([1]), was published in the Official Journal on 16 April 2013 ([2]).

Regardless of this withdrawal, the Commission adopted on 13 February 2013 a Product Safety and Market Surveillance Package ([3]) including a legislative proposal for a regulation on Consumer Product Safety ([4]). This proposal includes a mandatory indication of the origin of non-food consumer products. In the context of that proposal, the indication of origin is aimed at supplementing the basic traceability requirements and contributing to facilitating the task of market surveillance authorities. According to that proposal, the origin marking requirement would apply to both products manufactured in the EU and imported products. The proposal is now under examination as part of the ordinary legislative procedure.

([1]) COM(2005) 661 final.
([2]) OJ C 109, 16.4.2013.
([3]) COM(2013) 74 final.
([4]) COM(2013) 78/2 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007983/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Minimum income

Further to its answer of 23 December 2011 to Question E-009981/2011, what conclusions has the Commission drawn from the operation of the tax-benefit micro-simulation model (Euromed) that allows the effects of taxes and benefits of household income and work incentives of the population, in each Member State and the EU as a whole, to be compared?

In addition, what is the current situation with regard to the Commission's administration of the pilot project (social solidarity for social integration) which is intended to raise awareness and knowledge of minimum income schemes, their adequacy and their role in combating poverty and social exclusion?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2013)

The Commission has recently released the latest evidence elaborated from the Euromod model about the impact of consolidation packages until mid-2012. It shows that the design of measures is crucial to avoid that low income households are more affected, with signs of regressive impacts only in a few countries. ([1]) More recent analysis of the tax-benefit models in Europe can be found on the Euromod website ([2]) and on the Eurostat website ([3]).

The project aiming at creating a European Network for Minimum Income (EMIN) is advancing well. Currently, the country teams are drafting reports on the five focus countries (BE, DK, IE, IT and HU) presenting the situation in these Member States, identifying challenges related to issues such as non-take-up, coverage and adequacy and issuing recommendations based on these experiences to take to the European level. These reports will be discussed in a peer-review seminar at the beginning of October and at a conference in December. The results will be used to build the EU wide network to raise awareness on minimum income. The project will last till end 2014.

([1]) See notably EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review — March 2013, which can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1852&furtherNews=yes.
([2]) https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/euromod/working-papers.
([3]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-13-010/EN/KS-RA-13-010-EN.PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007984/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Non-formal and informal learning

What action has the Commission taken or is it considering taking to support Member States' implementation of the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(9 August 2013)

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Advisory Group is responsible for the follow-up of the recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Following the adoption of the recommendation, the Commission has extended the Group to representatives from the European Youth Forum and the European Volunteer Centre. Also, Member States and other countries participating in the EQF process have been invited to appoint a second member to the Group covering validation issues.

On 9-10 April 2013 the Commission organised a seminar on the validation of non-formal and informal learning which was attended by 120 validation specialists from the education/training, employment, youth and volunteering sectors. The results of the seminar will help the Commission to produce a revised version of the European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning by mid-2014. The Commission also plans an update of the European Inventory on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Both documents will support Member States in implementing the recommendation in order to have validation arrangements in place by 2018.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007985/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Setting maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals present in food supplements

What is the current situation with regard to the Commission's plans to present a proposal setting maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals present in food supplements, as provided for by Article 5 of Directive 2002/46/EC?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(5 August 2013)

The work on setting maximum amounts is ongoing. The Commission has consulted extensively with Member States and interested stakeholders on the issue. All the available data on the potential effects on economic operators and consumers of the setting of maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals in food supplements will be taken into account in preparing the relevant measure. However, the Commission is not in a position, at this stage, to detail the legislative timetable for it.

Pending the setting of maximum amounts of vitamins and minerals at the EU level, Member States are allowed to maintain or set such rules at national level. When doing so, they are however obliged to respect the rules of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and they must also be guided by the criteria laid down in Article 5(1) and (2) of Directive 2002/46/EC, including the requirement for a risk assessment based on generally accepted scientific data ([1]).

([1]) Case C-446/08 Solgar Vitamin's France and Others v Ministre de l'Économie, des Finances et de l'Emploi and Others [2010] ECR I-3973 paragraph 32.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007986/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Social services of general interest (SSGIs)

What action has the Commission taken in response to the resolution of Parliament of 5 July 2011 on the future of social services of general interest (P7_TA(2011)0319)? Particular attention is drawn to paragraph 47, which urged the Commission, as a follow-up to the 2007 communication on services of general interest and the then ongoing review of procurement and state aid rules, to undertake a programme of reform, adaptation and clarification in order to support and recognise the specific non-market characteristics of SSGIs, and to ensure full conformity not only with single market provisions but also with the social obligations of the Treaties.

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

The package of state aid rules on services of general economic interest (SGEI) adopted by the Commission between December 2011 and April 2012 introduces a diversified and proportionate approach that addresses a number of the issues raised by the Parliament in its resolution of 5 July 2011.

In particular, Commission Decision 2012/21/EU of 20 December 2011 ([1]) takes account of the specific characteristics of social services of general interest (SSGI) by exempting such services from the obligation to notify public service compensation to the Commission, provided that all conditions of the decision are fulfilled, regardless of the amount of compensation concerned. That exemption from notification applies to services that meet social needs as regards health and long term care, childcare, access to and reintegration into the labour market, social housing and the care and social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

The package also includes a communication clarifying basic concepts of state aid relevant for SGEI ([2]) and a new *de minimis* regulation providing that public service compensation not exceeding EUR 500 000 per undertaking over a three-year period does not constitute state aid ([3]).

([1]) OJ L 7, 11.1.2012, p. 3.
([2]) OJ C 8, 11.1.2012, p. 4.
([3]) OJ L 114, 26.4.2012, p. 8.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007988/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Young entrepreneurs

Paragraph 41 of Parliament's resolution of 11 November 2010 on the demographic challenge and solidarity between generations (P7_TA(2010)0400) underlined the importance of supporting youth entrepreneurship.

Paragraph 25 of Parliament's resolution of 7 February 2013 on the 2011 Annual Report of the European Investment Bank (P7_TA-PROV(2013)0057) encouraged the EIB Group and the Commission to continue supporting young entrepreneurs through different initiatives such as tailored loans and guarantee schemes.

In addition to the further development of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs scheme and encouraging exchanges of young entrepreneurs between the EU and third countries, what further action has the Commission taken, or is now considering taking, to support young entrepreneurs? Will it give consideration to developing a Youth Entrepreneurship Fund?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

The objectives of the new Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) for 2014-2020 include facilitating access to finance, creating an environment favourable to business creation and growth, and encouraging an entrepreneurial culture in Europe. Those are important for all types of entrepreneur, but especially for the young ones.

