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INFORMAZZJONI MINN ISTITUZZJONIJIET, KORPI, UFFIĊĊJI U AĠENZIJI TAL-UNJONI EWROPEA

Parlament Ewropew

MISTOQSIJIET BIL-MIKTUB U TWEĠIBIET

2014/C 88 E/01 Mistoqsijiet bil-miktub magħmula mill-Membri tal-Parlament Ewropew u t-tweġibiet mogħtija minn istituzzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea 1

(Ara l-avviż lill-qarrej)

MT

Avviż lill-qarrej

Din il-pubblikazzjoni tinkludi mistoqsijiet bil-miktub magħmula mill-Membri tal-Parlament Ewropew u t-tweġibiet mogħtija minn istituzzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea.

Għal kull mistoqsija u tweġiba, il-verżjoni tal-lingwa oriġinali hija ppreżentata qabel traduzzjoni possibbli.

F'xi każijiet, jista' jkun li r-risposta tingħata b'lingwa differenti minn dik tal-mistoqsija. Dan jiddependi mil-lingwa li jaħdem biha l-kumitat li jkun intalab jagħti tweġiba.

Dawn il-mistoqsijiet u tweġibiet huma ppubblikati skont l-Artikoli 117 u 118 tar-Regoli tal-Proċedura tal-Parlament Ewropew.

Il-mistoqsijiet u t-tweġibiet kollha jistgħu jinqraw fis-sit elettroniku tal-Parlament Ewropew (Europarl) taħt l-intestatura "Mistoqsijiet Parlamentari":

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

ABBREVJAZZJONIJIET UŻATI GĦALL-GRUPPI POLITIĊI

PPE	Grupp tal-Partit Popolari Ewropew (Demokristjani)
S&D	Grupp tal-Alleanza Progressiva tas-Socjalisti u d-Demokratici fil-Parlament Ewropew
ALDE	Grupp tal-Alleanza tal-Liberali u d-Demokratiċi għall-Ewropa
ECR	Grupp tal-Konservattivi u Riformisti Ewropej
Verts/ALE	Grupp tal-Ħodor/Alleanza Ħielsa Ewropea
GUE/NGL	Grupp Konfederali tax-Xellug Magħqud Ewropew - Xellug Aħdar Nordiku
EFD	Grupp għall-Ewropa Ħielsa u Demokratika
NI	Membri mhux Affiljati

MT

IV

(Informazzjoni)

INFORMAZZJONI MINN ISTITUZZJONIJIET, KORPI, UFFIĊĊJI U AĠENZIJI TAL-UNJONI EWROPEA

PARLAMENT EWROPEW

MISTOQSIJIET BIL-MIKTUB U TWEĠIBIET

Mistoqsijiet bil-miktub magħmula mill-Membri tal-Parlament Ewropew u t-tweġibiet mogħtija minn istituzzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea

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Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-007293/13
à la Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 juin 2013)

Objet: La Hongrie criminalise ses SDF

Les avertissements ont beau se multiplier depuis trois mois, le premier ministre Viktor Orbán fait la sourde oreille. Les critiques portant sur le quatrième remaniement apporté à la Constitution hongroise il y a quelques semaines sont pourtant convergentes: ces nouveaux changements menacent le respect des droits fondamentaux dans ce pays.

1. La Commission trouve-t-elle normales les dispositions permettant de criminaliser les sans-abri et de les exposer à des sanctions pénales?

2. Compte-t-elle réagir fermement? Comment?

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

En vertu des traités sur lesquels se fonde l'Union européenne ([1]), la Commission n'a pas de compétences générales pour intervenir auprès des États membres en matière de droits fondamentaux. Elle ne peut le faire que lorsqu'il s'agit d'une question relevant du droit de l'Union européenne. La disposition relative aux sans-abri prévue à l'article XXII.3 de la Loi fondamentale hongroise ne semble pas être liée à la mise en œuvre du droit de l'Union européenne. Toutefois, la Commission a souligné dans le train de mesures sur les investissements sociaux ([2]), notamment dans le document de travail des services de la Commission concernant la lutte contre le problème des sans-abri ([3]), que les stratégies de criminalisation des sans-abri appliquées par les États membres, par exemple en cas d'utilisation de l'espace public ou d'actes de mendicité, semblent inefficaces, coûteuses et stigmatisantes, et ne permettent pas d'agir sur le contexte social du problème.

La Commission rappelle également que la Commission de Venise du Conseil de l'Europe, dans son avis rendu le 17 juin 2013 ([4]), a commenté la disposition relative aux sans-abri figurant à l'article XXII.3 de la Loi fondamentale hongroise. Selon le point de vue exprimé par la Commission de Venise dans son avis, les problèmes importants sont l'imprécision des critères ainsi que le niveau de réglementation. L'article XXII.3 de la Loi fondamentale est l'une des dispositions du quatrième amendement contenant des règles détaillées qui sont généralement régies par la loi et qui ne devraient pas figurer dans une Constitution. Selon la Commission de Venise, l'élévation de ces règles au niveau de la Constitution a pour effet d'empêcher un examen par la Cour constitutionnelle.

([1]) Traité sur l'Union européenne et traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne.
([2]) Pour plus d'informations concernant le train de mesures sur les investissements sociaux, veuillez consulter la page suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=fr.
([3]) Document de travail des services de la Commission CSWD (2013)42 final intitulé «Confronting Homelessness in the European Union».
([4]) Avis adopté par la Commission de Venise sur le quatrième amendement à la Loi fondamentale hongroise.lors de sa 95 ^e^ session plénière (Venise, 14 et 15 juin 2013), publié le 17 juin 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-007293/13
to the Commission
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(20 June 2013)

Subject: Hungary criminalises the homeless

Despite increasing warnings over the past three months, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has turned a deaf ear. Yet criticisms of the fourth reform to the Hungarian Constitution a few weeks ago arrive at the same conclusion: these new changes are a threat to respect for fundamental rights in this country.

1. Does the Commission think these provisions, which criminalise the homeless and subject them to criminal penalties, are acceptable?

2. Does the Commission intend to respond decisively? How?

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

Under the Treaties on which the European Union is based ([1]), the Commission has no general powers to intervene with the Member States in the area of fundamental rights. It can only do so if an issue of European Union law is involved. The provision on homelessness enshrined in Article XXII.3 of the Hungarian Fundamental Law, does not appear to be related to the implementation of European Union law. However, the Commission emphasised in the Social Investment Package ([2]), notably in the Commission Staff Working Document on Confronting Homelessness in the European Union ([3]), that criminalising approaches towards homeless people by Member States, e.g. for public place use or begging, seem inefficient, costly, stigmatising and fail to address the social context of the problem.

The Commission also recalls that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, in its opinion issued on 17 June 2013 ([4]), commented on the provision on homelessness in Article XXII.3 of the Hungarian Fundamental Law. From the point of view of the Venice Commission in the framework of its Opinion, important issues are the vagueness of the criteria as well as the level of regulation. Article XXII.3 of the Fundamental Law is one of the provisions of the Fourth Amendment that contains detailed rules which are usually regulated by law and should not be part of a Constitution. Raising such provisions to the level of the Constitution has the effect of preventing review by the Constitutional Court, according to the Venice Commission.

([1]) Treaty on European Union and Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.
([2]) For more information on the Social Investment Package, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en.
([3]) Commission Staff Working Document CSWD (2013)42 final on Confronting Homelessness in the European Union.
([4]) Opinion on the Fourth amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary, adopted by the Venice Commission at its 95th Plenary Session (Venice, 14-15 June 2013), issued on 17 June 2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009020/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(24 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Esclusione della Regione Veneto dall'utilizzo dei fondi comunitari per la lotta alla disoccupazione giovanile

In occasione del vertice del 27 e 28 giugno, il Consiglio europeo ha stabilito lo stanziamento di 6 miliardi di euro a partire dal 1° gennaio 2014 per combattere la disoccupazione giovanile, secondo le linee guida dell'iniziativa a favore dell'occupazione giovanile (Youth Employment Initiative), e ha inoltre prospettato anche un possibile aumento della somma in questione a 8 miliardi di euro. Tuttavia, secondo quanto stabilito dal Consiglio stesso, solamente le regioni europee colpite da tassi di disoccupazione giovanile superiori al 25 % potranno beneficiare di tali risorse finanziarie.

La Commissione può confermare le informazioni precedentemente esposte, anche per quanto riguarda il fatto che le regioni europee con tassi di disoccupazione giovanile inferiori al 25 % verranno escluse dall'utilizzo dei fondi in questione?

In particolare, conferma che la regione italiana del Veneto, dove il numero di giovani disoccupati è pari a duecentomila, non potrà comunque beneficiare del fondo, in quanto il valore percentuale della disoccupazione giovanile è pari all'8,6 % e quindi inferiore alla soglia minima del 25 % stabilita dal Consiglio europeo?

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2013)

La Commissione conferma che il Consiglio europeo riunitosi a giugno ha stabilito, come condizione di ammissibilità per la concessione di un contributo finanziario nel quadro dell'iniziativa per l'occupazione giovanile (YEI — *Youth Employment Initiative*), una soglia minima pari al 25 % relativamente al tasso di disoccupazione giovanile regionale tra i giovani di età compresa tra i 15 ed i 24 anni. La Commissione conferma inoltre che il tasso di disoccupazione giovanile nella Regione Veneto è pari al 23,4 % ([1]) e non sembra quindi soddisfare detto criterio.

I parametri precisi per la YEI sono tuttavia ancora oggetto di discussione da parte del Consiglio e del Parlamento nell'ambito dei triloghi sui regolamenti concernenti il FSE e le norme comuni per i fondi.

La proposta della Commissione consentirebbe inoltre agli Stati membri di consacrare fino al 10 % dei loro stanziamenti a valere sulla YEI ai giovani residenti in sottoregioni in cui la disoccupazione giovanile è elevata e che non rientrano tra le le regioni ammissibili NUTS II. Gli Stati membri possono altresì utilizzare una parte degli stanziamenti complessivi del FSE ad essi destinati per promuovere l'integrazione dei giovani nel mercato del lavoro.

([1]) Eurostat, 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009020/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Veneto region of Italy not eligible for EU funding to tackle youth unemployment

At its meeting of 27 and 28 June 2013, the European Council agreed, in line with the Youth Employment Initiative guidelines, that EUR 6 billion should be made available from 1 January 2014 for action to combat youth unemployment. It also held out the possibility of increasing that sum to EUR 8 billion. At the same time, however, it decided that only European regions with youth unemployment rates of more than 25% would be eligible for the funding.

Can the Commission say whether the above information is correct? In particular, will European regions with youth unemployment rates of less than 25% not be eligible?

More specifically, can it confirm that the Veneto region of Italy, where 200 000 young people are without work, will not be eligible for the funding, in view of the fact that the region has a youth unemployment rate of 8.6%, which is below the 25% threshold set by the European Council?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission confirms that the June European Council agreed on a regional youth unemployment rate threshold of 25% for the 15-to-24 age group as the condition for eligibility for a financial contribution under the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The Commission also confirms that the Veneto Region has a youth unemployment rate of 23.4% ([1]), and therefore would not meet this criterion.

However, the precise parameters for the YEI are still being discussed by Council and Parliament in the context of ongoing trilogues on ESF and CPR regulations.

Furthermore, the Commission proposal would allow the Member States to use up to 10% of their YEI allocations for young persons residing in sub-regions where youth unemployment is high and which fall outside eligible NUTS 2 regions. The Member States can also use part of their overall ESF allocations to promote young people's integration into the labour market.

([1]) Eurostat, 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009021/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(24 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Stanziamento di 1,5 miliardi di euro per l'Italia per combattere la disoccupazione giovanile

Con il vertice del 27-28 giugno, il Consiglio europeo ha stabilito lo stanziamento di 6 miliardi di euro a partire dal primo gennaio 2014 per combattere la disoccupazione giovanile, secondo le linee guida dell'Iniziativa a favore dell'occupazione giovanile. Il Consiglio ha inoltre prospettato un possibile aumento della somma in questione a 8 miliardi di euro.

Può la Commissione confermare quanto segue:

1. una somma pari a 1,5 miliardi di euro verrà stanziata specificatamente per l'Italia;

2. una parte consistente di questi 1,5 miliardi verrà ricavata dal Fondo Sociale Europeo e non si tratterà quindi di uno stanziamento di fondi nuovi, bensì di un semplice dirottamento di fondi già previsti;

3. l'Italia non potrà accedere a questi fondi se non attraverso le consuete procedure di accesso al FSE.

Risposta di László Andor a nome della Commissione
(5 settembre 2013)

1.-2. Sulla base delle conclusioni del Consiglio europeo del 7-8 febbraio 2013, la Commissione ha adottato una proposta ([1]) al fine di attuare un'iniziativa per l'occupazione giovanile (YEI — Youth Employment Initiative), che è attualmente in discussione in sede di Parlamento e di Consiglio. Sulla base della proposta della Commissione e dei criteri di ammissibilità in essa previsti, all'Italia sarebbero destinati circa 530 milioni di EUR. A norma dell'articolo 15, vii, della proposta, il sostegno del Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) è almeno pari al sostegno da parte della dotazione specifica della YEI nelle regioni ammissibili.

3. A norma dell'articolo 15, iii, della proposta, la YEI è integrata nella programmazione del FSE. Gli Stati membri stabiliscono le modalità per la programmazione della YEI nell'accordo di partenariato e nel programma operativo. Inoltre, la Commissione ha proposto alcune modifiche al progetto di regolamento recante disposizioni comuni per accelerare l'attuazione della YEI, tra cui quella di anticipare l'ammissibilità delle spese relative alle attività YEI al 1º settembre 2013 e la possibilità di adottare programmi operativi YEI specifici prima della presentazione dell'accordo di partenariato.

([1]) COM(2013)145 def. del 12.03.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009021/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: EUR 1.5 billion in funding to Italy to combat youth unemployment

In its summit of 27-28 June, the European Council agreed to allocate EUR 6 billion, from 1 January 2014, in order to combat youth unemployment, according to the guidelines of the Youth Employment Initiative. The Council also suggested that the sum might possibly be increased to EUR 8 billion.

Can the Commission confirm the following:

1. that EUR 1.5 billion will be earmarked specifically for Italy;

2. that a substantial part of this 1.5 billion will come from the European Social Fund and will not, therefore, be new funding, but merely a diversion of funds for whichprovision had already been made;

3. that Italy will not be able to access these funds unless it goes through the usual proceduresrelating to access to the ESF?

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

1 & 2. On the basis of the European Council Conclusions of 7-8 February 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal ([1]) in order to implement a Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which is currently being discussed by Parliament and Council. On the basis of the Commission proposal and the eligibility criteria set therein, around EUR 530 million would be earmarked for Italy. According to Article 15 vii of the proposal, the European Social Fund (ESF) shall at least match the support from the specific allocation for the YEI in the eligible regions.

3. According to Article 15 iii of the proposal, the YEI is integrated in the programming of the ESF. Member States shall set out the programming arrangements for the YEI in the partnership agreement and in the operational programme. In addition, the Commission has proposed amendments to the draft Common Provisions Regulation in order to speed up implementation of the YEI, including advancing the eligibility of expenditure related to YEI activities to 1 September 2013 and the possibility of adopting YEI dedicated operational programmes before the submission of the Partnership agreement.

([1]) COM(2013) 145 final of 12.03.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009023/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Subsidising agricultural production

Can the Commission detail which countries outside the European Union presently subsidise agricultural production, and clarify the nature of the subsidies concerned?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

The Commission does not collect detailed information about subsidies to agricultural production outside the European Union. Available international data shows that every country manages a food and agriculture policy that covers a combination of different instruments as incentives for the farmers to best respond to the demand for food and public goods that agriculture provides.

In the World Trade Organisation, which requires its members to notify granted domestic support to agriculture, about 40% of non-EU countries indicated some sort of product-specific or non-product-specific support as part of Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS), usually lower than the subsidies provided through Green box, non-trade-distorting measures. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, in its recent Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation reports, showed that the support based on commodity outputs in OECD countries has been steadily decreasing and represented about 44% of total Producer Support Estimate (PSE), mostly attributed to Market Price Support. In Emerging Economies (Brazil, China, Russia, Ukraine, South Africa) the support based on commodity outputs as a share of PSE ranged from about 20% in South Africa to about 60% in China and Russia.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009024/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Fall in diabetes deaths

According to the results of a study published recently in *Diabetologia*, a medical journal, the likelihood of dying of people diagnosed with diabetes relative to those who do not suffer from the disease has decreased since the mid-1990s. However, it is still estimated that hundreds of patients will die prematurely in the United Kingdom as a result of diabetes every year.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. What steps have been taken at EU level to raise awareness and promote early prevention of diabetes, and to provide adequate and effective healthcare for people throughout the Member States who have been or may be diagnosed with the disease?

2. How many people across the EU have died as a result of suffering from diabetes in the past five years? Can the Commission break down this figure by: a) Member State, and b) age of the deceased?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Commission is keen to help address diabetes within its competencies. The Commission addresses the prevention of diabetes type II, by taking action on known risk factors such as nutrition and lack of physical activity, where the Commission has put in place a comprehensive strategy ([1]).

In addition, the Commission has supported a number of projects on the prevention, the diagnosis and other aspects of diabetes ([2]) through the Health programme.To further support the development of prevention and early diagnosis of diabetes type II, a joint action on chronic diseases has been developed between Member States and the Commission, which will be co-financed by the health programme. One part of the joint action is devoted to diabetes type II, to study barriers to prevention, screening and treatment of diabetes and to improve cooperation among Member States to act on diabetes.

The Commission further collects and provides data on causes of death at EU level by disease, age groups, gender and regional level ([3]) according to the International Classification of Diseases. In 2010, 106,398 Europeans died of Diabetes mellitus compared to 104,751 in 2006. In the United Kingdom, the figure of 6,439 deaths due to Diabetes mellitus in 2006 dropped slightly to 6,180 in 2010. This data is presented in annex per Member State and by age groups.

The prevention, as well as the provision of early diagnosis and care to people suffering from diabetes, is a health system management issue which falls under the responsibility of Member States.

([1]) White paper on a strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues COM(2007)279.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?full=full.
([3]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/health/public_health/data_public_health/database.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009025/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Criminal convictions of trafficked persons

Three Vietnamese children who had been trafficked into the United Kingdom recently had their convictions for drug crimes carried out at the behest of their captors quashed by the Court of Appeal.

In this context, can the Commission detail what provisions exist at EU level to ensure that victims of human trafficking in the Member States are not held responsible for crimes committed while under duress?

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

Addressing trafficking in human has been a priority area for the EU and its Member States for several years. This resulted in 2011 in the adoption by the Council and the European Parliament of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, with the transposition date of 6 April 2013. Article 8 of this directive provides for the Member States, in accordance with the basic principles of their legal systems, that competent national authorities are entitled not to prosecute or impose penalties on victims of trafficking in human beings for their involvement in criminal activities which they have been compelled to commit as a direct consequence of being subject to human trafficking. The aim of this such protection is to safeguard the human rights of victims, to avoid further victimisation and to encourage them to act as witnesses in criminal proceedings against the perpetrators.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009026/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Testing of lintels

Currently, under the Construction Products Regulation (CPR), lintels must be tested in line with harmonised EU standard EN 845-2:2003.

Can the Commission state whether there any plans to introduce, in the coming months, changes to this standard — and to the requirements set out therein — that could impact on manufacturers across the EU?

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

According to the Construction Products Regulation (305/2011/EU; the CPR), the assessment (test) methods to be applied for the performance of construction products covered by harmonised standards are to be found in these standards.

Article 27(3) of the CPR also allows for the European standardisation bodies to establish threshold levels for such performance. However, in this context it should be noted that this provision foresees a given procedure to be followed in these situations, comprising the involvement of the Commission and the Standing Committee of the CPR.

By now, the Commission has not received any information from the European standardisation bodies, indicating any needs to launch such procedures, related to either this harmonised standard or any other standards.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009027/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: European Alliance for Apprenticeships

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships was launched earlier this month at the 2013 WorldSkills competition in Leipzig. It is a joint initiative by the European Commissioners for Education and Youth and for Employment, and it aims to tackle youth unemployment by improving capacity for apprenticeships across the EU.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following questions;

1. How many apprenticeships were available for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 across the EU in the past five years? Could the Commission breakdown this figure by a) Member State and b) profession?

2. Can the Commission detail how the Alliance intends to improve capacity for apprenticeships across the EU between 2014 and 2020?

3. Does the Commission intend to form regional strategies with a view to realising an increased number of apprenticeship places under the Alliance?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

The European Alliance for Apprenticeships brings together key stakeholders, including public authorities, businesses, social partners, chambers, VET ([1]) providers and youth organisations to strengthen the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships. The aims are to: (1) facilitate knowledge transfer and modernisation of apprenticeship systems; (2) promote the benefits of apprenticeships; and (3) make best use of EU funding and resources.

Although the Commission does not have detailed figures for the past five years, a report ([2]) shows that in 2009 approximately 3.7 million pupils in secondary education followed apprenticeships in a strict sense, while another 5.7 million students attended other apprenticeship-type schemes, mainly school-based VET training with some work-based training in companies (EU-27). The report also shows that the economic crisis led to an increased interest in VET studies, even as the number of apprenticeship places on offer in companies has decreased in Europe.

With youth unemployment rates at unacceptable levels, boosting apprenticeship supply, quality and reputation is of major importance. Success depends on the active engagement of stakeholders. Member States play an important role since education and training policies and reform are national responsibilities. Partnerships at the national, regional and bilateral level are encouraged. The Commission will steer the Alliance, monitor and report on developments, and facilitate peer learning, cooperation and information sharing.

In addition, a European Social Fund Technical Assistance Support Programme for the establishment of apprenticeship and traineeship schemes ([3]) provides strategic, operational and policy advice to Member States.

([1]) vocational education training.
([2]) Apprenticeship supply in the Member States of the European Union, http://ec.europa.eu/education/vocational-education/doc/forum12/supply_en.pdf
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/youthtraining

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009028/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Number of skin cancer cases

According to research carried out by the Cancer Focus charity, 3 300 people develop skin cancer every year in my constituency, Northern Ireland. Cases of the most serious forms of the disease have more than doubled in the past twenty years.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. How many cases of skin cancer have been confirmed across the EU in the past 3 years? Can the Commission provide a breakdown of these figures by Member State?

2. What steps are being taken at EU level to address the causes of skin cancer, and in particular the issue of dangerous and prolonged exposure to the sun?

3. What provisions exists at EU level to raise awareness among EU citizens of the risks associated with exposure to the sun and the use of tanning salons?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2013)

1. The EU-funded EUCAN project of the International Agency for Research on Cancer ([1]) provides incidence and prevalence figures for cancer sites by gender. Incidence for malignant skin melanoma ([2]) at EU level was estimated at 82 075 cases 2012.

2. Research on skin cancers has been a priority in the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. So far, this programme has devoted EUR 67 million to diagnostic tools (e.g. MINERVA ([3]), VIAMOS ([4])), therapies and mechanisms of skin cancers initiation, progression and resistance to therapy.

Under the 6th Framework Programme for Research, GenoMEL (Melanoma Genetics Consortium) created collaboration between melanoma researchers in the EU, identified several genes associated with greater melanoma risk and engaged in outreach and education ([5]). The project EUROSKIN (European network of skin cancer prevention) focused on primary prevention in children, on European certification standard for solaria, on epidermal stem cells and carcinoma and on screening.

Under the Health Programme, the project EUROSUN (Measuring the exposure of individuals and populations in Europe to UV radiation by using the data of meteorological satellites) ([6]) further developed prevention messages adapted to each Member State, and an atlas of UV irradiation. In addition, the EPIDERM project (European Prevention Initiative for Dermatological Malignancies) ([7]), covered skin cancer occurrence, risk factors, treatments and costs.

3. The European Code Against Cancer recommends that 'Care must be taken to avoid excessive sun exposure. It is specifically important to protect children and adolescents. For individuals who have a tendency to burn in the sun, active protective measures must be taken throughout life'.

([1]) http://eu-cancer.iarc.fr/EUCAN/About.aspx
([2]) http://eu-cancer.iarc.fr/EUCAN/Cancer.aspx?Cancer=20
([3]) http://www.minerva-project.eu/
([4]) http://www.minerva-project.eu/
([5]) http://www.genomel.org/
([6]) http://www.eurosun-project.org/
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html?prjno=2007101

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009029/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Murder of women

According to research conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine which examined over 500 000 deaths across 66 countries, women are six times more likely to be murdered by a partner than men.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following questions:

1. What steps have been and are currently being taken at EU level to ensure that domestic violence is detected and tackled across the EU at any early stage, so as to prevent escalation?

2. What provisions exist at EU level to provide support and assistance to individuals that have exited an abusive domestic environment?

3. How many women across the EU have been murdered in the past three years as a direct result of domestic violence?

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

The Commission's full commitment to ending violence against women (VAW), including domestic violence, is seen particularly in the Women's Charter, the strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) ([1]), the 'victims' package' and the work on the European Protection Order. Adoption of legislative measures when appropriate, fighting against discrimination and empowering women, improving knowledge and data collection, exchanging good practices, as well as raising awareness and funding are Commission's main priorities in order to prevent violence against women, protect victims and punish perpetrators.

The directive 2012/29/EU ([2]) will reinforce the assistance to victims by ensuring that women victims of violence benefit from common minimum standards of procedural rights during criminal proceedings, through a whole range of measures, including training to practitioners and support services. Moreover, the regulation no. 606/2013 on the mutual recognition of civil law protection measures ([3]) complements the directive on the European protection order ([4]) to ensure that victims of (in particular domestic) violence can still rely on restraint or protection orders issued against the perpetrator in their home country if they travel or move to another Member State.

There are no official and comparable data available at EU-level on VAW. In order to increase knowledge about the prevalence of this phenomenon, the Commission is exploring possibilities to exploit current Eurostat surveys and actively participates in the work of the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) ([5]).

In the first quarter of 2014, the FRA's survey on women's experiences of violence ([6]) will publish comparable figures on VAW.

([1]) COM(2010) 491 final. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF

([2]) Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA ('the Victims' Directive'). The transposition deadline is 16 November 2015 http://eurex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:315:0057:0073:EN:PDF

([3]) http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R0606

([4]) Directive 2011/99/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the European protection order, which is applicable in criminal matters . http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:338:0002:0018:EN:PDF

([5]) The EIGE activities are available at: http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/activities/Gender-based-violence

([6]) Information on the ongoing FRA survey can be found at: http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/fra-survey-womens-well-being-and-safety-europe

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009031/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Persecution of Christians in Sudan

In April 2013, Sudan's Minister of Guidance and Endowments, Mr Al-Fatih Taj El-sir, prohibited the issuance of licences for the building of new churches, claiming that since the secession of South Sudan worship had declined and more and more churches had been abandoned.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following questions:

1. What steps are being taken at EU level to promote the protection of fundamental rights in Sudan and South Sudan, including the freedoms of association, religion and speech?

2. What action has been taken at EU level to tackle the persecution of Christians in Sudan, which has in recent months seen the arrest, detention and deportation of many priests and pastors?

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

The HR/VP is deeply concerned about the situation of fundamental rights in Sudan, including increasing restrictions of the freedom of religion. The HR/VP has drawn attention to the difficult human rights situation in Sudan in a number of public statements that have been disseminated locally and internationally, and the EU refers to human rights in all public messages concerning Sudan. The protection of fundamental rights is also addressed regularly in contacts between EU representatives, in particular the EU Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan and the EU Delegation, with the Government of Sudan. Finally, the EU provides support to the promotion of human rights in Sudan through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

Since the beginning of 2013, against the background of increasing reports of harassment and discrimination against religious minorities in Sudan, in particular against Christian communities, learning centres and representatives, the EU has put a specific focus on the protection of the freedom of religion. In addition to silent diplomacy efforts in concrete cases, the EU has brought up the issue in several formal fora, including in the regular dialogue between EU Human Rights Counsellors and the Advisory Council on Human Rights (Ministry of Justice), as well as in the International Partners Forum on Human Rights (open to all diplomatic missions in Sudan, co-chaired by the EU and Canada). The latter meeting was particularly valuable in that it gave an opportunity to several African and Asian countries whose clerics and teachers in Christian schools are among the most concerned by non-renewal of residence permits, to publicly raise their concerns.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009032/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Child obesity

According to statistics compiled by doctors at Imperial College London, the number of children admitted to hospital due to obesity-related conditions has seen a fourfold increase in the past 10 years.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. What steps have been and are being taken at EU level to tackle obesity among children across the EU?

2. What provisions exist at EU level to raise awareness of healthy eating and exercise as means of preventing children across the EU from becoming overweight?

3. What, if any, EU funding will be directed toward reducing cases of child obesity throughout the Member States in the 2014-2020 programming period?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2013)

The European Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-007019/2013 ([1]).

In addition, the Commission's proposal for the 2014-2020 Health Programme ([2]) foresees activities on obesity and nutrition. It is currently not possible to foresee how much funding will be used on childhood obesity, as the proposals are still under discussion and the annual work plans and the indicative budgets have therefore not yet been developed.

The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([3]) will likely offer opportunities for research on obesity, nutrition and physical activity, among others, through the Societal Challenges 'Health, Demographic Change and Well-being' and 'Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research and the bio-economy'.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2013-007019&language=EN
([2]) COM 2012/0339 (COD).
([3]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0809:FIN:en:PDF

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009033/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Treatments for children with cancer

Cancer is the biggest killer disease among children. Unless new treatments are introduced, children will continue to die.

The five-year report of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to the Commission on the application of the Paediatric Regulation, dated 8 July 2012 highlighted the need for change with regard to the process for granting class waivers. However, this was not included in the subsequent report on 'Better Medicines for Children' (COM(2013)0443) from the Commission to Parliament, dated 24 June 2013.

1. Can the Commission explain why the class waiver issue was not included in its report to Parliament, when the EMA describes this as an opportunity 'to recommend medicines development in paediatric conditions with unmet needs'?

2. Will the Commission consider recommending that class waivers be based on a drug's mechanism of action rather than on disease type?

3. Given that paediatric oncology is an area the needs of which remain unmet to a large extent, what proposals will the Commission put forward to increase the availability of innovative treatments for children with cancer?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2013)

The conditions for granting class waivers are provided in Article 11 of Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006 ([1]). One of the three possible grounds to grant a waiver is evidence that the disease or condition for which the specific medicinal product or class is intended occurs only in adult populations.

Any decision by the EMA to grant new waivers or to modify or revoke granted waivers has to respect the grounds provided by Article 11.

The Commission's report on 'Better Medicines for children' acknowledges that criticism has been voiced as regards the impact of the regulation in the field of paediatric oncology. ([2]) However, at the same time around 10% of submitted paediatric investigation plans cover the therapeutic area of oncology.

Furthermore, given that all paediatric cancers are rare diseases, the Orphan Regulation ([3]) provides additional incentives to develop specific medicines for children with cancer.

The Seventh Framework Programme for Research ([4]) has funded research on childhood cancers to an amount of EUR 94 million, including risk factors, drug development and novel therapeutic strategies (e.g. off-patent medicines for paediatric cancer indications). Enhanced coordination efforts are developed through initiatives, such as ENCCA ([5]) (European Network for Cancer Research in Children and Adolescents), IRDiRC ([6]) (International Rare Diseases Research Consortium), and the creation of a pilot network of cooperation between paediatric oncology centres ([7]). The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 — The framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) ([8]) will offer opportunities to address research on childhood cancer.

([1]) OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 1.
([2]) COM(2013)443 final, Chapter 5.1.
([3]) Regulation (EC) No 141/2000, OJ L 18, 22.1.2000, p. 1.
([4]) http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/health/home_en.html
([5]) http://www.encca.eu/
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/health/medical-research/rare-diseases/irdirc_en.html
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/docs/wp2013_fr.pdf
([8]) http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009034/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Attacks on LGBTI organisations and defenders in Cameroon

The latest occurrence in a spate of attacks in Cameroon against LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) organisations and defenders in Cameroon is the brutal murder of the prominent LGBTI rights activist and journalist Eric Lembembe earlier this month. In June 2013 an arson attack targeted Alternatives-Cameroun, the oldest LGBTI organisation in the country. Michel Togué, a lawyer who has taken on several high-profile cases defending women and men charged under Cameroon's anti-gay laws, has also been targeted, as has the Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network). This follows on from death threats and violence against the lawyer Alice Nkom for defending people accused of gay-related offences — as mentioned in the resolution of Parliament which I co-sponsored on violence against lesbians and the rights of LGBTI persons in Africa (2012/2701(RSP)).

1. Can the VP/HR confirm that the EU delegation in Yaoundé is monitoring the situation regarding the safety of LGBTI/human rights defenders and is putting pressure on the Cameroonian authorities to ensure that they do all they can to bring those perpetrating violence to justice?

2. Will the VP/HR recommend to the Commission the suspension of aid delivery to Cameroon if the Cameroonian authorities are found to be negligent in their investigation and prosecution of the above acts of violence, especially given that the Cameroonian government is overtly homophobic and has prosecuted dozens of people for consensual same-sex conduct since 2010?

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

1. The EU Delegation in Yaoundé, working in close cooperation with the Embassies of EU Member States and other like-minded countries, has been actively following up this case in close contact with local civil society organisations and has explicitly urged the Cameroonian Authorities to investigate this hideous crime in a swift and thorough way to ensure that its authors are brought to justice.

2. The present homophobic climate in Cameroon is a matter of serious concern to the EU. The HR/VP has voiced her strong concern with this situation and issued statement on LGBTI matters in Cameroon already twice, most recently on 17 July ([1]).

At the same time the EU prefers to stay engaged with Cameroon, having a better leverage with its ongoing cooperation, where the EU strongly advocates, in the framework of Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement, further progress on human rights, including those of LGBTI persons, such as decriminalisation of sexual activity between consenting adults of the same sex.

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/FR/foraff/138125.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009036/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(24 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Energías renovables en el Estado español IV

En referencia al «Tercer Paquete de la Energía» (del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, julio de 2009), la Directiva 2004/8/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, la Directiva 2009/28/CE, la Directiva 2012/27/UE y la «Estrategia Europa 2020», se ve con preocupación la actual situación de parálisis del sector de energías renovables y cogeneración en el Estado español, por las últimas reformas del sector eléctrico (principalmente los RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012, RD-L 9/2013), la inseguridad jurídica que suponen las medidas retroactivas que afectan a la retribución de las instalaciones de energías renovables en funcionamiento y la pérdida de competitividad de la economía debido al incremento constante del precio de la energía, tanto para los ciudadanos como para la industria. En el Estado español se sufre una falta de claridad legislativa desde 2011, cuando se aprueba el Real Decreto 1699/2011 que, si bien regula la conexión a la red eléctrica de producción de energía eléctrica de pequeña potencia, deja pendiente (hasta un máximo de cuatro meses según el mismo RD) la elaboración de la regulación del suministro de energía eléctrica producida en el interior de la red de un consumidor para su propio consumo, modalidad que llamamos «autoconsumo». No disponer de la regulación de las condiciones administrativas y económicas llevaría al incumplimiento de las Directivas antes referidas, pondría en riesgo el logro de los objetivos de penetración de energías renovables y reducción de emisiones de CO2, lastraría la necesaria competitividad de la economía del Estado y el consumo de las familias y tendría un impacto muy negativo en las empresas y la industria del sector.

Hay consumidores que han decidido proveerse de vías alternativas, renunciando así a estar conectados a la red convencional. ¿Cree la Comisión que contradice alguna normativa europea el hecho de que exista una normativa española que obligue a los consumidores a estar conectados a la red eléctrica o de gas convencional?

¿No cree la Comisión que, para fomentar el ahorro energético a partir del autoconsumo eléctrico, sería conveniente que se fomentase el funcionamiento en isla, sin conexión directa a la red eléctrica convencional, disponiendo, eso sí, de una conexión de emergencia a la red convencional?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009037/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Energías renovables en el Estado español

En referencia al «Tercer Paquete de la Energía» (Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, julio 2009), a la Directiva 2004/8/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo (febrero 2004), la Directiva 2009/28/CE (abril 2009), la Directiva 2012/27/UE (octubre 2012) y la «Estrategia Europea 2020», se ve con preocupación la actual situación de parálisis del sector de energías renovables y cogeneración en el Estado español, a raíz de las últimas reformas del sector eléctrico (principalmente el RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012, RD-L 9/2013), la inseguridad jurídica que suponen las medidas retroactivas que afectan a la retribución de las instalaciones de energías renovables en funcionamiento y la pérdida de competitividad de la economía debido al incremento constante del precio de la energía, tanto para los ciudadanos como para la industria.

Es preocupante la deriva legislativa sobre un aspecto clave de la política energética europea: el autoconsumo de energía. En el Estado español se sufre una falta de claridad legislativa desde 2011, cuando se aprueba el Real Decreto 1699/2011, de 18 de noviembre de 2011, que, si bien regula la conexión a la red eléctrica de producción de energía eléctrica de pequeña potencia, deja pendiente (hasta un máximo de cuatro meses según el mismo RD) la elaboración de la regulación del suministro de energía eléctrica producida en el interior de la red de un consumidor para su propio consumo, modalidad que llamamos «autoconsumo». No disponer de la regulación de las condiciones administrativas y económicas llevaría al incumplimiento de las Directivas antes referidas, pondría en riesgo el logro de los objetivos de penetración de energías renovables y reducción de emisiones de CO2, lastraría la necesaria competitividad de la economía del Estado y el consumo de las familias y tendría un impacto muy negativo en las empresas e industria del sector.

¿Cree la Comisión que el hecho de aumentar el término de potencia de la factura eléctrica (fijo, independientemente del consumo) y a la vez reducir el término de energía (variable, en función del consumo) fomentaría el ahorro y la eficiencia energética?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009040/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Energías renovables en el Estado español

En referencia al «Tercer Paquete de la Energía» (Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, julio 2009), a la Directiva 2004/8/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo (febrero 2004), la Directiva 2009/28/CE (abril 2009), la Directiva 2012/27/UE (octubre 2012) y la «Estrategia Europea 2020», se ve con preocupación la actual situación de parálisis del sector de energías renovables y cogeneración en el Estado español, a raíz de las últimas reformas del sector eléctrico (principalmente el RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012, RD-L 9/2013), la inseguridad jurídica que suponen las medidas retroactivas que afectan a la retribución de las instalaciones de energías renovables en funcionamiento, la pérdida de puestos de trabajo vinculados a la industria relacionada con las energías limpias y la pérdida de competitividad de la economía debido al incremento constante del precio de la energía, tanto para los ciudadanos como para la industria.

Es preocupante la deriva legislativa sobre un aspecto clave de la política energética europea: el autoconsumo de energía. En el Estado español se sufre una falta de claridad legislativa desde 2011, cuando se aprueba el Real Decreto 1699/2011, de 18 de noviembre de 2011, que, si bien regula la conexión a la red eléctrica de producción de energía eléctrica de pequeña potencia, deja pendiente (hasta un máximo de cuatro meses según el mismo RD) la elaboración de la regulación del suministro de energía eléctrica producida en el interior de la red de un consumidor para su propio consumo, modalidad que llamamos «autoconsumo». No disponer de la regulación de las condiciones administrativas y económicas llevaría al incumplimiento de las Directivas antes referidas, pondría en riesgo el logro de los objetivos de penetración de energías renovables y reducción de emisiones de CO2, lastraría la necesaria competitividad de la economía del Estado y el consumo de las familias y tendría un impacto muy negativo en las empresas e industria del sector.

¿Cree la Comisión que se contradice alguna normativa europea el hecho que un Estado miembro no esté regulando el «autoconsumo» eléctrico?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009042/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Energías renovables en el Estado español

En referencia al «Tercer Paquete de la Energía» (Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, julio 2009), a la Directiva 2004/8/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo (febrero 2004), la Directiva 2009/28/CE (abril 2009), la Directiva 2012/27/UE (octubre 2012) y la «Estrategia Europea 2020», se ve con preocupación la actual situación de parálisis del sector de energías renovables y cogeneración en el Estado español, a raíz de las últimas reformas del sector eléctrico (principalmente el RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012, RD-L 9/2013), la inseguridad jurídica que suponen las medidas retroactivas que afectan a la retribución de las instalaciones de energías renovables en funcionamiento, la pérdida de puestos de trabajo vinculados a la industria relacionada con las energías limpias y la pérdida de competitividad de la economía debido al incremento constante del precio de la energía, tanto para los ciudadanos como para la industria.

Es preocupante la deriva legislativa sobre un aspecto clave de la política energética europea: el autoconsumo de energía. En el Estado español se sufre una falta de claridad legislativa desde 2011, cuando se aprueba el Real Decreto 1699/2011, de 18 de noviembre de 2011, que, si bien regula la conexión a la red eléctrica de producción de energía eléctrica de pequeña potencia, deja pendiente (hasta un máximo de cuatro meses según el mismo RD) la elaboración de la regulación del suministro de energía eléctrica producida en el interior de la red de un consumidor para su propio consumo, modalidad que llamamos «autoconsumo». No disponer de la regulación de las condiciones administrativas y económicas llevaría al incumplimiento de las Directivas antes referidas, pondría en riesgo el logro de los objetivos de penetración de energías renovables y reducción de emisiones de CO2, lastraría la necesaria competitividad de la economía del Estado y el consumo de las familias y tendría un impacto muy negativo en las empresas e industria del sector.

¿Cree la Comisión que contradice alguna normativa europea el hecho que se pongan peajes a las instalaciones de «autoconsumo» eléctrico, aunque esta instalación disponga de elementos que impidan evacuar a la red eléctrica los excedentes que pueda haber, como cortafuegos para no afectar a la red eléctrica?

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009044/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Energías renovables en el Estado español

En referencia al «Tercer Paquete de la Energía» (Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, julio 2009), a la Directiva 2004/8/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo (febrero 2004), la Directiva 2009/28/CE (abril 2009), la Directiva 2012/27/UE (octubre 2012) y la «Estrategia Europea 2020», se ve con preocupación la actual situación de parálisis del sector de energías renovables y cogeneración en el Estado español, a raíz de las últimas reformas del sector eléctrico (principalmente el RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012, RD-L 9/2013), la inseguridad jurídica que suponen las medidas retroactivas que afectan a la retribución de las instalaciones de energías renovables en funcionamiento, la pérdida de puestos de trabajo vinculados a la industria relacionada con las energías limpias y la pérdida de competitividad de la economía debido al incremento constante del precio de la energía, tanto para los ciudadanos como para la industria.

Es preocupante la deriva legislativa sobre un aspecto clave de la política energética europea: el autoconsumo de energía. En el Estado español se sufre una falta de claridad legislativa desde 2011, cuando se aprueba el Real Decreto 1699/2011, de 18 de noviembre de 2011, que, si bien regula la conexión a la red eléctrica de producción de energía eléctrica de pequeña potencia, deja pendiente (hasta un máximo de cuatro meses según el mismo RD) la elaboración de la regulación del suministro de energía eléctrica producida en el interior de la red de un consumidor para su propio consumo, modalidad que llamamos «autoconsumo». No disponer de la regulación de las condiciones administrativas y económicas llevaría al incumplimiento de las Directivas antes referidas, pondría en riesgo el logro de los objetivos de penetración de energías renovables y reducción de emisiones de CO2, lastraría la necesaria competitividad de la economía del Estado y el consumo de las familias y tendría un impacto muy negativo en las empresas e industria del sector.

¿Cree la Comisión que el sistema eléctrico español, que el invierno pasado tuvo que parar la construcción de parques eólicos y el 20 % de la generación eléctrica generada en centrales nucleares, no necesita sistemas de control de curva de demanda, como, por ejemplo, sistemas de almacenaje de electricidad doméstica para utilizar en «horas valle»?

Respuesta conjunta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de octubre de 2013)

La Comisión remite a Su Señoría a la respuesta dada a la pregunta escrita E-009038/2013.

Si bien la Comisión se encuentra actualmente analizando la compatibilidad de las reformas en el sector de la energía español con el Derecho de la UE, comprendemos la preocupación manifestada por Su Señoría en cuanto a las posibles repercusiones negativas de una serie de medidas presentadas sobre las inversiones en energías renovables y eficiencia energética en España.

Como destacó recientemente la Comisión en su Comunicación sobre el mercado interior de la energía ([1]), la respuesta a la demanda, tan importante como la eficiencia energética, es una herramienta útil para influir sobre la curva de demanda de electricidad mediante la modulación de la demanda de energía en función de la situación del mercado, evitando de este modo picos de demanda costosos. La participación activa de los consumidores es necesaria para que los programas de respuesta a la demanda tengan éxito y podría permitir a los consumidores ahorrar dinero a la vez que aumentaría la eficacia y estabilidad del sistema eléctrico. Estos efectos positivos pueden verse realmente más reforzados si las medidas de respuesta a la demanda integran el uso del almacenamiento de energía.

La legislación de la UE sobre eficiencia energética ([2]) exige que la facturación de energía realizada por los distribuidores de energía, operadores de sistemas de distribución y empresas minoristas de venta de energía se base en el consumo real de energía, siempre y cuando esto sea técnicamente posible y se pueda justificar desde el punto de vista económico. Esta circunstancia no excluye la posibilidad de que las empresas de energía introduzcan determinados importes fijos, por ejemplo para reflejar los costes de mantenimiento de la conexión a la red de los usuarios finales. No obstante, esto se aplica a todos los usuarios finales, no únicamente a aquellos con un bajo consumo.

([1]) Véase COM(2012) 663 final. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0663:EN:NOT
([2]) Directivas 2006/32/CE y 2012/12/UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009036/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(24 July 2013)

Subject: Renewable energy in Spain

Following the publication of the third energy package (of the European Parliament and of the Council, July 2009), Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directive 2009/28/EC, Directive 2012/27/EU and the Europe 2020 strategy, the current deadlock in Spain's renewable energy and cogeneration sector is a cause for concern. The paralysis is the result of the latest electricity sector reforms (primarily RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012 and RD-L 9/2013), the legal uncertainty generated by retroactive measures affecting reimbursements for existing renewable energy installations, and a loss of competitiveness resulting from ever-increasing energy bills both for individuals and for industry. The law has been unclear in Spain since 2011, when Royal Decree 1699/2011 was approved. Although the decree regulates the connection to the grid of small-scale electricity producers, the matter of drawing up rules to govern the use of electricity produced on the grid by individuals for their own consumption, known as 'self-supply', is still unresolved (even though the decree says it should have been done within four months). Failing to draw up rules governing the administrative and economic requirements would lead to breaches of the aforementioned directives, undermine Spain's chances of meeting its renewable energy quotas and CO_2 emissions reductions objectives, hinder the country's competitiveness, put a strain on household energy consumption, and have serious repercussions for businesses and industry in the sector.

Some consumers have opted for alternative means of energy supply, which do not require them to be connected to the standard grid. In the Commission's view, does the fact that Spain requires consumers to be connected to the standard electricity grid or gas network run counter to EC law?

With a view to saving energy, does it not agree that people should be encouraged to produce electricity via the self-supply method without the need for a direct connection (only an emergency one) to the standard electricity grid?

Question for written answer E-009037/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Renewable energies in Spain

Bearing in mind the third energy package (European Council and Parliament, July 2009), Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2004), Directive 2009/28/EC (April 2009), Directive 2012/27/EU (October 2012) and the Europe 2020 strategy, it is extremely worrying to note the current state of paralysis in the Spanish renewable energy and cogeneration sector following recent reforms to the electricity sector (notably royal decree-laws 1/2012, 13/2012 and 9/2013), the legal uncertainty caused by retroactive measures affecting payments to functioning renewable energy facilities and the loss in competitiveness of the economy due to constant increases in energy prices both for the public and the industry.

It is worrying to note this legislative drift on such a key aspect of European energy policy as own consumption of energy. There has been a lack of legal clarity in Spain since 2011, when Royal Decree 1699/2011, of 18 November 2011, was passed. Although this law regulates connection to small-scale electric energy production grids, it leaves unresolved (for a period of up to four months, according to the decree itself) the drafting of rules on the supply of electricity produced by a consumer's grid for their own use, which is known as own consumption. Without any regulation of the administrative and economic terms, the abovementioned directives are likely to be infringed, it will become difficult to achieve the goals of increasing renewable energy supply and reducing CO_2 emissions, families' domestic consumption and the necessary competitiveness of the national economy will be adversely affected and the impact on businesses and industries in the sector will be very harsh.

Does the Commission consider that increasing power charges (which are fixed, regardless of consumption) while at the same time reducing energy charges (which vary according to consumption) is likely to encourage energy saving and efficiency?

Question for written answer E-009040/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Renewable energies in Spain

Bearing in mind the third energy package (European Council and Parliament, July 2009), Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2004), Directive 2009/28/EC (April 2009), Directive 2012/27/EU (October 2012) and the Europe 2020 strategy, it is extremely worrying to note the current state of paralysis in the Spanish renewable energy and cogeneration sector following recent reforms to the electricity sector (notably royal decree-laws 1/2012, 13/2012 and 9/2013), the legal uncertainty caused by retroactive measures affecting payments to functioning renewable energy facilities, the loss of jobs linked to clean energy production and the decreasing competitiveness of the economy due to constant rises in energy prices for both the public and the industry.

It is worrying to note this legislative drift on such a key aspect of European energy policy as own consumption of energy. There has been a lack of legal clarity in Spain since 2011, when Royal Decree 1699/2011, of 18 November 2011, was passed. Although this law regulates connection to small-scale electric energy production grids, it leaves unresolved (for a period of up to four months, according to the decree itself) the drafting of rules on the supply of electricity produced by a consumer's grid for their own use, which is known as own consumption. Without any regulation of the administrative and economic terms, the abovementioned directives are likely to be infringed, it will become difficult to achieve the goals of increasing renewable energy supply and reducing CO_2 emissions, families' domestic consumption and the necessary competitiveness of the national economy will be adversely affected and the impact on businesses and industries in the sector will be very harsh.

Does the Commission consider it to be an infringement of European law for a Member State to fail to regulate own consumption of electricity?

Question for written answer E-009042/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Renewable energies in Spain

Bearing in mind the third energy package (European Council and Parliament, July 2009), Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2004), Directive 2009/28/EC (April 2009), Directive 2012/27/EU (October 2012) and the Europe 2020 strategy, it is extremely worrying to note the current state of paralysis in the Spanish renewable energy and cogeneration sector following recent reforms to the electricity sector (notably royal decree-laws 1/2012, 13/2012 and 9/2013), the legal uncertainty caused by retroactive measures affecting payments to functioning renewable energy facilities, the loss of jobs linked to clean energy production and the decreasing competitiveness of the economy due to constant rises in energy prices for both the public and the industry.

It is worrying to note this legislative drift on such a key aspect of European energy policy as own consumption of energy. There has been a lack of legal clarity in Spain since 2011, when Royal Decree 1699/2011, of 18 November 2011, was passed. Although this law regulates connection to small-scale electric energy production grids, it leaves unresolved (for a period of up to four months, according to the decree itself) the drafting of rules on the supply of electricity produced by a consumer's grid for their own use, which is known as own consumption. Without any regulation of the administrative and economic terms, the abovementioned directives are likely to be infringed, it will become difficult to achieve the goals of increasing renewable energy supply and reducing CO_2 emissions, families' domestic consumption and the necessary competitiveness of the national economy will be adversely affected and the impact on businesses and industries in the sector will be very harsh.

Does the Commission consider that any European law is being infringed by the levying of charges on electricity generating plants destined for own consumption, even when such installations are equipped with firebreak devices to prevent any excess energy being fed into the national grid, to ensure that it is not affected?

Question for written answer E-009044/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Renewable energies in Spain

Bearing in mind the third energy package (European Council and Parliament, July 2009), Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2004), Directive 2009/28/EC (April 2009), Directive 2012/27/EU (October 2012) and the Europe 2020 strategy, it is extremely worrying to note the current state of paralysis in the Spanish renewable energy and cogeneration sector following recent reforms to the electricity sector (notably royal decree-laws 1/2012, 13/2012 and 9/2013), the legal uncertainty caused by retroactive measures affecting payments to functioning renewable energy facilities, the loss of jobs linked to clean energy production and the decreasing competitiveness of the economy due to constant rises in energy prices for both the public and the industry.

It is worrying to note this legislative drift on such a key aspect of European energy policy as own consumption of energy. There has been a lack of legal clarity in Spain since 2011, when Royal Decree 1699/2011, of 18 November 2011, was passed. Although this law regulates connection to small-scale electric energy production grids, it leaves unresolved (for a period of up to four months, according to the decree itself) the drafting of rules on the supply of electricity produced by a consumer's grid for their own use, which is known as own consumption. Without any regulation of the administrative and economic terms, the abovementioned directives are likely to be infringed, it will become difficult to achieve the goals of increasing renewable energy supply and reducing CO_2 emissions, families' domestic consumption and the necessary competitiveness of the national economy will be adversely affected and the impact on businesses and industries in the sector will be very harsh.

Does the Commission consider that the Spanish electrical system, which last winter had to halt the construction of wind farms and 20% of electricity generation in its nuclear power stations, has no need of systems to control the demand curve, including systems to store domestic energy for use during off-peak periods?

Joint answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 October 2013)

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its reply to Written Question E-009038/2013.

While the Commission is currently analysing the compatibility of the Spanish power sector reforms with EC law, we understand the concerns expressed by the Honourable Member about potential negative impacts of a number of measures tabled on investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency in Spain.

As the Commission recently highlighted in its communication on the Internal Energy Market ([1]), demand response, equally important as energy efficiency, is a useful tool to influence the electricity demand curve by modulating energy demand according to the situation on the market, thus avoiding costly peaks of demand. Active consumers' participation is necessary for successful demand response programmes and could allow consumers to save money while increasing the efficiency and stability of the electricity system. These positive effects can indeed be further enhanced if demand response measures integrate the use of energy storage.

The EU legislation on energy efficiency ([2]) requires that energy billing performed by energy distributors, distribution system operators and retail energy sales companies is based on actual energy consumption, where this is technically possible and economically justified. This does not exclude a possibility for energy companies to introduce certain fixed charges e.g. to reflect the costs of the maintenance of the grid connection for the final customers. However, this applies to all final customers, not just those with low consumption.

([1]) See COM(2012) 663 final.
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0663:EN:NOT
([2]) Directives 2006/32/EC and 2012/12/EU.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009038/13
a la Comisión
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: Energías renovables en el Estado español

En referencia al «Tercer Paquete de la Energía» (Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, julio 2009), a la Directiva 2004/8/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo (febrero 2004), la Directiva 2009/28/CE (abril 2009), la Directiva 2012/27/UE (octubre 2012) y la «Estrategia Europea 2020», se ve con preocupación la actual situación de parálisis del sector de energías renovables y cogeneración en el Estado español, a raíz de las últimas reformas del sector eléctrico (principalmente el RD-L 1/2012, RD-L 13/2012, RD-L 9/2013), la inseguridad jurídica que suponen las medidas retroactivas que afectan a la retribución de las instalaciones de energías renovables en funcionamiento y la pérdida de competitividad de la economía debido al incremento constante del precio de la energía, tanto para los ciudadanos como para la industria.

Es preocupante la deriva legislativa sobre un aspecto clave de la política energética europea: el autoconsumo de energía. En el Estado español se sufre una falta de claridad legislativa desde 2011, cuando se aprueba el Real Decreto 1699/2011, de 18 de noviembre de 2011, que, si bien regula la conexión a la red eléctrica de producción de energía eléctrica de pequeña potencia, deja pendiente (hasta un máximo de cuatro meses según el mismo RD) la elaboración de la regulación del suministro de energía eléctrica producida en el interior de la red de un consumidor para su propio consumo, modalidad que llamamos «autoconsumo». No disponer de la regulación de las condiciones administrativas y económicas llevaría al incumplimiento de las Directivas antes referidas, pondría en riesgo el logro de los objetivos de penetración de energías renovables y reducción de emisiones de CO_2, lastraría la necesaria competitividad de la economía del Estado y el consumo de las familias y tendría un impacto muy negativo en las empresas e industria del sector.

¿Cree la Comisión que el hecho de perjudicar el autoconsumo aplicando un «peaje de soporte» por la energía consumida, aunque no se inyecte directamente a la red convencional, fomentaría el ahorro y la eficiencia energética? ¿No cree la Comisión que este «peaje de soporte» sería necesario aplicarlo cuando los costes del sistema eléctrico (de transporte, distribución y generación) tendrían que ser pagados con el término de potencia fijo y la energía consumida de la red?

Respuesta del Sr. Oettinger en nombre de la Comisión
(11 de septiembre de 2013)

De acuerdo con la Directiva 2009/28/CE sobre fuentes de energía renovables ([1]), los Estados miembros tienen la responsabilidad y la obligación de establecer medidas de diseño eficiente para alcanzar el objetivo de 2020 y garantizar que la cuota de energía renovable se mantenga al menos al nivel de la trayectoria indicativa hacia el objetivo de 2020. En 2011, el Estado español se ajustaba a esa trayectoria ([2]).

Además, la Comisión es consciente de los recientes acontecimientos producidos en el sector eléctrico del Estado español y de la preocupación por el impacto de los cambios introducidos en el marco de apoyo, en particular para las instalaciones existentes, sobre el clima de inversiones en el sector de las energías renovables. En sus conversaciones con el Gobierno español, la Comisión ha manifestado en repetidas ocasiones la necesidad de garantizar que las reformas estructurales necesarias no pongan en peligro el desarrollo futuro de las energías renovables y la consecución del objetivo 2020. En este contexto, el fomento del autoconsumo de electricidad de producción nacional puede constituir un instrumento eficaz para promover proyectos de fuentes de energía renovables (FER) a pequeña escala. No obstante, el Derecho de la UE no incluye disposiciones específicas sobre el tratamiento del autoconsumo en la aplicación de gravámenes más allá de la prohibición general de discriminar la electricidad de fuentes de energía renovables a la hora de establecer las tarifas de transporte y distribución ([3]).

([1]) Directiva 2009/28/CE del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 23 de abril de 2009, relativa al fomento del uso de energía procedente de fuentes renovables y por la que se modifican y se derogan las Directivas 2001/77/CE y 2003/30/CE, DO L 140 de 5.6.2009.

([2]) Por lo que respecta al Estado español, esa trayectoria incluye el objetivo intermedio del 11 % en 2011/2012. En 2011, la cuota de energías renovables en el consumo energético final fue del 15 %.

([3]) Artículo 16, apartado 7, de la Directiva 2009/28/CE, véase más arriba.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009038/13
to the Commission
Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Renewable energies in Spain

Bearing in mind the third energy package (European Council and Parliament, July 2009), Directive 2004/8/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (February 2004), Directive 2009/28/EC (April 2009), Directive 2012/27/EU (October 2012) and the Europe 2020 strategy, it is extremely worrying to note the current state of paralysis in the Spanish renewable energy and cogeneration sector following recent reforms to the electricity sector (notably royal decree-laws 1/2012, 13/2012 and 9/2013), the legal uncertainty caused by retroactive measures affecting payments to functioning renewable energy facilities and the loss in competitiveness of the economy due to constant increases in energy prices both for the public and the industry.

It is worrying to note this legislative drift on such a key aspect of European energy policy as own consumption of energy. There has been a lack of legal clarity in Spain since 2011, when Royal Decree 1699/2011, of 18 November 2011, was passed. Although this law regulates connection to small-scale electric energy production grids, it leaves unresolved (for a period of up to four months, according to the decree itself) the drafting of rules on the supply of electricity produced by a consumer's grid for their own use, which is known as own consumption. Without any regulation of the administrative and economic terms, the abovementioned directives are likely to be infringed, it will become difficult to achieve the goals of increasing renewable energy supply and reducing CO_2 emissions, families' domestic consumption and the necessary competitiveness of the national economy will be adversely affected and the impact on businesses and industries in the sector will be very harsh.

Does the Commission believe that penalising own consumption by levying an additional charge on energy consumed, even where it is not being directly fed into the conventional grid, is likely to encourage energy saving and efficiency? Does the Commission not consider that this additional charge should be applied in cases where the costs of the electricity system (transportation, distribution and generation) need to be covered by the fixed power charge and energy consumption from the grid?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(11 September 2013)

Under the Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC ([1]), it is the responsibility and obligation of the Member States to have in place efficiently designed measures to reach the 2020 target and to ensure that the share of renewable energy remains at least at the level of the indicative trajectory towards the 2020 target. In 2011, Spain was on track as regards this trajectory ([2]).

At the same time, the Commission is aware of recent developments in the electricity sector in Spain and concerns about the impact of changes to the support framework, including for existing installations, on the investment climate in the renewable energy sector. In its dialogue with the Spanish Government, the Commission has repeatedly stressed the need to ensure that the necessary structural reforms do not put at risk the further development of renewable energy and the achievement of the 2020 target. In this context promoting own consumption of domestically produced electricity of renewable sources can be an effective instrument to promote smaller scale Renewable Energy Sources (RES) projects. However, EC law does not contain any specific provisions on the treatment of own consumption when levying charges beyond the general prohibition to discriminate against electricity from renewable energy sources when setting transmission and distribution tariffs ([3]).

([1]) Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC, OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.

([2]) For Spain, this trajectory includes the interim target of 11% in 2011/2012. In 2011, the renewable energy share in final energy consumption in Spain was 15%.

([3]) Article 16(7) of Directive 2009/28/EC, cf. above.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-009045/13
an die Kommission
Bernd Posselt (PPE)
(25. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Kroatische Gerichtsverfahren gegen den früheren Ministerpräsidenten Sanader

Die bisherigen Gerichtsverfahren gegen den früheren Ministerpräsidenten Sanader in Kroatien waren weder fair noch frei, da sie in einer Atmosphäre der Einschüchterung, auf der Grundlage von unglaubwürdigen Zeugenaussagen, unter willkürlicher Ausklammerung von Entlastungszeugen der Verteidigung, bei medialer Vorverurteilung und anderen schweren Mängeln stattfanden. Hinzu kommt, dass Urteile acht Monate, nachdem sie ergangen sind, noch nicht schriftlich ausgefertigt sind, obwohl dies laut kroatischem Gesetz binnen eines Monats zu geschehen hat, so dass jeder Einspruch unmöglich war, obwohl Sanader seitdem im Gefängnis sitzt.

Ist die Kommission über diese schwerwiegenden Mängel im Justizsystem, gerade auch in diesem Fall, informiert?

Hat Kroatien die europäischen Richtlinien im Rahmen der justiziellen Zusammenarbeit umgesetzt und ist das beschriebene Verfahren mit EU-Recht vereinbar?

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

Die EU hat sich vor kurzem auf mehrere Richtlinien über gemeinsame Mindestverfahrensrechte in Strafverfahren verständigt, nämlich auf die Richtlinie über das Recht auf Dolmetschleistungen und Übersetzungen in Strafverfahren ([1]), die Richtlinie über das Recht auf Belehrung und Unterrichtung in Strafverfahren ([2]) und eine Richtlinie zum Recht auf Rechtsbeistand in Strafverfahren ([3]). Wie alle anderen Mitgliedstaaten ist Kroatien verpflichtet, die gemeinsamen Mindestverfahrensrechte in nationales Recht umzusetzen. Die Kommission wird die Umsetzung dieser Richtlinien durch Kroatien genau verfolgen.

([1]) ABl. L 280 vom 26.10.2010.
([2]) ABl. L 142 vom 1.6.2012.
([3]) Im Mai 2013 wurde auf der Grundlage des unter folgendem Link abrufbaren Textes eine politische Einigung erzielt: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/libe/dv/p7_am178cons_antonescu_/p7_am178cons_antonescu_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009045/13
to the Commission
Bernd Posselt (PPE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Trials of former Croatian Prime Minister Sanader

The trials of former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader held to date in Croatia have been neither fair nor free. They have been conducted in an atmosphere of intimidation and on the basis of unreliable testimony, witnesses for the defence have been arbitrarily excluded, and there has been a backdrop of media prejudice, amongst other serious shortcomings. In addition, sentences issued eight months ago have still not been formalised in writing, although this should be done within one month under Croatian law. As a result, there has been no possibility to lodge an appeal, even though Sanader has been sitting in prison ever since.

Has the Commission been informed about these serious shortcomings in the judicial system, specifically in this case?

Has Croatia implemented the EU judicial cooperation directives, and are the proceedings described compatible with EC law?

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

The EU recently agreed on several Directives on common minimum procedural rights in criminal proceedings, namely the directives on interpretation and translation ([1]), on the right to information about rights ([2]) and on the right of access to a lawyer ([3]). Like all other Member States, Croatia will have to transpose these common minimum standards into their national law. The Commission will closely monitor the transposition of those instruments by Croatia.

([1]) OJ L 280, 26.10.2010.
([2]) OJ L 142, 1.6.2012.
([3]) Political agreement was reached in May 2013 on the basis of the text at the following link: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/libe/dv/p7_am178cons_antonescu_/p7_am178cons_antonescu_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009046/13
to the Commission
Gay Mitchell (PPE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Unlocking the consumer protection market

It has been argued that a new form of consumer protection debt waiver would unlock the consumer protection market and hugely increase the flow of credit into the economy.

ResPublica, a UK-based independent think-tank, contends that banks should be forced to insure loans to SMEs in order to guard against bankruptcies and encourage lending. The think-tank further believes that consumer lending should also be protected with insurance. Various studies in the EU and the US have highlighted how credit contraction has impacted on GDP growth — in the US, a 4% credit contraction has led to a fall in GDP of 0.6%, and, in the EU, a 5% contraction has led to a reduction of 1.6%.

Has the Commission ever considered the impact of an EU-wide form of consumer protection debt waiver, such as insurance, on our economy, and will it set out its position on the matter?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The insurance of consumer lending (except for mortgages) tends to be rather limited in terms of market size across the EU. The Commission is not aware of any public scheme in the Member States encouraging such insurance with the objective of increasing consumer lending. The Commission has no information on the impact on the economy of an EU-wide form of consumer protection debt waiver and is not planning initiatives in this respect in close future.

If the creditor makes any insurance compulsory for obtaining consumer credit, he is obliged by the directive 2008/48/EC [1] to include the cost of this insurance in the total cost of the credit and in the Annual Percentage Rate of charge in advertisements and pre-contractual information.

With regards to SMEs, the Commission is addressing their difficult access to credit through a variety of financial instruments. The loan guarantee facility of the current CIP programme 2007-2013 is made available to SMEs through financial intermediaries, such as banks and mutual guarantee societies. For the period 2014-2020, the Commission has put forward proposals for a new generation of financial instruments. The new COSME programme will include a loan guarantee facility which will consist of:

(a) guarantees for debt financing [2], which shall reduce the particular difficulties that viable SMEs face in accessing finance either due to their perceived high risk or their lack of sufficient available collateral;

(b) securitisation of SME debt finance portfolios, which shall mobilise additional debt financing for SMEs under appropriate risk-sharing arrangements with the targeted institutions.

This facility will complement the one included in the new Horizon 2020 programme, which will support research and innovation.

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[1] OJ L133 of 22.5.2008.
[2] including via subordinated and participating loans, leasing, or bank guarantees.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009047/13
to the Commission
Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Follow up on Written Question E-002862/2013

The Veterinary Medicinal Products Directive (2001/82/EC), as amended lays down a series of controls on the manufacture, authorisation, marketing, distribution and post-authorisation surveillance of veterinary medicines applicable in all Member States.

In 2010 the Commission launched a public consultation on the legal framework for veterinary medicinal products. The stated aim of this public consultation was to provide sufficient information for the production of an impact assessment relating to a revision of the legal framework for veterinary medicinal products.

Can the Commission state when the impact assessment relating to a revision of the legal framework for veterinary medicinal products will be published?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

All impact assessments are published once the Commission has adopted the related proposals. The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that it aims to adopt the proposal on the revision of veterinary medicines Directive by the end of 2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009048/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Απόφαση του ελληνικού δικαστηρίου κατά της Ελληνικής Επιτροπής Ανταγωνισμού

Με απόφασή του το Διοικητικό Εφετείο Αθηνών υποχρεώνει την Ελληνική Επιτροπή Ανταγωνισμού να καταβάλει το ποσό των 500 000 ευρώ, ως αποζημίωση σε επιχείρηση, επειδή αδικαιολόγητα καθυστερούσε να διερευνήσει συγκεκριμένη καταγγελία για την ύπαρξη καρτέλ στην αγορά του ξενόγλωσσου βιβλίου στην Ελλάδα.

Με δεδομένο ότι γινόμαστε συνεχώς δέκτες παραπόνων για καθυστερήσεις στις διαδικασίες διερεύνησης υποθέσεων που έχει αναλάβει η Ελληνική Επιτροπή Ανταγωνισμού, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Υπάρχει προηγούμενο για χώρα της ΕΕ, εθνικό δικαστήριο να έχει επιβάλει αποζημίωση για αδικαιολόγητη καθυστέρηση στην εκδίκαση υποθέσεων; Ποιες είναι οι σχετικές βέλτιστες πρακτικές τις οποίες θα πρότεινε η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή να δεσμεύονται ότι θα εφαρμόσουν οι Εθνικές Αρχές Ανταγωνισμού;

— Έχει πληροφορίες για το ποιες είναι οι υποθέσεις που χειρίζεται η Ελληνική Επιτροπή Ανταγωνισμού και για τις οποίες έχει ξεπεραστεί το εύλογο διάστημα διερεύνησης; Υπάρχει σχετικός κατάλογος;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι η απόφαση στην οποία αναφέρεται το Αξιότιμο Μέλος δεν είναι οριστική και ότι η Ελληνική Αρχή Ανταγωνισμού έχει ανακοινώσει την πρόθεσή της να προσβάλει την απόφαση ([1]). Περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες σχετικά με το θέμα αυτό παρέχονται στις απαντήσεις της Επιτροπής στις αναφορές 130/2007 και 338/2012.

Όσον αφορά τις επιπτώσεις παρόμοιων ενεργειών στην ΕΕ, τα κράτη μέλη δεν είναι υποχρεωμένα να ενημερώνουν την Επιτροπή με συστηματικό τρόπο.

Σε γενικές γραμμές, υπενθυμίζεται ότι η Επιτροπή και οι εθνικές αρχές ανταγωνισμού (ΕΑΑ) έχουν παράλληλες αρμοδιότητες όσον αφορά την εφαρμογή των κανόνων ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ (άρθρα 101 και 102 της ΣΛΕΕ) και ότι συνεργάζονται στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Δικτύου Ανταγωνισμού (ΕΔΑ), με στόχο να διασφαλισθεί η αποτελεσματική και συνεκτική εφαρμογή των κανόνων αυτών.

Ωστόσο, οι διαδικασίες των εθνικών αρχών ανταγωνισμού και οι σχετικές δυνατότητες νομικής προστασίας διέπονται από το δίκαιο του οικείου κράτους μέλους. Η εφαρμογή των εν λόγω εθνικών διατάξεων πρέπει να συμβιβάζεται με τις γενικές αρχές του δικαίου της ΕΕ, όπως την αρχή της αποτελεσματικότητας. Προς τούτο, το εθνικό πλαίσιο δεν πρέπει να καθιστά την επιβολή των κανόνων ανταγωνισμού της ΕΕ υπερβολικά δυσχερή ή πρακτικώς αδύνατη.

Η Επιτροπή σημειώνει ότι έχει δοθεί στην Ελληνική Αρχή Ανταγωνισμού το δικαίωμα να καθορίζει τις προτεραιότητές της βάσει του ελληνικού Νόμου 3959/2011 περί προστασίας του ελεύθερου ανταγωνισμού.

([1]) Δελτίο Τύπου της Αρχής (στην ελληνική γλώσσα) της 10ης Ιουλίου 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009048/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Decision by Greek court against Hellenic Competition Commission

The Athens Administrative Court of Appeal has ordered the Hellenic Competition Commission to pay the sum of EUR 500 000 in compensation to a company, because it delayed in investigating complaints of a cartel on the foreign language book market in Greece without good cause.

In view of the fact that we are constantly hearing reports of delays in investigations undertaken by the Hellenic Competition Commission, will the Commission say:

— Is there a precedent in an EU Member State of a national court ordering compensation for unwarranted delays in hearing cases? What are the best practices which the European Commission would propose that the national competition authorities should undertake to apply.

— Does it have information about which cases the Hellenic Competition Commission is handling and which have exceeded a reasonable investigation period? Is there a list?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission understands that the judgment referred to by the Honourable Member is not final and that the Greek competition authority has announced its intention to appeal ([1]). Additional detail about the subject can be found in the Commission's replies to Petitions 130/2007 and 338/2012.

Regarding the incidence of similar actions in the EU, Member States are not obliged to inform the Commission in a systematic manner.

In general terms, it is recalled that the Commission and the national competition authorities (NCAs) have parallel competences to apply the EU competition rules (Articles 101 and 102 TFEU) and that they cooperate in the European Competition Network (ECN) with a view to ensure effective and coherent application of these rules.

Notwithstanding, procedures of NCAs and related possibilities for legal redress are governed by the laws of the respective Member State. The application of such national provisions must be compatible with general principles of EC law, which include the principle of effectiveness. In this regard, the national framework must not make enforcement of the EU competition rules excessively difficult or practically impossible.

The Commission notes that the Greek Competition Authority has been given the right to set its priorities by virtue of Greek Law 3959/2011 on the Protection of Free Competition.

([1]) Press release of the authority (in Greek) of 10 July 2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009049/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Προκλητικές δηλώσεις του διευθυντή της Eurostat για την ελληνική δικαιοσύνη

Ο διευθυντής της Ευρωπαϊκής Στατιστικής Υπηρεσίας (Eurostat) κ. Radermacher, σε συνέντευξή του στη βελγική εφημερίδα Le Soir για το Ελληνικό Στατιστικό Σύστημα, χαρακτήρισε ως «κόλαση του Δάντη» τις δικαστικές έρευνες που διεξάγονται από την ελληνική δικαιοσύνη σε βάρος του προέδρου της Ελληνικής Στατιστικής Αρχής (ΕΛΣΤΑΤ) κ. Γεωργίου, για το σκάνδαλο της παραποίησης των ελληνικών στατιστικών στοιχείων. Στην ίδια συνέντευξη ο διευθυντής της Eurostat αναφέρεται στα συναλλαγματικά swaps της Ελλάδας, κατηγορώντας τις ελληνικές αρχές ότι απέκρυπταν επί μακρόν τα επίμαχα στοιχεία, την ίδια στιγμή που οι έρευνες της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας για τη χρήση των συναλλαγματικών swaps από τα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ παραμένει, μέχρι και σήμερα, κρυφή.

Με δεδομένο ότι οι ανακριτικές διαδικασίες για το σκάνδαλο παραποίησης των ελληνικών στατιστικών στοιχείων βρίσκονται σε εξέλιξη, και ότι ο διευθυντής της Eurostat όταν κλήθηκε από την Εξεταστική Επιτροπή της Βουλής σχετικά με το σκάνδαλο της παραποίησης των στατιστικών στοιχείων, αρνήθηκε να παραστεί ενώπιόν της ο ίδιος, αποστέλλοντας μόνο ένα υπόμνημα, χωρίς να υπάρχει η δυνατότητα να απαντήσει σε ερωτήσεις ελλήνων βουλευτών, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Αντιλαμβάνεται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, υπό την εποπτεία της οποίας λειτουργεί η Eurostat, ότι με τη συνέντευξή του ο κ. Radermacher παρεμβαίνει στις διαδικασίες της ελληνικής δικαιοσύνης, χαρακτηρίζοντάς τες ως «κόλαση του Δάντη»; Πώς σχολιάζει αυτές τις αναφορές;

— Ποια διαδικασία θα ακολουθηθεί από την Επιτροπή στην περίπτωση που κληθεί ο κ. Radermacher, ή άλλος υπάλληλός της, να καταθέσει στις ανακριτικές και δικαστικές ελληνικές αρχές για την υπόθεση της παραποίησης των στατιστικών στοιχείων; Θα απαντήσει και πάλι με υπόμνημα;

— Έχουν υπόψη τους η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και η Eurostat τα πορίσματα των ερευνών της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας σχετικά με τη χρήση των swaps; Εάν ναι, μπορούν να τα δώσουν στη δημοσιότητα για να αποκαλυφθεί όλο το εύρος της υπόθεσης των swaps, τόσο για την Ελλάδα, όσο και για τις άλλες χώρες;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. Η Επιτροπή δεν θεωρεί ότι η συνέντευξη του κ. Radermacher συνιστά παρέμβαση στο ελληνικό δικαστικό σύστημα. Τα στοιχεία που αναφέρονται και οι απόψεις που εκφράζονται στην εν λόγω συνέντευξη δεν υπαγορεύουν ούτε περιορίζουν τις ενέργειες που θα αποφασιστούν από τις ελληνικές δικαστικές αρχές στις διαδικασίες που εκκρεμούν ενώπιόν τους.

2. Όλες οι δεόντως αιτιολογημένες προσκλήσεις που απευθύνονται σε υπάλληλο της Επιτροπής για να εμφανιστεί σε εθνικούς φορείς όσον αφορά την επαγγελματική δραστηριότητά του/της, είτε είναι δικαστικές αρχές είτε κοινοβουλευτικές επιτροπές διερεύνησης, αντιμετωπίζονται σε περιπτωσιολογική βάση, σύμφωνα με τις σχετικές διατάξεις του κανονισμού υπηρεσιακής κατάστασης. Η Επιτροπή δεσμεύεται να συμβάλλει εποικοδομητικά στην αποσαφήνιση των γεγονότων των ζητημάτων που εξετάζονται από αυτές τις αρχές και επιτροπές. Η συνεργασία αυτή μπορεί να λάβει διάφορες μορφές ύστερα από συζήτηση με το μέλος που απευθύνει την πρόσκληση. Η προσέγγιση αυτή εφαρμόστηκε επίσης το 2012 στην πρόσκληση που στάλθηκε στον κ. Radermacher από την εξεταστική επιτροπή του ελληνικού κοινοβουλίου που εξετάζει τις αμφιβολίες σχετικά με τα στοιχεία του ελληνικού ελλείμματος του 2009. Σε συμφωνία με την επιτροπή, ο κ. Radermacher παρείχε λεπτομερείς γραπτές απαντήσεις σε όλες τις ερωτήσεις που υποβλήθηκαν.

3. Η Επιτροπή δεν συμμετέχει στην έρευνα της ΕΚΤ σχετικά με τη χρήση συμφωνιών ανταλλαγής (swaps) από τα κράτη μέλη και δεν διαθέτει πληροφορίες σχετικά με το περιεχόμενο και τα αποτελέσματά της.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009049/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Insulting statements by director of Eurostat about the Greek judicial authorities

The director of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), Mr Radermacher, speaking in an interview with the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir* on the Greek statistical system, used the term 'Dante's Inferno' to describe the judicial investigations being conducted by the Greek judicial authorities against Mr Georgiou, president of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (EL.STAT), in connection with the scandal of falsified Greek statistics. In the same interview, the director of Eurostat referred to Greek currency swaps and accused the Greek authorities of having long concealed the data in question, at a time when enquiries by the European Central Bank into the use of currency swaps by EU Member States are still being conducted in secret.

In view of the fact that the investigation into the scandal of falsified Greek statistics is under way and that the director of Eurostat refused, when summoned, to appear in person before Parliament's committee of inquiry into the scandal of falsified statistics and simply sent a memorandum, so that there was no opportunity for Greek MEPs to have their questions answered, will the Commission say:

— Does the European Commission, under whose supervision Eurostat operates, consider that the interview given by Mr Radermacher constitutes interference in the Greek judicial system, which he called 'Dante's Inferno'? What is its view on these comments?

— What procedure will the Commission apply in the event that Mr Radermacher or some other servant is summoned to testify before the Greek investigating and judicial authorities on the matter of falsified statistics? Will he again respond with a memorandum?

— Are the European Commission and Eurostat aware of the conclusions of the investigation by the European Central Bank into the use of swaps? If so, can they publish them, in order to disclose the full extent of the use of swaps, in both Greece and other countries?

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

1. The Commission does not consider that Mr Radermacher's interview constitutes interference in the Greek judicial system. The facts recalled and the views presented therein are not suggestive or limiting as regards the actions to be decided by the Greek judicial authorities in the proceedings before them.

2. All duly justified invitations addressed to a Commission official to appear before national bodies in relation to his/her professional activity, be they judicial authorities or investigating parliamentary committees, are dealt with on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Staff Regulations. The Commission is committed to constructively contributing to clarifying the facts of the matters considered by such authorities and committees. Such cooperation may take different forms following discussion with the inviting party. This approach was also applied in 2012 to the invitation sent to Mr Radermacher by the investigating committee of the Hellenic Parliament considering the doubts about 2009 Greek deficit data. In agreement with the committee, Mr Radermacher provided detailed written answers to all questions submitted.

3. The Commission is not involved in the ECB's investigation on the use of swaps by Member States and has no information on its content and results.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009050/13
προς την Επιτροπή (Αντιπρόεδρος/Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος)
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Ανθρωπιστική κατάσταση στη Συρία και εκπροσώπηση μειονοτήτων στη Συνδιάσκεψη της Γενεύης για την Ειρήνη

Η εμφύλια σύρραξη στην Συρία έχει προκαλέσει τεράστια ανθρωπιστική κρίση, η οποία πλήττει και τις εθνικές και θρησκευτικές μειονότητες. Στις συριακές περιοχές των μειονοτήτων, ειδικά στα σύνορα με την Τουρκία, όπου έχουν εκτοπιστεί εκατομμύρια σύριοι (Εσωτερικά Εκτοπισμένα Άτομα) υπάρχουν έντονα παράπονα ότι «δεν φτάνει» η διεθνής ανθρωπιστική βοήθεια.

Ταυτόχρονα, διοργανώνεται στη Γενεύη «Συνδιάσκεψη για την ειρήνη στη Συρία» η οποία ανακοινώθηκε ότι θα λάβει χώρα τους αμέσως προσεχείς μήνες. Για την εν λόγω συνδιάσκεψη, το Συμβούλιο Υπουργών Εξωτερικών της ΕΕ, στις 27.5.2013, τόνισε ότι «καλωσορίζει την πρωτοβουλία για τη συνδιάσκεψη ειρήνης» και ότι «η ΕΕ θα καταβάλει κάθε προσπάθεια για να βοηθήσει στην επίτευξη των κατάλληλων συνθηκών για την επιτυχή έκβαση αυτής της Συνδιάσκεψης».

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος:

— Πώς διασφαλίζει ότι η ανθρωπιστική βοήθεια που παρέχει η ΕΕ φτάνει σε όλες τις περιοχές και ειδικά σε αυτές των μειονοτήτων, που, πέρα από τους κατοίκους τους, φιλοξενούν και τεράστιο αριθμό εσωτερικά εκτοπισμένων ατόμων;

— Με δεδομένο ότι η ισότιμη συμμετοχή των μειονοτήτων στις αποφάσεις είναι μεγάλης σημασίας, τόσο για την επιτυχή έκβαση, όσο και για την βιωσιμότητα μιας ενδεχόμενης συμφωνίας, και ότι έχουν εκφραστεί ανησυχίες εκ μέρους του κουρδικού στοιχείου για την αντιπροσωπευτική συμμετοχή τους στη Συνδιάσκεψη, τι μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος, προκειμένου να συμμετέχουν στη Συνδιάσκεψη οι πραγματικοί εκπρόσωποι αυτών των μειονοτήτων και όχι πρόσωπα που δεν αναγνωρίζονται ως εκπρόσωποι από τις ίδιες τις μειονοτικές ομάδες;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου κ. Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η ΕΕ παρέχει την ανθρωπιστική της βοήθεια σε αυτούς που τη χρειάζονται, ανεξάρτητα από το θρήσκευμα, την εθνικότητα ή άλλα χαρακτηριστικά ταυτότητας. Το σημερινό συνολικό ποσό της ενωσιακής ανθρωπιστικής και μη ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των συνεισφορών των κρατών μελών, ανέρχεται σε περίπου 2 δισεκατ. ευρώ. Το μεγαλύτερο μέρος της βοήθειας της ΕΕ στη Συρία έχει παρασχεθεί μέσω οργανισμών των Ηνωμένων Εθνών και διεθνών ΜΚΟ.

Η ΕΕ έχει ανέκαθεν επιμείνει στην ανάγκη το συριακό καθεστώς να παρέχει πρόσβαση για ανθρωπιστικούς λόγους σε όλα τα τμήματα της συριακής επικράτειας υπό τον έλεγχό της, καθώς και πέραν των γραμμών αντιπαράθεσης, στις περιοχές που ελέγχει η αντιπολίτευση. Ενόψει των συνεχιζόμενων δυσκολιών, η ΕΕ, καθώς και άλλοι παράγοντες, ενέτειναν τις προσπάθειές τους για την επίτευξη του εν λόγω στόχου.

Ήδη από την έναρξη της εξέγερσης, στις επαφές της με εκπροσώπους της συριακής αντιπολίτευσης και διαφόρων μειονοτήτων, η ΥΕ/ΑΠ τονίζει με έμφαση και υπογραμμίζει την ανάγκη η αντιπολίτευση να είναι κατά το δυνατόν ευρεία και αντιπροσωπευτική. Έχει επίσης καταστήσει σαφές ότι η ειρηνευτική διάσκεψη μπορεί να επιτύχει μόνον αν και οι δύο πλευρές επιθυμούν πραγματικά να διαπραγματευθούν και αν διαθέτουν ισχυρή και αντιπροσωπευτική εντολή· στην δε περίπτωση της αντιπολίτευσης, τούτο θα είναι δυνατό μόνον εφόσον εξασφαλιστεί επαρκές εύρος συμμετοχής.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009050/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Humanitarian situation in Syria and representation of minorities at Geneva Peace Conference

The civil conflict in Syria has caused a massive humanitarian crisis, which is also affecting ethnic and religious minorities. In minority areas of Syria, especially along the Turkish border, where millions of Syrians have been displaced (internally displaced persons), there are serious complaints that international humanitarian aid 'is not enough'.