The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan ([1]) fully recognises the importance of supporting youth entrepreneurship as investing in entrepreneurship education for students is one of the highest-return investments possible. The Plan's first Action Pillar is therefore entrepreneurial education and training. The need for positive entrepreneurial role models and outreach to young people is also addressed.

The Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) for 2014-2020 will follow up on the microfinance activities of Progress Microfinance. It shall enable various disadvantaged groups, including young people, to access microfinance.

Member States and regions might also consider using the structural funds under their management to support young entrepreneurs in a more focused way. Young entrepreneurs already benefit from European Social Fund (ESF) actions in the field of research and innovation. The Commission's proposal for the next programming period of the ESF includes an investment priority dedicated to self-employment, entrepreneurship, business creation and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, through promoting the adaptability of enterprises and workers and increased investment in human capital.

([1]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM(2012) 795 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007989/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ο τραπεζικός τομέας της Κύπρου και το Μνημόνιο Συνεννόησης (ΜΣ)

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης (ΜΣ) μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Οι όροι της συμφωνίας είναι εξαιρετικά αυστηροί, σε σύγκριση με άλλες συμφωνίες διάσωσης στην ευρωζώνη. Η επιμονή στην "εμπροσθοβαρή" λιτότητα και στα μέτρα αναδιάρθρωσης του τραπεζικού τομέα δημιουργεί τον κίνδυνο να δοθεί ανεπαρκής σημασία στην πιο μακροπρόθεσμη ανάκαμψη της Κύπρου και στις μελλοντικές προοπτικές των τραπεζών. Η συμφωνία είναι πλέον γεγονός, δημιουργεί όμως δύσκολες συνθήκες για το έργο που πρέπει να συντελεστεί».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με τις παραπάνω διαπιστώσεις;

2. Αν ναι, γιατί επέτρεψε τη σύναψη του ΜΣ, αφού ήταν σαφές ότι αυτό θα προκαλούσε σοβαρά οικονομικά προβλήματα σε ένα κράτος μέλος;

3. Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να προβεί σε επαναδιαπραγμάτευση των όρων του ΜΣ, όπως επιθυμεί η συντριπτική πλειοψηφία του κυπριακού λαού και όπως συνιστούν πολλοί γνωστοί οικονομολόγοι;

4. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή για να περιορίσει τις αρνητικές συνέπειες του ΜΣ στην οικονομία και τον λαό της Κύπρου;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007993/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μνημόνιο Συνεννόησης για την Κύπρο — απουσία αναπτυξιακών μέτρων

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης (ΜΣ) μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Δεν υπάρχει στη συμφωνία τίποτε για την ενεργό προώθηση της οικονομικής ανάκαμψης της Κύπρου: η έμφαση δίδεται κυρίως στη δημοσιονομική λιτότητα και στη μεταρρύθμιση του τραπεζικού τομέα, παρότι αυτή η τελευταία σίγουρα θα προσφέρει μια βάση για τη μελλοντική ανάπτυξη. Για να ανακάμψει η οικονομία, θα χρειαστεί να βρεθούν νέες πηγές ανάπτυξης, και οι τράπεζες θα πρέπει να είναι σε θέση να επιτύχουν ουσιαστικά κέρδη για να αποκατασταθεί η οικονομική υγεία τους και να προσελκύσουν χρηματοδότηση η οποία θα αντικαταστήσει την ενίσχυση ρευστότητας που δέχονται από δημόσιες πηγές».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με τη γνώμη της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι δεν υπάρχει στο ΜΣ τίποτε για την ενεργό προώθηση της οικονομικής ανάκαμψης της Κύπρου;

2. Θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να προσδιορίσει συγκεκριμένα μέτρα και/ή πόρους που περιλαμβάνονται στο ΜΣ και που θα μπορούσαν να συμβάλουν σημαντικά στην ανάκαμψη της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας και στην αναδιάρθρωση της κυπριακής οικονομίας;

3. Αν η απάντηση στην προηγούμενη ερώτηση είναι αρνητική, ποια μέτρα προτίθεται να προωθήσει η Επιτροπή για την υποστήριξη της Κύπρου στην επανεκκίνηση και την ενδυνάμωση της οικονομίας της, μετά τα σοβαρά πλήγματα που δέχτηκε ως αποτέλεσμα του κουρέματος των καταθέσεων το οποίο αποφάσισε η τρόικα;

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Αυγούστου 2013)

Οι κυπριακές αρχές παρουσίασαν ένα πολυετές πρόγραμμα μεταρρυθμίσεων με στόχο την επίλυση των οικονομικών προκλήσεων που αντιμετωπίζει η χώρα. Σκοπός του προγράμματος αυτού είναι η σταθεροποίηση του χρηματοπιστωτικού συστήματος και η διατηρησιμότητα των δημόσιων οικονομικών, έτσι ώστε να τεθούν τα θεμέλια για την ανάκαμψη της οικονομικής δραστηριότητας και την ανάπτυξη του οικονομικού δυναμικού, που θα διασφαλίσουν τη μακροπρόθεσμη ευημερία του πληθυσμού.

Το πρόγραμμα λαμβάνει υπόψη τα σημαντικά βήματα που έχει ήδη κάνει η Κύπρος για την αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων των δύο μεγαλύτερων τραπεζών της και περιλαμβάνει δέσμη μέτρων για την εξασφάλιση ενός σταθερού, βιώσιμου και διαφανούς χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα.

Καθώς η κυπριακή κυβέρνηση έχει ήδη λάβει σημαντικά μέτρα δημοσιονομικής εξυγίανσης, το πρόγραμμα στοχεύει σε μια σταθερή δημοσιονομική προσαρμογή που θα εξισορροπεί τις βραχυπρόθεσμες διακυμάνσεις του οικονομικού κύκλου με τους μακροπρόθεσμους στόχους διατηρησιμότητας, προστατεύοντας παράλληλα τις ευάλωτες κοινωνικές ομάδες. Το σύστημα κοινωνικής πρόνοιας θα επανεξεταστεί, έτσι ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί η βιωσιμότητά του και η κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη.

Το πρόγραμμα περιλαμβάνει ολοκληρωμένες διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις για να δημιουργηθούν συνθήκες τόνωσης της ανάπτυξης και δημιουργίας απασχόλησης. Τα Κοινοτικά Ταμεία (περιλαμβανομένου του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου, του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης και του Ταμείου Συνοχής) έχουν επίσης ενεργοποιηθεί για τον σκοπό αυτό.

Η Επιτροπή έχει συγκροτήσει Ομάδα Στήριξης για την Κύπρο, η οποία θα συνεργάζεται στενά με τις κυπριακές αρχές παρέχοντας τεχνική εμπειρογνωσία.

Η Επιτροπή βρίσκεται στο πλευρό της Κύπρου και του κυπριακού λαού, παρέχοντας βοήθεια για την αποκατάσταση της χρηματοπιστωτικής σταθερότητας, της δημοσιονομικής διατηρησιμότητας, της ανάπτυξης της χώρας και της ευημερίας των πολιτών της.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007989/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Cyprus banking sector and the memorandum of understanding (MoU)

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus' banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'The terms of the agreement are exceptionally severe by the standards of other eurozone bail-outs. The focus on "front loaded" austerity and bank restructuring measures contains the danger that insufficient thought has been given to Cyprus' longer term recovery and the future of the banks. The agreement is now part of history, but it creates difficult conditions for the task ahead'.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission agree with the above findings?

2. If so, why did the Commission allow the MoU to go ahead, when it was obvious that this would create serious economic problems for a Member State?

3. Does the Commission intend to proceed with a renegotiation of the terms of the MoU as is expected by the vast majority of the Cypriot people and as is being recommended by many well-known economists?

4. What does the Commission intend to do in order to mitigate the negative effects of the MoU on the economy and people of Cyprus?

Question for written answer E-007993/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding for Cyprus — lack of measures to promote growth

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'There is nothing in the agreement actively to promote Cyprus' economic recovery: the emphasis is mostly on fiscal austerity and banking reform, though the latter will certainly provide a foundation for future growth. In order to recover, the economy will need to find new sources of growth, and the banks will have to be able to earn substantial profits to return to full health and attract funding to replace their official liquidity assistance.'

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission agree with the opinion of the committee of experts that there is nothing in the MoU to actively promote Cyprus's economic recovery?

2. Can the Commission identify specific measures and/or funds included in the MoU which could contribute significantly towards the recovery of economic activity and restructuring of the Cypriot economy?

3. If the answer to question (2) above is negative, what measures does the Commission intend to promote in order to assist Cyprus in restarting its economy and gaining momentum, after the serious blows it has received as a result of the haircut of deposits decided by the Troika?

Joint answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(23 August 2013)

The Cypriot authorities have put forward a multi-annual reform programme to address the economic challenges facing the country. Its goals are to stabilise the financial system and achieve fiscal sustainability in order to lay the foundations for a recovery of economic activity and the growth potential that will preserve the longer-term prosperity of the population.

The programme builds on important steps already taken by Cyprus to address the problems in the two largest banks and includes a set of measures aimed at ensuring a stable, sustainable and transparent financial sector.

While the Cypriot government has already adopted important fiscal consolidation measures, the programme entails a well-paced fiscal adjustment that balances short-run cyclical concerns and long-run sustainability objectives, while protecting vulnerable groups. The social welfare system will be reviewed with the view to ensuring sustainability and social fairness.

The programme puts forward comprehensive structural reforms to set the conditions for growth and job creation. The Community Funds (including the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund) are also mobilised to this end.

The Commission has set up a Support Group for Cyprus that will work closely with the Cypriot authorities by providing technical expertise.

The Commission stands by Cyprus and the Cypriot people in helping to restore financial stability, fiscal sustainability and growth to the country and its people.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007990/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κούρεμα καταθέσεων

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης (ΜΣ) μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Παρότι οι όροι του ΜΣ επιβάρυναν, τελικά, μόνο τις μη ασφαλισμένες καταθέσεις στις δύο μεγαλύτερες τράπεζες της Κύπρου, το κούρεμα των καταθέσεων και οι έλεγχοι κεφαλαίων που το συνοδεύουν θα επηρεάσουν ευρύτερα την εμπιστοσύνη στις τράπεζες της ευρωζώνης. Όσον αφορά την Κύπρο, το γεγονός αυτό θα προκαλέσει φόβους σχετικά με την ασφάλεια των καταθέσεων σε περίπτωση που η τρέχουσα διαδικασία χρηματοδότησης αποδειχτεί ανεπαρκής, κάνοντας έτσι πιο δύσκολη για την Κύπρο την άρση των ελέγχων των κεφαλαίων. Επιπλέον, οι ρυθμίσεις του κουρέματος τροποποιούν ριζικά τη μετοχική δομή της μεγαλύτερης τράπεζας της Κύπρου, με συνέπειες που είναι δύσκολο να προβλεφθούν.»

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί ότι πράγματι υπάρχουν οι ανωτέρω κίνδυνοι τους οποίους επισημαίνει η επιτροπή εμπειρογνωμόνων;

2. Αναγνωρίζει ότι οι αποφάσεις όσον αφορά το κούρεμα των καταθέσεων στην Κύπρο δημιουργούν πρόβλημα εμπιστοσύνης για την ευρωζώνη γενικά και για την Κύπρο ειδικότερα;

3. Πιστεύει πραγματικά η Επιτροπή ότι το συνολικό ποσό της χρηματοδότησης που περιλαμβάνεται στο ΜΣ επαρκεί για να μπορέσει η Κύπρος να άρει τους ελέγχους των κεφαλαίων και να επενδύσει αρκετά κεφάλαια για την ανάπτυξη της χώρας;

4. Όταν λαμβανόταν η απόφαση αυτή, γνώριζε η Επιτροπή ότι οι ενέργειές της θα άλλαζαν ριζικά την κεφαλαιακή δομή της Τράπεζας Κύπρου και ότι υπήρχε σοβαρός κίνδυνος ο έλεγχος της τράπεζας να περάσει στα χέρια των λεγόμενων «ρώσων ολιγαρχών»;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Αυγούστου 2013)

1. Η Επιτροπή επισημαίνει ότι η συμμετοχή των μη ασφαλισμένων καταθέσεων (bail-in) στις δύο μεγαλύτερες τράπεζες αποτελεί μονομερή δέσμευση των κυπριακών αρχών, η οποία δεν αποτελεί μέρος του ΜΣ το οποίο συνήφθη αργότερα.

2. Οι πολιτικές για τον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα της Κύπρου αποσκοπούν στην αποκατάσταση της εμπιστοσύνης στο τραπεζικό σύστημα. Οι αρχές έλαβαν δύσκολα αλλά απαραίτητα μέτρα για την πλήρη ανακεφαλαιοποίηση της Τράπεζας Κύπρου, δίνοντάς της έτσι τη δυνατότητα να αποφύγει τη διαδικασία εξυγίανσης και να επιστρέψει σε κανονικές δραστηριότητες. Οι αρχές έχουν επίσης εκπονήσει ένα σαφές πρόγραμμα για την αναδιάρθρωση και ανακεφαλαιοποίηση άλλων χρηματοπιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων πριν από το τέλος του έτους. Αυτό θα ενισχύσει επίσης το αίσθημα εμπιστοσύνης γενικότερα.