At the same time, a Geneva Peace Conference on Syria is being organised, which is apparently due to take place within the next few months. The Council of EU Foreign Ministers stressed on 27 May 2013 that it 'welcomed the … call for a peace conference' on Syria and that 'the EU would spare no effort in helping to create the appropriate conditions for the Conference to be convened successfully'.

In view of the above, will the High Representative say:

— How is she ensuring that the humanitarian aid provided by the EU is reaching all areas, especially minority areas which, in addition to their own inhabitants, are supporting a huge number of internally displaced persons?

— Given that equal participation of minorities in decisions is of huge importance, both to the successful outcome and to the sustainability of an agreement, and that concerns have been expressed by the Kurdish element about its representation at the Conference, what measures does the High Representative intend to take in order to ensure that the Conference is attended by the real representatives of these minorities and not by persons who are not recognised as representatives by the minority groups themselves?

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

The EU provides its humanitarian aid to those in need regardless of their confession, ethnicity or other identity features. The current overall sum of EU humanitarian and non-humanitarian assistance, including contributions from Member States, stands at nearly EUR 2 billion. A major part of the EU assistance inside Syria has been provided through UN agencies and international NGOs.

The EU has consistently insisted on the need for the Syrian regime to provide humanatarian access to all parts of Syria under its control, as well as across front lines to the areas controlled by the opposition. In the face of persisting difficulties, the EU as well as other actors increased their efforts to achieve that goal.

In her contacts with representatives of the Syrian opposition and various minority groups, the HR/VP has since the beginning of the uprising been deliveriving strong messages to underline the necessity for the opposition to be as inclusive and representative as possible. She has also been making clear that a peace conference can only succeed if both sides are genuinely willing to negotiate and have strong and representative mandates, which will only be possible for the opposition if it can ensure sufficient inclusiveness.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009051/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Έκθεση του ΔΝΤ για τις ευρωπαϊκές τράπεζες

Σε πρόσφατη έκθεση του ΔΝΤ για το χρηματοοικονομικό σύστημα στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση (European Union: Financial System Stability Assessment, March 2013), γίνεται αναφορά στον γερμανικό τραπεζικό τομέα, ο οποίος εκτιμάται ότι είναι ακόμα εκτεθειμένος σε απαιτήσεις σε κρατικά χρέη και ότι επιβαρύνεται από σοβαρούς κινδύνους (risk), λόγω θεσμικών βαρών και αβεβαιοτήτων (regulatory burden and regulatory uncertainty), ενώ ιδιαίτερη αναφορά γίνεται και στις Landesbanken, τις οποίες η έκθεση εμφανίζει ως πιο ευάλωτες σε σχέση με τις υπόλοιπες εμπορικές τράπεζες της χώρας.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Πώς σχολιάζει τα συμπεράσματα της έκθεσης του ΔΝΤ και, συγκεκριμένα, τα συμπεράσματα όσον αφορά την έκθεση σε «απαιτήσεις σε κρατικά χρέη» και τους κινδύνους (risk) λόγω «θεσμικών βαρών και αβεβαιοτήτων» του γερμανικού τραπεζικού συστήματος;

— Μετά και την έκθεση του ΔΝΤ, αισθάνεται την ανάγκη η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή να ζητήσει την εισαγωγή και των Landsbanken στα επόμενα stress-tests;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Στην έκθεση του ΔΝΤ, του 2013, σχετικά με την αξιολόγηση της σταθερότητας του χρηματοπιστωτικού συστήματος, παράρτημα 9, παρατίθενται λεπτομερή στοιχεία για τα διάφορα προγράμματα αξιολόγησης του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα (ΠΑΧΤ) που υλοποίησε το ΔΝΤ από το 2011 σε διάφορα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ. Οι Landesbanken αναφέρονται στο πλαίσιο του προγράμματος αξιολόγησης του χρηματοπιστωτικού τομέα της Γερμανίας (ΔΝΤ, Ιούλιος 2011).

Το 2011 η Επιτροπή πραγματοποίησε παρόμοια ανάλυση του γερμανικού τραπεζικού τομέα, η οποία αντανακλάται στη σύσταση του Συμβουλίου της 12ης Ιουλίου 2011 σχετικά με το εθνικό πρόγραμμα μεταρρυθμίσεων του 2011 της Γερμανίας ([1]), η οποία εκδόθηκε βάσει σύστασης της Επιτροπής.

Προς το παρόν η εποπτεία των τραπεζών πραγματοποιείται από τις εθνικές εποπτικές αρχές και όχι σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο. Παρ' όλα αυτά, οι περισσότερες εκ των Landesbanken περιελήφθησαν στο φάσμα των τραπεζών που κάλυψε ο τελευταίος γύρος των δοκιμών αντοχής (stress-tests)· ανάλογα δε με την εμβέλεια των μελλοντικών γύρων, παρόμοιος αριθμός Landesbanken ενδέχεται να θεωρηθούν «εντός φάσματος». Το θέμα αυτό, ωστόσο, εμπίπτει στην αρμοδιότητα των αρμόδιων εποπτικών αρχών.

([1]) ΕΕ C 212 της 19.7.2011, σ. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009051/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: IMF report on European banks

A recent IMF report on the financial system in the European Union (European Union: Financial System Stability Assessment, March 2013), refers to the German banking sector which, it considers, is still exposed to government claims and vulnerable to serious risks due to the regulatory burden and regulatory uncertainty, referring in particular to the *Landesbanken*, which appear to be more vulnerable than other commercial banks in the country.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— What are its comments on the conclusions drawn in the IMF report, especially the conclusions concerning exposure to 'government claims' and risks due to the 'regulatory burden and regulatory uncertainty' in the German banking system?

— In the wake of the IMF report, does the European Commission feel the need to ask for the *Landesbanken* to be included in the next stress tests?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

The IMF 2013 Financial System Stability Assesment (FSSA) details in its Annex 9 different Financial Sector Assessment Programs (FSAPs) that the IMF has performed since 2011 in various EU Member States. The Landesbanken are mentioned in the context of the IMF's July 2011 FSAP in Germany.

In 2011 the Commission performed a similar analysis of the German banking sector which was reflected in the Country Specific Council Recommendation of 12 July 2011 on the National Reform Programme 2011 of Germany ([1]), adopted on a recommendation of the Commission.

For the time being, bank supervision is performed by national supervisors and not at the European level. Nonetheless, most Landesbanken were within the scope of the last round of European stress tests and, depending on the size of future exercises, a similar number of Landesbanken are likely to be deemed 'in scope'. This however falls under the responsibility of the relevant supervisory authorities.

([1]) OJ C 212, 19.7.2011, p. 9.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009053/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Γιατί επιλέχθηκε η ακριβή λύση για την ΑΤΕ

Με βάση τα επίσημα απολογιστικά στοιχεία, τα οποία έχω ήδη παραθέσει στην ερώτησή μου E-005283/2013, αποδεικνύεται ότι η μεταβίβαση της «καλής» Αγροτικής Τράπεζας της Ελλάδας (ΑΤΕ) στην Τράπεζα Πειραιώς κόστισε στο ελληνικό δημόσιο, εν μέσω κρίσης, περισσότερα από 9 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ. Ωστόσο, οι εκτιμήσεις της Τράπεζας της Ελλάδος («Έκθεση για την Ανακεφαλαιοποίηση και Αναδιάταξη του Ελληνικού Τραπεζικού Τομέα», Δεκέμβριος 2012), ήταν ότι απαιτούνταν 4,9 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ για την ανακεφαλαιοποίηση της ΑΤΕ, τα οποία θα μπορούσαν να φτάνουν και μόλις σε 3,8 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ αν συνυπολογίζονταν και οι υπεραξίες των μετοχών και των ομολόγων. Αν λοιπόν δεν είχε επιλεγεί η μεταβίβαση της «καλής» ΑΤΕ στην Τράπεζα Πειραιώς, αλλά η ανακεφαλαιοποίηση της Τράπεζας, θα υπήρχε σημαντική οικονομία πόρων του Ταμείου Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας και του έλληνα φορολογούμενου.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Γιατί επιλέχθηκε η λύση της μεταβίβασης της ΑΤΕ στην Τράπεζα Πειραιώς, αφού ήταν η πιο ακριβή λύση; Πώς κρίνει η Επιτροπή την απόφαση αυτή;

— Ποιος είχε την ευθύνη για αυτή την επιλογή;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η αρχή εξυγίανσης στην Ελλάδα που είναι υπεύθυνη για την εκτέλεση των μέτρων εξυγίανσης είναι η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος.

Η Αγροτική Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος εξυγιάνθηκε σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 63Δ του νόμου 3601/2007. Η Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος, ως αρμόδια αρχή εξυγίανσης προβαίνει σε μια αρχική εκτίμηση του χρηματοδοτικού κενού με βάση συντηρητικές παραδοχές. Εν συνεχεία, διορίζεται ελεγκτής για να εκτιμήσει το χρηματοδοτικό κενό κατά την ημερομηνία της εξυγίανσης. Η εξυγίανση της Αγροτικής Τράπεζας της Ελλάδος πραγματοποιήθηκε σύμφωνα με τις δεσμεύσεις που συμφωνήθηκαν από τις ελληνικές αρχές βάσει του προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, στο πλαίσιο της εφαρμοζόμενης χρηματοπιστωτικής πολιτικής.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή επιθυμεί να παραπέμψει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου στην Τράπεζα της Ελλάδος για πιο αναλυτικές πληροφορίες σχετικά με την πραγματοποίηση της συγκεκριμένης συναλλαγής. Συμπληρωματικές πληροφορίες σχετικά με το εν εξελίξει πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα δημοσιεύονται στον δικτυακό τόπο της ECFIN: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009053/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Why was the expensive solution chosen for ATE?

Based on official closing data, which I previously included in my question E-005283/2013, the transfer of the 'good' Agricultural Bank of Greece (ATE) to Piraeus Bank cost the Greek state over EUR 9 billion, in the midst of a crisis. However, according to the estimates by the Bank of Greece (Report on the recapitalisation and restructuring of the Greek banking sector, December 2012), EUR 4.9 billion was needed in order to recapitalise ATE or, if capital gains on shares and bonds were included, just EUR 3.8 billion. If a choice had been made not to transfer the 'good' ATE to Piraeus Bank and to recapitalise the bank, considerable savings would have been made for the Financial Stability Fund and Greek taxpayers.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Why was the choice made to transfer ATE to Piraeus Bank, as it was the more expensive solution? How does the Commission rate that decision?

— Who was responsible for that choice?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

The Resolution Authority of Greece responsible for executing resolution measures is the Bank of Greece.

Agricultural Bank of Greece was resolved according to Article 63D of Law 3601/2007. As such, the Bank of Greece as the relevant Resolution Authority performs an initial estimation of the funding gap based on conservative assumptions. Sequentially, an auditor is appointed to estimate the funding gap at the date of the resolution. The resolution of Agricultural Bank of Greece was conducted in line with the commitments agreed by the Hellenic authorities under the Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece, as part of the ongoing Financial Sector policy.

The European Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member of the European Parliament to the Bank of Greece for more detailed information of the specific transaction that was carried out. Additional information on the ongoing Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece can be found on the ECFIN publication website:
http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/occasional_paper/

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009054/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Καταγραφή επιδοτήσεων προϊόντων στις ελληνικές συγκοινωνιακές ΔΕΚΟ

Σύμφωνα με τον Κανονισμό ESA95, αλλά και την απάντηση (E-003754/2013), οι επιδοτήσεις προϊόντων κατατάσσονται στα έσοδα μιας κρατικής επιχείρησης, εφόσον αυτή χρηματοδοτείται κυρίως από τις πωλήσεις του προϊόντος ή της υπηρεσίας που προσφέρει, σε «οικονομικά σημαντικές τιμές», εφαρμόζοντας το κριτήριο του 50%. Επίσης, σύμφωνα πάλι με τον Κανονισμό ESA95 (D.319), οι «επιδοτήσεις σε δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις και οιονεί επιχειρήσεις για αντιστάθμιση των συνεχών ζημιών τις οποίες υφίστανται, όσον αφορά τις παραγωγικές δραστηριότητές τους, επειδή χρεώνουν τιμές που είναι χαμηλότερες από το μέσο κόστος παραγωγής, λόγω συγκεκριμένης κρατικής ή ευρωπαϊκής οικονομικής και κοινωνικής πολιτικής» αποτελούν και αυτές επιδοτήσεις προϊόντων.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, αλλά και

α) τον ελληνικό νόμο 2669/1998 που στο άρθρο 5 (παράγραφος 5) ορίζει για τις συγκοινωνιακές δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις ότι «η διαφορά μεταξύ του λειτουργικού κόστους και του καθοριζόμενου κάθε φορά κομίστρου, όπως αυτό προσδιορίζεται με την τιμολογιακή πολιτική, αποτελεί κοινωνική παροχή, η οποία αντισταθμίζεται με την καταβολή της διαφοράς από τον Κρατικό Προϋπολογισμό», καθώς και

β) το νόμο 3920/2011, όπου στο άρθρο 6 (παράγραφος 6, δ) ορίζει ότι «Ο ΟΑΣΑ λαμβάνει επιδότηση από τον Κρατικό Προϋπολογισμό για την κάλυψη του συνολικού ετήσιου λειτουργικού ελλείμματος των εταιρειών του Ομίλου ΟΑΣΑ, με βάση το παραγόμενο συγκοινωνιακό έργο και δείκτες έργου, κόστους και ποιότητας, στους οποίους περιλαμβάνονται υποχρεωτικώς τα ελάχιστα προσφερθέντα οχηματοχιλιόμετρα, το ανώτατο επιτρεπτό λειτουργικό κόστος ανά οχηματοχιλιόμετρο και ο κατώτερος επιτρεπτός βαθμός ικανοποίησης πελατείας, καθώς και οποιοιδήποτε άλλοι δείκτες εφαρμόζονται διεθνώς στα συγκοινωνιακά δεδομένα», ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Για ποιο λόγο, στις 15 Νοεμβρίου 2010, ταξινομήθηκαν στη Γενική Κυβέρνηση οι τρεις συγκοινωνιακές κρατικές επιχειρήσεις του Ομίλου ΟΑΣΑ, δηλαδή, ΗΣΑΠ, ΗΛΠΑΠ και ΕΘΕΛ;

— Έγιναν οι σχετικές έρευνες στους ισολογισμούς τους, ώστε να ερευνηθεί η ισχύς του κριτηρίου του 50% για τις κρατικές θεσμικές μονάδες; Εάν ναι, με ποιο τρόπο αντιμετωπίστηκαν οι κρατικές επιδοτήσεις, οι οποίες, σύμφωνα με τον ESA95 και τους ελληνικούς νόμους, αποτελούν χωρίς καμία αμφιβολία επιδοτήσεις προϊόντων και επομένως καταγράφονται στα έσοδα των επιχειρήσεων;

— Μπορεί να τις κοινοποιήσει, με δεδομένο ότι όλοι οι ισολογισμοί των εν λόγω εταιρειών είναι δημοσιευμένοι στο διαδίκτυο και αποτελούν δημόσιες επιχειρήσεις; Εμμένει η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή στη δικαιολογία του «στατιστικού απορρήτου»;

Απάντηση του κ. Šemeta εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(6 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Το 2010 η ELSTAT, εφαρμόζοντας τους υφιστάμενους στατιστικούς κανόνες ([1]), ταξινόμησε 17 ελεγχόμενους από το δημόσιο οργανισμούς, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των αναφερόμενων εταιρειών, στην ελληνική γενική κυβέρνηση. Οι αναταξινομηθείσες εταιρείες δημόσιων μεταφορών θεωρήθηκε ότι είναι μονάδες γενικής κυβέρνησης, επειδή, σύμφωνα με το κριτήριο του 50%, οι πωλήσεις τους σε ποσοστό λειτουργικού κόστους δεν υπερέβησαν το κατώφλι του 50% για μια παρατεταμένη περίοδο πριν από το έτος αξιολόγησης.

Σύμφωνα με τη νομοθεσία της Ένωσης ([2]), «οι επιδοτήσεις προϊόντων είναι εκείνες οι επιδοτήσεις που καταβάλλονται ανά μονάδα ενός αγαθού ή μιας υπηρεσίας που παράγεται ή εισάγεται». Σύμφωνα με το κριτήριο του 50%, οι πωλήσεις περιλαμβάνουν τις πληρωμές που έγιναν από τη γενική κυβέρνηση, μόνο αν οι εν λόγω πληρωμές συνδέονται με τον όγκο ή την αξία του παραγόμενου έργου. Οι πωλήσεις δεν περιλαμβάνουν πληρωμές που έγιναν από την κυβέρνηση για να καλύψουν ένα γενικό έλλειμμα που πραγματοποιήθηκε έως το τέλος του οικονομικού έτους ή πληρώθηκε ως σταθερό ποσό εκ των προτέρων ([3]).

([1]) ESA95 (Κεφάλαιο 2) και MGDD (I.2).
([2]) ESA95 (4.33, 4.35c, και 4.36).
([3]) Εγχειρίδιο για το δημόσιο έλλειμμα και χρέος, τμήμα I.2.4.2.

Ο όμιλος ΟΑΣΑ και οι θυγατρικές του έλαβαν επιδοτήσεις που υπολογίστηκαν με έναν ειδικό τύπο που ορίζεται από τον νόμο ([4]) ο οποίος προβλέπει τετραμηνιαίες προπληρωμές με βάση την προβλεπόμενη ζημία για το έτος. Οι εν λόγω πληρωμές παραμένουν αμετάβλητες και ούτε ο ΟΑΣΑ δικαιούται να ζητήσει περισσότερη χρηματοδότηση στην περίπτωση αποτυχίας επίτευξης των στόχων του ούτε και το ελληνικό κράτος μπορεί να τη μειώσει, εάν υπάρχει υπέρβαση στους προκαθορισμένους στόχους.

Σημειώνεται ότι ο τύπος αυτός δεν βασίζεται στην ποσότητα του παραγόμενου έργου (αριθμός επιβατών), αλλά στην πρόβλεψη του ελλείμματος της εταιρείας.

Στοιχεία που συλλέγονται για στατιστικούς σκοπούς, τα οποία επιτρέπουν τον προσδιορισμό του προσώπου ή οικονομικού παράγοντα τον οποίο αφορούν τα στοιχεία, είναι εμπιστευτικά και προστατεύονται σύμφωνα με την ενωσιακή νομοθεσία.

([4]) Νόμος 2669/1998 όπως τροποποιήθηκε με το άρθρο 14 του νόμου 3297/2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009054/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Reporting subsidies on products in Greek public transport corporations and organisations

According to the ESA95 Regulation and reply E-003754/2013, subsidies on products are reported as revenue by a public corporation, provided that it is financed mainly from sales of the product or service which it provides at 'economically significant prices', to which the 50% criterion applies. Again in accordance with ESA95 (D.319) 'subsidies to public undertakings and quasi-undertakings to offset continual losses sustained from their productive activities, because they charge prices which are below average production costs, due to a specific State or European economic and social policy' are also subsidies on products.

In view of the above and the fact that:

a) Article 5(5) of Greek law 2669/1998 states for public transport corporations that 'the difference between operating costs and the fares set from time to time under pricing policies is a social benefit which is offset by payment of the difference from the national budget' and

b) Article 6(6)(d) of Law 3920/2011 states: 'OASA shall receive a subsidy from the national budget in order to cover the total annual operating deficit of OASA Group companies, based on the public transport services provided and service, cost and quality indicators, which must include the minimum number of vehicle/km offered, the maximum permissible operating cost per vehicle/km and the minimum permissible degree of customer satisfaction, together with any other indicators applied internationally in public transport data', will the Commission say:

— Why were the three State-owned companies in the OASA Group (namely ESAP, ELPAPand ETHEL) classed under general government on 15 November 2010?

— Were their balance sheets examined, in order to ascertain if the 50% criteria applied tothe State-owned institutional units? If so, how did they report State subsidies which,according to ESA95 and Greek laws, are without any shadow of a doubt subsidies onproducts and are thus reported under the company's revenue?

— Can it disclose them, given that all the accounts of the companies in question arepublished online and they are public corporations? Will the European Commission insiston the excuse of 'statistical confidentiality'?

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

In 2010, applying the existing statistical rules ([1]) ELSTAT classified 17 publicly controlled entities, including the mentioned companies, into the Greek general government. The reclassified public transportation companies were deemed to be general government units because, in accordance with the 50% criterion, their sales to operating costs ratio failed to exceed the 50% threshold for an extended period preceding the assessment year.

According to Union legislation ([2]) 'subsidies on products are subsidies payable per unit of a good or service produced or imported'. In accordance with the 50% criterion, sales include payments made by general government only if these payments are linked to the volume or value of output. Sales do not include payments made by government to cover an overall deficit realised by the end of a financial year or paid as a fixed amount ex-ante. ([3])

The company OASA and its subsidiaries received subsidies calculated with a specific formula defined by Law ([4]) that provides for quarterly pre-payments based on the projected loss for the year. These payments remain unchanged and neither is OASA entitled to request more funding in the event of failure to achieve its objectives, nor can the Greek State reduce it if there is an overrun in the pre-determined objectives.

It is noted that this formula is not based on the quantity of output (number of passengers), but instead on the forecast of the deficit of the company.

([1]) ESA95 (Chapter 2) and MGDD (I.2).
([2]) ESA95 (4.33, 4.35c, and 4.36).
([3]) Manual on Government Deficit and Debt, section I.2.4.2.
([4]) Law 2669/1998 as amended by Article 14 of Law 3297/2004.

Data collected for statistical purposes, which allow the person or economic operator concerned by the data to be identified, are confidential and shall be protected in accordance with Union legislation.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009055/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Χρηματοδότηση της εκπαίδευσης στην Ελλάδα

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατη ανακοίνωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για την εκπαίδευση (Ανασχεδιασμός της Εκπαίδευσης, 20.11.2012, COM(2012)0669), πολλές χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης έχουν προχωρήσει σε περικοπές μισθών των εκπαιδευτικών και, γενικότερα, της χρηματοδότησης των εκπαιδευτικών συστημάτων. Πιο συγκεκριμένα στην ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής αναφέρεται ότι «το 2012 οι περισσότερες χώρες διατήρησαν τις ρυθμίσεις τους όσον αφορά τη χρηματοδότηση των μηχανισμών υποστήριξης για μαθητές και φοιτητές και/ή για τις οικογένειές τους. Από τις χώρες που διαθέτουν σχετικά στοιχεία, μόνο η Ισπανία, η Κύπρος και η Πορτογαλία ανέφεραν μείωση της χρηματοδότησης των διαθέσιμων μηχανισμών για την υποστήριξη των εκπαιδευομένων».

Με βάση τα ανωτέρω, καθώς επίσης και το γεγονός ότι η Ελλάδα βρίσκεται στον τρίτο χρόνο οικονομικής προσαρμογής, με τεράστιες περικοπές στις δημόσιες δαπάνες, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της εκπαίδευσης, με αποτέλεσμα η πλειοψηφία των σχολείων και των πανεπιστημίων να υπολειτουργούν, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Γνωρίζει ποιες είναι οι σωρευτικές μειώσεις (2009-2012) στους μισθούς των εκπαιδευτικών στην Ελλάδα και για τους τρεις κλάδους της εκπαίδευσης (πρωτοβάθμια, δευτεροβάθμια, τριτοβάθμια); Ποια είναι η σωρευτική μείωση (2009-2012) στις δαπάνες για την εκπαίδευση γενικά;

— Όσον αφορά τη μείωση της χρηματοδότησης των μηχανισμών υποστήριξης για τους μαθητές και τους φοιτητές, γνωρίζει η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή ποια είναι η μείωση της χρηματοδότησης στην Ελλάδα; Πώς είναι δυνατόν να μην αναφέρεται στην παραπάνω έκθεση η μείωση της χρηματοδότησης των διαθέσιμων μηχανισμών για την υποστήριξη των εκπαιδευομένων, όταν την ίδια στιγμή η Ελλάδα βρίσκεται σε ένα αδιανόητο για δημοκρατική χώρα καθεστώς εποπτείας, στο οποίο η ελληνική κυβέρνηση ζητά την άδεια από την Τρόικα για κάθε ανάληψη δράσης της ή/και πολιτικής της;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή έχει πλήρη επίγνωση των επιπτώσεων της οικονομικής κρίσης στις δημόσιες δαπάνες για την εκπαίδευση στα κράτη μέλη, συμπεριλαμβανόμενης της Ελλάδας, στην οποία ο δείκτης δαπανών για την εκπαίδευση σε σχέση με το ΑΕγχΠ παρέμεινε σχεδόν σταθερός καθόλη τη διάρκεια της κρίσης (δεδομένα COFOG, περίπου 4% του ΑΕγχΠ για την περίοδο 2008-11) ([1])· επειδή όμως η σωρευτική απώλεια του ΑΕγχΠ ανήλθε στο 25% περίπου, οι δαπάνες για την παιδεία μειώθηκαν σε ανάλογο ποσοστό.

Όσον αφορά τους μισθούς των εκπαιδευτικών, από πρόσφατη μελέτη της Eurydice ([2]) προκύπτει ότι το 2012 οι ελληνικές δαπάνες για το ανθρώπινο δυναμικό μειώθηκαν σε σύγκριση με το προηγούμενο έτος κατά 24%, ως συνέπεια διάφορων μέτρων που ελήφθησαν από το 2010.

Όσον αφορά τις μειώσεις της χρηματοδότησης των μηχανισμών υποστήριξης για τους μαθητές, στην έκθεση αναφέρεται ότι καταβάλλονται προσπάθειες να διατηρηθεί η υποστήριξη για επιδότηση στέγασης, γευμάτων ή μεταφοράς, αλλά η κρίση ενδέχεται να είχε σημαντικές επιπτώσεις σε τοπικό επίπεδο (π.χ. στην παροχή υπηρεσιών εστίασης από ορισμένους δήμους).

Η Επιτροπή κατανοεί το γεγονός ότι οι χαμηλές δημόσιες επενδύσεις δυσχεραίνουν την επίτευξη των εθνικών στόχων στο πλαίσιο της στρατηγικής «Ευρώπη 2020» (π.χ. σχετικά με την πρόωρη εγκατάλειψη του σχολείου, την φοίτηση στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση) και ότι, όπως επισημάνθηκε στην ετήσια επισκόπηση της ανάπτυξης (ΕΕΑ) τόσο του 2012 όσο και του 2013, οι επενδύσεις στην εκπαίδευση και επαγγελματική κατάρτιση είναι σημαντικές για τη στήριξη της μακροπρόθεσμης βιώσιμης ανάπτυξης στην Ελλάδα. Οι ελληνικές αρχές λαμβάνουν μέτρα για τον εξορθολογισμό και τη βελτίωση του συστήματός τους και για την αντιμετώπιση των προκλήσεων από την άποψη της ποιότητας, της αποτελεσματικότητας και της αποδοτικότητας με την εφαρμογή του σχεδίου δράσης για την παιδεία.

([1]) Πηγή: Eurostat, στατιστικές εθνικών λογαριασμών και COFOG.
([2]) Εκτελεστικός οργανισμός εκπαίδευσης, οπτικοακουστικών θεμάτων και πολιτισμού (EACEA), Eurydice και η μονάδα υποστήριξης της πολιτικής, 2013, «Funding of Education in Europe — The Impact of the Economic Crisis» σύνδεσμος: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/147EN.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009055/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Financing education in Greece

According to a recent Commission communication on education (Rethinking Education, 20 November 2012, COM(2012)0669), numerous countries in the European Union have applied salary cuts for teachers and to funding in general for education systems. In fact, the Commission communication states that 'in 2012, the majority of countries maintained their arrangements regarding the funding of support mechanisms for pupils and students and/or their families. From the countries with available data, only Spain, Cyprus and Portugal reported a decrease in the funding of available schemes for support of people in education'.

In view of the above and the fact that Greece is in its third year of economic adjustment, involving huge cuts to public spending, including on education, with the result that the majority of schools and universities are operating below par, will the Commission say:

— Does it know what cumulative cuts (2009-2012) have been made to salaries for teachers in Greece in all three education sectors (primary, secondary, higher)? What is the cumulative cut (2009-2012) in spending on education in general?

— As regards the cut to funding for support mechanisms for pupils and students, does the European Commission know what cut to funding has been made in Greece? Why does the above report not refer to cuts in funding for available mechanisms to support people in education when, at the same time, Greece is under a supervisory regime which is unheard of in a democratic country, with the Greek Government asking permission from the Troika every time it wishes to take action and/or adopt a policy?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

The European Commission is fully aware of the impact of the economic crisis on public spending on education in Member States, including Greece. There the ratio of education expenditure to GDP remained almost stable throughout the crisis (COFOG data, ca. 4% of GDP for the period 2008-11) ([1]), but since the cumulative GDP loss was of ca. 25%, spending on education has decreased by a similar proportion.

As to teacher salaries, a recent Eurydice study ([2]) shows that in 2012 Greek spending on human resources compared with the previous year fell by 24%, reflecting a number of measures taken as of 2010.

As regards reductions in pupil support programmes, the report states that there has been an effort to maintain support for subsidised accommodation, meals or transport, but the crisis might have had an important impact locally (e.g. in the provision of catering services by some municipalities).

The Commission understands the fact that low public investment makes the achievement of national Europe 2020 strategy targets (e.g. on early school leaving, tertiary attainment) difficult and that, as pointed out in both the 2012 and 2013 Annual Growth Surveys (AGS) investment in education and training is crucial to support long-term sustainable growth in Greece. The Greek authorities are taking steps to rationalise and improve their system and to address challenges in terms of quality, effectiveness and efficiency through implementation of the action plan on education.

([1]) *Source:* Eurostat, national accounts statistics and COFOG.
([2]) Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), Eurydice and Policy Support Unit, 2013, 'Funding of Education in Europe — The Impact of the Economic Crisis' link http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/147EN.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009056/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Μελλοντικό κούρεμα του ελληνικού χρέους που κατέχει ο επίσημος τομέας

Πολλά ερωτηματικά έχει προκαλέσει η «μυστική» έκθεση του ΔΝΤ που διέρρευσε σε μέσα ενημέρωσης το Μάιο του 2013, με την οποία παίρνει ουσιαστικά αποστάσεις από τις οικονομικές πολιτικές που επιβάλλει η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση στο Πρόγραμμα Προσαρμογής της Ελλάδας. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, στην έκθεση αναφέρονται οι ανησυχίες που εξέφραζε το Ταμείο σχετικά με τη βιωσιμότητα του ελληνικού χρέους το 2010, επιρρίπτοντας ευθύνες στην Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και στα κράτη μέλη της Ευρωζώνης για την καθυστερημένη λήψη της απόφασης για κούρεμα των ελληνικών ομολόγων.

Οι ίδιες ανησυχίες για τη βιωσιμότητα του ελληνικού χρέους εκφράζονται και σε νέα, επίσημη αυτή τη φορά, μελέτη του ΔΝΤ (Debt Sustainability Analysis — January 2013), στην οποία ζητά να ληφθούν συγκεκριμένα μέτρα από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση και τους επίσημους πιστωτές της, ώστε το 2022, το συσσωρευμένο κρατικό χρέος της Ελλάδας να βρίσκεται κάτω από 110% του ΑΕΠ, όταν, για το 2020, υπολογίζεται ότι θα φτάσει στο 124% του ΑΕΠ.

Απαντώντας στο ΔΝΤ ο Επίτροπος Οικονομικών και Νομισματικών Υποθέσεων, κ. Ρεν, ανέφερε ότι «δεν νομίζω ότι είναι δίκαιο το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο να νίπτει τας χείρας του, πετώντας το βρόμικο νερό στους ευρωπαϊκούς ώμους».

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Έχουν εξεταστεί οι ανησυχίες που εκφράζονται από το ΔΝΤ για τη βιωσιμότητα του ελληνικού χρέους την επόμενη δεκαετία; Εάν ναι, με ποιο τρόπο θα επιτευχθεί η μείωση του συσσωρευμένου κρατικού χρέους κάτω από το 110% του ΑΕΠ το 2022; Εάν όχι, με ποιο τρόπο η Επιτροπή κάνει χρήση της λεγόμενης «τεχνογνωσίας» του ΔΝΤ σε προγράμματα οικονομικής προσαρμογής, για την οποία υποτίθεται ότι κλήθηκε να συνεισφέρει στην ελληνική και ευρωπαϊκή κρίση χρέους;

— Έχει εξετάσει εναλλακτικά σενάρια για να καταστεί το ελληνικό χρέος βιώσιμο; Έχει μελετήσει το ενδεχόμενο κουρέματος του ελληνικού χρέους που κατέχει ο επίσημος τομέας (κράτη μέλη Ευρωζώνης, ESM, ΕΚΤ); Εάν όχι, προτίθεται να το πράξει μετά τις γερμανικές εκλογές;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(28 Αυγούστου 2013)

Η τρίτη αναθεώρηση του 2ου προγράμματος προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, ολοκληρώθηκε τον Ιούλιο. Το Συμβούλιο διαπίστωσε ότι η δυναμική του χρέους της Ελλάδας είναι σε γενικές γραμμές αμετάβλητη σε σύγκριση με τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012. Ο δείκτης του χρέους προς το ΑΕΠ προβλέπεται να ακολουθήσει και πάλι πτωτική τροχιά το 2014 και να μειωθεί σε επίπεδα χαμηλότερα του 120% το 2021, εφόσον το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής εξακολουθήσει να υλοποιείται στο ακέραιο. Τα σενάρια προσομοίωσης ακραίων καταστάσεων επιβεβαιώνουν ότι το χρέος θα μειωθεί αισθητά σε σχέση με τα σημερινά επίπεδα με βάση τα περισσότερα σενάρια. Σε περίπτωση συνδυασμού αρνητικών εξελίξεων το χρέος αρχικά θα μειωθεί, αλλά κατόπιν θα σταθεροποιηθεί σε ένα πολύ υψηλό επίπεδο.

Όπως αναφέρθηκε σε δήλωση της Ευρωομάδας στις 21 Φεβρουαρίου 2012, οι εταίροι της ζώνης του ευρώ είναι αποφασισμένοι να παράσχουν επαρκή στήριξη στην Ελλάδα τόσο κατά τη διάρκεια του τρέχοντος προγράμματος όσο και μετά το πέρας αυτού, έως ότου η χώρα αποκτήσει και πάλι πρόσβαση στην αγορά, με προϋπόθεση την πλήρη συμμόρφωση της Ελλάδας με τις απαιτήσεις και τους στόχους του προγράμματος προσαρμογής. Όπως αναφέρθηκε σε δήλωση της Ευρωομάδας τον Νοέμβριο του 2012, τυχόν πρόσθετα μέτρα θα πρέπει να ληφθούν «… όταν η Ελλάδα καταλήξει να έχει ετήσιο πρωτογενές πλεόνασμα, όπως προβλέπεται στο ισχύον ΜΣ, υπό την προϋπόθεση της πλήρους εφαρμογής όλων των όρων που περιλαμβάνονται στο πρόγραμμα …». Η Ευρωομάδα επανέλαβε τη δέσμευση αυτή τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012.

Ως εκ τούτου, μολονότι αναγνωρίζουμε ότι εξακολουθούν να υφίστανται κίνδυνοι, πιστεύουμε ότι είναι πρόωρο να συζητηθεί η περαιτέρω ελάφρυνση του χρέους της Ελλάδας σε αυτό το στάδιο. Αντίθετα, πρέπει να δοθεί έμφαση στον τρόπο με τον οποίο θα δημιουργηθούν ισχυρότερα κίνητρα για τις διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις που απαιτούνται για την προαγωγή της οικονομικής μεγέθυνσης και της απασχόλησης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009056/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Future haircut to Greek debt held by official sector

The 'secret' IMF report leaked to the media in May 2013, in which it basically distances itself from the economic policies imposed by the European Union in the adjustment programme for Greece, has given rise to numerous questions. In fact, the report refers to the concerns expressed by the Fund about the sustainability of the Greek debt in 2010 and blames the European Commission and the Member States of the euro area for the delay in taking the decision to apply a haircut to Greek bonds.

The same concerns about the sustainability of the Greek debt are expressed in a new — official — IMF report (Debt Sustainability Analysis — January 2013), in which it calls for the Greek Government and its official creditors to take specific measures so that, by 2022, Greece's accrued national debt is below 110% of GDP, when it is expected to be 124% of GDP in 2020.

In reply to the IMF, the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, Mr Rein, said: 'I don't think that it's fair for the International Monetary Fund to wash its hands and throw the dirty water on European shoulders'.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Have the concerns expressed by the IMF about the sustainability of the Greek debt over the coming decade been examined? If so, how will it achieve a reduction in the accrued national debt to below 110% of GDP in 2022?If not, how is the Commission making use of the IMF's so-called 'expertise' in economic adjustment programmes, given that it supposedly contributed to the Greek and European debt crisis?

— Has it examined alternative ways of making the Greek debt sustainable? Has it considered the possibility of a haircut to the Greek debt held by the official sector (Member States of the euro area, ESM, ECB)?If not, does it intend to do so after the German elections?

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

The 3rd review of the 2nd adjustment programme for Greece was concluded in July. It established that Greece's debt dynamics is broadly unchanged compared to December 2012. The debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to resume a declining path in 2014 and should become lower than 120% by 2021, assuming that the economic adjustment programme continues to be fully implemented. The stress-test scenarios confirm that the debt would perceptibly decline from its current levels in most scenarios. Under a combined negative shock the debt would decline initially, but stabilise at a very high level.

As was stated by the Eurogroup on February 21, 2012, euro area partners are committed to providing adequate support to Greece during the life of the program and beyond until Greece has regained market access, provided that Greece fully complies with the requirements and objectives of the adjustment program. As stated by the Eurogroup in November 2012, any additional measure should be taken '… when Greece reaches an annual primary surplus, as envisaged in the current MoU, conditional on full implementation of all conditions contained in the programme …'. The Eurogroup reaffirmed this commitment in December 2012.

Hence, while we do recognise that risks remain, we believe that it is premature to discuss further debt relief for Greece at this stage. By contrast, the focus should be on how to create stronger incentives for structural reforms which are needed to promote economic growth and employment.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009057/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Τεράστια προβλήματα για τους πολίτες που είχαν εκκρεμείς υποθέσεις με τον ΟΕΚ — Περιπτώσεις στην Αχαΐα και στο Πλατύ Ημαθίας

Το Μάρτιο του 2012, με το Μνημόνιο μεταξύ Ελλάδας και Τρόικας επιβλήθηκε, μεταξύ άλλων, και η κατάργηση του Οργανισμού Εργατικής Κατοικίας (ΟΕΚ). Σε προηγούμενες ερωτήσεις μου (P-002348/2012, P-002379/2012) η Επιτροπή απάντησε ρητά ότι «θα τηρηθούν οι υφιστάμενες συμβατικές υποχρεώσεις» και ότι «οι ελληνικές αρχές έχουν συστήσει μια προσωρινή επιτροπή που είναι αρμόδια για τον καθορισμό των κανόνων διευθέτησης των εκκρεμών υποχρεώσεων και δικαιωμάτων καθώς και οποιουδήποτε άλλου νομικού κεκτημένου των δύο καταργηθέντων φορέων».

Όμως, ενάμιση χρόνο μετά, τα προβλήματα που έχουν δημιουργηθεί είναι τεράστια για τους πολίτες που είχαν εκκρεμείς υποθέσεις με τον ΟΕΚ. Αναφέρω ενδεικτικά τις εξής περιπτώσεις:

— Όσο ο ΟΕΚ ήταν εν λειτουργία, εγκρίθηκαν επισκευαστικά δάνεια τα οποία, προκειμένου ο οργανισμός να δανειοδοτήσει, ζήτησε με έξοδα των ενδιαφερομένων να εγγραφούν υποθήκες στο δανειοδοτούμενο ακίνητο, υπέρ του οργανισμού και στο ύψος του αιτούμενου δανείου. Όταν ξαφνικά έπαυσε η λειτουργία του ΟΕΚ, βρέθηκαν πολίτες που, ενώ δεν είχαν δανειοδοτηθεί, έχουν υποθηκευμένες τις περιούσιες υπέρ του ΟΕΚ. Μόνο στην Αχαΐα έχουν καταμετρηθεί επτά (7) περιπτώσεις. Μέχρι σήμερα δεν υπάρχει, τουλάχιστον για την Πάτρα, οποιαδήποτε Αρχή που να μπορεί αρμοδίως να εκδώσει βεβαίωση που να πιστοποιεί ότι δεν οφείλουν στον οργανισμό, ώστε να αρθούν οι υποθήκες.

— Στο Πλατύ Ημαθίας είχαν κατασκευαστεί 80 εργατικές κατοικίες και σχετικοί κοινόχρηστοι χώροι με προϋπολογισμό 6 976 250 ευρώ. Παρά το γεγονός ότι, από το τέλος του 2008, έχουν επιλεγεί οι οικογένειες στις οποίες θα εδίδοντο οι κατοικίες αυτές, μέχρι σήμερα δεν τους έχουν αποδοθεί. Ενώ λοιπόν τα σπίτια έχουν ολοκληρωθεί, παραμένουν ακατοίκητα, με αποτέλεσμα να υφίστανται συνεχώς φθορές και βανδαλισμούς.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Γνωρίζει τα παραπάνω; Γνωρίζει αν η προσωρινή επιτροπή έχει στην πράξη αναλάβει τα καθήκοντά της και αν διευθετεί τις νομικές εκκρεμείς υποχρεώσεις απέναντι στους πολίτες;

— Προτίθεται να παρέμβει προς την ελληνική κυβέρνηση;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τη δυσχερή οικονομική κατάσταση των νοικοκυριών στην Ελλάδα και τη σημασία της στέγασης για την ευημερία των νοικοκυριών. Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει ότι κατ' αρχήν οι υφιστάμενες συμβατικές υποχρεώσεις του ΟΕΚ θα εξακολουθούν να τηρούνται ακόμη και εάν δεν αναληφθούν νέες δεσμεύσεις. Η Επιτροπή δεν γνωρίζει τις λεπτομέρειες για τις δραστηριότητες της προσωρινής επιτροπής που είναι αρμόδια για τον καθορισμό των εκκρεμών υποχρεώσεων και δικαιωμάτων, καθώς και οποιουδήποτε άλλου νομικού κεκτημένου ή συμβατικής σχέσης του ΟΕΚ. Ειδικά ερωτήματα σχετικά με τις δραστηριότητες της επιτροπής μπορούν να απευθύνονται στις ελληνικές αρχές.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009057/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Huge problems for citizens with cases pending before the OEK — cases in Achaia and Platy (Imathia)

Under the Memorandum with Greece dated March 2012, the Troika insisted, among other things, on the abolition of the Social Housing Organisation (OEK).The Commission expressly stated, in reply to previous questions by me (P-002348/2012 and P-002379/2012), that 'existing contractual obligations will be respected' and that 'the Greek authorities have set a temporary administrative committee in charge of setting the operational modalities for rules for the settlement of outstanding operational obligations and rights, as well as of any other necessary and vested legal relationship of the two abolished entities'.

However, eighteen months later, huge problems have arisen for citizens with cases pending before the OEK. The following are examples:

— While the OEK was operational, when loans for repairs were approved, the organisation asked interested parties to register a mortgage on the property for which a loan was approved at their own expense, for the benefit of the organisation and for the amount of the loan requested. When the OEK suddenly ceased to operate, there were some citizens who had no loans but who had mortgaged their property for the benefit of the OEK. In Achaia alone, seven (7) cases have been reported. To date, there is no Authority, at least not for Patras, which has powers to issue confirmation that they have no debt to the organisation, so that the mortgages can be deleted.

— In Platy (Imathia), 80 social dwellings and associated common parts have been constructed at a cost of EUR 6 976 250. Despite the fact that the families allocated to these homes were selected by the end of 2008, they have yet to take possession. The homes have been completed but are still unoccupied and are deteriorating and being vandalised.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Is it aware of this problem? Does it know if the temporary committee has in fact assumed its responsibilities and if it is settling outstanding legal obligations towards these citizens?

— Does it intend to intervene with the Greek Government?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the difficult financial situation of households in Greece and of the importance of housing can be for the well-being of households. The Commission is aware of the principle that the existing contractual obligations of OEK would still be respected even if no new commitments would be assumed. The Commission is not aware of the detailed activities carried out by the temporary administrative committee in charge of setting the outstanding operational obligations and rights, as well as of any other necessary and vested legal or contractual relationship of OEK. Specific questions on the activities carried out by the committee can be addressed to the Greek authorities.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009058/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(25 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Allarmante moria di pesci verificatasi nella laguna di Venezia a causa di un possibile inquinamento delle acque

Da circa metà luglio 2013 a Venezia si è iniziato a percepire un odore terribile e l'acqua della laguna ha acquistato un colore marrone, quasi nero ([1]). In un primo momento il fenomeno si è manifestato all'altezza del ponte della Libertà, il ponte che collega Venezia alla terraferma, poco distante da Porto Marghera. Dalla notte fra venerdì 19 luglio 2013 e sabato 20 luglio 2013 tale fenomeno si è ulteriormente diffuso e sono stati avvistati migliaia di pesci morti galleggianti in alcune aree della laguna centrale. Nella mattinata del 20 luglio 2013 numerosissimi pesci in decomposizione, compresi anguille e granchi, sono apparsi nei canali interni del centro storico della città, incluso il Canal Grande ([2]). Significativo il fatto che nemmeno i gabbiani mangino questi pesci, benché costituiscano il loro cibo abituale. I pescatori locali, che sono stati i primi ad accorgersi dell'anomalia, dichiarano di non aver mai visto un fenomeno simile ([3]).

I cittadini veneziani riportano uno spettacolo terrificante, con un odore insopportabile diffuso la mattina del 21 luglio 2013 ed avvistamenti di pesci galleggianti con le interiora esposte. Il 21 luglio, tuttavia, l'acqua della laguna appare abbastanza «pulita» poiché nel frattempo sono raccolte 5 tonnellate di pesce marcio da parte di Veritas (Veneziana energia risorse idriche territorio ambiente servizi S.p.A.), l'azienda erogatrice di servizi ambientali al Comune di Venezia, ma l'odore e il nero dell'acqua restano. Altri 10 quintali di pesce marcio sono raccolti da Veritas il 22 luglio 2013.

Il Comune di Venezia e l'Agenzia regionale per la prevenzione e protezione ambientale del Veneto (ARPAV) hanno invitato la popolazione alla calma, in quanto il fenomeno sarebbe legato a cause naturali: la proliferazione anomala di alghe allogene, dovuta a fattori ambientali quali abbondanti piogge primaverili e caldo, con conseguente anossia ([4]). La popolazione però è perplessa, vista l'entità del fenomeno, e alcuni cittadini hanno già avviato una raccolta di fondi per commissionare privatamente le analisi di campioni di pesce morto e dell'acqua della laguna ([5]). Nel frattempo, la Procura della Repubblica di Venezia ha aperto un fascicolo d'inchiesta.

1. La Commissione è al corrente di questo grave caso di inquinamento e della moria di pesci a Venezia?

2. La Commissione non intende chiedere tempestivamente chiarimenti alle autorità locali venete su tale scempio ambientale, scongiurando così ogni possibile ripercussione sulla salute dei cittadini e sull'ecosistema, ed evitando il propagarsi di questo preoccupante fenomeno?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(18 settembre 2013)

La Commissione non era stata informata della recente moria di pesci a Venezia riferita dall'onorevole deputato. Prende atto dell'iniziativa della Procura veneziana di avviare un'inchiesta sul presente fenomeno e attende l'esito di tale inchiesta per valutare se saranno necessari ulteriori interventi.

([1]) http://www.gazzettino.it/nordest/venezia/acqua_marrone_e_migliaia_di_pesci_morti_in_canal_grande_manca_ossigeno_foto/notizie/306790.shtml.
([2]) http://nuovavenezia.gelocal.it/cronaca/2013/07/21/news/moria-di-pesci-in-laguna-e-canal-grande-1.7456006.
([3]) http://nuovavenezia.gelocal.it/cronaca/2013/07/22/news/allarme-in-citta-per-la-moria-di-pesci-raccolte-5-tonnellate-1.7461392.
([4]) http://www.gazzettino.it/nordest/venezia/mora_di_pesci_la_procura_accertare_se_causa_naturale_o_inquinamento/notizie/307590.shtml#.
([5]) http://video.gelocal.it/nuovavenezia/locale/moria-di-pesci-analisi-auto-organizzate-dai-cittadini/15669/15701 e http://youtu.be/38yzu9Wrjdk.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009058/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Alarming fish mortality in the Venice lagoon, due to possible water pollution

Since around mid-July 2013 Venice has begun to notice an awful smell and the water of the lagoon has turned a brown colour that is almost black ([1]). At first, the problem occurred at the Ponte della Libertà, the bridge that connects Venice to the mainland, not far from Porto Marghera. From the night between Friday, 19 July 2013 and Saturday, 20 July 2013, the problem spread further and thousands of dead fish were seen floating in certain areas of the central lagoon. On the morning of 20 July 2013, numerous decaying fish, including eels and crabs, appeared in the internal channels of the city's historic centre, including the Grand Canal ([2]). It is significant that not even the seagulls are eating these fish, even though they are their usual food. Local fishermen, who were the first to notice the problem, say they have never seen anything like it. ([3])

Venetian citizens have reported a horrific sight, with an overpowering smell which spread throughout the city on the morning of 21 July 2013 and sightings of fish floating with their innards exposed. On 21 July, however, the water of the lagoon appeared to be fairly 'clean' because, in the meantime, Veritas (Veneziana energia risorse idriche territorio ambiente servizi S.p.A.) — the company which provides environmental services to the City of Venice — had collected 5 tonnes of rotting fish, but the smell and the black water remained. Another 1000 kg of rotting fish were collected by Veritas on 22 July 2013.

The City of Venice and the Veneto Regional Agency for Environmental Prevention and Protection (ARPAV) have appealed for calm, since the phenomenon is apparently due to natural causes: the abnormal proliferation of alien algae, due to environmental factors such as abundant spring rains and heat, resulting in anoxia (oxygen deficiency) ([4]). The locals, however, are puzzled, given the extent of the phenomenon, and some people have already started raising funds in order to privately commission tests on samples of dead fish and on the water of the lagoon ([5]). Meanwhile, the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Venice has opened an investigation.

1. Is the Commission aware of this serious case of pollution and fish die-offs in Venice?

2. Will the Commission not promptly ask the local authorities in Venice for clarification on this environmental destruction, to avoid any possible repercussions on public health and the ecosystem, and to prevent the spread of this worrying phenomenon?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission has not been informed about this recent fish death incident in Venice. It takes note of the public prosecutor's initiative to launch an investigation into the present incident and will await the results of the investigation before assessing the need for further action.

([1]) http://www.gazzettino.it/nordest/venezia/acqua_marrone_e_migliaia_di_pesci_morti_in_canal_grande_manca_ossigeno_foto/notizie/306790.shtml
([2]) http://nuovavenezia.gelocal.it/cronaca/2013/07/21/news/moria-di-pesci-in-laguna-e-canal-grande-1.7456006
([3]) http://nuovavenezia.gelocal.it/cronaca/2013/07/22/news/allarme-in-citta-per-la-moria-di-pesci-raccolte-5-tonnellate-1.7461392
([4]) http://www.gazzettino.it/nordest/venezia/mora_di_pesci_la_procura_accertare_se_causa_naturale_o_inquinamento/notizie/307590.shtml#
([5]) http://video.gelocal.it/nuovavenezia/locale/moria-di-pesci-analisi-auto-organiszate-dai-cittadini/15669/15701 e http://youtu.be/38yzu9Wrjdk

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009059/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(25 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Contratação de professores em Portugal

Os dados disponíveis sobre professores contratados indicam-nos que existem 37 565 professores contratados com 4 ou mais anos de serviço e 11 526 com 10 ou mais anos de serviço. Como é sabido, estes professores trabalham ano após ano com vínculos precários, sem certezas em relação à sua contratação após um ano e em condições desfavoráveis em relação aos professores que estão no quadro, nomeadamente no que se refere aos níveis salariais, opções de escolha do horário de trabalho, proteção social, entre outros aspetos.

Esta semana foi anunciado que, no âmbito do concurso nacional externo de contratação de professores, apenas 3 professores conseguiram lugar nos quadros, num universo de 45 431 professores candidatos.

A Diretiva 1999/70/CE de 28 de junho de 1999 estabelece um acordo relativo a contratos de trabalho a termo, tendo estabelecidos princípios de não discriminação (artigo 4.º) e disposições para evitar os abusos (artigo 5.º).

Os números supracitados demonstram que o recrutamento de professores contratados é efetuado para assegurar necessidades permanentes das instituições de ensino.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão que análise faz da situação, nomeadamente à luz da leitura da Diretiva supramencionada.

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(5 de setembro de 2013)

Remete-se o Senhor Deputado para a resposta da Comissão à pergunta escrita E-1291/2013 ([1]). A Comissão já enviou uma carta de notificação para cumprir às autoridades portuguesas em 30 de setembro de 2011. E, em 1 de outubro de 2012, foi enviada uma carta de notificação para cumprir complementar, abrangendo outras questões que surgiram durante as investigações dos serviços da Comissão. Os serviços estão a concluir a análise das respostas prestadas pelas autoridades nacionais, bem como o material contido em várias queixas e uma petição. Uma vez concluída a avaliação, serão tomadas as medidas adequadas no quadro das competências da Comissão, a fim de garantir a correta aplicação do direito da UE.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009059/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Employment of teachers in Portugal

Available data on contract teachers in Portugal show that 37 565 teachers have been on temporary contracts for four or more years and that 11 526 have been similarly employed for 10 or more years. These teachers work year after year in precarious circumstances, without any certainty that their contracts will be renewed at the end of each year and under less favourable conditions than permanent teachers, particularly with regard to salaries, social protection and being able to choose their working hours, among other aspects.

This week it was announced that only three teachers obtained permanent teaching posts in this year's national external competition for the admission of teachers, out of a total of 45 431 teachers who applied.

Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 establishes an agreement on fixed-term contracts, laying down principles of non-discrimination (Article 4) and provisions to prevent abuse (Article 5).

The figures quoted above show that contract teachers are employed in order to cover permanent needs in the educational system.

How does the Commission view this situation, particularly in light of the abovementioned directive?

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

The Honourable Member is referred to the answer by the Commission to Written Question E-1291/2013 ([1]). The Commission already sent a letter of formal notice to the Portuguese authorities on 30 September 2011. A supplementary letter of formal notice, covering further issues arising during the Commission services' investigations, was sent on 1 October 2012. The services are completing their analysis of the replies provided by the national authorities together with the material contained in various complaints and a petition. Upon completion of this assessment, the appropriate action will be taken in line with the competence of the Commission in ensuring the correct application of EC law.

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

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009060/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(25 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Cortes financeiros na educação em Portugal

Na resposta de 5 de julho dada pela Comissária Vassiliou à pergunta E-005273/2013, é afirmado que «a Comissão considera que há que salvaguardar um nível adequado de investimento na qualidade da educação e da formação, especialmente em tempos de dificuldade económica. E que, no respetivo processo de consolidação orçamental, os Estados-Membros devem privilegiar e, sempre que possível, reforçar o investimento em domínios que contribuem para o crescimento, tais como a educação, a investigação, a inovação e a energia».

No acordo negociado entre o Governo português e a troica para o futuro corte da despesa pública de 4 700 milhões de euros, prevê-se o despedimento de dezenas de milhares de trabalhadores da função pública, entre os quais, previsivelmente, professores e outros funcionários do setor da educação.

Nos últimos dois anos saíram das escolas portuguesas mais de 25 mil professores do ensino básico e secundário, entre aposentações e despedimentos de docentes contratados, resultantes dos cortes na educação acordados entre o governo nacional e a troica. Esses professores não estão a ser substituídos, o que está a provocar um défice na qualidade da educação e a criar difíceis condições para o funcionamento das escolas.

Desta modo, pergunto à Comissão se, na próxima avaliação da troica em Portugal, defenderá mais cortes na área da educação.

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(30 de setembro de 2013)

A Comissão considera a educação um instrumento fundamental que contribui não só para reduzir as desigualdades, mas constitui igualmente o principal fator subjacente a um crescimento económico sustentável a longo prazo.

Segundo diversas fontes internacionais, o rácio aluno/professor nos ensinos primário e secundário em Portugal continua a ser baixo quando comparado com outros países da UE ([1]), embora os professores portugueses trabalhem praticamente o mesmo número de horas por semana do que a média na UE ([2]). Além disso, a despesa pública global com a remuneração dos empregados na educação em relação ao rendimento per capita em Portugal continua a ser uma das mais elevadas na UE.

No que respeita aos resultados do sistema de ensino português, tem havido melhorias notáveis, por exemplo nas competências básicas ([3]) e ao nível da redução do abandono escolar precoce.

Continua a existir no entanto, uma grande margem para introduzir melhorias ([4]), e o sistema de ensino em Portugal ainda necessita, portanto, de reformas. Os custos devem ser controlados de perto e reforçada a eficiência do conjunto do sistema. No quadro do Programa de Ajustamento Económico, está a ser implementada uma série de reformas essenciais a um ritmo satisfatório.

([1]) Eurydice (2012). *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012*, p. 155, e Gráficos F9 e F10. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/134EN.pdf
([2]) Eurydice (2012). *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012*, Gráfico E8. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/134EN.pdf
([3]) *Education and Training Monitor* 2012, p. 29.
([4]) *Education and Training Monitor* 2012, p. 15.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009060/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Spending cuts in education in Portugal

In her answer to Written Question E-005273/2013, dated 5 July 2013, Commissioner Vassiliou said that 'the Commission believes that maintaining an adequate level of investment in quality education and training needs to be safeguarded, especially in times of economic difficulty; and that in conducting fiscal consolidation, Member States should give priority to, and strengthen where possible, investment in growth-friendly areas such as education, research, innovation and energy'.

The agreement reached between the Portuguese Government and the Troika on EUR 4.7 billion in public spending cuts calls for the dismissal of tens of thousands of workers from the public sector, a measure which is likely to include teachers and other education sector employees.

During the last two years, Portuguese schools have lost over 25 000 primary and secondary teachers as a result of retirement and termination of contracts arising from the education cuts agreed between the Portuguese Government and the Troika. These teachers are not being replaced, a situation which is affecting the quality of education and making it difficult for schools to function properly.

I therefore wish to ask the Commission whether it intends, in the context of the Troika's next review of the situation in Portugal, to call for further cuts in education.

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

The Commission considers education an essential instrument which not only contributes to a reduction in inequalities but is also a main factor behind sustainable economic long-term growth.

According to information from several international data sources, the student/teacher ratio in primary and secondary schools in Portugal continues to be low when compared with other EU countries ([1]), while teachers in Portugal teach a similar amount of hours per week than, on average, in the EU. ([2]) In addition, overall public expenditure on compensation of employees in education relative to per capita income in Portugal is still one of the highest in the EU.

With regard to the outcomes of the Portuguese education system, there have been remarkable improvements, for example in basic skills ([3]) and in the reduction of early school leaving.

However, the scope for improvement remains large ([4]), and the education system in Portugal therefore continues to be in need of reform. Costs must be closely controlled and the efficiency of the overall system needs to be increased. In the framework of the economic adjustment programme, a number of crucial reforms are being implemented at a satisfactory pace.

([1]) Eurydice (2012). *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012*, p. 155, and Figures F9 and F10. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/134EN.pdf
([2]) Eurydice (2012). *Key Data on Education in Europe 2012*, Figure E8. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/134EN.pdf
([3]) Education and Training Monitor 2012, p.29.
([4]) Education and Training Monitor 2012, p.15.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009061/13
an die Kommission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(25. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Überarbeitung der TSI Lärm

Im Rahmen der aktuellen Überarbeitung der TSI Lärm hat die Europäische Eisenbahnagentur im Februar 2013 einen ersten Entwurf veröffentlicht.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission den aktuellen Stand der Geräuschgrenzwertentwicklung im vorliegenden Entwurf?

2. Gibt es im Rahmen der von der Kommission im Mai 2013 veranlassten Studie bereits Ergebnisse darüber, ob sich der Anwendungsbereich der TSI Lärm auf existierende Fahrzeuge ausweiten lässt?

3. Teilt die Kommission die Auffassung, dass ein akuter Bedarf besteht, die Lärmschutzpolitik viel stärker in die europäische Schienengesetzgebung einzubinden?

4. Wie bewertet die Kommission den Vorschlag, Geräuschgrenzwerte im Schienenverkehr, ähnlich wie bei Straßenfahrzeugen, im Rahmen des ordentlichen Gesetzgebungsverfahrens zu erlassen?

Antwort von Herrn Kallas im Namen der Kommission
(10. September 2013)

1. Die Kommission ist über die Arbeiten der Europäischen Eisenbahnagentur zur anstehenden Änderung der technischen Spezifikation für die Interoperabilität über Lärmemissionen (TSI „Lärm“) unterrichtet. Sie wird die diesbezügliche Empfehlung der Agentur aber erst dann bewerten, wenn sie offiziell vorgelegt wurde.

2. Die Studie befindet sich noch im Anfangsstadium und die Frage einer eventuellen Ausweitung des Anwendungsbereichs der TSI „Lärm“ auf bereits existierende Fahrzeuge ist bisher noch nicht behandelt worden. Bei der Studie und der aktuellen Überarbeitung der TSI „Lärm“ handelt es sich um zwei verschiedene Vorgänge.

3. Die Kommission stellt fest, dass der Schienenlärm in einigen Mitgliedstaaten ein akutes Problem darstellt, in anderen dagegen kaum oder gar keine Rolle spielt. Die infrage 2 angesprochene Studie soll dabei helfen, unter Berücksichtigung dieser Unterschiede Aufschluss darüber zu geben, welcher Ansatz auf EU-Ebene am ehesten verfolgt werden sollte.

4. „Lärm“ ist ein zu den Teilsystemen gehörender Bereich, in dem im Rahmen der Eisenbahninteroperabilitätsrichtlinie ([1]) die technischen Parameter von Schienenfahrzeugen harmonisiert werden. Wie bei den übrigen Teilsystemen erfolgt die Regelung im Wege von Rechtsakten der Kommission. Diese werden nach dem Regelungsverfahren mit Kontrolle erlassen, das nach Auffassung der Kommission gut funktioniert.

([1]) Richtlinie 2008/57/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 17. Juni 2008 über die Interoperabilität des Eisenbahnsystems in der Gemeinschaft (Neufassung), ABl. L 191 vom 18.7.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009061/13
to the Commission
Ismail Ertug (S&D)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Revision of the TSI Noise

In February 2013, the European Railway Agency presented a first draft in the context of the current revision of the TSI Noise.

1. What is the Commission's assessment of the current state of play with regard to developing limit values for noise in the Agency's draft?

2. Has the study which the Commission commissioned in May 2013 already yielded any findings as to whether the scope of the TSI Noise can be extended to existing rolling stock?

3. Does the Commission agree that there is an acute need to assign noise control policy a far greater role in European rail legislation?

4. What is the Commission's assessment of the proposal that noise limit values for rail transport should be adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure, as is the case for road vehicles?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the ongoing work of the European Railway Agency on the future revision of the technical specification for interoperability relating to noise (TSI Noise) but will assess the Agency's recommendation on this subject once it is officially submitted.

2. The study is at an early stage of its development and, as of today, the question of the possible extension of the scope of TSI Noise to existing rolling stock has not been touched upon. The study and the ongoing revision of TSI Noise are two separated processes.

3. The Commission observes that the rail noise problem is acute in some Member States, while it is marginal or non-existing in the other ones. The study referred to in question 2 was commissioned to help to assess what should be the most relevant EU-wide approach, taking into account the abovementioned differences.

4. Noise is an area of harmonisation of parameters of railway vehicles under the railway interoperability directive ([1]) and forms one of the sub-systems. As all the sub-systems, it is regulated via Commission acts adopted in accordance with the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. The Commission is of the opinion that this procedure works effectively.

([1]) Directive 2008/57/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 on the interoperability of the rail system within the Community (Recast), OJ L 191, 18.7.2008.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009062/13
alla Commissione (Vicepresidente/Alto Rappresentante)
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR) e Susy De Martini (ECR)
(25 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: VP/HR — Esportazione di medici cubani

Numerosi organi di stampa riportano che, in occasione della «Confederation Cup» di calcio svoltasi nei giorni scorsi in Brasile, il governo brasiliano abbia velocizzato i negoziati con la dittatura cubana per l'invio di 6 000 medici nelle zone svantaggiate del paese, garantendo in cambio 176 milioni di dollari ai fratelli Castro per l'ammodernamento delle infrastrutture dell'isola. Il Brasile infatti non ha un numero sufficiente di medici e invia quelli cubani dove i dottori brasiliani non vogliono andare, nelle aree più sperdute del paese. Allo stesso tempo, però, i medici brasiliani hanno protestato contro questa decisione, parallelamente alle varie proteste avvenute proprio in concomitanza con la manifestazione sportiva che lamentavano il malgoverno della Presidente Rousseff. A Cuba invece i medici migliori vengono inviati all'estero, come si è già verificato in numerosi altri casi, lasciando la popolazione nelle mani di medici inesperti o giovani praticanti e mettendo in serio pericolo la vita dei cittadini cubani.

Può il Vicepresidente della Commissione/Alto Rappresentante rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È al corrente della presenza di medici cubani in Europa e di eventuali programmi di scambio con Stati membri?

2. Non ritiene di dovere richiedere spiegazioni al governo cubano a tutela dei turisti e dei lavoratori cittadini dell'Unione Europea che si trovano sull'isola, e che rischiano di non ricevere cure mediche adeguate in caso di bisogno?

3. È in grado di certificare che eventuali fondi europei di solidarietà stanziati a Cuba e al Brasile non siano utilizzati per implementare programmi di scambio di questo tipo?

4. È al corrente di casi di malasanità legati a questo programma di scambio che abbiano arrecato danni ai cittadini dell'Unione Europea?

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

L'UE monitora regolarmente la situazione politica, economica e sociale di Cuba, attraverso la sua delegazione a L'Avana.

Nessun fondo dell'UE concesso a Cuba e al Brasile è stato utilizzato per stringere accordi volti a inviare medici all'estero. Ci risulta inoltre che i negoziati tra Brasile e Cuba per distaccare medici cubani in regioni remote del Brasile non siano sfociati in un accordo.

La Commissione sostiene gli Stati membri nell'attuazione del codice globale di condotta per il reclutamento internazionale di personale sanitario dell'OMS (WHO Global Code of Practice for the International recruitment of Health Personnel), che invita gli Stati membri dell'organizzazione (tra cui Cuba e il Brasile) ad astenersi da politiche attive di assunzione di personale sanitario proveniente da paesi che devono gestire gravi carenze di lavoratori in questo settore.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009062/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Cristiana Muscardini (ECR) and Susy De Martini (ECR)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Importing doctors from Cuba

According to media reports, in the run-up to the Confederations Cup held recently in Brazil the Brazilian Government speeded up negotiations with the Cuban dictatorship on sending 6000 Cuban doctors to disadvantaged parts of Brazil, with, in exchange, USD 176 million being handed over to the Castro brothers for infrastructure modernisation projects in Cuba. Brazil does not have enough doctors, and the idea was to send to the Cuban doctors to the most remote parts of the country, where Brazilian doctors refuse to go. Brazil's doctors took issue with this decision, joining their voices to the cacophony of protest against President Rousseff's poor governance that surrounded the holding of the Confederations Cup in the country.

Given that, as a result of Cuba's best doctors being sent abroad (similar arrangements have been made with other countries in the past), people on the island are left in the hands of inexperienced or trainee doctors, which places their lives at risk, will the Vice-President/High Representative say whether:

1. she is aware of any arrangements having been made between Cuba and Member States to bring Cuban doctors to Europe?

2. she should not seek clarifications from the Cuban Government, with a view to making sure that proper medical care is available to EU nationals on holiday or working in Cuba?

3. she can provide assurances that no EU funds provided to Cuba and Brazil have been used for arrangements of this kind?

4. she is aware of any harm being caused to EU citizens by substandard healthcare provision brought about by such arrangements?

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

The EU regularly monitors the political, economic and social situation in Cuba via its Delegation in Havana.

No EU funds provided to Cuba and Brazil have been used for arrangements concerning the sending abroad of doctors. To the best of our knowledge, the negotiations between Brazil and Cuba on the posting of Cuban doctors in remote regions of Brazil did not result in an agreement.

The Commission supports EU Member States in implementing the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Code of Practice for the international recruitment of health personnel that calls upon WHO Members States — which include both Cuba and Brazil — to discourage active recruitment of health personnel from countries facing critical shortages of health workers.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009063/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(25 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Chiusura del traffico di via dei Fori Imperiali: possibile violazione della normativa sugli appalti pubblici

L'amministrazione comunale di Roma Capitale nei giorni scorsi ha dato avvio alle procedure relative alla chiusura del traffico dell'arteria di via dei Fori Imperiali per promuovere la pedonalizzazione dell' area circostante.

Tale intervento impone il dirottamento verso altre arterie di un ingente traffico privato, comportando l'estensione della zona a traffico limitato, con relative opere ed interventi di viabilità, con un costo stimato tra i 1,5 e 2 milioni di euro.

La stessa amministrazione, tramite la Conferenza dei Servizi, ha individuato in Roma Metropolitane, per il tramite di METRO C, il soggetto attuatore di tale progetto.

Tale decisione, confermata dalla stessa Roma Metropolitane, e i relativi costi saranno imputati alla voce «cantierizzazioni» della METRO C, senza però alcun tipo di programmazione economica preventiva, in quanto tale decisione dell'amministrazione comunale non era presente tra le opere previste nell'ambito della cantierizzazione.

Ciò comporterà un aumento dei costi relativi alla METRO C, infrastruttura strategica cofinanziata dal governo nazionale tramite fondi CIPE, oltre che una variazione d'uso di fondi già stanziati e assegnati, il cui ammontare è allo stato totalmente provvisorio.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. Come valuta il modus operandi dell'amministrazione di Roma capitale?

2. Tale comportamento dell'amministrazione comunale è in linea con la legislazione relativa agli appalti pubblici?

3. Sono stati rispettati i principi di efficacia, efficienza ed economicità, e sono state rispettate tutte le procedure in termini di analisi economica e programmazione finanziaria?

4. Quali sono le conseguenze contabili e l'incidenza di tale operazione rispetto ai lavori relativi alla METRO C?

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

La Commissione ringrazia l'Onorevole deputata per averle segnalato l'eventualità che il progetto del Comune di Roma Capitale volto alla pedonalizzazione di Via dei Fori imperiali non sia compatibile con le norme dell'UE sugli appalti pubblici.

Sulla scorta delle limitate informazioni comunicate dall'Onorevole deputata, la Commissione non è in grado di stabilire la fondatezza dei timori manifestati in tal senso. Si rilevi al riguardo che la direttiva 2004/18/CE relativa al coordinamento delle procedure di aggiudicazione degli appalti pubblici si applica esclusivamente agli appalti di lavori di valore superiore a 5 milioni di euro. Per gli appalti che non raggiungono tale soglia, come il progetto in questione, i principi generali di trasparenza e trattamento equo risultanti dal TFUE si applicano laddove sia dimostrato che l'appalto presenta un interesse transfrontaliero.

Poiché, stante alle informazioni comunicate dall'Onorevole deputata, il progetto non sembra coinvolgere fondi dell'UE, spetta all'amministrazione aggiudicatrice e alle competenti autorità nazionali valutare tutti gli aspetti inerenti alle implicazioni finanziarie del progetto a fronte dei principi di efficacia, efficienza ed economicità.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009063/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Closure to traffic of Via dei Fori Imperiali: possible infringement of public procurement legislation

Rome City Council recently launched a procedure to close to traffic an arterial road in the capital — the Via dei Fori Imperiali — with a view to pedestrianising the surrounding area.

This will force very large numbers of private vehicles onto other arterial roads and involve the extension of the 'restricted traffic zone'. The cost of the road works and other operations has been put at between EUR 1.5 million and EUR 2 million.

Rome City Council has given Roma Metropolitane the responsibility for running the project, and the work is to be carried out by the METRO C firm.

This arrangement has been confirmed by Roma Metropolitane, and the costs involved will be charged to the budget for the METRO C line, despite the fact that the project was not included among the works initially planned.

Not only will this will entail higher costs for METRO C, a strategic infrastructure project which is being co-financed by the national government with CIPE (Interministerial Committee for Economic Planning) funding, but it will also involve a change in the use of funds which have already been earmarked and allocated, although the precise amount involved is not yet clear.

1. What view does the Commission take of the approach adopted by Rome City Council?

2. Is the local authority's behaviour consistent with public procurement legislation?

3. Have the principles of effectiveness, efficiency and value for money been adhered to and have proper financial planning procedures been followed?

4. What financial implications will this decision have and what will be the impact on the METRO C project?

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

The Commission thanks the Honourable Member for drawing its attention to possible concerns related to the compatibility of the Rome city council's project to pedestrianize Via dei Fori Imperiali with EU rules on public procurement.

On the basis of the limited information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission cannot establish whether the award of the project might raise such concerns. In this regard, it has to be noted that directive 2004/18/EC on the coordination of procedures for the award of public contracts applies only to works contracts with a value higher than EUR 5 million. For works contracts below this threshold, such as the one at stake, the general principles deriving from the TFEU of transparency and equal treatment apply if it can be proved that the contract has a certain cross-border interest.

Since according to the information provided by the Honourable Member no EU funds seem to be involved in the project, all aspects related to its financial implications in relation with the principles of effectiveness, efficiency and value for money lie within the remit of the contracting authority and the responsible national authorities.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009064/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(25 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibile sottovalutazione dell'impatto ambientale del progetto di una discarica per rifiuti speciali a Lughignano di Casale sul Sile (TV)

La Commissione VIA (Valutazione Impatto Ambientale) della Regione del Veneto, organo competente per la consultazione in materia di adempimenti ambientali, in data 24.4.2013 ha espresso parere favorevole in merito al progetto di realizzazione di una discarica per rifiuti speciali a Lughignano di Casale sul Sile (TV) ([1]). Il progetto, presentato da un consorzio di imprese, riguarda la realizzazione di un impianto per lo smaltimento dei rifiuti prodotti dalle stesse nei rispettivi impianti produttivi e di recupero; la capacità di stoccaggio complessiva prevista è pari a circa 315 000 metri cubi di rifiuti, equivalenti a 320 000 tonnellate.

La valutazione dell'impatto ambientale sulla base della quale è stato formulato il parere della Commissione VIA, tuttavia, risalirebbe al 2006, e si baserebbe sul S.I.A. (Studio Impatto Ambientale) presentato dal consorzio proponente nel 2005. Il parere, pertanto, avrebbe avuto a oggetto il solo progetto preliminare, che ha successivamente subìto numerose modifiche e integrazioni. Secondo la giurisprudenza della Corte di giustizia CE, qualora il diritto nazionale dello Stato membro preveda che il procedimento di autorizzazione di un progetto si articoli in più fasi, nel caso in cui la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale possa essere effettuata esclusivamente nel corso della fase iniziale del procedimento, e non nel corso di una fase successiva, vi sarebbe contrasto con quanto previsto dalla direttiva «VIA» 85/337/CEE (ora 2011/92/UE) ([2]).

L'impianto, inoltre, verrà realizzato a ridosso del Parco naturale regionale del fiume Sile, area tutelata quale SIC (ai sensi della direttiva «Habitat» 92/43/CEE) e ZPS (ai sensi della direttiva «Uccelli» 2009/147/CE); ciononostante, le pesanti interferenze ecosistemiche che l'opera potrebbe produrre non sono state tenute in considerazione alcuna nella formulazione di detto parere, nonostante i rilievi puntualmente formulati dall'«Ente Parco naturale regionale del fiume Sile» ([3]).

Alla luce di quanto precede, la Commissione non ritiene opportuno contattare le autorità competenti per verificare la regolarità della consultazione ambientale svoltasi, presumibilmente affetta da violazioni della normativa ambientale dell'UE comportanti la sottostima delle conseguenze negative sull'ambiente che l'impianto potrebbe andare a produrre?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(18 settembre 2013)

Sulla base delle informazioni trasmesse dall'onorevole deputato e in assenza di prove chiare e sostanziali della presenza di errori nelle valutazioni ambientali svolte dalle autorità competenti, la Commissione non è stata in grado di riscontare nessuna violazione delle disposizioni della direttiva 2011/92/UE ([4]) concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati (direttiva VIA), della direttiva Habitat ([5]) e della direttiva Uccelli ([6]), poiché non è stata fornita alcuna prova di una modifica sostanziale del progetto che comportasse effetti negativi sull'ambiente. La Commissione potrà svolgere ulteriori accertamenti nel caso in cui riceverà prove concrete di un'eventuale violazione della normativa UE in materia ambientale.

([1]) A seguito di istanza depositata all'Unità Complessa VIA della Regione del Veneto in data 14.6.2011, protocollo 282821.
([2]) Cfr. Corte di giustizia CE, 4.5.2006, C-508/03, Commissione/Regno Unito, punti 105 e 106. Nella causa in questione, la Commissione sostiene che la direttiva «VIA» richieda che una valutazione possa essere compiuta, in via di principio, in ogni fase di tale procedimento, qualora risulti che il progetto in questione può avere un impatto ambientale importante. V. punto 96.
([3]) Cfr. nota del 19.2.2013, protocollo n. 533/2013: http://www.parcosile.it/albOnline/2013/PRFSIdocumento17635.pdf
([4]) GU L 26 del 28.1.2012, pag. 1.
([5]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE del Consiglio, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.
([6]) Direttiva 2009/147/CEE concernente la conservazione degli uccelli selvatici, GU L 20 del 26.1.2010.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009064/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Possible underestimation of the environmental impact of a project for a special waste disposal facility at Lughignano di Casale sul Sile (TV)

On 24 April 2013, the EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) Committee of the Veneto Region, the body responsible for consultation on environmental compliance, expressed its approval of a project to create a disposal facility for special (hazardous) waste in Lughignano di Casale sul Sile (TV) ([1]). The project, submitted by a consortium of companies, concerns the construction of a facility for the disposal of waste produced by those companies in their respective factories and recovery plants. The overall storage capacity is expected to be approximately 315 000 cubic metres of waste, equivalent to 320 000 tonnes.

The environmental impact assessment on the basis of which the EIA Committee's opinion was delivered, however, dates back to 2006 and is allegedly based on the EIS (Environmental Impact Study) submitted by the consortium in 2005. The opinion, therefore, concerned only the preliminary project, which subsequently underwent numerous changes and additions. According to the case law of the EU Court of Justice, where the national law of a Member State provides that the procedure for authorising a project may be carried out in several stages, if the environmental impact assessment can be conducted only during the initial phase of the proceedings, and not at a later stage, this would be in breach of the provisions of the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC (now 2011/92/EU) ([2]).

The waste disposal facility, moreover, will be built near the River Sile Regional Natural Park, a protected area -– a site of Community importance (SCI) under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and an SPA (special protection area) under the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC. Despite that, the substantial impact that the work could have on the ecosystem has not been taken into account at all in the wording of the opinion, even though this issue was specifically pointed out by the River Sile Regional Natural Park Authority ([3]).

In the light of the above, should the Commission not contact the relevant authorities to ascertain whether the environmental consultation was carried out properly, since it appears to have been in breach of EU environmental law in that it may have underestimated the adverse impact that the waste disposal plant could have on the environment?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

From the information provided by the Honourable Member, and in the absence of clear and substantial evidence of error within the environmental assessments carried out by the competent Authorities, the Commission could not identify a breach of the directive 2011/92/EU ([4]) on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (EIA), Habitats Directive ([5]) and Birds Directive ([6]), as no evidence of a substantial change of the project, having significant adverse effects on the environment, has been provided. This would not preclude the Commission services investigating the matter further should they receive concrete evidence of a possible breach of the EU environmental law.

([1]) Further to an application lodged with the EIA Unit of the Veneto Region on 14 June 2011, ref. 282821.
([2]) Cfr. European Court of Justice, 4.5.2006, C-508/03, Commission v United Kingdom, paragraphs 105 and 106. In the case in question, the Commission argues that the EIA Directive requires that an assessment may in principle be carried out at each stage in that procedure if it appears that the project in question is likely to have significant effects on the environment. See paragraph 96.
([3]) Cfr. note of 19 February 2013, Ref. No 533/2013: http://www.parcosile.it/albOnline/2013/PRFSIdocumento17635.pdf
([4]) OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([5]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.
([6]) Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, OJ L 20, 26.1.2010.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009065/13
aan de Commissie
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE)
(25 juli 2013)

Betreft: Opslag en financiële spelers

In februari 2013 gaf de Commissie in haar antwoord op indieners vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord P-011351/2012 ([1]) aan op de hoogte te zijn van de bestaande opslagpraktijken waarbij eigenaars van opslaghuizen, inclusief financiële spelers, blijkbaar kunstmatige schaarste creëren voor de levering van metalen om hun winsten te maximaliseren.

Ziet de Commissie potentiële problemen voor de financiële spelers die de opslag en het vervoer van grondstoffen controleren? Zo ja, kan zij aangeven welke problemen kunnen ontstaan?

Is de Commissie van mening dat financiële spelers door opslaghuizen te controleren belangrijke informatie verkrijgen over de markt, die zij bij de handel in grondstoffen kunnen gebruiken?

Acht de Commissie het belangrijk dat banken die actief zijn op grondstofmarkten, bijvoorbeeld de aluminiummarkt, hun opslagfaciliteiten duidelijk gescheiden houden van hun bankactiviteiten? Zo ja, hoe zorgt de Commissie ervoor dat banken de verschillende activiteiten gescheiden houden?

In de VS wordt momenteel een uitvoerig debat gevoerd over de rol van financiële spelers op de grondstofmarkt. Werkt de Commissie met de Amerikaanse regelgevingsinstanties samen om de beste manier te vinden om de problemen in verband met opslag aan te pakken?

Onlangs gaf de *New York Times* aan dat de door opslagpraktijken kunstmatig opgedreven aluminiumprijzen de Amerikaanse consumenten de laatste 3 jaar meer dan 5 miljard USD hebben gekost ([2]). Kan de Commissie een raming geven van de kostenstijgingen die er kunnen zijn voor de Europese industrie? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(16 september 2013)

De Commissie is bekend met de berichten waarover het geachte Parlementslid het in zijn vraag heeft. De Commissie geeft zich rekenschap van het belang van de grondstoffenmarkten voor de economie als geheel. Zij volgt dan ook het debat dat wordt gevoerd over het belangenconflict dat kan ontstaan wanneer financiële spelers de opslag en het vervoer van grondstoffen controleren.

De Commissie werkt regelmatig samen met de toezichthouders in de VS en in andere jurisdicties rond mededingingskwesties die verband houden met de industrie in het algemeen en de grondstoffenmarkten in het bijzonder. Om echter het rechtmatige belang van derden en de integriteit van haar monitoring- en handhavingsactiviteiten te beschermen, acht de Commissie het in dit stadium niet passend zich uit te laten over maatregelen die in Europa of de in de Verenigde Staten zouden kunnen worden genomen.

De Commissie is momenteel nog niet in staat om in te schatten hoe groot de eventuele schade is die de activiteiten van financiële spelers hebben veroorzaakt, of een raming te geven van de mogelijke kostenstijgingen die daardoor voor de Europese industrie zijn ontstaan. Wel wil de Commissie hier beklemtonen dat zij deze kwesties zeer ernstig neemt en dat zij niet zal aarzelen om passende maatregelen te nemen wanneer zij denkt dat de mededingingsregels zijn geschonden.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2012-011351&language=NL.
([2]) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/21/business/a-shuffle-of-aluminum-but-to-banks-pure-gold.html?pagewanted=all & _r=1&.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009065/13
to the Commission
Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE)
(25 July 2013)

Subject: Warehousing and financial players

In February 2013 the Commission indicated ([1]) in its answer to my written question (P-011351/2012) that it was aware of the current warehousing practices in which owners of warehouses, including financial players, seem to be creating artificial shortages in the supply of metals in order to maximise their profits.

Does the Commission see any potential problems for financial players controlling the storage and shipment of commodities? If so, could the Commission indicate what problems could arise?

Does the Commission believe that by controlling warehouses financial players gain important market intelligence, which they can use when trading commodities?

Does the Commission believe that it is important that banks operating in commodities markets such as the aluminium market keep their storage facilities well separated from their banking activities? If so, how does the Commission ensure that banks keep these different practices at arm's length?

In the US there is currently a wide-ranging debate on the role of financial players in the commodity market. Does the Commission cooperate with US regulators in order to identify the best ways of addressing the problems related to warehousing?

Recently the *New York Times* indicated that inflated aluminium prices resulting from warehousing practices have cost American consumers more than USD 5 billion over the last 3 years ([2]). Can the Commission provide an estimate of possible cost increases to European industry? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the reports referred to in the Honourable Member's question. The Commission is mindful of the importance of the commodity markets for the economy as a whole and is conscious of the debate surrounding the alleged conflict of interest brought about when financial players control the storage and shipment of commodities.

The Commission regularly cooperates with US regulators and with regulators from other jurisdictions regarding antitrust matters relating to all industries and to the commodity markets in particular. However, in order to protect the legitimate interest of third parties and the integrity of its monitoring and enforcement activities, the Commission believes that it would not at this stage be appropriate to comment on any action that might be taken in either Europe or the United States.