3. Στις 9 Αυγούστου 2013 οι αρχές δημοσίευσαν έναν χάρτη πορείας με βάση ορόσημα όσον αφορά τη σταδιακή άρση των κεφαλαιακών ελέγχων και των διοικητικών περιορισμών με εύτακτο και προβλέψιμο τρόπο. Το πρόγραμμα είναι ειδικά σχεδιασμένο για την αντιμετώπιση των χρηματοδοτικών αναγκών της κυπριακής κυβέρνησης, καθώς και των κεφαλαιακών αναγκών του τραπεζικού τομέα κατά τη διάρκεια του προγράμματος.

4. Η Επιτροπή ήταν βέβαια ενήμερη για το γεγονός ότι η ανταλλαγή των μη ασφαλισμένων καταθέσεων με μετοχές θα καθιστούσε τους κατόχους μη ασφαλισμένων καταθέσεων κατόχους μετοχών. Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι σε θέση να σχολιάσει ούτε την αντίληψη που έχει σχηματίσει το κοινό για αυτούς τους καταθέτες και νυν μετόχους, ούτε την προέλευση των καταθέσεων αυτών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007990/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Deposit haircut

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'Although the terms of the MoU have, in the end, only hit uninsured deposits in Cyprus' two largest banks, the inclusion of a deposit haircut and the accompanying capital controls will affect banking confidence in the eurozone more widely. For Cyprus, it will raise fears about the safety of deposits if the current round of financing proves insufficient, making it harder for Cyprus to lift capital controls. Also, the haircut arrangements radically alter the shareholding structure of Cyprus' largest bank with consequences that are hard to foresee.'

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does it agree that the above dangers spotted by the committee of experts do actually exist?

2. Does it recognise that the decisions taken with regard to the haircut of deposits in Cyprus raises questions of confidence for the euro area in general and for Cyprus in particular?

3. Does the Commission really believe that the total amount of financing included in the MoU is sufficient to allow Cyprus to lift capital controls and to invest enough capital for the development of the country?

4. At the time the decision was taken, was the Commission aware of the fact that its policies would change the capital structure of the Bank of Cyprus very drastically and that there was a real danger that the control of the bank would pass into the hands of the so-called 'Russian oligarchs'?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

1. The Commission notes that the bail-in of uninsured deposits in the two major banks constitutes a unilateral commitment of the Cypriot authorities that does not form part of the MoU that was subsequently concluded.

2. Financial sector policies in Cyprus have been geared toward restoring confidence in the banking system. The authorities have taken difficult but necessary steps to fully recapitalize Bank of Cyprus, thus allowing it to exit resolution and return to normal operations. The authorities have also set out a clear agenda to restructure and recapitalize other financial institutions before the end of the year. This will strengthen confidence also in a wider context.

3. On 9 August 2013, authorities published a milestone-based roadmap for the gradual removal of capital controls and administrative restrictions in an orderly and predictable way. The programme envelope has been expressly calibrated in order to address the Cypriot government's funding needs as well as the banking sector capital needs for the duration of the programme.

4. The Commission was of course well aware of the fact a swap of uninsured deposits for equity will transform the holders of uninsured depositors into equity-holders. The Commission cannot comment either on the public perception of these deposit holders, who have become now equity holders, or on the origin of these deposits.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007991/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Καταστροφή του διεθνούς οικονομικού κέντρου της Κύπρου

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Δεν πιστεύουμε ότι η ύπαρξη μεγάλων διεθνών τραπεζικών δραστηριοτήτων υπήρξε ένας από τους σημαντικούς παράγοντες που συνέβαλαν στην κρίση. […] Μέχρι τη στιγμή που οι διαπραγματεύσεις για το Μνημόνιο έφεραν στην επιφάνεια το ενδεχόμενο ενός κουρέματος, οι καταθέσεις των κατοίκων εξωτερικού ήταν αξιοσημείωτα σταθερές και προσέφεραν τη βάση για μια βασισμένη στη φορολογία διεθνή τραπεζική δραστηριότητα η οποία ήταν κερδοφόρα. Η συρρίκνωση του τραπεζικού τομέα υποστηρίχθηκε από ορισμένες χώρες που είχαν αμφιβολίες για τη νομιμότητά του, παρά για τις επιπτώσεις του στην οικονομική υγεία των τραπεζών, πράγμα που είναι εντελώς διαφορετικό και θα μπορούσε να είχε αντιμετωπιστεί με εποπτικά μέσα».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει η Επιτροπή ουσιαστικούς λόγους να πιστεύει ότι το μεγάλο μέγεθος του κυπριακού τραπεζικού τομέα συνέβαλε άμεσα στην οικονομική κρίση στην Κύπρο; Αν ναι, θα μπορούσε να περιγράψει τους λόγους αυτούς;

2. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με τη γνώμη της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι η συρρίκνωση του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου υποστηρίχθηκε από ορισμένες χώρες που είχαν αμφιβολίες για τη νομιμότητά του, παρά για τις επιπτώσεις του στην οικονομική υγεία των τραπεζών; Αν η απάντηση στην ερώτηση αυτή είναι θετική, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να προσδιορίσει τις χώρες αυτές και να εξηγήσει αν τα επιχειρήματά τους εναντίον της Κύπρου ήταν τεκμηριωμένα ή όχι;

3. Είναι η Επιτροπή σε θέση να παρουσιάσει ακράδαντα στοιχεία που θα στηρίζουν τις κατηγορίες ότι το κυπριακό τραπεζικό σύστημα χρησιμοποιήθηκε για ξέπλυμα βρώμικου χρήματος ή άλλες παράνομες πράξεις;

4. Πιστεύει η Επιτροπή ότι ο κυπριακός τραπεζικός τομέας ήταν πιο επιρρεπής σε παράνομες πράξεις από ό,τι εκείνος άλλων κρατών μελών, τη στιγμή που είναι γνωστό ότι πολλές ανεξάρτητες μελέτες αποκαλύπτουν πως άλλα κράτη μέλη, όπως η Γερμανία, η Ολλανδία και το Λουξεμβούργο, κατατάσσονται ψηλότερα όσον αφορά τον κίνδυνο παράνομων πράξεων;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Αυγούστου 2013)

1. Τα προβλήματα της Κύπρου έχουν συσσωρευτεί εδώ και πολλά χρόνια. Στην αρχική τους φάση οφείλονταν στον υπερδιογκωμένο τραπεζικό τομέα ο οποίος άνθισε με την προσέλκυση αλλοδαπών καταθέσεων με πολύ ευνοϊκούς όρους. Τα τραπεζικά προβλήματα επιδεινώθηκαν από τις χαμηλής ποιότητας πρακτικές σε θέματα διαχείρισης κινδύνου. Με την έλλειψη επαρκούς εποπτείας, οι μεγαλύτερες κυπριακές τράπεζες δημιούργησαν καταστάσεις που τις εξέθεταν σε υπέρμετρο βαθμό σε κινδύνους.