The Commission is not at this stage in a position to judge whether any harm has been caused by the activities of financial players or to estimate any potential cost increases for European industry. Nonetheless, the Commission would stress that it takes these issues extremely seriously and will not hesitate to take appropriate action if it believes that the antitrust rules may have been infringed.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2012-011351&language=EN
([2]) http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/21/business/a-shuffle-of-aluminum-but-to-banks-pure-gold.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009108/13
au Conseil
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 juillet 2013)

Objet: 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 votre institution 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 compte-t-elle entamer des pourparlers avec les autorités du pays sur cette violation?

Réponse
(30 septembre 2013)

Le Conseil a été informé du cas soulevé par l'Honorable Parlementaire concernant le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite.

La Haute Représentante et ses services continueront de recourir, en toute occasion, à l'ensemble des outils dont ils disposent pour évoquer régulièrement la question des Droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales, en public ou non, dans le cadre de leurs contacts avec les autorités saoudiennes.

En l'absence d'accord bilatéral entre l'UE et le Royaume d'Arabie saoudite et donc de dialogue politique bilatéral au niveau institutionnel avec ce pays sur le thème des Droits de l'homme, l'UE continuera d'évoquer ces questions avec ses interlocuteurs saoudiens par tous les moyens dont elle dispose.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009108/13
to the Council
Marc Tarabella (S&D)
(26 July 2013)

Subject: 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 your institution'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?

Reply
(30 September 2013)

The Council is aware of the case raised by the Honourable Member of the European Parliament with regard to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The High Representative and her services 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 agreements between the EU and the KSA and there is not therefore any institutional bilateral political dialogue on human rights with the KSA, the EU will continue to raise these issues with its Saudi interlocutors, making full use of the opportunities at its disposal.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009109/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(26 July 2013)

Subject: Meeting between Commissioner Barnier and Gerry Grimstone

We note with interest that on 21 February 2013 Commissioner Barnier met formally with Gerry Grimstone, chairman of TheCityUK.

Will the Commission confirm whether minutes of this meeting were taken, and disclose the contents of those minutes in full? If not, why not? If the Commission is unwilling or unable to disclose the minutes themselves, can it state the purpose of the meeting, summarise all topics discussed and decisions taken or agreed either at or as a result of the meeting?

Please confirm whether Commissioner Barnier and Mr Grimstone speak on the telephone or exchange emails or other correspondence, and state the frequency and duration of the calls or correspondence. On what other occasions have they met whilst Commissioner Barnier has held his office? In any of the correspondence or meetings between them (or between their respective offices), is there discussion of: a) audit-related matters (in particular, but not limited to, mandatory auditor rotation and provision of non-audit services); b) the activities or future activities of TheCityUK; c) the timing of announcements or press releases by or on behalf of the Commission.

Please confirm whether the Commission provides TheCityUK with any direct or indirect funding or assistance.

Please disclose any direct or indirect relationship or interaction between the Commission and the directors or officers of Standard Life within the last two years.

Please confirm whether the Commission (or to its knowledge any EU institution) currently pays anything directly (or indirectly) or will do so in the future (e.g. pensions) to any of the directors of TheCityUK, and if so, please disclose the names of the recipients. For your ease of reference, we understand the directors of TheCityUK to be: Gerry Grimstone, Mark Boleat, Chris Cummings, Alan Houmann, Sir Andrew Cahn, Rachel Lomax, Sushill Saluja, Robert Gray, Sir Thomas Harris, Sean McGovern, Jeremy Wilson, Gary Campkin, Dan Torjussen-Proctor, Howard Miller, Juliet Carey, Marcus Scott, Kit Malthouse, Nick Sandall, Peter Mann, Nick Studer, Doug Barrow, Craig Donaldson, Lindsay J'Afrai-Pak, and Robert Elliott.

Question for written answer P-011704/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(15 October 2013)

Subject: Failure to answer question on EU Funding of UK NGOs

On 26 July 2013 I asked parliamentary Question E-009109/13 on EU funding of UK NGOs, with particular reference to a meeting between Commissioner Barnier and the chairman of TheCityUK on 21 February 2013.

The above parliamentary question was tabled under and in accordance with Rule 117, but I have not received a reply within the six weeks required by paragraph 4 of that rule.

I recognise that four weeks of August have intervened, but it is now eleven weeks since my question was received by the Commission and there is still not a word of response. Please explain the delay and the failure of your office to answer on the points I set out therein.

What should we infer from your silence?

Are you afraid of transparency being applied to your meetings with UK non-governmental organisations?

Do you hope to delay an answer for sufficient time that you are out of office before I receive a reply?

Do you accept that I can properly expect an answer on each and every one of my points, and not delay, obfuscation and avoidance?

Joint answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(15 November 2013)

Commissioner Barnier met Mr Grimstone on 21 February 2013. On the same day, Mr Grimstone also met Commissioner De Gucht. Both meetings were at Mr Grimstone's request as the newly appointed chairman of TheCityUK. As the Commissioners exchanged general considerations with Mr Grimstone, no formal minutes were taken of either meeting.

Commissioner Barnier and Mr Grimstone discussed the Commission's financial regulatory initiatives and the legislative measures announced by the Commission. Commissioner Barnier and Mr Grimstone have had no further contact.

Commissioner Barnier has not been in contact with any of the other people mentioned. There have, however, been meetings between Commission staff, Cabinet members and Standard Life representatives. For example, on 20 June 2013, a meeting took place between DG Internal Market staff, Mr Singh, Chief Risk Officer and Mr Porteous, Head of Solvency 2 Regulatory Development to discuss Solvency 2. A Member of Commissioner Barnier's Cabinet met Mr Porteous on 25 September 2013 to discuss the latest developments with regard to Solvency 2 and the Omnibus 2 negotiations, and Vice-President Reding met David Nish, Chief Executive of Standard Life on 24 April 2013, during a Roundtable discussion with members of the Association of British Insurers. A Standard Life representative is a member of DG Justice's Insurance Contract Law Expert Group. She participates in meetings and makes observations on relevant documents. In line with the Commission's rules and procedures, this expert was reimbursed expenses for attending a meeting on 17 April 2013.

The Commission does not currently pay anything to the individuals mentioned by the Honourable Member. Two of them have, in the past, held temporary positions within the Commission. They do not have any pension rights from the Commission.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009110/13
an die Kommission
Jo Leinen (S&D), Chris Davies (ALDE), Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL) und Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Bau illegaler Kraftwerke in Opole, Polen (Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen Polen aufgrund von Verzögerungen bei der Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2009/31/EG)

1. Die Richtlinie 2009/31/EG sollte von den Mitgliedstaaten bis zum 25. Juni 2011 umgesetzt werden. Im Juli 2011 leitete die Kommission ein Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen Polen aufgrund von Verzögerungen bei der Umsetzung ein. Hat die polnische Regierung auf das Aufforderungsschreiben der Kommission reagiert, und, falls ja, war die Antwort zufriedenstellend? Wurde der polnischen Regierung, falls sie nicht reagiert hat, eine begründete Stellungnahme vorgelegt?

2. Wie lange wird die Kommission warten, ob Polen die Richtlinie 2009/31/EG ordnungsgemäß umsetzt, bevor der Fall an den Gerichtshof verwiesen wird?

3. Ist sich die Kommission bewusst, dass Polen nicht dafür gesorgt hat, dass entweder die zuständige Behörde oder der Anlagenbetreiber die Eignung der zwei geplanten neuen Anlagen des Kraftwerks in Opole, die jeweils 900 MW erzeugen können, für die umweltverträgliche Abscheidung und geologische Speicherung von CO_2 (CCS-Fähigkeit) gemäß Artikel 33 der Richtlinie bewertet haben?

4. Ist die Kommission mit dem polnischen regionalen Verwaltungsgericht und dem Obersten Verwaltungsgericht einer Meinung, dass weder die zuständige Behörde noch die Investoren aufgrund der mangelnden Umsetzung der Richtlinie 2009/31/EG in polnisches Recht verpflichtet sind, die CCS-Fähigkeit einer neuen Verbrennungsanlage zu bewerten, auch wenn diese die in Artikel 33 der Richtlinie genannten Kriterien erfüllt?

5. Ist sich die Kommission bewusst, dass der polnische Ministerpräsident Donald Tusk den Baubeginn für diesen Sommer angekündigt hat, obwohl die von der Polska Grupa Energetyczna (PGE) geplante Investition in das Kraftwerk in Opole (für den Bau von zwei neuen Anlagen mit jeweils 900 MW) nicht die Anforderungen der Richtlinie erfüllt (da nicht bewertet wurde, ob die neuen Anlagen CCS-fähig sind) und somit vor Ort eine Sachlage geschaffen wird, die unwiderruflich gegen das EU-Recht verstößt?

6. Sind der Kommission andere Verbrennungsanlagen bekannt, die geplant sind oder sich bereits im Bau befinden und die gegen die Bestimmungen der Richtlinie in Bezug auf die Bewertung der CCS-Fähigkeit verstoßen?

Antwort von Frau Hedegaard im Namen der Kommission
(25. September 2013)

1./2. Im Juli 2011 hat die Kommission in der Tat Vertragsverletzungsverfahren wegen Nichtmitteilung der nationalen Umsetzungsmaßnahmen für die CCS-Richtlinie ([1]) gegen Polen und 25 weitere Mitgliedstaaten eingeleitet. Nach vollständiger Mitteilung der Umsetzungsmaßnahmen konnten neun Fälle inzwischen abgeschlossen werden, während andere Fälle, in denen die Umsetzungsmaßnahmen bis Juli 2013 mitgeteilt wurden, derzeit von der Kommission noch auf Vollständigkeit überprüft werden. Der polnischen Regierung wurde bisher noch keine mit Gründen versehene Stellungnahme wegen Polens Verletzung der CCS-Richtlinie zugeleitet. Die Kommission ist nicht in der Lage, weitere Einzelheiten ihres Austauschs mit den Mitgliedstaaten über laufende Vertragsverletzungsverfahren bekanntzugeben ([2]).

3./5. Bei der Kommission ist diesbezüglich eine Beschwerde eingegangen, und sie trägt derzeit Informationen zusammen, um den Sachverhalt und die Rechtsvorschriften, die die zwei geplanten neuen Feuerungsanlagen des Kraftwerks in Opole betreffen, zu klären.

4. EU-Richtlinien müssen bis zu ihrer Umsetzungsfrist umgesetzt sein. Die Mitgliedstaaten und ihre zuständigen Behörden sind auch im Fall einer Nichtumsetzung nicht von ihrer Verpflichtung entbunden, die Richtlinienbestimmungen anzuwenden.

([1]) Richtlinie 2009/31/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 23. April 2009.
([2]) Urteil vom 11. Dezember 2001, Petrie und andere gegen Kommission (T-191/99, Sammlung der Rechtsprechung 2001 S. II — 3677).

6. Der Kommission ist nicht bekannt, dass weitere Feuerungsanlagen, die nicht im Einklang mit Artikel 9a der Richtlinie 2001/80/EG ([3]) stehen, geplant sind oder sich im Bau befinden. Gemäß diesem Artikel müssen die Mitgliedstaaten gewährleisten, dass Betreiber von Feuerungsanlagen mit einer elektrischen Nennleistung von 300 Megawatt oder mehr die technische und die wirtschaftliche Machbarkeit einer Nachrüstung für die CO_2-Abscheidung geprüft haben. Ist die Prüfung positiv, so ist auf dem Betriebsgelände genügend Platz für die Anlagen zur Abscheidung und Kompression von CO_2 freizuhalten.

([3]) Gemäß Artikel 33 der CCS-Richtlinie.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009110/13
aan de Commissie
Jo Leinen (S&D), Chris Davies (ALDE), Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL) en Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(29 juli 2013)

Betreft: Bouw van een illegale energiecentrale in Opole, Polen (inbreukprocedure tegen Polen wegens vertraging bij de omzetting van Richtlijn 2009/31/EG)

1. Richtlijn 2009/31/EG moest uiterlijk op 25 juni 2011 door de lidstaten in nationale wetgeving omgezet zijn. In juli 2011 startte de Commissie een inbreukprocedure tegen Polen wegens vertraging bij deze omzetting. Heeft de Poolse overheid op de schriftelijke aanmaning van de Commissie geantwoord? Zo ja, heeft dit antwoord de Commissie tevredengesteld? Zo nee, heeft de Poolse overheid een met redenen omkleed advies ontvangen?

2. Hoe lang is de Commissie bereid te wachten op de correcte omzetting door Polen van Richtlijn 2009/31/EC alvorens de zaak voor het Hof van Justitie te brengen?

3. Is de Commissie zich ervan bewust dat Polen heeft nagelaten erop toe te zien dat de bevoegde instantie of de exploitant van de centrale nagaan of de twee geplande nieuwe units in de energiecentrale van Opole, die elk 900 MW kunnen opwekken, klaar zijn voor de milieuverantwoorde opvang en geologische opslag van CO_2 („CCS-klaar"), conform de vereiste in artikel 33 van de richtlijn?

4. Deelt de Commissie de mening van de regionale administratieve rechtbank en het administratieve hooggerechtshof van Polen dat de bevoegde instantie en de investeerders als gevolg van de niet-omzetting van Richtlijn 2009/31/EC in de Poolse wetgeving wettelijk niet verplicht zijn om te evalueren of een nieuwe verbrandingsinstallatie CCS-klaar is, zelfs als de installatie aan de in artikel 33 van de richtlijn genoemde criteria beantwoordt?

5. Is de Commissie ervan op de hoogte dat de Poolse premier, Donald Tusk, heeft aangekondigd dat de bouwwerkzaamheden deze zomer zullen beginnen, ongeacht het feit dat de investering die de Polska Grupa Energetyczna (PGE) in de energiecentrale van Opole wil doen (voor de bouw van twee units met elk een capaciteit van 900 MW) niet conform is met de bepalingen van de richtlijn (aangezien er niet is beoordeeld of de nieuwe units CCS-klaar zijn of niet), en beseft ze dat er zo in de praktijk een situatie wordt gecreëerd die onherroepelijk in strijd zal zijn met de EU-wetgeving?

6. Heeft de Commissie kennis van geplande of aan de gang zijnde bouwwerkzaamheden voor andere verbrandingsinstallaties die niet in overeenstemming zijn met de bepalingen van de richtlijn inzake evaluaties van de CCS-paraatheid?

Antwoord van mevrouw Hedegaard namens de Commissie
(25 september 2013)

1./2. In juli 2011 heeft de Commissie inderdaad een inbreukprocedures tegen Polen en 25 andere lidstaten ingeleid wegens niet-mededeling van nationale maatregelen tot omzetting van de CCS-richtlijn ([1]). Tot nu toe werden negen zaken afgesloten omdat er mededeling van de volledige omzettingsmaatregelen had plaatsgevonden, terwijl de Commissie in de andere zaken, voor zover de omzettingmaatregelen zijn meegedeeld tot juni 2013, momenteel de volledigheid ervan controleert. Er is bij de Poolse regering nog geen met redenen omkleed advies ingediend in verband met de inbreuk van dat land op de CCS-richtlijn. De Commissie kan geen nadere details verstrekken over haar contacten met de lidstaten over lopende inbreukprocedures. ([2])

3./5. De Commissie heeft een klacht over deze kwestie ontvangen en verzamelt nu feitelijke en juridische informatie over de zaak van de geplande twee nieuwe units in de energiecentrale van Opole.

4. De EU-richtlijnen moeten worden omgezet binnen de daarvoor vastgestelde termijn. Indien zij niet worden omgezet, ontslaat dit de lidstaten en hun bevoegde autoriteiten niet van de verplichting om ze toe te passen.

([1]) Richtlijn 2009/31/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 23 april 2009.
([2]) Arrest van 11 december 2001, Petrie e.a./Commissie (T-191/99, Jurispr. 2001 blz. II — 3677).

6. De Commissie is niet op de hoogte van geplande of lopende bouwwerkzaamheden van andere stookinstallaties die niet aan artikel 9 bis van Richtlijn 2001/80/EG voldoen ([3]). Op grond van dat artikel moeten de lidstaten ervoor zorgen dat de exploitanten van stookinstallaties met een nominaal elektrisch vermogen van 300 megawatt of meer zijn nagegaan of de installaties in technisch en economisch opzicht geschikt zijn om voor CO_2-afvang te worden aangepast. Indien de beoordeling positief uitvalt, moet geschikte ruimte op de locatie van de installatie worden vrijgemaakt om CO_2 af te vangen en te comprimeren.

([3]) Zoals ingevoerd bij artikel 33 van de CCS-richtlijn.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys E-009110/13
komissiolle
Jo Leinen (S&D), Chris Davies (ALDE), Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL) ja Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(29. heinäkuuta 2013)

Aihe: Laittoman voimalan rakentaminen Opoleen Puolaan (rikkomusmenettely Puolaa vastaan direktiivin 2009/31/EY täytäntöönpanon viivästymisestä)

1. Jäsenvaltioiden olisi pitänyt panna direktiivi 2009/31/EY täytäntöön 25. kesäkuuta 2011 mennessä. Heinäkuussa 2011 komissio käynnisti rikkomusmenettelyn Puolaa vastaan täytäntöönpanon viivästymisestä. Onko Puolan hallitus vastannut komission viralliseen huomautukseen? Jos on, oliko vastaus tyydyttävä? Jos ei ollut, onko Puolan hallitukselle toimitettu perusteltu lausunto?

2. Kuinka pitkään komissio on valmis odottamaan, että Puola varmistaa direktiivin 2009/31/EY sisällyttämisen oikeusjärjestykseensä, ennen kanteen nostamista tuomioistuimessa?

3. Onko komissio tietoinen, että Puola ei ole varmistanut, että toimivaltainen viranomainen tai laitoksen toiminnanharjoittaja on arvioinut, onko Opolen voimalan suunnitelluissa kahdessa uudessa yksikössä, joiden kummankin sähköntuotantokapasiteetti on 900 MW, valmiudet ympäristön kannalta turvalliseen hiilidioksidin talteenottoon ja geologiseen varastointiin (CCS-valmius) direktiivin 33 artiklan vaatimusten mukaisesti?

4. Onko komissio samaa mieltä Puolan alueellisen hallinto-oikeuden ja korkeimman hallinto-oikeuden kanssa siitä, että direktiivin 2009/31/EY täytäntöönpanon laiminlyömisen takia toimivaltainen viranomainen tai investoijat eivät ole oikeudellisesti velvollisia arvioimaan, onko uudella polttolaitoksella CCS-valmius, vaikka se täyttäisi direktiivin 33 artiklassa luetellut vaatimukset?

5. Onko komissio tietoinen, että vaikka Polska Grupa Energetycznan (PGE) suunnittelema investointi Opelen voimalaan (kahden uuden 900 MW:n yksikön rakentamiseksi) on vastoin direktiivin vaatimuksia (koska ei ole tehty arviota siitä, onko uusissa yksiköissä CCS-valmius), Puolan pääministeri Donald Tusk on ilmoittanut, että rakennustyöt alkavat tänä kesänä, jolloin syntyy uusi tilanne, joka on peruuttamattomasti EU:n lainsäädännön vastainen?

6. Onko komissio tietoinen muiden sellaisten polttolaitosten suunnitelluista tai käynnissä olevista rakennustöistä, joissa rikotaan direktiivin säännöksiä CCS-valmiutta koskevan arvion tekemisestä?

Connie Hedegaardin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(25. syyskuuta 2013)

1./2. Komissio todellakin käynnisti heinäkuussa 2011 rikkomismenettelyt Puolaa ja 25:tä muuta jäsenvaltiota vastaan, jotka eivät olleet ilmoittaneet kansallisista toimenpiteistä CCS-direktiivin ([1]) täytäntöönpanemiseksi. Tähän mennessä 9 näistä menettelyistä on päätetty, koska niiden osalta on ilmoitettu täytäntöönpanotoimenpiteet täysimääräisesti. Muiden osalta komissio suorittaa parhaillaan heinäkuuhun 2013 mennessä ilmoitettujen täytäntöönpanotoimenpiteiden täydellisyystarkastusta. Puolalle ei ole vielä osoitettu CCS-direktiivin rikkomisen vuoksi perusteltua lausuntoa. Komissio ei voi antaa enempää tietoa yhteydenpidostaan niiden jäsenvaltioiden kanssa, joita koskevat rikkomismenettelyt ovat kesken ([2]).

3./5. Komissio on vastaanottanut asiaa koskevan valituksen ja kerää parhaillaan tietoja Opolen voimalaan suunniteltuja kahta yksikköä koskevista seikoista ja lainsäädännöstä.

4. EU-direktiivit on saatettava osaksi kansallista lainsäädäntöä säädetyssä määräajassa. Tämän tekemättä jättäminen ei vapauta jäsenvaltioita ja niiden viranomaisia velvollisuudesta soveltaa direktiivejä.

([1]) Euroopan parlamentin ja neuvoston direktiivi 2009/31/EY, annettu 23. huhtikuuta 2009.
([2]) Asiassa Petrie ja muut v. komissio 11. joulukuuta 2001 annettu tuomio (T-191/99, Kok. 2001, s. II – 3677).

6. Komissio ei ole tietoinen muista direktiivin 2001/80/EY 9 a artiklan ([3]) vastaisista mahdollisesti suunnitelluista tai käynnissä olevista polttolaitosten rakennustöistä. Kyseisen artiklan mukaan jäsenvaltioiden on varmistettava, että kaikkien sellaisten polttolaitosten toiminnanharjoittajat, joiden nimellinen sähköntuotantoteho on vähintään 300 megawattia, ovat arvioineet hiilidioksidin talteenoton jälkiasentamisen tekniset ja taloudelliset edellytykset. Jos arvioinnin tulos on myönteinen, hiilidioksidin talteenottoon ja paineistukseen tarvittaville laitteille on varattava sopiva tila laitosalueella.

([3]) CCS-direktiivin 33 artiklalla lisätty.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009110/13
to the Commission
Jo Leinen (S&D), Chris Davies (ALDE), Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE), Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE), Sabine Wils (GUE/NGL) and Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Construction of illegal power plant in Opole, Poland (infringement proceedings against Poland for delay in the transposition of Directive 2009/31/EC)

1. Member States should have transposed Directive 2009/31/EC by25 June 2011. In July 2011 the Commission launched infringement proceedings against Poland for delay in the transposition. Has the Polish Government replied to the Commission's letter of formal notice, and, if so, was its reply satisfactory? If not, has a reasoned opinion been submitted to the Polish Government?

2. How long is the Commission prepared to wait for Poland to ensure the proper transposition of Directive 2009/31/EC before referring the case to the Court of Justice?

3. Is the Commission aware that Poland has failed to ensure that either the competent authority or the plant operator has assessed whether the planned two new units at the Opole power plant, each capable of generating 900 MW, are ready for the environmentally safe capture and geological storage of CO_2 (CCS-ready), as required by Article 33 of the directive?

4. Does the Commission share the opinion of the Polish Regional Administrative Court and Supreme Administrative Court that, owing to the non-transposition of Directive 2009/31/EC into Polish law, neither the competent authority nor the investors are legally obliged to conduct an assessment of whether a new combustion plant is CCS-ready, even if it meets the criteria listed in Article 33 of the directive?

5. Is the Commission aware that, despite the fact that the investment planned by the Polska Grupa Energetyczna (PGE) at the Opole power plant (for the construction of two new units, 900 MW each) is non-compliant with the requirements of the directive (given that no assessment has been made of whether the new units are CCS-ready), Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk has announced that construction is to begin this summer, thereby creating facts on the ground that will irreversibly be in breach of EC law?

6. Is the Commission aware of any planned or ongoing construction of other combustion plants that do not comply with the directive's provisions regarding CCS-readiness assessments?

Answer given by Ms Hedegaard on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

1./2. In July 2011 the Commission did indeed launch infringement cases for non-communication of national measures transposing the CCS Directive ([1]) against Poland and 25 other Member States. While 9 cases were closed to date due to notification of complete transposing measures, for other cases, where the transposition measures have been notified until July 2013, the Commission is currently performing the completeness check. A reasoned opinion has not been yet submitted to the Polish Government in relation to Poland's infringement of the CCS Directive. The Commission is not in a position to provide further details of its communication with the Member States on infringement proceedings which are ongoing. ([2])

3./5. The Commission has received a complaint on this issue and is currently gathering information to determine facts and law concerning the case of the planned two new units at the Opole power plant.

4. EU Directives must be transposed by the deadline for their transposition. Member States and their competent authorities are not relieved from the obligation to apply them in case of failure to transpose them.

([1]) Directive 2009/31/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2009.
([2]) Judgment of 11 December 2001, Petrie and others / Commission (T-191/99, ECR 2001p. II — 3677).

6. The Commission is not aware of any planned or ongoing construction of other combustion plants that do not comply with Article 9a of Directive 2001/80/EC ([3]). According to that Article the Member States need to ensure that operators of combustion plants with a rated electrical output of 300 MW or more have assessed technical and economic conditions necessary to retrofit for CO_2 capture. Where the assessment is positive, suitable space on the installation site for the equipment necessary to capture and compress CO_2 has to be set aside.

([3]) As introduced through Article 33 of the CCS Directive.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009111/13
to the Commission
Seán Kelly (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Common charger for small electronic devices

Could the Commission outline what progress, if any, has been made in harmonising charging devices for small electronic goods — such as mobile phones, digital cameras and tablets — since the expiry in 2012 of its Memorandum of Understanding with mobile phone manufacturing companies?

Could the Commission clarify the current position of these mobile phone manufacturing companies with regard to this initiative, and could it confirm whether or not they will continue to work with the Commission to achieve a common charger for small electronic devices?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2013)

The latest progress report provided by the signatories of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) has shown that more than 90% of the new devices put on the market by the end of 2012 supported the common charging capability.

The voluntary agreement based on the micro-USB technology has proved successful in delivering benefits for both industry and citizens without any particular need for stricter legislation.

The Commission has launched a study to evaluate the results achieved with the MoU and to consider options for appropriate follow-up activity including voluntary agreement and legislation. The study will take into account technological innovations and will consider a possible extension of the harmonisation of chargers initiative to new categories of products, such as the new generation of mobile phones and other small portable electronic devices like digital cameras, tablets and music players.

The outcomes of the study will be available by the first semester of 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009112/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: The Commission's 'close protection service' I

Thank you for your answer to Written Question E-002638/2013 (EUROGENFOR X) in which you referred to 'the competent Commission services' and the security measures that they provide, which 'can range from discreet monitoring actions up to a more visible close protection scheme'. Please confirm the name of those competent Commission services, and confirm and explain in respect of each such service:

— when it was established and under what treaty provision;

— the Committee of the European Parliament to which the service is accountable and what additional or alternative democratic oversight is in place for their activities;

— the number, rank (and salaries by rank) of their personnel;

— the budget from which the salaries and other costs of the competent Commission service are paid; and

— the gross amount spent by the service in each year since its establishment (up to the most recent year for which figures are available and stating each year).

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

The Security Service of the European Commission was established on the 6th October 1958 by Regulation (Euratom) n° 3, implementing Article 24 of the Treaty, establishing the European Atomic Energy Community and is nowadays a directorate of the Commission's DG for Human Resources and Security.

Its mandate is defined in Commission Decision C(94)2129 of 8th September 1994 and it develops policy and guidelines, implements organisational and technical measures and offers security services. The Commission provides security for members of the Commission, staff and other servants, personnel and visitors in all its premises according to the operational requirements stemming from a formal threat assessment.

As a directorate of the DG for Human Resources and Security, it falls under the political responsibility of the Vice-President responsible for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration and operates under the management and supervision of its Director General.

Central Commission security services comprise around 185 officials and other servants whose salaries are determined by the Staff Regulations. Every Directorate-General has also appointed a 'Local Security Officer' who act as contact person and coordinator for all matters related to security in their department.

The salaries and mission costs of the staff of the Security Directorate are financed by the Commission's Administrative Budget.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009113/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: The Commission's 'close protection service' II

Thank you for your answer to Written Question E-002638/2013 (EUROGENFOR X) in which you referred to 'the competent Commission services' and the security measures that they provide, which 'can range from discreet monitoring actions up to a more visible close protection scheme'. Please confirm the name of those competent Commission services, and confirm and explain in respect of each such service:

— whether and to whom their personnel swear an oath of office, or otherwise owe allegiance;

— whether they liaise formally or informally with EuroGendFor;

— whether they liaise formally or informally with Europol;

— the decision-making process for requesting, approving and implementing their deployment; and

— whether any of their personnel are also members of national reserves, armed forces, security services, police forces (military or civilian) of Member States, EuroGendFor, Europol or Interpol.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

The competent Commission service is the Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security which has a Directorate for security. This directorate is an internal administrative service responsible for protecting Commission personnel, buildings and information.

Staff of this directorate have to comply with the obligations of the Staff Regulations of Officials and Conditions of employment of other servants of the Europan Union, see Articles 11 and following.

Commission services may liaise with other institutions, bodies and government administrations when appropriate and necessary in the performance of their tasks. Since the Directorate General for Human Resources and Security has no particular competencies with regard to third persons or activities outside the Commission premises, it must rely on cooperation with national law enforcement authorities.

Security measures are management decisions driven by the security requirements of the person, the building or the information in need of protection.

Staff of the European institutions may be on leave on personal grounds from national administrations or may belong to reserve forces of a member state army, see Article 42 (3) of the Staff Regulations, while fully respecting their obligations resulting from the Staff Regulations.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009114/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: The Commission's 'close protection service' III

Thank you for your answer to Written Question E-002638/2013 (EUROGENFOR X) in which you referred to 'the competent Commission services' and the security measures that they provide, which 'can range from discreet monitoring actions up to a more visible close protection scheme'. Please confirm the name of those competent Commission services, and confirm and explain in respect of each such service:

— the number and rank (title of office) of individuals for whom the service could be provided as protection;

— the number and rank (title of office) of individuals for whom the service has been provided as protection;

— the number of occasions on which the 'close protection service' has been provided and their duration;

— whether personnel of the service have operated in the United Kingdom; and

— whether such operations in the United Kingdom included personnel carrying firearms.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

DG Human Resources and Security may provide close protection to Commissioners, high-level visitors and officials when required so by a personalised threat assessment.

The Commission cannot provide operational security information which, if made public, could increase risks to Commissioners, visitors and officials who currently benefit or have benefited from such protection.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009115/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: The Commission's 'close protection service' IV

Thank you for your answer to Written Question E-002638/2013 (EUROGENFOR X) in which you referred to 'the competent Commission services' and the security measures that they provide, which 'can range from discreet monitoring actions up to a more visible close protection scheme'. Please confirm the name of those competent Commission services, and confirm and explain in respect of each such service:

— the type and number of weapons available to them;

— the transport equipment (whether by land, sea or air) owned or operated by them, and

— the transport costs (including travel expenses and capital expenditure) for each of the last five years.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

The Commission cannot provide, for the purpose of answering a written question, operational security information which, if made public, could increase risks to Commissioners, visitors and staff who currently benefit or have benefited from specific protection measure since this information could be useful to potential wrongdoers.

The Commission cannot undertake, for the purpose of answering a written question, the lengthy and costly research that would be required to provide the Honourable Member with the requested information on costs for each of the last five years.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009116/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: The Commission's 'close protection service' V

Thank you for your answer to Written Question E-002638/2013 (EUROGENFOR X) in which you referred to 'the competent Commission services' and the security measures that they provide, which 'can range from discreet monitoring actions up to a more visible close protection scheme'. Please confirm the name of those competent Commission services, and confirm and explain in respect of each such service:

— whether their personnel operating in Member States are subject to all the laws of that Member State;

— whether their personnel have any immunity from arrest or prosecution and the nature, duration and territorial extent of that immunity; and

— whether, and in what circumstances, any such immunity has been exercised or invoked.

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

Officials and other servants of the European are subject to the laws of the member state in which they operate and their immunities are governed by Articles 17 and 18 of the Protocol on the Privileges and Immunities of the European Union.

Immunity — as is necessary for the performance of their tasks — is granted to officials and other servants of the European Union on the territory of members states. Immunity of an official or other servant of the European Union may be lifted — upon request of a competent national authority — when such decision is not deemed to be against the interest of the Union.

Immunity was — in the context of the tasks of the security services — neither exercised nor invoked in the last decade.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009117/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(29 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la realizzazione del «Progetto Telefono Blu»

Una società è impegnata da circa 30 anni nell'elaborazione, implementazione e realizzazione di progetti finalizzati al miglioramento delle relazioni interpersonali anche attraverso metodologie internazionali la cui validità scientifica è stata ampiamente convalidata nelle diverse applicazioni realizzate. Di conseguenza, una concreta iniziativa denominata «Progetto Telefono Blu» si impegna a garantire un'efficiente assistenza, con la collaborazione di avvocati, medici, psicologi ed operatori qualificati che faranno di questa linea telefonica un importante sostegno, offrendo un utile supporto morale, psicologico e giuridico che sarà fondamentale per la prevenzione ed il miglioramento di fenomeni violenti quali il femminicidio, lo stalking e conflitti relazionali. L'iniziativa sarà estesa sul territorio della Regione Lazio, con la collaborazione del Comune di Roma (Assessorato alla Sanità) e dei rispettivi Ministeri della Sanità e delle Politiche Sociali.

Alcuni dei punti principali che il progetto mira a conseguire sono:

— un protocollo d'intesa con strutture di accoglienza e sostegno da creare ad hoc presso siti ospedalieri;

— una mirata selezione del personale, garantendo una parallela ed eccellente attività di formazione, che rafforzerà negli operatori impegnati la capacità di creare un'efficiente comunicazione con qualsiasi interlocutore disagiato.

Tutto ciò premesso, può la Commissione:

1. far sapere se vi è la possibilità di ricevere un finanziamento per tale progetto che garantirebbe, inoltre, occupazione e nuovi posti di lavoro?

2. far sapere se sono presenti analoghe iniziative europee riguardanti tale disagio e, se sì, quali?

3. fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(28 ottobre 2013)

Il programma Daphne III prevede finanziamenti per i progetti transnazionali volti a prevenire e a combattere la violenza contro le donne. Sono attualmente aperti inviti a presentare proposte ([1]).

La direttiva 2012/29/UE ([2]) («direttiva sulla protezione delle vittime») garantirà che le donne vittime di violenze beneficino di norme minime comuni per quanto riguarda i diritti procedurali nei procedimenti penali. Verrà predisposta inoltre tutta una serie di misure speciali, fra cui la formazione degli operatori della giustizia per proteggere e sostenere le vittime fra cui le donne vittime ad esempio di reati di natura sessuale o di violenza nelle relazioni strette ([3]). Anche i finanziamenti del programma «Giustizia penale» riguardano attività in quest'area ([4]).

La relazione dell'Istituto europeo per l'uguaglianza di genere ([5]) fornisce a sua volta una panoramica dei servizi a sostegno delle vittime di violenza domestica nell'UE.

Nell'aprile 2013, la Commissione ha organizzato uno scambio di pratiche per discutere le esperienze riguardanti i servizi di sostegno alle vittime della violenza di genere ([6]).

([1]) Scadenza: 30/10/2013. Si veda: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/grants/just_2013_dap_ag_en.htm
([2]) Direttiva 2012/29/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 25 ottobre 2012, che istituisce norme minime in materia di diritti, assistenza e protezione delle vittime di reato e che sostituisce la decisione quadro 2001/220/GAI. Il termine per il recepimento è il 16 novembre 2015. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?mode=dbl&lang=en&lng1=en,it&lng2=bg,cs,da,de,el,en,es,et,fi,fr,hu,it,lt,lv,mt,nl,pl,pt,ro,sk,sl,sv,&val=691388:cs.
([3]) Gli Stati membri devono recepire la direttiva nell'ordinamento nazionale entro il 16 novembre 2015.
([4]) Si veda: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/programmes/criminal/index_en.htm
([5]) Che sostiene le conclusioni adottate dal Consiglio nel dicembre 2012 sulla violenza contro le donne — http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/violence-against-women-victim-support-report.
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/review-seminars/seminars_2013/vaw_en.htm

Inoltre, per il sostegno alle vittime esistono le linee armonizzate di assistenza telefonica al numero 116 ([7]). I servizi sono forniti da organizzazioni pubbliche o private selezionate localmente da ogni Stato membro. In questo contesto, il numero 116 006 serve a fornire assistenza alle vittime di reati. Lo Stato membro può anche chiedere la predisposizione della linea 116 016 per fornire specifiche informazioni e aiuto alle vittime della violenza di genere.

Infine il progetto, quale descritto, non sembra rientrare nel campo d'applicazione del Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) ([8]).

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/about-116-helplines.

([8]) Poiché il FSE sostiene «le politiche degli Stati membri intese a conseguire la piena occupazione e la qualità e la produttività sul lavoro, promuovere l'inclusione sociale, compreso l'accesso all'occupazione delle persone svantaggiate, e ridurre le disparità occupazionali a livello nazionale, regionale e locale». Per maggiori informazioni su tali possibilità di finanziamento, l'Onorevole Parlamentare è invitato a contattare le autorità di gestione del FSE per la regione Lazio: http://www.portalavoro.regione.lazio.it/portalavoro/fondo-sociale-europeo/POR-2007-2013.php.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009117/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Availability of funding for the 'Progetto Telefono Blu' (Blue Telephone Project)

A company has been involved for some 30 years in devising and carrying out projects which use internationally proven methods to improve interpersonal relationships. To take one example, the 'Progetto Telefono Blu' aims, with the involvement of lawyers, doctors, psychologists and other professionals to prevent and improve the response to phenomena such as femicide, stalking and violence within couples and to provide effective moral, psychological and legal support for the individuals concerned. The project will cover the Lazio region and will involve Rome City Council (Health Department) and the Ministries of Public Health and Social Policy.

The project will be based on an agreement to set up reception and support facilities in hospitals, and the staff involved will be selected carefully and provided with appropriate training in order to improve their ability to communicate effectively when taking calls from persons in difficulty.

1. Can the Commission say whether funding would be available for a project of this kind, which would, moreover, safeguard jobs and create new ones?

2. What, if any, similar projects are being carried out in Europe?

3. Can the Commission provide any other information relevant to this matter?

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

Funding for transnational projects aimed at preventing and combating violence against women is available under the Daphne III Programme, where a call for proposals is currently open ([1]).

The directive 2012/29/EU ([2]) ('Victims' Directive') will ensure that women victims of violence benefit from common minimum standards of procedural rights during criminal proceedings. A whole range of special measures will be further put in place, including training to practitioners and support services, in order to protect and support victims, including women victims of e.g. sexual crime or violence in close relationship ([3]). Funding from the Criminal Justice Programme has also been covering activities in this area ([4]).

Moreover, the report of the European Institute for gender equality ([5]) gives an overview of national services which support victims of domestic violence in the EU.

In April 2013, the Commission organised an exchange of practices aimed at discussing experiences related to support services for victims of gender based violence ([6]).

Furthermore, harmonised 116 helplines exist for victim support ([7]). The services are provided by public or private organisations selected locally by each Member State. In this context, the 116 006 helpline aims at providing assistance to victims of crime. The Member States could also consider requesting the establishment of the helpline 116 016 for providing specific information and assistance to victims of gender-based violence.

Finally, the project as described does not seem to fall within the scope of the European Social Fund (ESF) ([8]).

([1]) Deadline 30/10/2013. See http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/grants/just_2013_dap_ag_en.htm

([2]) Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA. The transposition deadline is 16 November 2015. http://eurex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:315:0057:0073:EN:PDF

([3]) The Member States have to transpose the directive into national law by 16 November 2015.

([4]) See http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/programmes/criminal/index_en.htm

([5]) Which supports the Council conclusions on violence against women adopted by the Council in December 2012 http://eige.europa.eu/content/document/violence-against-women-victim-support-report

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/review-seminars/seminars_2013/vaw_en.htm

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/about-116-helplines

([8]) As the ESF supports 'Member States' policies aiming to achieve full employment and quality and productivity at work, promote social inclusion, including the access of disadvantaged people to employment, and reduce national, regional and local employment disparities'. For more information about those funding possibilities, the Honourable Member is invited to contact the ESF Managing Authority of the Lazio region: http://www.portalavoro.regione.lazio.it/portalavoro/fondo-sociale-europeo/POR-2007-2013.php

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-009200/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Erwarteter Aufschwung durch das Handelsabkommen EU-USA

Angesichts des offenbar nicht enden wollenden Budgettiefs erwarten sich die USA laut jüngsten Medienberichten durch das geplante Freihandelsabkommen einen nicht unerheblichen Handelsaufschwung.

1. In welcher Größenordnung bewegen sich diese Erwartungen, und erachtet die Kommission diese Erwartungen für realistisch?

2. Welche konkreten Vorteile erwartet die Kommission insbesondere unter dem Aspekt der noch immer allgegenwärtigen Wirtschaftskrise für die Europäische Union/Eurozone?

3. Welche Auswirkungen auf den Haushaltsplan der Europäischen Union werden erwartet?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(21. August 2013)

Die EU und die USA handeln täglich mit Waren und Dienstleistungen im Wert von 2 Mrd. EUR und unterhalten damit die umfangreichsten Handelsbeziehungen der Welt. In der im März 2013 veröffentlichten unabhängigen Studie ([1]) wurden die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen eines Handels- und Investitionsabkommens sowohl für die EU als auch für die USA umrissen. Der Studie zufolge könnte sich der gesamtwirtschaftliche Gewinn für die EU auf 119 Mrd. EUR pro Jahr belaufen — dies entspricht einem Zusatzeinkommen von 545 EUR für einen Vier-Personen-Haushalt in der EU. Da sich die EU und der Euroraum nur langsam von der Rezession erholen, könnte dieser Beitrag durchaus beträchtlich sein. Die US-amerikanische Wirtschaft könnte aus dem Abkommen einen Gewinn von 95 Mrd. EUR pro Jahr ziehen, so dass jede amerikanische Familie 655 EUR mehr zur Verfügung hätte. Diesem Nutzen stünden sehr geringe Kosten gegenüber, da er aus der Abschaffung von Zöllen sowie unnötigen Regelungen und bürokratischen Hürden resultieren würde, die derzeit Käufe und Verkäufe über den Atlantik hinweg erschweren.

Das erwartete zusätzliche Wirtschaftswachstum durch die Transatlantische Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft (TTIP) wird jedermann zugutekommen. Die Belebung des Handels ist ein probates Mittel zur Stimulierung der jeweiligen Volkswirtschaften, da sie Nachfrage und Angebot verstärkt, ohne dass die öffentliche Hand ihre Ausgaben oder ihre Kreditaufnahme erhöhen muss. Die einzigen Haushaltskosten für die EU wären der Einnahmenverlust durch den Wegfall der Zölle, der aber der unabhängigen Analyse zufolge auf 5,4 Mrd. EUR begrenzt bliebe. Er wird durch die Verbreiterung der Steuerbemessungsgrundlage infolge der erhöhten Wirtschaftstätigkeit indessen ausgeglichen. Den Berechnungen der Studie zufolge ergäbe sich der wirtschaftliche Nutzen der TTIP bis zu 80 % aus dem Abbau von unnötigen Kosten und Bürokratie aufgrund unterschiedlicher Vorschriften sowie aus der Liberalisierung des Dienstleistungsverkehrs und der öffentlichen Ausschreibungen. Dies wird dazu beitragen, die EU-Wirtschaft dynamischer und wettbewerbsfähiger zu machen. Insgesamt dürfte das BIP der EU um rund 0,5 % steigen, wenn das Abkommen erst einmal in vollem Umfang angewandt wird.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/march/tradoc_150737.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009200/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Expected boost as a result of the EU-USA Trade Agreement

According to recent media reports, the USA expects to enjoy a considerable boost to trade as a result of the impending Trade Agreement, at a time when there is no end in sight to the budget slump.

1. What order of magnitude is meant here by 'considerable'? Does the Commission think that these are realistic expectations?

2. What specific advantages does the Commission expect to see for the EU / the eurozone, given the continued persistence of the economic crisis?

3. What is the expected impact on the EU budget?

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

The EU-US trade relationship is the biggest in the world, every day we trade goods and services worth EUR 2 billion. The independent study released in March 2013 ([1]) outlined the economic effects of a trade and investment agreement for both the EU and the US. According to the study, the EU's economy could benefit by EUR 119 billion a year — equivalent to an extra EUR 545 for a family of four in the EU. As the EU and euro area slowly emerge from the recession, this contribution has the potential to be significant. The US economy could gain an extra EUR 95 billion a year or EUR 655 per American family. These benefits would cost very little as they would result from removing tariffs and unnecessary rules and bureaucratic hurdles that make it difficult to buy and sell across the Atlantic.

The extra economic growth that is expected to come from the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will benefit everyone. Promoting trade is a good way of boosting our economies by creating increased demand and supply without having to increase public spending or borrowing. The only budgetary cost for the EU would be the loss in revenue associated with tariff elimination, which the independent analysis concludes to be limited to EUR 5.4 billion. This will be offset by the expansion of the tax base associated with the increased economic activity. The study also calculates that up to 80% of the economic benefits of the TTIP would come from reducing unnecessary costs and red tape stemming from divergent regulations, and from liberalising trade in services and government tenders. This will contribute to make the EU economy more dynamic and competitive. Overall, the EU's GDP would be boosted by around 0.5%, once the deal will be fully implemented.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/march/tradoc_150737.pdf

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009201/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(29 de julio de 2013)

Asunto: «Fracking»

Los estudios sobre repercusiones de la extracción de gas y petróleo de esquisto mediante fractura hidráulica «(fracking)» en el medio ambiente y la salud humana ponen de manifiesto los elevados riesgos que comporta esta técnica minera, dada su toxicidad, potencial sismicidad y limitada capacidad técnica existente para la prevención de tales riesgos. Sin embargo, y a pesar de ello, en Castilla y León, el Gobierno español ha autorizado un proyecto de investigación para un futuro campo de explotación en la cabecera de la cuenca del río Jalón, denominado «Cronos», que afectaría a las aguas de este río a nivel superficial y a la red de acuíferos subterráneos de dicha cuenca. Además de las afecciones directas al LIC de los Sabinares del Jalón y las ZEPA de Monteagudo de las Vicarías, Páramo de Layna y Parameras de Maranchón, hoz del Mesa y Aragoncillo, son de destacar las afecciones a la agricultura y ganadería de la zona, así como el enorme impacto que supondría para esa zona el que se malograse la actividad de los balnearios aragoneses de Paracuellos de Jiloca, Jaraba (Sicilia, La Virgen y Serón), Alhama de Aragón (Pallarés) y de las tres plantas embotelladoras de agua mineral (Lunares, Fontjaraba y Fontecabras) que se encuentran en la Comunidad de Calatayud. Todo ello, en un contexto general de enormes dificultades económicas resultaría demoledor e irreversible para unas comarcas rurales que luchan contra la despoblación, el envejecimiento y el abandono con actividades económicas alternativas.

¿Cree la Comisión que estos proyectos son compatibles con la legislación europea en materia de aguas, con la preservación de la Red Natura 2000, con las actividades económicas (turismo, termalismo, comercialización de agua mineral, ganadería, agricultura, etc.) existentes en esa zona y con la preservación de la seguridad y la salud humanas?

Respuesta del Sr. Potočnik en nombre de la Comisión
(19 de septiembre de 2013)

La Comisión no lleva a cabo un seguimiento pormenorizado de las operaciones concretas de exploración o explotación de gas de esquisto en lugares o regiones específicos. Incumbe a los Estados miembros garantizar, a través de evaluaciones adecuadas, regímenes de concesión de autorizaciones y licencias y actividades de supervisión e inspección, que todas las exploraciones o explotaciones de fuentes de energía, incluidas las que utilizan la técnica de la fractura hidráulica, cumplan los requisitos establecidos en el marco jurídico existente en la EU. Ello incluye, entre otras cosas, las disposiciones en materia de evaluaciones de impacto ambiental y participación pública ([1]), protección de las aguas superficiales y las aguas subterráneas ([2]), gestión de los residuos ([3]) y conservación de los hábitats naturales ([4]).

([1]) Directiva 2011/92/UE relativa a la evaluación de las repercusiones de determinados proyectos públicos y privados sobre el medio ambiente (DO L 26 de 28.1.2012, p. 1).

([2]) Directiva 2000/60/CE por la que se establece un marco comunitario de actuación en el ámbito de la política de aguas (DO L 327 de 22.12.2000) y Directiva 2006/118/CE relativa a la protección de las aguas subterráneas contra la contaminación y el deterioro (DO L 372 de 27.12.2006, p. 19).

([3]) Directiva 2006/21/CE sobre la gestión de los residuos de industrias extractivas y por la que se modifica la Directiva 2004/35/CE (DO L 102 de 11.4.2006).

([4]) Directiva 92/43/CEE relativa a la conservación de los hábitats naturales y de la fauna y flora silvestres (DO L 206 de 22.7.1992).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009201/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Fracking

Studies on the environmental and public health repercussions of extracting oil and gas from shale rock by hydraulic fracturing (a process commonly known as 'fracking') have brought to light the high risks associated with the technique, which include its use of toxic chemicals, its potential to cause seismic activity and the fact that existing technical capabilities to prevent such risks are limited. However, despite the risks, the Spanish Government has authorised a project to explore a future extraction area known as 'Cronos' in the headwaters of the Jalón river in the region of Castilla y León. If extraction were to go ahead it would affect both the surface water of the river and the network of aquifers underneath the basin. In addition to the direct effect it would have on Sabinares del Jalón, a site of Community importance, and the Special Protection Areas of Monteagudo de las Vicarías, Páramo de Layna and Parameras de Maranchón, Hoz de Mesa y Aragoncillo, it is worth highlighting the effect on local farming (both arable and livestock) and the huge impact it would have were it to disrupt operations at the Aragonese thermal baths in Paracuellos de Jiloca, Jaraba (Sicilia, La Virgen and Serón) and Alhama de Aragón (Pallarés) and the three mineral water bottling plants (Lunares, Fontjaraba and Fontecabras) in the municipality of Calatayud. Given the enormous economic difficulties that people are facing at the moment, these repercussions would prove devastating and irreversible for some rural communities which are struggling to deal with declining and ageing populations and the disappearance of alternative forms of economic activity.

Does the Commission believe that these projects are compatible with EU legislation on water, with the preservation of the Natura 2000 network, with existing economic activity in the area (tourism, the spa industry, mineral water production, farming, etc.) and with the need to safeguard people's health and security?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

The Commission does not follow in detail specific shale gas exploration or exploitation operations in individual locations or regions. It is the responsibility of the Member States to ensure — via appropriate assessments, licensing and permitting regimes as well as monitoring and inspections activities — that any exploration or exploitation of energy sources, including those using hydraulic fracturing, complies with the requirements of the existing legal framework in the EU. This includes, *inter alia*, provisions on environmental impact assessments and public participation ([1]), the protection of surface and groundwater ([2]), on waste management ([3]) and on the conservation of natural habitats ([4]).

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on environment (OJ L 26/1, 28.01.2012).
([2]) Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000) and Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration (OJ L372/19, 27.12.2006).
([3]) Directive 2006/21/EC on the management of waste from extractive industries and amending Directive 2004/35/EC (OJ L 102, 11.4.2006).
([4]) Directive 92/43/EC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009202/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Umweltverschmutzung in Galicien

Die Lebensbedingungen in Galicien werden zunehmend schlechter. Die Besorgnis über die Gesundheit und Sicherheit der einheimischen Bevölkerung wächst.

Die Medien melden, dass für die Wiederherstellung der Flussufer der „Ría de Ferrol" EU-Gelder widmungswidrig für die Herstellung eines Weges entlang der Küste verwendet wurden.

1. Ist dieser Umstand der Kommission bekannt?

2. Kann die Kommission dazu gegebenenfalls Details nennen? (Um ausführliche Erläuterung wird gebeten)

3. Wie wurden die EU-Fördergelder, die zur Wiederherstellung des Flussufers gedacht waren, in der Tat genutzt? Gebeten wird um eine entsprechende Auflistung der jeweiligen Haushaltslinien und ihrer Details.

4. Hat die Kommission gegebenenfalls Kenntnis, ob es einen Zusammenhang zwischen den Korruptionsvorwürfen gegen die spanische Regierung und den Vorfällen in Galicien gibt?

Antwort von Johannes Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(25. September 2013)

1.-2. Der Kommission ist weder bekannt, dass die für die Wiederherstellung des Flussufers der Ría de Ferrol vorgesehenen EU-Gelder angeblich für den Bau einer Straße entlang der Küste verwendet wurden, noch kennt sie entsprechende Medienberichte oder die Grundlage für derartige Behauptungen.

3. Umweltschutzmaßnahmen wie Kanalisations- und Abwasserbehandlungarbeiten sind eine wichtige Priorität der galicischen Programme. Daher wurden mehrere Projekte aus dem Europäischen Fonds für regionale Entwicklung finanziell unterstützt. Gemäß den geltenden nationalen und den EU-Vorschriften sind nach dem Grundsatz der geteilten Verwaltung allein die Mitgliedstaaten und die nationalen Behörden für die Auswahl, Verwaltung und Durchführung von Projekten im Rahmen der Programme verantwortlich. Die Kommission legt der Frau Abgeordneten daher nahe, sich direkt mit den Verwaltungsbehörden in Verbindung zu setzen.

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28071 Madrid, Spanien
http://www.dgfc.sepg.minhap.gob.es/sitios/DGFC/es-ES/Paginas/inicio.aspx

4. Die Kommission kann hierzu keine Angaben machen, da ihr zu der von der Frau Abgeordneten angesprochenen Frage keinerlei Informationen vorliegen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009202/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Environmental pollution in Galicia

Living conditions in Galicia are getting steadily worse. Concern about the health and safety of the local population is growing.

According to media reports, EU money to restore the banks of the Ría de Ferrol is being used to build a road along the coast.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. Can the Commission provide any details on this? Please provide a comprehensive explanation.

3. How has EU aid for the restoration of the river bank actually been used? Please provide a list with details of individual budget headings.

4. Does the Commission know if there is any connection between the complaints of corruption against the Spanish Government and the incidents in Galicia?

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

1-2. The Commission is not aware of the use of EU money for building a road along the coast instead of restoring the banks of the Ria de Ferrol, nor of the media reports referred to in the question or the basis for such allegations.

3. Environmental works including sanitation and waste water treatment are an important priority of programmes for Galicia. Therefore, several projects have been supported by European Regional Development Fund financing. Within the framework of the shared management principle, the responsibility for the selection, management and implementation of projects within the programmes lies solely with the Member States and the national authorities, in full compliance with applicable EU and national legislation. Therefore, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the managing authority of the programmes:

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4. As the Commission has no information concerning the issue raised by the Honourable Member, it is unable to comment further.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009203/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung Bulgariens und deren Auswirkungen

Es wird zuletzt vermehrt berichtet, dass Bulgarien zu wenig im Kampf gegen Korruption und andere Missstände, wie beispielsweise die mangelhaften demokratischen Standards, unternimmt. Viele wichtige Reformen würden dort nicht umgesetzt werden. Des Weiteren wird berichtet, dass Minderheiten (u. a. Roma) auf Gebieten wie Bildung, Arbeit und Gesundheitsversorgung unvermindert andauernd diskriminiert werden.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission diese Vorwürfe?

2. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Entwicklungen zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt des EU-Beitritts von Bulgarien sowohl kurz- als auch langfristig?

3. Wie werden EU-Gelder (Kohäsionsfonds/Strukturfonds/Entwicklungsfonds), die zur Förderung der Infrastruktur bzw. Wirtschaft eingesetzt werden sollten, in der Tat nun genutzt? (Mit der Bitte um eine entsprechende Auflistung der jeweiligen Projekte, Haushaltslinien und ihrer Details)?

4. Sind der Kommission gegebenenfalls Korruptionsfälle und Verletzungen gegen die Menschenrechte, wie im Fall der Roma, bekannt? Wenn ja, wie gedenkt sie in der Tat konkret bei der Bekämpfung von Korruption und der Verteidigung der Menschenrechte in diesem Land vorzugehen?

Antwort von Herrn Šefčovič im Namen der Kommission
(16. September 2013)

Beim EU-Beitritt Bulgariens wurde eingeräumt, dass noch immer Unzulänglichkeiten bei der Justizreform sowie bei der Bekämpfung von Korruption und organisierter Kriminalität bestanden. Es wurde vereinbart, einen Kooperations- und Überprüfungsmechanismus zur Unterstützung Bulgariens und zur Überwachung der Fortschritte in diesen Bereichen einzurichten. Im Rahmen dieses Mechanismus führen die Kommission und die bulgarischen Behörden einen kontinuierlichen Dialog über alle einschlägigen Fragen, wie die Bekämpfung von Korruption und organisierter Kriminalität. Sowohl durch regelmäßige Kontakte in Brüssel als auch durch eine ständige Präsenz in Sofia ist gewährleistet, dass die Kommission stets über die neuesten Entwicklungen im Land informiert ist. Die Kommission organisiert im September eine ihrer regelmäßigen Expertenmissionen nach Bulgarien, die unter anderem das Thema Korruptionsbekämpfung zum Gegenstand haben wird. Die Kommission wird Ende dieses Jahres über die Fortschritte Bulgariens im Rahmen des Kooperations- und Überprüfungsmechanismus Bericht erstatten. Sie erhält eine Vielzahl von Informationen über Korruptions- und Menschenrechtsfragen, die von Fall zu Fall bewertet werden.

Mit den EU-Strukturfonds werden unterschiedlichste Maßnahmen in Bulgarien unterstützt, unter anderem Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung der Lage von Minderheiten, vor allem der Roma. Dazu zählen auch der Wiederaufbau und die Instandsetzung bildungsbezogener, sozialer, sanitärer und städtischer Infrastrukturen. Die mangelnde öffentliche Unterstützung für solche Initiativen stellt eines der größten Hindernisse für die erfolgreiche Umsetzung der Integrationspolitik für Roma dar. Die Kommission kann der Frau Abgeordneten direkt zusätzliche Auskünfte zu diesem Thema geben. Ausführliche Informationen zu spezifischen Projekten im Rahmen der verschiedenen operationellen Programme in Bulgarien sind auf folgender Website zu finden: http://www.eufunds.bg/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009203/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Economic developments in Bulgaria and their impact

We are increasingly hearing reports recently that Bulgaria is doing too little in the fight against corruption and other problems, such as the lack of democratic standards. Numerous important reforms have not been implemented. There are also reports that minorities (including the Roma) are still subject to persistent discrimination in areas such as education, work and healthcare.

1. How does the Commission assess these complaints?

2. What is the Commission's prognosis for the post-accession situation in Bulgaria in the short and in the long term?

3. How is EU money to support infrastructure and the economy (Cohesion Fund/Structural Funds/Regional Development Fund) actually being used on the ground? Please provide a list with details of projects and budgetary headings.

4. Is the Commission aware of cases of corruption and human rights violations, as in the case of the Roma? If so, what specific measures does it intend to take to combat corruption and defend human rights in this country?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

When Bulgaria acceded to the European Union, it was acknowledged that shortcomings remained concerning the reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption and organised crime. It was agreed to set up a Cooperation and Verification Mechanism in order to support Bulgaria and to monitor progress in these areas. Under the CVM, the Commission and the Bulgarian authorities carry out a continuing dialogue on all CVM related matters, including progress in the fight against corruption and organised crime. Both through regular contacts in Brussels, as well as through a permanent presence in Sofia, it is ensured that the Commission is informed of the latest developments in the country. The Commission will organise one of its regular expert missions to Bulgaria in September where the issue of the fight against corruption will also be covered. The Commission will report on progress in Bulgaria under the CVM at the end of this year. The Commission receives a variety of information concerning corruption and human rights issues, which are assessed on a case by case basis.

EU structural funds have supported a wide variety of actions in Bulgaria, including improving the situation of minorities, in particular Roma. This includes reconstruction and renovation of educational, social, health and urban infrastructure. The lack of public support for such initiatives is one of the main barriers for the successful implementation of Roma integration policy. The Commission can provide further details directly to the Honourable Member. Detailed information regarding specific projects covered by the different Operational Programmes in Bulgaria can also be found on the website: http://www.eufunds.bg/.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009204/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Wirtschaftsprobleme in Kroatien

Kroatien ist nach Slowenien das zweite EU-Mitgliedsland aus dem ehemaligen Jugoslawien.

Es wird immer wieder über Probleme berichtet, die in dieser Region aufgrund der historischen Entwicklungen noch heute bestehen.

So sei die Wirtschaft schwer angeschlagen, die Industrie liege am Boden, die Sozialsysteme stünden unter Druck, und die öffentliche Verwaltung müsste modernisiert werden.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission diesen Umstand nach dem Beitritt kurz- als auch langfristig?

2. Wie gedenkt die Kommission gegebenenfalls die schwerwiegenden Probleme wie etwa die hohe Arbeitslosigkeit und das niedrige Lohnniveau anzugehen? Gibt es dazu insbesondere konkrete Lösungsansätze für die budgetären Auswirkungen auf die EU wie auch auf die Eurozone? (Mit der Bitte um ausführliche Erklärung)

3. Sind der Kommission konkrete Korruptionsfälle im Land bekannt? Falls ja, welche Strategien werden zur Bekämpfung dieser Fälle zur Lösung in Erwägung gezogen?

4. Wie werden EU-Gelder, die zur Förderung der Wirtschaft gedacht sind, genutzt? Um welche Beträge aus den verschiedenen Fonds (Kohäsions-/Struktur-/Regionalfonds) handelt es sich? (Mit der Bitte um entsprechende Auflistung der Projekte/Haushaltslinien)

Antwort von Herrn Hahn im Namen der Kommission
(24. September 2013)

1. Laut der Frühjahrsprognose der Kommission wird das BIP im Jahr 2013 um 1 % sinken. Kurzfristig besteht die größte Herausforderung darin, einen arbeitsplatzintensiven Aufschwung zu bewerkstelligen und gleichzeitig den Haushalt zu konsolidieren. Mittelfristig geht es um die Umsetzung der Strukturreformen, die Förderung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und die Verbesserung der Wachstumsaussichten.

2. In der Arbeitsunterlage der Kommissionsdienststellen ([1]) aus dem Jahr 2013 über das Wirtschaftsprogramm der kroatischen Regierung werden die Pläne zur Bewältigung der wirtschaftlichen Herausforderungen des Landes bewertet. Zu den Prioritäten gehören eine bessere Nutzung des Wachstumspotenzials Kroatiens und die Umsetzung der Strukturreformen (z. B. die Arbeitsmarktreform und die Reform der Sozialleistungen). Durch den Beitritt zur EU ist mit höheren Investitionen zu rechnen. Auch durch die Kohäsionspolitik wird dem Land beträchtliche Unterstützung zuteil.

Die Auswirkungen des EU-Beitritts Kroatiens auf den Haushalt und den Euroraum sind kein Thema, da Kroatien kein Programmland ist.

3. Bei der Umsetzung der EU-Fonds für regionale Entwicklung wird besonderes Augenmerk auf eine wirtschaftliche Haushaltsführung gelegt. Bis Januar 2013 unterlag die Verwaltung der EU-Finanzmittel einer strengen Überwachung und Ex-ante-Kontrolle durch die EU-Delegation in Kroatien. Bisher wurden keine größeren Fälle von Betrug oder Korruption aufgedeckt.

4. Im Entwurf des EU-Legislativpakets für den Zeitraum 2014-2020 sind die Investitionsprioritäten der EU-Fonds auf die Kernziele von „Europa 2020“ ausgerichtet, so dass die Finanzmittel vor allem für das Erreichen der nationalen und europäischen sozioökonomischen Ziele eingesetzt werden.

Die laufenden Programme für den Zeitraum 2007-2013, die im Rahmen des Instruments für Heranführungshilfe in den Bereichen regionale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, Verkehr, Umwelt und Humanressourcen angenommen wurden, werden im Rahmen der Kohäsionspolitik eine neue Mittelzuweisung in Höhe von 450 Mio. EUR ([2]) erhalten. Kroatien bereitet derzeit den neuen Programmplanungszeitraum 2014-2020 vor (8 Mrd. EUR).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_croatia_en.pdf
([2]) Genauere Informationen über die Mittelzuweisungen pro Programm sind Kapitel 6.1 des nationalen strategischen Rahmenplans zu entnehmen: http://www.mrrfeu.hr/UserDocsImages/EU%20fondovi/NSRF_HR_.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009204/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Economic problems in Croatia

Croatia is the second Member State from the former Yugoslavia, after Slovenia, to join the EU.

We are repeatedly hearing reports of persistent problems caused by historical developments.

For example, the economy is in dire straits, industry has collapsed, social systems are under pressure and the public administration needs to be modernised.

1. What is the Commission's prognosis for this post-accession situation, in both the short and the long term?

2. How does the Commission think serious problems such as high unemployment and low wages should be addressed? Have any specific approaches been considered for resolving the budgetary impact on the EU and on the euro area? Please provide a detailed explanation.

3. Does the Commission know of specific cases of corruption in this country? If so, what strategies are being considered as solutions to combat such cases?

4. How is EU money intended to support the economy actually being used? What amounts from the various funds (Cohesion Fund/Structural Funds/Regional Development Fund) are involved? Please list relevant projects/budget headings.

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

1. According to the Commission spring forecast, GDP will contract by 1% in 2013. In the short term, a key challenge is to kickstart a job-rich growth, while ensuring fiscal consolidation. In the medium term, it is implementing structural reforms, promoting competitiveness and improving growth prospects.

2. The Commission's 2013 Staff Working Document ([1]) on the Government's Economic Programme assesses the plans to address the country's economic challenges. Better use of the country's growth potentials, and the implementation of structural reforms (e.g. labour market and social benefits reform) are among the priority areas. EU accession may result in a higher level of investment while cohesion policy will also provide significant support.

The budgetary impact of Croatia's accession on the EU and the euro area is not an issue; Croatia is not a programme country.

3. In the implementation of EU funds for regional development, particular attention is being paid to sound financial management. Until January 2013, EU fund management was under close supervision and *ex-ante* control of the EU Delegation in Croatia. So far, no major fraud or corruption cases were found.

4. The EU draft legislative package for the 2014-20 period aligns the key investment priorities from EU funds with the Europe 2020 headline targets, channelling funds towards national and EU socioeconomic goals.

The ongoing 2007-13 programmes adopted under the Instrument for Pre-Accession for regional competitiveness, transport, environment and human resources benefit from a new allocation of EUR 450 million ([2]) under cohesion policy. Croatia is currently preparing for the 2014-20 period (EUR 8 billion).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/swd2013_croatia_en.pdf
([2]) For details on allocations per programme please see Section 6.1 of National Strategic Reference Framework: http://www.mrrfeu.hr/UserDocsImages/EU%20fondovi/NSRF_HR_.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009205/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung Rumäniens und deren Auswirkungen

Rumänien sei schwer von der Wirtschaftskrise angeschlagen, wird vielerorts berichtet. Gerade dort wachse der Unmut in der Bevölkerung, denn das Land unterziehe sich einem eisernen Sparprogramm.

Korruption und Bürokratie seien bis heute Alltag im Geschäftsleben Rumäniens. Die schlechte Wirtschaftslage Rumäniens führe bereits zu einer Massenflucht von Arbeitskräften. Millionen Menschen gingen in den letzten Jahren nach Westeuropa, zum Beispiel nach Spanien oder Italien.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission die eingangs beschriebenen Umstände nach dem Beitritt Rumäniens kurz- und langfristig?

2. Wie wirkt sich dieser Auswanderungsstrom sowohl budgetär als auch soziopolitisch auf die Mitgliedstaaten aus angesichts der Tatsache, dass sich die weitere Entwicklung in Rumänien nicht verbessern würde?

3. Hat die Kommission Detailkenntnisse zur finanziellen und wirtschaftlichen Lage Rumäniens, und wie werden die EU-Gelder für die Förderung der Wirtschaftslage vor Ort in der Tat genutzt? (Mit der Bitte um ausführliche Auflistung der jeweiligen Projekte, Haushaltslinien und ihrer Details)

4. Sieht die Kommission es als fiskalpolitisches Alarmsignal, dass der Mittelstand im Rückgang begriffen ist und die Armut generell zunimmt? Wenn ja, welche Maßnahmen gedenkt sie zu empfehlen und gegebenenfalls auf europäischer Ebene zu ergreifen?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(7. Oktober 2013)

Seit Ausbruch der Finanzkrise hat sich die Wirtschaftslage Rumäniens dank zweier Zahlungsbilanzprogramme verbessert. Das Wachstum dürfte im Jahr 2013 bei 1,6 % und im Jahr 2014 bei 2,2 % liegen ([1]). Damit wird das geschätzte Wachstumspotenzial von 2,1 % bzw. 2,6 % nicht ausgeschöpft, was teils auf die verzögerte Umsetzung der geplanten Reformen, unzureichende Verwaltungskapazitäten und eine unzulängliche Prioritätensetzung bei den öffentlichen Investitionen zurückzuführen ist.

Der Arbeitsmarkt in Rumänien zeigt sich solide ([2]) mit einer Erwerbslosenquote, die deutlich niedriger ist als der EU-Durchschnitt ([3]).

Für den Zeitraum 2007-2013 wurden Rumänien fast 20 Mrd. EUR im Rahmen des Ziels „Konvergenz" ([4]) zugewiesen. Mit diesen Mitteln sollen Projekte in den Bereichen Verkehrs- und Umweltinfrastruktur, Forschung, KMU-Unterstützung, Energie, Entwicklung der Humanressourcen und Verbesserung der Verwaltungskapazität gefördert werden ([5]). Für das rumänische Nationale Programm für ländliche Entwicklung wurden weitere Mittel in Höhe von 8 Mrd. EUR bereitgestellt, die der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der Agrar- und Ernährungswirtschaft und der Diversifizierung der ländlichen Wirtschaft zugutekommen. Die Durchführung der Programme verläuft nur schleppend. Der Rat hat Rumänien 2013 in einer länderspezifischen Empfehlung ([6]) aufgefordert, die Verwaltungskapazitäten zu stärken, um die Inanspruchnahme von EU-Mitteln zu beschleunigen.

([1]) Frühjahrsprognose der Kommission. Die Kommission veröffentlicht dreimal im Jahr ausführliche makroökonomische Prognosen: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/index_de.htm

([2]) Da die Auswanderung aus Rumänien hauptsächlich wirtschaftlich motiviert ist, treten rumänische Staatsangehörige üblicherweise in den Arbeitsmarkt der Zielländer ein und leisten einen Beitrag zum Wirtschaftswachstum und zu den lokalen Sozialversicherungssystemen.

([3]) Siehe jüngste Eurostat-Mitteilung: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-31072013-BP/EN/3-31072013-BP-EN.PDF

([4]) Das Ziel „Konvergenz" betrifft Regionen, deren Pro-Kopf-BIP weniger als 75 % des EU-Durchschnitts (zwischen 2000 und 2002) beträgt. Es gilt für 99 Regionen, die 35 % der Bevölkerung der EU-27 ausmachen, und hebt auf die Förderung der Voraussetzungen für mehr Wachstum und für Konvergenz auf Echtzeitbasis in den Mitgliedstaaten und Regionen mit dem größten Entwicklungsrückstand ab. Die Mittel für Rumänien werden über sieben kofinanzierte operationelle Programme zugewiesen. Diese Zahlen umfassen nicht die Entwicklung des ländlichen Raums und die Fischerei, die als gesonderte Politiken anderen Förderfähigkeitsbestimmungen unterliegen.

([5]) Das rumänische Ministerium für EU-Mittel stellt umfassende Daten über Projekte und Auswirkungen auf den Haushalt bereit: http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_de.htm

Die Kommission widmet wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Entwicklungen große Aufmerksamkeit. Die Verbesserung des wirtschaftlichen Umfelds für KMU war Teil der letzten beiden Programme (siehe Arbeitsunterlage der Kommissionsdienststellen für eine Gesamtbewertung ([7])), gehörte zu den länderspezifischen Empfehlungen und ist geplanter Bestandteil des von den rumänischen Behörden beantragten Zahlungsbilanzprogramms 2013-2015. Der vorsichtig austarierte Konsolidierungspfad für Rumänien ist auf Defizitabbau und nachhaltiges Wachstum angelegt.

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/romania/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009205/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Economic developments in Romania and their impact

Romania has been hit hard by the economic crisis, as reported in numerous media. Resentment at the harsh austerity programme imposed on the country is growing among the population.

Corruption and bureaucracy are daily occurrences in Romania's commercial life. Romania's weak economy has already resulted in a mass exodus of workers. Millions of people have left in recent years for Western European countries such as Spain or Italy.

1. What is the Commission's prognosis for this post-accession situation in Romania, in both the short and the long term?

2. What impact is this migratory movement having on the budgets and social policy of the Member States, assuming that the situation in Romania does not improve?

3. Does the Commission have detailed information on the financial and economic situation in Romania and on how EU money to support the economy is actually being used on the ground? Please provide a comprehensive list with details of projects and budgetary headings.

4. Does the Commission view the fact that small and medium-sized enterprises are declining and poverty in general is increasing as an alarm bell in terms of fiscal policy? If so, what measures is it thinking of recommending and, where necessary, applying at European level?

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

Since the financial crisis and with the support of two BoP ([1]) programmes, Romania has improved its economic stance. Growth is projected at 1.6% in 2013 and 2.2% in 2014. ([2]) This is still below potential growth, estimated at 2.1% and 2.6%, respectively, in part due to delayed implementation of planned reforms, weak administrative capacity and insufficient prioritisation of public investment.

Romania's own labour market performs well ([3]), with an unemployment rate markedly lower than the EU average ([4]) .

For 2007-13, Romania has been allocated almost EUR 20 billion under the Convergence Objective ([5]) supporting projects for transport and environment infrastructure, research, SMEs support, energy, human resources development and improvement of the administrative capacity. ([6]) The Romanian National Rural Development Programme has an allocation of an additional EUR 8 billion which contributes to promoting competitiveness in the agri-food sector and diversification of the rural economy. Implementation of the programmes has been slow. The Council recommendation (CSRs) addressed to Romania in 2013 ([7]) called for the strengthening of administrative capacity, in order to accelerate the absorption of EU funds.

([1]) Balance of Payments.
([2]) Commission Spring Forecast. The Commission publishes detailed macroeconomic forecasts three times a year: http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu/forecasts/index_en.htm
([3]) As migration from Romania is mostly for economic reasons, Romanian citizens tend to join the workforce in the countries of destination and to contribute to economic growth and local social security schemes.
([4]) See latest Eurostat release http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-31072013-BP/EN/3-31072013-BP-EN.PDF
([5]) The Convergence Objective concerns regions where GDP per head is less than 75% of the EU average as it stood between 2000 and 2002. It applies to 99 regions representing 35% of the EU-27 population and aims to promote conditions conducive to growth and ones which lead to real-time convergence in the least-developed Member States and regions. Funds earmarked for Romania are allocated through seven co-financed operational programmes. These figures do not include rural development and fisheries, which are separate policies, with different eligibility rules.
([6]) The Romanian Ministry of European Funds provides comprehensive data on projects and budgetary implications : http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/
([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

The Commission pays close attention to business and social developments. Improving the business environment for SMEs was part of the past two programmes (see the Commission's services paper for an overall assessment ([8])), was part of the CSRs, and would be part of the 2013-2015 BoP programme requested by the Romanian authorities. The fiscal adjustment path for Romania is cautiously balanced to achieve deficit reduction and sustained growth.

([8]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/romania/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009206/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Mehr Netto vom Brutto

In vielen Mitgliedstaaten stellt sich die Frage nach „mehr Netto vom Brutto".

So soll es laut Medienberichten künftig eine seriöse Form der Gegenfinanzierung geben, wenn man sich eine reine Abgabensenkung zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt wegen der Haushaltslage nicht leisten könne.

1. Wie bewertet die Kommission das Konzept?

2. Erwägt die Kommission, gegebenenfalls die Umsetzung in den Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen, und wenn ja, wie?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(12. September 2013)

In ihrem Jahreswachstumsbericht 2013 forderte die Kommission eine effizientere, gerechtere und wachstumsfreundlichere Ausgestaltung der Steuersysteme. Entsprechend sollte die Besteuerung des Faktors Arbeit dort, wo sie vergleichsweise hoch ist, der Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen entgegensteht und sich nachteilig auf die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit auswirken könnte, deutlich gesenkt werden. Damit etwaige Reformen aufkommensneutral sind, könnten im Gegenzug Steuern, die als weniger wachstumsschädlich gelten, wie beispielsweise Verbrauchsteuern, Grundsteuern oder Umweltsteuern, angehoben werden.

Auf der Grundlage einer Überprüfung der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Entwicklungen in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten sowie der im Jahreswachstumsbericht dargelegten EU-weiten Handlungsprioritäten hat die Kommission im Mai 2013 an jeden Mitgliedstaat länderspezifische Empfehlungen gerichtet. Diese Empfehlungen wurden im Juni 2013 vom Europäischen Rat gebilligt und im Juli 2013 vom Rat förmlich verabschiedet. Eine der für mehrere Mitgliedstaaten genannten Reformprioritäten ist die Eindämmung der Steuer- und Abgabenbelastung des Faktors Arbeit. Ziel ist es, Arbeitsanreize zu setzen und die relativ hohen Arbeitskosten, insbesondere für geringqualifizierte Arbeitskräfte, zu reduzieren. Zur Gewährleistung tragfähiger öffentlicher Finanzen müssen derartige Steuer- und Abgabensenkungen gegenfinanziert werden.

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_de.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009206/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: More net from the gross

In many Member States the issue of 'more net from the gross' is being raised.

Media reports are claiming that we should in future have a reliable form of reciprocal financing if we cannot afford a pure tax cut at the present time on account of the budgetary situation.

1. What is the Commission's view of this idea?

2. Is it considering supporting its implementation in the Member States, where appropriate, and if so, how?

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

In its 2013 Annual Growth Survey (AGS), the Commission calls for tax systems to be made more effective, fairer and less detrimental to growth. In this respect, the tax burden on labour should be substantially reduced in countries where it is comparatively high and hampers job creation and could pose a drag on competitiveness. To ensure that reforms are revenue neutral, taxes considered less detrimental to growth, such as consumption tax, recurrent property tax and environmental taxes could be increased.

Based on the review of each Member State's economic and social performance, and the EU-wide priorities for action set out in the abovementioned AGS, the Commission adopted a set of country-specific recommendations for each Member State in May 2013. The recommendations were endorsed by the European Council in June 2013 and formally adopted by the Council in July 2013. A reform priority identified for several Member States was to limit labour taxation in order to raise incentives to work and to reduce the relatively high cost of labour, in particular for low-skilled workers. In order to ensure sound public finances, such tax cuts need then to be compensated financially.

http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009207/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Korruption in Europa

Laut diverser Medienberichte soll die Korruption im Geschäftsleben von Slowenien zu 96 %, in Griechenland zu 84 % und in Spanien zu 61 % an der Tagesordnung sein.

Die Wirtschaftskrise verschärfe die Situation in vielen Ländern Europas, weil die Unternehmen trotzdem unter Druck stünden, mit Umsatz- und Gewinnzuwächsen zu glänzen.

1. Ist dieser Umstand der Kommission bekannt?

2. Wenn ja, wie ist der aktuelle Stand der Situation in den jeweiligen Ländern?

3. In welchen Höhen bewegen sich die Summen, die den Mitgliedstaaten in den Bereichen Kohäsionsfonds/Strukturfonds/Regionalfonds durch Korruption verloren gehen?

4. Zu wie viel Prozent kann die Kommission durch Korruption verlorene Gelder wieder „zurückgewinnen"?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(30. September 2013)

Der Kommission sind die zahlreichen Medienberichte über die Korruption in einigen Mitgliedstaaten bekannt.

Sie erstellt derzeit den ersten Antikorruptionsbericht der EU, der noch dieses Jahr angenommen werden soll. Ziel ist es, den Stand der Korruptionsbekämpfung in der Europäischen Union in regelmäßigen Abständen zu untersuchen sowie bewährte Verfahren der Korruptionsbekämpfung zu fördern und den politischen Willen hierzu in den Ländern und Bereichen, in denen entschiedener gegen Korruption vorgegangen werden muss, zu stimulieren. Nachfolgend soll auf Grundlage von der Kommission vorliegenden Informationen alle zwei Jahre ein entsprechender Bericht zur Situation in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten herausgegeben werden.

Im Oktober 2013 wird die Kommission Schätzungen zu den Kosten der Korruption im Rahmen der öffentlichen Auftragsvergabe publizieren, die auf einer von einem Beratungsunternehmen für das Europäische Amt für Betrugsbekämpfung (OLAF) durchgeführten Studie basieren.

Für die Wiedereinziehung rechtsgrundlos gezahlter Beträge zu Lasten des EU-Haushalts im Wege einer angemessenen Strafverfolgung sind in erster Linie die Mitgliedstaaten verantwortlich.

Ferner verweist die Kommission die Frau Abgeordnete auf den letzten Jahresbericht über den Schutz der finanziellen Interessen der Europäischen Union — Betrugsbekämpfung ([1]) und auf den Jahresbericht des OLAF ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/reports/communities-reports/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/documents/reports-olaf/2012/olaf_report_2012_de.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009207/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Corruption in Europe

According to various media reports, corruption affects 96% of business life in Slovenia, 84% in Greece and 61% in Spain.

The economic crisis is exacerbating the situation in numerous countries in Europe, because companies are under pressure to perform by increasing sales and profits.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. If so, what is the current situation in each individual country?

3. How much money are the Member States losing to corruption through the Cohesion Fund, the Structural Funds and the Regional Development Fund?

4. What percentage of money lost due to corruption can the Commission 'recover'?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(30 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the numerous reports concerning corruption in particular in some Member States.

The Commission is currently drafting the first EU Anti-Corruption Report, to be adopted later in 2013. The objective is to periodically assess the situation in the Union regarding the fight against corruption promote good practices and stimulate political will in those countries and sectors where corruption needs to be addressed more vigorously. Subsequent reports will follow every two years.

Based on the information which is available to the Commission, the situation for each Member State will be set out in the abovementioned report.

On the basis of a study conducted by a consultancy firm for OLAF, the Commission will publish estimates of the costs of corruption in public procurement in October 2013.

The Member States are in the first instance responsible for the recovery of sums unduly paid affecting the EU Budget through appropriate judicial prosecution.

The Commission would further refer the Honourable Member to its recent annual report on the Protection of the EU's financial interests — Fight against fraud ([1]) and to the OLAF annual report ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/about-us/reports/communities-reports/index_en.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/anti_fraud/documents/reports-olaf/2012/olaf_report_2012_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009208/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Anfrage zu der Einfuhr von Lebensmitteln aus den USA

Aufgrund der derzeitigen Verhandlungen über die Freihandelszone zwischen der EU und den USA werden Befürchtungen über die Einfuhr von „Chlorhuhn" und „Klonfleisch" laut. Eine reine Kennzeichnung der Lebensmittel reiche nicht aus, wird vielfach geäußert. Wenn Hühner wie in den USA zur Desinfizierung beim Schlachten durch ein Chlorbad gezogen würden, dann sei der Anreiz für hohe Hygienestandards in Ställen wohl eher gering.

Während in Europa beispielsweise genveränderte Lebensmittel bei Verbrauchern und Politikern auf breite Ablehnung stoßen, verhält es sich in den USA völlig anders: 90 % des verwendeten Mais, der Sojabohnen und der Zuckerrüben sind gentechnisch verändert und werden akzeptiert. In Amerika gibt es auch keine Kennzeichnungspflichten.

Dementsprechend ist es schwer nachvollziehbar, welche Inhaltsstoffe verwendet wurden und wie das Produkt produziert wurde. Beispiele sind hormonbelastetes Rindfleisch und Hähnchen, die mit Chlor desinfiziert werden.

1. Hat die Kommission entsprechende Detailkenntnisse, und wie lautet ihre Beurteilung? (Bitte um ausführliche Erläuterung)

2. Wird es Handelsschranken für Lebensmittel aus den USA geben, oder werden diese nur entsprechend den EU-Standards in den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten gekennzeichnet?

3. Wie verhält sich die länderspezifische Situation?

4. Welche Standards müssen die einzuführenden Lebensmittel erfüllen?

5. Wird es in der Folge bestimmte Regelungen bei der Produktion der Güter geben?

6. Ist sich die Kommission der Folgen einer möglichen Preiserhöhung bei heimischen Produkten bewusst?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(6. September 2013)

Einige in den Vereinigten Staaten relativ übliche Lebensmittelproduktionsverfahren sind in der EU tatsächlich nicht zugelassen. Daher dürfen Lebensmittel, die auf diese Weise produziert werden, nicht auf den EU-Markt gelangen. In die EU eingeführte Lebensmittel müssen entsprechend den Anforderungen der EU oder zumindest solchen, die die EU als gleichwertig erachtet, hergestellt werden. Die US-Behörden müssen diese Bestimmungen einhalten. Die Einhaltung der Vorschriften wird von den zuständigen Behörden des Ausfuhrlandes überwacht, vom Lebensmittel- und Veterinäramt der Kommission regelmäßig kontrolliert und bei der Einfuhr von Produkten in die EU von den EU-Grenzkontrollstellen überprüft. Gleichermaßen müssen aus der EU in die Vereinigten Staaten ausgeführte Lebensmittel die Anforderungen der USA oder solche, die als gleichwertig erachtet werden, erfüllen.

Bei den Verhandlungen zur transatlantischen Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft stehen grundlegende Rechtsvorschriften zum Verbraucherschutz in der EU nicht zur Debatte. EU-Standards für sichere Lebensmittel gelten für alle Lebensmittel in der EU, ungeachtet dessen, ob diese von einem Mitgliedstaat oder von einem Drittland produziert werden. Die EU ist eine Einheit mit einem Gemeinsamen Markt und harmonisierten Einfuhrvorschriften. Daher haben alle 28 Mitgliedstaaten dieselben gesundheitspolizeilichen Einfuhrvorschriften.

Die Kommission möchte die Frau Abgeordnete auf die Antworten auf die Anfragen E-1348/2013 ([1]) und E-002504/13 ([1]) bezüglich GVO aufmerksam machen.