Η Επιτροπή προειδοποίησε την Κύπρο για τη συσσώρευση των προβλημάτων της από νωρίς. Οι προειδοποιήσεις και η καθοδήγηση στα θέματα πολιτικής για την αντιμετώπιση των προβλημάτων στον τραπεζικό τομέα και των συνακόλουθων δημοσιονομικών και μακροοικονομικών ανισορροπιών συμπεριλήφθηκαν στις εκθέσεις και τις ειδικές ανά χώρα συστάσεις στο πλαίσιο του πρώτου Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου, τον Ιούνιο του 2011.

Στη συνέχεια, τον Νοέμβριο του 2011, οι κυπριακές αρχές είχαν περαιτέρω ενημερωθεί ότι το πρόγραμμα χρηματοδοτικής συνδρομής θα ήταν αναπόφευκτο, εκτός εάν τα διαιωνιζόμενα οικονομικά προβλήματα αντιμετωπίζονταν πάραυτα. Τελικά, τον Ιούνιο του 2012, η Κύπρος ζήτησε χρηματοδοτική συνδρομή.

2. Στην ενδιάμεση έκθεση, για την οποία έκανε λόγο το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου, αναφέρεται επίσης σχετικά στην παράγραφο Α14, στη σελίδα 7 ότι «*το πρόβλημα στην Κύπρο έγκειται στο ότι η διαχείριση* [των επιχειρηματικών δραστηριοτήτων του διεθνούς χρηματοπιστωτικού κέντρου] *ήταν κακή, αυτό αυξήθηκε με υπερβολικά ταχύ ρυθμό, η εποπτεία του ήταν ανεπαρκής, δεν ήταν επαρκώς διαφοροποιημένο από γεωγραφική άποψη και η στρεβλωτική του επίδραση στην τοπική οικονομία δεν διορθώθηκε για υπερβολικά μακρύ χρονικό διάστημα. Για την άσκηση των επιχειρηματικών του δραστηριοτήτων βασίστηκε σε υπέρμετρο βαθμό στην φορολογική ελκυστικότητα και την ανεπαρκή διαχείριση σε θέματα εποπτείας και όχι αρκετά στις χρηστές χρηματοοικονομικές πρακτικές και ποιότητα*».

3. και 4. Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου στην έκθεση και την συνοπτική περίληψη που διατέθηκαν πρόσφατα από το κυπριακό Υπουργείο Οικονομικών. Η πρώτη πραγματοποιήθηκε από τη Moneyval (που αποτελεί μέρος του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης), ενώ η δεύτερη εκπονήθηκε από την Deloitte Financial Advisory S.r.l. Το συμπέρασμα στο οποίο κατέληξαν είναι ότι το νομικό και ρυθμιστικό σύστημα στην Κύπρο εφαρμόζονται ελλιπώς από τα χρηματοπιστωτικά ιδρύματα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007991/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Destruction of the Cypriot international financial centre

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'We do not consider the presence of a large foreign banking business to have been of itself a major direct contributor to the crisis. […] Until the MoU negotiations threw up the possibility of a haircut, non-residents' deposits had been remarkably stable, and provided the foundation for a tax-based international banking business that was profitable. The case for shrinking this sector was driven by certain countries' concern about its legitimacy rather than its impact on the soundness of the banks, which is a different issue which could have been dealt with by supervisory means'.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission have substantive reasons to believe that the sheer size of the Cypriot banking sector was a direct contributor to the economic crisis in Cyprus? If so, could it elaborate on those reasons?

2. Does the Commission agree with the committee of experts that the case for shrinking the Cypriot banking sector was driven by certain countries' concern over its legitimacy rather than its impact on the soundness of the banks? If the answer to the above question is positive, can the Commission name those countries and also elaborate on whether their arguments against Cyprus were substantiated or not?

3. Is the Commission in a position to present hard evidence substantiating the allegations that the Cypriot banking system was used for money laundering or other illegal acts?

4. Does the Commission believe that the Cypriot banking sector was more prone to illegal acts than those of other Member States, when it is well known that a number of comparative studies reveal that other Member States such as Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg are classified much higher than Cyprus, as regards the danger of illegal acts?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

1. The problems of Cyprus built up over many years. At their origin was an oversized banking sector that thrived on attracting foreign deposits with very favourable conditions. The banking problems were aggravated by poor practices of risk management. Lacking adequate oversight, the largest Cypriot banks built up excessive risk exposures.

The Commission warned Cyprus about its accumulating problems early on. Warnings and policy guidance to tackle the banking problems and consequent fiscal and macroeconomic imbalances were included in the reports and Country-Specific Recommendations under the first European Semester in June 2011.

Then, in November 2011, the Cypriot authorities were further informed that a financial assistance programme would be unavoidable, unless the persistent economic problems were immediately addressed. Eventually, in June 2012, Cyprus asked for financial assistance.

2. The interim report that the Honourable Member made reference to, states also on paragraph A14, page 7 that 'The problem in Cyprus is that it [international financial centre business] was poorly managed it grew too fast, it was inadequately supervised, it was insufficiently diversified geographically, and its distorting effect on the local economy went uncorrected for too long. As a business, it relied too much on tax appeal and poorly managed supervision, and not enough on financial soundness and quality'.

3. and 4. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the report and summary that were recently made available by the Cypriot Ministry of Finance. The first one was conducted by Moneyval (part of the Council of Europe) and the second by Deloitte Financial Advisory S.r.l. They concluded that the legal and regulatory system in Cyprus is poorly implemented by financial institutions.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007992/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Συγχώνευση της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας Κύπρου με την Τράπεζα Κύπρου

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Η συγχώνευση της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας Κύπρου με την Τράπεζα Κύπρου διευκολύνει την Τρόικα στην αντιμετώπιση των άμεσων προβλημάτων της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας Κύπρου και στη συγκέντρωση επαρκών εγγυήσεων για την εξασφάλιση της επείγουσας χρηματοδότησης εκ μέρους της ΕΚΤ. Πρόκειται όμως για μια δύσκολη συγχώνευση που ενέχει σημαντικό κίνδυνο εκτέλεσης και εκτίθεται σε νομική αμφισβήτηση. Επιπλέον, θα δημιουργήσει στην Κύπρο μια δεσπόζουσα τράπεζα που θα ελέγχει το 40-50 τοις εκατό της εγχώριας αγοράς, γεγονός που θα μπορούσε αργότερα να δημιουργήσει προβλήματα στον ανταγωνισμό και στη χρηματοπιστωτική σταθερότητα».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με το συμπέρασμα της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι η συγχώνευση αυτή είναι ενδεχομένως εκτεθειμένη σε νομική αμφισβήτηση;

2. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με την εκτίμηση ότι υπάρχει σοβαρός κίνδυνος να δημιουργηθεί μια τράπεζα με δεσπόζουσα θέση στην αγορά της Κύπρου, γεγονός που θα μπορούσε αργότερα να δημιουργήσει προβλήματα στον ανταγωνισμό και στη χρηματοπιστωτική σταθερότητα της χώρας;

3. Αν η απάντηση στην προηγούμενη ερώτηση είναι θετική, γιατί επέτρεψε η Επιτροπή να γίνει η συγχώνευση αυτή, παρότι έρχεται σε πλήρη αντίθεση προς την πολιτική ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ;

4. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή για να εξασφαλίσει έναν ανταγωνιστικό και αποδοτικό τραπεζικό τομέα στην Κύπρο;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(22 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η συγχώνευση μεταξύ της Τράπεζας Κύπρου και της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας Κύπρου πραγματοποιήθηκε με την ευθύνη των κυπριακών αρχών, σύμφωνα με την κυπριακή νομοθεσία.

Η συνδυασμένη νέα οντότητα θα έχει πράγματι μερίδιο αγοράς περίπου 40%. Ωστόσο, η νέα Τράπεζα Κύπρου θα λειτουργεί σε ένα περιβάλλον στο οποίο θα έχει άμεσους ανταγωνιστές την Ελληνική Τράπεζα, τα συνεργατικά πιστωτικά ιδρύματα και τα αλλοδαπά πιστωτικά ιδρύματα.

Με βάση τις διαθέσιμες πληροφορίες, η συναλλαγή δεν είχε τη διάσταση που απαιτεί κοινοποίηση σύμφωνα με τους κανόνες της ΕΕ περί συγχωνεύσεων, η οποία εφαρμόζεται μόνον εάν επιτυγχάνονται ορισμένα όρια του κύκλου εργασιών.

Είναι σημαντικό να διασφαλιστεί ρευστότητα και κεφάλαιο σε επαρκή βαθμό για τον τραπεζικό τομέα στην Κύπρο. Μετά την επίτευξη αυτών των στόχων και την επιστροφή σε κλίμα εμπιστοσύνης, μπορεί να αναμένεται από τις τράπεζες να ξεκινήσουν και πάλι την κανονική ροή πιστώσεων προς την οικονομία.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007992/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Merger of Cyprus Popular Bank with Bank of Cyprus

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'The merger of Cyprus Popular Bank with Bank of Cyprus provides the Troika with an expedient way of dealing with Cyprus Popular Bank's immediate problems, and assembling enough collateral to secure the ECB's emergency funding. But it is a difficult merger which contains considerable execution risk, and will be open to legal challenge. Furthermore, it will leave Cyprus with a dominant bank controlling 40-50% of the domestic market — which could become problematic for competition and financial stability later on'.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission agree with the conclusion of the committee of experts that the above merger might be open to legal challenge?

2. Does the Commission agree that there is a real danger of creating a dominant bank in Cyprus, which could become problematic later on in terms of competition and financial stability in Cyprus?

3. If the answer to the previous question is positive, why did the Commission allow this merger to proceed, something which clearly runs contrary to EU competition policy?

4. What does the Commission intend to do in order to ensure a competitive and efficient banking sector in Cyprus?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2013)

The merger between Bank of Cyprus and Cyprus Popular Bank was carried out under the responsibility of the Cypriot authorities according to Cypriot law.

The combined new entity will indeed have a market share of about 40%. However, the new Bank of Cyprus will operate in an environment where Hellenic Bank, the credit cooperative institutions, and foreign credit institutions will be its direct competitors.

On the basis of the available information the transaction was not of a dimension which would have required a notification under EU merger rules, which apply only if certain turnover thresholds are reached.

It is important to ensure sufficient liquidity and enough capital for the banking sector in Cyprus. Once these goals are achieved, and confidence returns, banks can be expected to restart the normal flow of credit to the economy.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007994/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Το βέλτιστο μέγεθος του κυπριακού τραπεζικού τομέα

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης (ΜΣ) μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Είναι καταφανώς αναγκαίος κάποιος βαθμός συρρίκνωσης. […] Το δύσκολο είναι να βρεθεί το ιδανικό μέγεθός του. Το ιδανικό αυτό μέγεθος δεν είναι πιθανό να είναι 3,5 φορές το ΑΕγχΠ, που απλώς αποτελεί έναν μέσο όρο της ΕΕ. Πιστεύουμε ότι υπάρχουν αποδεκτοί λόγοι για τους οποίους η Κύπρος θα μπορούσε να έχει ένα τραπεζικό σύστημα με μέγεθος πάνω από τον μέσο όρο. Ένας από τους λόγους αυτούς είναι ότι, μέχρις ότου προκύψουν άλλοι δίαυλοι χρηματοδότησης, η Κύπρος δεν διαθέτει άλλη εναλλακτική χρηματοδότηση πλην της τραπεζικής και, συνεπώς, οι τράπεζες πρέπει να διαδραματίσουν σημαντικό ρόλο. Ένας ακόμη λόγος είναι ότι η εξειδίκευση στον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα αποτελεί μια αξιοπρεπή επιλογή για μια οικονομία με περιορισμένες εναλλακτικές λύσεις.»