Bezüglich der Frage nach den Auswirkungen auf die inländischen Produktionskosten ist es unwahrscheinlich, dass ein Freihandelsabkommen mit den Vereinigten Staaten eine Preissteigerung inländischer EU-Produkte zur Folge hätte.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009208/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Inquiry into imported foodstuffs from the USA

In the light of current negotiations on a free trade area between the EU and the USA, fears are being expressed about imports of chlorine-washed poultry and meat from cloned animals. Simple labelling of foodstuffs does not suffice, as has been explained on many occasions. If poultry are pulled through a chlorine disinfection bath during slaughter, as in the USA, then there is less incentive to maintain hygiene standards in cages.

Whereas in Europe, for example, consumers broadly reject genetically-modified foodstuffs, things are very different in the USA: 90% of the maize, soya beans and sugar beet used is genetically modified, and that is accepted. Nor are there any labelling requirements in the USA.

Therefore it is hard to track what ingredients are used and how products are produced. Hormone-loaded beef and chlorine-disinfected poultry are examples of this.

1. Does the Commission have any details on this, and what is its assessment? Please provide a detailed explanation.

2. Will there be trade restrictions on foodstuffs from the USA, or will they simply be labelled in keeping with EU standards in the individual Member States?

3. What is the situation in each country?

4. What standards must imported foodstuffs meet?

5. Will specific production regulations be adopted?

6. Does the Commission know what the impact would be of a possible increase in the price of domestic products?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(6 September 2013)

Some food production methods that are rather common in the US are indeed not allowed in the EU. Therefore, food produced according to these methods cannot enter the EU market. Food imported in the EU must be produced according to the EU requirements, or at least with requirements that the EU has considered to be equivalent, and US authorities must ensure the respect of these provisions. The respect of these conditions is overseen by the competent authorities of the country of export, regularly audited by the Commission's Food and Veterinary Office and verified by the EU Border Inspection Posts when products enter the EU. In a similar manner, food exported from the EU to the US must be in line with the US requirements or at least with requirements which are considered equivalent to them.

With regards to the negotiation on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, basic legislation protecting EU consumers will not be up for negotiation. EU standards on safe food apply to all foodstuffs circulating within the EU, either produced in an EU Member State or imported from a third country. The EU is a single entity, thus it has a single market and harmonised import rules. Therefore, the sanitary import conditions are the same for each of the 28 Member States.

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Question E-1348/2013 ([1]) and to Question E-002504/13([1]) as regards GMO.

With reference to the question on the impact on the domestic production cost, it is unlikely that a free trade agreement with the US would increase the price of EU domestic products.

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009209/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: IT-Vertrauensverlust — Auswirkungen auf die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit

Im Zuge der aktuellen Entwicklungen um den sogenannten „Abhörskandal" fühlen sich die EU-Bürgerinnen und EU-Bürger zunehmend überwacht und empfinden ihre Datentransfers im Internet nicht mehr als sicher (erste einzelstaatliche Studien weisen auf einen Vertrauensverlust bei bis zu zwei Dritteln der BenutzerInnen hin).

1. Wie beurteilt die Kommission den oben beschriebenen Vertrauensverlust im demokratiepolitischen Zusammenhang, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Tatsache, dass es sich dabei um eine staatliche Überwachung handelt (entweder durch die Staaten selbst oder durch Informationsweitergabe)?

2. Wie beurteilt die Kommission den oben beschriebenen Vertrauensverlust im ökonomischen Zusammenhang, insbesondere im Hinblick auf einen möglichen Verlust der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der IT-Wirtschaft?

3. Welche Maßnahmen würden nach Ansicht der Kommission diesem Vertrauensverlust entgegenwirken?

4. Sind derartige Maßnahmen geplant?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(7. Oktober 2013)

Die Kommission ist äußerst besorgt über die jüngsten Medienberichte über Programme wie PRISM, die es offenkundig ermöglichen, in großem Umfang auf personenbezogene Daten zuzugreifen und diese zu verarbeiten.

Die digitale Welt bietet uns allen große Chancen, für Meinungsäußerung, Kreativität und Geschäftstätigkeit. Für ihre Entwicklung und ihr Wachstum muss aber das Vertrauen gegeben sein, dass die Grundrechte eingehalten werden. Der Schutz personenbezogener Daten ist ein solches Grundrecht. Ein solider Rahmen für den Datenschutz ist daher in einer demokratischen Gesellschaft weder ein Hindernis noch ein Luxus, sondern vielmehr eine Notwendigkeit.

Die Reform des Datenschutzes ([1]), die von der Kommission im Januar 2012 vorgeschlagen wurde, wird dazu beitragen, den Trend des sinkenden Vertrauens in die Art des Umgangs mit Daten vonseiten der Unternehmen, denen die Daten anvertraut wurden, umzukehren. Mit der vorgeschlagenen Reform wird das bestehende hohe Datenschutzniveau in der EU durch die Aktualisierung der Rechte von Einzelpersonen verstärkt. Sie wird die Pflichten und Zuständigkeiten der Verarbeiter sowie der für die Verarbeitung Verantwortlichen klären. Eindeutige und solide Vorschriften zum freien Verkehr personenbezogener Daten werden auch zum Wachstum von Unternehmen innerhalb eines vertrauenswürdigen Datenschutzrahmens beitragen.

Gemeinsam mit dem Vorsitz des Rates der EU hat die Kommission ferner eine hochrangige ad-hoc-EU-US-Arbeitsgruppe zum Datenschutz eingesetzt, um die durch Programme wie PRISM aufgeworfenen Fragen genauer zu prüfen. Auf der Grundlage der somit erlangten Informationen wird die Kommission dem Europäischen Parlament und dem Rat im Oktober Bericht erstatten.

([1]) KOM(2012)11, KOM(2012)10.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009209/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: IT — loss of confidence and effects on competitiveness

During the course of current developments surrounding the so-called 'bugging scandal', EU citizens have come to feel that they are under increasing surveillance and that their online data transmissions are no longer secure (initial national studies indicate that user confidence has fallen by up to two-thirds).

1. How does the Commission rate the above loss of confidence in a democratic context, especially in light of the fact that this was government surveillance (either by a State itself or in the form of information transfer)?

2. How does the Commission rate the above loss of confidence in an economic context, especially in light of the potential loss of confidence in the IT economy?

3. What measures does the Commission consider would counter this loss of confidence?

4. Are any such measures planned?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 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 personal data.

The digital world presents great opportunities for us all, for expression, for creativity, and for business. But in order for it to develop and grow, there must be trust that fundamental rights are respected. The protection of personal data is such a fundamental right. A strong framework for data protection is therefore neither a constraint nor a luxury but a necessity in a democratic society.

The Data Protection Reform ([1]) proposed by the Commission in January 2012 will help reverse the trend of falling trust in the way in which data is handled by companies to which it is entrusted. The proposed reform will strengthen the current high level of data protection in the EU by updating individual's rights. It will clarify obligations and responsibilities on processors as well as data controllers. Clear and robust rules for the free movement of personal data will also help businesses grow within a data protection framework that can be trusted.

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 the issues raised by programs such as PRISM further. Based on the information gathered, the Commission will report back to the European Parliament and the Council in October.

([1]) COM 2012(11), COM 2012(10).

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009210/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Menschenrechtsverletzungen im Oman

Es häufen sich die Meldungen über Menschenrechtsverletzungen im Oman, insbesondere was freie Meinungsäußerung und friedlichen zivilen Protest angeht. Derartige Meldungen sind bereits seit längerem — unter anderen in Medienkreisen und Politik — bekannt und werden auch im Bericht von Amnesty International von 2013 zur weltweiten Lage der Menschenrechte erwähnt.

1. Sind der Hohen Vertreterin die oben genannten Fakten bekannt, und inwiefern wirken sie sich auf die internationalen Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und dem Oman aus?

2. Inwiefern wirken sich die Menschenrechtsverletzungen auf die internationalen Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und dem Kooperationsrat der Arabischen Staaten des Golfes (GCC) aus?

3. Gibt es Pläne und Maßnahmen der Europäischen Union, die Lage der NGOs und von verhafteten Menschenrechtsaktivisten im Oman zu verbessern?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(24. September 2013)

Der Hohen Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin sind die von der Frau Abgeordneten in Bezug auf Oman genannten Fakten bekannt. Die EU-Delegation in Riad (in Oman akkreditiert) und die diplomatischen Vertretungen der EU in Maskat verfolgen die Menschenrechtslage einschließlich der Entwicklungen in Zusammenhang mit der freien Meinungsäußerung im Rahmen ihrer regelmäßigen Berichterstattung aufmerksam.

Derzeit gibt es keine bilateralen Abkommen zwischen der EU und Oman und somit keinen institutionellen bilateralen politischen Dialog, auch nicht zum Thema Menschenrechte.

Im Verlauf des Ministertreffens zwischen der EU und dem Golfkooperationsrat vom 30. Juni 2013 in Manama hob die EU in ihren Beiträgen die zentrale Bedeutung der Menschenrechte in den Beziehungen der EU mit Drittpartnern hervor.

Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin der Kommission und ihre Dienststellen werden weiterhin die gesamte Palette verfügbarer Möglichkeiten und Instrumente nutzen, darunter öffentliche Erklärungen und diplomatische Demarchen, um in ihren Kontakten mit Beamten Omans und des Golfkooperationsrates die Themen Menschenrechte und Grundfreiheiten regelmäßig zur Sprache zu bringen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009210/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Human rights violations in Oman

Reports of human rights violations in Oman are piling up, especially in connection with freedom of expression and peaceful civil protect. Such reports have been common knowledge for a long term, including in media and political circles, and are also mentioned in the 2013 Amnesty International report on the state of the world's human rights.

1. Is the High Representative aware of these facts? What impact are they having on international relations between the European Union and Oman?

2. What impact are human rights violations having on international relations between the European Union and the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)?

3. Does the European Union have plans and measures to improve the situation of NGOs and detained human rights activists in Oman?

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

The HR/VP is well aware of the issues raised by the Honourable Member with regard to Oman. The EU Delegation in Riyadh (accredited to Oman) and EU diplomatic missions in Muscat are closely following the human rights situation, including developments related to freedom of expression, as part of their regular reporting.

There are currently no bilateral agreements between the EU and Oman and thus no institutional bilateral political dialogue, inlcuding on Human Rights.

EU interventions during the EU-GCC Ministerial meeting of 30 June 2013 in Manama emphasised the central importance of Human Rights in EU relations with third partners.

The HR/VP and her services will continue to use the full range of opportunities and instruments available, including public statements and diplomatic demarches, to raise human rights and fundamental freedoms regularly in their contacts with Omani and GCC officials.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009211/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Drogenpolitik — neue Herausforderungen

In Europa konsumieren 85 Millionen Menschen illegale Drogen; damit befindet sich der Drogenkonsum auf einem außergewöhnlich hohen Stand; zusätzlich gab es Entwicklungen im Hinblick auf den Variantenreichtum der angebotenen Substanzen, der eklatant gestiegen ist. Ebenso problematisch sind sogenannte „legal highs"; hierbei werden noch nicht verbotene Berauschungsmittel auf den Markt gebracht und vertrieben. Für die Behörden ist ein Erfassen und Verbieten nur mit erheblicher Zeitverzögerung möglich.

1. Sind bereits Maßnahmen geplant, die speziell auf „legal highs" eingehen und derartige Substanzen erfassen und deren Konsum eindämmen?

2. Gibt es Vorschläge, die Erfassung von neuen Substanzen zeitnaher zu ermöglichen?

3. Teilt die Kommission die Ansicht, dass der Anstieg der Jugendarbeitslosigkeit und die Kürzung der Sozialleistungen im Zuge der Wirtschaftskrise Ursachen für den Anstieg des Drogenkonsums darstellen?

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

Der Kommission ist bekannt, dass in der EU zunehmend neue psychoaktive Substanzen auftreten und vor allem immer mehr junge Menschen solche Substanzen konsumieren. Die rasche Ausbreitung neuer psychoaktiver Substanzen, die häufig als legale Alternativen zu international überwachten Drogen wie Kokain oder Amphetamin vermarktet werden, und die Unkenntnis ihrer akuten und langfristigen Risiken, stellt eine Gefahr für die öffentliche Gesundheit dar.

Die Kommission beabsichtigt, Legislativvorschläge zur Verschärfung der geltenden EU-Vorschriften für neue psychoaktive Substanzen vorzulegen. Mit den Vorschlägen, die auf eine Überarbeitung des bisherigen EU-Instruments, d. h. den Beschluss 2005/387/JI des Rates betreffend den Informationsaustausch, die Risikobewertung und die Kontrolle bei neuen psychoaktiven Substanzen hinauslaufen ([1]), soll ein schnelleres, wirksameres und angemesseneres Eingreifen auf EU-Ebene ermöglicht werden. Die Vorlage dieser Vorschläge ist im zweiten Halbjahr 2013 geplant.

Wie aus dem Europäischen Drogenbericht 2013 ([2]) der Europäischen Beobachtungsstelle für Drogen und Drogensucht (EMCDDA) hervorgeht, ist die Drogensituation in Europa in den letzten Jahren relativ stabil geblieben. Dem Bericht zufolge verbleibt der Drogengebrauch in der EU im historischen Vergleich zwar weiterhin auf hohem Niveau, doch sind auch positive Entwicklungen zu erkennen; so geht insbesondere der Konsum von Heroin, Kokain und Cannabis zurück. Die Berichte der Beobachtungsstelle zeigen zudem, dass infolge des wirtschaftlichen Abschwungs weniger Mittel für drogenbedingte Gesundheitsrisiken sowie Maßnahmen zur Wahrung der öffentlichen Ordnung und Sicherheit bereitgestellt werden ([3]) (wenngleich es erhebliche länderspezifische Unterschiede gibt), was sich ebenfalls auf die Drogensituation auswirken kann.

([1]) Beschluss 2005/387/JI des Rates vom 10. Mai 2005 betreffend den Informationsaustausch, die Risikobewertung und die Kontrolle bei neuen psychoaktiven Substanzen, ABl. L 127 vom 20.5.2005.
([2]) 2013, EMCDDA — Europäischer Drogenbericht 2013. Trends und Entwicklungen, abrufbar unter: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2013
([3]) 2012, EMCDDA — Jahresbericht 2012 zum Stand der Drogenproblematik in Europa, abrufbar unter: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2012 und Europäischer Drogenbericht 2013. Trends und Entwicklungen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009211/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Drugs policy — new challenges

In Europe, 85 million people use illegal drugs; in other words drug use is at very high levels. The number of variations on the substances available has also spiralled. So-called 'legal highs' are equally problematic. What are still legal intoxicants are being marketed and sold and it is only after considerable delay that the authorities are able to seize and ban them.

1. Have measures already been planned to deal specifically with 'legal highs', seize such substances and curtail their use?

2. Have proposals been made so that new substances can be seized more quickly?

3. Does the Commission share the view that the increase in youth unemployment and cutbacks in social security benefits during the economic crisis have caused an increase in drug use?

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

The Commission is aware of the increasing emergence of new psychoactive substances in the EU, and of the growing use of such substances, particularly among young people. The rapid spread of new psychoactive substances, which are often marketed as legal alternatives to controlled substances, such as cocaine or amphetamine, and the lack of knowledge about their acute and long term risks, pose a threat to public health.

The Commission is planning to table legislative proposals to strengthen the EU response to new psychoactive substances. The aim of the proposals, which will revise the existing EU instrument, Council Decision 2005/387/JHA on the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances ([1]), will be to enable swifter, more effective and more proportionate action at EU level. The Commission is planning to present these legislative proposals in the second half of 2013.

The 2013 European Drug Report ([2]) from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) shows that the drugs situation has remained relatively stable in Europe in recent years. According to this report, while drug use remains high by historical standards in the EU, positive changes can be seen, notably a reduction in heroin injection, cocaine consumption and cannabis smoking. EMCDDA reports also indicate that the economic downturn has affected the budgets dedicated to drug-related health, public order and safety measures ([3]) (although there are considerable variations between countries), which can have an impact on the drugs situation.

([1]) Council Decision 2005/387/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances, OJ L 127, 20.5.2005.
([2]) EMCDDA, 2013 European Drug Report. Trends and developments, 2013; available at: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2013
([3]) EMCDDA, 2012 Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe, 2012, available at: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2012; and 2013 European Drug Report. Trends and developments, 2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009212/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Bluttest für Trisomie 21 — medizinethische Implikationen

Ein umstrittener Gentest zur Feststellung von Trisomie 21 während der Schwangerschaft (pränataldiagnostisches Verfahren) wird — insbesondere von Verbänden von Menschen mit Behinderung — in Politik und Medien diskutiert.

1. Sind der Kommission die oben genannten Tatsachen bekannt und gibt es bereits eine offizielle Stellungnahme zu diesem Thema, oder ist eine derartige Stellungnahme geplant?

2. Im Zuge der oben genannten Diskussion wird häufig die fehlende Sensibilität von medizinischem Fachpersonal (insbesondere in Erstberatungen) kritisiert. Gibt es in diesem Bereich bereits eine EU-weite Zusammenarbeit zur Aus- und Weiterbildung von Fachpersonal?

3. Außerdem wird auf die positive Wirkung von umfassender Frühaufklärung über die möglichen Folgen und Ergebnisse des Bluttests hingewiesen. Gibt es in diesem Bereich bereits Sensibilisierungskampagnen?

4. Kritiker des Tests betrachten ihn als Möglichkeit zur Diskriminierung von Menschen mit Behinderung und als (Be-)Wertung von Leben. Welchen Standpunkt vertritt die Kommission dazu?

5. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Prognose, dass es durch diesen Bluttest vermehrt zu Abtreibungen von Föten mit Behinderung kommen wird?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(12. September 2013)

Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antworten zu den schriftlichen Anfragen E-005106/2011, E-002976/2012 und E-000340/2013 zum selben Thema ([1]).

Die Kommission unterstützt im Übrigen seit vielen Jahren Arbeiten zur Überwachung angeborener Anomalien. Aus dem EU-Gesundheitsprogramm wird derzeit die gemeinsame Maßnahme der Mitgliedstaaten EUROCAT ([2]) gefördert, die ein spezielles Arbeitspaket zum pränatalen Screening, zum Down-Syndrom (Trisomie 21) und zu genetischen Syndromen umfasst. Im Rahmen von EUROCAT arbeiten die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Schulung von medizinischem Fachpersonal zusammen, das direkt mit der Diagnose und dem Screening angeborener Anomalien zu tun hat.

EUROCAT hat bisher keine Stellungnahme zum nichtinvasiven Test anhand zellfreier fetaler DNA (cffDNA) für Trisomie 21 abgegeben.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) http://www.eurocat-network.eu/aboutus/jointactioneurocat

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009212/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Trisomy 21 blood test — medical ethical implications

A controversial genetic test for trisomy 21 during pregnancy (prenatal diagnostic procedure) has triggered political and media debate, especially among associations for the disabled.

1. Is the Commission aware of this and does it already have an official position on this issue or is it planning to take such a position?

2. The lack of sensitivity on the part of medical specialists (especially during initial consultations) is a subject of frequent criticism in the discussions mentioned above. Is there currently any EU-wide cooperation on the training (and further training) of specialists in this sector?

3. Also, it has been pointed out that explaining the possible consequences and the results of the blood test in detail early on can have a positive effect. Are awareness-raising campaigns already under way in this area?

4. Critics of the test see it as an opportunity to discriminate against people with disabilities and as a (value) judgment on life. Where does the Commission stand on this?

5. What is the Commission's opinion of the prognosis that this blood test will lead to an increase in the number of abortions of foetuses with disabilities?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Questions E-007591/2012 and E-7428/2013 on the same subject ([1]).

In addition, the Commission has supported work on the surveillance for Congentrial Anomalies for many years. Currently the EU Health Programme is supporting a Joint Action with the Member States EUROCAT ([2]) which includes a specific Work Package on prenatal screening, Down's syndrome (trisomy 21), and genetic syndromes. Within EUROCAT, Member States cooperate on training of health staff directly related to diagnosis and screening of congenital anomalies.

No position has been reached by EUROCAT on the non-invasive test based on cell-free foetal DNA (cffDNA) for trisomy 21.

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

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009213/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Flexible Rentenzeitmodelle

Momentan ist die Diskussion um eine Anhebung des Rentenalters in ganz Europa aufgeflammt; Interessenverbände und Betroffene wehren sich gegen eine festgelegte Arbeitszeitgrenze, die als einzigen Faktor das Lebensalter der ArbeitnehmerInnen miteinbezieht. Studien zufolge arbeiten ältere ArbeitnehmerInnen ebenso produktiv wie ihre jüngeren Kollegen und Kolleginnen, sind in vielen Bereichen sogar grundlegend für Know-how-Transfer und Ausbildung. Ein vielfältiges Lösungscluster trägt auch individuellen Lebensentwürfen und gesundheitlichen Möglichkeiten Rechnung und erlaubt durch Modelle wie Teilzeit, Berater auf Honorarbasis, Vertretung und viele mehr einen geregelten Übergang aus dem Berufsleben.

1. Gibt es bereits Überlegungen, Empfehlungen für eine Rentenuntergrenze statt einer Obergrenze und einen generell freieren individuell-fallbasierten Übergang in die Rente (auch mit zeitlichen Staffelungssystemen wie beispielsweise Altersteilzeit) auszusprechen?

2. Wenn nicht, gibt es bereits rentenbezogene Initiativen, dem Fachkräftemangel zu begegnen (auch und besonders durch eine Ausbildungsfunktion von älteren Arbeitnehmern)?

3. Gibt es bereits Empfehlungen an Unternehmen, Strukturen und Abläufe in höherem Ausmaß an ältere Arbeitnehmer anzupassen und generell eine andere Personalpolitik zu fokussieren?

4. Sieht die Kommission ein höheres Renteneintrittsalter als Mittel, der Finanz- und Wirtschaftskrise zu begegnen, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Tatsache, dass eine Mehrbeschäftigung zu Wirtschaftswachstum führt und dementsprechend auch Arbeitsplätze für Jugendliche schafft?

Antwort von Herrn Andor im Namen der Kommission
(13. September 2013)

In ihrem Weißbuch über Renten und Pensionen ([1]) legt die Kommission ihren Standpunkt zum Renteneintrittsalter und zur Verrentungspraxis dar. Dies wird im Europäischen Semester weitergeführt, indem auf Rentenprobleme in den Jahreswachstumsberichten ([2]) und länderspezifischen Empfehlungen ([3]) eingegangen wird.

Wenn die Kommission empfiehlt, das Rentenalter entsprechend der Lebenserwartung ([4]) anzuheben, so bezieht sie sich auf das niedrigste Alter, mit dem eine volle Rente bezogen werden kann. Sie unterstützt indessen auch Arbeitsplatz- und Rentenmaßnahmen, die es den Menschen ermöglichen und ihnen Anreize geben, länger zu arbeiten und später in Rente zu gehen ([5]).

Seit den späten 1990er Jahren wird in den beschäftigungspolitischen Leitlinien ([6]) und den Initiativen für aktives Altern ([7]) ein angemessener Zugang zu Aus- und Weiterbildung für ältere Arbeitnehmer sowie die Anpassung der Arbeitsplätze und der Arbeitsorganisation empfohlen. Die länderspezifischen Empfehlungen für 2013 enthalten den Rat, die Beschäftigungsquote und das Erwerbsaustrittsalter durch Verbesserung der Beschäftigungsfähigkeit älterer Arbeitnehmer zu erhöhen, unter anderem mit Maßnahmen ([8]) für lebenslanges Lernen und aktives Altern.

([1]) „Weißbuch: Eine Agenda für angemessene, sichere und nachhaltige Pensionen und Renten“ (KOM(2012)55 endg. vom 16. Februar 2012), abrufbar unter folgender Adresse: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7341&langId=de.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm
Auch in den Jahreswachstumsberichten 2011 und 2012 wurde das Thema Renten eingehend behandelt. Informationen zum Jahr 2013 sind im makroökonomischen Bericht (KOM(2012)750 endg. vom 28. November 2012) zu finden.

([3]) „Europäisches Semester 2013: Länderspezifische Empfehlungen: Europa aus der Krise führen“ (KOM(2013)350 endg. vom 29. Mai 2013), unter: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/

([4]) Die von der Kommission in den länderspezifischen Empfehlungen 2013 vorgeschlagene Anpassung des Rentenalters an die Lebenserwartung, wurde vom Europäischen Rat ausgeweitet, der es für erforderlich hält, das Rentenalter oder den Pensionsanspruch der Lebenserwartung anzugleichen.

([5]) Siehe z. B. Weißbuch über Renten und Pensionen.

([6]) http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/community_employment_policies/em0040_de.htm

([7]) Siehe z. B. die „Leitprinzipien für aktives Altern und Solidarität zwischen den Generationen“, die Ende des Europäischen Jahres 2012 angenommen wurden, unter: http://europa.eu/ey2012/ey2012main.jsp?langId=de&furtherNews=yes&newsId=1743&catId=970

([8]) Mehr als zehn Mitgliedstaaten haben im Europäischen Semester 2013 länderspezifische Empfehlungen dieser Art erhalten: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_de.htm

Die Kommission teilt die Meinung, dass eine Anhebung des tatsächlichen Renteneintrittsalters helfen kann, der Finanz- und Wirtschaftskrise entgegenzuwirken, weil die Beschäftigung gefördert wird und der Renteneintritt später erfolgt. Die Kommission verweist die Frau Abgeordnete auch auf die Antworten auf die Fragen E-4640/2013 und E-6529/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009213/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Flexible retirement model

Debate about a higher retirement age is currently raging throughout Europe. Interest groups and those who would be affected are resisting the introduction of a fixed working age limit based solely on the worker's age. Studies illustrate that older workers are just as productive as their younger colleagues and are actually vital to the transfer of knowhow and training in numerous areas. A multifaceted cluster solution would also take account of individual lifestyles and health-related issues and, with models such as part-time work, fee-based consultancy, agency work and more, would allow for a regulated transition to retirement.

1. Is the possibility being considered of recommending a minimum retirement age, rather than a maximum retirement age, and generally a freer, more individualised transition to retirement (including under graduated time-based systems, such as partial retirement)?

2. If not, have pension-related initiatives already been taken to address the lack of specialised workers (especially by giving older workers training responsibilities)?

3. Have recommendations already been made to companies to gear structures and processes more towards older workers and generally to focus on a different staffing policy?

4. Does the Commission see a higher retirement age as a way of countering the financial and economic crisis, especially in light of the fact that higher employment leads to economic growth and thus also create jobs for young people?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission's White Paper on pensions ([1]) sets out its position on the pensionable age and retirement practice. This is followed up through the European Semester by paying attention to retirement issues in the annual growth surveys ([2]) and country-specific recommendations ([3]) (CSRs).

When the Commission recommends raising the pensionable age in line with life expectancy ([4]), it is referring to the lowest age at which a full pension can be drawn. However, it also supports workplace and pension scheme measures that allow people, and offer them incentives, to continue working to a higher age and defer taking up their pensions ([5]).

Since the late 1990s, the Employment Guidelines ([6]) and Active Ageing initiatives ([7]) have recommended adequate access to training and upgrading for older workers and the adaptation of work places and work organisation. The 2013 CSRs advise raising the employment rate and the exit age by improving older workers' employability, including through lifelong learning and active ageing measures ([8]).

The Commission agrees that increasing the effective retirement and pension take-up ages can help counter the financial and economic crisis by boosting employment and delaying pension take-up. It would also refer the Honourable Member to its answers to questions E-4640/2013 and E-6529/2013.

([1]) 'White Paper: An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions' (COM(2012) 55 final of 16 February 2012), at: http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7341&langId=en.

([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/annual-growth-surveys/index_en.htm Special attention was also paid to pensions in the 2011 and 2012 Annual Growth Surveys. For 2013, see the Macroeconomic Report (COM(2012) 750 final of 28 November 2012).

([3]) '2013 European Semester: Country-Specific Recommendations: Moving Europe Beyond the Crisis' (COM(2013) 350 final of 29 May 2013), at: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/

([4]) The European Council extended the need to align the retirement age on life expectancy in the Commission proposals for 2013 CSRs to the need to align the retirement age or pension benefits on life expectancy.

([5]) For instance, see the White Paper on pensions.

([6]) http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/community_employment_policies/em0040_en.htm

([7]) For example, see the 'Guiding Principles for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations' adopted at the end of the 2012 European Year, at: http://europa.eu/ey2012/ey2012main.jsp?langId=en&furtherNews=yes&newsId=1743&catId=970

([8]) Over 10 Member States received CSRs of this sort in the 2013 European Semester: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009214/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Kosmetik — Verbraucherschutz

Verbraucherschutzorganisationen, NGOs und Medien warnen zunehmend häufiger und dringlicher vor schädlichen Stoffen in Kosmetika; das Thema gewinnt an Brisanz, besonders im Hinblick auf die Verabschiedung der Kosmetik-Verordnung. Diese Warnungen beschäftigen sich vor allem mit einzelnen möglicherweise gefährlichen Stoffen wie Parabenen, allergieauslösenden Substanzen wie dem Konservierungsmittel Methylisothiazolinon (MI) und hormonell wirkenden Chemikalien.

1. Wird ein Verbot der oben genannten Stoffe erwogen?

2. Werden auch Möglichkeiten zur Vermeidung bestimmter Stoffe angedacht, wie beispielsweise alternatives Verpackungsdesign, das den Kontakt zu möglichen Verunreinigungen verringert und dementsprechend teilweise die biozide Wirkung der Konservierungsstoffe ersetzen kann?

3. Welche Ansichten vertritt die Kommission zum sogenannten „Cocktaileffekt"? Wie gedenkt sie mit der Tatsache zu verfahren, dass es zu diesem immens alltagsrelevanten Phänomen kaum wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen gibt und dementsprechend die Sicherheit der Stoffe in ihrem Zusammenspiel nicht garantiert werden kann?

4. Wie gedenkt die Kommission mit hormonell wirksamen Stoffen zu verfahren; wird ein Verbot in Kinderprodukten erwogen (insbesondere im Hinblick auf die möglichen Nebenwirkungen, wie ein verfrühtes Einsetzen der Pubertät)?

Antwort von Herrn Mimica im Namen der Kommission
(12. September 2013)

1. Das Verbot schädlicher Stoffe ist gemäß der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1223/2009 über kosmetische Mittel ([1]) unter der Bedingung möglich, dass der Wissenschaftliche Ausschuss „Verbrauchersicherheit" (SCCS) eine Risikobewertung des Stoffs durchgeführt und diesen als nicht sicher für die menschliche Gesundheit befunden hat.

Was Methylisothiazolinon anbelangt, so arbeitet die Kommission derzeit an einer Beschränkung der Verwendung dieses Stoffs in Mischung mit Chlormethylisothiazolinon und hat den SCCS um eine neue Sicherheitsbewertung ersucht. Die Kommission arbeitet ferner am Verbot bestimmter Parabene, für die Sicherheitsdaten fehlen, sowie an der Einschränkung der Verwendung von Butyl- und Propylparabenen im Allgemeinen; bei Kindern unter drei Jahren soll die Verwendung in auf der Haut verbleibenden Mitteln im Windelbereich verboten werden.

2. Die Unternehmen sind aufgefordert, alternative Verpackungsformen in Erwägung zu ziehen, die den Kontakt mit möglichen Kontaminanten verringern, so dass der Einsatz von Konservierungsstoffen minimiert werden kann. Allerdings kann im Hinblick auf den Schutz der Gesundheit der Bevölkerung im Kosmetikbereich nicht vollkommen auf Konservierungsstoffe verzichtet werden.

3. Was Cocktaileffekte betrifft, möchte die Kommission die Frau Abgeordnete auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-003913/2013 verweisen ([2]).

4. Zu „Stoffen mit endokrin wirksamen Eigenschaften" in kosmetischen Mitteln heißt es in der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 1223/2009, dass die Kommission die Verordnung überprüfen wird, wenn EU-weit oder international anerkannte Kriterien für die Bestimmung dieser Stoffe zur Verfügung stehen, bzw. spätestens am 11. Januar 2015. Im Zusammenhang mit der Verordnung über Biozidprodukte ([3]) und der Verordnung über Pflanzenschutzmittel ([4]) befasst sich die Kommission derzeit mit der Festlegung von Kriterien zur Ermittlung von Stoffen mit endokrinschädlichen Eigenschaften.

([1]) ABl. L 342 vom 22.12.2009, S. 59.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/de/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 528/2012 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 22. Mai 2012, ABl. L 167 vom 27.6.2012, S. 1.
([4]) Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1107/2009 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates vom 21. Oktober 2009, ABl. L 309 vom 24.11.2009, S. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009214/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Cosmetics and consumer protection

Consumer associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the media are issuing more frequent and more urgent warnings about harmful substances in cosmetics; this is becoming an explosive issue, especially in light of the new Cosmetics Regulation. These warnings mainly concern individual substances that are potentially harmful, such as parabens, allergy-triggering substances such as the preservative methylisothiazolinone (MIT) and endocrine disruptors.

1. Is a ban on the above substances being considered?

2. Are ways of avoiding certain substances being considered, such as alternative packaging designs that reduce contact with potential contaminants and can thus partly replace the biocidal effect of preservatives?

3. What is the Commission's view on the so-called 'cocktail effect'? How does it intend to address the fact that hardly any scientific investigations have been carried out into this phenomenon — which is hugely relevant to people's daily lives — and thus the safety of interacting substances cannot be guaranteed?

4. How does the Commission intend to deal with endocrine disruptors? Is it considering a ban on these in children's products (especially in light of possible side effects such as early onset of puberty)?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2013)

1. The ban of harmful substances is possible under Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 on cosmetic products ([1]) under the condition that the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) has carried out a risk assessment of the substance and found it unsafe for human health.

For methylisothiazolinone, the Commission is in the process of restricting its use as part of the mixture with methylchloroisothiazolinone and has asked the SCCS to carry out a new safety assessment. The Commission is also in the process of banning certain parabens for which safety data is missing, and restricting the use of butyl and propylparabens in general, while banning them in leave-on products for the nappy area of children less than three years old.

2. Companies are invited to consider alternative packaging designs that reduce contact with potential contaminants in order to minimise the use of preservatives. However, it is impossible to do away with preservatives in cosmetics, while still preserving public health.

3. Regarding cocktail effects, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to the Written Question E-003913/2013. ([2])

4. Regarding 'endocrine disruptors' in cosmetic products, Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 stipulates that the Commission will review it with regard to substances with endocrine-disrupting properties when EU or internationally agreed criteria for identifying those substances are available, or at the latest on 11 January 2015. Work within the Commission on defining criteria for identifying substances with endocrine-disrupting substances is ongoing in the context of the Biocidal Products Regulation ([3]) and the Plant Protection Products Regulation ([4]).

([1]) OJ L 342, 22.12.2009; p.59.
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([3]) Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2012, OJ L 167/1, 27.6.2012.
([4]) Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009, OJ L 309/1, 24.11.2009.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009215/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Genveränderte Pflanzen (Monsanto)

Der amerikanische Großkonzern Monsanto hat sein Vorhaben aufgegeben, weitere genmanipulierte Pflanzen für den europäischen Markt zulassen zu wollen. Allerdings wird eine Verlängerung der Zulassung für die Maissorte MON810 angestrebt.

Welche Haltung vertritt die Kommission zu einer Verlängerung dieser Zulassung?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(13. September 2013)

Die Kommission äußert sich nicht zu internen Entscheidungen von Unternehmen und hat zu der Verlautbarung der Entscheidung von Monsanto, nach und nach die Anträge auf Anbau gentechnisch veränderter Organismen in der EU zurückzuziehen, nichts zu bemerken. Zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt liegen vier Anträge von Monsanto auf GVO-Anbau vor, zu denen die EFSA befürwortende Stellungnahmen abgegeben hat und über deren Zulassung zu entscheiden ist.

Gemäß den internen Verfahren setzt die Kommission die Bearbeitung ausstehender Zulassungen für den Anbau von GVO, einschließlich MON 810, fort.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009215/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Genetically modified plants (Monsanto)

The US conglomerate Monsanto has abandoned its attempt to get further genetically modified plants approved for the European market. It is, however, seeking an extension of the approval for its MON810 maize.

Where does the Commission stand with regard to extension of this approval?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission does not comment on companies' internal decisions and has no comment to make regarding the announcements made by Monsanto on its decision to progressively withdraw GM applications for cultivation in the EU. At this stage there are four Monsanto cultivation files with favourable EFSA opinion and awaiting a decision for authorisation.

In line with the internal procedures, the Commission is continuing to deal with pending authorisations for cultivation, including MON 810.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009216/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Gesundheitsgefährdung durch elektromagnetische Felder — Neubewertung

Im Juni 2012 hat die Kommission in ihrer Antwort auf die Anfrage E-004785/2012 angemerkt, dass SCENIHR um „eine Neu-Überprüfung aller wissenschaftlichen Nachweise ersucht" wurde, die im Zusammenhang mit der Gefährdung durch extrem niederfrequente elektrische und magnetische Felder stehen. Der Hintergrund ist die Gefährdung vor allem von Kindern durch Leukämie.

1. Wie weit ist diese Überprüfung fortgeschritten?

2. Gibt es zwischenzeitlich bereits erste Ergebnisse, bzw. zu welchen Resultaten ist die Überprüfung gelangt?

Antwort von Herrn Borg im Namen der Kommission
(2. September 2013)

1. Der unabhängige Wissenschaftliche Ausschuss „Neu auftretende und neu identifizierte Gesundheitsrisiken" (SCENIHR) hat ein laufendes Mandat zur Bewertung der von elektromagnetischen Feldern ausgehenden potenziellen Risiken. Die letzte Stellungnahme wurde im Jahr 2009 veröffentlicht ([1]). Der Wissenschaftliche Ausschuss veröffentlicht voraussichtlich im Herbst 2013 eine neue Stellungnahme zur Aktualisierung seiner Stellungnahme vom 19. Januar 2009, in der neu verfügbare Informationen berücksichtigt und insbesondere Bereiche abgedeckt werden, in denen bisher große Wissenslücken bestanden.

2. Der Ausschuss ist für die wissenschaftliche Bewertung neuer Erkenntnisse zuständig. Es ist nicht vorgesehen, vor Annahme der Stellungnahme Zwischenergebnisse zu veröffentlichen. Unbeschadet der Meinung des SCENIHR ist jedoch zu sagen, dass es kaum neue Daten über den Zusammenhang zwischen extrem niederfrequenten Feldern und der Gefahr von Leukämie bei Kindern gibt.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009216/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Health hazard posed by electromagnetic fields — reassessment

In June 2012, the Commission stated in its answer to Question E-004785/2012 that the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) had been asked to carry out 'a new review of all the scientific evidence' relating to the risk from extremely low frequency fields. The background to this is the risk of children in particular suffering from leukaemia.

1. How much progress has been made on this review?

2. Are there any initial results available already, or what findings have been obtained by the review?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 2013)

1. The independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) has a standing mandate to evaluate potential risks related to electromagnetic fields. The latest Opinion was published in 2009 ([1]). The Scientific Committee is expected to release a new opinion by autumn 2013 to update its opinion of 19 January 2009 in the light of newly available information, and to give special consideration to areas where important knowledge gaps were identified in the previous opinion.

2. Scientific assessment of new evidence is the responsibility of the Committee. It is not planned to release interim findings before the adoption of the opinion. Without prejudice to the views of SCENIHR, however, it can be noted that little new data is available on the association between extremely low frequency fields and the risk of childhood leukaemia.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihr/docs/scenihr_o_022.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009217/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Situation im Kongo

Der Krieg im Kongo währt mittlerweile seit rund zwei Jahrzehnten; der Einsatz der UN wird vor allem von der ansässigen Bevölkerung immer wieder heftig kritisiert.

1. Inwiefern ist die Union in humanitäre Hilfsaktionen im Land involviert? (Mit der Bitte um eine Auflistung der konkreten Einsätze von 2009 bis heute.) Welche finanziellen Mittel wurden für die entsprechenden Missionen bereitgestellt?

2. Welche Kosten tragen die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten für den Einsatz im Kongo jährlich?

3. Wie bewertet die Hohe Vertreterin den Einsatz der Friedenstruppen? Sieht die Hohe Vertreterin andere oder zusätzliche Möglichkeiten, um den Frieden in der Region wiederherzustellen?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(30. September 2013)

1. Die EU ist seit zwanzig Jahren einer der wichtigsten Geber humanitärer Hilfe in der Demokratischen Republik Kongo. Im Jahr 2013 belief sich die humanitäre Hilfe der EU für die Demokratische Republik Kongo auf 59 Millionen EUR. Eine Aufstellung der von der Kommission seit 2009 für die humanitäre Hilfe bereitgestellten Mittel ist im Anhang beigefügt, der der Frau Abgeordneten sowie dem Generalsekretariat des Europäischen Parlaments direkt übermittelt wird.

2. Jeder Mitgliedstaat der Vereinten Nationen ist verpflichtet, sich nach einem im Voraus festgelegten Verteilungsschlüssel an der Finanzierung von Friedensmissionen zu beteiligen. Insgesamt beliefen sich die Mittel für Friedensmissionen in aller Welt im vergangenen Jahr (2012-2013) auf 7,33 Milliarden USD. Die 28 EU-Mitgliedstaaten haben zusammen rund 37 % des Gesamtbudgets beigetragen. Die MONUSCO verfügte im gleichen Zeitraum über 1,347 Milliarden USD.

3. Die MONUSCO spielte (und spielt weiterhin) eine grundlegende Rolle im Stabilisierungsprozess, durch den die regionalen Konflikte der 90er Jahre im Gebiet der Großen Seen beendet und die Institutionen des Landes wieder aufgebaut wurden. Ihre Beteiligung am Schutz der Bevölkerung muss unterstützt werden. Auch die Schaffung einer Einsatztruppe zur Bekämpfung der Rebellengruppen im Osten der Demokratischen Republik Kongo ist ein wichtiger Bestandteil der Strategie zur Wiederherstellung des Friedens und der Umsetzung der Zusagen, die die Demokratische Republik Kongo und die Länder der Region im Hinblick auf die Überwindung der Krise gemacht haben. Der MONUSCO-Einsatz muss durch einen politischen Prozess sowie durch Maßnahmen ergänzt werden, die die Konfliktursachen angehen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009217/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Situation in Congo

The war in Congo has been waging for around twenty years now and the UN mission is attracting increasingly severe criticism, especially from the local population.

1. To what extent is the Union involved in humanitarian relief operations in the country? Please list specific missions since 2009. What funds have been provided for the missions in question?

2. What are the annual costs borne by the individual Member States for the mission in Congo?

3. What is the High Representative's assessment of the mission of the peace troops? Does the High Representative see any other or any additional ways of restoring peace in the region?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par la Vice présidente/Haute Représentante M^me^ Ashton au nom de la Commission
(30 septembre 2013)

1. L'UE est l'un des plus importants contributeurs en matière d'aide humanitaire en RDC ([1]), depuis une vingtaine d'années. En 2013 l'aide humanitaire de l'UE à la RDC s'est élevée à 59 millions d'euros. Une liste des montants engagés par la Commission en aide humanitaire depuis 2009 est fournie en annexe, qui est envoyé directement à l'Honorable Parlementaire ainsi qu'au Secrétariat du Parlement.

2. Chaque État membre des Nations Unis a une obligation de contribuer au financement des missions de maintien de la paix selon une clé de répartition préétablie. Le budget global pour les opérations de maintien de la paix dans le monde pour l'année écoulée (2012-2013) a été de 7,33 milliards d'USD. Les 28 États membres de l'UE y ont apporté une contribution globale d'environ 37 % du total. Le Budget de la Monusco pour la même période a été de 1,347 milliard d'USD.

3. La Monusco a joué (et continue de jouer) un rôle essentiel dans le processus de stabilisation qui a mis fin aux conflits régionaux des années 90 dans les Grands Lacs et remis en place les institutions du pays. Son implication en matière de protection des populations doit être encouragée. Par ailleurs, la mise en place d'une Brigade d'intervention pour combattre les groupes rebelles à l'est de la RDC est un élément important dans la stratégie pour y ramener la paix et mettre en œuvre les engagements pris par la RDC et les pays de la région afin de surmonter la crise. L'action de la Monusco doit être complétée par un processus politique et des mesures visant à faire face aux racines du conflit.

([1]) République démocratique du Congo.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009218/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29. Juli 2013)

Betrifft: Entgangene Einnahmen in Griechenland

Angesichts der umfangreichen Enthüllungen über Steueroasen und „Steuerflüchtlinge“ stellt sich die Frage, inwiefern das hoch verschuldete Griechenland vom Kapitalverlust durch ausländische Anlagen betroffen ist.

1. Hat die Kommission Informationen darüber, ob und falls ja, wie viel Geld aus Griechenland in Folge der sich fortsetzenden Krise ins Ausland verbracht wurde?

2. Ist des Weiteren einzuschätzen, in welcher Höhe sich die möglichen Steuereinnahmen bewegen, die dem griechischen Staat auf diese Weise entgehen?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(5. September 2013)

Informationen der Bank of Greece zufolge haben sich die Finanzströme 2013 dank eines besseren Vertrauens in die Wirtschaft stabilisiert.

Von Januar bis Mai 2013 verzeichneten die Direktinvestitionen einen Nettozufluss von 1,1 Mrd. EUR im Vergleich zu einem Nettoabfluss in Höhe von 224 Mio. EUR im Vergleichszeitraum 2012.

Während des gleichen Zeitraums verzeichneten die Portfolio-Investitionen einen Nettoabfluss von 11,1 Mrd. EUR verglichen mit einem Nettoabfluss in Höhe von 71,9 Mrd. EUR im Vergleichszeitraum 2012.

Die Bankguthaben stiegen wieder an: Nach einem Einbruch von 240 Mrd. EUR im Januar 2010 auf 159 Mrd. EUR im Juni 2012 erreichten die Bankguthaben im Mai 2013 wieder ein Volumen von 176 Mrd. EUR.

Eine Einschätzung der Auswirkungen der veränderten Finanzströme auf die Steuererhebung ist schwierig, da die Finanzströme — im Gegensatz zu dem aus ihnen abgeleiteten Einkommen oder Verbrauch — keine wesentliche Steuergrundlage darstellen. Die Bekämpfung der Steuerflucht ist von großer Bedeutung und ein wesentlicher Bestandteil des Anpassungsprogramms.

Die laufenden Reformen der Steuerverwaltung und der Steuerpolitik sind ausschlaggebend, wenn es um eine Stärkung der öffentlichen Finanzen und die Förderung von Fairness und Annahme der Reformbemühungen in der Gesellschaft geht.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009218/13
to the Commission
Angelika Werthmann (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Lost revenue in Greece

In view of the substantial revelations concerning tax havens and 'tax refugees', the question arises as to what extent Greece, which is heavily indebted, is affected by loss of capital as a result of foreign investments.

1. Does the Commission have any information on whether any money from Greece has been taken abroad as a result of the continuing crisis, and if so how much?

2. Is it also possible to estimate how much potential tax revenue is lost in this way by the state in Greece?

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

Information from the Bank of Greece suggests that financial flows have stabilised in 2013 as confidence in the economy has picked up.

From January to May 2013, direct investment showed a net inflow of EUR 1.1 billion, compared to a net outflow of EUR 224 million in the same period of 2012.

Over the same period, portfolio investment recorded a net outflow of EUR 11.1 billion, compared to a net outflow of EUR 71.9 billion in the same period of 2012.

Bank deposits are recovering: after declining from EUR 240 billion in January 2010 to EUR 159 billion in June 2012, bank deposits reached EUR 176 billion in May 2013.

Estimating the impact of changes in financial flows on tax collection is difficult, as financial flows are not a major tax base but instead the income or consumption derived from them.

Importantly, fight against tax evasion is a critical element of the economic adjustment programme.

The ongoing reforms of tax administration and tax policy are essential to bolster public finances and the fairness and social acceptability of the reform efforts.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009219/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Επιστολή Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής σε ελληνική κυβέρνηση για Cosco

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιογραφικές πληροφορίες, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή απέστειλε στην ελληνική κυβέρνηση επιστολή 23 σημείων, ζητώντας απαντήσεις σχετικά με τις διαπραγματεύσεις που γίνονται μεταξύ της εταιρίας «Σταθμός Εμπορευματοκιβωτίων Πειραιά ΑΕ» (θυγατρική του ομίλου Cosco) και του Οργανισμού Λιμένος Πειραιά ΑΕ, για την ανάληψη κατασκευής της επέκτασης του προβλήτα ΙΙΙ στο λιμάνι του Πειραιά.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Μπορεί να διευκρινίσει ποιο είναι το περιεχόμενο και σε τι συνίσταται η επιστολή της; Ποια είναι τα 23 σημεία στα οποία αναφέρονται τα δημοσιεύματα;

Απάντηση του κ. Almunia εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Διεξάγονται συζητήσεις μεταξύ των υπηρεσιών της Επιτροπής και των ελληνικών αρχών σχετικά με τα σημεία που ανέφερε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου. Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να δώσει διευκρινίσεις όσον αφορά ενδεχόμενη αίτηση για πληροφορίες των οποίων τα στοιχεία παραμένουν απόρρητα στον βαθμό που η διαδικασία προκαταρκτικής εξέτασης είναι εν εξελίξει.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009219/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Letter from the Commission to the Greek Government concerning Cosco

According to press reports, the Commission has sent a letter to the Greek Government containing 23 points, requesting answers to questions about the negotiations taking place between the company 'Piraeus Container Terminal' (a Cosco subsidiary) and Piraeus Port Authority regarding the construction of the extension to Quay III in the port of Piraeus.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Can it explain the content of the letter and say what it consists of? What are the 23 points to which the reports refer?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(26 septembre 2013)

Des discussions sont en cours entre les services de la Commission et les autorités grecques concernant les éléments mentionnés par l'Honorable Parlementaire. Toutefois, la Commission ne peut apporter des précisions sur une éventuelle demande de renseignements dont les éléments restent confidentiels pour autant que la procédure d'examen préliminaire et en cours.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009220/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Αλλαγή του ελληνικού νόμου περί ομαδικών απολύσεων

Σύμφωνα με δημοσιεύματα του ελληνικού Τύπου (3.7.2013), η Τρόικα ζητά από την ελληνική κυβέρνηση να αλλάξει το νομικό πλαίσιο που διέπει τις ομαδικές απολύσεις, στην κατεύθυνση της αύξησης του ορίου που θέτει για τον αριθμό των ομαδικών απολύσεων ανά μήνα, αλλά και της κατάργησης του δικαιώματος βέτο των αρμόδιων αρχών.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Έχουν υπάρξει σχετικές συζητήσεις με την ελληνική κυβέρνηση; Μπορεί να επιβεβαιώσει ή να διαψεύσει η Επιτροπή τα ανωτέρω δημοσιεύματα;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(19 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Ως μέρος των όρων πολιτικής που συνδέονται με το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, η ελληνική κυβέρνηση συμφώνησε να προβεί στην αναθεώρηση της ισχύουσας εργασιακής νομοθεσίας. Στόχος είναι ο καθορισμός μέτρων τα οποία, με βάση τις πρόσφατες μεταρρυθμίσεις, μπορούν να συμβάλουν στην προσέλκυση επενδύσεων και στη στήριξη της δημιουργίας θέσεων εργασίας, με ταυτόχρονη ευθυγράμμιση της Ελλάδας με βέλτιστες πρακτικές άλλων χωρών και τη διασφάλιση του δικαιώματος στην εργασία. Το εν λόγω εγχείρημα αναμένεται να συμπεριλάβει τη συγκριτική αναθεώρηση ρυθμιστικών θεμάτων που αφορούν την αναδιάρθρωση εταιρειών και τις ομαδικές απολύσεις ώστε να εξασφαλιστεί η ισορροπία μεταξύ της διευκόλυνσης της αναγκαίας προσαρμογής και ενός δίκαιου επιμερισμού του βάρους της προσαρμογής μεταξύ εργαζομένων, εταιρειών και της κυβέρνησης ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/pdf/reportcompliancedisbursement-062013_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009220/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Change in Greek law on collective redundancies

According to reports in the Greek press (3 July 2013), the Troika is urging the Greek Government to change the legal framework governing collective redundancies so as to increase the limit for the number of collective redundancies per month and also to remove the power of veto of the competent authorities.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Have there been any discussions on this matter with the Greek government? Can it confirm or deny the above reports?

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

As part of the policy conditionality attached to the economic adjustment programme for Greece, the Greek Government agreed in carrying out a review of existing labour regulations. The objective is to identify measures that, building on recent reforms, can contribute to attract investment and support job creation while aligning Greece with best practices in other countries and safeguarding the right to work. This exercise is expected to include a comparative review of regulatory issues concerning the re-structuring of companies and collective dismissals to ensure a balance between facilitating necessary adjustment and a fair sharing of the burden of adjustment between workers, firms and the Government ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/assistance_eu_ms/greek_loan_facility/pdf/reportcompliancedisbursement-062013_en.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009221/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: ΠΕΠ Δυτικής Ελλάδας-Ιονίων Νήσων-Πελοποννήσου

Η ελληνική οικονομία διανύει την 5η χρονιά συνεχόμενης ύφεσης, με την ανεργία να φτάνει σε επίπεδα ρεκόρ και τις ελληνικές περιφέρειες να καταστρέφονται οικονομικά και κοινωνικά. Πιο συγκεκριμένα, για την Περιφέρεια Δυτικής Ελλάδας, για τα Ιόνια Νησιά και για την Πελοπόννησο, σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία της Eurostat, η ανεργία ανήλθε σε 25,5%, 14,7% και 19,9%, αντίστοιχα.

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω, αλλά και το γεγονός ότι η αξιοποίηση και η καλύτερη χρήση των κοινοτικών κονδυλίων και συγκεκριμένα των Περιφερειακών Επιχειρησιακών Προγραμμάτων θα μπορούσαν να βοηθήσουν στην ανάσχεση της οικονομικής κατάρρευσης των ελληνικών περιφερειών, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιο είναι το ποσοστό απορροφητικότητας του ΠΕΠ Δυτικής Ελλάδας-Ιονίων Νήσων-Πελοποννήσου της περιόδου 2007-2013 για κάθε χωρική ενότητα και για τους αντίστοιχους Άξονες Προτεραιότητας; Ποιοι από αυτούς τους άξονες παρουσιάζουν τα μεγαλύτερα προβλήματα και καθυστερήσεις, και γιατί; Διαθέτει σχετικούς πίνακες;

2. Ποια είναι, κατά τη γνώμη της Επιτροπής, τα σημαντικότερα έργα που παρουσιάζουν καθυστερήσεις και τι μέτρα προτείνει για την αύξηση της απορροφητικότητας του συγκεκριμένου ΠΕΠ; Έχουν δρομολογηθεί αλλαγές στη δομή και την κατεύθυνσή του, ώστε να συνάδει με τις νέες οικονομικές και κοινωνικές ανάγκες των συγκεκριμένων περιφερειών;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. Στο παράρτημα επισυνάπτονται για τον κ. βουλευτή σχετικές πληροφορίες από τον Αύγουστο του 2013 όσον αφορά την απορρόφηση ανά περιφέρεια και άξονα για το επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα DEPIN. Τον Αύγουστο 2013 το ποσοστό απορρόφησης της Ελλάδας ανερχόταν στο 67,46%, ενώ ο μέσος όρος της ΕΕ ανέρχεται σε 56,10%.

Οι καθυστερήσεις στα διάφορα έργα στις περισσότερες περιπτώσεις οφείλονται στις χρηματοπιστωτικές δυσκολίες των τελικών δικαιούχων που προκάλεσε η οικονομική κρίση, στη διαδικασία υποβολής προσφορών για συμβάσεις και στις χρονοβόρες διαδικασίες απαλλοτρίωσης ή σε θέματα αδειοδότησης.

2. Η Επιτροπή έχει ήδη λάβει μέτρα για να αντισταθμίσει τις αρνητικές επιπτώσεις της κρίσης στην Ελλάδα, όπως η αύξηση του ποσοστού συγχρηματοδότησης στο 85% και η περαιτέρω συμπλήρωση της χρηματοδότησης κατά 10% που ισχύει από το 2013 και η Επιτροπή προτείνει να ισχύει μέχρι τη λήξη της περιόδου επιλεξιμότητας και το οποίο αποτελεί ένα μέσο για την επίσπευση της ροής κονδυλίων προς την Ελλάδα. Επιπλέον, τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012 πραγματοποιήθηκε αναθεώρηση των περιφερειακών επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων. Ο κύριος στόχος της αναθεώρησης είναι η ενίσχυση των αξόνων ανταγωνιστικότητας μέσω στοχοθετημένων ενεργειών που βελτιώνουν την υποστήριξη των ΜΜΕ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009221/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: ROP for Western Greece — the Ionian Islands — the Peloponnese

The Greek economy is in its fifth consecutive year of recession, with unemployment reaching record levels and the Greek regions being destroyed economically and socially. More specifically, according to Eurostat data, in the Region of Western Greece, the Ionian Islands and Peloponnese unemployment has risen to 25.5%, 14.7% and 19.9%, respectively.

Given the above, and the fact that the utilisation or better use of EU funds, in particular the Regional Operational Programmes, could help check the economic collapse of the Greek regions, will the Commission say:

1. What is the take-up rate for the ROP Western Greece — the Ionian Islands — the Peloponnese in 2007-2013 for each territorial unit and the corresponding Priority Axes? Which of these axes faces the greatest problems and delays and why? Does it have any tables on this matter?

2. What, in the Commission's opinion, are the most important projects facing delays and what measures does it propose to increase the take-up rate for this specific ROP? Have any changes been initiated in the structure and orientation of this programme in order to reflect the new economic and social needs of specific regions?

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

1. The Honourable Member will find attached in the annex relevant information as of August 2013 of the absorption per region and axis for the Operational programme DEPIN. In August 2013 the absorption rate of Greece stands at 67,46% while the EU average is at 56,10%.

The reasons for the delays in the various projects are in most cases mainly due to the financial difficulties of the final beneficiaries caused by the economic crisis, the tender procedure for contracts and the long procedures of expropriations or licencing issues.

2. The Commission has already taken measures to counter balance the negative effects of the crisis in Greece, such as the increase of the co-financing rate to 85% and a further top up of 10% which applies up to 2013 and the Commission proposes to apply up to the end of the eligibility period and which is a facility to accelerate the flow of funds to Greece. In addition, in December 2012 a revision of the Regional Operational Programmes took place took place. The main objective of the revision is to reinforce the axes of competitiveness through targeted actions that enhance support to SMEs.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009222/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πορεία υλοποίησης του Προγράμματος «Αλέξανδρος Μπαλτατζής»

Το συγχρηματοδοτούμενο από το Ευρωπαϊκό Γεωργικό Ταμείο Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης, Πρόγραμμα Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης της Ελλάδας για την περίοδο 2007-2013, «Αλέξανδρος Μπαλτατζής», αποτελεί τη μοναδική δυνατότητα επενδύσεων στον αγροτικό τομέα. Ωστόσο, η ιδιαίτερα δυσμενής κατάσταση της ελληνικής οικονομίας και, κατ' επέκταση, των παραγωγών γεωργικών και κτηνοτροφικών προϊόντων, η αύξηση του κόστους παραγωγής και η συνεχής πτώση του διαθέσιμου εισοδήματος, έχουν δημιουργήσει ένα τοπίο κάθε άλλο παρά ευοίωνο για τον αγροτικό κόσμο της Ελλάδας.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Ποια είναι η μέχρι σήμερα πορεία υλοποίησης (νομικές δεσμεύσεις — απορρόφηση) του προγράμματος «Αλέξανδρος Μπαλτατζής» ανά μέτρο και άξονα; Ποια είναι τα συγκριτικά στοιχεία με τα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη; Ποια είναι τα σημαντικότερα προβλήματα στην ομαλή εκτέλεση και απορρόφηση του προγράμματος;

Απάντηση του κ. Cioloș εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Την 1η Αυγούστου 2013, το ποσοστό εκτέλεσης του ελληνικού προγράμματος αγροτικής ανάπτυξης (ΠΑΑ) 2007-2013 ήταν 52,94%:

Συνολική συνεισφορά του ΕΓΤΑΑ σε ευρώ	Προκαταβολές σε ευρώ	Ενδιάμεσες πληρωμές σε ευρώ	Ποσοστό εκτέλεσης
3 906 228 424	273 435 990	1 794 707 792	52,94%

Το μέσο ποσοστό εκτέλεσης των ΠΑΑ-ΕΕ27 είναι 69,06% και περιλαμβάνει τις προκαταβολές.

Το ποσοστό εκτέλεσης του ελληνικού ΠΑΑ δεν προχωρά τόσο γρήγορα όσο τα υπόλοιπα ΠΑΑ της ΕΕ-27 το 2013. Αυτό οφείλεται κυρίως στην επιβράδυνση του ενδιαφέροντος για τις επενδύσεις στην Ελλάδα, καθώς και στη στενότητα πιστώσεων στη χώρα που επηρεάζει επίσης τους επενδυτές του ελληνικού ΠΑΑ. Τα δημόσια έργα και τα έργα των οργανισμών τοπικής αυτοδιοίκησης εκτελούνται με βραδύτερο ρυθμό και, κατά συνέπεια, υπάρχουν λιγότερες αιτήσεις για πληρωμές στο πλαίσιο του ελληνικού ΠΑΑ. Από την άλλη πλευρά, τα πολυετή μέτρα του προγράμματος, κυρίως αγροπεριβαλλοντικού χαρακτήρα, προχωρούν αρκετά ικανοποιητικά.

Στο παράρτημα Ι παρατίθεται το ποσοστό εκτέλεσης ανά μέτρο για το ελληνικό ΠΑΑ και τα ΠΑΑ της ΕΕ-27. Το ποσοστό εκτέλεσης ενός μέτρου εξαρτάται από πολλούς παράγοντες (μεταξύ άλλων, από τη δομή παράδοσης, το θεσμικό πλαίσιο, τις εθνικές διαδικασίες, τα συμφέροντα των δικαιούχων, την πρόσβαση σε πιστώσεις), οι οποίοι ποικίλλουν σημαντικά μεταξύ των περιφερειών και των κρατών μελών.

Οι εκθέσεις προόδου που εκπονούνται ετησίως από τη διαχειριστική αρχή περιγράφουν, μεταξύ άλλων, τα προβλήματα υλοποίησης και τις προτεινόμενες λύσεις. Όσον αφορά την Ελλάδα, οι εκθέσεις αυτές είναι διαθέσιμες στον δικτυακό τόπο http://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/index.php?obj=c731077c04035ac9

Δεν υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα στοιχεία σε επίπεδο Επιτροπής σχετικά με νομικές δεσμεύσεις σε επίπεδο προγράμματος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009222/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Progress in implementing the 'Alexander Baltatzis' Programme

The 'Alexander Baltatzis' Rural Development Programme for Greece for the period 2007-2013, which is co-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, constitutes the sole possibility for investing in the agricultural sector. However, the particularly unfavourable state of the Greek economy and, by extension, the plight of producers of agricultural and livestock products, increasing production costs and the steady decline in disposable income have created a climate that is anything but propitious for the rural world in Greece.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

What progress has so far been made in implementing (legal commitments — take-up) the 'Alexander Baltatzis' Programme by measure and axis? What are the comparative data in other Member States? What are the main problems in the smooth implementation and take-up of the programme?

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

The Greek 2007-13 Rural Development Programme (GR-RDP) had an implementation rate of 52.94% on 1 August 2013:

Total EAFRD allocation (EUR)	Payment on Account (EUR)	Interim Payments (EUR)	Implementation rate
3 906 228 424	273 435 990	1 794 707 792	52.94%

The average implementation rate of the EU-27-RDPs is 69.06% and include payments on account.

The GR-RDP implementation rate has not been advancing as fast as for other RDPs of the EU-27 in 2013. This is mostly due to the slowdown of the interest for investments in Greece as well as to the credit crunch in the country which also affects investors of the GR-RDP. Public projects and projects of local authorities are being implemented at a slower rhythm and hence present fewer requests for payments to the GR-RDP. On the other hand multiannual measures of the programme, mostly agrienvironmental, are advancing quite well.

Annex I shows the implementation rate per measure for the GR-RDP and the EU-27-RDPs. The implementation rate of a measure depends on many factors (amongst others, delivery structure, institutional framework, national procedures, interest of beneficiaries, access to credit), which vary considerably between Regions and Member States.

Progress reports prepared annually by the Managing Authority describe amongst others, the implementation problems and solutions proposed. For Greece, these reports can be consulted at:
http://www.agrotikianaptixi.gr/index.php?obj=c731077c04035ac9

No information is available at Commission level on legal commitments at programme level.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009223/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Στοιχεία εκκαθάρισης λογαριασμών ΕΓΤΕ/ΕΓΤΑΑ

Στην ερώτησή μου E-009030/2012, σχετικά με τα στοιχεία εκκαθάρισης λογαριασμών του Ευρωπαϊκού Γεωργικού Ταμείου Ενισχύσεων (ΕΓΤΕ) και του Ευρωπαϊκού Γεωργικού Ταμείου Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΓΤΑΑ), η Επιτροπή είχε απαντήσει ότι, με την απόφαση C(2012)4293 της 28.6.2012, είχε αποφασίσει την αναβολή της εκτέλεσης των δημοσιονομικών διορθώσεων, σύμφωνα με το αίτημα της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης τον Μάιο του ίδιου χρόνου, μέχρι την 31.12.2013.

Στην ίδια απάντηση, η Επιτροπή σημείωνε ότι, μέχρι το τέλος του 2013 «θα προκύψουν συνολικά 392 εκατ. ευρώ από αναβληθείσες δημοσιονομικές διορθώσεις (μη συμπεριλαμβανομένων των τυχόν πρόσθετων διορθώσεων οι οποίες θα περιληφθούν σε άλλες αποφάσεις συμμόρφωσης που θα εκδοθούν ενδιάμεσα)».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια είναι τα συνολικά ποσά δημοσιονομικών διορθώσεων/παρακρατήσεων που έχουν γίνει για κάθε κράτος μέλος από το 2007 μέχρι και σήμερα;

2. Ποιο είναι το ύψος των ποινών που έχουν βεβαιωθεί ανά καθεστώς ενίσχυσης, σε ποιο έτος αναφέρεται η κάθε ποινή και ποιοι ήταν οι λόγοι της επιβολής της;

3. Έχουν εκδοθεί πρόσθετες αποφάσεις στο διάστημα από την απάντηση της Επιτροπής στην ερώτηση E-009030 μέχρι και σήμερα; Σε ποια καθεστώτα αναφέρονται; Ποιο είναι το ύψος των ποινών που έχει βεβαιωθεί; Βρίσκονται κάποιες από αυτές σε στάδιο διαβούλευσης της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης με την επιτροπή των γεωργικών ταμείων, σύμφωνα με τη δυνατότητα που παρέχεται στο άρθρο 11 παρ. 4 του 885/2006/ΕΚ, όπως τροποποιήθηκε από τον Εκτελεστικό Κανονισμό ΕΕ αριθ. 375/2012; Ποιες είναι αυτές;

4. Τι μειώσεις έχουν εκτελεστεί συνολικά για την Ελλάδα από το 2007 μέχρι και σήμερα;

Απάντηση του κ. Cioloş εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. και 2. Από το 2007, η Επιτροπή έλαβε 19 αποφάσεις για τον αποκλεισμό από τη χρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης ορισμένων δαπανών που προκύπτουν για τα κράτη μέλη στο πλαίσιο του Τμήματος Εγγυήσεων του Ευρωπαϊκού Γεωργικού Ταμείου Προσανατολισμού και Εγγυήσεων (ΕΓΤΠΕ), του Ευρωπαϊκού Γεωργικού Ταμείου Εγγυήσεων (ΕΓΤΕ) και του Ευρωπαϊκού Γεωργικού Ταμείου Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΓΤΑΑ).

Η Επιτροπή αποστέλλει απευθείας στο Αξιότιμο Μέλος και στη γραμματεία του Κοινοβουλίου λεπτομερή στοιχεία για τις δημοσιονομικές διορθώσεις για κάθε κράτος μέλος και τον κατάλογο των Επίσημων Εφημερίδων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης στις οποίες δημοσιεύθηκαν οι αποφάσεις για τις δημοσιονομικές διορθώσεις.

3. Μετά την απάντηση στην ερώτηση E-009030/2012, εκδόθηκαν τρεις αποφάσεις εκκαθάρισης λογαριασμών ως προς τη συμμόρφωση: οι αποφάσεις 40 ([1]), 41 ([2]) και 42 ([3]). Κατά συνέπεια, το σύνολο του ποσού για το οποίο αναβλήθηκε η πληρωμή στην Ελλάδα μέχρι το 31/12/2013 με την απόφαση της Επιτροπής C(2012)4293 ανέρχεται τώρα σε 529 εκατ. ευρώ. Πρόκειται για τα ακόλουθα ποσά: 8,9 εκατ. ευρώ από την απόφαση 40 (ΕΓΤΕ), 122,6 εκατ. ευρώ από την απόφαση 41 (116,4 για το ΕΓΤΕ και 6,2 για το ΕΓΤΑΑ) και 5,2 εκατ. ευρώ από την απόφαση 42 (ΕΓΤΕ).

4. Ο δημοσιονομικός αντίκτυπος των διορθώσεων που επιβλήθηκαν στην Ελλάδα από το 2007 ανέρχεται σε 1 298,3 εκατ. ευρώ.

([1]) ΕΕ L 67 της 9.3.2013.
([2]) ΕΕ L 123 της 4.5.2013.
([3]) ΕΕ L 219 της 15.8.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009223/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Clearance of EAGGF and EAFRD accounts

In its answer to my Question E-009030/2012 on clearance of European Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) accounts, the Commission stated that through Decision C (2012) 4293 of 28.6.2012 it had decided to defer, until 31.12.2013, the execution of the financial correction in accordance with the request made by the Greek Government in May.

In the same answer, the Commission had noted that, by the end of 2013 'there will be a total of EUR 392 million in deferred financial corrections (not including any additional corrections which will be included in other conformity decisions which will be adopted in the meantime).'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What are the total amounts of financial corrections / deductions that have been made for each Member State since 2007?

2. What are the penalties that have been imposed per aid scheme, to which year does each penalty apply and what were the reasons for the imposition of the penalty?

3. Have any additional decisions been issued since the Commission's answer to Question E-009030? If so, to which schemes do they apply? What is the amount of the penalties? Are any of them the subject of consultations between the Greek Government and the Committee on the Agricultural funds, in accordance with the option provided in Article 11, paragraph 4, of 885/2006/EC, as amended by Commission Implementing Regulation EU No 375/2012? If so, what are they?

4. What deductions have been made overall in respect of Greece since 2007?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

1 and 2. Since 2007, the Commission has taken 19 decisions on excluding from European Union financing certain expenditure incurred by the Member States under the Guarantee Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), under the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The Commission is sending directly to the Honourable Member and to Parliament secretariat the details of the financial corrections by Member States and the list of Official Journals of the European Union where the decisions on financial corrections have been published.

3. Since the reply to the Question E-009030/2012 three conformity clearance decisions have been adopted: Decisions 40 ([1]), 41 ([2]) and 42 ([3]). As a result the total of the amount deferred for Greece until 31/12/2013 by the Commission Decision C(2012)4293 has now reached EUR 529 million. The following amounts are concerned: EUR 8.9 million from Decision 40 (EAGF), EUR 122.6 million from Decision 41 (116.4 for EAGF and 6.2 for EAFRD) and EUR 5.2 million from Decision 42 (EAGF).

4. The financial impact of the corrections imposed on Greece since 2007 amounts to EUR 1 298.3 million.

([1]) OJ L67, 9.03.2013.
([2]) OJ L123, 4.05.2013.
([3]) OJ L219 of 15.08.2013.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009224/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόβλεψη στην τροποποίηση του κανονισμού 562/2006 (κώδικας συνόρων του Σένγκεν)

Στο προοίμιο της τροποποίησης του Κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 562/2006, του κανονισμού Σένγκεν, όπως εγκρίθηκε από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο στις 12.6.2013, προβλέπεται ότι «Σε περιπτώσεις εμμενουσών σοβαρών ανεπαρκειών … του κεκτημένου Σένγκεν … θα πρέπει να θεσπισθεί ένας ευρωπαϊκός μηχανισμός για την επαναφορά προσωρινής και κατ' εξαίρεσιν άσκησης συνοριακού ελέγχου στα εσωτερικά σύνορα …, η Επιτροπή θα πρέπει να διαβιβάζει στο Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο σύσταση όπου θα αξιολογείται η ανάγκη της επαναφοράς της άσκησης συνοριακού ελέγχου στα εσωτερικά σύνορα ως έσχατο μέτρο.».

Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο θα πρέπει να υποβάλουν τις γνωμοδοτήσεις τους εντός ενός μηνός από την παραλαβή της σύστασης της Επιτροπής, διάστημα μετά το οποίο η Επιτροπή θα πρέπει να είναι σε θέση να αποφασίσει για την επαναφορά της άσκησης συνοριακού ελέγχου στα εσωτερικά σύνορα μέσω εκτελεστικών πράξεων, σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό (ΕΕ) αριθ. 182/2011 «Βάσει των όρων του άρθρου 2 παράγραφος 2 στοιχείο β) σημείο iii) του εν λόγω κανονισμού, για την έγκριση των εκτελεστικών αυτών πράξεων θα πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται η διαδικασία εξέτασης.».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Μπορεί να εξηγήσει πώς αντιλαμβάνεται την παραπάνω πρόβλεψη; Όταν ισχύσει η εν λόγω τροποποίηση, η Επιτροπή θα είναι σε θέση να αποφασίσει για την επαναφορά της άσκησης συνοριακού ελέγχου στα εσωτερικά σύνορα κρατών μελών μέσω εκτελεστικών πράξεων ακόμα και με την αντίθετη γνώμη των κρατών αυτών;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Το νομοθετικό ψήφισμα που ενέκρινε το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο στις 12 Ιουνίου 2013 αναφέρει στο άρθρο 26 ότι «σε εξαιρετικές περιστάσεις, όταν η συνολική λειτουργία του χώρου χωρίς ελέγχους στα εσωτερικά σύνορα, τίθεται σε κίνδυνο, ως αποτέλεσμα των συνεχιζόμενων σοβαρών αδυναμιών που συνδέονται με τον έλεγχο των εξωτερικών συνόρων […], και στο μέτρο που αυτές οι περιστάσεις αποτελούν σοβαρή απειλή για τη δημόσια τάξη ή την εσωτερική ασφάλεια εντός του χώρου χωρίς εσωτερικά σύνορα ή τμήματα αυτών, ο έλεγχος στα εσωτερικά σύνορα μπορεί να επανεισαχθεί […] ([1])».

Όσον αφορά τη διαδικασία, το «Συμβούλιο μπορεί να συστήσει σε ένα ή περισσότερα συγκεκριμένα κράτη μέλη να αποφασίσουν την επαναφορά των ελέγχων σε όλα ή συγκεκριμένα τμήματα των εσωτερικών συνόρων τους. Η σύσταση του Συμβουλίου στηρίζεται σε πρόταση της Επιτροπής. […].

Σε περίπτωση που η σύσταση δεν εφαρμοστεί από κράτος μέλος, το εν λόγω κράτος μέλος ενημερώνει αμέσως την Επιτροπή γραπτώς σχετικά με τους λόγους του».

Οι εκτελεστικές αρμοδιότητες, συνεπώς, δεν έχουν ανατεθεί στην Επιτροπή, γεγονός που αντικατοπτρίζεται και στην αιτιολογική σκέψη 8α, η οποία αναφέρει ότι «λόγω του πολιτικά ευαίσθητου χαρακτήρα των μέτρων αυτών που αφορούν τις εθνικές εκτελεστικές και τις εξουσίες επιβολής του νόμου όσον αφορά τον έλεγχο στα εσωτερικά σύνορα, οι εκτελεστικές αρμοδιότητες ως προς την έγκριση συστάσεων στο πλαίσιο της παρούσας ειδικής διαδικασίας σε επίπεδο Ένωσης θα πρέπει να ανατεθούν στο Συμβούλιο, αποφασίζοντας μετά από πρόταση της Επιτροπής».

([1]) P7_TA(2013)0259 — κείμενο πριν από τη νομική-γλωσσική οριστικοποίησή του.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009224/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Provision in the amendment to Regulation 562/2006 (Schengen Borders Code)

The preamble to the amendment of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006, the Schengen Regulation, as adopted by the European Parliament on 12.6.2013, provides that: 'For cases of persistent serious deficiencies … of the Schengen acquis] …, a European mechanism for the reintroduction of temporary and exceptional border control at internal borders should be established. Under that mechanism, the Commission should transmit to the European Parliament and to the Council a recommendation assessing the necessity for the reintroduction of border control at internal borders as a measure of last resort.'

The European Parliament and the Council should present their opinions within one month of receipt of the Commission's recommendation, after which the Commission should be able to decide on the reintroduction of border control at internal borders by way of implementing acts, in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 182/2011. 'In view of the terms of Article 2(2)(b)(iii) of that regulation, the examination procedure should be used for the adoption of those implementing acts.'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Can it explain how it understands the above provision? When this amendment enters into effect, will the Commission be able to decide on the reintroduction of border controls at the internal borders of Member States by means of implementing acts even if the States in question disagree?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

The legislative resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 12 June 2013 states in its Article 26 that 'in exceptional circumstances where the overall functioning of the area without internal border controls is put at risk as a result of persistent serious deficiencies related to external border control […], and insofar as these circumstances constitute a serious threat to public policy or internal security within the area without internal border controls or parts thereof , border control at internal borders may be reintroduced […] ([1])'.

As far as the procedure is concerned, 'the Council may […] recommend for one or more specific Member States to decide to reintroduce border control at all or specific parts of its internal borders. The Council's recommendation shall be based on a proposal from the Commission. […].

In the event that the recommendation is not implemented by a Member State, that Member State shall without delay inform the Commission in writing of its reasons'.

The implementing powers have thus not been entrusted to the Commission, which is also reflected in Recital 8a, which states that 'in view of the politically sensitive nature of such measures which touch on national executive and enforcement powers regarding the control at internal borders, implementing powers to adopt recommendations under this specific Union-level procedure should be conferred on the Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission'.

([1]) P7_TA(2013)0259 -text before submission to legal-linguistic finalisation.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009225/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανάγκη μελέτης της κατάστασης υγείας των κατοίκων στην περιοχή του ΧΥΤΑ Φυλής

Στην Αττική, στην περιοχή της Φυλής, λειτουργεί χώρος «δήθεν» Υγειονομικής Ταφής απορριμμάτων (ΧΥΤΑ), όπου αποτίθενται σύμμικτα τα απορρίμματα όλης της Αττικής για πολλές δεκαετίες.

Οι κάτοικοι της περιοχής Φυλής και Άνω Λιοσίων παρατηρούν για χρόνια την αύξηση περιστατικών καρκίνου και την υποβάθμιση της κατάστασης της υγείας των κατοίκων και των εργαζομένων της περιοχής.

Ταυτόχρονα, εμφανίζονται μελέτες και έρευνες από τις οποίες προκύπτει ότι, πέριξ του ΧΥΤΑ, σε μεγάλη διασπορά, καταγράφονται σε υψηλές συγκεντρώσεις, καρκινογόνα και άλλα επικίνδυνα στοιχεία που οφείλονται στην λειτουργία του ΧΥΤΑ. Μεταξύ των ερευνών είναι και αυτή της Ειδικής Υπηρεσίας Επιθεωρητών Περιβάλλοντος (19.9.2012), που καταγράφει «υψηλές συγκεντρώσεις εξασθενούς χρωμίου».

Οι κάτοικοι ζητούν επίμονα εδώ και χρόνια την διενέργεια τοξικολογικών, υγειονολογικών, επιδημιολογικών ερευνών-μελετών, προκειμένου να μελετηθεί η επίπτωση στην υγεία τους από την λειτουργία του ΧΥΤΑ. Μέχρι τώρα, οι αρμόδιες αρχές, δεν δίνουν καμία απάντηση στα συνεχή αιτήματα, γεγονός που έχει δημιουργήσει την πεποίθηση στους κατοίκους ότι η διενέργεια των εν λόγω μελετών δεν είναι επιθυμητή και ότι αποκρύπτονται στοιχεία.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Γνωρίζει αν υπάρχουν ή αν έχουν χρηματοδοτηθεί στο παρελθόν μελέτες, για την περιοχή, που να συνδέονται με το ανωτέρω ζήτημα;

Αν όχι, υπάρχουν διαθέσιμα κονδύλια τα οποία θα μπορούσαν να ζητηθούν από τις αρχές ή άλλους φορείς προκειμένου να πραγματοποιηθούν μελέτες σχετικά με τις επιπτώσεις στην υγεία των κατοίκων από την λειτουργία του χώρου ταφής και των λοιπών δραστηριοτήτων διαχείρισης απορριμμάτων;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Δεν υπάρχει πρόσφατη μελέτη η οποία να έχει χρηματοδοτηθεί ή συγχρηματοδοτηθεί από την Επιτροπή όσον αφορά προβλήματα υγείας των κατοίκων που εικάζεται ότι οφείλονται στον χώρο υγειονομικής ταφής απορριμμάτων στην περιοχή της Φυλής.

Δεν υπάρχουν χρηματοδοτικά μέσα της ΕΕ τα οποία να επιτρέπουν τη χρηματοδότηση τέτοιου είδους μελετών που διεξάγονται από τις εθνικές αρχές ή άλλους φορείς.

Σύμφωνα με τους κανονισμούς των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων, ο σχεδιασμός, η προετοιμασία, η εφαρμογή, η παρακολούθηση, ο έλεγχος και η αξιολόγηση συγχρηματοδοτούμενων παρεμβάσεων στο πλαίσιο των επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων εμπίπτουν στην αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών αρχών, στο πιο κατάλληλο γεωγραφικό επίπεδο και σύμφωνα με το θεσμικό σύστημα κάθε κράτους μέλους.

Έτσι, με βάση την αρχή της επικουρικότητας και τους κανόνες επιλεξιμότητας για τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία, οι ελληνικές αρχές είναι αρμόδιες να εξασφαλίζουν τη διενέργεια κατάλληλων μελετών σε συνδυασμό με την κατασκευή υποδομών συγχρηματοδοτούμενων από το ΕΤΠΑ ή το Ταμείο Συνοχής.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009225/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Need for health studies for residents of the Fyli landfill area

Fyli in Attica is the site of a supposedly hygienic landfill where composite waste from all over Attica has been dumped for many decades.

Local residents of Fyli and Ano Liosia have for years seen an increase in the incidence of cancer and a deterioration of their health and that of workers in the area.

At the same time, studies and surveys have appeared showing that high concentrations of carcinogenic and other dangerous substances resulting from the operation of the landfill are widely dispersed around the landfill site. One such survey is that of the Special Environmental Inspectorate (19 September 2012) which records 'high concentrations of hexavalent chromium'.

For years, residents have been persistently demanding toxicological, health and epidemiological surveys and studies in order to study the impact on health of the operation of the landfill. So far the competent authorities have failed to respond to these repeated demands, which has convinced residents that such studies are undesirable and that information is being withheld.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

Does it know whether any relevant studies exist for this area or whether any such studies have been funded in the past?

If not, are any funds available which could be requested by the authorities or other bodies in order to commission studies on the impact on residents' health of the operation of the landfill and other waste management activities?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

There is no recent study funded or co-funded by the Commission related to human health issues allegedly caused by the Fyli landfill area.

There are no EU financial instruments which allow financing of this type of studies to be carried out by national authorities or other bodies.

Under the Structural Funds Regulations, the design, preparation, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation of co-funded interventions under the operational programmes fall under the responsibility of the national authorities, at the most appropriate territorial level and according to the institutional system of each Member State.

As such, on the basis of the subsidiarity principle and the eligibility rules for structural funds, the Greek authorities are responsible for ensuring that appropriate studies associated with infrastructures co-financed by the ERDF or the Cohesion Fund are undertaken.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009226/13
au Conseil
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(29 juillet 2013)

Objet: Pour un accord rapide sur le paquet «protection des données»

Les récentes révélations sur l'existence du programme américain de transfert des données «PRISM», et sur l'utilisation qui en serait faite par les autorités américaines, rappellent que le respect de la vie privée est une question qui interpelle tout particulièrement les Européens.

C'est aussi une source d'inquiétude pour les entreprises européennes qui dépendent de la confiance de leurs clients dans la collecte de données.

Après les questions qui se sont posées dans le cadre des accords SWIFT et PNR et alors que nous entamons des négociations importantes pour l'avenir et la compétitivité de l'Europe, PRISM ne doit pas être une cause d'érosion de la confiance des Européens en notre partenaire américain. Il s'agit, bien au contraire, de trouver un juste équilibre entre sécurité et utilisation des données privées.

Mme Reding a très rapidement invité le Parlement et le Conseil à accélérer les négociations sur le paquet législatif révisant le régime de protection des données. À cette invitation le Parlement européen n'a pas tardé à réagir: la commission des libertés civiles a lancé une enquête pour évaluer l'impact des activités de surveillance sur les droits fondamentaux des citoyens, et une résolution a été adoptée en séance plénière, demandant au Conseil de traiter d'urgence le paquet «protection des données».

Réunis en Conseil informel «justice et affaires intérieures» les 18 et 19 juillet 2013, les États membres avaient la possibilité de parvenir à un accord sur le nouveau régime de protection des données. La France et l'Allemagne ont réclamé une action ambitieuse et rapide en matière de protection des données. Malgré ce signal fort, le dossier est toujours bloqué.

Par respect pour les Européens, nous devons mener à leur terme, et en toute transparence, les négociations sur le paquet «protection des données» et, dans la foulée, parvenir à un accord-cadre sur la protection des données avec les États-Unis.