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με τη γνώμη της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι το επιδιωκόμενο με το ΜΣ μέγεθος του κυπριακού τραπεζικού τομέα (3,5 φορές το ΑΕγχΠ) έχει καθοριστεί αυθαίρετα;

2. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με τη γνώμη της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι υπάρχουν αποδεκτοί οικονομικοί λόγοι για τους οποίους η Κύπρος θα μπορούσε να έχει ένα τραπεζικό σύστημα με μέγεθος πάνω από τον μέσο όρο;

3. Αν η απάντηση στις παραπάνω ερωτήσεις είναι θετική, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να εξηγήσει γιατί επελέγη τελικά το αυθαίρετο επίπεδο των 3,5 φορών;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Αυγούστου 2013)

Ο εγχώριος τραπεζικός τομέας της Κύπρου, περιλαμβανομένων των συνεταιριστικών πιστωτικών ιδρυμάτων, ισοδυναμούσε έως πρόσφατα με το 550% του ΑΕΠ, ενώ ο αντίστοιχος μέσος όρος της ΕΕ ανέρχεται στο 350%. Οι δύο κυριότερες τράπεζες της Κύπρου, η Τράπεζα Κύπρου και η Λαϊκή Τράπεζα Κύπρου, είχαν τεθεί σε διαδικασία εξυγίανσης από τις κυπριακές αρχές πριν από τη σύναψη του ΜΣ. Ως αποτέλεσμα, το μέγεθος του εγχώριου τραπεζικού τομέα μειώθηκε. Οι πολιτικές για τον χρηματοπιστωτικό τομέα στην Κύπρο έχουν ως στόχο την αποκατάσταση της εμπιστοσύνης στο τραπεζικό σύστημα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007994/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: Optimal size for the Cypriot banking sector

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'Some degree of shrinkage is clearly necessary. […] The challenge is to find its optimal size. This is unlikely to be 3.5 times GDP, which is merely an EU average. We believe that there are acceptable reasons why Cyprus could have an above average sized banking system. One is that, until other financing channels emerge, it has no alternatives to bank finance, so the banks will need to play an important role. Another is that financial specialisation is a respectable option for an economy with limited choices.'

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission agree with the opinion of the committee of experts that the targeted size of the Cypriot banking sector in the MoU (3.5 times GDP) is an arbitrary figure?

2. Does the Commission agree with the opinion of the committee of experts that there are acceptable economic reasons why Cyprus could have an above-average-sized banking system?

3. If the answer to the above questions is positive, can the Commission explain why the arbitrary figure of 3.5 was ultimately chosen?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 August 2013)

The domestic banking sector of Cyprus, including the cooperative credit institutions, represented until recently 550% of GDP, compared with 350% as an average for the EU. The two main banks of Cyprus, Bank of Cyprus (BoC) and Cyprus Popular Bank (Laiki), were put into resolution by the Cypriot authorities before the MoU was concluded. As a result, the size of the domestic banking sector has been reduced. Financial sector policies in Cyprus have been geared toward restoring confidence in the banking system.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007995/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η πώληση των υποκαταστημάτων κυπριακών τραπεζών στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Οι ακριβείς όροι της πώλησης των υποκαταστημάτων κυπριακών τραπεζών στην Ελλάδα είναι δύσκολο να προσδιοριστούν, φαίνεται όμως ότι προκάλεσαν μεγάλες απώλειες στους ιδιοκτήτες τους, ενώ ο φρενήρης ρυθμός της υλοποίησής της επιβλήθηκε μάλλον από την ανάγκη να αποφευχθεί η υπό το κράτος του φόβου φυγή των ελλήνων καταθετών. Πρόκειται για μια μέθοδο περιορισμού του μεγέθους ενός τραπεζικού συστήματος η οποία έχει περιττά υψηλό κόστος, αλλά και αποδιοργανωτικές συνέπειες. Ο τραπεζικός τομέας της Κύπρου θα έπρεπε να είχε αφεθεί να βρει το βέλτιστο μέγεθός του μέσα σε ένα λογικότερο χρονικό περιθώριο, παρά τις όποιες ανησυχίες σχετικά με την εξάρτησή του από τις διεθνείς δραστηριότητες.»

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Συμμετείχε με οποιονδήποτε τρόπο η τρόικα, και ιδίως η Επιτροπή, στην απόφαση της πώλησης των υποκαταστημάτων κυπριακών τραπεζών στην Ελλάδα και, αν ναι, ποιο ήταν το οικονομικό σκεπτικό της απόφασης αυτής;

2. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με το συμπέρασμα της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι «οι ακριβείς όροι της πώλησης των υποκαταστημάτων κυπριακών τραπεζών στην Ελλάδα […] φαίνεται ότι προκάλεσαν μεγάλες απώλειες στους ιδιοκτήτες τους»;

3. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με το συμπέρασμα της επιτροπής εμπειρογνωμόνων ότι η μέθοδος που επελέγη ήταν μια μέθοδος «περιορισμού του μεγέθους ενός τραπεζικού συστήματος η οποία έχει περιττά υψηλό κόστος, αλλά και αποδιοργανωτικές συνέπειες»; Αν ναι, γιατί επελέγη αυτός ο συγκεκριμένος τρόπος, και όχι κάποιος άλλος, για τον περιορισμό του μεγέθους του κυπριακού τραπεζικού συστήματος;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(22 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η πώληση των ελληνικών επιχειρηματικών δραστηριοτήτων της Τράπεζας Κύπρου και της Λαϊκής Τράπεζας Κύπρου στην Τράπεζα Πειραιώς αποτελεί ιδιωτική συναλλαγή που εγκρίθηκε από τις εποπτικές αρχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Ελλάδας και της Κύπρου, προκειμένου να προστατευθεί η σταθερότητα τόσο του ελληνικού όσο και του κυπριακού τραπεζικού συστήματος.

Η πώληση των ελληνικών επιχειρηματικών δραστηριοτήτων πραγματοποιήθηκε σε τιμή που λάμβανε υπόψη τις αναμενόμενες μελλοντικές ζημίες, όπως αυτές είχαν εκτιμηθεί στο πλαίσιο του ανεξάρτητου ελέγχου της ποιότητας του ενεργητικού που διεξήγαγε η Pimco.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007995/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: The sale of the Greek branches of Cypriot banks

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'The precise terms of the sale of the Greek branches of Cypriot banks are hard to establish but appear to have crystallised heavy losses for their owners, while the hectic pace of the disposal appears to have been dictated by the need to avoid frightening off Greek depositors. This is an unnecessarily costly and disruptive way to downsize a banking system. Cyprus' banking sector should have been left to find its optimal size within a more reasonable time frame, whatever the concerns about its reliance on international business.'

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Has the Troika, and in particular the Commission, been in any way involved in the decision to sell the Greek branches of Cypriot banks, and if so, what was the economic reasoning behind this decision?

2. Does the Commission agree with the conclusion of the committee of experts that 'the terms of the sale of the Greek branches of Cypriot banks […] appear to have crystallised heavy losses for their owners'?