Le Conseil pourrait-il nous éclairer sur les points qui font encore débat?

Réponse
(30 septembre 2013)

Depuis que la Commission a soumis sa proposition fin janvier 2012, la négociation de ce paquet a toujours constitué une priorité législative pour le Conseil. Au cours de la précédente présidence du Conseil, les groupes de travail ont consacré à ce paquet pas moins de 27 journées de réunion pendant le premier semestre de cette année.

Lors de la session du Conseil qui s'est tenue les 6 et 7 juin 2013 à Luxembourg, toutes les délégations ont reconnu les avancées importantes réalisées sur ce dossier législatif majeur mais il a également été souligné que des progrès rapides ne devaient pas se faire au détriment de la qualité de la législation. La présidence du Conseil a fait savoir qu'il y avait une volonté de poursuivre, de la façon la plus dynamique possible, les négociations sur le projet de règlement dans l'intérêt à la fois des citoyens et des entreprises, notamment les PME.

Le Conseil n'est pas en mesure de prévoir la durée ni l'issue des négociations sur ce dossier.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009226/13
to the Council
Rachida Dati (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Need for swift agreement on the data protection package

The public reaction to the recent revelations concerning the existence of the US Prism data mining programme and the use to which the data are allegedly being put by the US authorities has shown once again that privacy is a matter about which Europeans feel very strongly.

It is also a matter of concern for European companies, which need their customers' trust in order to collect data.

Given the questions raised during the talks on the SWIFT and PNR agreements, and the fact that we are now embarking on negotiations of key importance to Europe's future and its continuing competitiveness, the Prism affair cannot be allowed to undermine Europeans' trust in our US partners. Rather, what we must do is strike an appropriate balance between the need for security and the right to privacy.

Commissioner Reding lost no time in calling on Parliament and the Council to step up the negotiations on the legislative package to revise the data protection regime. Parliament was quick to respond to those calls, with the Committee on Civil Liberties launching an inquiry into the impact of surveillance activities on citizens' fundamental rights, and Parliament adopting a resolution in plenary, calling on the Council to treat the data protection package as a matter of urgency.

The informal Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting of 18 and 19 July 2013 provided an ideal opportunity for the Member States to reach an agreement on a new data protection regime. However, despite the calls from France and Germany for swift, ambitious action on data protection, there is still deadlock on the issue.

Out of respect for the people of Europe, we need to bring the negotiations on the data protection package to a conclusion — while ensuring full transparency at all times — and subsequently to conclude a framework agreement on data protection with the United States. Can the Council say what the outstanding issues are?

Reply
(30 September 2013)

The negotiation of this package has been a legislative priority for the Council ever since the Commission made the proposal at the end of January 2012. Under the previous Council Presidency no less than 27 Working Party meeting days were devoted to this package in the course of the first half of this year.

At the Council meeting of 6-7 June 2013 in Luxembourg, all delegations acknowledged the important progress which had been achieved on this major legislative file, but it was also highlighted that rapid progress should not be at the expense of the quality of legislation. The Chair of the Council indicated that there is a willingness to continue negotiations on the draft Regulation as dynamically as possible in the interests of both citizens and the business community, including small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Council is not in a position to foresee the duration or outcome of the negotiations on this file.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009228/13
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(29 juli 2013)

Betreft: Niet betaalde boetes diplomaten

In Nederland is gebleken dat buitenlandse diplomaten meer dan de helft van de verkeersboetes niet betalen. In 2012 werden in totaal 4 056 (verkeers)boetes uitgedeeld aan buitenlandse diplomaten. Diplomaten moesten vorig jaar in totaal 289 399 euro aan boetes in Nederland betalen. Hiervan is 141 755 euro nog niet betaald.

Is de Commissie bekend met het feit dat er diplomaten zijn die openstaande verkeersboetes niet betalen en dat — door de onschendbaarheid die zij genieten — er geen dwangmiddelen zijn om diplomaten hun openstaande boetes te laten betalen?

Is de Commissie met het CDA van mening dat iedereen zich moet houden aan de regels die in Europa gelden? En dus ook diplomaten?

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het aantal verkeersboetes van diplomaten van de Europese Dienst voor extern optreden (EDEO)?

Wat is het totale bedrag van de verkeersboetes van diplomaten en worden deze boetes allemaal betaald?

Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het aantal verkeersboetes van Eurocommissarissen?

Wat is het totale bedrag van de verkeersboetes van commissarissen en worden deze boetes allemaal betaald?

Is de Commissie met het CDA van mening dat, als EU-diplomaten derde landen oproepen regels en de rechtsstaat te handhaven, zij dit ook zelf in de praktijk moeten brengen door verkeersboetes te betalen?

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

Het personeel van de instellingen van de Europese Unie dat in Brussel werkt en de commissarissen worden niet door diplomatieke onschendbaarheid gedekt overeenkomstig het Verdrag van Wenen inzake Diplomatiek Verkeer (1961) ([1]). Evenzeer worden EDEO-personeelsleden van nationale diplomatieke diensten niet door het Verdrag van Wenen gedekt, wanneer ze in Brussel werken.

De Commissie is ervan op de hoogte dat ingevolge artikel 31 van het Verdrag van Wenen inzake Diplomatiek Verkeer een diplomatieke ambtenaar immuniteit geniet ten aanzien van de strafrechtelijke rechtsmacht van de ontvangende staat en ook ten aanzien van zijn burgerlijke en administratieve rechtsmacht, behalve in de speciale, opgesomde gevallen. Artikel 41 lid 1 van het Verdrag van Wenen bepaalt dat alle personen die privileges en onschendbaarheid genieten, de plicht hebben om de wetten en de voorschriften van de ontvangende staat te respecteren.

Personeel van de Europese Unie en leden van de Commissie genieten onschendbaarheid in overeenstemming met het 7e Protocol betreffende de Voorrechten en Immuniteiten, gehecht aan het VWEU betreffende de werking van de Europese Unie ten aanzien van de door hen in hun officiële hoedanigheid uitgevoerde handelingen.

Zelfs al worden wagens voor officiële doeleinden gebruikt, toch roept de Commissie, en dan alleen voor veiligheids- of andere, te rechtvaardigen redenen, niet meer dan ongeveer tweemaal per jaar onschendbaarheid betreffende overtredingen op het verkeersregelement in.

Commissarissen, directeurs-generaal, chauffeurs van de commissarissen en elke andere chauffeur van officiële auto's van de Commissie betalen persoonlijk hun verkeersboetes. Derhalve beschikt de Commissie niet over administratie van deze boetes.

([1]) http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009228/13
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Fines unpaid by diplomats

In the Netherlands, it has been established that foreign diplomats fail to pay more than half of their traffic fines. In 2012, a total of 4 056 (traffic) fines were imposed on diplomats. Altogether, diplomats should have paid EUR 289 399 in fines in the Netherlands last year. Of this total, EUR 141 755 has not yet been paid.

Is the Commission aware that there are diplomats who fail to pay their traffic fines and that — because of the inviolability that they enjoy — no coercive measure is available to compel diplomats to pay their fines?

Does the Commission agree with the CDA that everyone should abide by the rules which apply in Europe? And that this includes diplomats?

Is the Commission aware of the number of traffic fines payable by diplomats belonging to the European External Action Service (EEAS)?

What is the total amount of the traffic fines imposed on diplomats, and are all these fines paid?

Does the Commission know how many traffic fines are imposed on European Commissioners?

What is the total amount of the traffic fines imposed on European Commissioners, and are all these fines paid?

Does the Commission agree with the CDA that if EU diplomats call upon third countries to abide by rules and adhere to the rule of law, they should also practise what they preach by paying traffic fines?

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

Staff of the European Union institutions working in Brussels and Commissioners are not covered by diplomatic immunity as set out in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) ([1]). Equally, EEAS staffs from national diplomatic services are not covered by the Vienna Convention when working in Brussels.

The Commission is aware that under Article 31 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, a diplomatic agent enjoys immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State and also from its civil and administrative jurisdiction, except in the special cases enumerated. Article 41 (1) of the Vienna Convention stipulates that all persons enjoying privileges and immunity have the duty to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving state.

European Union staff and Members of the Commission enjoy immunity according to the 7th Protocol on Privileges and Immunities, annexed to the TFEU in respect of acts performed by them in their official capacity.

However, even when cars are used for official purpose, the Commission does not invoke immunity concerning traffic code violations, unless for security or other justifiable reasons — about twice a year.

Commissioners, Directors General, Commissioners' drivers and any other drivers of Commission official cars personally pay their traffic fines. Therefore, the Commission does not have accounting of these fines.

([1]) http://untreaty.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009229/13
aan de Commissie
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(29 juli 2013)

Betreft: Gevaarlijk zwemspeelgoed voor baby's en kleine kinderen

TÜV Rheinland heeft onderzoek gedaan naar strandspeelgoed en babyzwemzitjes die verkocht worden in vakantieoorden in Duitsland, Spanje, Italië, Griekenland, België en Nederland. In totaal werden 50 producten onderzocht, waaronder opblaasbare zwemdieren en luchtmatrassen uit souvenirwinkels en strandkiosken. Hieruit bleek dat 20 van de 50 zwemartikelen aan geen enkele veiligheidsvoorwaarde voldeden. De onderzoekers van TÜV Rheinland vonden zes zwemstoeltjes waarbij het risico bestaat op kapseizen of dat de baby's en kleine kinderen eruit kunnen glijden. Daarnaast werden ook in sommige artikelen te grote hoeveelheden giftige stoffen zoals weekmakers gevonden.

Is de Commissie ervan op de hoogte dat een groot deel van het waterspeelgoed en de babyzwemzitjes die in Europese vakantieoorden worden verkocht, niet aan de veiligheidsvoorwaarden voldoen en dat ze daarnaast in sommige gevallen te hoge concentraties giftige stoffen bevatten zoals kankerverwekkende weekmakers?

Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat ouders worden misleid doordat de vermeend veilige zwemstoeltjes in werkelijkheid levensgevaarlijk blijken te zijn?

Welke maatregelen neemt de Commissie om ervoor te zorgen dat waterspeelgoed en babyzwemzitjes die in Europese vakantieoorden worden verkocht, veilig zijn?

Hoe kan de Commissie ervoor zorgen dat de bovengenoemde levensgevaarlijke zwemstoeltjes zo spoedig mogelijk van de Europese markt verdwijnen?

Antwoord van de heer Tajani namens de Commissie
(17 september 2013)

De Commissie heeft de resultaten van het door TÜV Rheinland verrichte onderzoek via de pers vernomen. Volgens TÜV Rheinland ging het bij de meeste geteste producten om speelgoed, waarvoor derhalve de speelgoedrichtlijnrichtlijn ([1]) en de Reach-bepalingen inzake speelgoed ([2]) gelden. Andere producten, zoals zwemzitjes, vallen onder de richtlijn algemene productveiligheid ([3]). De veiligheid van zwemzitjes voor kinderen tot 36 maanden is het voorwerp van Europese norm EN 13138-3 ([4]) betreffende ontwerp, afmetingen, materiaal, sterkte en prestaties in en op het water alsmede bepalingen inzake keurmerk en informatieverstrekking.

Volgens het verslag van TÜV Rheinland voldeden 20 van de 50 geteste producten niet aan de toepasselijke eisen. De meeste vastgestelde gebreken betroffen de waarschuwingen op de verpakking van speelgoed (15 gevallen), te hoge gehalten aan chemische stoffen in speelgoed (6 gevallen) en de aanwezigheid in speelgoed van kleine onderdelen die kunnen worden ingeslikt (5 gevallen).

De Commissie hecht veel belang aan het informeren van de consumenten over de aankoop van veilig speelgoed. Op de website van de Commissie ([5]) zijn in 22 talen tips voor veilig speelgoed te vinden.

([1]) Richtlijn 2009/48/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 18 juni 2009 betreffende de veiligheid van speelgoed (PB L 170 van 30.6.2009, blz. 1).
([2]) Verordening (EG) nr. 1907/2006 van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 18 december 2006 inzake de registratie en beoordeling van en de autorisatie en beperkingen ten aanzien van chemische stoffen (Reach) [en] tot oprichting van een Europees Agentschap voor chemische stoffen (PB L 396 van 30.12.2006, blz. 1).
([3]) Richtlijn 2001/95/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 3 december 2001 inzake algemene productveiligheid (PB L 11 van 15.1.2002, blz. 4).
([4]) EN 13138-3:2007 „Drijfhulpmiddelen voor zwemles — Deel 3: Veiligheidseisen en beproevingsmethoden voor zwemzitjes die gedragen moeten worden".
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/toys/tst-campaign/index_en.htm

Het toezicht op de naleving van de EU-wetgeving inzake niet-conforme en dus onveilige producten is de taak van de markttoezichtautoriteiten van de lidstaten. Een van de instrumenten waarover zij beschikken is de bevoegdheid om producten uit de handel te nemen, en corrigerende maatregelen met betrekking tot producten die ernstig gevaar opleveren moeten worden gerapporteerd aan het Europese systeem voor snelle uitwisseling van informatie (Rapex). De voorstellen die worden gedaan in het wetgevingspakket van de Commissie over productveiligheid en markttoezicht ([6]) zijn bedoeld om er verder toe bij te dragen dat de nationale markttoezichtautoriteiten beter samenwerken met het oog op dezelfde concurrentievoorwaarden voor alle ondernemingen en veiligere producten voor consumenten.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/internal-market-for-products/market-surveillance/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009229/13
to the Commission
Esther de Lange (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Dangerous swimming toys for babies and young children

TÜV Rhineland has investigated beach toys and baby swim seats on sale in holiday resorts in Germany, Spain, Italy, Greece, Belgium and the Netherlands. Altogether, 50 products were examined, including inflatable animals and lilos from souvenir shops and beach kiosks. It was found that 20 of the 50 articles did not comply with any safety standards. TÜV Rhineland's researchers found six swim seats which were liable to capsize or allow babies and small children to fall out. In addition, some of the products contained excessive levels of toxins such as plasticisers.

Is the Commission aware that many water toys and baby swim seats on sale in European holiday resorts do not comply with safety requirements and that moreover in some cases they contain excessive concentrations of toxins, such as carcinogenic plasticisers?

Does the Commission agree that parents are misled because swim seats which they assume to be safe are in reality life-threatening?

What measures will the Commission take to ensure that water toys and baby swim seats on sale in European holiday resorts are safe?

How can the Commission ensure that the abovementioned life-threatening swim seats are removed from the European market as quickly as possible?

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

The Commission was made aware of the results of TÜV Rheinland's investigation through the press. According to TÜV Rheinland, most of the tested items were toys and thus subject to the Toy Safety Directive ([1]) and toy-related provisions of REACH ([2]). Other items, such as swim seats, are subject to the General Product Safety Directive ([3]). The safety of swim seats intended for children up to 36 months is covered by European Standard EN 13138-3 ([4]) regarding design, sizing, materials, strength and in-water performance as well as provisions for marking and information supply.

TÜV Rheinland reported 20 out of the 50 items tested not to meet applicable requirements. Most reported failures concerned warnings on toy packaging (15 cases), excessive levels of chemicals in toys (6 cases) and the presence in toys of small parts that could be swallowed (5 cases).

The Commission attaches high importance to informing consumers on how to buy safe toys. Toy Safety Tips for consumers are available in 22 languages on the Commission's website ([5]).

Enforcement of EU legislation on non-compliant and therefore unsafe products is the responsibility of the market surveillance authorities in the Member States. The tools at their disposal include powers to withdraw products from the market, and corrective actions on products posing a serious risk have to be reported to the European rapid alert system RAPEX. The proposals made in the Commission's Product Safety and Market Surveillance package ([6]) are intended to further help national market surveillance authorities to cooperate better to ensure a level playing field for businesses and safer products for consumers.

([1]) Directive 2009/48/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the safety of toys, OJ L 170, 30.6.2009, p.1.
([2]) Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) and establishing a European Chemicals Agency, OJ L 396, 30.12.2006, p.1.
([3]) Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 December 2001 on general product safety, OJ L 11, 15.1.2002, p.4.
([4]) EN 13138-3:2007 'Buoyant aids for swimming instruction — Part 3: Safety requirements and test methods for swim seats to be worn'.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/toys/tst-campaign/index_en.htm
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/internal-market-for-products/market-surveillance/index_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009230/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(29 juli 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — EU wil eigen geheime dienst

De Europese Commissie (EC) en de Europese Dienst voor extern optreden (EDEO), onder leiding van vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger Ashton, hebben het voornemen een eigen Europese geheime dienst op te richten, die zelfs de beschikking zou moeten hebben over drones en vliegtuigen.

Woordvoerders van de EC en de EDEO hebben medegedeeld dat het voornemen een tegenreactie is op de Amerikaanse en Britse afluisterpraktijken in de EU.

1. Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger bekend met het bericht „EU planning to „own and operate" spy drones and an air force" ([1])?

2. Hoe legitimeert de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger de oprichting van een Europese geheime dienst? Deelt zij de mening dat de EC en de EDEO deze bevoegdheid helemaal niet hebben? Zo neen, op welke Verdragsartikelen baseert de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger zich dan?

3. Deelt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger de mening dat het ongehoord is wanneer de EC en de EDEO door middel van een eigen geheime dienst de Nederlandse resp. Europese burgers gaan bespioneren? Zo neen, welke positieve uitwerkingen verwacht de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger dan van deze ordinaire spionage?

4. Deelt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger de mening dat het oprichten van een Europese geheime dienst geen tegenreactie is op de Amerikaanse en Britse afluisterpraktijken in de EU, maar een juist daardoor geïnspireerd voornemen om de Nederlandse resp. Europese burgers, zoals in een politiestaat, continu in de gaten te houden — onder het mom „Big Brother is watching you"? Zo neen, hoe valt het met elkaar te rijmen dat de EC en de EDEO de praktijken die zij de Amerikanen en de Britten zozeer verwijten, nu zelf ter hand willen gaan nemen?

5. Deelt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger de mening dat het oprichten van een Europese geheime dienst een opmaat is naar een militaire organisatie op EU-niveau onder leiding van de EC en de EDEO? Zo neen, hoe ziet de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger dit dan wel?

6. Deelt de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger de mening dat het oprichten van een Europese geheime dienst een ongehoorde aantasting is van de privacy van de Nederlandse resp. Europese burgers? Is de vicevoorzitter/hoge vertegenwoordiger er dan ook toe bereid te voorkomen dat een Europese geheime dienst er daadwerkelijk gaat komen? Zo neen, waarom niet?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(6 september 2013)

1. De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter is niet op de hoogte van enig voornemen van de EU om drones of gevechtsvliegtuigen aan te schaffen of in te zetten. De lidstaten voorzien in dergelijke vermogens via hun nationale capaciteit voor operaties of missies in het kader van het gemeenschappelijk buitenlands en veiligheidsbeleid, wanneer hiertoe is besloten door een consensus van EU-lidstaten.

2-6. De hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter noch de Commissie heeft plannen om een Europese geheime dienst op te richten.

([1]) http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/bruno-in-brussels-eu-unplugged/brusselsbruno/367/eu-planning-to-own-and-operate-spy-drones-and-an-air-force/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009230/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — EU plan to establish its own secret service

The Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), headed by Vice-President/High Representative Ashton, intend to set up their own European secret service, which would even be equipped with drones and aircraft.

Spokespersons for the Commission and the EEAS have indicated that the plan is a response to the eavesdropping practices of the Americans and the British in the EU.

1. Is the Vice-President/High Representative familiar with the report 'EU planning to "own and operate" spy drones and an air force'? ([1])

2. How does the Vice-President/High Representative justify the establishment of a European secret service? Does she agree that the Commission and EEAS have absolutely no power to pursue such a plan? If not, on what Treaty articles does the Vice-President/High Representative base her view?

3. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that it would be outrageous for the Commission and the EEAS to spy on Dutch/European citizens by means of its own secret service? If not, what positive effects does the Vice-President/High Representative expect from this disreputable spying?

4. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that establishing a European secret service is not a response to the American and British eavesdropping practices in the EU but a plan which, on the contrary, is inspired by precisely those practices with the aim of continuously monitoring Dutch/European citizens, as in a police state, on the pretext that 'Big Brother is watching you'? If not, how can the contradiction be accounted for that the Commission and EEAS now themselves wish to adopt the very practices which they so strongly object to when employed by the Americans and the British?

5. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that establishing a European secret service is a preliminary to a military organisation at EU level directed by the Commission and EEAS? If not, how else does the Vice-President/High Representative view the matter?

6. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that establishing a European secret service is an outrageous infringement of the privacy of Dutch/European citizens? Will the Vice-President/High Representative therefore prevent the establishment of a European secret service? If not, why not?

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

1. The HR/VP is unaware of any EU plan to own and operate either drones or combat airplanes. All such capabilities are provided by Member States for Common Foreign and Security Policy operations/missions, from their respective national resources, when operations/missions are authorised by a consensus of EU Member States.

2-6. The HR/VP nor the Commission have any plans to create a European secret service

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([1]) http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/bruno-in-brussels-eu-unplugged/brusselsbruno/367/eu-planning-to-own-and-operate-spy-drones-and-an-air-force/

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009231/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(29 juli 2013)

Betreft: Herziening staatssteunregels voor luchthavens

Op 3 juli 2013 lanceerde de Europese Commissie een publieke consultatie over de ontwerprichtsnoeren voor staatssteun aan luchthavens en luchtvaartmaatschappijen. Die richtsnoeren impliceren strengere regels voor overheidssteun aan de luchtvaart. Dit moet de transparantie vergroten en het misbruik van belastingsgeld stoppen.

Onlangs werd ook het onderzoek naar staatssteun aan de luchthaven van Charleroi opnieuw geopend.

In verband hiermee volgende vragen:

1. Is de Commissie van plan om onderzoeken tegen andere (regionale) luchthavens op Belgisch grondgebied te starten?

2. Indien de Commissie positief antwoordt op de eerste vraag, welke Belgische luchthavens zouden onderzocht worden en op welke basis?

Antwoord van de heer Almunia namens de Commissie
(18 september 2013)

De Commissie heeft geen enkel ander onderzoek naar Belgische luchthavens ingesteld dan het onderzoek naar staatssteun aan de luchthaven van Charleroi. In dit verband zij erop gewezen dat de Commissie te allen tijde een onderzoek naar staatssteun kan openen, met name naar aanleiding van een klacht of van andere marktinformatie waaruit blijkt dat staatssteun is of zal worden verleend.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009231/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Review of state aid rules for airports

On 3 July 2013, the Commission launched a public consultation process on the draft guidelines for state aid to airports and airlines. Those guidelines entail stricter rules for state aid to aviation. This is intended to increase transparency and stop the misuse of tax revenue.

Recently, the investigation into state aid to Charleroi airport was also reopened.

1. Does the Commission intend to launch investigations into other airports (particularly regional airports) in Belgium?

2. If so, which Belgian airports are to be investigated and on what basis?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission has not initiated any investigations into Belgian airports other than the one concerning state aid to Charleroi airport. It should be mentioned in this context that the Commission can initiate a state aid investigation at any time, in particular following a complaint or other market information indicating that state aid was or will be granted.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009266/13
to the Commission
Claude Moraes (S&D)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: World Health Organisation (WHO) report on air quality in cities

Is the Commission aware that according to the final technical report on the 'Review of evidence on health aspects of air pollution — REVIHAAP' recently published by the WTO, the health effects of air pollution have been gravely underestimated?

Particulate matter and other sources of air pollution are believed to be the cause of 4 300 early deaths per year in my constituency of London alone. The report also draws new links between air pollution and diabetes, still births and adverse effects on the cognitive development of children born to mothers exposed to even small levels of air pollution.

Can the Commission comment on what action it will take in light of this new scientific information, and how it will affect current or possible future proceedings against Member States which have not yet complied with the limits set in Directive 2008/50/EC (the Air Quality Directive)?

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

The Commission has issued two grant agreements to the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health to provide a review of the evidence on health aspects of air pollution (REVIHAAP). The information contained in it is one of the key elements in the Commission's review of EU air quality policy, as is illustrated on its webpage ([1]).

In light of the scientific evidence the Commission intends to ensure full implementation of existing air policy legislation by 2020 and this may include legal proceedings against Member States who have not yet complied with the requirements of Directive 2008/50/EC ([2]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/review_air_policy.htm
([2]) Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe, OJ L 152/1, 11.6.2008, http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/quality/legislation/existing_leg.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009267/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(29 Ιουλίου 2013)

Θέμα: Κακομεταχείριση γυναικών δημοσιογράφων από την αστυνομία

Σύμφωνα με την *Hurriyet Daily News* (Τουρκία) δύο γυναίκες δημοσιογράφοι κατηγόρησαν την αστυνομία για κακομεταχείριση κατά τη διάρκεια επιδρομής στον τόπο εργασίας τους, το πρακτορείο ειδήσεων Etkin, στα πλαίσια της κάλυψης των διαδηλώσεων στο πάρκο Γκεζί στην Κωνσταντινούπολη. Περίπου 44 αξιωματικοί ενεπλάκησαν, στους οποίους συμπεριλαμβανόταν μόνο μία γυναίκα.

Μία από τις δημοσιογράφους υποστηρίζει ότι η γυναίκα αξιωματικός την μετέφερε στην τουαλέτα και την υπέβαλε σε σωματικό έλεγχο κατόπιν απογύμνωσης αφού η ίδια αρνήθηκε να βγάλει τα ρούχα της.

Η άλλη δημοσιογράφος υποστηρίζει ότι κάτι παρόμοιο συνέβη και σε αυτήν, και ότι την άγγιξαν ανάμεσα στο στήθος και στα γεννητικά της όργανα.

Οι δύο δημοσιογράφοι υποστηρίζουν ότι η αστυνομία απομάκρυνε σχεδόν όλα τα αρχεία σχετικά με τις διαδηλώσεις στο πάρκο Γκεζί. Ανέμεναν ότι κάτι τέτοιο θα συνέβαινε, καθώς οι επιδρομές της αστυνομίας στο πρακτορείο ειδήσεων Etkin πραγματοποιούνται σε ετήσια βάση και κατάσχονται τα αρχεία τους λόγω της καίριας τους σημασίας για την κυβέρνηση.

Δεδομένου ότι αυτές οι κατηγορίες εναντίον της αστυνομίας και της κυβέρνησης είναι πολύ συχνές στην Τουρκία:

1. Σε τι είδους ενέργειες σκοπεύει να προβεί η ΕΕ με σκοπό την αποφυγή αυτών των παραβιάσεων και κατασχέσεων αρχείων των ΜΜΕ, τα οποία παρεμποδίζουν τόσο την ελευθερία του Τύπου όσο και την ελευθερία έκφρασης;

2. Γιατί η ΕΕ δεν μπορεί να σταματήσει την συνεχή παρενόχληση των δημοσιογράφων από την τουρκική κυβέρνηση, δεδομένου ότι παρόμοιες κατηγορίες έχουν διατυπωθεί από διεθνείς οργανώσεις ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων όπως είναι η Διεθνής Αμνηστία και η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση Δημοσιογράφων;

3. Τι συγκεκριμένα μέτρα θα λάβουν οι αρμόδιοι Επίτροποι για την διεύρυνση, τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και τη δικαιοσύνη προκειμένου να εξασφαλίσουν ότι η Τουρκία και η τουρκική αστυνομία συμμορφώνεται με το κοινοτικό κεκτημένο, για την κατοχύρωση των δικαιωμάτων των πολιτών και των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων των γυναικών και των δημοσιογράφων και τη διασφάλιση ότι τέτοιες προκλητικές πράξεις από αξιωματικούς της αστυνομίας διερευνούνται διεξοδικά;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009450/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ο Τούρκος πρωθυπουργός κινεί νομικές διαδικασίες κατά της εφημερίδας The Times

Ο Τούρκος πρωθυπουργός Ρεσέπ Ταγίπ Ερντογάν απείλησε ότι θα κινήσει νομικές διαδικασίες κατά της βρετανικής εφημερίδας *The Times,* κατόπιν της δημοσίευσης μιας ανοικτής επιστολής, η οποία καταδικάζει τις πράξεις του Τούρκου πρωθυπουργού και της κυβέρνησής του εναντίον των διαδηλωτών στο Γκεζί και περιγράφει τις εν λόγω πράξεις ως «δικτατορικό καθεστώς».

Επομένως ζητούμε από την Επιτροπή να σχολιάσει:

1. τη συμπεριφορά του κ. Ερντογάν προς τις εφημερίδες, εντός και εκτός της Τουρκίας· και

2. τη συμμόρφωση της Τουρκίας με το κοινοτικό κεκτημένο, την Ευρωπαϊκή Σύμβαση των Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων, και ιδιαίτερα το δικαίωμα στην ελευθερία έκφρασης.

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τα γεγονότα που αναφέρει ο αξιότιμος κ. ευρωβουλευτής και τον παρακαλεί να ανατρέξει σε απαντήσεις της σε προηγούμενες ερωτήσεις που υποβλήθηκαν από τον ίδιο και από άλλα μέλη του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου σχετικά με την ελευθερία της έκφρασης στην Τουρκία, όπως στην ερώτηση αριθ. E-008312/2013 ([1]).

Τον Οκτώβριο του 2013, η Επιτροπή θα υποβάλει εκτενή έκθεση στο Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και στο Συμβούλιο στο πλαίσιο της ετήσιας έκθεσης προόδου σχετικά με τις εξελίξεις στην Τουρκία, στην οποία θα εξετάζεται μεταξύ άλλων η τήρηση του δικαιώματος ελευθερίας της έκφρασης και η προστασία της πολυφωνίας και της ελευθερίας των μέσων ενημέρωσης.

Επιπλέον, η προαγωγή των ευρωπαϊκών αξιών πέραν των συνόρων της ΕΕ εξετάστηκε και στο πλαίσιο των συστάσεων της ανεξάρτητης ομάδας υψηλού επιπέδου για την ελευθερία και την πολυφωνία των μέσων ενημέρωσης που συγκροτήθηκε από τον αρμόδιο για το ψηφιακό θεματολόγιο Επίτροπο. Μετά την παρουσίαση της έκθεσης από την εν λόγω ομάδα, η Επιτροπή δρομολόγησε δύο δημόσιες διαβουλεύσεις, μία σχετικά με τις συστάσεις της ομάδας και μία ειδικά για την ανεξαρτησία των εθνικών ρυθμιστικών αρχών του οπτικοακουστικού τομέα. Τα αποτελέσματα των διαβουλεύσεων θα ληφθούν υπόψη σε κάθε απόφαση σχετικά με τις πιθανές μεταγενέστερες ενέργειες εντός των ορίων των αρμοδιοτήτων της ΕΕ.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί επίσης το αίτημα του Κοινοβουλίου σχετικά με την εφαρμογή δοκιμαστικού σχεδίου για το «Ευρωπαϊκό κέντρο ελευθερίας του Τύπου και των μέσων ενημέρωσης» το οποίο θα λειτουργεί ως «κέντρο υποδοχής» ευρωπαϊκού επιπέδου για δημοσιογραφικούς οργανισμούς ή ιδιώτες και μέσα ενημέρωσης από τα κράτη μέλη και από τις υποψήφιες για προσχώρηση χώρες.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009267/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Women journalists 'abused' by police

According to the *Hurriyet Daily News* (Turkey), two women journalists have accused police of abusing them during a raid on their place of work, the Etkin News Agency, in connection with their coverage of the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul. Some 44 officers were involved, only one of whom was a woman.

One of the journalists claims that the woman officer took her to the bathroom and strip-searched her after she had refused to take her clothes off.

The other journalist claims that something similar happened to her, and that she was touched between her breasts and on her genitalia.

The two journalists say that the police took away almost all their archives relating to the Gezi Park protests. They were expecting it to happen, as the police raid the Etkin News Agency on a yearly basis and confiscate its archives because it is critical of the government.

As such accusations against the police and the government are very common in Turkey:

1. What action does the EU intend to take with a view to preventing such violations and confiscations of media archives, which suppress both freedom of the press and freedom of expression?

2. Why is the EU failing to stop this persistent harassment of journalists by the Turkish Government, given that similar accusations have been made by international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and the European Union of Journalists?

3. What specific action will be taken by the Commissioners responsible for enlargement, human rights and justice to ensure that Turkey and the Turkish police comply with the *acquis communautaire*, upholding citizens' rights and the human rights of women and journalists and ensuring that such provocative acts by police officers are closely investigated?

Question for written answer E-009450/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Turkish Prime Minister to take legal action against *The Times*

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has threatened to take legal action against UK newspaper *The Times*, following its publication of an open letter condemning the actions of the Turkish Prime Minister and his government against the Gezi protesters and describing those actions as 'dictatorial rule'.

We therefore ask the Commission to comment on:

1. Mr Erdoğan's behaviour towards newspapers, within and outside Turkey; and

2. Turkey's compliance with the *acquis communautaire*, the European Convention on Human Rights, and in particular the right to freedom of expression.

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the events raised by the Honourable Member. The Commission refers to its answers to previous questions by the Honourable Member and other Members of the European Parliament on freedom of expression in Turkey, such as question number E-008312/2013 ([1]).

In October 2013, the Commission will extensively report to Parliament and to the Council in its annual Progress Report on developments in Turkey, including observance of the right to freedom of expression and the protection of media freedom and pluralism.

Moreover the promotion of European values beyond EU borders has also been addressed by the recommendations of the independent High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism set up by the Commissioner responsible for Digital Agenda. Following the presentation of the report by this group, the Commission launched two public consultations, one on the recommendations of the group and one specifically on the independence of national audiovisual regulatory authorities. Any decision on possible follow-up actions within the limits of the competences of the EU will take account of the responses to the consultations.

The Commission also follows up on the request by Parliament to implement a pilot project for a European Centre for Press and Media Freedom acting as a European-level 'drop-in centre' for journalistic organisations or individuals and media from the Member States and from the Candidate Countries.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009268/13
to the Commission
Arlene McCarthy (S&D)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Bank charges

In a single market with a common currency there should be no discrimination against citizens travelling between Member States and paying for services. A constituent from the north west of England who regularly travels to the Netherlands from the UK, when taking the train from Amsterdam airport is only able to pay for the ticket with a Dutch bank card. As he does not live in the Netherlands, he does not have a Dutch bank card. The only way for him to buy a ticket with a non-Dutch card is to incur a fee. The situation also exists in other Member States, including Belgium and Germany.

Does the Commission intend to take action against those Member States still allowing payment providers to accept only domestic bank cards, thereby discriminating against other EU nationals who want to pay by card but who do not have a bank card in that Member State?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

According to the understanding of the Commission, a passenger buying a rail ticket at Amsterdam airport may pay both with a card issued nationally and with a card issued in any other Member State. Depending on the card scheme used, a fee (a surcharge) may be added to the bill. These differences are based on the different costs of acceptance of different card brands for the merchant (the rail company) and are not linked to the country where the card is issued. A payment by a Dutch-issued Visa or MasterCard card should incur exactly the same fee as a payment by a Visa or MasterCard issued in, for example, the UK or France.

According to Article 52(3) of the Payment Services Directive ([1]) fees (surcharges) may be demanded by merchants for the use of payment instruments (e.g. cards), though Member States may decide to limit or forbid such fees. This means that there are no harmonised internal market rules on this matter at this point. However, in its proposal for a revision of the Payment Services Directive ([2]) and a regulation of interchange fees for card payments ([3]), the Commission has proposed to eliminate the surcharging on all three-party consumer cards. They should therefore fully address the issue raised by the Honourable Member.

([1]) Directive 2007/64/EC, OJ L319, 05.12.1997, p. 1.
([2]) COM(2013) 547 final, see in particular Article 55.
([3]) COM(2013) 550 final/2.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009269/13
to the Commission
Catherine Stihler (S&D)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Protection of indigenous ladybird species in the EU

Can the Commission update Parliament on the actions being taken in conjunction with the Member States to protect indigenous ladybird species, in particular given the threat now posed by the Harlequin ladybird to native species? Is specific work being conducted, and if so, by whom and to what timescale?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(9 September 2013)

Apart from the general habitat conservation measures being undertaken by Member States under the Habitats Directive ([1]) there are no specific EU mandated actions being currently taken to protect indigenous ladybirds against the impact of invasive alen species such as the harlequin ladybird. The Commission intends to put forward a proposal to prevent and manage the introduction and spread of invasive alien species in the EU as part of implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

([1]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009271/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(29 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Revamping di un impianto di trattamento di rifiuti speciali sito a Marghera (VE), autorizzato in possibile violazione della direttiva «VAS» 2001/42/CE

La Giunta della Regione del Veneto ha recentemente concesso l'autorizzazione alla ristrutturazione con ampliamento (definita tecnicamente *revamping*) dell'impianto denominato «ALLES» di Marghera (VE), che opera nel campo del trattamento dei fanghi di escavazione dei canali della Laguna di Venezia ([1]).

Grazie al succitato provvedimento, la struttura in questione potrà ora ricevere 180.000 tonnellate all'anno di rifiuti speciali anche pericolosi, con raddoppiata capacità di stoccaggio (da 6.000 a 12.000 tonnellate); quanto ai rifiuti trattabili, si assiste addirittura all'aumento da 20 a 70 codici CER, tra i quali svariate tipologie di fanghi, rifiuti fangosi, ceneri pesanti, scarti di mescole, terre e rocce contenenti sostanze pericolose, fanghi prodotti da trattamenti fisico-chimici con sostanze pericolose. L'impianto riceverà inoltre rifiuti speciali (pericolosi e non) provenienti anche da aree esterne al bacino lagunare, ovvero da tutto il territorio nazionale e anche dall'estero, per rispondere alle richieste di mercato in tema di smaltimento dei rifiuti ([2]).

Il conferimento dell'autorizzazione appena descritta ha reso necessaria la contestuale modifica (mediante il medesimo provvedimento) del P.A.T. (Piano di Assetto del Territorio) del comune di Venezia, che impediva il rilascio di nuove autorizzazioni relative a impianti per il trattamento di rifiuti speciali. Tale modifica, poiché riguardante un piano territoriale e urbanistico adottato ai sensi di legge dalla Competente Autorità, avrebbe necessitato la previa effettuazione della V.A.S. (Valutazione Ambientale Strategica), ai sensi di quanto previsto dalla relativa direttiva 2001/42/CE; tale adempimento, tuttavia, sembrerebbe essere stato omesso.

Si ricorda infine che, in base ai risultati emersi da un'indagine epidemiologica promossa congiuntamente dall'Istituto superiore della Sanità, dal Ministero della Salute e dall'Università «La Sapienza» di Roma, l'area rimane ai primi posti tra quelle più inquinate d'Italia, nonché tra quelle caratterizzate da maggiore presenza di patologie tumorali ([3]).

Tutto ciò premesso, quali iniziative intende intraprendere la Commissione per reagire alla possibile violazione della direttiva «VAS» descritta sopra, nonché al fine di verificare la presenza di eventuali altre violazioni della normativa comunitaria ambientale nella vicenda in esame?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(23 settembre 2013)

A norma dell'articolo 3, paragrafo 3, della direttiva 2001/42/CE ([4]), per i piani di assetto territoriale in ambito urbano e rurale che determinano l'uso di piccole aree a livello locale e per le modifiche minori di tali piani la valutazione ambientale è necessaria solo se gli Stati membri stabiliscono che essi possono avere effetti significativi sull'ambiente.

La Commissione non ha ricevuto elementi di prova che indichino che il progetto cui fa riferimento l'onorevole deputato non rappresenta una modifica minore al piano d'assetto del territorio (PAT) della città di Venezia. Con DGR n. 448 del 10 aprile 2013, la Regione Veneto ha espresso parere favorevole circa la compatibilità ambientale del progetto.

Sulla base delle informazioni fornite e in mancanza di elementi chiari e sostanziali che comprovino l'esistenza di errori nelle valutazioni ambientali effettuate dalle autorità competenti, la Commissione non ha potuto riscontrare alcuna violazione della direttiva VAS.

([1]) Deliberazione di Giunta regionale del Veneto n. 448 del 10 aprile 2013, presente nel sito della Regione del Veneto al seguente link: http://goo.gl/i6VOT7

([2]) Si segnala che l'autorizzazione è stata concessa dall'organo di governo della Regione del Veneto malgrado il parere contrario espresso dagli enti locali interessati (Provincia e Comune di Venezia).

([3]) Cfr. http://goo.gl/l7WGZ.

([4]) Direttiva 2001/42/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 27 giugno 2001, concernente la valutazione degli effetti di determinati piani e programmi sull'ambiente, GU L 197 del 21.7.2001.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009271/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Revamping of a special waste treatment plant in Marghera (Venice), authorised possibly in breach of Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Regional Council of the Veneto Region has recently granted permission for the 'Alles' plant in Marghera (Venice), which treats sludge from the excavation of canals in the Venice Lagoon, to be revamped ([1]).

This means that the facility in question will now be able to receive 180 000 tonnes of special waste per year, including hazardous waste, and will have a doubled storage capacity (from 6 000 to 12 000 tonnes). As regards treatable waste, there will even be an increase from 20 to 70 EWC codes, including various types of sludge, waste sludge, bottom ash, compound wastes, rocks and soils containing hazardous substances and sludge produced by physical and chemical treatments containing hazardous substances. The plant will also receive special waste (hazardous and non-hazardous) coming from areas outside the lagoon basin, or from all over the country and even from abroad, in order to meet the market demands in terms of waste disposal ([2]).

The granting of the permission described above meant that the City of Venice's PAT (Spatial Planning Plan) also had to be changed at the same time (through the same measure), because this plan prohibited the issuance of new permits for special waste treatment plants. Given that this amendment concerned an urban development plan that had been legally adopted by the 'Competent Authority', it should first have been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), in accordance with the provisions of Directive 2001/42/EC. This does not, however, appear to have been done.

Lastly, based on the findings of an epidemiological survey sponsored jointly by the National Institute of Health, the Ministry of Health and the La Sapienza University of Rome, the area remains among the most polluted of Italy, with one of the highest number of cases of cancer ([3]).

What measures does the Commission therefore intend to take in response to this possible breach of the SEA Directive as described above, and to ascertain whether there may have been any other breach of EU environmental legislation in the case in question?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

According to Article 3(3) of the SEA Directive 2001/42/EC ([4]) plans regarding town and country planning, which determine the use of small areas at local level and minor modifications to these plans, require an environmental assessment to be carried out only where the Member States determine that these plans are likely to have significant environmental effects.

The Commission has not received the evidence suggesting that the project referred to by the Honourable Member does not represent a minor modification to the City of Venice's PAT (Spatial Planning Plan). By DGR n. 448 of 10 April 2013 the Veneto Region expressed a favourable opinion regarding the environmental compatibility of this project.

Based on the information provided and in the absence of clear and substantial evidence of error within the environmental assessments carried out by the competent Authorities, the Commission could not identify any evidence of a breach of the SEA Directive.

([1]) Veneto Regional Council Decision No 448 of 10 April 2013, which can be found on the Veneto Region website through the following link: http://goo.gl/i6VOT7

([2]) This permission was granted by the government department of the Veneto Region, despite the disapproval expressed by the local authorities concerned (the Province and Municipality of Venice).

([3]) Cfr. http://goo.gl/l7WGZ

([4]) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009272/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE) e Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(29 luglio 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per la creazione di un Parco Archeologico Ambientale Interregionale

Il Progetto denominato «Safinim» prevede la creazione di un Polo di Turismo Archeologico-Ambientale da costituirsi nel territorio dei Comuni di Agnone, Pietrabbondante, Pescopennataro (Molise) e Schiavi d'Abruzzo (Abruzzo) su iniziativa delle associazioni culturali Archeoclub di Schiavi d'Abruzzo e O.S.C.A., Istituzione di Studi e Ricerche, di Agnone (in provincia di Isernia).

Il progetto prevede la valorizzazione delle ricchezze specifiche del territorio attraverso la riqualificazione turistico-ambientale delle aree in oggetto, in particolare:

— la sistemazione, l'ampliamento e la messa in rete di aree archeologiche sparse nel territorio dei comuni partecipanti ed omogenee per tematica (ad esempio Sannio e Sanniti, cuore della civiltà italica);

— la realizzazione della Scuola di Alta formazione Archeologica post-laurea;

— la realizzazione di una serie di attività di ricerca ed educazione ambientale grazie alla presenza nel territorio di siti ad altissima valenza ambientale (foreste Mab-Unesco, siti comunitari ecc.);

— la costituzione di una rete internazionale di organizzazioni operanti nel settore.

Tutto ciò rappresenterebbe un importante volano per tutto il territorio, sia in termini di tutela ambientale sia in termini socio-econonomici ed occupazionali.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione:

1. far sapere se esistono finanziamenti per la realizzazione del progetto suesposto;

2. far sapere quali programmi o finanziamenti sono previsti nell'ambito della programmazione 2014-2020;

3. fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(9 settembre 2013)

1. Nell'ambito dell'obiettivo «Competitività regionale e occupazione» (2007-2013), nel quale rientrano le regioni Molise ed Abruzzo, il Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (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. Al fine di conseguire risultati tangibili, i progetti che fanno capo a questo ambito vanno concepiti come parte di una strategia integrata basata sul territorio per la valorizzazione delle risorse culturali.

In base al principio di gestione condivisa applicato ai finanziamenti della politica di coesione, la Commissione suggerisce agli onorevoli parlamentari di contattare direttamente le pertinenti autorità di gestione: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=IT&pay=it#1

2. Nel periodo 2014-2020, la proposta della Commissione, non ancora adottata, prevede la possibilità di sostenere gli investimenti su piccola scala volti a tutelare, promuovere e sviluppare il patrimonio culturale nell'ambito di vari obiettivi tematici, compresa l'occupazione. Tuttavia, in quest'ultimo caso essi devono far parte della strategia di sviluppo integrata di un determinato territorio o città e contribuire in modo chiaro all'occupazione. Gli obiettivi da perseguire verranno definiti nei programmi 2014-2020, che le autorità italiane sottoporranno alla Commissione all'atto dell'adozione dei regolamenti sulla politica di coesione e parallelamente al perfezionamento dell'accordo di partenariato con l'Italia.

3. Per una panoramica generale dei progetti UE finanziati dalla politica di coesione in Italia in tutti i settori, la Commissione invita gli onorevoli parlamentari 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-009272/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE) and Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Possible funding of the creation of an Interregional Archaeological and Environmental Park

The Safinim project has the aim of establishing an archaeological and environmental tourism centre in the communes of Agnone, Pietrabbondante, Pescopennataro (Molise) and Schiavi d'Abruzzo (Abruzzo) at the initiative of the cultural associations Archeoclub in Schiavi d'Abruzzo and OSCA, Agnone Research Institute (in the province of Isernia).

The project involves promoting the area's heritage by means of the touristic/environmental rehabilitation of the localities concerned, particularly:

— developing, enlarging and networking archaeological sites scattered throughout the territory of the communes participating in the project which illustrate common themes (e.g. Samnium and the Samnites, the heart of the Italic civilisation);

— establishment of the Postgraduate School of Archaeology;

— carrying-out of a range of environmental research and education activities on the basis of the presence in the area of sites of great environmental value (MAB-Unesco forest, Community sites, etc.);

— establishment of an international network of organisations operating in the sector.

All this would give the area as a whole a big boost in terms both of environmental protection and of the socioeconomic and employment impact.

1. Does any funding exist which could be used for the above project?

2. What programmes or financing are provided for in the period 2014-2020?

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

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(9 September 2013)

1. Under the 'Regional competitiveness and employment objective' (in 2007-2013), to which regions Molise and Abruzzo belong, the European Regional Development Fund (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.

In line with the shared management principle used for cohesion policy funding, the Commission suggests the Honourable Member contacts directly the respective managing authorities:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/manage/authority/authorities.cfm?lan=EN&pay=it#1

2. In the 2014-2020 period, the Commission proposal, not yet adopted, provides for the possibility to support small scale investments aiming at protecting, promoting and developing cultural heritage under various thematic objectives, including employment. However, in the latter case they should be part of an integrated development strategy of a specific territory or town and clearly contribute to employment. The objectives to be pursued will be defined in the 2014-2020 programmes to be submitted by the Italian authorities to the Commission upon adoption of the Cohesion Policy Regulations and in parallel with the finalisation of the Italian Partnership Agreement.

3. For a general overview of EU projects funded by Cohesion policy in Italy, the Honorable member is invited to 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.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009273/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter / Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(29 juli 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Protesten Turkije (vervolgvraag)

Op 25 juli 2013 heeft hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-006390/2013. Daarin schrijft zij onder andere: „De huidige gebeurtenissen onderstrepen het belang van nadere betrokkenheid bij Turkije in het kader van het proces van toetreding tot de EU, inclusief met betrekking tot de onderhandelingshoofdstukken die het meest essentieel zijn voor het hervormingsproces. Bijgevolg is de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter ingenomen met het besluit van de Raad Algemene Zaken (RAZ) van 25 juni 2013 om hoofdstuk 22 te openen. De intergouvernementele conferentie met Turkije vindt plaats na de presentatie van het jaarlijkse voortgangsverslag van de Commissie en na een bijeenkomst van de RAZ. Tijdens deze bijeenkomst wordt het gemeenschappelijk standpunt van de RAZ ten gunste van de opening van hoofdstuk 22 bekrachtigd en wordt de datum voor de toetredingsconferentie bepaald."

1. Het openen van hoofdstuk 22, waarmee de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter zo „ingenomen" is, betreft „Regionaal Beleid & Coördinatie van Structurele Instrumenten". Waarom verwacht de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter dat de opening van juist dít hoofdstuk het hervormingsproces resp. de toetredingsonderhandelingen een positieve impuls zou kunnen geven?

2. Is de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter bekend met Erdoğans uitspraak: „Democratie is als een tram; je rijdt ermee tot je jouw einddoel hebt bereikt en dan stap je uit" ([1])? Deelt de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter de mening dat uit deze uitspraak blijkt dat democratie voor Erdoğan slechts een „slinks middel" is om zijn eigen dictatoriale agenda verwezenlijkt te krijgen? Deelt de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter de mening dat Erdoğan met deze uitspraak zijn ondemocratische, dictatoriale karakter toont? Zo neen, hoe interpreteert de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Erdoğans uitspraak dan wel?

3. Wanneer trekt de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter de, uiteindelijk onvermijdelijke, conclusie dat de toetredingsonderhandelingen met Turkije een gebed zonder einde zijn? Met andere woorden: wanneer komt de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter tot het besef dat — hoeveel hoofdstukken er ook worden geopend — Turkije zich niet aan de EU wíl en kán aanpassen en bijgevolg nóóit tot de EU zal kunnen toetreden? Wanneer besluit de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter dientengevolge de toetredingsonderhandelingen te beëindigen?

Antwoord van de heer Fuele namens de Commissie
(20 september 2013)

1. In zijn conclusies van december 2012 heeft de Raad onderstreept dat dankzij actieve en geloofwaardige toetredingsonderhandelingen die in overeenstemming zijn met de verbintenissen van de EU en de gestelde voorwaarden, het potentieel van de betrekkingen tussen de EU en Turkije volledig zal kunnen worden benut en dat het in het belang van beide partijen is dat de toetredingsonderhandelingen spoedig weer op tempo komen en dat de EU het ijkpunt voor hervormingen in Turkije blijft. In dit opzicht geeft het openen van een onderhandelingshoofdstuk waarvoor Turkije aan de voorwaarden heeft voldaan een positieve impuls aan het hervormingsproces en de toetredingsonderhandelingen.

2. De Commissie maakt in haar jaarlijkse voortgangsverslag aan de Raad en het Parlement een beoordeling van de vooruitgang die Turkije boekt wat betreft volledige naleving van de toetredingscriteria, en met name de politieke criteria, die betrekking hebben op de stabiliteit van de instellingen die de democratie, de rechtsstaat, de mensenrechten en de eerbiediging van en bescherming van minderheden garanderen. Het volgende voortgangsverslag wordt in oktober 2013 gepubliceerd.

3. Ik verwijs het geachte parlementslid naar de antwoorden op een aantal eerdere schriftelijke vragen, waaronder schriftelijke vraag E-010384/2012.

([1]) http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/25/magazine/25turkey.html?_r=3&8hpib=&pagewanted=print & .

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009273/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Protests in Turkey (follow-up question)

On 25 July 2013, Vice-President/High Representative Ashton replied to Written Question E-006390/2013 on behalf of the Commission. She wrote, *inter alia*: 'Current events underline the importance of further engagement with Turkey within the framework of the EU accession process, including on those negotiating chapters most fundamental to its reform efforts. The HR/VP therefore welcomes the decision of the General Affairs Council on 25 June 2013 to open Chapter 22. The Inter-Governmental Conference with Turkey will take place after the presentation of the Commission's annual progress report and following a discussion of the GAC which will confirm the common position of the Council for the opening of Chapter 22 and determine the date for the accession conference.'

1. The opening of Chapter 22, which the VP/HR so 'welcomes', concerns 'Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments'. Why does the VP/HR anticipate that the opening of this chapter in particular could give positive impetus to the reform process and the accession negotiations?

2. Is the VP/HR familiar with Erdoğan's statement, 'Democracy is like a tram: you ride it until you arrive at your destination, then you step off' ([1])? Does the VP/HR agree that this statement shows that, as far as Erdoğan is concerned, democracy is just a cunning way of getting his own dictatorial agenda carried out? Does the VP/HR agree that this statement reveals Erdoğan's undemocratic, dictatorial character? If not, how does the VP/HR interpret Erdoğan's statement?

3. When will the VP/HR draw the ultimately inevitable conclusion that the accession negotiations with Turkey are a never-ending saga? In other words, when will the VP/HR realise that — no matter how many chapters are opened — Turkey is neither willing nor able to adapt to the EU and consequently will never be able to accede to the EU? When will the VP/HR therefore decide to terminate the accession negotiations?

Answer given by Mr Fuele on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

1. The Council in its December 2012 conclusions underlined that active and credible accession negotiations which respect the EU's commitments and established conditionality will enable the EU-Turkey relationship to achieve its full potential, and that it is in the interest of both parties that accession negotiations regain momentum, ensuring that the EU remains the benchmark for reforms in Turkey. Against this background, opening of a negotiating chapter in which Turkey has complied with the conditions indeed gives positive impetus to the reform process and the accession negotiations.

2. The Commission reflects its assessment of progress by Turkey towards full compliance with the accession criteria, including the political criteria, which cover the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, in its yearly progress report to the Council and Parliament. The next progress report will be published in October 2013.

3. The Honourable Member is kindly referred to the answers to several previous written questions, notably E-010384/2012.

([1]) http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/25/magazine/25turkey.html?_r=3&8hpib=&pagewanted=print&.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009274/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Apoios para a divulgação dos produtos dos pequenos produtores

A Associação de Criadores de Carne de Bovino Mirandesa é uma cooperativa que associa pequenos produtores deste tipo de carne. Em recente reunião com esta associação, foi-nos relatado que a situação dos pequenos produtores é bastante difícil e que necessitam, entre outros, de apoios para viagens de promoção e divulgação deste produto regional, nomeadamente junto dos importadores, com vista à internacionalização dos seus produtos.

Desta forma, pergunto à Comissão que auxílios poderão ser mobilizados para apoiar atividades, iniciativas e viagens de divulgação dos produtos dos pequenos produtores junto dos importadores internacionais.

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(17 de setembro de 2013)

Os pequenos e médios produtores que fazem parte de organizações profissionais ou interprofissionais podem beneficiar de apoio financeiro para campanhas de informação ou promoção genéricas no âmbito do Regulamento (CE) n.° 3/2008 do Conselho ([1]). Essas campanhas tanto podem ter por alvo países terceiros como o mercado interno.

O Fundo Europeu Agrícola de Desenvolvimento Rural (Feader) não apoia medidas específicas de promoção de produtos agrícolas no mercado internacional. Existem, contudo, algumas medidas ao abrigo deste Fundo que podem ser úteis para melhorar a competitividade dos produtos.

O Feader ajuda os agricultores a investir nas respetivas explorações, na transformação e comercialização dos seus produtos e na criação de novos produtos e tecnologias. O Feader apoia igualmente a participação dos agricultores em regimes de garantia da qualidade criados ao abrigo do Regulamento da UE. Podem ainda beneficiar de apoio as atividades de informação e promoção de produtos abrangidos por um regime de garantia da qualidade no mercado interno.

Os agricultores e as PME agrícolas podem também beneficiar de formação específica e de consultoria, em função do teor dos programas de desenvolvimento rural. Os investimentos apoiados pelo Feader devem, contudo, ser levados a cabo nas respetivas áreas do programa de desenvolvimento rural.

Além disso, devido às regras em matéria de auxílios estatais que se aplicam ao Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional (FEDER), não é possível conceder apoio ao desenvolvimento regional diretamente às empresas que se dedicam à produção primária dos produtos agrícolas constantes do anexo I do Tratado. O FEDER tem apoiado, todavia, algumas iniciativas neste setor, nomeadamente o Polo de Competitividade e Tecnologia Agroindustrial, o Cluster Agroindustrial do Centro ou o Cluster Agroindustrial do Ribatejo.

([1]) JO L 3 de 5.1.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009274/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Support for promoting small producers' products

The Mirandesa Cattle Farmers Association is a cooperative of small beef producers. At a recent meeting with the association, we learned that small producers were in a very difficult situation and that they needed, among other things, support in order travel around promoting and raising awareness of this regional product, particularly among importers, with a view to selling their products internationally.

What aid could be mobilised to support activities, initiatives and trips promoting small producers' products among international importers?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2013)

Small and medium-sized stakeholders as members of trade and/or inter-trade organisations are potential beneficiaries of the financial support for generic information and promotion campaigns provided within the framework of Council Regulation (EC) No 3/2008 ([1]). These campaigns can be destined to third countries or the internal market.

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) does not support specific measures for the promotion of agricultural products in the international market. However there are some measures under this policy that can be relevant for improving the competitiveness of products.

EAFRD supports farmers to invest in their farms in processing and marketing of their production and in the creation of new products and technologies. The EAFRD also supports the participation of farmers in quality schemes established under the EU regulation. Information and promotion activities of products covered by a quality scheme in the internal market may also be supported.

Farmers and rural SMEs can also receive specific training and advisory support, depending on the content of the rural development programmes. The supported investments by the EAFRD, however, should be undertaken in the respective rural development programme area.

Moreover, due to the European State Aid rules applied to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) it is not possible to grant regional development support directly to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products as listed in Annex I to the Treaty. However, ERDF has supported some initiatives in the agro-sector such as 'PCT Agro-industrial', 'Cluster Agro-industrial do Centro' e 'Cluster Agro-industrial do Ribatejo'.

([1]) OJ L 3, 5.1.2008.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009275/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Apoios para a modernização do pequeno comércio local

Em recente reunião com a Associação Comercial e Industrial de Bragança, a qual aglomera 560 associados, nomeadamente da área do comércio local, foi-nos relatada uma situação dramática. Segundo a associação, a falência e o encerramento de unidades de comércio local é constante e a situação piorou progressivamente ao longo dos últimos 3 anos, o que está associado à diminuição do poder de compra dos portugueses. O impacto do encerramento de pequenas unidades de comércio nas economias locais do interior de menor dimensão é, evidentemente, muito significativo.

A referida associação transmitiu-nos ainda que os pequenos comerciantes não têm acesso a financiamentos direcionados para a modernização e qualificação das suas lojas.

Desta forma, pergunto à Comissão que fundos da UE podem ser mobilizados para o apoio a projetos de pequenas obras de modernização das lojas do pequeno comércio local.

Resposta dada por Johannes Hahn em nome da Comissão
(5 de setembro de 2013)

A mobilização de fundos da UE, no âmbito do quadro de referência estratégico nacional de Portugal (QREN) para 2007-2013, bem como a seleção de projetos a financiar, em conformidade com o princípio da gestão partilhada utilizado para a administração da política dos fundos de coesão, é da plena e exclusiva competência e responsabilidade das autoridades portuguesas competentes, nomeadamente as autoridades de gestão responsáveis pela execução dos programas operacionais nacionais e regionais.

As informações relativas aos programas, ações e medidas em curso de implementação durante o período de 2007-2013, estão disponíveis no seguinte sítio Web: www.qren.pt.

As informações específicas relativas ao programa ON.2 O Novo Norte de 2007-2013 podem ser obtidas através do seguinte contacto da autoridade de gestão:

Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte
Rua Rainha D. Estefânia, 251
4150-304 Porto
Tel. 00.351.226 086 300
email: geral@ccdr-n.pt

Além disso, a Comissão está atualmente a estudar as dificuldades no acesso ao crédito por parte das PME, através do Mecanismo de Garantia GPME do programa PCI ([1]), que é disponibilizada às PME através de intermediários financeiros, tais como bancos e sociedades de garantias mútuas. Para o período de 2014-2020, o novo programa COSME basear-se-á na experiência adquirida com o atual PCI ([2]). O programa incluirá um mecanismo de garantia de empréstimos, que irá complementar o instrumento de garantia incluída no novo programa Horizonte 2020 ([3]).

([1]) Programa-Quadro para a Competitividade e a Inovação 2007-2013, gerido pelo Fundo Europeu de Investimento em nome da Comissão.
([2]) Programa para a Competitividade das Empresas e PME.
([3]) O programa Horizonte 2020 irá apoiar a investigação e a inovação.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009275/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Support for modernising small local shops

At a recent meeting with the Bragança Trade and Industry Association, which has 560 members, mainly local businesspeople, our attention was drawn to a serious situation. According to the association, local businesses are constantly going bankrupt and closing down and the situation has steadily deteriorated over the last three months, as a result of the Portuguese public's reduced purchasing power. The closure of small businesses clearly has a very significant effect on smaller, local inland economies.

The association also told us that small traders do not have access to funding for modernising and fitting out their shops.

What EU funds can be mobilised to support projects involving small-scale works to modernise small local shops?

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

Mobilisation of EU funds in the framework of the 2007-2013 Portuguese National Strategic Reference Framework, as well as selection of projects to be funded, in line with the shared management principle used for the administration of cohesion policy funds, is the full and exclusive competence and responsibility of relevant Portuguese authorities, in particular the managing authorities in charge of the implementation of national and regional operational programmes.

Information relating to programmes and relevant actions and measures under implementation during the 2007-2013 period is available on the following website: www.qren.pt.

Specific information relating to the 'ON.2 O Novo Norte' 2007-2013 programme can be obtained through the contact with the managing authority to the following adress:

Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte
Rua Rainha D. Estefânia, 251
4150-304 Porto
Tel. 00.351.226 086 300
email: geral@ccdr-n.pt

In addition, the Commission is currently addressing the difficulties in access to credit by SMEs by means of the SMEG guarantee facility of the CIP ([1]) programme, which is made available to SMEs through financial intermediaries, such as banks and mutual guarantee societies. For the period 2014-2020, the new COSME ([2]) programme will build on the experience gained from the current CIP. The programme will include a Loan Guarantee Facility which will complement the guarantee instrument included in the new Horizon 2020 programme ([3]).

([1]) Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme 2007-2013, managed by the European Investment Fund on behalf of the Commission.
([2]) Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs.
([3]) Horizon 2020 will support research and innovation.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009276/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Apoios para projetos de divulgação do comércio local

Em recente reunião com a Associação Comercial e Industrial de Bragança, a qual aglomera 560 associados, nomeadamente da área do comércio local, foi-nos relatada uma situação dramática. Segundo a associação, a falência e o encerramento de unidades de comércio local é constante e a situação piorou progressivamente ao longo dos últimos 3 anos, o que está associado à diminuição do poder de compra dos portugueses. O impacto do encerramento de pequenas unidades de comércio nas economias locais do interior de menor dimensão é, evidentemente, muito significativo.

Sendo certo que esta situação é consequência das políticas do governo nacional e da troica e que só quando estas terminarem é que a situação se inverterá globalmente, a referida associação informou-nos que tem falta de apoios para a realização de projetos de animação e divulgação do comércio local e dos produtos regionais.

Desta forma, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento, nomeadamente através dos técnicos da Comissão Europeia que integram a troica, desta situação desastrosa que está a afetar os pequenos comerciantes locais?

2. Que apoios podem ser mobilizados para a realização de projetos de animação e divulgação do comércio local, nomeadamente através de iniciativas de rua que promovam este setor da economia?

Resposta dada por Olli Rehn em nome da Comissão
(19 de setembro de 2013)

A economia portuguesa está a sofrer um importante processo de ajustamento que implica o abandono de um crescimento induzido principalmente pelo mercado doméstico para um crescimento induzido pelas exportações. Tendo em conta o elevado endividamento da economia, este processo, sem o qual a dívida externa ficaria insustentável, é necessário. Implica alterações significativas na reafetação dos recursos, passando das empresas tradicionais principalmente voltadas para o mercado doméstico para o setor mais dinâmico das empresas exportadoras. Este ajustamento já progrediu de forma substancial, como comprovam os dados muito positivos das exportações. Existem igualmente indicações mais gerais de que o processo de ajustamento está a dar os seus frutos, por exemplo, com dados que demonstram que, em 2013, o número de empresas recém-criadas ultrapassou o número de empresas encerradas.

Para ajudar as empresas locais a resistirem melhor ao processo de reorientação acima referido, os mais de 600 membros da Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) (rede europeia de apoio às empresas) prestam assistência no acesso a novos mercados e informações sobre possíveis financiamentos da UE. No Norte de Portugal, existem duas sucursais da EEN — no Porto (o Instituto de Apoio às Pequenas e Médias Empresas e à Inovação e a Agência de Inovação) e em Braga (Associação Industrial do Minho). Além disso, a Comissão está a divulgar guias que oferecem ideias, exemplos testados, ajuda prática e aconselhamento prático reunidos por grupos de peritos em política das PME. A aplicação das melhores práticas identificadas por estes grupos de peritos pode também ser elegível para apoio financeiro dos fundos estruturais (FEDER e FSE).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009276/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Support for projects publicising local businesses

At a recent meeting with the Bragança Trade and Industry Association, which has 560 members, mainly local businesspeople, our attention was drawn to a serious situation. According to the association, local businesses are constantly going bankrupt and closing down and the situation has steadily deteriorated over the last three years, as a result of the Portuguese public's reduced purchasing power. The closure of small businesses clearly has a very significant effect on smaller, local inland economies.

Convinced that the policies of the Portuguese Government and the Troika have led to this situation and that it will only be completely resolved when the polices are abandoned, the association told us that it lacked support for carrying out projects to promote and publicise local businesses and regional products.

1. Is the Commission aware, particularly through Commission staff in the Troika, of this disastrous situation that is affecting small local traders?

2. What support can be mobilised for carrying out projects to promote and publicise local businesses, particularly through initiatives on the ground to promote this sector of the economy?

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

The Portuguese economy is undergoing an important adjustment process from mainly domestically driven growth to an export driven one. In view of the high indebtedness of the economy, this is a necessary development in the absence of which external debt would become unsustainable. This process entails a significant relocation of resources from traditional companies mainly catering for the domestic market to the more dynamic, export-oriented sector. This adjustment has already made substantial progress as evidenced by the very positive export data. There are also more general indications that the adjustment process is bearing fruit with, for instance, data showing that during 2013 the number of newly created companies has overtaken the number of companies that ceased to exist.

In order to help local business to better withstand the abovementioned relocation process, the more than 600 members of the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) provide assistance in accessing new markets and inform about possible EU funding. In the North of Portugal, there are two branches of the EEN in Porto (Instituto de Apoio às Pequenas e Médias Empresas e à Inovação and Agência de Inovação) and in Braga (Associação Industrial do Minho). Furthermore, the Commission is disseminating guidebooks which offer ideas, tested examples, practical help and hands-on advice gathered by SME Policy expert groups. Implementation of the best practices identified by these expert groups can also be eligible for financial support by structural funds (ERDF and ESF).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009277/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Financiamento dos centros de investigação

A Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia é a instituição responsável pelo financiamento da atividade de investigação em Portugal, nomeadamente da atividade dos centros de investigação, um financiamento que é executado com fundos nacionais e fundos provenientes da União Europeia.

O novo regulamento da FCT relativo à Avaliação e Financiamento de Unidades de Investigação inclui duas parcelas de financiamento: Financiamento de Base e Financiamento Estratégico. Nesta última parcela de financiamento apenas estão abrangidas as unidades de investigação científica e desenvolvimento tecnológico com classificação de Excecional, Excelente ou Muito Bom. Significa isto que parte do financiamento é automaticamente direcionada para estas unidades, excluindo aquelas que têm avaliação de Bom.

Do nosso ponto de vista, isto pode potenciar uma duplicação ao nível da atribuição dos financiamentos a instituições que já estão mais consolidadas e prejudicar aquelas que se pretendem afirmar e, desta forma, atingir progressivamente níveis mais elevados na sua classificação. Segundo informações que recebemos da Reitoria do Instituto Politécnico de Bragança, tal poderá também significar que os financiamentos se concentrarão nas grandes universidades e unidades do litoral, em detrimento de instituições do interior do país, tão fundamentais para garantir o desenvolvimento de regiões mais deprimidas, atenuar as assimetrias sociais e regionais e garantir os objetivos da coesão tão proclamados pela UE.

Desta forma, questiono a Comissão:

1. Tem informações acerca desta situação?

2. Considera que as regras de financiamento acima citadas estão de acordo com os princípios da coesão?

Resposta dada por Máire Geoghegan-Quinn em nome da Comissão
(16 de setembro de 2013)

1. Dispor de capacidade de investigação e inovação de craveira mundial, assente numa base científica sólida e pública, é fundamental para a prosperidade futura da Europa. A estratégia Europa 2020 colocou a investigação, a inovação e a ciência no centro da política europeia para o crescimento. Para tal, devemos proteger os orçamentos para a investigação pública mas também aumentar a eficiência, a eficácia e a excelência do nosso sistema público de investigação. Embora as regras de financiamento referidas pela Senhora Deputada sejam da competência exclusiva das autoridades nacionais, a reforma dos sistemas de investigação nacionais, para assegurar uma maior eficácia das despesas públicas, encontra-se no cerne do Espaço Europeu da Investigação. A existência de concorrência no financiamento da investigação contribui para a eficiência dos dinheiros públicos consagrados à investigação. As melhores práticas a nível nacional implicam a repartição dos financiamentos mediante convites abertos à apresentação de propostas e de uma avaliação institucional em função do desempenho.

2. Para o próximo período de programação (2014-2020), as condições *ex ante* para a atribuição de financiamento a título da coesão (ao abrigo dos Fundos Estruturais e de Investimento Europeus) ao apoio à investigação e à inovação consistem na elaboração de um quadro estratégico de investigação e inovação para a especialização inteligente. Portugal está atualmente a preparar a sua estratégia de especialização inteligente, que terá elementos nacionais e regionais. Isto deve permitir garantir que o financiamento dos Fundos Estruturais e de Investimento Europeus ao abrigo dos programas operacionais conexos em Portugal terá em conta as exigências da estratégia global de Portugal no domínio da investigação e inovação, incluindo os aspetos territoriais.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009277/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Funding of research centres

The Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) is the body in charge of funding research in Portugal, particularly the work of research centres. This funding comes from national and European Union funds.

The new FCT regulation on the assessment and funding of research centres includes two types of funding: basic funding and strategic funding. The latter type of funding only covers scientific research and technological development centres classified as exceptional, excellent or very good. That means that a portion of the funding is automatically channelled towards such centres, excluding those that have been evaluated as good.

We believe that this could encourage duplication in the funding allocated to institutions that are already very well established and damage those seeking gradually to achieve a higher classification. According to information from the Rector's office of Bragança Polytechnic, this could also mean that funding is concentrated on large universities and coastal institutions, to the detriment of inland institutions, which are so vital for securing the development of more disadvantaged regions, reducing social and regional inequality and ensuring that the EU's much-lauded cohesion objectives are met.

1. Does the Commission have any information on this situation?

2. Does it think that the funding rules mentioned above are compatible with the principles of cohesion?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

1. A world-leading research and innovation capacity, built on a strong public science base, is critical for Europe's future prosperity. With the Europe 2020 strategy, research, innovation and science have been placed at the heart of European policy for growth. This requires that public research budgets are protected, but also that we need to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and excellence of our public research system. While the specific rule referred to by the Honourable Member in the second paragraph is the exclusive competence of the relevant national authorities, reforms of national research systems to ensure the highest efficiency of public spending are at the heart of the European Research Area (ERA). The availability of competitive research funding contributes to the efficiency of public money invested in research. Best-practices at Member States' level involve allocation of funding through open calls for proposals and performance based institutional assessment.

2. For the next programming period (2014-20), the *ex-ante* conditionality for the allocation of cohesion funding (under the European Structural and Investment Funds — ESIF) in support of research and innovation will be the preparation of a research and innovation strategic policy framework for smart specialisation. Portugal is at present preparing its smart specialisation strategy that will have both national and regional elements. This will help to ensure that ESIF funding under the related Operational Programmes in Portugal will take account of the overall strategic requirements of Portugal in the field of research and innovation, including the territorial aspects.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009278/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Situação da Casa do Douro

A Casa do Douro, sediada no Peso da Régua, é uma instituição de cariz associativo que representa os interesses dos viticultores, nomeadamente dos pequenos e médios produtores, mas que presta também serviços de apoio à produção.

Os produtores têm sido bastante afetados por políticas que os prejudicam, como o corte de 25 mil pipas de benefício aos produtores implementado pelo atual Governo. A atual situação dos viticultores tem-se refletido também nos problemas financeiros da Casa do Douro, que tem avultadas dívidas. Urge, em nome dos interesses dos pequenos e médios viticultores, salvar a Casa do Douro, mantendo o seu atual estatuto.

Desta forma, pergunto à Comissão:

1. Tem conhecimento desta situação?

2. Que tipo de apoios é que a UE pode mobilizar para auxiliar a Casa do Douro?

3. Esta questão foi debatida com o Governo português no âmbito da reprogramação das verbas dos fundos comunitários destinados ao setor agrícola?

Resposta dada por Dacian Cioloş em nome da Comissão
(13 de setembro de 2013)

A Comissão não tem conhecimento dos elementos descritos relacionados com os problemas financeiros da Casa do Douro.

Portugal, tal como outros Estados-Membros produtores de vinho, beneficiou de um instrumento específico de programação financeira para o setor vitivinícola no período de 2009-2013, no âmbito da Organização Comum do Mercado (OCM) da UE: o programa de apoio nacional. Um segundo programa de apoio nacional beneficiará o setor vitivinícola português durante o período de 2014-2018, tendo esse programa sido discutido com as autoridades portuguesas no ano passado. As medidas incluídas nesse programa, que se destinam aos diferentes intervenientes na cadeia de abastecimento, incluem «restruturação e conversão de vinhas», «promoção em países terceiros», «seguros de colheitas» e «destilação de subprodutos».

O principal objetivo dessas medidas consiste no aumento da competitividade do setor vitivinícola da UE/Portugal, bem como na disponibilização de instrumentos de gestão dos riscos em caso de circunstâncias imprevistas. Não parece que seja possível que qualquer uma destas medidas possa ajudar a organização referida a resolver os seus problemas de dívidas, embora essas medidas possam ajudar viticultores individuais que são membros da Casa do Douro.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009278/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Situation of Casa do Douro

Casa do Douro, in the Portuguese municipality of Peso da Régua, is an association that represents the interests of winegrowers, particularly small and medium-sized producers; it also provides production support services.

Producers have been severely affected by damaging policies, such as the cut in aid for producers by 25 000 barrels introduced by the current government. The current situation of winegrowers has also been mirrored in the financial problems of Casa do Douro, which has huge debts. In the interests of small and medium-sized winegrowers, it is vital to save Casa do Douro, preserving its current status.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. What kind of support can the EU mobilise to help Casa do Douro?

3. Has this issue been discussed with the Portuguese Government as part of the reprogramming of EU funds for the agricultural sector?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission is not aware of the elements described, related to financial problems of the organisation 'Casa do Douro'.

Portugal, as well as other wine producing Member States, has benefited from a specific financial programming instrument for the wine sector during the period 2009-2013, in the framework of the EU single Common Market Organisation (CMO): the national support programme (NSP). A second NSP will benefit the Portuguese wine sector during the period 2014-2018, which has been discussed with Portuguese authorities during the past year. The measures included in such programme, targeting different actors in the supply chain, include 'restructuring and conversion of vineyards', 'promotion in third countries', 'harvest insurance' and 'by-products distillation'.

These measures aim mainly at increasing the competitiveness of the EU/Portuguese wine sector, as well as providing risk-management tools against unforeseen circumstances. It does not appear possible for any of these measures to assist the referred organisation in solving its debt problems, although they could benefit individual wine-growers which are members of Casa do Douro.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009279/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 de julho de 2013)

Assunto: Poder local

Sob cobertura e com o pretexto das imposições feitas pela troica, o Governo português tem asfixiado financeiramente o poder local democrático em Portugal impondo, não apenas o financiamento dos serviços que as autarquias prestam às populações, mas também roubando, indiretamente, recursos e meios que lhes seriam devidos.

Aliado a isto, o aumento exponencial do desemprego e da pobreza e o corte nas despesas sociais do Estado (medida imposta pela troica) exigem do poder local um maior esforço financeiro e material para fazer face ao flagelo social que atinge as suas populações, uma vez que as autarquias são as instituições que mais próximo estão dos cidadãos.

Assim, solicito à Comissão que me informe quais os programas e fundos da Politica de Coesão que podem ser mobilizados diretamente pelo poder local.

Resposta dada por László Andor em nome da Comissão
(5 de setembro de 2013)

No atual período de programação de 2007-2013, as autoridades públicas locais podem ter diretamente acesso ao FSE e ao FEDER, seja na qualidade de beneficiárias, de autoridades de gestão ou de organismos intermédios, em função das disposições nacionais ou regionais. Neste contexto, é importante sublinhar que as autoridades locais (aos níveis regional e municipal) participam ativamente em diferentes programas e projetos através de vários mecanismos, beneficiando assim direta e indiretamente de fundos comunitários.

A proposta da Comissão Europeia para o período de 2014-2020 prevê que os fundos estruturais e de investimento intervenham ativamente ao nível local, por intermédio de estruturas igualmente locais. Estes podem ser utilizados para envolver mais ativamente as autoridades regionais e locais, as cidades, os parceiros sociais e as organizações não governamentais. O desenvolvimento promovido pelas comunidades locais será promovido por grupos de ação local, compostos por representantes dos interesses socioeconómicos, públicos e privados locais, e concebidos tendo em conta as necessidades e potencialidades presentes. Além disso, para gerir e executar os investimentos territoriais integrados, o Estado-Membro ou a autoridade de gestão pode designar um ou vários organismos intermediários, incluindo autoridades locais, organismos de desenvolvimento regional ou organizações não governamentais (ONG).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009279/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(29 July 2013)

Subject: Local government

Citing the conditions imposed by the Troika as an excuse, the Portuguese Government has drastically restricted the money available to democratic local government in Portugal by dictating not only the funding for public services provided by local authorities, but also by indirectly stealing the resources and funds due to them.

In addition to this, the exponential rise in unemployment and poverty and the cut in social spending by the State (a measure imposed by the Troika) require local government to commit more financial and material resources to tackling the social challenges facing the public, as local authorities are the institutions that are most in touch with the public.

Can the Commission say what Cohesion Policy programmes and funds could be mobilised directly for local government?

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

In the current programming period 2007-2013, ESF and ERDF can be accessed directly by local public authorities, either as beneficiaries or also in the role of managing authorities or intermediary bodies, depending on national or regional arrangements. In this context, it is relevant to emphasise that local authorities (at regional and municipal level) are being active partners in different programmes and projects through several mechanisms, being thus directly and indirectly beneficiaries from Community funds.

The European Commission's proposal for 2014 — 2020 has provided for wide local involvement through local delivery vehicles of the European Structural and Investment Funds. They can be used to involve more actively regional and local authorities, cities, social partners, and Non-Governmental Organisations. Community-Led Local Development shall be promoted by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socioeconomic interests, and designed considering local needs and potential. Also, to manage and implement an Integrated Territorial Investments, the Member State or a managing authority may designate one or more intermediate bodies, including local authorities, regional development bodies or NGOs.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-009280/13
до Комисията
Vladko Todorov Panayotov (ALDE)
(1 август 2013 г.)

Относно: Финансовата криза в Кипър през 2013 г. и въздействието на сделката с тройката председателства върху ЕС

Кипърското правителство, под натиска на тройката председателства, реши да наложи данък от 10 % върху всички сметки в банки, разположени на територията на Кипър, без изключение, с цел покриване на прекомерния бюджетен дефицит на държавата.

Извършила ли е Комисията правен анализ на тази мярка и потенциалните правни последици, които тя може да окаже върху кипърското общество, по-специално по отношение на нейното въздействие върху основните права на ЕС и правата на човека като цяло?

Била ли е извършена оценка на въздействието на тази мярка преди нейното прилагане, с цел да се направи преценка на възможните последици за цялостния имидж на Кипър, а също така за този на ЕС и еврозоната?

Не се ли опасява Комисията, че това действие може да създаде прецедент в бъдеще поради факта, че на държава членка е наложено решение от страна на тройката председателства — орган, който не е част от Договорите на ЕС, и поради факта, че институции извън ЕС, например Международният валутен фонд, участват и изпълняват много важна роля във вземането на политически решения, които засягат ЕС?

Отговор, даден от г-н Рен от името на Комисията
(28 август 2013 г.)

Случаят с Кипър е безпрецедентен поради размера на банковия сектор на страната, съчетан с неговата структура, степента на поемане на риск и недостатъчния надзор. Предприетите мерки са съобразени с извънредната ситуация в Кипър с цел да се възстанови жизнеспособността на един по-малък банков сектор, като същевременно бъдат защитени всички депозити в размер под 100 000 евро в съответствие с принципите на ЕС. Комисията иска да отбележи също така, че използването на негарантираните депозити за целите на рекапитализация чрез вътрешни източници на двете най-големи банки представлява едностранна мярка на кипърските власти, която не е част от сключения по-късно меморандум за разбирателство.

Финансовата политика на Кипър е насочена към възстановяване на доверието в банковата система. Властите предприеха трудни, но необходими мерки за цялостна рекапитализация на Банката на Кипър (Bank of Cyprus), като по този начин ѝ позволиха да премине през оздравителна процедура и да възстанови нормалната си работа. Властите изработиха и ясна програма за преструктуриране и рекапитализация преди края на годината на други финансови институции. По отношение на еврозоната според данни от средата на месец април не се наблюдава изтегляне на депозити.

Комисията подкрепя Кипър и кипърските граждани, като подпомага възстановяването на финансовата стабилност, бюджетната устойчивост и растежа на страната и нейното население. За целта са мобилизирани и средства от фондовете на Общността (включително Европейския социален фонд, Европейския фонд за регионално развитие и Кохезионния фонд). Комисията създаде група за подпомагане на Кипър, която ще работи в тясно сътрудничество с кипърските власти, като им предоставя техническа експертиза.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009280/13
to the Commission
Vladko Todorov Panayotov (ALDE)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: The 2013 Cypriot financial crisis and the impact of the Troika deal on the EU

The Government of Cyprus, under pressure from the Troika, decided that a tax of 10% would be imposed on all Cyprus-based bank accounts, without exception, to cover the country's excessive deficit.

Has the Commission carried out a legal analysis of this measure and the potential legal implications that it could have on Cypriot society, specifically in terms of its impact on fundamental EU rights and human rights in general?

Has an impact assessment of this measure been carried out ahead of implementation, so as to evaluate the potential implications for Cyprus' global image, as well as that of the EU and the eurozone?

Is the Commission not afraid that this event might set a precedent for the future, considering that a decision was imposed on a Member State by the Troika — a body that is not part of the EU Treaties — and considering that non-EU institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, participate and have a very strong say in policy decisions affecting the EU?

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

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 the EU principles. The Commission notes also that the bail-in of uninsured deposits in the two major banks constitutes a unilateral measure of the Cypriot authorities that does not form part of the MoU that was subsequently concluded.

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. As regards the euro area, data since mid-April do not show deposit flight.

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. 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.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009281/13
to the Commission
Daniel Hannan (ECR)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Gibraltar

Does the Commission believe that the use of border controls between two EU territories for reasons other than national security, as a mechanism to exert political pressure in an unrelated dispute, is a violation of the European Treaties?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

Border checks on persons need to be carried out in accordance with the Schengen Borders Code by a Member State which is part of the Schengen area at its border with a European territory for whose external relations another Member State is responsible and which territory is not part of the Schengen area, independent of any dispute between the Member States concerned.

In addition, if a European territory for whose external relations a Member State is responsible is not part of the customs area of the European Union, a Member State which is part of the customs area also needs to carry out customs checks at the border with that territory.

Checks carried out in accordance with the above provisions are in line with the treaties.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009283/13
aan de Commissie
Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL)
(1 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Discriminatie van Europese consumenten door ondernemingen die nationale registratienummers vereisen

Kortgeleden ontving ik een klacht van een Nederlands staatsburger die een deel van het jaar doorbrengt in zijn zomerhuisje in Zweden. De periode die hij elk jaar in Zweden verblijft is niet lang genoeg om zich te kunnen registreren en een Zweeds persoonlijk identificatienummer te ontvangen. Dit levert geen problemen op bij zijn contacten met de Zweedse autoriteiten, maar een aantal ondernemingen in Zweden verlangen een dergelijk identificatienummer voordat zij bereid zijn hun diensten te verlenen. Dit geldt bijvoorbeeld voor het openen van een bankrekening, het nemen van een mobieletelefoonabonnement of het huren van dvd's. Indien nodig kan ik de Commissie nadere informatie verstrekken over de betreffende ondernemingen en hun praktijken.

1. Deze ondernemingen verlangen van burgers van de EU dat zij beschikken over een persoonlijk identificatienummer van een lidstaat waar zij een beperkt aantal weken verblijven, voordat ze bereid zijn hun diensten te verlenen. Is de Commissie het ermee eens dat dit ingaat tegen de beginselen van de interne markt en het burgerschap van de EU, in het bijzonder tegen het recht op non-discriminatie?

2. Zo nee, waarom niet? Zo ja, welke maatregelen wil de Commissie dan nemen om deze praktijken tegen te gaan?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(11 september 2013)

De Commissie heeft onlangs een aantal klachten ontvangen van burgers van de Unie die tijdelijk als zelfstandige, werknemer, student of gepensioneerde in Zweden verblijven, en van wie het verzoek om registratie in het Zweedse bevolkingsregister door de Zweedse autoriteiten is afgewezen.

Volgens de Zweedse wet inzake het bevolkingsregister kan een persoon die minder dan een jaar in Zweden verblijft, niet in het Zweedse bevolkingsregister worden geregistreerd. Deze personen mag bijgevolg geen Zweeds persoonlijk identificatienummer (PIN) worden toegekend. Zij mogen echter wel een coördinatienummer krijgen.

De personen die het recht op een PIN wordt ontzegd, ervaren uiteenlopende problemen in verband met bepaalde administratieve formaliteiten in Zweden en met de toegang tot huisvesting en andere basisdiensten (zoals scholen, taalcursussen en vervoer). Ondernemingen zouden wegens het ontbreken van een PIN ook de toegang hebben geweigerd tot allerhande diensten zoals de opening van een bankrekening, het sluiten van een telefoon- of internetabonnement en het huren van dvd's. In de klachten wordt gesteld dat een coördinatienummer of andere identificatiemiddelen zelden worden aanvaard voor de beschreven doeleinden.

De verenigbaarheid van de Zweedse wetgeving en/of praktijk met het EU-recht, in het bijzonder met de regels betreffende het vrije verkeer van personen en diensten, moet nader worden onderzocht. Om de situatie in haar geheel te kunnen beoordelen, is meer informatie nodig. De Commissie is voornemens contact op te nemen met de Zweedse autoriteiten. In het kader daarvan gaat de Commissie in op het aanbod van het geachte Parlementslid en vraagt zij het de informatie over de betrokken ondernemingen en hun praktijken te bezorgen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009283/13
to the Commission
Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Discrimination against European consumers by companies requiring national registration numbers

Recently, I received a complaint from a Dutch citizen who spends part of the year in his cottage in Sweden. The time he spends in Sweden each year is not long enough for him to register and receive a Swedish personal identification number. This does not pose any problems as far as his contacts with the Swedish authorities are concerned, but a number of companies in Sweden require such a number before they are willing to offer their services. This applies, for example, to opening a bank account, obtaining a mobile phone contract or renting DVDs. I can provide the Commission with more detailed information on the companies concerned and their practices if necessary.

1. These companies require EU citizens to have a personal identification number for a Member State in which they spend a limited number of weeks in order to gain access to certain services. Does the Commission agree that this runs counter to the principles of the internal market and of EU citizenship, in particular the right not to be discriminated against?

2. If not, why not? If so, what action does the Commission plan to take to combat these practices?

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

The Commission has recently received a number of complaints from Union citizens temporarily residing in Sweden as self-employed, workers, students or retired and whose requests for registration in the Swedish population registry have been rejected by the Swedish authorities.

According to the Swedish Registration Act, a person residing in Sweden for less than one year cannot be registered in the Swedish population registry. These persons may therefore not be granted a Swedish personal identification number (PIN). They may, however, be granted a coordination number.

The complaints allege various difficulties, as a result of being denied the right to be granted a PIN, in completing certain administrative formalities in Sweden and in accessing to housing or other basic services (such as schools, language courses, transport). Access to various services, such as the opening of a bank account, making a telephone or Internet subscription, renting DVDs, etc. have allegedly also been refused by companies in the absence of a PIN. The complaints allege that a coordination number or other forms of identification are rarely accepted for the purposes described.

The compatibility of Swedish law and/or practice with EC law, in particular with the rules on free movement of persons and services, needs to be further verified. To assess the situation in full, more information is necessary. The Commission intends to contact the Swedish authorities. In that context, the Commission would appreciate to receive the information on the companies concerned and their practices as offered by the Honourable Member.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009284/13
an die Kommission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(1. August 2013)

Betrifft: TTIP-Verhandlungen

Zahlreiche Organisationen aus den Bereichen Landwirtschaft, Umweltschutz, Entwicklungs- und Handelspolitik kritisieren die geplante „Transatlantische Handels- und Investitionspartnerschaft" (TTIP) zwischen der EU und den USA. Mit der geplanten Marktöffnung für Produkte der amerikanischen Agrarindustrie sind laut deren Kritik viele Errungenschaften des europäischen Verbraucherschutzes in Gefahr. So drohen z. B. Klonfleisch, Hormonmilch, Chlorhühnchen und noch mehr Gentechniklebensmittel auf den Tellern zu landen. Dazu ergeben sich folgende Fragen:

1. Es wird unter anderem die Geheimhaltung und Intransparenz der Verhandlungen kritisiert. In welchem Rahmen finden die Verhandlungen schlussendlich statt?

2. Fallen bei dieser Verhandlungsstrategie so nicht gesellschaftliche Interessen unter den Tisch, während sich Wirtschaftsinteressen großer Konzerne durchsetzen könnten?

3. Kritisiert wird auch die Anerkennung der niedrigen amerikanischen Lebensmittelstandards in Europa durch dieses Abkommen. Wie sieht die Kommission die Befürchtungen der Konsumenten, für die viel auf dem Spiel steht?

4. Setzt dieses Vorgehen nicht die bäuerliche und qualitätsorientierte Landwirtschaft in Europa massiv unter Druck?

5. Wie will die Kommission unsere sozialen und ökologischen Standards in Europa in Zukunft schützen und weiterentwickeln?

6. Befürchtungen werden laut, dass mit TTIP das Vorsorge- und das Verursacherprinzip im Klima- und Umweltschutz und dadurch auch im Arbeitsschutz unterlaufen werden könnten. Wie beurteilt das die Kommission?

7. Wird durch das TTIP-Abkommen versucht, die europäische Chemikalien-, Umwelt- und Energiegesetzgebung zu umgehen? Und wie wird die gesamte Umweltbewegung in Europa darauf reagieren? Was denkt die Kommission darüber?

8. Stimmt es, dass im TTIP-Abkommen auch Sonderklagerechte für Konzerne geplant sind?

9. Viele Konzerne freuen sich schon auf das Investitionskapitel des geplanten Vertrags. Deutschland und die EU wollen angeblich Konzernen wie Chevron Sonderrechte geben, mit denen diese dann vor geheimen Schiedsgerichten gegen gemeinwohlorientierte Politik klagen können. Stimmt das?

10. Wenn ja, wie lässt sich dies mit elementaren Grundsätzen von Demokratie und Rechtsstaatlichkeit vereinbaren?

Antwort von Herrn De Gucht im Namen der Kommission
(26. September 2013)

Der Kommission sind die von dem Herrn Abgeordneten geäußerten Bedenken bekannt. Damit die EU erfolgreich handeln und ihre Ziele erreichen kann, ist ein gewisses Maß an Vertraulichkeit bei den Verhandlungen erforderlich. Die Kommission bleibt in ständigem Kontakt mit dem Europäischen Parlament, den Mitgliedstaaten, der Zivilgesellschaft und der breiten Öffentlichkeit. Bei Abschluss wird das Abkommen wie alle internationalen Abkommen mit den Grundsätzen der Rechtsstaatlichkeit vereinbar sein und es muss vom Europäischen Parlament ratifiziert werden. Somit unterliegt das Abkommen weiterhin vollkommen der demokratischen Kontrolle durch das Parlament.

Oberste Priorität aller Handels- und Investitionsverhandlungen der EU ist es, für die Gesellschaft, die Bürger und die Unternehmen nachhaltige Vorteile zu erzielen. Dies gilt folglich auch für die TTIP-Verhandlungen: Inländische Standards zum Schutz von Umwelt und Privatsphäre und in den Bereichen Sicherheit oder Gesundheit sowie Verbraucherschutzmaßnahmen werden und dürfen nicht zugunsten von Handel und Investitionen aufgeweicht werden. Von den Verhandlungen geht keinerlei Gefahr einer gesundheitlichen Beeinträchtigung der europäischen Verbraucher aus. Grundlegende Rechtsvorschriften zum Verbraucherschutz stehen nicht zur Debatte. Ferner beachtet die Kommission genau die Besonderheiten der Agrarmärkte der EU und behandelt sensible Waren gesondert. Das Vorsorgeprinzip und das Verursacherprinzip, die im AEUV niedergelegt sind, werden uneingeschränkt berücksichtigt.

Bei Handels- und Investitionsverhandlungen wie den TTIP-Verhandlungen wird das Regelungsrecht stets vollständig gewahrt. Bezüglich des Investitionsschutzes wird besonderes Augenmerk darauf gelegt, dass materielle Normen eindeutig so abgefasst sind, dass Rechtsvorschriften im öffentlichen Interesse jederzeit beibehalten oder verabschiedet werden können.

Die Kommission verweist den Herrn Abgeordneten auf die Beantwortung der Anfragen 2504-6958/13 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009284/13
to the Commission
Franz Obermayr (NI)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations

A host of agricultural, environmental, development and trade organisations are critical of the planned TTIP between the EU and the US, claiming that the projected opening-up of markets to US agro-industry products will jeopardise much of what has been achieved in terms of EU consumer protection. For instance, there is a risk that cloned meat, hormone-containing milk, chlorine-washed chicken and even more genetically engineered foods will be served up. The following questions arise:

1. Criticism is directed *inter alia* at the fact that the negotiations are being held in secret and are not transparent. Within what forum are the negotiations taking place?

2. Is this negotiating strategy not ignoring society's interests, while large concerns' financial interests might be gaining the upper hand?

3. Criticism is also directed at the fact that, through the agreement, the US' low food standards would be recognised in the EU. What is the Commission's view of the fears of consumers, for whom much is at stake?

4. Does this not put high-quality small-scale farming in the EU under severe pressure?

5. How does the Commission intend to safeguard and expand the EU's social and environmental standards in future?

6. Fears are being voiced that as regards climate change and protecting the environment, and consequently industrial health and safety standards too, the TTIP might undermine the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle. How does the Commission view this?

7. Is an attempt being made, via the TTIP agreement, to circumvent EU chemicals, environment and energy legislation? How will the entire environmental movement in the EU react to this? What are the Commission's thoughts on this?

8. Is it true that a special entitlement for concerns to bring actions is also planned to be included in the TTIP agreement?

9. Many concerns are already looking forward to the investment chapter of the planned agreement. Germany and the EU are allegedly seeking to grant concerns such as Chevron special rights which they would be able to exercise to bring actions, before secret courts of arbitration, against policies which were in the public interest? Is that true?

10. If it is, how can this be compatible with elementary principles of democracy and the rule of law?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the concerns raised by the Honourable Member. A certain level of confidentiality is needed in the negotiations for the EU to succeed and reach its objectives. The Commission will remain in regular contact with the European Parliament, Member States, civil society and the public at large. The agreement, when concluded, will, like all international agreements, comply with the rule of law and have to be ratified by the European Parliament. It will thus remain entirely subject to the democratic scrutiny of the Parliament.

All EU trade and investment negotiations are conducted with the overarching aim of bringing benefits to our societies, citizens and companies in a sustainable way. The same therefore applies to the TTIP negotiations: domestic environmental, privacy, safety or health standards, and policies to protect consumers cannot and will not be lowered to promote trade and investment. The negotiations would not be about compromising the health of European consumers. Basic legislation protecting consumers will not be up for negotiation. Moreover, the Commission will carefully take into account the specifics of EU agricultural markets and special treatment will be provided for sensitive products. The precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle, which are enshrined in the TFEU, will be fully respected.

The right to regulate will always be fully preserved in EU trade and investment agreements, including in the TTIP. As for investment protection, due consideration is given to the way substantive standards are drafted to make it clear that regulatory measures in the public interest can always be maintained or adopted.

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answers to questions 2504- 6958/13 ([1]).

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009285/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(1 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Αμίαντος στο δίκτυο ύδρευσης του Αμπελώνα, Δήμου Τυρνάβου του Νομού Λάρισας

Αντιμέτωποι με διαρκή έκθεση σε αμίαντο βρίσκονται οι εργαζόμενοι της Δημοτικής Επιχείρησης Ύδρευσης Αποχέτευσης Τυρνάβου, αλλά και οι πολίτες του Αμπελώνα του Δήμου Τυρνάβου του Νομού Λάρισας, εξαιτίας του αμιαντούχου δικτύου ύδρευσης της περιοχής, το οποίο χρήζει επισκευών διαρκώς. Η κατάσταση αυτή έχει προκαλέσει μεγάλη ανησυχία στην τοπική κοινωνία ως προς την δημόσια υγεία.

Με δεδομένα ότι:

— το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο στο ψήφισμά του «σχετικά με τις απειλές κατά της υγείας στον χώρο εργασίας λόγω αμίαντου και τις προοπτικές πλήρους εξάλειψης του υπάρχοντος αμίαντου» (P7_TA(2013)0093), μεταξύ άλλων, «καταδικάζει την έλλειψη πληροφοριών εκ μέρους πολλών κρατών μελών που δεν επιτρέπει μια αξιόπιστη πρόβλεψη για τη θνησιμότητα λόγω μεσοθηλιώματος στην Ευρώπη, ενώ, σύμφωνα με την Παγκόσμια Οργάνωση Υγείας (ΠΟΥ), μόνο στην ΕΕ, ο αριθμός των κρουσμάτων ασθενειών που σχετίζονται με τον αμίαντο κυμαίνεται μεταξύ 20 000 και 30 000 ετησίως και περισσότεροι από 300 000 πολίτες αναμένεται ότι θα πεθάνουν από μεσοθηλίωμα έως το 2030 στην ΕΕ» και «καλεί τα κράτη μέλη να προχωρήσουν στη σταδιακή κατάργηση του αμίαντου το συντομότερο δυνατό» και

— η Δημοτική Επιχείρηση Ύδρευσης Αποχέτευσης Τυρνάβου έχει εκπονήσει μελέτες αντικατάστασης των σωληνώσεων αμιάντου,

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Έχει υποβληθεί αίτημα χρηματοδότησης από ευρωπαϊκά κονδύλια, για την αντικατάσταση των δικτύων και την απομάκρυνση των σωληνώσεων αμιάντου, από τις αρμόδιες αρχές; Αν όχι, υπάρχει δυνατότητα χρηματοδότησης του εν λόγω προγράμματος στο πλαίσιο του τρέχοντος ΕΣΠΑ;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(5 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Σύμφωνα με τους κανονισμούς για τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία, προβλέπεται βοήθεια για την εκτέλεση των αρμοδιοτήτων των κρατών μελών και της Επιτροπής. Βάσει της αρχής της επιμερισμένης διαχείρισης, ο σχεδιασμός, η προετοιμασία, η υλοποίηση, η παρακολούθηση, ο έλεγχος και η αξιολόγηση των συγχρηματοδοτούμενων παρεμβάσεων στο πλαίσιο των προγραμμάτων είναι αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών αρχών, στο πλέον κατάλληλο εδαφικό επίπεδο και ανάλογα με το θεσμικό σύστημα κάθε κράτους μέλους.

Η Επιτροπή δεν μπορεί να παρέμβει στην επιλογή των έργων (εκτός από πολύ μεγάλα έργα και έργα συγχρηματοδοτούμενα από το Ταμείο Συνοχής για την περίοδο 2000-2006), διότι αυτό είναι αποκλειστική αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών διαχειριστικών αρχών, υπό την προϋπόθεση ότι οι επιλογές τους είναι σύμφωνες με τα έγγραφα προγραμματισμού που έχουν εγκριθεί ύστερα από διαβούλευση με την Επιτροπή και υπό τον όρο ότι συμμορφώνονται με την κείμενη νομοθεσία.

Συνεπώς, η Επιτροπή συνιστά στον κ. βουλευτή να έρθει σε επαφή με την ενδιάμεση διαχειριστική αρχή της περιφέρειας της Θεσσαλίας, που είναι η αρμόδια αρχή για την επιλογή και την παρακολούθηση των έργων σύμφωνα με τη στρατηγική και τους στόχους του προγράμματος «Θεσσαλίας-Στερεάς Ελλάδας-Ηπείρου» 2007-2013:

Περιφέρεια Θεσσαλίας-Ενδιάμεση Διαχειριστική Αρχή
Οδός Σωκράτους 111, 413 36 Λάρισα
Τηλ: 2413 505100
Φαξ: 2410287408
Ηλ. ταχυδρομείο: thessalia@mou.gr

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009285/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Asbestos in the water supply of Ambelona in the municipality of Tyrnavos in Larissa Prefecture

Tyrnavos Municipal Water Supply and Sewerage Company employees and also citizens of Ambelona in the Municipality of Tyrnavos in Larissa Prefecture are constantly exposed to asbestos because of the local water supply pipes which contain asbestos and need constant repairs. This situation has caused great concern about public health among the local community.

Given that:

— The European Parliament in its resolution on asbestos-related occupational health threats and prospects for abolishing all existing asbestos (P7_TA (2013) 0093) in particular: 'Deplores the lack of information from several Member States that impedes a reliable prediction of mesothelioma mortality in Europe, when according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) between 20 000 and 30 000 cases of asbestos-related diseases are recorded every year in the EU alone and more than 300 000 citizens are expected to die from mesothelioma by 2030 in the EU' and 'Calls on the Member States to move forward with the phasing-out of asbestos in the shortest possible timeframe' and

— The Tyrnavos Municipal Water Supply and Sewage Company has drawn up studies to replace the asbestos pipes,

Will the Commission say:

— Has any application for EU funding been made by the relevant authorities to replace the water supply networks and remove the asbestos pipes? If not, is there any possibility of funding this programme under the current NSRF?

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

In accordance with the Structural Funds Regulations, assistance is provided in view of the respective responsibilities of the Member States and the Commission. On the basis of the shared management principle, the design, preparation, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation of co-funded interventions under the programmes is the responsibility of the national authorities, at the most appropriate territorial level and according to the institutional system of each Member State.

The Commission may not intervene in the selection of the projects (except for major projects and projects co-financed under the 2000-2006 Cohesion Fund), as this comes under the exclusive competence of the national managing authorities, provided that their choices are in line with the programming documents adopted in consultation with the Commission, and that they comply with current legislation.

Therefore, the Commission suggests the Honourable Member to contact the intermediate managing authority of Thessaly, which is the competent authority for the selection and monitoring of projects in line with the strategy and objectives of the 'Continental Greece-Thessaly- Epirus' 2007-2013 programme:

Intermediate managing authority of Thessaly
111 Sokratous str., 413 36 Larissa
Tel: 2413 505100
Fax:2410287408
email: thessalia@mou.gr

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009286/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(1 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανεξέλεγκτη απόρριψη αποβλήτων και κίνδυνος περιβαλλοντικής υποβάθμισης της Λίμνης Τριχωνίδας (περιοχή Natura 2000 GR 2310009)

Έντονη ανησυχία σε κατοίκους και φορείς της ευρύτερης περιοχής της Λίμνης Τριχωνίδας του Νομού Αιτωλοακαρνανίας έχουν προκαλέσει οι συνεχιζόμενες ανεξέλεγκτες απορρίψεις στερεών και υγρών αποβλήτων στις παρόχθιες ζώνες και τα ύδατα της Λίμνης Τριχωνίδας. Όπως καταγγέλλεται, δεκάδες σημεία της λίμνης έχουν μετατραπεί σε παράνομες χωματερές και ανεπεξέργαστα υγρά απόβλητα, από ελαιοτριβεία και άλλες μεταποιητικές μονάδες της περιοχής, διατίθενται απευθείας στη λίμνη ή μέσω των χειμάρρων καταλήγουν σε αυτήν.

Με δεδομένο ότι η Λίμνη Τριχωνίδα:

— είναι η μεγαλύτερη σε έκταση φυσική λίμνη στην Ελλάδα με μεγάλη οικολογική, αισθητική και παραγωγική αξία,

— έχει πλούσια βιοποικιλότητα που περιλαμβάνει 20 είδη ψαριών και περισσότερα από 200 είδη πτηνών, ορισμένα από αυτά εξαιρετικά σπάνια,

— ως ενιαίο οικοσύστημα με τη Λίμνη Λυσιμαχεία έχει ενταχθεί στο ευρωπαϊκό οικολογικό δίκτυο Natura 2000 (GR 2310009) ως Ειδική Ζώνη Διατήρησης για την ορνιθοπανίδα και οικότοπος προτεραιότητας για την ΕΕ (οδηγία 92/43/ΕΚ),

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Είναι σε γνώση της ο κίνδυνος της περιβαλλοντικής υποβάθμισης της εν λόγω λίμνης; Με ποιο τρόπο σκοπεύει να παρέμβει για την εφαρμογή του κοινοτικού δικαίου ως προς την προστασία της Λίμνης Τριχωνίδας από την καθημερινή περιβαλλοντική υποβάθμιση;

— Γνωρίζει εάν οι χώροι ανεξέλεγκτης απόθεσης απορριμμάτων στις παρόχθιες ζώνες της Λίμνης Τριχωνίδας περιλαμβάνονται στη λίστα με τους Χώρους Ανεξέλεγκτης Διάθεσης Αποβλήτων (ΧΑΔΑ), για τους οποίους έχει παραπεμφθεί η Ελλάδα στο Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο;

— Έχει εγκριθεί το σχέδιο διαχείρισης λεκάνης απορροής ποταμών στο οποίο εντάσσεται η Λίμνη Τριχωνίδα; Αν ναι, καταγράφεται σε αυτό η παραπάνω κατάσταση;

— Υπάρχουν κοινοτικοί πόροι που θα μπορούσαν να αξιοποιηθούν από τις αρμόδιες ελληνικές αρχές για την προστασία και αξιοποίηση της λίμνης και, αν ναι, έχουν γίνει οι αναγκαίες ενέργειες ώστε να απορροφηθούν αυτοί οι πόροι και σε ποιο βαθμό;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για τη συγκεκριμένη κατάσταση που περιγράφεται όσον αφορά τη λίμνη Τριχωνίδα.

Η διάθεση μεγάλου μέρους οικιακών αποβλήτων που παράγονται στην Ελλάδα παραμένει ανεξέλεγκτη ή παράνομη. Αυτός είναι ο λόγος για τον οποίον, τον Φεβρουάριο του 2013, η Επιτροπή αποφάσισε να αναπέμψει την υφιστάμενη υπόθεση παράβασης (2001/2273) στο Δικαστήριο της ΕΕ και να ζητήσει την επιβολή οικονομικών κυρώσεων. Η εν λόγω υπόθεση αφορά όλους τους παράνομους χώρους υγειονομικής ταφής απορριμμάτων στην Ελλάδα.

Η Ελλάδα υπέβαλε στην Επιτροπή εκθέσεις σχετικά με 8 μόνο από τα 14 σχέδια διαχείρισης λεκανών απορροής ποταμών (ΣΔΛΑΠ). Τα σχέδια αυτά δεν έχουν ακόμη εκτιμηθεί. Το ΣΔΛΑΠ για τη λεκάνη απορροής στην οποία βρίσκεται η Τριχωνίδα δεν περιλαμβάνεται σε αυτά που έχει εγκρίνει μέχρι τώρα η Ελλάδα. Το 2011, η Επιτροπή προσέφυγε κατά της Ελλάδας στο Δικαστήριο της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για μη συμμόρφωση με τη νομοθεσία της ΕΕ για τα ύδατα και για μη υποβολή όλων των ΣΔΛΑΠ της. Το Δικαστήριο καταδίκασε την Ελλάδα τον Απρίλιο του 2012.

Ο κανονισμοί για τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία ([1]) προβλέπουν ότι ο σχεδιασμός, η προετοιμασία, η υλοποίηση, η παρακολούθηση, ο έλεγχος και η αξιολόγηση των συγχρηματοδοτούμενων παρεμβάσεων στο πλαίσιο επιχειρησιακών προγραμμάτων αποτελούν αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών αρχών, στο καταλληλότερο εδαφικό επίπεδο και σύμφωνα με το θεσμικό σύστημα κάθε κράτους μέλους. Με εξαίρεση τα μεγάλα έργα ([2]), οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής δεν ενημερώνονται σχετικά με μεμονωμένα έργα που λαμβάνουν στήριξη από τα διαρθρωτικά ταμεία.

Ωστόσο, σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες που υπέβαλαν οι ελληνικές αρχές, έργο σχετικό με τα λύματα των παράκτιων κοινοτήτων της Τριχωνίδας βρίσκεται υπό εξέταση στο πλαίσιο του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Περιβάλλον και αειφόρος ανάπτυξη 2007-2013». Για περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες, παραπέμπουμε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στη διαχειριστική αρχή του προγράμματος ([3]).

([1]) Κανονισμός 1083/2006, ΕΕ L 210 της 31.7.2006.

([2]) Δηλ. σχέδια με ελάχιστο προϋπολογισμό 50 000 000 ευρώ.

([3]) Διαχειριστική Αρχή του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Περιβάλλον και αειφόρος ανάπτυξη»
Διεύθυνση: Αεροπόρου Παπαναστασίου 34, GR-11527 Αθήνα.
Τηλ.: 00302132142200, Φαξ: 210 6920437
Ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: grammateia-epperaa@mou.gr

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009286/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Uncontrolled dumping of waste and threat of environmental degradation of Lake Trichonida (Natura 2000 site GR 2310009)

Residents and organisations in the Lake Trichonida area in Aitoloakarnania Prefecture are extremely concerned about the ongoing uncontrolled dumping of solid and liquid waste along the shores and in the waters of Lake Trichonida. They complain that dozens of sites on the lake have become illegal dumps and that untreated effluents from olive mills and other manufacturing plants in the region are being discharged directly into the lake or into the streams that drain into it.

Given that Lake Trichonida:

— Is the largest natural lake in Greece and is of great ecological, aesthetic and productive value;

— Has a rich biodiversity including 20 species of fish and over 200 species of bird, some of them extremely rare;

— As a single ecosystem with Lake Lysimachia, forms part of the European environmental network Natura 2000 (GR 2310009) as a Special Area of Conservation for birds and a priority habitat for the EU (Directive 92/43/EC);

Will the Commission say:

— Is it aware of the risk of environmental degradation of the Lake? How does it intend to intervene to ensure the application of Community law so as to protect Lake Trichonida from daily environmental degradation?

— Is it aware that the illegal dumping sites on the shores of Lake Trichonida are included in the list of illegal landfills in respect of which Greece was referred to the European Court?

— Has the River Basin Management Plan been approved for the river basin to which Lake Trichonida belongs? If so, does this plan record the above situation?

— Are there any Community funds that could be used by the competent Greek authorities for the protection and utilisation of the lake? If so, have the necessary steps been taken to ensure the take-up of these funds and to what extent?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

The Commission is not aware of the specific situation described with regard to Trichonida Lake.

The disposal of a large part of household waste produced in Greece remains uncontrolled or illegal. The Commission therefore decided in February 2013 to refer the existing infringement case (2001/2273) back to the EU Court of Justice and seek financial sanctions. This case concerns all illegal landfills operating in the country.

Greece has only reported to the Commission 8 out of 14 River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), and they have not yet been assessed. The RBMP for the river basin to which Lake Trichonida belongs is not among those which have been adopted by Greece so far. In 2011, the Commission took Greece to the European Union Court of Justice over failure to comply with EU water legislation and submit all of its River Basin Management Plans. The Court condemned Greece on April 2012.

The Structural Funds Regulations ([1]) provide that the design, preparation, implementation, monitoring, audit and evaluation of co-funded interventions under operational programmes is the responsibility of national authorities, at the most appropriate territorial level and according to the institutional system of each Member State. With the exception of major projects ([2]), the Commission services are not informed on individual projects supported by the Structural Funds.

([1]) Regulation 1083/2006, OJ L 210, 31.7.2006.
([2]) i.e. projects of EUR 50.000.000 and above.

However, according to the information received from the Greek authorities, a project related to the waste water of the coastal municipalities surrounding Trichonida is being considered under the 'Operational Programme Environment and Sustainable Development 2007-2013'. For further details the Honourable Member could contact the Managing authority of the Programme ([3]).

([3]) Managing Authority of Operational Programme Environment and Sustainable Development
Address: Aeroporou Papanastasiou 34, GR — 115 27 Athens.
Tel : 00302132142200 , Fax: 210 6920437
Email: grammateia-epperaa@mou.gr

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite E-009287/13
à la Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(1er août 2013)

Objet: Rôle de la Commission européenne dans la régulation de la concurrence

Les fonctionnaires de la DG Concurrence de la Commission européenne ont récemment perquisitionné trois grands opérateurs de télécommunications européens: Orange, Deutsche Telekom et Telefonica. Ces derniers faisaient l'objet d'une enquête à la suite d'une plainte de la société américaine Cogent les accusant de ne pas écouler leur trafic gratuitement, comme le prévoient les accords de «peering».

Au-delà du fait que les trois opérateurs contestent les accusations de Cogent, on remarque que ce n'est pas la première fois que la Commission européenne enquête auprès de sociétés européennes, notamment Orange, sur des questions de concurrence les opposant à des entreprises américaines, et ce dans un laps de temps relativement réduit. Il est évidemment du ressort de la Commission européenne de veiller au maintien de pratiques concurrentielles saines aussi bien au sein de l'Union que vis-à-vis des entreprises étrangères; cependant, ce rôle d'autorité de la concurrence ne doit pas être surinterprété, au risque de pénaliser nos entreprises européennes et d'entrer en contradiction avec l'objectif fixé par la Commission elle-même de favoriser l'émergence de champions industriels européens.

1. La concentration de la Commission européenne sur l'antitrust dans sa politique économique, notamment dans le secteur des télécoms, ne risque-t-elle pas de provoquer l'effet inverse à celui voulu, c'est-à-dire une multiplication de fusions entre opérateurs qui ne sauraient plus faire face tout seuls à la concurrence?

2. Dans un contexte où les opérateurs sont obligés d'investir massivement dans de nouvelles technologies afin de maintenir leur rang mondial, et où, en parallèle, leurs ressources diminuent (baisse du prix du «roaming», concurrence accrue…), la Commission a-t-elle prévu des mesures qui permettraient de stimuler ces investissements, dont les consommateurs européens seraient les premiers bénéficiaires?

Réponse donnée par M. Almunia au nom de la Commission
(23 octobre 2013)

Les règles de concurrence de l'UE concourent avec la réglementation spécifique au secteur des télécommunications à offrir des services innovants et d'un coût abordable aux consommateurs européens. La politique de concurrence de l'UE n'entrave pas l'émergence ni la croissance d'entreprises européennes capables d'affronter la compétition mondiale. Au contraire, l'application des règles de l'UE en la matière contribue à faire en sorte que l'industrie européenne soit bien armée pour faire face à la concurrence de plus en plus rude sur les marchés mondiaux. Il convient de rappeler que la réussite des entreprises sur le plan international s'explique très souvent par leur aptitude à satisfaire une demande complexe sur des marchés internes compétitifs. C'est pourquoi la politique de concurrence de l'UE est cruciale pour une politique de compétitivité efficace.

La Commission ne peut pas se prononcer sur des affaires en cours, mais il convient de préciser qu'elle a procédé à cette inspection d'office, et non à la suite d'une plainte.

L'énorme potentiel de croissance et de création d'emplois de l'économie numérique n'est pas pleinement exploité dans l'UE parce que nous ne disposons pas encore d'un véritable marché unique des télécommunications. L'intégration du marché créera les incitations nécessaires pour innover et rendre le marché plus dynamique et plus compétitif, ce qui accélérera probablement les investissements dans l'internet à haut débit, améliorera le choix offert au consommateur et la qualité et consolidera la position concurrentielle de l'Europe sur le marché mondial du numérique.

Le Conseil européen de printemps a appelé à des mesures visant à créer un véritable marché unique des télécommunications. À la suite de cet appel, la Commission vient d'adopter un ensemble de mesures législatives visant à transposer dans le secteur des télécommunications deux principes essentiels: la liberté de fournir des services dans toute l'UE et celle d'en acquérir n'importe où dans l'Union.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009287/13
to the Commission
Constance Le Grip (PPE)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Commission's role as competition regulator

Officials from the Commission's DG Competition recently raided the offices of three major European telecoms operators, namely Orange, Deutsche Telekom and Telefonica. The raids were part of an investigation launched into the companies following a complaint from US firm Cogent accusing them of not carrying traffic free of charge, as envisaged in 'peering' agreements.

While all three operators deny the allegations made by Cogent, it is worth noting that this is not the first time that the Commission has investigated European companies, particularly Orange, in connection with competition-related disputes with US businesses, and that it last did so only quite recently. Of course, it is part of the Commission's job to safeguard fair competition within the Union and vis-à-vis non-EU firms. However, the Commission must be wary of overreaching in its role as the competition authority, as this might harm European companies and jeopardise its efforts to achieve its own goal of encouraging the emergence of European industrial champions.

1. Is there not a danger that the Commission's focus on anti-trust issues in its economic policy, particularly with regard to the telecoms sector, will have the opposite effect to that intended, i.e. a proliferation of mergers among operators no longer able to compete on their own?

2. Given that operators are having to invest heavily in new technologies to stay ahead in the global market, and that at the same time they are seeing their revenues diminish (owing to lower roaming fees, greater competition, etc.), does the Commission plan to take measures to encourage such investment, which would benefit European consumers first and foremost?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(23 October 2013)

The EU competition rules work side by side with regulation specific to the telecoms sector to bring innovative, affordable services to European consumers. EU competition policy does not stand in the way of the emergence and growth of European companies capable of competing on the world market. On the contrary, enforcing the EU competition rules helps to ensure that European industry is in good shape to take on the increasingly fierce competition that characterises global markets. It should be recalled that very often companies' international success has been due to their ability to satisfy sophisticated demand on competitive home markets. EU competition policy is therefore a central element of an effective competitiveness policy.

The Commission cannot comment on ongoing cases, but it is necessary to point out that this inspection arose from *ex officio* action by the Commission and not as the result of a complaint.

The enormous potential of the digital economy as a source of growth and job creation is not fully exploited in the EU because we still lack a true single market for telecoms. Market integration will create the right incentives to innovate and render the market more dynamic and competitive. This in turn is likely to fuel investments in high-speed Internet, increase consumer choice and quality and reinforce Europe's global competitive position in the digital economy.

The Spring European Council called for measures to establish a genuine single market for telecoms. Following that call, the Commission has just adopted a set of legislative measures aiming at reflecting in the telecom sector two key principles of the Treaty: the freedom to provide services anywhere in the EU and the freedom to buy services from anywhere in the EU.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009289/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1º agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Bollino rosso sui prodotti «made in Italy» commercializzati nel Regno Unito

Per contrastare l'aumento del tasso di obesità, il 19 giugno scorso il governo del Regno Unito ha introdotto un codice a colori sulle etichette dei prodotti alimentari: bollino verde per gli alimenti sani, giallo per gli intermedi e rosso per quelli contenenti alte percentuali di grassi e zuccheri. Il sistema prevede una classifica in base alle percentuali calcolate sui singoli nutrienti dei prodotti, con il risultato che anche gli ingredienti essenziali per una qualsiasi dieta, come per esempio il latte e la carne, i formaggi e la marmellata, risultano «insani» per un corretto regime alimentare. L'iniziativa, che entrerà in vigore a partire da settembre e che è stata accolta da tutte le grosse catene di supermercati come Tesco, Sainsbury's e Marks&Spencer, danneggerà in particolare le importazioni di prodotti tipici italiani. Circa il 60 % di essi, tra cui il parmigiano, il prosciutto di Parma, l'olio toscano e altri prodotti della dieta mediterranea venduti sia all'ingrosso sia al dettaglio, risulteranno bollati come prodotti insani.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. è informata dei fatti?

2. Come valuta l'iniziativa del governo del Regno Unito?

3. Ritiene che tale iniziativa contrasti con la politica di qualità promossa dall'Unione per il commercio e la valorizzazione dei prodotti tipici e delle eccellenze alimentari degli Stati membri così come stabilito dal Libro verde del 15 ottobre 2008 sulla qualità dei prodotti agricoli: norme di prodotto, requisiti di produzione e sistemi di qualità (COM(2008)0641)?

4. Ritiene necessaria una revisione del sistema dei bollini in modo da permettere ai cittadini del Regno Unito una giusta informazione sul corretto apporto nutritivo degli alimenti?

5. Intende intervenire a sostegno delle aziende italiane del settore alimentare, la qualità della cui produzione è riconosciuta in tutto il mondo e che saranno penalizzate da tale provvedimento?

6. Come intende rispondere a Federalimentare, la Federazione italiana dell'industria alimentare, e alle altre associazioni di categoria del settore che chiedono un intervento dell'Unione per verificare la legittimità di tale iniziativa?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(4 ottobre 2013)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza del sistema di etichettatura «a semaforo» raccomandato dal governo britannico per i prodotti alimentari.

2. Il regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 relativo alla fornitura di informazioni sugli alimenti ai consumatori ([1]) consente agli operatori del settore alimentare di ricorrere, a determinate condizioni, a forme supplementari di espressione e presentazione della dichiarazione nutrizionale, che diventa obbligatoria a decorrere dal 13 dicembre 2016. Le autorità degli Stati membri possono, in base alle stesse norme, raccomandare l'uso di tali forme supplementari di espressione e presentazione.

3. Il sistema di etichettatura raccomandato non è inteso a valutare la qualità globale del prodotto alimentare in merito ad aspetti quali le caratteristiche organolettiche, bensì ad integrare la dichiarazione nutrizionale obbligatoria con altre modalità di presentazione delle medesime informazioni.

4. Spetterebbe alle autorità britanniche rivedere, ove necessario, il raccomandato sistema di etichettatura supplementare, cui viene fatto ricorso in via facoltativa.

5. A quanto risulta alla Commissione i criteri utilizzati per questo sistema di etichettatura sono gli stessi per tutti i prodotti alimentari, indipendentemente dalla loro origine nazionale. Pertanto il sistema in questione, che resta di natura facoltativa, non penalizza in particolare nessun alimento proveniente da un determinato Stato membro.

([1]) GU L 304 del 22.11.2011, pag. 18.

6. Ai fini della conformità con il suddetto regolamento il sistema raccomandato deve soddisfare i criteri di cui all'articolo 35 del medesimo. In una lettera della DG Imprese e industria della Commissione è stato ricordato alle autorità britanniche che il sistema in questione non deve assumere carattere obbligatorio, né *de jure*, né *de facto*.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009289/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Red label for Italian products sold in the United Kingdom

On 19 June 2013 the British Government, seeking to combat the growing obesity rate, launched a 'traffic-light' labelling system for food products: healthy foods will bear a green label; foods in the 'medium' category are denoted by an amber label; and foods high in fats and sugars will be identified by a red label. The system rates products according to the percentages of nutrients which they contain. Because of that fact, even foods which — whatever one's eating habits — constitute essential ingredients, such as milk, meat, cheese, and jam, are deemed to be 'unhealthy' from the point of view of a proper diet. This scheme, which will enter into force in September and which all the leading supermarket chains, for example Tesco, Sainsbury's, and Marks & Spencer, have agreed to join, will be particularly damaging to imports of typical Italian products, roughly 60% of which, including Parmesan cheese, Parma ham, Tuscan extra-virgin olive oil, and other foods forming part of the Mediterranean diet, will, whether sold wholesale or retail, be classed as 'unhealthy'.

1. Is the Commission aware of the above facts?

2. What does it think about the British Government's initiative?

3. Does it consider the initiative to be at odds with the quality policy advocated by the EU for the purposes of marketing and promoting Member States' premium products and food specialities, as set out in the Green Paper of 15 October 2008 on 'agricultural product quality: product standards, farming requirements and quality schemes' (COM(2008)0641)?

4. Does it believe that the labelling system needs to be revised so as to ensure that British citizens will be accurately informed about the real nutritional value of foods?

5. Will it take steps in support of Italian food industry firms, whose products are world-famous for their quality and which will be penalised under the British scheme?

6. What answer will it give to Federalimentare, the Italian food industry federation, and other food trade associations, which are calling on the EU to ascertain whether the abovementioned initiative is lawful?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the 'traffic light' labelling system for food products recommended by the British Government.

2. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on food information to consumers ([1]) allows under certain conditions for the use by food business operators of additional forms of expression and presentation of the nutrition declaration, which becomes mandatory from 13 December 2016. According to the same rules, Member States authorities may recommend the use of such additional forms of expression and presentation.

3. The recommended labelling scheme does not assess the overall quality of the food product with respect to aspects such as organoleptic properties but complements the mandatory nutrition declaration using additional way of presentation of the same information.

4. If necessary, it would be up to the British authorities to revise the recommended, voluntary, additional labelling scheme.

5. As far as the Commission is aware, the criteria used for this labelling scheme are the same for all foods, independently of their national origin. No food from a specific Member State will be therefore penalised by this scheme, which remains voluntary.

([1]) OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

6. To be in line with the abovementioned Regulation, the recommended labelling scheme has to be in line with the criteria referred to in Article 35 of the regulation. It was also reminded by a letter from the Commission Directorate Enterprise and Industry to the UK authorities that such scheme should not become *de jure* or *de facto* mandatory.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009290/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1º agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Pratiche burocratiche più snelle per i produttori di vino italiani

I produttori vitivinicoli del Veneto della sezione Coldiretti di San Biagio di Callalta, in provincia di Treviso, si sono rivolti all'Unione europea per chiedere la semplificazione delle pratiche doganali per l'esportazione dei vini verso gli altri Stati membri, soprattutto Austria e Germania, principali destinatari della produzione veneta. Il sistema normativo attuale presenta infatti una serie di complessità burocratiche difficili da gestire per le piccole aziende, basti pensare che, dalla produzione dell'uva alla vendita, i produttori si trovano a gestire oltre 70 procedimenti tra compilazioni di documenti e pratiche di autorizzazione, oltre a doversi relazionare con una molteplicità di soggetti istituzionali, dall'Agenzia delle Dogane alle ASL, dall'Ispettorato centrale qualità e repressione frodi alle Camere di Commercio, fino ai laboratori di analisi. Si stima che il peso della burocrazia del vino sottragga circa 100 giornate di lavoro all'anno al tempo passato in vigna e in cantina, favorendo sempre di più l'abbandono delle produzioni e la delocalizzazione del settore.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. è informata dei fatti?

2. Qual è la sua posizione relativamente alla richiesta avanzata dai viticoltori all'Unione?

3. Quali misure intende adottare per ridurre il carico burocratico gravante sul settore e agevolare i produttori veneti senza ridurre l'efficacia delle attività di controllo?

4. Non ritiene che una semplificazione possa favorire anche lo sviluppo del territorio interessato dalla produzione e aumentare la competitività del *made in Italy* nel mercato europeo?

5. Con riferimento al regolamento (CE) n. 436/2009 della Commissione, del 26 maggio 2009, recante modalità di applicazione del regolamento (CE) n. 479/2008 del Consiglio, ritiene che una revisione in ordine alle disposizioni sullo schedario viticolo, sulle dichiarazioni obbligatorie e sulla tenuta dei registri possa contribuire al processo di semplificazione normativa, così come auspicato nella comunicazione della Commissione al Consiglio e al Parlamento europeo intitolata «Verso un settore vitivinicolo europeo sostenibile» (COM(2006)0319)?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(11 settembre 2013)

Nel 2012 e 2013 sono state armonizzate e notevolmente semplificate le diverse normative applicabili al settore proprio per coordinare tutte le procedure di controllo (dogane, sanità e protezione dei consumatori, viticoltura e fiscalità). La Commissione non è a conoscenza degli oltre 70 procedimenti applicati agli operatori del Veneto e desidera richiamare l'attenzione sulle riforme delle pratiche amministrative a carico dei prodotti vitivinicoli, nello specifico sulla fusione delle procedure fiscali e agricole di monitoraggio e controllo dei prodotti, riconosciuta dall'articolo 26 del regolamento (CE) n. 436/2009 del 26 maggio 2009 ([1]).

I servizi della Commissione stanno portando avanti i lavori per facilitare il commercio del vino sul territorio dell'Unione Europea e all'esportazione, per giunta si adoperano per sopprimere tutti gli adempimenti ridondanti o non indispensabili ai controlli di qualità, origine e tracciabilità dei prodotti destinati all'UE e all'esportazione.

Per quanta riguarda l'obbligo di tenuta dei registri, il regolamento (CE) n. 436/2009 è stato ulteriormente semplificato. A tale proposito, la maggior parte degli obblighi ivi previsti riguardano i controlli della denominazione di origine protetta e dell'indicazione geografica protetta, comprese quelle del Veneto.

I servizi della Commissione si adoperano, insieme ai rappresentanti dei produttori e del settore commerciale, a razionalizzare e semplificare al meglio le procedure, in misura accettabile.

([1]) GU L 128 del 27.5.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009290/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Less red tape for Italian wine growers

Veneto wine growers in the Colidiretti district of San Biagio di Callalta in the Province of Treviso have called on the EU to simplify customs procedures for the export of wine to other Member States, in particular Austria and Germany, where much of the wine grown in the Veneto region is sold. The current rules make life extremely complicated for small wine growers, given that anyone wishing to grow and market wine is confronted with more than 70 administrative procedures requiring documents to be drawn up and permits to be applied for and is obliged to deal with a whole range of bodies, including customs authorities, local health authorities, the national quality and anti-fraud office, chambers of commerce and test laboratories. It is estimated that 100 working days a year are spent dealing with this red tape — time that should instead be spent in the vineyard and the winery. As a result, vineyards are closing down and it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep the wine industry going in the area.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. What is its response to the call made by local wine growers?

3. How does it intend to streamline administrative procedures to make life easier for Veneto wine growers, without making the controls on the industry any less effective?

4. Would it not agree that simplifying the rules could help boost development in the region and make Italian wines more competitive on European markets?

5. With reference to Commission Regulation (EC) No 436/2009 of 26 May 2009 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 479/2008, would it not agree that the provisions on the vineyard register, compulsory declarations and the registers to be kept should be revised as part of the simplification process the Commission itself called for in its communication to the Council and Parliament entitled 'Towards a sustainable European wine sector' (COM(2006)0319)?

(Version française)

Réponse donnée par M Cioloş au nom de la Commission
(11 septembre 2013)

Les différentes règlementations applicables à ce secteur ont été harmonisées en 2012/2013 et fortement simplifiées pour coordonner toutes les procédures de contrôles (douane, santé et protection des consommateurs, viticulture et fiscalité). La Commission n'a dans ce contexte pas connaissance de l'existence des 70 procédures administratives appliquées aux opérateurs du Veneto et souhaitent attirer l'attention sur les réformes des formalités applicables aux produits vitivinicoles effectuées, et notamment la fusion des procédures fiscales et agricoles de suivi et de contrôle des produits concernés reconnue à l'article 26 du règlement (CE) n° 436/2009 du 26 mai 2009 ([1]).

Les services de la Commission poursuivent par ailleurs leurs travaux pour faciliter le commerce du vin sur le territoire de l'UE et à l'exportation et supprimer toutes les formalités redondantes ou non indispensables aux contrôles de qualité, d'origine, et de traçabilité des produits dans l'UE et à l'exportation.

Concernant les obligations de tenue des registres de cave, le règlement (CE) n° 436/2009 a fait l'objet de simplifications. À cet égard la majeure partie des obligations y relative sont liées aux contrôles des appellations d'origine et indications géographiques protégées, y compris pour celles du Veneto.

Les services de la Commission veillent en collaboration avec les représentants des producteurs et du négoce à rationaliser et simplifier au mieux et dans la mesure de l'acceptable les procédures dans ce secteur.

([1]) JO L 128 du 27.5.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009291/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1º agosto 2013)

Oggetto: L'UE in controtendenza rispetto alle politiche protezionistiche dei paesi terzi

Di fronte alla crisi economica internazionale, mentre i paesi terzi hanno reagito imponendo nuove misure protezionistiche o aumentando quelle già esistenti sui prodotti importati dall'estero per difendere le produzioni nazionali, l'Unione europea ha stabilito, in controtendenza, tariffe molto basse sui beni importati ritrovandosi ora con un mercato interno invaso da merci a basso costo cui le imprese non riescono a fare concorrenza.

Sono soprattutto le economie emergenti a penalizzare i prodotti europei: l'India ha stabilito dazi fino al 101 % su autoveicoli, tè, caffè, olio di cocco e birra, e 151 % sugli alcolici; il Brasile ha imposto dazi del 35-40 % sulle importazioni di macchine utensili e ha imposto per tutti i prodotti alimentari una tariffa del 15 % oltre ad aver vietato l'importazione di tutti gli insaccati con maturazione inferiore a 10 mesi e aver adottato una regolamentazione sulle etichettature dei prodotti di origine animale importati che rende praticamente impossibile operare senza un partner locale. Anche la Russia ha imposto tariffe particolarmente elevate su mobili, calzature, abbigliamento, arredamento e ceramiche, mentre gli Stati Uniti mantengono dazi protezionistici, variabili a seconda della classificazione delle merci, su tutti i prodotti importati.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. non ritiene che la linea seguita dall'Unione penalizzi la produzione europea e impedisca la ripresa economica degli Stati membri?

2. Come valuta la mancata corrispondenza tra l'abolizione delle tariffe doganali da parte dell'Europa e l'inasprimento delle misure protezionistiche sui prodotti europei da parte dei paesi terzi?

3. Ritiene che le negoziazioni bilaterali dell'Unione con i paesi terzi siano uno strumento valido affinché i prodotti europei possano beneficiare di migliori condizioni commerciali?

4. Con riferimento all'indagine antidumping avviata dalla Cina sul vino europeo in risposta ai dazi stabiliti dall'Unione sui pannelli solari, quale seguito intende dare alla lettera inviata da Italia, Francia e Spagna al Commissario europeo al Commercio circa un rapido intervento da parte della Commissione sulla questione?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(25 settembre 2013)

L'approccio dell'UE non sta penalizzando i produttori dell'Unione né ostacolando la ripresa economica. L'obiettivo della politica commerciale dell'UE è stimolare la crescita e l'occupazione. Per il momento la domanda esterna è per l'UE la più importante fonte di crescita. Nel lungo termine la ripresa economica dovrà essere consolidata rinsaldando i legami con i nuovi centri della crescita mondiale.

L'UE non elimina autonomamente le tariffe doganali da essa applicate; sta piuttosto sospendendo in modo autonomo le tariffe sulle materie prime, sui beni intermedi e sui componenti non prodotti nell'UE al fine di migliorare la concorrenzialità della nostra industria. Le riduzioni tariffarie operate dall'UE sono il risultato di negoziati che prevedono riduzioni tariffarie reciproche da parte dei paesi partner. L'UE è leader nella lotta internazionale contro il protezionismo. La sua linea offensiva contro il protezionismo all'estero risulterà credibile soltanto se verrà opposta altrettanta resistenza al protezionismo al suo interno.

Il sistema multilaterale di scambi è lo strumento più efficace per servire gli interessi dell'UE, ma i negoziati in tema di accesso al mercato sono ancora in una fase di stallo che difficilmente potrà essere superata nel prossimo futuro. Per il momento i negoziati bilaterali rappresentano pertanto il modo più efficace per compiere progressi. Essi potrebbero determinare un incremento del prodotto interno lordo dell'UE di oltre il 2 %, ossia di 250 miliardi di EUR e un aumento dell'occupazione nell'UE pari ad oltre 2 milioni di posti di lavoro.

La Cina ha il diritto di avviare tali indagini e di applicare disposizioni specifiche, a condizione che siano rispettate le regole dell'Organizzazione mondiale del commercio. La Commissione è in stretto contatto con il settore vitivinicolo dell'UE e con gli Stati membri interessati per offrire tutta l'assistenza necessaria, ha esaminato attentamente l'evolversi delle succitate indagini ed è intervenuta per garantire che la Cina agisca secondo le regole. Ove necessario la Commissione non esita ad intervenire.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009291/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: EU swimming against the protectionist tide

Many third countries have responded to the global economic crisis by introducing new protectionist measures or tightening up existing measures in an effort to shelter their own industries. The EU, in contrast, imposes very low import tariffs, with the result that the internal market is being flooded with goods marketed at prices with which European firms cannot compete.

It is the emerging economies which are taking the most punitive line: India has imposed duties of up to 101% on imported motor vehicles, tea, coffee, coconut oil and beer and 151% on alcoholic beverages, whilst Brazil has introduced duties of between 35 and 40% on machine tools and a tariff of 15% on all food products, in addition to banning imports of all sausages an hams aged for less than 10 months and introducing rules on the labelling of imported animal products which make it virtually impossible for foreign firms to operate in Brazil without a local partner. Russia, meanwhile, has imposed particularly high tariffs on furniture and furnishings, footwear, clothing and ceramics, whilst the United States continues to levy protectionist tariffs on all imported products — the amount varies depending on the type of goods involved.

1. Does the Commission not agree that the EU approach is penalising European manufacturers and hampering economic recovery in the Member States?

2. What view does it take of the contradiction between the removal of customs tariffs by the EU and the introduction by third countries of more stringent protectionist measures aimed at European products?

3. Does the Commission regard bilateral negotiations between the Union and third countries as an effective way of securing the best possible terms of trade for European products?

4. Against the background of the anti-dumping investigation into European wines launched by China in response to the duties imposed by the EU on solar panels, how does the Commission intend to respond to the letter sent by Italy, France and Spain to the Commissioner with responsibility for trade calling for prompt action on this matter?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

The EU approach is not penalising EU manufacturers and hampering economic recovery. EU's trade policy objective is to boost growth and jobs. External demand is the EU's most important source of growth for the moment. In the longer term, economic recovery will need to be consolidated through stronger links with the new centres of global growth.

The EU does not remove its customs tariffs autonomously but is rather autonomously suspending tariffs on raw materials, intermediary goods and components not produced in the EU in order to impove the competitiveness of our industry. EU tariff cuts are the outcome of negotiations involving reciprocal tariff cuts from partner countries.The EU is a leader in the international fight against protectionism. Its offensive stance against protectionism abroad will be credible only if it equally resists protectionism at home.

The multilateral trading system is the most effective tool to serve EU's interests but negotiations on market access remain at an impasse that will unlikely be resolved in the near future. Therefore bilateral negotiations are the most effective way to move forward at the moment. They could boost EU Gross Domestic Product by more than 2% or EUR 250bn and EU jobs by more than 2 millions.

China has the right to initiate such investigations and to impose measures provided that World Trade Organisation rules are respected. The Commission is in close contact with the EU wine industry and relevant Member States in order to offer all necessary assistance. It has been carefully analysing those investigations and intervened in order to ensure that China follows the rules. The Commission does not hesitate to intervene where needed.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009292/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1º agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Politiche protezionistiche dei paesi terzi sui prodotti europei

In merito ai dazi imposti dai paesi terzi sui prodotti europei importati, la Commissione:

1. può far sapere quali settori del mercato europeo risultano più colpiti dalle restrizioni commerciali?

2. Ha a disposizione dati aggiornati sulle tariffe applicate alle merci europee?

3. Può far sapere quali barriere non tariffarie pesano maggiormente sull'export europeo?

4. Con riferimento al recente caso delle tariffe doganali applicate dalla Cina al vino italiano in relazione alla questione dei pannelli fotovoltaici, come valuta il ricorso ai dazi doganali come misura politica di ritorsione?

5. Ritiene che nuovi negoziati per il libero scambio tra paesi e tra l'Unione e i paesi terzi rappresentino uno strumento valido per superare il protezionismo doganale sulle merci europee, particolarmente forte in Cina, India, Brasile, Giappone, Turchia, Argentina e Stati Uniti?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(24 settembre 2013)

Le restrizioni imposte da paesi terzi sulle importazioni dell'Unione europea colpiscono di solito vari prodotti, con effetti svariati, a seconda del paese. È difficile quindi determinare quali siano i settori più colpiti, sebbene in generale ne soffrano maggiormente le industrie altamente regolamentate o produttrici di beni con elevato valore aggiunto.

L'onorevole parlamentare troverà su questo sito il livello medio dei dazi all'importazione applicati dai paesi selezionati ([1]).

La Commissione è del parere che tutti gli ostacoli non tariffari siano in grado di perturbare gli scambi e di provocare danni alle esportazioni dell'UE, sia che ciò accada a causa di regolamentazioni tecniche onerose, di requisiti di contenuto locale, di imposte o di rilascio di licenze a livello interno. L'onorevole parlamentare troverà ulteriori informazioni su tali misure in una relazione pubblicata il 2 settembre 2013 ([2]).

Per quanto concerne l'inchiesta avviata contro gli esportatori di vino dell'UE, la Commissione ritiene che la Cina abbia il diritto di procedere in tal senso, purché siano rispettate le regole pertinenti dell'Organizzazione mondiale del commercio. La Commissione ha sempre condotto un'attenta analisi dei meriti e dello sviluppo di tali casi intervenendo per garantire che la Cina applichi rigorosamente tali norme. La Commissione fornisce inoltre all'industria europea tutta l'assistenza necessaria in materia.

La Commissione ritiene infine che gli accordi commerciali con paesi terzi selezionati siano senza dubbio uno dei mezzi per eliminare gli ostacoli al commercio tramite discipline bilaterali. Ogni proposta di avvio di negoziati è tuttavia attentamente valutata dal punto di vista di tutti gli interessi economici dell'Unione.

([1]) http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/tariff_profiles12_e.pdf; http://madb.europa.eu/madb/datasetPreviewFormATpubli.htm?datacat_id=AT&from=publi.
([2]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/151703.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009292/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Third countries targeting EU goods with protectionist policies

1. Which EU market sectors have been hit the hardest by trade restrictions?

2. Can the Commission provide up-to-date figures on the duties imposed on EU goods?

3. Which non-tariff barriers are causing the most damage to EU exports?

4. With reference to the recent move by China to impose customs duties on Italian wine in connection with the solar panel dispute, what view does the Commission take of using customs duties as a means of retaliation?

5. Would the Commission agree that negotiations on new trade agreements between the Union and third countries provide a suitable forum in which to deal with the problem of protectionist tariffs levied on EU goods, in particular by China, India, Brazil, Japan, Turkey, Argentina and the USA?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

Restrictions imposed by third countries on EU imports usually hit various products, with various effects, depending on the country. Hence it is difficult to establish which sectors suffer the most, however generally, industries subject to advanced regulation or adding high value are more targeted.

The Honorable Member will find on this website the average level of import duties applied by selected countries ([1]).

The Commission is of the view that all non-tariff barriers have the capacity to disrupt trade and to cause damage to EU exports, be it through burdensome technical regulation, local content requirements, internal taxation or licensing. The Honorable Member will find more information on such measures in a Report issued on 2 September 2013 ([2]).

In relation to the investigation initiated against EU wine exporters, the Commission considers that China has the right to do so, provided that relevant World Trade Organisation rules are respected. The Commission has always been carefully analysing the merits and development of such cases and has intervened to ensure that such rules are strictly applied by China. The Commission also provides all necessary assistance in the matter to the European industry.

Finally, the Commission considers that trade agreements with selected third countries are indeed one of the means to dismantle trade irritants through bilateral disciplines. Any proposal to launch negotiations is however carefully assessed from the point of view of all the EU's economic interests.

([1]) http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/tariff_profiles12_e.pdf
http://madb.europa.eu/madb/datasetPreviewFormATpubli.htm?datacat_id=AT&from=publi
([2]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/151703.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009293/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1º agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Politiche protezionistiche dell'UE

In merito ai dazi doganali stabiliti dall'Unione sui prodotti importati da paesi terzi, la Commissione :

1. ha a disposizione dati aggiornati su quantità e tipologia di merci importate da paesi terzi?

2. Può indicare da quali paesi terzi l'Unione importa le maggiori quantità di beni?

3. Ritiene che le tariffe doganali attualmente in vigore siano adeguate a tutelare la produzione comunitaria e la circolazione dei prodotti europei nel mercato interno?

4. Non ritiene che la decisione dell'Unione di ridurre progressivamente le tariffe doganali sulle merci straniere rappresenti un'anomalia rispetto alla tendenza dei paesi terzi che rafforzano invece le misure protezionistiche?

5. Considerata la difficile congiuntura economica, ritiene auspicabile un innalzamento delle barriere doganali a tutela della produzione interna degli Stati membri?

Risposta di Karel De Gucht a nome della Commissione
(25 settembre 2013)

Tutti i dati aggiornati sui quantitativi di merci importate da paesi terzi, sono reperibili sul sito web della Commissione ([1]).

L'Unione importa merci principalmente dai seguenti paesi: Cina (16,2 % delle importazioni complessive), Stati Uniti (11,4 %), Russia (11 %), Svizzera (5,9 %), Norvegia (4,4 %), Giappone (3,6 %), Turchia (2,7 %), Corea (2,1 %), India (2,1 %) e Brasile (2,1 %).

I dazi imposti dall'UE offrono un'adeguata protezione ai produttori dell'Unione e alle merci UE che circolano sul mercato interno. Tali dazi sono il frutto di accordi negoziati. Tutti i paesi sviluppati dispongono di un analogo sistema di tutela. Grazie all'impiego congiunto di provvedimenti antidumping e antisovvenzioni, l'UE mantiene una posizione rigorosa di contrasto alle pratiche commerciali sleali. Essa ricorre infatti con elevata frequenza a strumenti di difesa commerciale, come fanno USA e Cina.

I due terzi delle importazioni dell'UE sono costituiti da materie prime, beni intermedi e componenti necessari ai processi di produzione delle imprese dell'Unione. L'aumento delle tariffe doganali e del costo delle importazioni ridurrebbe la concorrenzialità delle imprese e le loro potenzialità di vendita sui mercati mondiali.

In merito alla quarta domanda si rimanda l'onorevole parlamentare alla risposta fornita alla precedente interrogazione scritta E-009291/13.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_122530.xlsx.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009293/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: EU protectionist policy

1. Can the Commission provide up-to-date figures on the amounts of the various types of goods that are imported from third countries?

2. From which third countries does the Union import most goods?

3. Does the Commission believe that the tariffs currently in place afford adequate protection to Union producers and the EU goods circulating on the internal market?

4. Would it agree that the Union's decision to progressively reduce customs duties on goods from abroad is out of step with the current trend for third countries to apply still more protectionist measures?

5. In view of the current economic situation, would it agree that customs tariffs should be raised in order to protect EU producers?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

All up-to-date figures on the amounts of goods imported from third countries can be found on the website of the Commission ([1]).

The Union imports goods mostly from China (16,2% of its total imports), the US (11,4%), Russia (11%), Switzerland (5,9%), Norway (4,4%), Japan (3,6%), Turkey (2,7%), Korea (2,1%), India (2,1%) and Brazil (2,1%).

EU tariffs afford adequate protection to Union producers and the EU goods circulating on the internal market. They result from negotiated agreements. All developed countries have a similar level of protection. The EU keeps a firm hand against anti-competitive trade practices, using both anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures to do so. It is one of the main users of trade defence instruments, together with the US and China.

Two-thirds of EU imports are raw materials, intermediary goods and components needed for EU companies' production processes. Raising customs tariffs and the cost of imports would reduce companies' competitiveness and ability to sell on global markets.

On the fourth question, the Honourable Member is referred to the reply given to previous Written Question E-009291/13.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_122530.xlsx

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009294/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(1 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Paarden uitgesloten van de slacht

De Verordeningen (EG) nrs. 852/2004, 853/2004, 854/2004 en 504/2008 regelen de controles van de identificatie en de traceerbaarheid van medische behandelingen van paarden. Vooraleer paarden geslacht worden voor menselijke consumptie moeten zij gecontroleerd worden op verschillende criteria. Twijfels omtrent de identiteit en de niet-naleving (niet elke lidstaat is even streng of controleert even veel) van de wettelijke termijnen voor de identificatie van voor slacht voor menselijke consumptie bestemde paarden, leiden tot een leemte in de registratie van de medische behandelingen en vormen een risico voor de gezondheid van de consument.

De controle gebeurt op basis van het paspoort van het paard. Bij diefstal of verlies van dit paspoort moet een nieuw aangevraagd worden en mag het paard pas zes maanden later geslacht worden voor menselijke consumptie.

Paarden die niet geslacht mogen worden voor menselijke consumptie worden vaak verwaarloosd en mishandeld omdat zij de eigenaar niets meer opbrengen. Daarom is een oplossing nodig om paarden alsnog te kunnen inschrijven voor de slacht voor menselijke consumptie. Een mogelijke oplossing ligt bij de termijn van zes maanden die bij verlies van het paspoort wordt gehanteerd. Er wordt immers van uit gegaan dat na zes maanden alle medicijnen uit het vlees verdwenen zijn en de consumptie veilig is. Veel dierenleed kan worden voorkomen als wordt voorzien in de mogelijkheid om voor alle paarden zes maanden na registratie toestemming te verkrijgen voor slacht voor menselijke consumptie.

Daarom volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Wat is de visie van de Commissie op de huidige verordeningen voor paarden bestemd voor slacht voor menselijke consumptie en op uitbreiding ervan om dierenleed te voorkomen?

2. Zal de Commissie maatregelen nemen om de verordeningen aan te passen voor paarden die zijn uitgesloten van de slacht?

3. Heeft de Commissie weet van misbruiken of afzwakkingen door lidstaten en wat wordt hiertegen gedaan?

4. Welke timing voorziet de Commissie?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(16 september 2013)

1. De bescherming van als landbouwdieren gehouden paarden valt onder wetgeving van de EU. De EU-regels inzake dierenwelzijn gelden ook voor paarden bij de slacht en bij het vervoer dat verband houdt met een economische activiteit. De Commissie is van mening dat voornoemde wetgeving volstaat en voldoet. De bescherming van paarden die voor de sport of ontspanning worden gebruikt, overstijgt echter de bevoegdheden van de EU.

2. De Commissie bespreekt met de belanghebbenden en deskundigen van de lidstaten eventuele nieuwe regels waardoor paarden die van de voedselketen zijn uitgesloten en als zodanig in het paspoort worden gekenmerkt, in erkende slachthuizen kunnen worden geslacht in overeenstemming met bovenvermelde regels inzake dierenwelzijn. Het vlees van deze paarden zou echter uitsluitend mogen worden gebruikt om voeder voor gezelschapsdieren te vervaardigen.

3. De toepassing door de lidstaten en derde landen van de EU-regels inzake voedselveiligheid en -kwaliteit, diergezondheid en dierenwelzijn wordt regelmatig doorgelicht door het Voedsel- en Veterinair Bureau van het directoraat-generaal Gezondheid en Consumenten ([1]). Indien tekortkomingen worden vastgesteld, dan worden deze aangepakt via vervolgactieplannen. Ook heeft de Commissie de lidstaten onlangs een gedetailleerde vragenlijst toegezonden over de toepassing van EU-regels inzake paardenpaspoorten en momenteel analyseert zij de antwoorden op die lijst. Als een lidstaat EU-wetgeving niet nakomt, kan de Commissie de zaak voor het Europees Hof van Justitie brengen.

([1]) Gedetailleerde bevindingen van hun audits kunt u raadplegen op: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/what_nl.htm

4. Vooraleer de in punt 2 vermelde eventuele nieuwe regels kunnen worden vastgesteld, moeten zij voor advies worden voorgelegd aan de deskundigen van de lidstaten van het Permanent Comité voor de voedselketen en de diergezondheid. Indien wordt besloten om deze koers te volgen en de lidstaten de voorgelegde ontwerptekst steunen, kan deze binnen enkele maanden worden vastgesteld.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009294/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Horses whose slaughter is not permitted

Regulations (EC) Nos 852/2004, 853/2004, 854/2004 and 504/2008 lay down provisions concerning inspections with reference to their identification and the traceability of medical treatments administered to them. Before horses are slaughtered for human consumption, they have to be checked in the light of various criteria. Doubts regarding their identity and non-compliance (not all Member States are equally strict or perform as many inspections) with the statutory time limits for the identification of horses intended for slaughter for human consumption result in a lacuna in the registration of medical treatments and present a risk to the health of consumers.

Inspections are performed on the basis of the horse's passport. If a passport is stolen or lost, a new one has to be applied for, and the horse may then only be slaughtered for human consumption six months later.

Horses whose slaughter for human consumption is not permitted are often neglected and mistreated because their owner is no longer deriving any profit from them. A solution is therefore needed in order to be able to register horses for slaughter for human consumption in such cases. One possible solution lies in the six-month period which is applied if a passport is lost. It is assumed that after six months all medicines will have disappeared from the meat and that it will safe to consume. Much animal suffering could be avoided if it were made possible to obtain authorisation of slaughter for human consumption of all horses six months after registration.

1. What view does the Commission take of the existing regulations on horses intended for slaughter for human consumption and what does it think about the possibility of extending them in order to avoid animal suffering?

2. Will the Commission take measures to amend the regulations for horses whose slaughter is not permitted?

3. Is the Commission aware of abuses or weak application of the law by Member States, and what is it doing about them?

4. What time frame does the Commission have in mind?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

1. The protection of horses kept as farmed animals is covered by the EU legislation. EU animal welfare rules also apply to horses at slaughter and when they are transported in connection with an economic activity. The Commission considers the above legislation adequate and appropriate. On the other hand, the protection of horses used for sports or entertainment is beyond EU competences.

2. The Commission is discussing with stakeholders and Member States experts possible new rules that would allow horses excluded from the food chain and identified as such in the passport to be slaughtered in approved slaughterhouses, in conformity with the animal welfare rules mentioned above. The meat from these horses, however, would then be limited to the pet food industry.

3. Implementation of EU rules by the Member States and third countries on food safety and quality, animal health and welfare legislation are regularly audited by the Food and Veterinary Office of the Directorate General for Health and Consumers ([1]). In case deficiencies are found, these are addressed in follow-up action plans. The Commission has also recently sent to the Member States a detailed questionnaire on the implementation of EU rules on horse passports and it is currently analysing the responses received. Where a Member State fails to comply with EC law, the Commission may refer the case to the European Court of Justice.

4. In order to be adopted, the possible new rules mentioned under 2 above would need to be submitted to the Member States experts at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health for their opinion. In case a decision is taken to move in that direction and the Member States support the draft legal text submitted, the adoption of such a text would be a matter of some months.

([1]) Details findings of their audits can be consulted at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/what_en.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009295/13
aan de Commissie
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(1 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Beleggen in grondstoffen

Uit onderzoek van The New York Times is gebleken dat de Amerikaanse bank Goldman Sachs een „carrousel" heeft opgestart dat de prijzen van aluminium kunstmatig hoog houdt. Goldman Sachs is sinds drie jaar eigenaar van Metro International Trade Services, een van de grootste Amerikaanse aluminiumopslagbedrijven. Via het carrousel zijn de wachttijden voor het leveren van aluminium aan klanten gestegen van 6 weken tot meer dan 16 maanden, wat de prijs van aluminium doet stijgen.

Coca Cola stelde de te lange levertijden al eerder aan de kaak bij de London Metal Exchange, waar de aluminiumprijs wordt vastgelegd. De London Metal Exchange besloot toen dat de opslaghuizen minstens 3 000 ton aluminium per dag moeten leveren. Uit het huidige onderzoek is gebleken dat Metro International Trade Services een carrousel heeft opgestart waarbij aluminium wordt vervoerd van de ene loods naar de andere en zo de regels omzeilt en de prijs kunstmatig hoog houdt. Naar schatting zorgen deze praktijken voor een stijging van 1 eurocent per blikje cola.

Goldman Sachs houdt via Metro International Trade Services bijna een kwart van de beschikbare aluminiumvoorraad in handen en heeft daardoor grote invloed op de prijzen. De Amerikaanse centrale bank onderzoekt nu of het nog opportuun is dat investeringsbanken zoals de Goldman Sachs Group en JP Morgan Chase & Co beleggingsproducten zoals olie, steenkool en bepaalde metalen kunnen verhandelen terwijl ze die grondstoffen ook fysiek in hun bezit hebben.

1. Heeft de Commissie weet van deze praktijken? Wat is de impact op de Europese markt, en in het bijzonder op de prijs van consumptiegoederen zoals Coca Cola?

2. Is de Commissie bereid om een onderzoek te openen naar deze praktijken van de Goldman Sachs Group en de impact van deze praktijken op de Europese markt? Zo ja, wanneer? Zo nee, waarom niet?

3. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van het aantal banken in de Europese Unie die fysiek grondstoffenvoorraden in hun bezit hebben? Indien ja, is de Commissie bereid om een lijst te geven van die banken? Is de Commissie bereid om te onderzoeken of dit wel opportuun is?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(23 september 2013)

De Commissie is op de hoogte van de bedoelde verslagen. De Commissie is zich bewust van het belang van de grondstoffenmarkten voor de economie als geheel en is op de hoogte van de discussie rond het vermeende belangenconflict dat ontstaat wanneer financiële spelers de opslag en het transport van grondstoffen beheersen.

In lijn met de G20-toezeggingen, is de Commissie gestart met een aantal regelgevende initiatieven ter verhoging van de integriteit en de transparantie van de markten voor grondstoffenderivaten, bijvoorbeeld de toetsing van de MiFID ([1]) en de versterking van het marktmisbruikkader. De EU neemt actief deel aan de werkzaamheden van de G20 waarbij een analyse wordt gemaakt van de interactie tussen de fysieke en de financiële grondstoffenmarkten. De aanwezigheid van financiële spelers in de toeleveringsketen van fysieke grondstoffen, kan een impact hebben op de vorming van de grondstoffenprijzen. De G20-leden zijn het erover eens dat meer coördinatie tussen de sectorale toezichthouders en de marktautoriteiten alsook sterkere samenwerking van de nationale en regionale rechtsgebieden nodig is op mondiaal niveau. De EU zal actief blijven op dit gebied.

Ter bescherming van het rechtmatige belang van derden en de integriteit van haar toezicht- en handhavingsactiviteiten, is de Commissie van mening dat het in dit stadium niet passend zou zijn om opmerkingen te maken over de maatregelen die door haar in deze zaak zouden kunnen worden genomen.

([1]) Richtlijn betreffende markten voor financiële instrumenten, COM(2011) 656 definitief.

De Commissie is — in dit stadium — niet in een positie om te oordelen of er door de activiteiten van financiële spelers schade is veroorzaakt of om het effect van mogelijke kostenstijgingen op de prijs van consumentengoederen te ramen. Niettemin wil de Commissie beklemtonen dat zij deze kwesties zeer serieus neemt en niet zal aarzelen om passende maatregelen te nemen als zij van mening is dat de antitrustregels mogelijk zijn geschonden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009295/13
to the Commission
Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D)
(1 August 2013)

Subject: Investment in commodities

According to an investigation by the New York Times, the American bank Goldman Sachs has initiated a 'carousel' which keeps aluminium prices artificially high. For three years, Goldman Sachs has owned Metro International Trade Services, one of the largest American aluminium storage companies. Because of the carousel, waiting times for supplies of aluminium to customers have increased from 6 weeks to more than 16 months, raising the price of aluminium.

Coca Cola has previously complained to the London Metal Exchange (where the price of aluminium is set) about the excessively long delivery times. The London Metal Exchange responded by deciding that warehouses must supply at least 3 000 tonnes of aluminium per day. The latest investigation has shown that Metro International Trade Services has set up a carousel as a result of which aluminium is transported from one warehouse to another, thus evading the rules and keeping the price artificially high. It is estimated that these practices have raised the price of a can of Coke by 1 euro-cent.

Through Metro International Trade Services, Goldman Sachs owns nearly a quarter of the available aluminium supply, giving it considerable influence over prices. The US Central Bank is currently investigating whether it is still desirable for investment banks such as the Goldman Sachs Group and JP Morgan Chase & Co to be allowed to trade in investment products such as oil, coal and certain metals while also having those commodities physically in their possession.

1. Is the Commission aware of these practices? What is their impact on the European market, particularly on the price of consumer goods such as Coca Cola?

2. Will the Commission launch an investigation into these practices on the part of the Goldman Sachs Group and their impact on the European market? If so, when? If not, why not?

3. Does the Commission know how many banks in the European Union have stocks of commodities physically in their possession? If so, will the Commission provide a list of those banks? Will the Commission investigate whether this is desirable?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the reports referred to. The Commission is mindful of the importance of the commodity markets for the economy as a whole and is conscious of the debate surrounding the alleged conflict of interest brought about when financial players control the storage and shipment of commodities.

In line with G20 commitments, the Commission has launched a number of regulatory initiatives to increase the integrity and transparency of commodity derivatives markets, for example the review of the MiFID ([1]) and the reinforcement of the market abuse framework. The EU is actively participating in the G20 work which analyses the interactions between physical and financial commodity markets. Indeed, the presence of financial players in the supply chain of physical commodities can have an impact on the formation of commodity prices. G20 members agree that more coordination between sectorial regulators and market authorities as well as stronger cooperation of national and regional jurisdictions is needed at global level. The EU will remain active in this area.

In order to protect the legitimate interest of third parties and the integrity of its monitoring and enforcement activities, the Commission believes that it would not at this stage be appropriate to comment on any action that might be taken by the Commission regarding this matter.

([1]) Markets in Financial Instruments Directive, COM(2011) 656 final.

The Commission is not at this stage in a position to judge whether any harm has been caused by the activities of financial players or to estimate any potential cost increases to the price of consumer goods. Nonetheless, the Commission would stress that it takes these issues extremely seriously and will not hesitate to take appropriate action if it believes that the antitrust rules may have been infringed.

(Suomenkielinen versio)

Kirjallisesti vastattava kysymys P-009439/13
komissiolle
Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE)
(2. elokuuta 2013)

Aihe: Metsäpeurapopulaatioiden pienentyminen

EU on määritellyt metsäperuran (Rangifer tarandus fennicus) silmälläpidettäväksi lajiksi, mutta ei uhanalaiseksi. Elinkelpoisia metsäpeurapopulaatioita on EU:n alueella vain kaksi, molemmat Suomessa; Kainuussa ja Suomenselällä. Populaatio on pienentynyt erityisesti Kainuussa, jossa metsäpeuroja on arvion mukaan 700. Suurimmillaan kanta on ollut 1 700 metsäpeuraa. Kainuussa metsäpeuraa ei käytännössä metsästetä ollenkaan. Syynä populaatioiden pienentymiseen pidetään suurpetojen määrän lisääntymistä.

1. Onko komissio tietoinen metsäpeurapopulaatioiden merkittävästä pienentymisestä? Harkitseeko komissio metsäpeuran luokittelemista uhanalaiseksi lajiksi?

2. Milloin luontodirektiiviä arvioidaan seuraavan kerran? Katsooko komissio, että luontodirektiivi kaipaa päivittämistä?

Janez Potočnikin komission puolesta antama vastaus
(30. elokuuta 2013)

Komissio on vasta äskettäin saanut Suomesta raportin ([1]), jonka mukaan metsäpeurojen (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*) populaatio Suomessa on todellakin pienentynyt viimeisten kuuden vuoden ajan.

Koska Suomen on luontotyyppidirektiivin (direktiivi 92/43/ETY ([2])) vaatimusten mukaisesti jo pyrittävä estämään metsäpeurojen suojelun tason heikkeneminen, komissio ei katso, että luontotyyppidirektiiviä olisi tarpeen päivittää metsäpeurojen suojelun lisäämiseksi.

([1]) http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/fi/eu/art17/envua2q0a/index_html?&page=2
([2]) EYVL L 206, 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009439/13
to the Commission
Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE)
(2 August 2013)

Subject: Decline in Finnish forest reindeer populations

The EU has classified the Finnish forest reindeer (Rangifer tarandus fennicus) as a near threatened species but not as a threatened species. There are only two viable populations of the species within the EU, both in Finland — in Kainuu and Suomenselkä. The population has declined, especially in Kainuu, where it is estimated that 700 individuals remain. At its largest, the population in this region was 1700. In Kainuu, the species is not in practice hunted at all. It is thought that the reason why the populations are declining lies in an increase in the number of large predators.

1. Is the Commission aware of the significant decline in populations of the Finnish forest reindeer? Is the Commission considering classifying the species as threatened?

2. When will the Habitats Directive next be assessed? Does the Commission consider that the directive needs updating?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(30 August 2013)

The Commission has very recently received a report ([1]) from Finland, which confirms that the national population of the wild forest reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus fennicus*) has indeed been declining over the last 6 years.

Since the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC ([2])) already imposes a requirement for Finland to avoid a deterioration of the conservation status of wild forest reindeer, the Commission does not consider that there is any need for an update of the Habitats Directive in order to further strengthen the protection of wild forest reindeer.

([1]) http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/fi/eu/art17/envua2q0a/index_html?&page=2.
([2]) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009440/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατανομή των μειονοτήτων στην Τουρκία σύμφωνα με «κωδικούς φυλής»

Σύμφωνα με την ημερήσια εφημερίδα «Hurriyet», επίσημο έγγραφο της επαρχιακής διεύθυνσης εθνικής εκπαίδευσης στην Κωνσταντινούπολη αποκαλύπτει ότι η διοίκηση για τον πληθυσμό της Τουρκίας καταγράφει με μυστικούς «κωδικούς φυλής» τους κατοίκους που έχουν αρμενική, εβραϊκή ή ανατολίτικη ελληνική (Ρουμ ή Ρωμαίοι) καταγωγή.

Στο πλαίσιο αυτής της πρακτικής, οι Έλληνες λαμβάνουν το μυστικό κωδικό φυλής 1, οι Αρμένιοι τον κωδικό 2 και οι Εβραίοι τον κωδικό 3. Οι κωδικοί αυτοί δεν χρησιμοποιούνται για τις άλλες μειονότητες ή ομάδες. Ισχυρισμοί για την ύπαρξη της εν λόγω πρακτικής υπήρχαν εδώ και πολύ καιρό, αλλά οι αρχές πάντοτε τους διέψευδαν. Όταν η μητέρα (της οποίας η καταγωγή είναι αρμενική) ενός Τούρκου πολίτη ζήτησε να κάνει εγγραφή του παιδιού της σε ένα αρμενικό νηπιαγωγείο, το σχολείο απάντησε ζητώντας της να αποδείξει ότι είχε λάβει τον «κωδικό 2» στο μητρώο του πληθυσμού προκειμένου να ελέγξει ότι δεν είχε αλλάξει θρησκεία.

Θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει:

1. Κατά πόσον θεωρεί ότι τέτοιες πρακτικές διακριτικής μεταχείρισης και παράνομης δημιουργίας προφίλ των Τούρκων πολιτών, βάσει της εθνικότητας και της θρησκείας, συμμορφώνονται με το κοινοτικό κεκτημένο, την Ευρωπαϊκή Σύμβαση Ανθρωπίνων Δικαιωμάτων και τον Χάρτη Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης;

2. Τι μέτρα σκοπεύει να λάβει προκειμένου να πιέσει την Τουρκία, ως υποψήφια χώρα προς ένταξη, να εγκαταλείψει τέτοιες πρακτικές και να συμμορφωθεί πλήρως στα ευρωπαϊκά πρότυπα, προστατεύοντας τα δικαιώματα όλων των πολιτών χωρίς διακρίσεις;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Βάσει των πληροφοριών που παρείχαν οι τουρκικές αρχές, η Επιτροπή αντιλαμβάνεται ότι το τουρκικό ληξιαρχείο χρησιμοποιεί τους κωδικούς μειονοτικής καταγωγής 1, 2 και 3 για τους τούρκους πολίτες που ανήκουν αντίστοιχα στην ελληνική, αρμενική και εβραϊκή μειονότητα. Οι τουρκικές αρχές δήλωσαν ότι οι εν λόγω κωδικοί μειονοτικής καταγωγής χρησιμοποιούνται για να εξακριβωθεί κατά πόσον οι τούρκοι πολίτες έχουν τα δικαιώματα που προβλέπονται από το τουρκικό δίκαιο για τις εν λόγω μειονότητες, σύμφωνα με την ερμηνεία της Συνθήκης της Λωζάνης από την Τουρκία.

Η Επιτροπή θα συνεχίσει να παρακολουθεί το θέμα και θα το εξετάσει περαιτέρω με τις τουρκικές αρχές, εφόσον κριθεί σκόπιμο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009440/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Minorities in Turkey tagged with 'race codes'

According to the daily newspaper *Hürriyet*, an official document issued by the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education has revealed that Turkey's population administration has been assigning secret 'race codes' to citizens of Armenian, Jewish and Anatolian Greek (Rum) origin.

As part of this practice, Greeks are assigned secret race code 1, Armenians code 2 and Jews code 3. No such secret codes are used for other minorities or groups. There had long been allegations of such a practice being in place, but they were always denied by the authorities. When the mother (of Armenian origin) of a Turkish citizen asked to register her child at an Armenian kindergarten, the school responded by asking her to prove that she had been assigned 'code 2' in the population register, in order to check that she had not changed religion.

Can the Commission state:

1. whether it believes such discriminatory practices and the secret illegal profiling of Turkish citizens based on ethnicity and religion comply with the *acquis communautaire*, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;

2. what action it intends to take in order to urge Turkey, as a candidate country, to abandon such practices and to conform fully to EU standards, protecting the rights of all citizens without discriminating?

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

On the basis of information provided by the Turkish authorities, the Commission understands that the Turkish civil registry uses the lineage codes 1, 2 and 3 for Turkish citizens belonging respectively to the Greek, Armenian and Jewish minority. The Turkish authorities have stated that these lineage codes are used to verify whether Turkish citizens are entitled to rights provided for under Turkish law to these minorities, in line with Turkey's interpretation of the Lausanne Treaty.