3. Does the Commission agree with the conclusion of the committee of experts that the method chosen was 'an unnecessarily costly and disruptive way to downsize a banking system'? If so, why was this particular, and not some alternative, method used for downsizing the Cypriot Banking System?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(22 August 2013)

The sale of the Greek operations of Bank of Cyprus and Cyprus Popular Bank to Piraeus Bank is a private transaction that was approved by the Greek and Cypriot banking sector supervisors, in order to protect the stability of both the Greek and the Cypriot banking system.

The sale of the Greek operations was carried out at a price that provisioned for the future expected losses as estimated by the independent asset quality review performed by Pimco.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-007996/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Η συρρίκνωση του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου

Σύμφωνα με την προσωρινή έκθεση μιας επιτροπής τεσσάρων διεθνούς φήμης εμπειρογνωμόνων σε τραπεζικά και χρηματοοικονομικά θέματα, στους οποίους η Κεντρική Τράπεζα της Κύπρου ανέθεσε να εξετάσουν τις διάφορες πτυχές του τραπεζικού τομέα της Κύπρου, υπάρχουν σοβαρές ανησυχίες σχετικά με μια σειρά ζητημάτων που σχετίζονται με διατάξεις του Μνημονίου Συνεννόησης μεταξύ της Κύπρου και της Τρόικας. Στην έκθεση των εμπειρογνωμόνων αναφέρονται, μεταξύ άλλων, τα εξής:

«Ζητήθηκε από την Κύπρο να περιορίσει το μέγεθος του τραπεζικού τομέα της στο επίπεδο του μέσου όρου της ΕΕ, δηλαδή 3,5 φορές το ΑΕγχΠ, ένα μέγεθος που είναι αυθαίρετο. Ο πιεστικός ρυθμός της συρρίκνωσης αυτής προκάλεσε ξεπουλήματα με ζημίες, και ενδέχεται να προκαλέσει και άλλα».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς, και με ποια οικονομικά κριτήρια, επέλεξε η τρόικα το αυθαίρετο μέγεθος «3,5 φορές το ΑΕγχΠ»;

2. Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή το γεγονός ότι σε κάποια κράτη μέλη τα τραπεζικά συστήματα έχουν μέγεθος 10 ή 20 φορές μεγαλύτερο από το ΑΕγχΠ της αντίστοιχης χώρας; Προτίθεται η Επιτροπή να λάβει μέτρα εναντίον των κρατών μελών των οποίων οι τραπεζικοί τομείς υπερβαίνουν το ΑΕγχΠ τους κατά έναν ορισμένο παράγοντα και, αν ναι, ποιο θα ήταν το βέλτιστο μέγεθος ως ποσοστό του ΑΕγχΠ;

3. Γιατί έγινε αυτή η διάκριση εις βάρος της Κύπρου, και μάλιστα με τόσο τραχύ τρόπο, σε σχέση με το ζήτημα αυτό;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Αυγούστου 2013)

1. Το ποσό των 350% του ΑΕΠ αποτελεί το μέσο μέγεθος του εγχώριου τραπεζικού τομέα στις χώρες της ΕΕ.

2. Υπάρχουν κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ στις οποίες το μέγεθος του τραπεζικού τομέα είναι πολύ μεγαλύτερο του μέσου όρου της ΕΕ. Ωστόσο, κάθε χώρα αντιπροσωπεύει συγκεκριμένα επιχειρηματικά τραπεζικά μοντέλα που έχουν πολύ διαφορετική επίδραση στους κινδύνους που το τραπεζικό σύστημα που είναι εγκατεστημένο στη χώρα παρουσιάζει τόσο για την οικονομία και για τα δημόσια οικονομικά του δημόσιου χρέους. Στην περίπτωση της Κύπρου, η υπερεπέκταση των ημεδαπών τραπεζών, καθώς και σε διεθνές επίπεδο, είχε ως αποτέλεσμα τη συσσώρευση σημαντικών ανισορροπιών. Αυτό δεν συμβαίνει σε άλλα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ, όπου ιδρύματα της αλλοδαπής, χωρίς να σχετίζονται με την εγχώρια οικονομία, ευθύνονται για τα υπερτροφικά τραπεζικά συστήματα.

3. Η Κύπρος αποτελεί μοναδική περίπτωση εξαιτίας του μεγέθους και της δομής του τραπεζικού της τομέα, του βαθμού ανάληψης κινδύνου και της ανεπαρκούς εποπτείας. Τα μέτρα που λαμβάνονται είναι προσαρμοσμένα στις πολύ ιδιαίτερες συνθήκες της Κύπρου και στοχεύουν στην αποκατάσταση της βιωσιμότητας ενός μικρότερου τραπεζικού τομέα και, ταυτόχρονα, στην προστασία όλων των καταθέσεων κάτω των 100 000 ευρώ, σύμφωνα με τις αρχές της ΕΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007996/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(4 July 2013)

Subject: The shrinkage of the banking system of Cyprus

According to the interim report of a committee of four internationally-renowned experts on banking and finance, who have been commissioned by the Central Bank of Cyprus to research into various aspects of Cyprus's banking sector, there are strong concerns about a number of issues regarding the provisions of the memorandum of understanding between Cyprus and the Troika. Among other things, the report by the committee of experts states that:

'Cyprus has been told to reduce its banking sector to the EU average of 3.5 times GDP — an arbitrary figure. The forced pace of the shrinkage has already created fire sale losses, and may cause more'.

Can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. How, and according to what economic criteria, was this arbitrary figure of '3.5 times GDP' chosen by the Troika?

2. Is the Commission aware of the fact that among the Member States there are banking systems which are 10 or even 20 times bigger than the GDP of that country? Does it intend to take action against Member States whose banking sectors exceed the GDP of the country by a certain factor, and, if so, what would be the optimum size as a proportion of GDP?

3. Why was Cyprus discriminated against in such an abrupt way on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(7 August 2013)

1. The figure of 350% of GDP represents the average domestic banking sector size in EU countries.

2. There are Member States in the EU where the size of the banking sectors is well above the EU average. However, individual country cases represent specific business banking models, which have very different bearing on the risks that the resident banking system raises for both the economy and the sovereign's public finances. In the case of Cyprus, the over-expansion of the domestic banks, including internationally, has resulted in the accumulation of significant imbalances. This is not the case in other Member States of the EU, where foreign institutions without a link to the domestic economy account for the above-the-average size of the banking systems.

3. Cyprus is a unique case because of the size of its banking sector combined with its structure, level of risk-taking and suboptimal supervision. Measures taken are tailor-made to the very exceptional situation in Cyprus in order to restore the viability of a smaller banking sector while, at the same time, protecting all deposits below EUR 100.000 in accordance with EU principles.

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