The Commission will continue to monitor the issue and raise it further with the Turkish authorities as appropriate.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009441/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Attività sismiche sottomarine nel Mare Mediterraneo

Il Mare Mediterraneo è una zona sempre più interessata da attività legate all'industria petrolifera. Dette attività implicano il ricorso a impulsi acustici ad alta energia mediante i cosiddetti «*air-gun*», per la prospezione sismica di giacimenti di petrolio e di gas, nonché costituiscono una grave minaccia per varie specie marine, tra cui i mammiferi. È provato che le attività in questione sono svolte anche in aree proposte o dichiarate siti di conservazione e nei principali habitat riservati alle specie protette, con la possibile inclusione d'indagini anche multiple (condotte, cioè, da diverse navi sismiche). È emerso altresì che il sottogruppo tecnico ([1]) sull'inquinamento acustico subacqueo, nell'ambito della direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino (MSFD), ha proposto la compilazione di una banca dati dei rumori impulsivi ad alta intensità in un registro delle emissioni acustiche a livello dell'UE.

Può la Commissione fornire una panoramica completa dal 2010 di dette attività (indagini sismiche condotte in ambito accademico e nel settore dell'industria petrolifera, nonché altre sorgenti di rumore correlate) e delle attività eventualmente previste nel prossimo futuro (2013-2015) nel Mare Mediterraneo (compresi, tra l'altro, il volume e il numero di *air-gun*, i livelli spettrali di sorgente misurati sulla base di un calcolo retroattivo su tutte le frequenze, la durata dell'indagine, il numero di navi sismiche, l'area di prospezione)?

Il processo di attuazione del buono stato ecologico, in seno alla direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino (MSFD-BSE) ([2]), prevede e include misure finalizzate all'applicazione delle migliori pratiche ambientali e delle migliori tecnologie disponibili (quali, ad esempio, vibratori sismici marini, indagini non ripetitive, intensità della sorgente ai più bassi livelli realizzabili, restrizioni territoriali e stagionali), da parte del settore petrolifero e studi sismici a livello accademico?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(18 settembre 2013)

La Commissione non dispone di un quadro completo in merito alle prospezioni sismiche e ad altre sorgenti di rumore ad esse associate, comprese quelle programmate per il prossimo futuro nel Mediterraneo. Tuttavia, uno studio avviato dalla Commissione sulla sicurezza delle attività di esplorazione e sfruttamento offshore nel Mediterraneo ha fornito una panoramica riguardo ad attuali e future attività offshore (per petrolio e gas) nel Mediterraneo, sulla base di un controllo documentale e della consultazione delle parti interessate (comprese le organizzazioni non governative, l'industria e le autorità competenti) ([3]).

La Commissione sta analizzando le relazioni presentate dagli Stati membri, in linea con la direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino ([4]), che potrebbero contenere, tra l'altro, informazioni sulle attività offshore. Il monitoraggio delle attività che generano rumore e la coordinazione con altri paesi a livello regionale spettano tuttavia agli Stati membri. Gli Stati membri sono tenuti a istituire e attuare un programma di monitoraggio entro il 15 luglio 2014 nonché a sviluppare non oltre il 2015 un programma di misure volte a conseguire o mantenere un buono stato ecologico dell'ambiente marino entro il 2020.

([1]) Nella decisione 2010/477/UE della Commissione sui criteri e gli standard metodologici relativi al buono stato ecologico delle acque marine, sono stati pubblicati due indicatori per il descrittore 11 (rumore/energia) della direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino (2008/56/CE). Si tratta dei seguenti indicatori: Indicatore 11.1.1 sui «suoni impulsivi di frequenza media e bassa» e Indicatore 11.2.1 sul «suono continuo a bassa frequenza (rumore ambientale)». Per dar seguito alla decisione della Commissione, nel 2010, i direttori delle risorse marine hanno deciso di istituire un sottogruppo tecnico nell'ambito del gruppo di lavoro sul buono stato ecologico (BSE), per l'ulteriore sviluppo del descrittore 10 (rifiuti marini) e del descrittore 11 (rumore/energia). Per motivi di ordine pratico, la DG ENV ha deciso che i lavori sarebbero stati svolti da due gruppi distinti.

([2]) Si veda la nota 1.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/barcelona-convention/index_en.htm

([4]) Direttiva 2008/56/CE, del 17 giugno 2008, che istituisce un quadro per l'azione comunitaria nel campo della politica per l'ambiente marino (direttiva quadro sulla strategia per l'ambiente marino).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009441/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Marine seismic activities in the Mediterranean Sea

The Mediterranean Sea is a region that is increasingly exposed to the activities of the petroleum industry. Such activities involve the use of high-energy impulsive sound by so-called 'airguns' for seismic oil and gas exploration, and pose a significant threat to various species of marine life, including, among others, marine mammals. There is evidence that such activities are undertaken even in regions proposed or declared as conservation sites and in core habitats for protected species, and might include even multiple surveys (from different seismic vessels). We also note that the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Technical Subgroup ([1]) on underwater noise proposed compiling a database of loud impulsive noises in an EU-wide noise register.

Can the Commission provide a comprehensive overview of such activities (both academic and petroleum industry seismic surveys and other associated noise sources) since 2010, as well as of those planned for the near future (2013 — 2015) in the Mediterranean Sea (including airgun volume, number of airguns, measured back-calculated spectral source levels across all frequencies, duration of survey, number of source vessels and survey area, etc.)?

Does the process towards implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Good Environmental Status (MSFD-GES) ([2]) provide for and include measures leading to the application of best environmental practices and best available technologies (marine vibroseis, non-duplicative surveys, lowest practicable source levels, seasonal and area restrictions, etc.) by the petroleum industry and academic seismic surveys?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission does not have a comprehensive overview of seismic surveys and other associated noise sources, including those planned for the near future in the Mediterranean. However, a study launched by the Commission on the safety of offshore exploration and exploitation activities in the Mediterranean provided an overview of ongoing and future offshore (oil and gas) activities in the Mediterranean, based on desk review and stakeholder consultation (including non-governmental organisations, industry and competent authorities) ([3]).

The Commission are analysing reports submitted by Member States in line with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive ([4]) which might include, *inter alia*, information on offshore activities. However, it is the responsibility of Member States to monitor noise-generating activities and to coordinate with other countries at the regional level. Member States are expected to establish and implement a monitoring programme by 15 July 2014 and by 2015 at the latest develop a programme of measures for achieving or maintaining good environmental status in the marine environment by 2020.

([1]) In Commission Decision 2010/477/EU on criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status (GES) of marine waters, two indicators were published for Descriptor 11 (Noise/Energy) of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC (MSFD). These are: Indicator 11.1.1 on 'low and mid frequency impulsive sounds' and Indicator 11.2.1 on 'continuous low frequency sound (ambient noise)'. As a follow-up to the Commission decision, the Marine Directors in 2010 agreed to establish a Technical Sub-Group (TSG) under the Working Group on Good Environmental Status (WG GES) for further development of Descriptor 10 Marine Litter and Descriptor 11 Noise/Energy. For practical reasons, DG ENV decided that the work would be carried out by two separate groups.

([2]) See footnote 1.

([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/barcelona-convention/index_en.htm

([4]) Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009442/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU policy on Area C of the West Bank (I)

The conclusions of the 14 May 2012 Foreign Affairs Council called upon Israel to meet its obligations including 'halting forced transfer of population and demolition of Palestinian housing and infrastructure, simplifying administrative procedures to obtain building permits, ensuring access to water and addressing humanitarian needs'.

Since May 2012:

— How many Palestinians have been forcibly transferred from their land?

— How many Palestinian homes and other structures have been demolished?

— How have Israeli administrative procedures for building permits for Palestinians been simplified?

— How many Palestinian wells and cisterns have been demolished?

— How has access to water improved for Palestinians?

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

It is not possible to determine with precision the figures since May 2012 as requested by the Honourable Member. Since May 2013 the EU has however initiated a monthly incident-tracking system for EU-funded projects in Area C.

According to the latest information provided by UN OCHA (Protection of Civilians weekly report 6-12 August) there have been 377 demolitions so far in 2013. The total amount of demolitions in 2012 was 604 with a monthly average of 12.

Concerning displaced people, in 2013 there have been to date 630 displacements. The total amount of displaced persons in 2012 totalled 886 with a monthly average of 17.

The Commission does not consider that there has been a simplification of building permits for Israeli administative procedures since May 2012. There has been no noteworthy improvement in the access to water for Palestinians.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009443/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU policy on Area C of the West Bank (II)

The report published in June 2013 by the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA), 'Failing to Make the Grade', criticises the failure of the European Union to deliver on the commitments made on development in Area C of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) of May 2012.

What is the Commission's response to the conclusions of the report?

What assessment has the Commission made of its own implementation of the FAC's recommendations in relation to Area C?

What consideration has the Commission given, or is it considering giving, to the specific recommendations for future action made by the AIDA Report?

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

The Commission refers the Honourable Member to the answer to previous Written Question E-006277/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009444/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU policy on Area C of the West Bank (III)

The EU has funded the development of 32 planning master plans for Area C of the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 2009.

How many of those plans have been finally approved by the Israeli authorities?

How many of those plans were submitted more than 18 months ago?

What percentage of Area C is covered by these 32 master plans?

How many Palestinians live in those parts of Area C covered by these master plans?

What is the average time taken for approval of such plans?

What assessment has the EU made, or is it considering making, based on the current rate of approvals, in terms of when the entirety of Area C will be covered by master plans?

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

Since 2009, 48 master plans have been developed for Area C with the support of the Palestinian NGO International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPCC). In addition another 25 plans for Palestinian communities in Area C are currently being developed by the Palestinian private sector. The EU and its member states are supporting this process. The first 32 plans developed with the support of the IPCC cover 1400 hectares and would host approximately 36, 300 inhabitants. 22 plans were submitted to the Israeli Civil Administration in 2011 and are at different stages of the process. Some of the master plans have been pre-approved but to date none have been published for the final 60-day period of public claims. Irrespective of this process, this approach has underscored the capacity of the Palestinian communities to carry out their own development plans and responded to the Palestinian Authority's own strategy on Area C.

Given that Israeli settlements are also located in Area C of the West Bank, it is not expected that the Palestinian master plans will cover the entirety of Area C.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009445/13
to the Commission
Emer Costello (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU policy on Area C of the West Bank (IV)

What funding has the EU allocated to fund projects in Area C to meet the needs of Palestinians? What projects are planned and when will they be completed?

Given the questionable legality of the Israeli Civil Administration's permit regime in Area C and its discriminatory effect on the indigenous Palestinian population, when will the Commission bring forward a common European policy to:

— start building infrastructure projects in areas of Area C where master plans have been submitted more than 18 months ago, even if the plans are unapproved?

— start aid projects in areas of Area C not covered by master plans within six months of an application for a building permit, even if there is no response from the Israeli authorities, or if objections are not related to minimal technical standards or legitimate security concerns?

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

The EU has been active in Area C for a number years including through a number of humanitarian projects.

Currently there are a number of ongoing EU interventions in Area C. The most recently signed financing agreement relating to development in Area C includes a number of components namely support to the planning process which the Ministry of Local Government is currently planning with the support of UN Habitat, the preparation for the eventual construction of small scale infrastructure within the master plans as well as a land reclamation and rehabilitation programme.

Through its PEGASE mechanism, the EU has also been providing assistance to Palestinian farmers and agribusinesses in Area C who are directly affected by settler violence and demolitions. Through the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP), the EU has also been providing support to the most vulnerable communities with a special focus on Bedouin and herder communities in Area C.

A number of the EU's current interventions are not directly related to the master plan process. Concerning the infrastructure within the master plans, the EU considers that if no major objection has been raised, this could start to be developed approximately 18 months following the submission of the plans to the Israeli Civil Administration by the village councils.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009447/13
to the Commission
Nessa Childers (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease and the Tobacco Products Directive

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a long-term, irreversible lung and airways disease that affects up to 10% of Europeans ([1]); it is today the fifth leading cause of death worldwide and is expected to be the third by 2030.

COPD is mostly preventable, tobacco being the main risk factor: smoking is responsible for the disease in 80 to 90% of cases, ([2]) and the more people smoke the more they are at risk.

On 19 December 2012 the Commission adopted a proposal for revising the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD), which is currently being examined by Parliament.

In this context:

1. Has the Commission fully taken into consideration the abovementioned facts about the seriousness of COPD in preparing its impact assessment of the Tobacco Products Directive?

2. After the adoption of the Tobacco Products Directive, does the Commission plan to include COPD-related health warnings when updating Annex I (list of text warnings) in line with scientific and technical progress?

3. What further measures does the Commission intend to take in respect of the tobacco- related legislation in order to prevent further COPD cases?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

As recognised in the impact assessment accompanying the Commission proposal ([3]) for revising the Tobacco Products Directive ([4]), Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases is a key group of disease associated with smoking.

The ASPECT study showed that mortality from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases is significantly higher in smokers than in non-smokers ([5]). Evidence shows that the smoking attributable factor for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases in the EU-27 is over 50% ([6]). A detailed analysis of health impacts of smoking is provided in Annex 5 of the impact assessment.

The text warnings of the directive have been recently revised by Commission Directive 2012/9/EU ([7]) on the basis of a thorough analysis of the existing knowledge on the health effects of tobacco use. One of these new warnings, incorporated also in the Commission's proposal to revise the Tobacco Products Directive, ('Smoking damages your lungs') refers specifically to the respiratory consequences of smoking.

The Commission does not have immediate plans to review the text warnings.

The Commission remains committed to pursuing comprehensive policy action to address the largest avoidable health threat in the EU — the consumption of tobacco — which is responsible for at least 121 000 deaths due to respiratory diseases in the EU every year ([4]).

([1]) EU Public Health Information System (Halbert et al., 2003, Interpreting COPD prevalence estimates: what is the true burden of disease? Chest, 2003; 123(5): 1684-92. Estimate — there is not enough epidemiological information on the matter.
([2]) Feenstra et al., 2001.
([3]) COM(2012) 788 final.
([4]) OJ L 194, 18.7.2001, p. 26.
([5]) ASPECT Consortium. (2004). Tobacco or Health in the European Union Past, Present and Future, 2004.
([6]) Peto et al., http://www.ctsu.ox.ac.uk/~tobacco/
([7]) OJ L 69, 8.3.2012, p. 15.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009448/13
an die Kommission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(5. August 2013)

Betrifft: Möglicher Widerspruch zwischen dem deutschen Glücksspielrecht und den Wettbewerbsregeln der EU

In Einklang mit dem kürzlich überarbeiteten Staatsvertrag zum Glücksspielwesen ist der deutsche Staat am Glücksspielwesen beteiligt und steht somit im Wettbewerb mit privaten Betreibern. Dieser Wettbewerb scheint jedoch verzerrt zu sein, da der Rechtsrahmen für das Glücksspiel den staatlichen Betreibern günstigere Bedingungen bietet als den privaten. Dies wird bei einem Vergleich privater Spielhallen und staatlicher Kasinos besonders deutlich: Allein die staatlichen Kasinos sind berechtigt, Geldautomaten aufzustellen, Alkohol und Speisen anzubieten und eine unbegrenzte Anzahl von Spielautomaten zu besitzen. Außerdem unterliegen sie keinen technischen Beschränkungen im Hinblick auf Spieleinsatz und -dauer. Dadurch entsteht ihnen ein Wettbewerbsvorteil. Viele staatliche Kasinos werden von privaten Betreibern mit einer Zulassung geleitet, die zum Teil gleichzeitig private Spielhallen betreiben.

1. Von den Mitgliedstaaten verwaltete Unternehmen sind öffentliche Unternehmen, für die gemäß Artikel 106 AEUV die Wettbewerbsregeln der EU gelten. Sind staatliche Glücksspielanbieter wie Kasinos als Unternehmen im Sinne von Artikel 106 AEUV einzustufen?

2. Gemäß Artikel 106 Absatz 2 AEUV müssen solche Unternehmen die Wettbewerbsregeln der EU einhalten, „soweit die Anwendung dieser Vorschriften nicht die Erfüllung der ihnen übertragenen besonderen Aufgabe rechtlich oder tatsächlich verhindert". Die besonderen Rechte der Kasinos (z. B. die Erlaubnis, Alkohol auszuschenken und eine unbegrenzte Anzahl von Spielautomaten aufzustellen) scheinen dem Ziel abträglich zu sein, Spieler und junge Menschen zu schützen, und stehen somit im Gegensatz zu den Zielen von allgemeinem Interesse. Schließt sich die Kommission diesem Standpunkt an?

3. Falls ja, verstößt der deutsche Staatsvertrag zum Glücksspielwesen gegen die Wettbewerbsregeln der EU?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(26. September 2013)

Für die Zwecke der Auslegung der Wettbewerbsbestimmungen und die Vorschriften für staatliche Beihilfen definiert die Rechtsprechung des EuGH ein Unternehmen unabhängig von seiner Rechtsform oder Finanzierung als eine Einheit, die eine wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit im Sinne des Angebots von Waren oder Dienstleistungen auf einem bestimmten Markt ausübt. Diese Definition trifft eigentlich auch auf staatliche Glücksspielanbieter wie Spielbanken zu, so dass diese als Unternehmen im Sinne von Artikel 106 Absatz 1 und Artikel 107 Absatz 1 AEUV betrachtet werden könnten.

Artikel 106 Absatz 2 AEUV sieht eine Ausnahmeregelung vor, die jedoch nur für Unternehmen gilt, die Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichem Interesse (DAWI) anbieten. Da die typischen Aktivitäten von staatlichen Glücksspielanbietern und Spielbanken a priori nicht als Dienstleistungen von allgemeinem wirtschaftlichem Interesse (DAWI) eingestuft werden können, würde Artikel 106 Absatz 2 AEUV normalerweise keine Anwendung auf staatliche Kasinos finden.

Es ist jedoch nicht möglich, allein auf Grundlage des für staatliche und private Kasinos unterschiedlichen rechtlichen Rahmens, auf den in der Frage Bezug genommen wird, zu schließen, dass gegen die EU-Vorschriften für den Wettbewerb und staatliche Beihilfen verstoßen wird. Solange die regulatorischen Unterschiede nicht mit einer Übertragung staatlicher Mittel zugunsten staatlicher Kasinos einhergehen, liegt kein Verstoß gegen die Vorschriften über staatliche Beihilfen vor, selbst wenn sie zu einem Wettbewerbsvorteil führen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009448/13
to the Commission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Possible conflict between German gambling law and EU competition rules

In accordance with the recently revised State Treaty on Gambling, the German state participates in the gambling market in competition with private operators. However, this competition appears to be distorted, as the legal framework for gambling includes more favourable conditions for state operators than for private operators. This is particularly evident when comparing privately owned gambling halls and state-owned casinos: only state-owned casinos are allowed to provide ATM machines, serve alcohol and food, have an unlimited number of gambling machines, and have no technical monetary or time limitations. This creates a competitive advantage. Many of the state-owned casinos are operated by licensed private companies, sometimes the same ones that operate private gambling halls.

1. Undertakings governed by the Member States are public undertakings, to which EU competition rules apply in accordance with Article 106 TFEU. Are state-owned gambling operators, such as casinos, undertakings in the sense of Article 106 TFEU?

2. According to Article 106(2) TFEU, such undertakings must respect EU competition rules 'in so far as the application of such rules does not obstruct the performance, in law or in fact, of the particular tasks assigned to them'. The special rights granted to casinos (e.g. permission to serve alcohol and have an unlimited number of gambling machines) seem to obstruct the goal of protecting gamblers and young people, and therefore counteract their general interest objectives. Does the Commission agree?

3. If so, does the German State Treaty on Gambling infringe EU competition rules?

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

The case law of the CJEU defines an undertaking for the purposes of the competition and state aid rules of the Treaty as any entity, regardless of its legal status or the way in which it is financed, which carries on an economic activity: i.e. an activity consisting in offering goods or services on a given market. State-owned gambling operators such as casinos would normally fit with this definition and therefore could be considered as undertakings within the meaning of Articles 106 (1) and 107(1) TFEU.

Article 106(2) TFEU lays down a derogation that only applies to undertakings entrusted with a service of general economic interest (SGEI). The standard activities of State-owned gambling operators and casinos would not a priori qualify as SGEIs. Therefore, Article 106(2) would not normally apply to State-owned casinos.

It is not possible to conclude, on the sole basis of the different legal framework referred to in the question which would apply to State-owned and private casinos, that EU competition and state aid rules are infringed. In particular, if such regulatory differences do not entail a transfer of State resources in favour of State-owned casinos, they would not infringe state aid rules, even if they result in a competitive advantage for these casinos.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009449/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Επιδείνωση της εξωτερικής πολιτικής της Τουρκίας

Σύμφωνα με την τουρκική εφημερίδα Hurriyet, η εξωτερική πολιτική της Τουρκίας για «μηδενικά προβλήματα με τους γείτονες» έχει καταρρεύσει, με την Τουρκία να αντιμετωπίζει προβλήματα με την ιρακινή κυβέρνηση.

Επιπρόσθετα προβλήματα υπάρχουν με το Ιράν και τη Συρία λόγω της υποστήριξης του Ιράν προς το συριακό καθεστώς, παρά την αντίθετη στάση της Τουρκίας.

Με το πρόσφατο πραξικόπημα στην Αίγυπτο, ο πρωθυπουργός Ερντογάν έχασε τον πιο σημαντικό του σύμμαχο στην περιοχή, κάτι που οδήγησε στην κατάρρευση του σουνιτικού άξονα, ο οποίος συστάθηκε από την Τουρκία με την Αίγυπτο, το Κατάρ και την Σαουδική Αραβία

Επιπλέον, οι προσπάθειες της Τουρκίας να επανακτήσει καλούς δεσμούς με το Ισραήλ έπεσαν σε αδιέξοδο και οι δεσμοί της με τις ΗΠΑ επιδεινώθηκαν λόγω των διαφωνιών που προέκυψαν σχετικά με τα δικαιώματα και τις ελευθερίες.

Επομένως ζητούμε από την Επιτροπή να σχολιάσει την παρούσα εξωτερική πολιτική της Τουρκίας, στο πλαίσιο της υποψηφιότητάς της προς ένταξη στην ΕΕ. Θεωρεί ότι η συμπεριφορά της Τουρκίας συμμορφώνεται με τους στόχους της Ευρωπαϊκής Πολιτικής Γειτονίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Τουρκία αντιμετωπίζει πολλά προβλήματα στην περιοχή της, κυρίως λόγω της αστάθειας που οφείλεται στις πρόσφατες αλλαγές που επήλθαν σε πολλές χώρες στη Βόρεια Αφρική και στη Μέση Ανατολή. Ταυτόχρονα, η Τουρκία βρίσκεται σε ένα περιφερειακό σταυροδρόμι στρατηγικής σημασίας για την ΕΕ: Βαλκάνια, Καύκασος, Κεντρική Ασία, Μέση Ανατολή και Ανατολική Μεσόγειος. Η Τουρκία διαδραματίζει σημαντικό περιφερειακό ρόλο και έχει αναλάβει ενεργό δράση στην ευρύτερη γειτονική περιοχή της. Η ΕΕ αναγνωρίζει τον ρόλο της Τουρκίας στη Συρία, ειδικότερα λόγω της στήριξης που παρέχει σε Σύριους που διαφεύγουν τη βία στη χώρα τους διερχόμενοι τα σύνορα.

Ως παλαιό μέλος του ΝΑΤΟ, η Τουρκία συνεισέφερε σημαντικά στην ασφάλεια της Ευρώπης και της γειτονικής περιοχής. Παρέχει τεράστια και πολύτιμη βοήθεια στην Κοινή Πολιτική Ασφάλειας και Άμυνας (ΚΠΑΑ). Με τις μεγάλες στρατιωτικές δαπάνες και δυνάμεις της, η Τουρκία μπορεί να αυξήσει τη συνεισφορά της στη ΚΠΑΑ στο μέλλον.

Η Τουρκία εξακολουθεί να συνεισφέρει σημαντικά στις δράσεις της ΕΕ για τη διαχείριση στρατιωτικών και πολιτικών κρίσεων. Επί του παρόντος εκπροσωπείται στην αποστολή της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για την επιβολή του κράτους δικαίου στο Κοσσυφοπέδιο (EULEX Kosovo) και στη στρατιωτική επιχείρηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης στη Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη (EUFOR Althea) (όπου είναι ο δεύτερος μεγαλύτερος συμμετέχων, με 274 στρατιωτικές δυνάμεις). Συνεισέφερε σε πολλές άλλες ολοκληρωθείσες αποστολές/δράσεις της ΚΠΑΑ. Η Τουρκία είναι πρόθυμη να συνεχίσει να συμμετέχει σε αποστολές και δράσεις της ΚΠΑΑ και εξετάζει τώρα την πρόσκληση της ΕΕ να συμμετάσχει σε δράσεις της ΕΕ στο Κέρας της Αφρικής, στο Νότιο Σουδάν, καθώς και στο Μαλί και τη Λιβύη.

Όπως αναφέρει στα συμπεράσματά του της 11ης Δεκεμβρίου 2012, το Συμβούλιο παραμένει προσηλωμένο στον στόχο περαιτέρω ενίσχυσης του υπάρχοντος πολιτικού διαλόγου μεταξύ της ΕΕ και της Τουρκίας σχετικά με θέματα εξωτερικής πολιτικής αμοιβαίου ενδιαφέροντος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009449/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Deterioration of Turkey's foreign policy

According to the Turkish newspaper, *Hürriyet*, Turkey's 'zero-problems' foreign policy with neighbouring countries has collapsed, with Turkey facing difficulties with the Iraqi Government.

Additional problems exist with Iran and Syria due to the former's support of the Syrian regime, despite Turkey's opposition.

With the current coup in Egypt, Prime Minister Erdoğan has lost his most important ally in the region, leading to the collapse of the Sunni axis which was set up by Turkey with Egypt, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, Turkey's efforts to repair strains in ties with Israel have come to a halt and its US ties have deteriorated due to disagreements concerning rights and freedoms.

We therefore ask the Commission to comment on Turkey's current foreign policy, in the context of its candidature for EU accession. Does the Commission believe that Turkey's behaviour complies with the aims of the European Neighbourhood Policy?

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

Turkey faces many challenges in its region, not least due to the instability resulting from recent changes in a number of countries in North Africa and the Middle East. At the same time, Turkey is situated at a regional crossroads of strategic importance for the EU: the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey plays an important regional role and is actively involved in its wider neighbourhood. The EU recognises Turkey's role on Syria, in particular with regard to support provided to Syrians fleeing violence across the border.

As a long-standing member of NATO, Turkey has made important contributions to the security of Europe and its neighbourhood. It provides a significant and valuable contribution to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). With its large military expenditure and manpower, Turkey has the capacity to increase its contribution to CSDP in the future.

Turkey remains an important contributor to EU military and civilian crisis management operations. It is currently represented in EULEX Kosovo and in EUFOR Althea (where it is the second biggest contributor, with 274 troops). It has contributed to several other completed CSDP missions/operations. Turkey is keen to continue its involvement in CSDP missions and operations, and is currently assessing the EU's invitation to join EU operations in the Horn of Africa, South Sudan and Mali and Libya.

As stated in its conclusions from 11 December 2012, the Council remains committed to the further enhancement of the existing political dialogue between the EU and Turkey on foreign policy issues of common interest.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-009451/13
upućeno Komisiji
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(5. kolovoza 2013.)

Predmet: Pelješki most — osiguravanje hrvatskog/europskog teritorijalnog kontinuiteta

Veoma mi je drago da se u okviru Instrumenta pretpristupne pomoći sklapa ugovor za izradu stručne prethodne studije o izvodljivosti u vezi s prometnim opcijama za povezivanje južne Hrvatske.

Pelješki most smatra se najprikladnijim rješenjem za povezivanje dubrovačkog područja s južnom Hrvatskom.

Većina hrvatskih građana vjeruje da je most najbolje rješenje i jedini način da se postigne teritorijalni kontinuitet Hrvatske. Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ) i ja podržavamo ovaj projekt od samog početka.

Htjela bih istaknuti da je teritorijalni kontinuitet isto toliko važan za Dubrovačko-neretvansku županiju i moj rodni grad Dubrovnik koliko i za cijelu Europsku uniju.

U očekivanju zaključaka prethodne studije o izvodljivosti, može li Komisija navesti koji je njezin službeni stav o izgradnji Pelješkog mosta?

Kada možemo očekivati sljedeće konkretne korake u vezi s vitalnim projektom Pelješkog mosta?

Odgovor g. Hahna u ime Komisije
(18. rujna 2013.)

U pripremi je predstudija izvedivosti čiji je cilj identificirati sve dostupne prijevozne mogućnosti za povezivanje Dubrovačke regije s ostatkom Hrvatske i koja pri usporedbi raznih mogućnosti u obzir uzima financijske, društveno-gospodarske i okolišne kriterije.

Za ugovor te predstudije izvedivosti nadležna su hrvatska upravna tijela, koja se pri tome savjetuju s upravnim tijelima Bosne i Hercegovine te Komisije. Ovisno o rezultatu studije, za izabranu mogućnost pripremit će se dodatna projektna dokumentacija kao što su projekt, potpuna studija izvedivosti, analiza troškova i koristi, procjena utjecaja na okoliš i drugi dokumenti. Tek će naknadno hrvatska upravna tijela odlučiti hoće li sufinancirati izabrani projekt u sklopu Europskih strukturnih i investicijskih fondova, u kojem će slučaju biti potrebno pripremiti prijavu za veliki projekt i podnijeti je Komisiji.

Komisija pažljivo prati pripremu te studije.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009451/13
to the Commission
Dubravka Šuica (PPE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Pelješac bridge — ensuring Croatian/European territorial continuity

I am very pleased that the expert pre-feasibility study on transport options to connect southern Croatia is being contracted under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance.

The Pelješac bridge is viewed as the most appropriate solution for connecting the Dubrovnik area with southern Croatia.

The majority of Croatian citizens believe that the bridge is the best solution and the only way to achieve the territorial continuity of Croatia. The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and I supported this project from the very beginning.

I would point out that territorial continuity is as important for the Dubrovnik-Neretva County and my hometown of Dubrovnik as it is for the entire EU.

Pending the findings of the pre-feasibility study, could the Commission indicate its official position regarding the construction of the Pelješac bridge in Croatia?

When could we expect to see the next concrete steps regarding this vital Pelješac bridge project?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

A pre-feasibility study is in preparation, aiming at identifying all available transport options to link the Dubrovnik region with the rest of Croatia, taking into account financial, socioeconomic and environmental criteria to compare the different options.

The Croatian authorities are in charge of the contract of this pre-feasibility study, in consultation with authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Commission. Depending on the result of the study, further project documentation such as design, full feasibility study, cost-benefit analysis, environmental impact assessment and other documents will be prepared for the preferred option. Only later will the Croatian authorities decide whether to co-finance the chosen project under the European Structural and Investment Funds, in which case a major project application will need to be prepared and submitted to the Commission.

The Commission is closely following the preparation of the study.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009452/13
to the Commission
Nigel Farage (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU funding of NGOs in the UK

Please confirm or deny whether EU bodies or institutions have, during the current and last three financial years, provided financial or other assistance to, or met with representatives of:

British Influence,

Business for New Europe,

ClientEarth,

Friends of the Earth,

Greenpeace,

Oxfam,

Surrey University,

The Welsh Assembly,

TheCityUK,

The City of London Corporation,

The Charity Commission,

Votewatch.eu,

and in each case, and for each period, state:

1. the amount of the funding or the nature of the assistance (as the case may be);

2. the budget from which the financing or assistance was paid;

3. the EU body or institution authorising or approving the financing or assistance;

4. the dates of, and individuals attending, the meeting (if any); and

5. the stated purpose for which the financing or assistance was given.

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

The Honourable Member can find in the annex information concerning financial assistance given to entities listed in the question in the last three years.

Concerning the part of the question that relates to the dates of, and individuals attending, any meetings held, the Commission cannot undertake, for the purpose of answering a written question, the lengthy and costly research that would be required to provide the Honourable Member with the information requested.

(българска версия)

Въпрос с искане за писмен отговор E-009453/13
до Комисията
Monika Panayotova (PPE)
(5 август 2013 г.)

Относно: Деинституционализация на грижите за деца в България, извършвана с европейско финансиране

На 31 юли 2013 г. бе освободен от длъжност председателят на Държавната агенция за закрила на детето в България, без да бъдат представени обективни аргументи за взетото решение.

Един от основните приоритети на Агенцията е реализацията на ключовата за България реформа на националната система за подкрепа на деца, лишени от родителска грижа, в изпълнение на Националната стратегия „Визия за деинституционализация за децата в Република България“ и Плана за действие към нея.

Процесът на деинституционализация е прецедент на европейско ниво за успешна синергия между различни оперативни програми, приоритетни оси и източници на финансиране (Оперативна програма „Регионално развитие“, Оперативна програма „Развитие на човешките ресурси“ и Програмата за развитие на селските райони).

Реформата на грижите за деца, по която бяха постигнати значителни резултати от 2010 г. насам, навлиза в решителен етап. В контекста на тази реформа ролята на председателя на Агенцията като координатор на процеса е от изключителна важност, включително и по отношение на успешната реализация на изпълняваните проекти с европейско финансиране.

В този контекст, с какви механизми Европейската комисия ще гарантира, че подобно освобождаване от длъжност на такъв ключов етап от извършваната реформа няма да компрометира значително стартиралия процес и да създаде реални рискове за децата и младежите, живеещи в институциите?

Съществува ли потенциален риск от забавяне на усвояването на европейските средства за постигане на целите на деинституционализацията?

Отговор, даден от г-н Hahn от името на Комисията
(26 септември 2013 г.)

Процесът на деинституционализация в България действително може да се разглежда като успешен пример за интегрирано използване на различни фондове, а именно Европейския фонд за регионално развитие, Европейския социален фонд и Европейския земеделски фонд за развитие на селските райони. По тази причина Комисията от самото начало следеше отблизо този процес и подпомогна усилията на българските органи да спрат разрастването на институционалните грижи за деца, лишени от родителски грижи.

С цел да се гарантира успешно усвояване на отпуснатите от ЕС средства чрез безпроблемното изпълнение на всички предвидени дейности, Комисията насърчава българските власти да поддържат — както на политическо, така и на техническо равнище — тясната междуинституционална координация, която бе създадена за наблюдение на изпълнението на проекти по националната стратегия за деинституционализация. В това отношение е необходима висока степен на последователност и стабилност в установените управленски и координационни структури.

Въпреки известно забавяне в началото на изпълнението сега се изграждат значителен брой съфинансирани от ЕС домове за малък брой деца, като се очаква най-напредналите от тях да бъдат завършени през следващите месеци. Напредък има и по отношение на стартирането на съответните социални услуги, предназначени да подкрепят прехода от институционална грижа към грижа в рамките на общността.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009453/13
to the Commission
Monika Panayotova (PPE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU-funded deinstitutionalisation of children in Bulgaria

The head of the State Agency for Child Protection in Bulgaria was dismissed on 31 July 2013 without any objective explanation as to why he was dismissed.

One of the main priorities for the agency is to reform the national support system for children without parental care, which is a key area for Bulgaria, so as to fulfil the national strategy entitled 'Vision for the deinstitutionalisation of children in the Republic of Bulgaria', and the associated Action Plan for implementing this vision.

The deinstitutionalisation process is a precedent at European level for successfully synergising various operational programmes, priority axes and funding sources (the Regional Development operational programme, the Human Resources Development operational programme and the Rural Development Programme).

Reform of the childcare system, which has achieved significant results since 2010, has reached a crucial stage. The head of the agency plays an essential role as coordinator for the reform process, including as regards the successful implementation of EU-funded projects.

In this context, what mechanisms will the European Commission use to ensure that this kind of dismissal at such a critical stage in implementing reform will not seriously compromise the ongoing process and will not create real risks for children and young people living in institutions?

Might the provision of EU funds targeted at achieving deinstitutionalisation goals be delayed?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The deinstitutionalisation process in Bulgaria can indeed be regarded as a successful example of the integrated use of different funds, namely the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. For this reason, the Commission has been closely following this exercise from the beginning and has assisted the Bulgarian authorities in their efforts to stop the expansion of institutional care settings for children without parental care.

In order to guarantee a successful absorption of the allocated EU funds through a smooth implementation of all envisaged activities, the Commission is encouraging the Bulgarian authorities to maintain the close interinstitutional coordination at both political and technical level, which has been put in place to monitor the implementation of projects under the national deinstitutionalisation strategy. In this regard, a high degree of continuity and stability in the established management and coordination structures is essential.

Despite some delay in the start of implementation a considerable number of the EU co-financed small group homes are now under construction and in the coming months the most advanced are expected to be completed. Progress is also being made with regard to the launch of the corresponding social services, designed to support the transition from institutional to community-based care.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009454/13
an die Kommission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(5. August 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 Frage gebeten:

Kann die Kommission bestätigen, dass sie dafür Sorge tragen wird, dass die Gesamtdauer der Bereitschaft 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
(10. September 2013)

Die Kommission weist darauf hin, dass in ihrer Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage P-007959/2013 auf die hier aufgeworfenen Fragen eingegangen wird, und möchte daher die Frau Abgeordnete auf diese Antwort ([1]) verweisen.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009454/13
to the Commission
Jutta Steinruck (S&D)
(5 August 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 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
(10 September 2013)

The Commission would point out that its answer to the Written Question P-007959/2013 covers the queries raised by the Honourable Member in the present question and would therefore refer her to this answer ([1]).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/QP-WEB/application/home.do?language=EN

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009455/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(5. August 2013)

Betrifft: Automatisierte Überwachung

In einer Studie findet das Max-Planck-Institut für ausländisches und internationales Strafrecht keine Hinweise darauf, dass die Vorratsdatenspeicherung einen Terroranschlag verhindert hätte. Genau dieses Argument wird indes stets zur Rechtfertigung besagten Vorgehens gebraucht. Mit der automatisierten Überwachung ist es hingegen ein Kinderspiel, Regierungsgegner ausfindig zu machen. Auch Journalisten und ihre Informanten sind so leicht zu verfolgen. Zudem wollen die US-Geheimdienste Firmen zur Zusammenarbeit hinsichtlich Verschlüsselung zwingen, da sie alle Nachrichten vor einer Verschlüsselung — die zu knacken immerhin sehr zeitaufwendig ist — lesen können wollen.

Inwieweit finden diese Problempunkte im Rahmen der anstehenden Überarbeitung der EU-Datenschutzbestimmungen Berücksichtigung?

Antwort von Frau Reding im Namen der Kommission
(18. Oktober 2013)

Die Vorschläge der Kommission für eine Überarbeitung der Datenschutzbestimmungen ([1]) vom 25. Januar 2012, die derzeit dem Europäischen Parlament und dem Rat zur Prüfung vorliegen, bauen auf den Grundsätzen der Richtlinie 95/46/EG auf. Das Ziel, einen stabileren und einheitlicheren Rahmen für die Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten zu schaffen, soll unter anderem durch die Einführung des Grundsatzes „Datenschutz durch Technik und datenschutzfreundliche Voreinstellungen“ erreicht werden; ferner sollen die Rechte des Einzelnen gestärkt werden, und zwar in erster Linie durch die Einführung des Rechts auf Vergessenwerden. Der neue Datenschutzrahmen sieht insbesondere vor, dass nicht in der EU niedergelassene Unternehmen, die in der Union ansässigen Personen Waren oder Dienstleistungen anbieten oder das Verhalten von natürlichen Personen in der EU beobachten, die EU-Datenschutzbestimmungen einhalten müssen.

Die Mitgliedstaaten und Europol haben die Kommission auf zahlreiche Fälle hingewiesen, in denen die Vorratsdatenspeicherung zum Zwecke der Ermittlung und Verfolgung von schweren Straftaten, einschließlich Terroranschlägen, von entscheidender Bedeutung war ([2]).

([1]) KOM(2012)11 und KOM(2012)12.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/pdf/policies/police_cooperation/evidence_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009455/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Automated surveillance

A study by the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law has found that there is no evidence of data retention having prevented a terrorist attack, yet this is precisely the argument which is always used to justify the procedure. Automated surveillance makes it easy to identify opponents of the government; it is also a simple matter to keep tabs on journalists and their informants. Furthermore, the US security services are trying to force firms to cooperate with them on encryption, as they want to be able to see all information prior to encoding (decryption being very time-consuming).

How much attention will be paid to these problematic issues in the forthcoming review of the EU data protection rules?

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

The Commission's proposals for a Data Protection Reform ([1]) of 25 January 2012, currently under examination of the co-legislators, builds on the principles of Directive 95/46/EC and will provide a more robust and uniform framework for the processing of personal data, *inter alia* by introducing the principles of 'data protection by design and by default' and reinforces individual's rights, especially by introducing the right to be forgotten. It foresees in particular that companies established outside the EU, but offering goods or services to data subjects in the Union, or monitoring the behaviour of EU individuals, will have to comply with these EU rules.

Evidence has been provided to the Commission by Member States and Europol concerning numerous cases where retained data have been crucial to the investigation or prosecution of serious crime, including terrorism cases ([2]).

([1]) COM(2012) 11 and COM(2012) 12.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/pdf/policies/police_cooperation/evidence_en.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009456/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(5. August 2013)

Betrifft: Manipulation auf dem Rohstoffsektor

Da die Lagerung und der Handel mit Rohstoffen ein milliardenschweres Geschäft ist, ist es in den USA durchaus Usus, dass Banken im Besitz von Metalllagerhäusern, Stromkraftwerken, Warenhäusern, Raffinerien und Hafenanlagen sind. Der US-Bankenausschuss will deshalb hinterfragen, ob es den Banken erlaubt sein kann, Öltanker und Metalllager zu halten und gleichzeitig mit Wertpapieren auf den Preis der gelagerten Rohstoffe zu spekulieren. Beispielsweise soll das Institut Goldman Sachs über seine Firma „Metro International Trade Service" jahrelang Aluminium gehortet und später an den Endkunden weitergegeben haben. Diese künstliche Verknappung ließ den Aluminiumpreis steigen.

1. Sieht die Kommission die Gefahr einer ähnlichen Problematik für den EU-Bereich?

2. In welchem Ausmaß wurden diese Probleme im Rahmen der Änderungen der Finanzmarktaufsicht berücksichtigt bzw. sind diesbezüglich noch Änderungen geplant?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(3. Oktober 2013)

Die Berichte, auf die sich der Herr Abgeordnete in seiner Anfrage bezieht, sind der Kommission bekannt. Der Kommission ist bewusst, welche Bedeutung die Rohstoffmärkte für die gesamte Wirtschaft haben. Auch verfolgt sie die Debatte über mutmaßliche Interessenkonflikte, zu denen es kommen kann, wenn Finanzakteure die Lagerung und den Transport von Rohstoffen kontrollieren.

Die Eindämmung der übermäßigen Preisvolatilität auf den Weltrohstoffmärkten hat für die Kommission hohe Priorität. In ihrer einschlägigen Mitteilung vom Februar 2011 ([1]) forderte sie weitere Maßnahmen zur Erhöhung der Integrität und Transparenz dieser Märkte. Im Einklang mit den auf G20-Ebene eingegangenen Verpflichtungen hat die Kommission verschiedene Rechtsetzungsinitiativen auf den Weg gebracht, die darauf abzielen, Integrität und Transparenz der Märkte für Rohstoffderivate zu fördern. Dazu zählen die Kommissionsvorschläge zur Änderung der Richtlinie über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente („MiFID-Überprüfung") ([2]) ebenso wie die Marktmissbrauchsverordnung ([3]), über die bereits eine politische Einigung erzielt wurde.

Die EU beteiligt sich aktiv an den Arbeiten der G20 zur Analyse der Interaktionen zwischen physischen Commodity-Märkten und den einschlägigen Finanzmärkten. In der Tat kann sich die Präsenz von Finanzakteuren in der Lieferkette für physische Rohstoffe auf die Preisbildung auswirken. Unter den G20-Mitgliedern besteht Einigkeit darüber, dass auf globaler Ebene eine stärkere Koordinierung zwischen den für die jeweiligen Sektoren zuständigen Regulierungs- und Marktaufsichtsbehörden wie auch eine engere Zusammenarbeit der nationalen und regionalen Gerichtsbarkeiten erforderlich ist. Die EU wird sich auch künftig aktiv in diesem Bereich engagieren.

([1]) Grundstoffmärkte und Rohstoffe: Herausforderungen und Lösungsansätze, Februar 2011, KOM(2011)25 endg.

([2]) Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente und zur Änderung der Verordnung [EMIR] über OTC-Derivate, zentrale Gegenparteien und Transaktionsregister (KOM(2011)652) und Vorschlag für eine Richtlinie des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über Märkte für Finanzinstrumente zur Aufhebung der Richtlinie 2004/39/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates (KOM(2011)656):
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0656:FIN:DE:PDF

([3]) Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über Insider-Geschäfte und Marktmanipulation — Validierung der vorläufigen Einigung mit dem Europäischen Parlament:
http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st11/st11384.en13.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009456/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Manipulation in the raw materials sector

Since the storage and trading of raw materials is a multibillion activity, it is standard practice in the USA for banks to own metal warehouses, power stations, department stores, refineries and port facilities. The US Banking Committee intends to investigate whether banks can be allowed to own oil tankers and metal stores whilst at the same time engaging in securities speculation on the price of the raw materials. For example, the Goldman Sachs Institute is said to have used its firm Metro International Trade Service to stockpile aluminium for a number of years and delay its passage to final consumers, so that the resultant artificial shortage pushed up the price of aluminium.

1. In the Commission's view, is there a danger of a similar situation arising in the EU?

2. To what extent were these problems taken into account in the changes to financial market supervision? Are further changes envisaged in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Commission is aware of the reports referred to in the Honourable Member's question. The Commission is mindful of the importance of the commodity markets for the economy as a whole and is conscious of the debate surrounding the alleged conflict of interest brought about when financial players control the storage and shipment of commodities.

The Commission considers the need to address the excessive price volatility on the world's commodity markets a high priority. In its communication of February 2011 ([1]), the Commission called for further action to improve integrity and transparency on these markets. In line with G20 commitments, the Commission has launched a number of regulatory initiatives to increase the integrity and transparency of commodity derivatives markets. These include the Commission proposals amending the directive on Markets in Financial Instruments (the MiFID review) ([2]) and the provisionally agreed Market Abuse Regulation ([3]).

The EU is actively participating in the G20 work which analyses the interactions between physical and financial commodity markets. Indeed, the presence of financial players in the supply chain of physical commodities can have an impact on the formation of commodity prices. G20 members agree that more coordination between sectorial regulators and market authorities as well as stronger cooperation of national and regional jurisdictions is needed at global level. The EU will remain active in this area.

([1]) Tackling the challenges in commodity markets and on raw Materials, February 2011, COM(2011) 25 final.

([2]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Markets in financial instruments and amending Regulation [EMIR] on OTC derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories (COM(2011)652) and Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on markets in financial instruments repealing Directive 2004/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (COM(2011)656).http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0656:FIN:EN:PDF

([3]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on insider dealing and market manipulation (market abuse) (MAR) — Validation of the provisional agreement with the European Parliament http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/13/st11/st11384.en13.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009457/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ανάγκη προστασίας της μελισσοκομίας

Στις 29.4.2013 η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή αποφάσισε την απαγόρευση, για δύο χρόνια, της χρήσης 3 νεονικοτινοειδών φυτοφαρμάκων (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam και clothianidin), καθώς, ύστερα από έρευνες της Ευρωπαϊκής Αρχής για την Ασφάλεια των Τροφίμων (ΕΑΑΤ), αποδείχθηκε ότι υπάρχει αιτιώδης συνάφεια μεταξύ της χρήσης των νεονικοτινοειδών φυτοφαρμάκων και της επιβίωσης των αποικιών μελισσών.

Κατά την ΕΑΑΤ, μάλιστα, τα 3 αυτά νεονικοτινοειδή επιφέρουν οξείες και χρόνιες επιπτώσεις στην ανάπτυξη και επιβίωση των αποικιών των μελισσών, επιπτώσεις στις προνύμφες των μελισσών καθώς και στη συμπεριφορά τους.

Πιο πρόσφατα, τα κράτη μέλη υπερψήφισαν πρόταση της Επιτροπής για μερική αναστολή της χρήσης και της δραστικής ουσίας fipronil, η οποία είναι εξίσου επικίνδυνη για τους πληθυσμούς των μελισσών.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Έχει αξιολογήσει τα πρόσφατα πορίσματα της ΕΑΑΤ, και, εάν ναι, σε τί συμπεράσματα και συστάσεις έχει καταλήξει για να θέσει υπό έλεγχο το φαινόμενο της συρρίκνωσης των πληθυσμών των μελισσών και να τονώσει τον μελισσοκομικό κλάδο;

— Προτίθεται στο άμεσο μέλλον να ζητήσει από την ΕΑΑΤ να εξετάσει τους κινδύνους για τις μέλισσες, από τη χρήση και άλλων δραστικών ουσιών; Εάν ναι, ποιες;

— Τι μέτρα έχει λάβει ώστε να αποτραπεί η εισαγωγή και εξάπλωση στην ΕΕ, δύο ιδιαίτερα επικίνδυνων εχθρών των μελισσών, του μικρού σκαθαριού της κυψέλης Aethina tumida και του ασιατικού ακάρεως Tropilaelaps;

— Ποια συγκεκριμένα μέτρα προτίθεται να λάβει προκειμένου να αντιστραφεί η φθίνουσα πορεία της μελισσοκομίας, η οποία αποτελεί μία οικονομική δραστηριότητα φιλική προς το περιβάλλον, συντελεί στην ορθολογική διαχείριση των φυσικών πόρων και της αγροτικής παραγωγής και από την οποία εξαρτώνται χιλιάδες οικογένειες;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. Η Επιτροπή καλεί τον κύριο βουλευτή να ανατρέξει στην απάντηση που έχει δώσει στις γραπτές ερωτήσεις E-000160/2012, E-010355/2012, P-003944/2013 και E-008771/2013 ([1]).

2. Οι δραστικές ουσίες που περιέχει έχουν εγκριθεί για περιορισμένη χρονική περίοδο και υπόκεινται σε επανεξέταση των κινδύνων για την υγεία του ανθρώπου και των ζώων και για το περιβάλλον, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των κινδύνων για τις μέλισσες. Εκτός αυτού, η Επιτροπή μπορεί να αποφασίσει να εφαρμοστούν περαιτέρω μέτρα διαχείρισης κινδύνου, ανάλογα με την περίπτωση, με βάση τις νέες επιστημονικές πληροφορίες.

3. Τα μέτρα της ΕΕ κατά του μικρού κανθάρου των κυψελών και του ακάρεως Tropilaelaps περιγράφονται στην ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής για την υγεία των μελισσών ([2]). Η ΕΑΑΤ ([3]) επιβεβαίωσε ότι οι πιο αποτελεσματικές και εφικτές επιλογές άμβλυνσης του κινδύνου καλύπτονται ήδη από τους υφιστάμενους κανόνες της ΕΕ. Η εκπαίδευση και κατάρτιση θα μπορούσε επίσης να συμβάλει στην αποφυγή εισόδου επιβλαβών οργανισμών. Η Επιτροπή αντιμετώπισε ειδικά τούτο σε κύκλους μαθημάτων για την υγεία των μελισσών στο πλαίσιο της πρωτοβουλίας «Καλύτερη κατάρτιση για ασφαλέστερα τρόφιμα».

4. Εκτός από τις ενέργειες που περιγράφονται στις απαντήσεις που αναφέρονται ανωτέρω, η Ένωση παρέχει στήριξη δυνάμει του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1234/2007, για τη βελτίωση της παραγωγής και της εμπορίας των προϊόντων της μελισσοκομίας. Για την επόμενη τριετή περίοδο προγραμματισμού (2014-2016) και τα 28 κράτη μέλη θα επωφεληθούν από συνεισφορά της Ένωσης συνολικού ύψους 33,1 εκατ. ευρώ/έτος.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/el/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) COM (2010)714 τελικό, http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/bees/docs/honeybee_health_communication_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130314.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009457/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Need for protection of beekeeping

On 29.04.2013 the Commission decided to ban for two years the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides (imidacloprid, thiamethoxam and clothianidin), because research by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has established a causal link between the use of neonicotinoid pesticides and the survival of honeybee colonies.

According to EFSA, these 3 neonicotinoids have an acute and chronic impact on the development and survival of bee colonies and affect bee larvae and their behaviour.

More recently, Member States also voted in favour of the Commission proposal for a partial suspension of the use of the active substance fipronil, which is equally dangerous for bee populations.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Has it evaluated the recent EFSA findings, and if so, what conclusions has it drawn and what recommendations has it made to control the phenomenon of shrinking bee populations and boost the beekeeping sector?

2. Does it intend in the near future to ask EFSA to consider the risks to bees from the use of other active substances? If so, which substances?

3. What measures has it taken to prevent the introduction and spread in the EU of two particularly dangerous enemies of the bee, the small hive beetle *Aethina tumida* and the Asian mite *Tropilaelaps*?

4. What specific steps will it take to reverse the decline of beekeeping, which is an environmentally-friendly economic activity, is conducive to the rational management of natural resources and agricultural production and provides a livelihood for thousands of families?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

1. The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-000160/2012, E-010355/2012, E-003944/2013 and E-008771/2013 ([1]).

2. Active substances are approved for a limited period and subject to a review of risks to human and animal health and the environment, including risk to bees. Besides this, the Commission can decide on further risk management measures, as appropriate, on the basis of new scientific information.

3. EU measures against small hive beetle and *Tropilaelaps* mite are described in the Commission Communication on Honeybee health ([2]). EFSA ([3]) confirmed that the most effective and feasible risk mitigation options are already covered in the current EU rules. Education and training could also help prevent pest entry. The Commission has specifically addressed this in bee health courses within its Better Training for Safer Food initiative.

4. In addition to the actions described in the replies mentioned above the Union provides support under Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 to improve the production and marketing of apiculture products. For the next tri-annual programming period (2014-2016) all 28 Member States will benefit from a Union contribution in total of 33.1 million EUR/year.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) COM(2010) 714 final, http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/bees/docs/honeybee_health_communication_en.pdf
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130314.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009458/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Αξιοποίηση του έργου «Λιμνοδεξαμενή Μοσχόπουλου» στο νησί της Κέρκυρας

Το έργο της Λιμνοδεξαμενής Μοσχόπουλου στο νησί της Κέρκυρας κατασκευάστηκε και αποπερατώθηκε το 2001 με συγχρηματοδότηση από την ΕΕ. Το συνολικό κόστος κατασκευής ανήλθε στο ποσό των 1 015 400 ευρώ. Το 2008 αποφασίσθηκε από τους αρμόδιους Υπουργούς Εσωτερικών και Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης, η μεταφορά της διοίκησης, λειτουργίας και συντήρησης του έργου στο Δήμο Λευκιμμαίων, ενώ στο Υπουργείο Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης και Τροφίμων θα έμενε ως αρμοδιότητα, η παρακολούθηση της συμπεριφοράς του ταμιευτήρα.

Δυστυχώς, το έργο έχει μείνει εντελώς αναξιοποίητο και ποτέ δεν ικανοποίησε τους λόγους για τους οποίους είχε αρχικά κατασκευαστεί.

Τη στιγμή μάλιστα που οι κάτοικοι της Κέρκυρας διαμαρτύρονται δικαιολογημένα, βλέποντας ένα έργο σημαντικό για τον τόπο τους, το οποίο έχει χρηματοδοτηθεί από την ΕΕ, να παραμένει αναξιοποίητο τόσα χρόνια, οι αρμόδιες ελληνικές αρχές δηλώνουν ότι: «απαιτούνται επιπλέον έργα σημαντικού κόστους, όπως διϋλιστήριο, αντλιοστάσια και δίκτυα ύδρευσης και άρδευσης, ενώ χρήζουν άμεσων επεμβάσεων ο ταμιευτήρας και τα σύνοδα προς αυτόν έργα της υδροληψίας για καθαρισμό και βελτίωσή τους, λόγω της μακρόχρονης εγκατάλειψής τους».

Με δεδομένα όλα τα ανωτέρω, καθώς και ότι,

α) το νησί της Κέρκυρας αντιμετωπίζει σημαντικό πρόβλημα ύδρευσης και άρδευσης, και

β) η τραγική οικονομική κατάσταση στην οποία έχουν περιέλθει οι Δήμοι στην Ελλάδα, λόγω των προγραμμάτων δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής που εφαρμόζονται τα τελευταία χρόνια, καθιστά αδύνατη την χρηματοδότηση του έργου από ίδιους πόρους, για την ολοκλήρωσή του,

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Γνωρίζει το πρόβλημα της μη αξιοποίησης του εν λόγω χρηματοδοτούμενου έργου από την ΕΕ; Πώς το σχολιάζει;

— Υπάρχει η δυνατότητα της χρηματοδότησης από κοινοτικούς πόρους των επιπρόσθετων έργων που απαιτούνται, ώστε να λυθεί σε μεγάλο βαθμό το τεράστιο πρόβλημα της ύδρευσης και άρδευσης που αντιμετωπίζουν οι κάτοικοι της περιοχής;

Απάντηση του κ. Cioloş εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει πληροφορίες για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο χρησιμοποιήθηκε το νερό αυτού του ταμιευτήρα (ο οποίος κατασκευάστηκε και χρηματοδοτήθηκε το 2001) μετά την αποπεράτωσή του. Ωστόσο, ο γενικός κανόνας που διέπει τα συγχρηματοδοτούμενα έργα είναι ότι καθίστανται επιλέξιμα για συγχρηματοδότηση της ΕΕ εάν έχουν ολοκληρωθεί και καταστεί λειτουργικά, καθώς και εφόσον εξυπηρετούν τον σκοπό για τον οποίο εκτελέστηκαν. Ως προς αυτό θα ζητηθούν περαιτέρω πληροφορίες από το κράτος μέλος.

Υδροταμιευτήρες και δίκτυα άρδευσης είναι επιλέξιμα για συγχρηματοδότηση από το Ευρωπαϊκό Γεωργικό Ταμείο Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης (ΕΓΤΑΑ), ενώ στο πρόγραμμα αγροτικής ανάπτυξης του 2007-13 για την Ελλάδα συμπεριλαμβάνεται ένα μέτρο που αφορά αυτόν τον τύπο υποδομών.

Στο πλαίσιο της επιμερισμένης διαχείρισης (άρθρο 7, και τίτλος VI του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 1698/2005 ([1])) κάθε κράτος μέλος έχει την ευθύνη της εφαρμογής του οικείου προγράμματος αγροτικής ανάπτυξης. Η επιλογή των έργων υπάγεται στην αρμοδιότητα κάθε κράτους μέλους.

([1]) ΕΕ L 277 της 21.10.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009458/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Use of the Moschopoulos reservoir project on the island of Corfu

The Moschopoulos reservoir project on the island of Corfu was constructed and completed in 2001 with co-funding from the EU. The total construction cost amounted to EUR 1 015 400. In 2008 it was decided by the Ministers of the Interior and Rural Development, the Ministers responsible, to transfer responsibility for the administration, operation and maintenance of the project to the Municipality of Lefkimmi, while the Ministry of Rural Development and Food would retain responsibility for monitoring the behaviour of the reservoir.

Unfortunately, the project has remained completely unused and never justified the decision to construct it in the first place.

When the inhabitants of Corfu justifiably complained that an important local EU-funded project has remained unused for so many years, the competent Greek authorities replied that '*further projects entailing significant costs are needed, such as a water treatment plant, pumping stations and water supply and irrigation networks, while the reservoir and associated water supply projects require immediate work to clean and improve them, since they have long been neglected.*'

Given all the above, and the fact that a) the island of Corfu is facing major water supply and irrigation problems, and b) the desperate economic situation of the municipalities in Greece due to the fiscal consolidation programmes implemented in recent years makes it impossible to finance and complete the project from its own resources,

Will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of the failure to use this EU-funded project? What is its view of this matter?

2. Is there any possibility of financing the additional projects required from EU funds in order to solve most of the huge water supply and irrigation problem faced by local residents?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

No information is available at Commission level, on how the water of this reservoir, co-financed and constructed in 2001, was used after its completion. However, the general rule governing co-financed projects is that they are eligible for EU co-financing if they are completed and operational and if they serve the purpose they were carried-out for. Further information will be requested from the Member State in this regard.

Water reservoirs and irrigation networks are eligible for co-financing from the European Agricultural Development Fund (EAFRD) and a measure targeting this type of infrastructure is included under the 2007-13 rural development programme (RDP) for Greece.

In the context of shared management (Article 7, and Title VI of Council Regulation (EC) 1698/2005 ([1])), it is the responsibility of each Member State to implement its rural development programme (RDP). The selection of projects falls under the competence of each Member State.

([1]) OJ L 277, 21.10.2005.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009460/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Αυξημένες συγκεντρώσεις νιτρικών στο νερό οικισμών της Ροδόπης

Σύμφωνα με ελέγχους που διενήργησε για την ποιότητα των υδάτων η Χημική Υπηρεσία Αλεξανδρούπολης, που λειτουργεί υπό την αιγίδα του Γενικού Χημείου του Κράτους, στους οικισμούς Λυκείου, Μύστακα και Μικρό Πιστό του Δήμου Αρριανών της Περιφερειακής Ενότητας Ροδόπης, παρατηρήθηκαν ασυνήθιστα υψηλές συγκεντρώσεις Νιτρικών αλάτων, που ανέρχονταν ως και τα 93 mg/l, όταν ανώτατη επιτρεπόμενη τιμή, σύμφωνα με την οδηγία 75/440/ΕΟΚ για την απαιτούμενη ποιότητα των υδάτων επιφάνειας που προορίζονται για την παραγωγή ποσίμου ύδατος στα Κράτη μέλη, καθώς και με την οδηγία 91/676/ΕΟΚ για την προστασία των υδάτων από την νιτρορύπανση γεωργικής προέλευσης, ορίζονται τα 50 mg/l.

Με δεδομένο ότι: α) οι υψηλές συγκεντρώσεις Νιτρικών μπορούν να προκαλέσουν σοβαρή επιβάρυνση της υγείας των κατοίκων που καταναλώνουν αυτό το νερό, και β) η Επιτροπή πριν λίγες εβδομάδες παρέπεμψε την Ελλάδα στο Ευρωπαϊκό Δικαστήριο, καθώς ο πρόσφατος ορισμός πρόσθετων, ευπρόσβλητων στη νιτρορύπανση, ζωνών, δεν κάλυπτε όλες τις αιτιάσεις που είχε διατυπώσει, και υπάρχουν και άλλες περιοχές που πρέπει να χαρακτηριστούν ως ευπρόσβλητες ζώνες ή που έχουν μόνο εν μέρει χαρακτηριστεί,

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση εντάξει την ανωτέρω περιοχή στις ευπρόσβλητες στη νιτρορύπανση ζώνες; Αν όχι, όφειλε, κατά την Επιτροπή, να το έχει πράξει, δεδομένων των υπαρχόντων στοιχείων για υψηλές συγκεντρώσει νιτρικών, προκειμένου να προστατευθούν τόσο τα υπόγεια και επιφανειακά ύδατα της περιοχής όσο και η δημόσια υγεία;

2. Ποιες είναι οι πρόσθετες ζώνες που έπρεπε, αλλά δεν έχουν χαρακτηριστεί ευπρόσβλητες στη νιτρορύπανση, στην Ελλάδα; Τι στοιχεία σχετικά διαθέτει η Επιτροπή;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή προσφεύγει στο Δικαστήριο της ΕΕ κατά της Ελλάδας, επειδή η χώρα δεν έλαβε μέτρα τα οποία να διασφαλίζουν την αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση της ρύπανσης των υδάτων από νιτρικά άλατα γεωργικής προέλευσης. Μετά την προσφυγή στο Δικαστήριο, η Ελλάδα εξέδωσε απόφαση τον Απρίλιο του 2013 για τον χαρακτηρισμό δέκα επιπλέον περιοχών ως ευπρόσβλητες στη νιτρορρύπανση ζώνες (ΝΕΖ). Σύμφωνα με την εκτίμηση της Επιτροπής, ο νέος χαρακτηρισμός ΝΕΖ, ωστόσο, δεν καλύπτει όλες τις περιοχές από τις οποίες απορρέουν ύδατα που εμφανίζουν ρύπανση και οι οποίες πρέπει να χαρακτηριστούν ΝΕΖ, ζήτημα που θα πρέπει να ληφθεί υπόψη στην εν εξελίξει διαδικασία.

Η εκτίμηση της Επιτροπής βασίζεται κυρίως στα αποτελέσματα για την ποιότητα του νερού που προκύπτουν από το δίκτυο για την παρακολούθηση της συγκέντρωσης νιτρικών ιόντων στα επιφανειακά ύδατα και τα υπόγεια ύδατα, καθώς και στην επανεξέταση της κατάστασης ευτροφισμού των γλυκών υδάτων και των παράκτιων και θαλάσσιων υδάτων. Με βάση τις πληροφορίες που υπέβαλε η Ελλάδα και πρόσθετες μελέτες, διαπιστώνεται ότι σε ορισμένες περιοχές, εκτός των ευπρόσβλητων στη νιτρορρύπανση ζωνών και συμπεριλαμβανομένης της περιοχής της Ροδόπης, παρατηρούνται υψηλές συγκεντρώσεις νιτρικών ιόντων στα υπόγεια ύδατα, ύδατα που εμφανίζουν ευτροφισμό και άσκηση σημαντικής πίεσης από τη γεωργία.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009460/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Increased concentrations of nitrates in water in villages in Rodopi

Water quality tests conducted by the Chemicals Service of Alexandroupolis, which operates under the auspices of the General State Chemicals Service, in the villages of Lykeio, Mystaka and Mikro Pisto in the Municipality of Arriana in Rodopi Regional Unit have found abnormally high concentrations of nitrates of up to 93 mg/l. The maximum amount permitted by Council Directive 75/440/EEC concerning the quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States and Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources is 50 mg/l.

Given that (a) high concentrations of nitrates can seriously damage the health of residents who consume this water and (b) the Commission referred Greece a few weeks ago to the European Court, as the recent designation of additional zones vulnerable to nitrate pollution did not meet all the objections which it had raised; the Commission takes the view that there are other areas that should be designated as vulnerable zones or have only been partially designated as such.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Has the Greek Government included the above region in the areas at risk from nitrate pollution? If not, should it have done so, in the Commission's view, given the existing data concerning high concentrations of nitrates, in order to protect both groundwater and surface water in the area and public health?

2. What are the additional areas which should have been — but were not — designated as vulnerable to nitrate pollution in Greece? What information does the Commission have on this matter?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission referred Greece to the EU Court of Justice for failing to take measures guaranteeing that water pollution by nitrates from agricultural sources is adequately addressed. After the referral to the Court, Greece adopted a decision to designate ten additional areas as nitrate vulnerable zones (NVZs) in April 2013. According to the Commission's assessment the new NVZs designation, however, does not cover all areas that drain into waters affected by pollution and that should be designated as NVZs, an aspect which will need to be taken into account in ongoing proceedings.

The Commission's assessment is primarily based on the water quality results from the monitoring network measuring nitrate concentration in surface waters and groundwater, and on the revision of the eutrophic state of freshwaters, as well as coastal and marine waters. Based on the information submitted by Greece and on additional studies, a number of areas outside the nitrate vulnerable zones, including in the region of Rodopi, have been identified as having high nitrate concentrations in groundwater, eutrophic waters, and significant agricultural pressure.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009461/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Επιπτώσεις στη δημόσια υγεία και ιδιαίτερα σε ασθενείς χρονίων παθήσεων από το κλείσιμο του Γενικού Νοσοκομείου Δυτικής Αττικής «Αγία Βαρβάρα»

Με απόφαση της κυβέρνησης, υλοποιώντας τις Μνημονιακές υποχρεώσεις (να μην υπερβαίνει το 6% του ΑΕΠ ο προϋπολογισμός για την υγεία), κλείνει το Γενικό νοσοκομείο Δυτικής Αττικής «Αγία Βαρβάρα» που εξυπηρετεί χιλιάδες κατοίκους της Αττικής.

Ας ληφθεί υπόψη ότι: α) είναι το μοναδικό νοσοκομείο στην Ελλάδα το οποίο λειτουργεί υποστηρικτικά στο επίσης μοναδικό «Κέντρο Χρονίων Παθήσεων», όπου νοσηλεύονται ασθενείς με την νόσο Hansen, το δε δερματολογικό τμήμα του νοσοκομείου είναι υπεύθυνο, σύμφωνα με τον νόμο, για την διάγνωση-θεραπεία των ασθενών που νοσούν από την νόσο αυτή, β) με την απόφαση αυτή, κλείνει και το μοναδικό σε όλη την Ελλάδα κέντρο διάγνωσης λύσσας, γ) κλείνει το κέντρο αναφοράς μοριακής διάγνωσης ιογενών ηπατιτίδων (Α, Β, C) Δυτικής Αθήνας που παρέχει υποστηρικτικές λειτουργίες για άτομα που νοσούν από ιογενείς ηπατίτιδες και βρίσκονται στο στάδιο της απεξάρτησης της μονάδας 18 Άνω του ΨΝΑ (Ψυχιατρικό Νοσοκομείο Αττικής) και των έγκλειστων των φυλάκων Κορυδαλλού, και δ) κλείνει το μοναδικό σε όλη την Ελλάδα Κέντρο Αναφοράς Μοριακής Διάγνωσης για την ηπατίτιδα Δ.

Τα παραπάνω έχουν, μεταξύ πολλών άλλων, ως αποτέλεσμα να αφήνονται εντελώς ακάλυπτοι και σε πλήρη απόγνωση τόσο οι ασθενείς με νόσο Hansen όσο και οι ασθενείς με ιογενείς ηπατίτιδες.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Η παραπάνω απόφαση είναι σε γνώση της Επιτροπής; Κρίνει ότι βοηθάει στην μεταρρύθμιση του τομέα υγείας στην Ελλάδα προς την σωστή κατεύθυνση;

2. Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή πώς θα αντιμετωπιστούν οι ανάγκες των υπαρχόντων ασθενών με νόσο Hansen, καθώς και τυχόν νέων κρουσμάτων της ασθένειας;

3. Στην απάντησή της, στο ερώτημά μου (E-006752/2013) η Επιτροπή τόνισε ότι «στα πλαίσια του εν εξελίξει διαλόγου με τις ελληνικές αρχές, η Επιτροπή αναφέρθηκε και θα συνεχίσει να αναφέρεται στις ανησυχίες της σχετικά με την δημόσια υγεία». Η απόφαση για το κλείσιμο του εν λόγω νοσοκομείου καλύπτει τις ανησυχίες της Επιτροπής; Αν όχι, τι προτίθεται να πράξει;

Απάντηση του κ. Borg εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή έχει επίγνωση του θέματος στο οποίο αναφέρεται ο κ. βουλευτής από τον Τύπο. Αυτή η συγκεκριμένη απόφαση των ελληνικών αρχών αποτελεί μέρος ενός ευρύτερου προγράμματος μεταρρύθμισης για τον εξορθολογισμό του νοσοκομειακού δικτύου της Ελλάδας με στόχο να μειωθούν οι υφιστάμενες ανεπάρκειες και να αξιοποιηθούν οικονομίες κλίμακας. Η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει γενικά το εν λόγω ευρύτερο πρόγραμμα μεταρρύθμισης από τις ελληνικές αρχές.

Η λήψη σωστών μέτρων για την εξασφάλιση της συνεχούς παροχής περίθαλψης στους ασθενείς που πάσχουν από τη νόσο Hansen εμπίπτει στην αρμοδιότητα των ελληνικών αρχών όπως, σύμφωνα με τη Συνθήκη, και η διαχείριση των υγειονομικών υπηρεσιών και της ιατρικής περίθαλψης καθώς και η κατανομή των πόρων που προβλέπονται για τις υπηρεσίες αυτές, ανήκει στην αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών.

Η Επιτροπή, ωστόσο, λόγω των ανησυχιών που εξέφρασε ο κ. βουλευτής, θα θέσει το εν λόγω ζήτημα ενώπιον των ελληνικών αρχών.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009461/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Consequences for public health, in particular for patients with chronic diseases, of the closure of Western Attica General Hospital 'Agia Varvara'

The Greek Government, honouring the commitments set out in the Memoranda (that the health budget should not exceed 6% of GDP), has decided to close the Western Attica General Hospital 'Agia Varvara' which serves thousands of residents of Attica.

Bearing in mind that this decision will close: (a) the only hospital in Greece which has a centre for chronic diseases, where patients with Hansen's disease (leprosy) are treated; (the hospital's dermatological department is responsible under the law for the diagnosis and treatment of patients suffering from this disease); (b) the only centre in Greece for the diagnosis of rabies; (c) the reference centre for the molecular diagnosis of viral hepatitis (A, B, C) for Western Athens, which provides support for people suffering from viral hepatitis, in particular detox patients in the designated unit in Attica Psychiatric Hospital and prisoners of Korydallou prison; and (d) the reference centre for the molecular diagnosis of hepatitis D, the only one of its kind in Greece.

The above developments will have many unfortunate consequences, in particular Hansen's disease patients and patients with viral hepatitis will be left completely without resources, driving them to despair.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of the above decision? Does it judge that it will help reform the health sector in Greece in the right direction?

2. Does it know how the needs of existing Hansen's disease patients and new patients with the disease will be met?

3. In its answer to my question (E-006752/2013), the Commission stated that 'as part of the ongoing dialogue with Greek authorities, the Commission raised and will continue to raise any relevant public health concerns'. Does the decision to close this hospital allay the Commission's concerns? If not, what action will it take?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the issue raised by the Honourable Member from the press. This specific decision by the Greek authorities is part of a wider reform programme to streamline Greece's hospital network with a view to reducing existing inefficiencies and utilising economies of scale. The Commission supports in general this wider reform programme by the Greek authorities.

Taking proper measures to ensure the continuity of care for Hansen's disease patients falls under the responsibility of the Greek authorities as, according to the Treaty, the management of health services and medical care, and the allocation of the resources assigned to them is the responsibility of the Member States.

In the light of the concerns expressed by the Honourable Member, the Commission will nonetheless raise this matter with the Greek authorities.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009462/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Οικολογική κατάσταση της λίμνης της Καστοριάς

Η λίμνη της Καστοριάς έχει ενταχθεί στο δίκτυο Natura 2000 (GR1320003), περιλαμβάνοντας σημαντικούς οικοτόπους καθώς και οικοτόπους προτεραιότητας, σύμφωνα με την οδηγία 92/43, για τη διατήρηση των φυσικών οικοτόπων καθώς και της άγριας πανίδας και χλωρίδας, ενώ αποτελεί και Ζώνη Ειδικής Προστασίας σύμφωνα με την οδηγία 79/409 περί της διατήρησης των άγριων πτηνών.

Στοιχεία από επιστημονικές μελέτες, δείχνουν ότι η οικολογική κατάσταση της Λίμνης της Καστοριάς έχει υποστεί δραματική υποβάθμιση τα τελευταία χρόνια. Χαρακτηριστικά αναφέρεται ότι το φυτοπλαγκτόν έχει καλυφθεί σε ποσοστό μεγαλύτερο από 90% από τοξικά κυανοβακτήρια. Σε περίπτωση που τα υψηλά αυτά επίπεδα ρύπανσης διατηρηθούν και τα επόμενα χρόνια, απειλείται με οριστική υποβάθμιση η χλωρίδα και η πανίδα της λίμνης.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Διαθέτει η Επιτροπή στοιχεία για την οικολογική κατάσταση της λίμνης της Καστοριάς; Πώς τα αξιολογεί;

— Έχουν χρηματοδοτηθεί από ευρωπαϊκά κονδύλια, την τελευταία πενταετία, έργα για την παρακολούθηση της οικολογικής κατάστασης και για την προστασία της λίμνης, τα οποία να έχουν ολοκληρωθεί; Ποια ήταν αυτά και ποιος ήταν ο προϋπολογισμός τους;

— Υπάρχουν έργα εν εξελίξει; Ποια και με τι προϋπολογισμό; Τι απορροφητικότητα έχουν;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει στοιχεία όσον αφορά την οικολογική κατάσταση της λίμνης της Καστοριάς, δεδομένου ότι δεν συγκεντρώνει τέτοιου είδους στοιχεία όσον αφορά μεμονωμένες τοποθεσίες. Η λίμνη της Καστοριάς (που αποτελεί μέρος της λίμνης Ορεστιάδας (GR1320003) περιλαμβάνεται στο δίκτυο Natura 2000 και υπόκειται, συνεπώς, στις διατάξεις περί προστασίας και διαχείρισης που προβλέπονται στο άρθρο 6 της οδηγίας περί ενδιαιτημάτων 92/43/ΕΟΚ ([1]). Η Ελλάδα πρέπει να εξασφαλίσει τη λήψη κατάλληλων μέτρων για την πρόληψη της επιδείνωσης της περιοχής ώστε η κατάσταση τόσο των ενδιαιτημάτων όσο και των ειδών να διατηρηθεί σε καλό επίπεδο ή να αποκατασταθεί. Η Επιτροπή θα διερευνήσει περαιτέρω το ζήτημα αυτό με τις ελληνικές αρχές.

Τα κράτη μέλη δεν οφείλουν να διαβιβάζουν πληροφορίες στην Επιτροπή σχετικά με θέματα σχεδιασμού και ανάπτυξης δημόσιων και ιδιωτικών έργων, εκτός εάν αυτά είναι συγχρηματοδοτούμενα μεγάλα έργα, σύμφωνα με τον κανονισμό 1083/2006 ([2]) του Συμβουλίου (άρθρα 39-41). Εντούτοις, σύμφωνα με πληροφορίες που λάβαμε από τις ελληνικές αρχές σχετικά με την λίμνη της Καστοριάς, το επιχειρησιακό πρόγραμμα Μακεδονίας-Θράκης συγχρηματοδοτεί ένα έργο όσον αφορά την παρακολούθηση της κατάστασης των υδάτων πολλών λιμνών στη Δυτική Μακεδονία, περιλαμβανομένης της λίμνης της Καστοριάς. Για περαιτέρω πληροφορίες, το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου μπορεί να απευθυνθεί στη διαχειριστική αρχή του προγράμματος ([3]).

([1]) Για τη διατήρηση των φυσικών οικοτόπων καθώς και της άγριας πανίδας και χλωρίδας, ΕΕ L 206 της 22.7.1992.
([2]) Περί καθορισμού γενικών διατάξεων για το Ευρωπαϊκό Ταμείο Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης, το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο και το Ταμείο Συνοχής, ΕΕ L 49 της 31.7.2007.
([3]) Ενδιάμεση Διαχειριστική Αρχή Δυτικής Μακεδονίας
Διεύθυνση: ΖΕΠ Κοζάνης, GR-50100, ΚΟΖΑΝΗ
Τηλ.: 0030 24610 53900, Φαξ: 0030 24610 53969
ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση: dapepdm@mou.gr

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009462/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: State of the environment of Lake Kastoria

Lake Kastoria forms part of the Natura 2000 network (GR1320003), as it contains important and priority habitats, in accordance with Directive 92/43 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora; it has also been designated a Special Protection Area in accordance with Directive 79/409 on the conservation of wild birds.

Evidence from scientific studies shows that the state of the environment of Lake Kastoria has declined dramatically in recent years. For instance, over 90% of the phytoplankton is covered with toxic cyanobacteria. If these high pollution levels continue over the next few years, the Lake's flora and fauna face permanent degradation.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Does it have any data on the state of the environment of Lake Kastoria? If so, how does it evaluate this data?

— Has the EU funded any completed projects over the last five years to monitor the state of the environment and protect the Lake? What were they and what were their budgets?

— Are there any ongoing projects? What are they and what are their budgets? What are their take-up rates?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission does not have data regarding the state of the environment of Lake Kastoria at its disposal, as it does not collect such data on individual sites. Lake Kastoria is included in the Natura 2000 network (part of Limni Orestias (GR1320003) and it is therefore subject to the protection and management provisions laid down in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC ([1]). Greece needs to ensure that adequate measures are taken to prevent the deterioration of the area so that the habitats and species are maintained at or restored to a favourable conservation status. The Commission will further investigate this matter with the Greek authorities.

Member States are not obliged to send information to the Commission on planning and development issues of public and private projects, unless these are co-funded Major Projects as foreseen under Council Regulation 1083/2006 ([2]) (Articles 39-41). However according to information received from the Greek authorities for Lake Kastoria, the Operational Programme Macedonia-Thrace is co-funding a project related to the monitoring of the state of water of various lakes in Western Macedonia including Lake Kastoria. For further information the Honourable member could contact the Managing authority of the Programme ([3]).

([1]) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora Official Journal L 206 , 22/07/1992.
([2]) laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion FundOJ L 49, 31.07.07.
([3]) Intermediate Managing Authority of Western Macedonia
Address: Z.E.P Area Kozanis, GR- 50100, KOZANI
Tel: 00302461053900 , Fax: 00302461053969
email: dapepdm@mou.gr.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009463/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Αύξηση της ανεργίας

Ο Διεθνής Οργανισμός Εργασίας (ILO) προειδοποιεί ότι θα αυξηθεί περαιτέρω η ανεργία στα κράτη της G20, αν δεν ληφθούν άμεσα μέτρα. Σύμφωνα με δηλώσεις του Γενικού Διευθυντή του ILO, Γκάι Ράιντερ στο CNBC, που προηγήθηκαν της συνόδου των G20 στη Μόσχα, είναι ανησυχητικό το γεγονός πως στο τελευταίο12μηνο η ανεργία δεν μειώθηκε, αλλά αυξήθηκε.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια μέτρα λαμβάνονται για αντιμετώπιση της ανεργίας σε Ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο και τι μηχανισμοί υπάρχουν για ασφαλή και έγκαιρη αντιμετώπιση μιας ενδεχόμενης περαιτέρω αύξησης της ανεργίας σε κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ;

2. Πόσο ανησυχητικό είναι για την Επιτροπή το γεγονός ότι σε μεγάλες, πληθυσμιακά, χώρες της ΕΕ, όπως η Ιταλία και η Γαλλία, το ποσοστό ανεργίας αγγίζει το 11% ενώ σε μια άλλη, την Ισπανία, υπερβαίνει το 25%;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(13 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή συμμερίζεται την ανησυχία του κυρίου βουλευτή όσον αφορά τα τρέχοντα πρωτοφανώς υψηλά επίπεδα ανεργίας, ιδίως στους νέους. Παρ' όλα τα σημάδια ότι η ύφεση βαίνει προς το τέλος της, η οικονομική ανάκαμψη θα πρέπει να έχει διάρκεια και να είναι στιβαρή για να απορροφήσει την ανεργία. Χρειάζεται περισσότερη εστιασμένη δράση για να επιταχυνθεί ο ρυθμός δημιουργίας νέων θέσεων εργασίας. Για τον σκοπό αυτό, η Επιτροπή ακολουθεί την ατζέντα που ορίστηκε στο πακέτο εργασίας, το οποίο εγκρίθηκε τον Απρίλιο του 2012 ([1]) και επικεντρώνεται, μεταξύ άλλων, στη δημιουργία θέσεων εργασίας σε τομείς με υψηλό δυναμικό ανάπτυξης και στη βελτίωση του δυναμικού της ευρωπαϊκής αγοράς εργασίας.

Η οικονομική κρίση οδήγησε σε μια αυξανόμενη απόκλιση μεταξύ των κρατών μελών σε ό,τι αφορά την ανεργία και ιδίως μεταξύ των κρατών της ευρωζώνης. Οι συστάσεις ([2]) που εγκρίθηκαν στο τέλος του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου καθόρισαν ειδικές οδηγίες ανά χώρα για την οικονομική, εργασιακή και κοινωνική πολιτική, οι οποίες λαμβάνουν υπόψη την κατάσταση σε κάθε κράτος μέλος.

Για την αντιμετώπιση του εξαιρετικά υψηλού ποσοστού ανεργίας των νέων, τα κράτη μέλη πρέπει να εγκρίνουν επειγόντως τα σχέδια υλοποίησης του προγράμματος «Εγγύηση για τη Νεολαία», όπως αυτά συμφωνήθηκαν στο Ευρωπαϊκό Συμβούλιο του Ιανουαρίου 2013. Τα εν λόγω σχέδια θα πρέπει να ορίσουν τον τρόπο με τον οποίο θα υλοποιηθεί και θα χρηματοδοτηθεί το πρόγραμμα «Εγγύηση για τη Νεολαία». Τα κράτη μέλη θα πρέπει να εξασφαλίσουν ότι χρησιμοποιούν ένα σημαντικό ποσοστό των κονδυλίων ύψους μεγαλύτερου από 10 δις ευρώ ετησίως που έχουν συμφωνηθεί για το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο για την περίοδο 2014-20, επιπλέον της παροχής συμπληρωματικής χρηματοδότησης στο πλαίσιο της πρωτοβουλίας για την απασχόληση των νέων.

([1]) «Στοχεύοντας σε μια ανάκαμψη με άφθονες θέσεις απασχόλησης» [COM(2012)173 της 18ης Απριλίου 2012].
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_el.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009463/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Increase in unemployment

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has issued a warning that there will be a further increase in unemployment in the G20 countries unless urgent action is taken. The Director General of the ILO, Guy Ryder, stated on CNBC, prior to the G20 meeting in Moscow, that it was alarming that over the last twelve months unemployment had not decreased but increased.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What measures are being taken to tackle unemployment at European level and what mechanisms exist to address in a safe and timely manner a possible further rise in unemployment in EU Member States?

2. How alarming is it, in the Commission's view, that in EU countries such as Italy and France, with large populations, the unemployment rate is running at 11%, while it is over 25% in another such country, Spain?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission shares the Honourable Member's concern at current record-high unemployment, especially among young people. Despite signs that the recession is coming to an end, the economic recovery will have to last and be robust to absorb unemployment, and more closely focused action is needed to step up the pace of job creation. To that end, the Commission is following the agenda set out in the Employment Package adopted in April 2012 ([1]) and is focusing *inter alia* on job creation in sectors with high growth potential and improving European labour market dynamics.

The economic crisis has led to growing divergence in unemployment between the Member States and in particular amongst euro area countries. The recommendations ([2]) adopted at the end of the European Semester set out country-specific guidance on economic, employment and social policy that takes account of the situation in each Member State.

To address the excessively high rate of youth unemployment, the Member States must urgently adopt Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans, as agreed at the June 2013 European Council. These plans should notably set out how the Youth Guarantee will be implemented and financed. The Member States should ensure that they use a significant percentage of the over EUR 10 billion a year agreed for the European Social Fund for 2014-20, in addition to the top-up under the Youth Employment Initiative.

([1]) 'Towards a job-rich recovery' (COM(2012) 173 of 18 April 2012).
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/making-it-happen/country-specific-recommendations/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009464/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαίοι πολίτες κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας

Σε πρόσφατη ανακοίνωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής επισημαίνεται ότι το 16% των νοικοκυριών στην ΕΕ ζουν κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας. Τα μικρότερα ποσοστά εντοπίζονται σε χώρες όπως είναι η Τσεχία και η Ολλανδία, όπου κινούνται κάτω από το 10%, ενώ την ίδια ώρα σε χώρες όπως είναι η Ισπανία, η Βουλγαρία και η Κροατία, το ποσοστό αυτό φτάνει ή ακόμα ξεπερνά το 20%.

Επιπρόσθετα, στην Ιταλία, σύμφωνα με στοιχεία του Εθνικού Στατιστικού Ινστιτούτου της χώρας, Istat, οι άνθρωποι που ζουν κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας ανέρχονται σε 9,5 εκατομμύρια και αποτελούν το 8% του συνολικού πληθυσμού σε σχέση με 5,7% που ήταν το 2011.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποια μέτρα λαμβάνονται σε Ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο για αντιμετώπιση του φαινομένου της αύξησης του αριθμού των Ευρωπαίων πολιτών που ζουν κάτω από το όριο της φτώχειας;

2. Αντιλαμβάνεται η Επιτροπή τον αυξανόμενο κίνδυνο δημιουργίας μιας Ευρώπης των δύο ή και περισσοτέρων ταχυτήτων;

3. Ποια μέτρα λαμβάνονται για κλείσιμο της ψαλίδας, ανάμεσα στις χώρες της Κεντρικής και Βόρειας Ευρώπης και των χωρών του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί, στο πλαίσιο του Ευρωπαϊκού Εξαμήνου, τα μέτρα και τις επιδόσεις των κρατών μελών σε σχέση με την ανταπόκρισή τους στους στόχους της στρατηγικής «Ευρώπη 2020», ειδικότερα όσον αφορά τη μείωση του αριθμού των ανθρώπων που ζουν στη φτώχεια ή απειλούνται από τη φτώχεια κατά 20 εκατομμύρια τουλάχιστον έως το 2020. Για τρίτο κατά σειρά έτος η Επιτροπή εξέδωσε ειδικές ανά χώρα συστάσεις σχετικά με τη φτώχεια και τον κοινωνικό αποκλεισμό με στόχο τη βελτίωση της κοινωνικής προστασίας σε ολόκληρη την ΕΕ.

Πρότεινε το 25% τουλάχιστον των κονδυλίων των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων της ΕΕ κατά την προγραμματική περίοδο 2014-2020 να χορηγηθεί σε επενδύσεις στους ανθρώπους και στη μεταρρύθμιση της πολιτικής απασχόλησης και της κοινωνικής πολιτικής μέσω του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινωνικού Ταμείου, και το 20% τουλάχιστον του εν λόγω ποσού να προορίζεται για την κοινωνική ένταξη σε κάθε κράτος μέλος. Για να μειωθούν οι περιφερειακές ανισότητες εντός της ΕΕ, δύο τρίτα της συνολικής χρηματοδότησης πρέπει να συγκεντρωθούν στις λιγότερο αναπτυγμένες περιφέρειες κατά την περίοδο 2014-20.

Τα κονδύλια της πολιτικής της ΕΕ για την αγροτική ανάπτυξη (π.χ. στο πλαίσιο των μέτρων για την ποιότητα ζωής και του Leader), καθώς και του Ευρωπαϊκού Ταμείου Περιφερειακής Ανάπτυξης (με επενδύσεις στις υποδομές του κοινωνικού τομέα, του τομέα της υγείας, της εκπαίδευσης και της στέγασης) είναι επίσης διαθέσιμα για τη μείωση της φτώχειας και την κοινωνική ένταξη.

Εντός της ζώνης του ευρώ, η Επιτροπή ανέπτυξε ένα σχέδιο στρατηγικής ([1]) για μια βαθιά και ουσιαστική οικονομική και νομισματική ένωση τονίζοντας τη σημασία της ισχυρής κοινωνικής συνοχής και σύγκλισης ως προϋπόθεση για τη σωστή λειτουργία της ΟΝΕ. Προς τον σκοπό αυτόν το σχέδιο στρατηγικής της Επιτροπής απαιτεί, μεταξύ άλλων, να ενισχυθεί η επιτήρηση και ο συντονισμός των πολιτικών απασχόλησης και κοινωνικών θεμάτων εντός της διακυβέρνησης της ΟΝΕ. Η Επιτροπή θα υποβάλει συγκεκριμένες προτάσεις το φθινόπωρο του 2013.

([1]) Σχέδιο στρατηγικής για μια βαθιά και ουσιαστική οικονομική και νομισματική ένωση. Έναρξη συζήτησης σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο [(COM(2012)777 τελικό/2 της 30ής Νοεμβρίου 2012)].

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009464/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: European citizens living below the poverty threshold

A recent communication from the Commission points out that 16% of EU households are living below the poverty threshold. Lower percentages are found in countries such as the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, where the figure is below 10%, while in countries such as Spain, Bulgaria and Croatia, the figure is 20% or more.

Moreover, in Italy, according to data of the Italian National Statistical Institute, Istat, 9.5 million people are living below the poverty threshold, which amounts to 8% of the total population, compared to a figure of 5.7% in 2011.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What measures are being taken at European level to deal with the phenomenon of the increase in the number of European citizens living below the poverty threshold?

2. Does it understand the increased risk of creating a Europe of two or more speeds?

3. What steps are being taken to close the gap between the countries of Central and Northern Europe and the countries of Southern Europe?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

The Commission monitors, in the context of the European Semester, the Member States' measures and performance to meet the Europe 2020 targets, in particular for reducing the number of people in or at risk of poverty by at least 20 million by 2020. For the third year running, it has issued country specific recommendations relating to poverty and social exclusion with a view to improving social protection across the EU.

It has proposed that at least 25% of EU structural funds in the 2014-2020 programming period be allocated to investments in people and employment and social policy reform through the European Social Fund, and that at least 20% of that amount be earmarked for social inclusion in each Member State. . To reduce regional disparities within the EU, two thirds of the total funding is to be concentrated on the less-developed regions in 2014-20.

The EU Rural Development Policy (e.g. under the measures of Quality of Life and Leader), as well as, the European Regional Development Fund (through investments in social-, health, education and housing infrastructure) are also available for poverty reduction and social inclusion.

Within the euro area, the Commission has developed a 'Blueprint' ([1]) for deep and genuine Economic and Monetary Union stressing the importance of strong social cohesion and convergence as condition for the proper functioning of EMU. To this end, the Commission's Blueprint calls, among others, for reinforcing surveillance and coordination of employment and social policies within the EMU governance. The Commission will come up with concrete proposals in the autumn 2013.

([1]) 'A blueprint for a deep and genuine economic and monetary union: Launching a European Debate' (COM(2012) 777 final/2 of 30 November 2012).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009465/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ιδιωτικοποίηση του νερού

Η πρόσβαση στο νερό ανακηρύχθηκε από τον ΟΗΕ σε ανθρώπινο δικαίωμα. Σήμερα το νερό ανήκει κυρίως στους Δήμους και στις Κοινότητες, δηλαδή σε όλους μας. Αυτό φαίνεται πως θα αλλάξει δραστικά κατόπιν νέας πρότασης οδηγίας της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής. Ήδη στην Πορτογαλία η ιδιωτικοποίηση έχει ξεκινήσει ενάντια στη θέληση των πολιτών. Πιέσεις δέχονται επίσης η Ελλάδα και η Πορτογαλία από την Τρόικα για να πουλήσουν τους παρόχους ύδρευσής τους. Να πωληθούν δηλαδή οι δύο μεγάλες εταιρείες ύδρευσης της Αθήνας (ΕΥΔΑΠ) και της Θεσσαλονίκης (ΕΥΑΘ) και στην Πορτογαλία να προωθηθεί η ιδιωτικοποίηση της Εθνικής Εταιρείας Ύδρευσης Aquas de Portugal. Υπάρχει σοβαρός κίνδυνος για αύξηση των τιμών και κακή ποιότητα νερού από τέτοιες ιδιωτικοποιήσεις.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Αναγνωρίζει τον κίνδυνο να μετατραπεί το νερό σε αντικείμενο κερδοσκοπίας και η ιδιωτικοποίηση του να μην φέρει καλύτερη ποιότητα και οικονομικότερες λύσεις;

2. Σε ποιες γνωμοδοτήσεις βασίζεται η νέα πρόταση οδηγίας; Ποια είναι η ομάδα ειδικών που συμβουλεύει την Επιτροπή σε θέματα πολιτικής των υδάτων;

3. Γιατί στη λίστα ειδικών βρίσκονται κυρίως αντιπρόσωποι της βιομηχανίας υδάτων και συναφών βιομηχανιών;

4. Ποιος επέλεξε τους συγκεκριμένους ειδικούς;

5. Γιατί παραγνωρίζονται οι ανάγκες του πληθυσμού και δεν εκπροσωπούνται σε τέτοιες λίστες ειδικών εκπρόσωποι Δήμων/Κοινοτήτων και όχι μόνο, για να είναι πιο ισορροπημένη η σύνθεση τους;

6. Είναι τελικά το νερό ανθρώπινο δικαίωμα ή οικονομικό εργαλείο για τζίρο δισεκατομμυρίων;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(26 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Τρόικα δεν ασκεί πιέσεις ούτε στην Πορτογαλία ούτε στην Ελλάδα προκειμένου να ιδιωτικοποίησουν τις εταιρείες ύδρευσης. Για τα περιουσιακά στοιχεία που περιλαμβάνονται στο πρόγραμμα ιδιωτικοποιήσεων για τις χώρες του προγράμματος αποφασίζουν αποκλειστικά οι εθνικές αρχές.

Οι υπηρεσίες παροχής πόσιμου ύδατος έχουν αποκλεισθεί ρητώς από το πεδίο εφαρμογής της οδηγίας περί ανάθεσης συμβάσεων παραχώρησης, όπως συμφωνήθηκε κατά τις διαπραγματεύσεις μεταξύ του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και του Συμβουλίου.

Γενικώς, η οδηγία περί ανάθεσης δεν θίγει την ελευθερία των δημόσιων αρχών να αποφασίζουν πώς θα διοργανώσουν την παροχή οιασδήποτε δημόσιας υπηρεσίας. Πράγματι, η απόφαση για την ιδιωτικοποίηση ή μη τέτοιων υπηρεσιών εναπόκειται στην αποκλειστική αρμοδιότητα των εθνικών αρχών, οι οποίες είναι σε καλύτερη θέση να εκτιμούν κατά περίπτωση τους κινδύνους και τις ευκαιρίες κάθε τέτοιας ιδιωτικοποίησης.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009465/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Privatisation of water

Access to water has been declared a human right by the UN. Today, water belongs mainly to municipalities and communities, i.e. all of us. This looks set to change dramatically following a new proposal for a directive by the Commission. Already in Portugal privatisation has begun in defiance of public opinion. Pressure is also being applied in Greece and Portugal by the Troika to sell their water providers. In Greece, this means selling off the two major water companies — EYDAP in Athens and EYATh in Thessaloniki — and in Portugal promoting the privatisation of the National Water Company *Aquas de Portugal*. There is a serious risk of rising prices and poor quality water from such privatisation.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it recognise the danger that water may be transformed into an object of speculation and that privatisation will not bring better quality and lower prices?

2. On what opinions is the new proposal for a directive based? Which team of experts advises the Commission on water policy issues?

3. Why does the list of experts consist mainly of representatives of the water industry and related industries?

4. Who chose these particular experts?

5. Why are the needs of the population being overlooked and why are representatives of Municipalities / Communities and other bodies not included in these lists of experts in order to make their composition more balanced?

6. Ultimately, is water a human right or an economic tool in a multi-billion euro business?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The Troika is not putting pressure on Portugal or on Greece to privatise drinking water providers. The assets included in the privatisation programme for programme countries are the exclusive result of the national authorities' decision.

Provision of drinking water services have been explicitly excluded from the scope of application of the directive on the award of concessions contracts, as agreed upon during the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council.

In a general manner, the directive on concessions does not interfere with the freedom of public authorities of the Member States to decide on the organisation of any public services. Indeed, the decision whether such services should be privatised or not belongs exclusively to the competence of the national authoritities which are best placed to assess the risks and opportunities of such privatisation in each specific case.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009466/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Λογοκρισία ποιήματος «Νιόβη '74»

Στις 7 Μαρτίου 2013, οι Πολιτιστικές Υπηρεσίες του Υπουργείου Παιδείας της Κύπρου πρότειναν στον φιλόλογο-ποιητή Γιώργο Μοράρη να εκπροσωπήσει την Κύπρο στην έκθεση ποιημάτων «Transpoesie» που διοργανώνεται κάθε χρόνο από την EUNIC (European Union National Institutes of Culture). Ο Γιώργος Μοράρης απάντησε θετικά στέλνοντας για την έκθεση το ποίημα του «Νιόβη '74». Το ποίημα αναφέρεται σε μια θλιβερή παιδοκτονία στη διάρκεια της τουρκικής εισβολής στην Κύπρο. Στις 30 Μαΐου, σε απάντηση που επιδόθηκε στις Κυπριακές Πολιτιστικές Υπηρεσίες, η διευθύντρια του πολωνικού τμήματος της EUNIC Beata Podgorska, ανέφερε πως το Συμβούλιο του οργανισμού αποφάσισε ότι το πρόγραμμα «Transpoesie» δεν αποτελεί το κατάλληλο πλαίσιο για την παρουσίαση του ποιήματος «Νιόβη '74», κάνοντας αναφορά στο γεγονός ότι ο οργανισμός έχει την έδρα του στις Βρυξέλλες όπου υπάρχει μεγάλη τουρκική κοινότητα.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Πως είναι δυνατόν να υπάρχουν φαινόμενα λογοκρισίας στην καρδιά της πολιτισμένης Ευρώπης;

2. Από πότε λογοκρίνονται ποιήματα γιατί περιέχουν, πολύ ακροθιγώς, αναφορές σε πραγματικά γεγονότα όπως είναι η τουρκική εισβολή κατά της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, το 1974;

3. Ποιοι είναι οι ακριβείς λόγοι, καλλιτεχνικοί ή άλλοι, στους οποίους βασίστηκε η απόφαση του EUNIC για αποκλεισμό του ποιήματος «Νιόβη '74»;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(20 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή θα ήθελε να παραπέμψει τον κ. βουλευτή στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-008667/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009466/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Censorship of the poem 'Niobe '74'

On 7 March 2013, the Cultural Services of the Ministry of Education in Cyprus suggested that the scholar and poet Giorgios Moraris should represent Cyprus in the poetry exhibition 'Transpoesie' organised every year by EUNIC (European Union National Institutes of Culture). Giorgios Moraris agreed and sent his poem 'Niobe '74' to the exhibition. The poem refers to the appalling killing of children during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. On 30 May, in her reply to the Cultural Services of the Republic of Cyprus, the head of the Polish section of EUNIC, Beata Podgorska, stated that the board of the organisation had decided that the project 'Transpoesie' was not the appropriate framework for presenting the poem 'Niobe '74', and referred to the fact that the organisation has its headquarters in Brussels, where there is a large Turkish community.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. How can censorship exist at the heart of civilised Europe today?

2. Since when are poems censored because they refer very fleetingly to real events such as the Turkish invasion of the Republic of Cyprus in 1974?

3. What are the precise reasons, artistic or otherwise, for EUNIC's decision to exclude the poem 'Niobe '74'?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-008667/2013 ([1]).

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009467/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Πτωτική πορεία της Κυπριακής Οικονομίας

Σε πρόσφατες δηλώσεις του, ο Αντιπρόεδρος της Επιτροπής Όλι Ρεν, δήλωσε ότι δεν πρέπει να επιμένουμε τυφλά στην επίτευξη των δημοσιονομικών στόχων και ότι οι χώρες θα πρέπει να κρίνονται περισσότερο από τα μεταρρυθμιστικά προγράμματα που καθιερώνουν και εφαρμόζουν.

Μετά την απόφαση του Eurogroup, που έπληξε καίρια την κυπριακή οικονομία, η Κύπρος έχει προχωρήσει σε μια σειρά από μεγάλες μεταρρυθμίσεις που αφορούν τον τραπεζικό τομέα ενώ σε εξέλιξη βρίσκονται και οι προσπάθειες μεταρρύθμισης του γενικότερου πλαισίου λειτουργίας των Συνεργατικών Πιστωτικών Ιδρυμάτων.

Την ίδια ώρα, συγκρίνοντας το 1ο εξάμηνο του 2013 με το αντίστοιχο του 2012, παρατηρείται κάθετη μείωση σε όλους σχεδόν τους δείκτες της οικονομίας. Μείωση 7% στις αφίξεις τουριστών, 10% στις συναλλαγές με πιστωτικές κάρτες, 37,2% στις ταξινομήσεις μηχανοκίνητων οχημάτων, 75% στις πωλήσεις ακινήτων, 55,8% στις εγγραφές εταιρειών, 11% στις εισπράξεις εταιρικού φόρου.

Τα πιο πάνω καταδεικνύουν ότι ο τόπος έχει εισέλθει σε βαθιά ύφεση.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

Ποια είναι τα αντισταθμιστικά μέτρα που προτείνει η Επιτροπή, για αναστροφή του γενικότερου, αρνητικού, κλίματος και ανατροπή της συνεχιζόμενης πτωτικής πορείας ειδικά για την περίπτωση της Κύπρου;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(2 Σεπτεμβρίου 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 περιλαμβάνει επίσης ολοκληρωμένες διαρθρωτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις για να δημιουργηθούν συνθήκες τόνωσης της ανάπτυξης και δημιουργίας απασχόλησης.

Η Επιτροπή είναι 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.

Τα Κοινοτικά Ταμεία (περιλαμβανομένων 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.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009467/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Downward trend of Cyprus's economy

In recent statements, Commission Vice-President Olli Rehn has stressed that we should not blindly insist on meeting budgetary targets and that countries should be judged more by the reform programmes that are being introduced and implemented.

Following the Eurogroup decision, which came as a body blow to the economy of Cyprus, the Republic has undertaken a series of major reforms in the banking sector, while efforts are underway to reform the overall operating framework of Cooperative Credit Institutes.

At the same time, a comparison between the first half of 2013 and the corresponding period in 2012 will reveal a precipitous decline in virtually all economic indicators: — 7% in tourist arrivals, — 10% in credit card transactions, — 37.2% in registrations of motor vehicles, — 75% in property sales, — 55.8% in registrations of companies and — 11% in corporate tax receipts.

The above shows that the Republic of Cyprus has entered into a deep recession.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

What are the compensatory measures proposed by the Commission to dispel the generally negative climate and reverse the continuing downward trend, especially in the case of Cyprus?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(2 September 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 puts also forward comprehensive structural reforms to set the conditions for growth and job creation.

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.

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.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009468/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Συλλογή στοιχείων για Ευρωβαρόμετρο

Παρατηρώντας το τελευταίο υπ' αριθμό 79, Ευρωβαρόμετρο, της Άνοιξης 2013, που δημοσίευσε η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή την προηγούμενη βδομάδα, μπορεί κάποιος να εντοπίσει, ότι εκτός από το δείγμα που πάρθηκε από τα 27 κράτη μέλη και τις 6 υποψήφιες για ένταξη χώρες, πάρθηκε ξεχωριστό δείγμα για την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Γιατί στην περίπτωση της Κύπρου γίνεται διαχωρισμός, από την Επιτροπή, ανάμεσα στις δύο κοινότητες;

2. Ακόμα και αν κάποιος αποδεχτεί την ανάγκη για διαφορετική συλλογή στοιχείων για τις περιοχές που δεν ελέγχονται από την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία, πώς είναι δυνατό η συλλογή των στοιχείων αυτών να γίνεται από ένα Ινστιτούτο που βρίσκεται στα κατεχόμενα, στα οποία η Τουρκία ασκεί απόλυτο έλεγχο; Ως εκ τούτου, ποια είναι η αξιοπιστία των δεδομένων αυτών;

3. Σύμφωνα με τα στοιχεία του Ευρωβαρόμετρου, ο πληθυσμός, σε άτομα 15 ετών και άνω, στην Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία είναι 660 400, ενώ ο αντίστοιχος αριθμός για την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα είναι 143 226. Με βάση αυτή την πληθυσμιακή διαφορά, πως είναι δυνατό να πάρθηκαν 505 συνεντεύξεις για την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία, ενώ για την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα, 500; Που αποσκοπεί αυτή η υπέρ-αντιπροσώπευση της τουρκοκυπριακής κοινότητας;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Δεδομένου ότι η νομοθεσία της ΕΕ δεν εφαρμόζεται στις περιοχές της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας στις οποίες η κυβέρνηση δεν ασκεί αποτελεσματικό έλεγχο, διεξάγονται δύο έρευνες του Ευρωβαρομέτρου προκειμένου να εκτιμηθούν οι διαφορές ως προς την αντίληψη της κοινής γνώμης. Σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, ερωτήσεις χωρίς σημασία για την τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα δεν περιλαμβάνονται στις έρευνες.

Η συλλογή δεδομένων στην τουρκοκυπριακή κοινότητα γίνεται κατά τον ίδιο τρόπο όπως και στις άλλες περιοχές που καλύπτονται από τις έρευνες του τακτικού Ευρωβαρομέτρου.

Δεν υπάρχει υπερεκπροσώπηση της τουρκοκυπριακής κοινότητας στην έρευνα του τακτικού Ευρωβαρομέτρου. Το σύνηθες μέγεθος των δειγμάτων είναι 1 000 ερωτηθέντες ανά ενότητα, εκτός από τις λιγότερο πυκνοκατοικημένες ενότητες όπου το δείγμα περιορίζεται συνήθως σε 500 ερωτηθέντες.

Το ζήτημα που θίγει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου καταδεικνύει για μία ακόμη φορά την ανάγκη ταχείας και συνολικής διευθέτησης του κυπριακού προβλήματος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009468/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Data collection for Eurobarometer

A perusal of the latest issue of Eurobarometer, No 79 of Spring 2013, published by the Commission last week, shows that in addition to the sample taken from the 27 Member States and the six candidate countries, a separate sample was taken for the Turkish Cypriot community.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Why does it distinguish between the two communities in the case of Cyprus?

2. Even if one accepts the need for a separate data collection for areas not controlled by the Republic of Cyprus, how can such data be collected by an institute that is located in the occupied territories over which Turkey exercises absolute control? What therefore is the reliability of such data?

3. According to Eurobarometer data, the population over the age of fifteen in the Republic of Cyprus is 660 400, while the figure for the Turkish Cypriot community is 143 226. In the light of this population difference, how is it possible that 505 interviews were conducted in the Republic of Cyprus and 500 in the Turkish Cypriot community? What is the purpose of this over-representation of the Turkish Cypriot community?

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

As EU legislation does not apply in the areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which its government does not exercise effective control, two Eurobarometer surveys are carried out in order to assess the differences in public perception. In certain cases, questions without relevance for the Turkish Cypriot community are not included in the surveys.

The data collection in the Turkish Cypriot community is done in the same way as in the other areas covered by the Standard Eurobarometer surveys.

There is no over-representation of the Turkish Cypriot community in the Standard Eurobarometer survey. The usual size of samples is 1000 respondents per entity, except for the least populated entities where the sample is usually limited to 500 respondents.

The issue raised by the Honourable Member emphasises once again the urgency of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009469/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Finanziamenti UE alla Croazia per i controlli di frontiera

La Croazia potrà perfezionare i propri controlli di frontiera sulla nuova frontiera esterna dell'UE grazie ad uno strumento finanziario temporaneo istituito nel quadro dell'accordo di Schengen.

Si chiede alla Commissione:

Qual è lo strumento finanziario temporaneo istituito nel quadro dell'accordo di Schengen al quale si riferisce la Commissione? Cosa si intende per «temporaneo» ed a quanto ammonta tale finanziamento?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2013)

Lo strumento temporaneo Schengen è stato istituito conformemente all'articolo 31 dell'atto di adesione della Repubblica di Croazia all'Unione europea ([1]) al fine di aiutare la Croazia a finanziare azioni alle nuove frontiere esterne dell'Unione per l'attuazione dell'*acquis* di Schengen e il controllo di tali frontiere.

Nell'ambito di tale strumento sarà messo a disposizione della Croazia un importo totale di 120 milioni di EUR (40 milioni nel 2013 e 80 milioni nel 2014), da utilizzarsi entro tre anni dal primo pagamento. La Croazia ha ricevuto l'importo annuale per il 2013 nel luglio 2013.

Sono ammissibili al finanziamento dello strumento Schengen i seguenti tipi di azioni:

— investimenti per la costruzione, la ristrutturazione o il miglioramento delle infrastrutture per l'attraversamento delle frontiere e degli edifici connessi;

— investimenti in attrezzature operative, quali apparecchi di laboratorio, strumenti di rilevazione, Sistema d'informazione Schengen (SIS II), hardware e software, sistemi informatici per l'attuazione dell'*acquis* di Schengen, mezzi di trasporto;

— formazione delle guardie di frontiera;

— sostegno per i costi logistici e operativi, ivi compreso il pagamento degli stipendi del personale necessario per adempiere gli obblighi della Croazia in virtù dell'acquis di Schengen.

Lo strumento Schengen è «a carattere temporaneo» in quanto costituisce un sostegno una tantum destinato ai nuovi Stati membri dell'UE al momento dell'adesione per un periodo limitato.

([1]) GU L 112 del 24.4.2012, pag. 21.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009469/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU funding for Croatian border controls

A temporary financial instrument established under the Schengen Agreement is to be used to help Croatia conduct effective border controls at the EU's new external border.

What exactly is this temporary financial instrument? What is meant by 'temporary' and how much funding is to be provided?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Schengen Facility temporary instrument was created in accordance with Article 31 of the Act of Accession of Croatia to the European Union ([1]) in order to help Croatia finance actions at the new external borders of the Union for the implementation of the Schengen *acquis* and external borders control.

A total amount of EUR 120 million (EUR 40 million in 2013 and EUR 80 million in 2014) will be made available to Croatia under the Schengen Facility. The funding should be used within three years from the first payment. The 2013 annual payment was paid to Croatia in July 2013.

The following types of action are eligible for financing under the Schengen Facility:

— investment in construction, renovation or upgrading of border crossing infrastructure and related buildings;

— investments in operating equipment, such as laboratory equipment, detection tools, Schengen Information System (SIS II), hardware and software, the creation of the IT systems needed to implement the Schengen *acquis*, means of transport;

— training of border guards;

— support for costs of logistics and operations, including payment of the salaries of the personnel required to fulfil the obligations of Croatia in respect of Schengen *acquis*.

The instrument is 'temporary' as the Schengen Facility funding is one-off support provided to new EU Member States on their accession for a limited duration.

([1]) OJ L 112, 24.4.2012, p. 21.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009470/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Finanziamenti UE alla Croazia attraverso il programma SOLID

Saranno messe a disposizione della Croazia risorse aggiuntive in vista di una migliore implementazione della politica comune in materia di asilo, immigrazione e controllo delle frontiere esterne, anche mediante il programma quadro «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori» (SOLID), il futuro Fondo Asilo e migrazione e il Fondo Sicurezza interna.

— Il programma quadro SOLID è composto da quattro fondi: il Fondo europeo per l'integrazione di cittadini di paesi terzi, il Fondo europeo per i rifugiati, il Fondo europeo per le frontiere esterne e il Fondo europeo per i rimpatri, per un importo complessivo di circa 5,866 miliardi di euro per il periodo 2007-2013.

A quanto ammontano le ulteriori risorse a favore della Croazia grazie al programma SOLID e per quale ambito in particolare sono state o saranno erogate?

— Le proposte per aderire al programma SOLID possono essere presentate dalle autorità nazionali, regionali e locali, dalle università (inclusi gli istituti di ricerca), dalle organizzazioni non governative e dalle organizzazioni internazionali con provata esperienza e competenza nel settore. I paesi ammissibili sono i 27 Stati membri dell'UE esclusa la Danimarca.

Da quale ente (pubblico o privato) sono state presentate le proposte alla Commissione europea e per quale importo?

La Croazia è il 28° Stato membro dell'UE dal 1° luglio 2013: dato che il programma quadro SOLID copre il periodo 2007-2013, la Commissione europea ha apportato modifiche a detto programma in vista e/o a seguito dell'entrata della Croazia nell'UE? E se sì, in che modo?

Risposta data da Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(23 settembre 2013)

A seguito dell'interesse manifestato dalle autorità croate a prendere parte al programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori» (SOLID), sono stati assegnati alla Croazia 1 804 941 EUR nell'ambito del Fondo europeo per i rimpatri (FR), 317 358 EUR nell'ambito del Fondo europeo per l'integrazione di cittadini di paesi terzi (FEI), e 85 717 EUR nell'ambito del Fondo europeo per i rifugiati (FER). Questi importi sono stati calcolati in base alle pertinenti disposizioni della legislazione dell'UE ([1]), sulla base di dati statistici a disposizione della Commissione.

I finanziamenti servono a contribuire agli obiettivi definiti per ciascuno dei fondi nei pertinenti atti di base. Le azioni da finanziare saranno indicate nei programmi annuali per i fondi, che devono essere elaborati dalle autorità croate e presentati alla Commissione per approvazione.

I sopra menzionati stanziamenti FR, FEI e FER per la Croazia sono a gestione concorrente, il che significa che la loro attuazione (pubblicazione dei bandi di gara, esame delle domande, selezione dei progetti) è di competenza delle autorità nazionali designate, conformemente al principio di sussidiarietà. La Commissione non ha pertanto ricevuto direttamente nessuna domanda di finanziamento legata agli importi di cui sopra.

Oltre ad avere l'opportunità di beneficiare dei finanziamenti SOLID stanziati per i programmi annuali croati FR, FEI e FER, le organizzazioni croate possono inoltre presentare domanda, direttamente alla Commissione, per finanziamenti, nell'ambito del FR e del Fondo per le frontiere esterne, per l'attuazione di azioni transnazionali o di azioni che interessano l'UE nel suo insieme.

A seguito dell'adesione della Croazia non è stata apportata alcuna modifica al quadro giuridico del programma SOLID.

([1]) Articolo 14 della decisione n. 575/2007/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio che istituisce il Fondo europeo per i rimpatri per il periodo 2008-2013 nell'ambito del programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori»; articolo 12 della decisione n. 2007/435/CE del Consiglio che istituisce il Fondo europeo per l'integrazione di cittadini di paesi terzi per il periodo 2007-2013 nell'ambito del programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori»; articolo 13 della decisione n. 573/2007/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio che istituisce il Fondo europeo per i rifugiati per il periodo 2008-2013, nell'ambito del programma generale «Solidarietà e gestione dei flussi migratori» e che abroga la decisione 2004/904/CE del Consiglio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009470/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU funding for Croatia under the SOLID programme

Additional funds will be made available to Croatia under the framework programme on solidarity and management of migration flows (SOLID), the future Asylum and Migration Fund and the Internal Security Fund, among others, with a view to ensuring that the common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control is implemented more effectively.

The SOLID programme is made up of four funds — the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, the European Refugee Fund, the External Borders Fund and the European Return Fund. The total funding package for the programme for the period 2007-2013 is approximately EUR 5.866 billion.

How much additional funding has been or will be made available to Croatia under the SOLID programme and for what purposes has it been or will it be used?

National, regional and local authorities, universities (including research institutes), NGOs and international organisations with proven experience and competence in the field may apply for funding under the programme. All the Member States, with the exception of Denmark, are eligible.

What bodies (public or private) have submitted funding applications to the Commission and how much funding have they requested?

Croatia became the twenty-eighth Member State on 1 July 2013. Given that the SOLID programme covers the period 2007-2013, has the Commission made changes to the programme to take account of Croatia's accession? If so, what changes has it made?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

Following the interest expressed by the Croatian authorities in taking part in the general programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' (SOLID), EUR 1 804 941 were allocated to Croatia for actions under the European Return Fund (RF), EUR 317 358 under the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EIF) and EUR 85 717 under the European Refugee Fund (ERF). These amounts were calculated in accordance with the relevant provisions of EU legislation ([1]), on the basis of statistical data available to the Commission.

The funding should contribute to the objectives defined for each of the funds in the relevant basic acts. The actions to be supported will be described in annual programmes for the funds, which are to be drafted by the Croatian authorities and submitted to the Commission for approval.

The abovementioned RF, EIF and ERF allocations for Croatia are under shared management, which means that implementation (launching of calls for proposals, processing of applications and the selection of projects for funding) is the responsibility of the designated national authorities, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. The Commission has therefore not received any direct application for funding related to the abovementioned amounts.

Apart from having the opportunity to benefit from SOLID funding allocated for the Croatian RF, EIF and ERF annual programmes, Croatian organisations can also apply directly to the Commission for funding under the RF and the External Borders Fund for the implementation of transnational actions or actions of interest to the EU as a whole.

No changes to the legal framework of the SOLID programme have been made in connection with Croatia's accession.

([1]) Article 14 of Decision No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows', Article 12 of Council Decision No 2007/435/EC establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' and Article 13 of Decision No 573/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' and repealing Council Decision 2004/904/EC.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009471/13
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Incidente stradale a Monteforte Irpino e sicurezza del sistema stradale europeo

La sicurezza stradale interessa tutti i cittadini e tutti devono contribuire a rendere le strade più sicure. Sebbene le azioni finora intraprese siano state efficaci, nell'Unione europea il numero degli incidenti stradali mortali continua ad essere troppo elevato: ogni anno 1,3 milioni di incidenti stradali provocano 35 000 morti e 1,5 milioni di feriti con costi economici per la società stimati intorno ai 130 miliardi di euro all'anno.

Nella comunicazione «Verso uno spazio europeo della sicurezza stradale: orientamenti 2011-2020 per la sicurezza stradale» al fine di riuscire nell'intento di creare uno spazio comune della sicurezza stradale, la Commissione propone di dimezzare il numero totale di vittime della strada nell'Unione entro il 2020.

Si rilevi che tra le soluzioni tracciate per raggiungere tale ambiziosa finalità la Commissione identifica tra i sette obiettivi strategici anche quello di migliorare le infrastrutture stradali attraverso il finanziamento delle TEN-T e mediante il ricorso al Fondo di coesione.

Lo scorso 28 luglio un pullman con a bordo 48 persone è precipitato da un viadotto della tratta autostradale da Avellino a Napoli provocando 38 morti e 10 feriti gravi.

Si tenga presente che, secondo le prime ricostruzioni, il mezzo, a seguito del probabile scoppio di uno pneumatico, si è per un lungo tratto adagiato a barriere di cemento, che lo hanno tenuto in carreggiata, fino a che però i new jersey sarebbero terminati sostituiti dal guardrail che, come ovvio, non ha retto il peso dello stesso che è successivamente precipitato in un dirupo.

È evidente che i limiti infrastrutturali esistenti su gran parte delle reti autostradali europee costituiscono una delle ragioni principali alla base di tragedie probabilmente evitabili come quella di Monteforte.

Alla luce di quanto precede, in che modo intende la Commissione coordinare le attività dei singoli Stati membri per consentire alle nostre strade di essere più sicure e permettere di raggiungere gli obiettivi ambiziosi tracciati nella comunicazione del 20 luglio 2010?

Risposta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2013)

La Commissione deplora l'incidente avvenuto a Monteforte Irpino che ribadisce in modo particolarmente triste la necessità di uno sforzo continuo mediante diverse misure volte a migliorare la sicurezza sulle strade europee.

La Commissione rammenta che l'UE ha adottato due direttive volte a migliorare la sicurezza dell'infrastruttura stradale transeuropea, una sui requisiti minimi di sicurezza per le gallerie ([1]) e l'altra sulla gestione della sicurezza delle infrastrutture stradali ([2]). All'inizio di quest'anno i servizi della Commissione hanno iniziato a preparare il varo di studi sull'applicazione e l'adeguatezza di tali direttive. Quest'iniziativa dovrebbe contribuire fra l'altro a individuare i settori in cui è richiesta una più incisiva azione comune dell'UE.

Per quanto riguarda la costruzione di barriere stradali, si applica il regolamento (UE) n. 305/2011 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio che fissa condizioni armonizzate per la commercializzazione dei prodotti da costruzione e che abroga la direttiva 89/106/CEE del Consiglio ([3]). A norma della direttiva 98/106/CEE è stata sviluppata la norma armonizzata EN 1317 sui sistemi di ritenuta stradale. Sebbene l'applicazione della norma EN 1317 conferisca la presunzione di conformità di un sistema di ritenuta stradale commercializzato nell'UE, la legislazione unionale non impone alle autorità nazionali, regionali o locali di richiedere l'applicazione di tale norma nei loro appalti.

La Commissione desidera infine sottolineare che i risultati dell'indagine sull'incidente non sono ancora disponibili. Non sono note le cause all'origine dell'incidente. Per trarre conclusioni motivate saranno inoltre necessarie informazioni tecniche più dettagliate in merito al sistema di ritenuta stradale in questione e ai relativi elementi di progettazione, realizzazione, collaudo, manutenzione nonché all'eventuale applicazione della norma EN 1317.

([1]) GU L 167 del 30.4.2004, pag. 39.
([2]) GU L 319 del 29.11.2008, pag. 59.
([3]) GU L 88 del 4.4.2011, pag. 5.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009471/13
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Road accident in Monteforte Irpino and road safety in Europe

Road safety is a matter of interest to everyone and everyone must do what they can to make our roads safer. Although the measures taken thus far have proved effective, the number of fatal road accidents in the European Union is still too high: every year, 1.3 million road accidents leave 35 000 people dead and 1.5 million injured, generating an annual cost to society which is put at roughly EUR 130 billion.

In its communication entitled 'Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020' the Commission sets a target of halving the number of road accident victims in the Union by 2020 as part of the efforts to create a European road safety area.

This is an ambitious target and, as one possible means of achieving it, the Commission includes among its seven strategic objectives that of improving road infrastructure by financing the TEN-T properly and using resources drawn from the Cohesion Fund.

On 28 July 2013 a coach carrying 48 passengers plunged from a viaduct on the motorway between Avellino and Napoli, killing 38 people and injuring 10 seriously.

According to initial reconstructions of the accident, after suffering what was probably a burst tyre the coach skidded for some distance along the concrete barrier, which kept it on the road, until that barrier gave way to a guard rail. That rail could of course not bear the weight of the coach, which plunged down an embankment. The inadequate nature of the infrastructure on much of the European motorway network is one of the main reasons for tragedies such as that which occurred in Monteforte, many of which are probably avoidable.

How does the Commission intend to coordinate the efforts by individual Member States to make our roads safer and to achieve the ambitious objectives set in the communication of 20 July 2010, as referred to above?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission deplores the accident of Monteforce Irpino which in a particularly sad manner reconfirms the continous effort needed through different measures to improve safety on European roads.

The Commission reminds that the EU has adopted two directives seeking to improve the safety of the trans-European road infrastructure, one on minimum safety requirements for tunnels ([1]) and another on road infrastructure safety management ([2]). Earlier this year the Commission services have started preparations to launch studies on the application and adequateness of these directives. This work should help, *inter alia*, to identify areas where more common EU action is required.

As regards the construction of road barriers, Regulation (EU) No 305/2011 laying down harmonised conditions for the marketing of construction products ([3]), repealing Directive 89/106/EEC, applies. Under Directive 98/106/EEC a harmonised standard EN 1317 on road restraint systems has been developed. Although the application of EN 1317 provides a presumption of conformity of a road restraint system placed on the EU market, EU legislation does not impose that national, regional or local authorities require the application of that standard in their procurement.

Finally, the Commission wishes to underline that the results of the accident inquiry are not yet available. The root causes of the accident are not known. In addition, more detailed technical information relating to the road restraint system involved, including its design, construction, testing, maintenance and eventual application of standard EN 1317, will be necessary to draw any substantiated conclusions.

([1]) OJ L 167, 30.4.2004.
([2]) OJ L 319, 29.11.2008.
([3]) OJ L 88, 4.4.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009472/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Fondi europei inaccessibili in Veneto a causa del malfunzionamento del sistema online per la registrazione delle domande di partecipazione

Notizie apparse sulla stampa locale ([1]) riportano il caso di numerose aziende venete che sarebbero rimaste escluse da un bando regionale «a sportello» per l'assegnazione di quasi 6,5 milioni di euro di fondi europei.

Il bando, relativo al finanziamento di progetti innovativi presentati da imprese e organismi di ricerca veneti in collaborazione con partner di altri paesi europei, nell'ambito dell'asse 5 del Programma Operativo Regionale «Competitività Regionale e Occupazione» (POR CRO) — parte FESR 2007-2013 ([2]), è stato aperto il 1° luglio 2013. Le domande di contributo andavano presentate tramite registrazione nel sistema online denominato «Piattaforma GIF», seguendo le indicazioni riportate sul sito di Veneto Innovazione S.p.A. ([3]), l'agenzia della Regione Veneto dedicata alla promozione e allo sviluppo della ricerca applicata e dell'innovazione all'interno del sistema produttivo veneto.

Stando a quanto denunciato da una società di consulenza che assiste le imprese nel reperire risorse attraverso i fondi dell'UE e nazionali, circa una cinquantina di aziende sarebbero rimaste escluse dall'assegnazione dei fondi a causa della prolungata inaccessibilità o del cattivo funzionamento del server sul quale si doveva inserire la domanda di partecipazione, problemi riscontrati anche dopo ripetuti tentativi. Pare che i maggiori disagi siano stati riscontrati soprattutto nelle aree meno servite dal punto di vista tecnologico, cioè quelle con connessioni lente e/o intermittenti: il Bellunese, la Bassa Padovana, il Polesine e la montagna veronese e vicentina.

Trattandosi di un bando con modalità «a sportello», ovvero in cui le domande ritenute idonee accedono ai contributi secondo l'ordine di presentazione, appare particolarmente grave che alcune decine di aziende siano rimaste escluse non per mancanza di requisiti, ma per meri disguidi tecnici. Pare infatti che, nel giro di un paio d'ore dall'apertura del bando, le risorse fossero già esaurite.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È a conoscenza dei disguidi sopra descritti nell'assegnazione di fondi dell'UE?

2. Come intende procedere per garantire che tutti i cittadini e tutte le aziende europee abbiano gli stessi diritti e partano da condizioni di parità per accedere ai finanziamenti dell'UE?

Risposta di Johannes Hahn a nome della Commissione
(9 ottobre 2013)

1. La Commissione è a conoscenza dei supposti problemi relativi al sistema di candidatura online.

2. Sulla base delle informazioni ricevute dall'autorità di gestione, la piattaforma per la gestione dei progetti (piattaforma GIF) è uno strumento collaudato, utilizzato da Veneto Innovazione S.p.A. fin dal 2009 per la gestione di progetti cofinanziati sia da fondi regionali che da fondi dell'UE.

Per quanto riguarda la presunta interruzione del funzionamento della piattaforma GIF, nel corso delle prove condotte da Veneto Innovazione S.p.A. sembra che non vi siano stati problemi tecnici relativi al caricamento dei dati. La connessione simultanea di numerose richieste di accesso alla piattaforma non dovrebbe causare rallentamenti o un arresto anomalo del sistema. Inoltre, le informazioni sono riassunte in un numero limitato di moduli di domanda da compilare e caricare nella piattaforma. Tali moduli erano facilmente accessibili (grazie a workshop, alla pubblicazione nei quotidiani regionali e sul sito internet della Regione Veneto) al fine di garantire la piena trasparenza e la parità di trattamento dei beneficiari.

La Commissione si metterà in contatto con l'autorità di gestione per assicurarsi che si presti particolare attenzione al corretto funzionamento del sistema in tutti i futuri inviti a presentare proposte.

([1]) http://www.ilgiornaledivicenza.it/stories/Economia/541825BandoregionaleperfondiUeinaccessibile
([2]) Approvato il 7.5.2013 dalla Giunta regionale del Veneto con Dgr n. 632. Cfr. l'allegato A: http://www.regione.veneto.it/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f983e675-e4f8-4682-924f-9848c0efbc95&groupId=10717
([3]) www.venetoinnovazione.it

In linea con il principio della gestione condivisa, la Commissione suggerisce all'onorevole parlamentare di contattare direttamente l'autorità di gestione responsabile della gestione e della selezione dei singoli progetti:

Regione Veneto
Direzione Programmazione
Palazzo ex ULSS
Rio dei Tre Ponti — Dorsoduro, 3494/A
30123 Venezia (VE)
programmazione@regione.veneto.it

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009472/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: EU funds inaccessible in Veneto due to malfunctioning of online application registration system

The local press has reported ([1]) that many companies in the Veneto region have apparently been excluded from a 'first come first served' regional call for proposals for the allocation of almost EUR 6.5 million in EU funding.

The call for proposals, regarding the financing of innovative projects to be submitted by research companies and organisations in Veneto, in collaboration with partners in other EU countries, as part of priority axis 5 of the Regional Operational Programme 'Regional Competitiveness and Employment' (ROP RCE), ERDF 2007-2013 ([2]), was issued on 1 July 2013. Applications for funding had to be submitted by registering on the online system called 'GIF Platform', following the instructions on the website of Veneto Innovazione SpA ([3]), the Veneto Region's agency for the promotion and development of applied research and innovation in the Veneto production sector.

According to complaints from a consulting firm that assists companies in securing financing from EU and national funds, around fifty companies were allegedly excluded from the granting of funds due to the prolonged inaccessibility or malfunctioning of the server through which they were supposed to submit their applications; these problems were encountered even after repeated attempts. Apparently, the main problems were found in areas that are poorly served from a technological point of view, i.e. areas with slow and/or intermittent connections, such as the Belluno area, the Lower Padua area, the Po Delta and the mountain areas around Verona and Vicenza.

Since the project funding system is a 'first come first served' system in which applications that are deemed eligible can have access to grants in the order in which they are submitted, it is a particularly serious matter that several dozen companies were excluded not because they did not meet the requirements, but because of mere technical hitches. Apparently, within a couple of hours of the official notice being issued, the available funds had already been exhausted.

In the light of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of the problems described above in the allocation of EU funds?

2. What action does it intend to take ensure that all EU citizens and companies have thesame rights and a level playing field when it comes to access to EU funding?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the alleged problems concerning the online application system

2. Based on information received by the managing authority, the platform for the management of the projects (GIF Platform) is a proven tool and used by Veneto Innovazione SpA since 2009 for the management of projects co-financed by both regional and EU funds.

With regard to the alleged operational failure of the GIF platform, from tests conducted by Veneto Innovazione SpA, it appears that there were no technical problems for the loading of data. Moreover, the simultaneous connection of many requests for access to the platform is not likely to cause slowdowns or a system crash. In addition, the information is summarised in a small number of application forms to be completed and uploaded onto the platform. These forms were widely accessible (workshops, publications in regional newspapers as well as on the Veneto Region's website) in order to ensure full transparency and equal treatment of beneficiaries.

The Commission will contact the managing authority to ensure that particular attention is paid in all future calls for proposals to ensure a smooth functioning of the application system.

([1]) http://www.ilgiornaledivicenza.it/stories/Economia/541825BandoregionaleperfondiUeinaccessibile/
([2]) Adopted on 7 May 2013 by the Veneto Regional Council through Regional Decree No 632. See Annex A: http://www.regione.veneto.it/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=f983e675-e4f8-4682-924f-9848c0efbc95&groupId=10717
([3]) www.venetoinnovazione.it

In line with the shared management principle, the Commission suggests that the Honourable Member contact directly the managing authority responsible for the management and selection of individual projects:

Regione Veneto
Direzione Programmazione
Palazzo ex ULSS
Rio dei Tre Ponti — Dorsoduro, 3494/A
30123 Venezia (VE)
programmazione@regione.veneto.it

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009473/13
alla Commissione
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(5 agosto 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, il quale si ritiene che sia, date le caratteristiche tecniche che possiede, 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, alcune problematiche si sono registrate per le 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 precedentemente, c'è bisogno di un aggiornamento del software dei dispositivi, aggiornamento 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 in virtù del fatto che, 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 stati i dati sulla contraffazione di banconote nel 2011 e nel 2012 in ogni Stato membro dell'UE, tali da giustificare il totale ricambio delle banconote circolanti?

Risposta di Olli Rehn a nome della Commissione
(26 settembre 2013)

L'emissione di nuove banconote non è una questione di competenza della Commissione bensì della Banca centrale europea. Si invita pertanto l'onorevole deputato a rivolgere la sua domanda a questa istituzione.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009473/13
to the Commission
Fabrizio Bertot (PPE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Problems arising from the introduction of new banknotes

The new EUR 5 banknote which entered circulation on 2 May 2013 includes new security features intended to make it less prone to forgery. Although efforts do of course need to be made to combat forgery, the new EUR 5 note has caused a certain amount of inconvenience, particularly in view of the fact that it is the smallest denomination and, therefore, is the most widely used in small day-to-day transactions. Businesses using machines containing banknote readers, such as automated pumps at petrol stations, cigarette machines and public transport ticket machines, have encountered problems. The changes to the banknote's design make it necessary for retailers to update the vending machine software and, owing to supply-side constraints and the fact that there are a limited number of specialists working in this field, this can end up costing businesses hundreds of euros. In view of the current economic situation, many retailers, in particular in Italy, have decided not to upgrade their equipment, choosing instead to defer the necessary expenditure on the grounds that the old EUR 5 banknote has not yet been withdrawn and still makes up a very large proportion of the total number in circulation.

Although the fight against counterfeiting needs to be continued, with appropriate measures being taken towards this end, can the Commission say how many forged banknotes were recovered in each Member State in 2011 and 2012 and whether these figures warrant the replacement of all of the banknotes in circulation?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The issuance of new banknotes is not a competence of the Commission, but of the European Central Bank. Therefore, The Honourable Member should address his request directly to the ECB.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009474/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Pakistan: programma televisivo a premi mette in palio neonati abbandonati

In Pakistan il programma televisivo a premi Amaan Ramazan, condotto da Aamir Liaquat Hussain, star della tv e fedelissimo ai precetti dell'Islam, ha stabilito che i concorrenti possano riceve, oltre a elettrodomestici, gioielli, viaggi e altri riconoscimenti materiali, anche dei bambini. Una coppia di vincitori ha ricevuto in premio una neonata. Erano infatti stati messi in palio alcuni neonati abbandonati dai genitori biologici. La Chhipa Welfare Association, organizzazione non governativa che aveva in carico la piccola, ha difeso la scelta del programma spiegando la difficoltà di ospitare nella propria sede un numero sempre crescente di bambini abbandonati. Nonostante alcune polemiche, il programma televisivo a premi continua a essere trasmesso in diretta da Geo Tv, una delle emittenti private più seguite del paese, per sette ore al giorno durante il mese di Ramadan e sta registrando un boom di ascolti, tanto che si pensa di prolungarne la durata.

Può la Commissione far sapere:

se è informata dei fatti,

se ritiene doveroso e necessario richiamare l'attenzione della comunità internazionale su quanto sta accadendo e,

considerando che in Pakistan non esistono leggi sull'adozione e che l'abbandono di neonati è molto frequente, soprattutto quando si tratta di difendere l'onore della famiglia, come intende intervenire a tutela dei minori?

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

La Commissione è informata dei fatti riferiti. Il caso è stato ampiamente diffuso dai media, anche dalla rete internazionale CNN. Secondo le notizie riportate dai media, due bambine abbandonate sono state date in premio a Karachi durante un gioco televisivo che promuoveva questa pratica durante il periodo del Ramadan.

L'abbandono dei neonati, in particolare femmine, da parte di genitori in difficoltà economiche rappresenta un problema grave in Pakistan. Secondo la ONG Chhipa Welfare Organisation, che risponde a questa emergenza salvando i neonati abbandonati a Karachi, ogni mese in città vengono trovati tra i rifiuti 8-10 neonati, nella maggior parte dei casi femmine. Il responsabile di detta ONG, Ramzan Chhipa, che era presente durante il gioco in TV, ha chiarito che le coppie che hanno ricevuto in premio i neonati erano già registrate presso la ONG, erano già state sottoposte a una selezione preliminare e avevano già partecipato a sessioni di preparazione all'adozione presso la stessa ONG. Detta ONG ha collaborato con la TV allo scopo sia di richiamare l'attenzione sulla difficile situazione dei bambini abbandonati sia di mettere in rilievo le richieste di bambini da parte di coppie senza figli.

Il Pakistan è firmatario della convenzione internazionale sui diritti del fanciullo. Benché in Pakistan non esista una legge sull'adozione, le coppie senza figli che hanno ricevuto i neonati sono tenute a chiedere la custodia presso un tribunale competente in diritto di famiglia. Le conclusioni del Consiglio «Affari esteri» del marzo 2013 sottolineano che l'UE intende attivarsi in tempi rapidi con il neoeletto governo pakistano su temi prioritari, inclusi i diritti umani. Nel corso di tale dialogo sarà affrontato il tema dell'attuazione della convenzione internazionale sui diritti del fanciullo e di altre convenzioni.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009474/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Pakistan: abandoned babies offered as prizes in television show

In the Pakistani television game show Amaan Ramazan, hosted by Aamir Liaquat Hussain, a well-know TV personality who is a staunch Muslim, contestants have a chance to win not just household goods, jewellery and holidays, but also babies. A number of babies abandoned by their biological parents have been offered as prizes. One couple won a baby girl. The Chhipa Welfare Association, a non-governmental organisation that had been looking after the baby, has said that it came to this arrangement because it was having difficulties finding room for the growing number of babies being abandoned. Although there has been some criticism of the show, it is continuing to be broadcast live on Geo TV, one of Pakistan's most popular channels, for seven hours a day during the month of Ramadan, and is attracting so many viewers that thought is being given to increasing its air time.

Is the Commission aware of this situation?

Should it not bring the matter to the attention of the international community?

Given that there are no adoption laws in Pakistan and that it is a common occurrence for babies to be abandoned, in particular when a family's honour needs to be protected, how will it seek to ensure that children's rights are upheld in the country?

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

The Commission is aware of the situation. The story was widely reported in the news, including through the international news network, CNN. According to news reports, two abandoned baby girls were awarded as prizes in a Karachi-based TV game show which promoted this as a gimmick during the period of Ramadan.

The abandonment of babies, particularly girls, by impoverished parents is a serious problem in Pakistan. According to the emergency response NGO Chhipa Welfare Organisation, which rescues abandoned babies in Karachi, between 8 and 10 mainly girl babies are found on garbage heaps every month in the city. The Head of the NGO, Ramzan Chhipa, who was present during the game show, clarified that the couples who received the babies as prizes were already registered with the NGO and had undergone prior vetting and adoption counselling sessions with his organisation. The NGO collaborated with the game show in order to draw attention to the plight of the abandoned babies and to underline the demand for babies by childless couples.

Pakistan is a signatory to the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Although Pakistan does not have an adoption law, the childless couples who received the babies would subsequently be required to apply for guardianship at a family court. The March 2013 Foreign Affairs Council conclusions underline EU plans to engage promptly with the newly elected Pakistani government on priority issues including human rights. The implementation of the CRC and other conventions will be addressed in the course of that dialogue.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009475/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Morìa di mucche a causa di avvelenamento da botulino a Trebaseleghe (PD): possibile relazione con la presenza di impianti per la produzione di biogas

Nel maggio del 2013, a Trebaseleghe (PD) si è verificata una vera e propria morìa di mucche a causa di avvelenamento da botulino. Il contagio ha coinvolto circa 50 capi e ha comportato il sequestro di un allevamento a opera dell'ASL (Azienda Sanitaria Locale), con un danno per l'azienda agricola pari a 100.000 euro. Le cause dell'infezione sono ancora misteriose sebbene, secondo quanto emerso dalle indagini epidemiologiche svolte nell'immediatezza dei fatti, la tossina potrebbe essere stata ingerita sul terreno, attraverso il fieno consumato dai bovini ([1]).

Il botulismo, malattia mortale anche per l'uomo, è legato al Clostridium botulinum, un batterio anaerobico che produce la neurotossina botulinica, la sostanza più tossica fino a oggi conosciuta. Al riguardo, occorre segnalare che potrebbe esistere un rapporto causa-effetto tra botulismo nei bovini e presenza sul territorio di centrali per la produzione di biogas. Il Clostridium botulinum, infatti, può essere presente nel digestato di tali impianti, il materiale di scarto che viene sparso sui terreni a valle del processo produttivo del biogas.

Occorre inoltre segnalare che, in un raggio di circa 3-4 chilometri rispetto all'allevamento colpito dal grave fatto descritto sopra sono in funzione quattro centrali a biogas, tre delle quali site nel territorio di Trebaseleghe (PD) e una in quello di Piombino Dese (PD).

Secondo le ricerche compiute dal professor Helge Boehnel, per dieci anni direttore dell'Istituto di biotecnologie tropicali dell'Università di Göttingen ([2]), in Germania, e massimo esperto di botulismo, negli ultimi anni in Germania si sono verificati circa mille casi di morti di bovini da botulismo in zone caratterizzate dalla presenza di centrali per la produzione di biogas ([3]).

Alla luce di quanto esposto, la Commissione:

1. È a conoscenza della grave morìa di mucche accaduta a Trebaseleghe (PD), descritta in apertura?

2. Quali iniziative intende intraprendere al fine di approfondire la possibile esistenza di un rapporto causa-effetto tra la presenza di impianti per la produzione di biogas e botulismo nei bovini e al fine di accertare la sicurezza biologica della pratica di spargimento sui terreni dei digestati residui di tali produzioni?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(2 ottobre 2013)

1. La Commissione non è a conoscenza della moria di mucche descritta nell'interrogazione. Poiché il Clostridium botulinum non è contagioso, il botulismo non rientra nell'elenco delle malattie soggette a denuncia obbligatoria dell'Organizzazione mondiale per la salute animale (OIE) ([4]). Allo stesso modo, la normativa UE in materia di sanità animale non contempla l'obbligo per gli Stati membri di denunciare tale malattia alla Commissione; le misure di prevenzione e controllo delle malattie sono adottate in base alla legislazione nazionale.

2. È in corso un dibattito tra la Commissione e gli Stati membri riguardo agli episodi sporadici di botulismo viscerale nei bovini ed alla presunta, seppur non dimostrata, relazione causale tra la malattia ed il digestato residuo della produzione di biogas.

([1]) Cfr. http://www.veneziatoday.it/cronaca/epidemia-botulino-allevamento-distributore-mucche-latte-trebaseleghe-martellago.html
([2]) Cfr. http://cremonademocratica.org/2012/10/19/di-biogas-si-puo-anche-morire-allarme-del-professor-boehnel-delluniversita-di-gottinga/.
([3]) Nel maggio del 2011 un'importante rivista tedesca ha dedicato allo scottante problema un'inchiesta dal titolo shock: «Tod aus der Biogasanlage (la morte dagli impianti a biogas)». V. http://goo.gl/fyxYfN.
([4]) http://www.oie.int/animal-health-in-the-world/oie-listed-diseases-2013/.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009475/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Cattle die-off caused by botulism poisoning in Trebaseleghe (Padua): possible link to biogas digesters

A cattle die-off occurred in Trebaseleghe (Padua) in May 2013; the cause was botulism poisoning. The ASL (local health unit) responded to this incident, involving about fifty animals, by sealing off the farm concerned, which consequently incurred a financial loss amounting to EUR 100 000. How the infection happened is still a mystery, but the findings of epidemiological investigations carried out immediately afterwards suggest that the cattle may have ingested the toxin while feeding off hay spread on the ground ([1]).

Botulism, which can also be fatal in humans, is caused by *Clostridium botulinum*, an anaerobic bacterium which produces botulinum neurotoxin, the most toxic substance to have been discovered to date. There might be a cause-and-effect relationship between cattle botulism and neighbouring biogas digesters, the reason being that *Clostridium botulinum* can be contained in digested biogas production waste, which is spread on soil once the production process has been completed.

There are, moreover, four biogas power plants operating within a radius of 3-4 km of the farm affected by the serious incident described above: three are in Trebaseleghe (Padua), and one is in Piombino Dese (Padua).

According to research conducted by Professor Helge Boehnel, an eminent botulism expert who for the last 10 years has headed the German-based Göttingen University Institute of Applied Biotechnology in the Tropics ([2]), about a thousand deaths from cattle botulism have occurred in recent years in those parts of Germany which have biogas digesters ([3]).

1. Is the Commission aware of the serious cattle die-off in Trebaseleghe described in the opening paragraph?

2. What will it do in order to throw full light on the possible cause-and-effect relationship between biogas digesters and cattle botulism and to determine whether the practice of spreading digested production waste on soil is acceptable from the biosafety and biosecurity point of view?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

1. The Commission is not aware of the die-off of cattle in Italy described in the written question. Due to the fact that the Clostridium botulinum is not contagious, botulism is not included in the list of notifiable diseases of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) ([4]). In a similar way, EU animal health legislation does not foresee the obligation for the Member States to notify it to the Commission, and disease prevention and control measures are taken on the bases of national legislation.

2. A debate is ongoing between the Commission and the Member States on the sporadic phenomenon of visceral botulism in cattle and the alleged but unproven causal relationship with biogas digestion residues.

([1]) See http://www.veneziatoday.it/cronaca/epidemia-botulino-allevamento-distributore-mucche-latte-trebaseleghe-martellago.html
([2]) See http://cremonademocratica.org/2012/10/19/di-biogas-si-puo-anche-morire-allarme-del-professor-boehnel-delluniversita-di-gottinga/
([3]) A report on this burning issue published in a leading German magazine in May 2011 was graphically entitled 'Tod aus der Biogasanlage' (death from the biogas plant). See http://goo.gl/fyxYfN
([4]) http://www.oie.int/animal-health-in-the-world/oie-listed-diseases-2013/

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009476/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Costanti e gravi violazioni della direttiva «Habitat» 92/43/CEE in Italia: il dossier di denuncia di WWF e LIPU

Secondo quanto esposto e documentato in un dossier di denuncia elaborato congiuntamente dalle associazioni ambientaliste WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) Italia e LIPU (Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli) BirdLife — Italia, è in atto il progressivo depauperamento dello stato dei SIC (Siti di importanza comunitaria) e delle ZPS (Zone di protezione speciale) italiani facenti parte del programma Rete Natura 2000 ([1]). Tale riprovevole situazione è dovuta alle costanti, gravi violazioni della direttiva «Habitat» commesse dalle autorità competenti in occasione della realizzazione di interventi in tali aree protette, in particolare dell'articolo 6, paragrafo 3, che prevede l'obbligo di redazione della VINCA (Valutazione di Incidenza Ambientale) sul progetto di intervento, qualora questo possa produrre significative incidenze negative sull'area coinvolta e che vieta di procedere qualora ciò venga confermato, e del paragrafo 4, che prevede, invece, le eccezioni a tale divieto.

Riassumendo la casistica italiana, innanzitutto accade talvolta che l'effettuazione della VINCA venga del tutto omessa; anche qualora la VINCA venga redatta (spesso trattasi di mera pre-valutazione detta *screening*), tuttavia, questa è in genere estremamente superficiale e contiene gravi errori ([2]). I pareri degli organi coinvolti nella procedura sono spesso lacunosi perché i funzionari addetti sono oberati di lavoro o non sufficientemente preparati o ancora, addirittura, a causa di ingerenze politico-istituzionali. Anche in quei rari casi in cui la VINCA venga effettuata correttamente, infine, accade successivamente che spesso l'intervento venga poi realizzato senza rispettare tutte le prescrizioni ivi contenute. Ad aggravare il contesto si aggiunge la difficile situazione in cui versa notoriamente la giustizia in Italia: la carenza e/o scarsa efficacia di eventuali strumenti sanzionatori si accompagna alla previsione di lenti e macchinosi procedimenti al fine di ottenere l'annullamento degli atti amministrativi aventi a oggetto l'intervento che si intende contestare. Nel frattempo, tuttavia, i lavori procedono e l'area viene (a volte irreversibilmente) danneggiata, ricordando che tali progetti vengono spesso realizzati in presenza già a monte di una gestione non corretta del SIC/ZPS.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione riferire se intende avviare una procedura di infrazione contro l'Italia per costante violazione della direttiva «Habitat», in particolare dell'articolo 6, paragrafi 3 e 4, come chiesto da WWF e LIPU nel loro dossier, richiesta alla quale l'interrogante si associa pienamente ([3])?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(18 settembre 2013)

La Commissione ha ricevuto la relazione cui l'onorevole deputato fa riferimento e l'ha protocollata con il riferimento CHAP(2013)01024.

Se dall'esame della denuncia emerge una presunta violazione della direttiva Habitat ([4]), la Commissione avvierà un'inchiesta per ottenere ulteriori informazioni dalle autorità italiane.

([1]) Cfr. WWF & LIPU. 2013. Dossier sul depauperamento dei siti Natura 2000 e sulla Valutazione di Incidenza in Italia.

([2]) Ecco alcuni esempi di errori nelle VINCA, divenuti purtroppo prassi consolidate: carenza di informazioni sullo stato di conservazione dell'area e sulle sue capacità di recupero; descrizione generica o incompleta dell'intervento nelle sue diverse fasi e opere; assenza di valutazione dell'opzione zero (non realizzazione dell'intervento) e inconsistente valutazione di soluzioni alternative.

([3]) L'interrogante ha presentato diverse interrogazioni in proposito, in relazione a singoli casi, alle quali si rinvia.

([4]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE del Consiglio, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e seminaturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009476/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Serious and repeated breaches of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in Italy: WWF and LIPU report

According to a well-documented report produced jointly by the Italian World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and LIPU (Italian League for the Protection of Birds) BirdLife Italia, a process of progressive impoverishment of sites of Community importance (SCIs) and special protection areas (SPAs) forming part of the Natura 2000 network is under way in Italy ([1]). This deplorable state of affairs is the result of serious and repeated breaches of the Habitats Directive by the relevant authorities when carrying out work in protected areas — in particular of Article 6(3), which requires environmental impact assessments (EIAs) to be carried out for projects which could have a significant adverse effect on the sites concerned and stipulates that they may not go ahead if it is found that they would have such an effect, and Article 6(4), which allows exceptions to be made in certain circumstances.

In Italy, EIAs are not carried out at all in some cases, and when they are (although, even then, they often go no further than the preliminary screening phase), the reports are generally extremely superficial and display serious shortcomings ([2]). The opinions delivered by the various bodies involved in the procedure are often incomplete because the officials responsible for drafting them are overloaded with work or lack the necessary grounding, and even, in some cases, because of political or institutional interference. What is more, in the rare cases when EIAs are conducted as they should be, it often happens that the conclusions set out in the reports are not fully implemented when the projects are carried out. This situation is made worse by the well-known shortcomings of the Italian legal system, where a lack of proper and effective penalties is coupled with slow and complicated procedures for overturning administrative decisions authorising projects that need to be challenged. As a result, projects can go ahead and sometimes cause irremediable damage to the areas concerned before anything can be done to stop them. It should also be pointed out that many SCIs/SPAs in which projected are carried out have not been properly administered in the first place.

Given the above, does the Commission intend to institute infringement proceedings against Italy on grounds of serious and repeated breaches of the Habitats Directive, with specific reference to Article(6)(3) and (4) thereof, as called for in the WWF/LIPU report, which the author of this question fully endorses ([3])?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The Commission has received the report mentioned by the Honourable Member and registered it under the reference CHAP(2013)01024.

If the assessment of the complaint shows an alleged breach of the Habitats Directive ([4]), the Commission will launch an investigation procedure to get more information from the Italian Authorities.

([1]) See WWF & LIPU, 2013: Dossier sul depauperamento dei siti Natura 2000 e sulla Valutazione di Incidenza in Italia.

([2]) Such shortcomings, which, alarmingly, have become almost an established practice, include inadequate information on the relevant area's conservation status and resilience, incomplete or overly general descriptions of the various phases of the works and what they involve, and failure to consider the 'zero option' (i.e. not carrying out the works) and to take a proper look at alternatives.

([3]) See the various questions on specific instances of failure to comply with the directive that the author of this question has tabled in the past.

([4]) Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009477/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Elevate concentrazioni di sostanze PFAS (perfluoroalchiliche) nell'acqua potabile di una trentina di comuni della Regione del Veneto

Le acque potabili di circa trenta comuni della Regione del Veneto — ubicati principalmente nella zona ovest della provincia di Vicenza, in particolare nelle valli dell'Agno e del Chiampo e nel bacino del fiume Fratta (che confluisce nel canale Garzone), ma anche in alcune zone confinanti delle province di Padova e Verona — sono interessate da significativa contaminazione da sostanze PFAS (perfluoroalchiliche). Il fenomeno è emerso in seguito a una campagna di misurazioni dei pozzi eseguita a livello nazionale dall'IRSA (Istituto di Ricerca sulle Acque), braccio operativo del CNR (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche). Secondo quanto riportato dai media, in alcuni casi la concentrazione di alcune tra queste sostanze supererebbe i 1.000/1.500 ng/l (nanogrammi per litro), arrivando a sfiorare soglia 2.000 ng/l in un pozzo (poi chiuso) di una zona industriale di Vicenza ([1]). Tali composti del fluoro vengono utilizzati per impermeabilizzare tessuti, carta, contenitori per alimenti; l'ARPAV (Agenzia regionale per la Prevenzione e Protezione Ambientale del Veneto), infatti, ha individuato la fonte della contaminazione negli scarichi di una locale industria ([2]).

La presenza di tali composti nell'acqua potabile non è fatta oggetto di specifici limiti da parte né della normativa italiana, né di quella comunitaria. Tali sostanze vengono, infatti, definite «microinquinanti emergenti», frutto di un'industria chimica recente e per questo non monitorate dalle indagini di laboratorio di routine. In Germania, tuttavia, il limite è di 100 ng/l e nel New Jersey (U.S.A.) pari ad appena 40 ng/l.

Si ricorda che, proprio a causa dell'ampio utilizzo di tali sostanze in campo industriale e dell'associabilità di queste a un ampio spettro di effetti sulla salute, l'EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) ha svolto un'indagine scientifica sull'esposizione umana alle stesse nella catena alimentare, arrivando però a escludere probabili effetti negativi (ammettendo tuttavia la carenza di dati); ciononostante, nel 2010 la Commissione ha imposto agli Stati membri il monitoraggio della presenza di tali sostanze per gli anni 2010 e 2011 attraverso una raccomandazione ad hoc ([3]) . Tutto ciò premesso, la Commissione

1. È a conoscenza del fenomeno di contaminazione dell'acqua riportato sopra e della sua intensità?

2. Può comunicare i risultati del monitoraggio stabilito con la raccomandazione succitata?

3. Non ritiene opportuno che si arrivi presto a regolamentare a livello UE la presenza di tali sostanze nell'acqua potabile?

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

La Commissione non è a conoscenza di questo specifico problema di contaminazione delle acque.

Le sostanze perfluoroalchiliche (PFAS) sono un ampio gruppo di composti. Il monitoraggio svolto sulla scorta della raccomandazione 2010/161/UE ha dimostrato che l'esposizione a tali sostanze attraverso il consumo di alimenti (compresa l'acqua potabile) varia fino a un massimo del 19 % della dose giornaliera ammissibile (DGA) per l'acido perfluorottano sulfonato e un massimo del 2,1 % per l'acido perfluoroottanoico. I prodotti che contribuiscono maggiormente all'esposizione alimentare sono il pesce e altri frutti di mare, la frutta, la carne e i loro derivati, ma notevoli sono le variazioni in termini di esposizione a seconda degli studi e delle fasce d'età e delle diverse abitudini alimentari ([4]).

La direttiva sull'acqua potabile ([5]) non stabilisce valori limite per il contenuto di PFAS ma lascia agli Stati membri il compito di fissarli, in conformità all'articolo 5, paragrafo 3, qualora ciò sia necessario per tutelare la salute umana.

([1]) I rilievi fatti successivamente dall'ULSS (Unità Locale Socio Sanitaria) 5 di Arzignano (VI), tuttavia, ridimensionerebbero il fenomeno attestando i valori rilevati, nei casi più significativi, di poco al di sopra dei 1.000 ng/l.
([2]) Cfr. http://www.ilgiornaledivicenza.it/stories/Home/539311_fluoro_arriva_da_trissinola_minaccia_alle_nostre_acque/.
([3]) Raccomandazione della Commissione del 17 marzo 2010 relativa al controllo della presenza di sostanze perfluoroalchiliche negli alimenti (testo rilevante ai fini del SEE) (2010/161/UE).
([4]) Perfluoroalkylated substances in food: occurrence and dietary exposure. EFSA Journal 2012; 10(6):2743 [55 pagg.], disponibile all'indirizzo: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/it/efsajournal/doc/2743.pdf
([5]) GU L 330 del 5.12.1998.

La produzione e l'uso di acido perfluorottano sulfonato e dei suoi derivati sono attualmente vietati dal regolamento (CE) n. 850/2004 ([6]) relativo agli inquinanti organici persistenti, che prevede una deroga solo per cinque casi minori.

Secondo le informazioni in possesso della Commissione, la presenza di PFAS nell'acqua potabile è soprattutto un problema locale che dovrebbe ridursi nel tempo per effetto della richiamata legislazione e dello sviluppo di linee guida negli Stati membri.

La Commissione non intende pertanto modificare la direttiva sull'acqua potabile poiché le questioni discusse sono già soggette alla legislazione dell'Unione e, in caso di rischi per la salute, gli Stati membri sapranno intervenire.

([6]) GU L 158 del 30.4.2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009477/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: High concentrations of PFAS (perfluoroalkylated substances) in the drinking water of some 30 municipalities in the Veneto Region

The drinking water of around thirty municipalities in the Veneto Region — primarily in the west of the province of Vicenza, particularly in the Agno and Chiampo valleys and the Fratta river basin (which flows into the Garzone canal), but also in some neighbouring areas in the provinces of Padua and Verona — is suffering from significant PFAS contamination (perfluoroalkylated substances). The problem emerged following a national measuring campaign in wells, carried out by the IRSA (Water Research Institute), the operational arm of the CNR (National Research Council). According to media reports, in a number of cases the concentration of some of these substances exceeded 1.000/1 500 ng/L (nanogrammes per litre), reaching nearly 2.000 ng/l in a well (subsequently closed) in an industrial part of Vicenza ([1]). These fluoride compounds are used to waterproof fabrics, paper and food containers. ARPAV (Veneto Regional Agency for Environmental Prevention and Protection) has identified the source of contamination as being the waste water discharged by a local industry ([2]).

The presence of these compounds in drinking water is not subject to any specific limits by either Italian or EC law. These substances are, in fact, known as 'emerging micropollutants', which have only recently started to be produced by the chemical industry and are thus not monitored by routine laboratory investigations. In Germany, however, the limit is 100 ng/l and in New Jersey (USA), a mere 40 ng/l.

It is worth noting that it is precisely because of the extensive use of these substances in industry and the fact that they may be linked to a wide range of health effects, that the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) conducted a scientific investigation on human exposure to these substances in the food chain. In the end, however, it ruled out any likely adverse effects (but did admit there was a lack of data). However, in 2010 the Commission instructed Member States to monitor the presence of these substances in the years 2010 and 2011, by means of a specific recommendation ([3]).

That said, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Is it aware of the abovementioned water contamination problem and of its magnitude?

2. Can it announce the results of the monitoring required by the abovementioned recommendation?

3. Does it not agree that the presence of these substances in drinking water should be regulated at EU level as soon as possible?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(11 October 2013)

The Commission is not aware of this specific water contamination problem.

The term PFAS is very broad and covers several substances. The monitoring exercise following recommendation 2010/161/EU demonstrated that exposure to PFAS in food (including drinking water) ranged from up to 19% of the tolerable daily intake (TDI) for perfluorooctane sulfonic acid and up to 2.1% of the TDI for perfluorooctanoic acid. The main contributors to the dietary exposure were fish and other seafood, fruits and meat (and their products). The results revealed a high variation in contribution across dietary studies and age classes reflecting differences in dietary patterns ([4]).

The Drinking Water Directive ([5]) (DWD) does not include a limit value for PFAS. It is for Member States to regulate them in accordance with Article 5(3), in case there is a risk to human health.

([1]) The measurements taken subsequently by the ULSS (local health authority) No 5 in Arzignano (VI), however, found values, in the most significant cases, of just above 1.000 ng/l
([2]) Cfr. http://www.ilgiornaledivicenza.it/stories/Home/539311_fluoro_arriva_da_trissinola_minaccia_alle_nostre_acque/
([3]) Commission Recommendation of 17 March 2010 on the monitoring of perfluoroalkylated substances in food (text with EEA relevance) (2010/161/EU)
([4]) Perfluoroalkylated substances in food: occurrence and dietary exposure. EFSA Journal 2012; 10(6):2743. [55 pp.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2743. Available online: www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal.
([5]) OJ L 330, 5.12.1998.

Production and use of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid and derivatives is currently banned by Regulation 850/2004 on Persistent Organic Pollutants ([6]). A derogation is given only for five relatively minor uses.

According to the Commission's information, PFAS in drinking water are primarily a localised problem which should diminish over time as a result of the above legislation and the development of guidelines in some Member States.

The Commission does thus not intend to amend the DWD as such issues are already subject to EU legislation and in case of health risks can be dealt with by Member States.

([6]) OJ L 158, 30.4.2004.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009478/13
alla Commissione
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Incidente ferroviario a Santiago de Compostela e sicurezza del sistema ferroviario europeo

Le recenti tragedie ferroviarie che hanno avuto luogo in Francia dove una collisione tra due treni di pendolari ha provocato sei vittime e la ancor più grave strage accaduta in Spagna dove lo scorso 24 luglio una scellerata imprudenza del macchinista ha causato 77 morti e 140 feriti nelle vicinanze di Santiago de Compostela, hanno portato alla ribalta il problema dell'inadeguatezza tecnologica che tutt'ora contraddistingue numerosi tratti delle linee europee di alta velocità.

Il treno Alvia della serie 730 è deragliato su una stretta curva sulla quale vige un limite di 80 km orari. Il convoglio però l'ha imboccata a oltre 180 Km/h senza che nessun sistema elettronico potesse correggere l'errore del macchinista.

Considerato che l'UE ha da tempo avviato sforzi per armonizzare il traffico ferroviario europeo aumentando il livello tecnologico mediante la creazione del sistema ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System) il cui compito è impedire che il treno superi i limiti di velocità, rallentandolo in modo automatico.

Considerato che mediante lo standard ERMTS la centrale a terra, mediante una trasmissione radio di dati digitali è praticamente in costante contatto con il treno, e in caso di emergenza è in grado di intervenire in automatico «prevaricando» le azioni di comando del macchinista.

Considerato che il treno in questione, un moderno S-730 in grado di circolare su qualunque rotaia in Spagna, era equipaggiato con il sistema europeo ERMTS, ma l'infrastruttura ferroviaria contava solo su quello spagnolo ASFA, che fa fermare il treno in caso di velocità eccessiva solo nel caso in cui vi sia un faro di segnalazione, cosa che nella fattispecie non ha avuto luogo.

Considerato che una simile fatale circostanza sarebbe stata evitabile se le infrastrutture fossero state tecnologicamente adeguate. Considerato che come da comunicazione della Commissione del 17.9.2010 COM(2010)0474 ([1]) la politica ferroviaria europea mira a facilitare lo sviluppo sostenibile dell'economia europea fornendo servizi di qualità, affidabili, sicuri ed efficienti.

Non ritiene la Commissione che sia necessario intervenire al fine di intensificare gli sforzi finalizzati all'armonizzazione del traffico europeo, condizione essenziale per la creazione di uno spazio ferroviario europeo credibile e sicuro?

Risposta congiunta di Siim Kallas a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2013)

La Commissione deplora profondamente i recenti incidenti ferroviari e ha espresso sostegno e solidarietà alle famiglie delle vittime.

Ai sensi della direttiva 2004/49/CE ([2]), gli Stati membri dispongono di organismi investigativi nazionali di sicurezza incaricati di indagare sulla sicurezza in seguito a incidenti gravi, stabilire le cause degli incidenti e individuare misure atte a ridurne la frequenza. Le relazioni degli organismi investigativi nazionali riguardanti i recenti avvenimenti devono inoltre rivolgere raccomandazioni alle autorità nazionali responsabili della sicurezza e ad altri organismi competenti, quali l'Agenzia ferroviaria europea (ERA) e la Commissione. La Commissione deve attendere le relazioni prima di trarre conclusioni. Laddove le relazioni evidenzino la necessità di ulteriori interventi a livello dell'UE, la Commissione adotterà urgentemente le misure del caso.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0474:IT:NOT.

([2]) DIRETTIVA 2004/49/CE DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E DEL CONSIGLIO, del 29 aprile 2004, relativa alla sicurezza delle ferrovie comunitarie e recante modifica della direttiva 95/18/CE del Consiglio relativa alle licenze delle imprese ferroviarie e della direttiva 2001/14/CE relativa alla ripartizione della capacità di infrastruttura ferroviaria, all'imposizione dei diritti per l'utilizzo dell'infrastruttura ferroviaria e alla certificazione di sicurezza (direttiva sulla sicurezza delle ferrovie), GU L 220 del 21.6.2004, pag. 16.

Per quanto riguarda la sicurezza dei sistemi di segnalazione, la Commissione ha dato inizio allo sviluppo del sistema ERTMS (sistema europeo di gestione del traffico ferroviario) per promuovere la sostenibilità, l'armonizzazione e la sicurezza dello spazio ferroviario europeo. La norma corrispondente è obbligatoria per tutte le nuove linee e i nuovi veicoli ferroviari. Conformemente al piano di attuazione europeo 2009, gli Stati membri devono dotare alcune linee del sistema ERTMS entro il 2015. La Commissione presenterà una relazione in merito entro la fine dell'anno e lancerà una valutazione d'impatto relativa alle misure migliori per il completamento dell'ERTMS sulla rete principale dell'UE entro il 2030, in linea con gli orientamenti TEN-T riveduti ([3]).

Pur riguardando il materiale rotabile ad alta velocità, l'incidente di Santiago è avvenuto su una parte della rete convenzionale che assicura il collegamento con la linea ad alta velocità. È quindi possibile che non vi fosse alcun obbligo giuridico di utilizzare l'ERTMS. In tal caso, competeva al gestore dell'infrastruttura garantire l'adeguatezza del sistema di controllo dei treni, mentre l'impresa ferroviaria doveva assicurare l'autorizzazione e la compatibilità del materiale rotabile, delle patenti dei macchinisti e della loro formazione.

([3]) COM(2011)650 def.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009495/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(5 august 2013)

Subiect: Creșterea siguranței transportului feroviar

Într-o perioadă de nici două săptămâni (12 iulie 2013-24 iulie 2013), s-au produs două accidente feroviare grave:

— accidentul feroviar din apropierea orașului Santiago de Compostela din nord-vestul Spaniei, în care au murit 80 de persoane, iar alte 140 au fost rănite;

— accidentul feroviar produs în apropiere de Paris, la Brétigny-sur-Orge, care s-a soldat cu șase morți și 200 de răniți

Aș dori să întreb Comisia ce măsuri intenționează să ia pentru a crește siguranța transportului feroviar pe teritoriul Uniunii Europene?

Intenționează Comisia să adopte măsuri specifice pentru reducerea automată a vitezei excesive pe calea ferată și pentru implementarea sistemului european de management al traficului feroviar ERTMS?

Răspuns comun dat de dl Kallas în numele Comisiei
(13 septembrie 2013)

Comisia regretă profund recentele accidente feroviare, și-a exprimat solidaritatea cu familiile victimelor și le-a oferit acestora sprijin.

În temeiul Directivei 2004/49/CE ([1]), statele membre au organisme de anchetă naționale care trebuie să efectueze anchete privind siguranța în urma unor accidente grave, pentru a stabili cauzele acestora și a identifica eventualele măsuri de reducere a riscului de repetare a accidentelor. De asemenea, rapoartele acestor organisme referitoare la evenimentele recente ar trebui să cuprindă recomandări pentru autoritățile naționale de siguranță și pentru alte organisme competente, precum Agenția Europeană a Căilor Ferate (AEF) și Comisia. Comisia trebuie să aștepte rapoartele înainte să tragă concluzii. Dacă rapoartele indică necesitatea întreprinderii de acțiuni suplimentare la nivelul UE, Comisia va lua măsurile adecvate în regim de urgență.

În ceea ce privește sistemele de semnalizare pentru siguranță, Comisia a început dezvoltarea ERTMS (Sistemul european de management al traficului feroviar), menit a sta la baza unui spațiu feroviar european sustenabil, armonizat și sigur. Standardul aferent este obligatoriu pentru toate liniile și vehiculele feroviare noi. În temeiul unui Plan european de desfășurare (2009), statele membre trebuie să echipeze unele linii cu ERTMS până în 2015. Mai târziu în cursul acestui an, Comisia va prezenta un raport și va lansa o evaluare a impactului în privința celor mai bune măsuri pentru completarea ERTMS în rețeaua centrală a UE până în 2030, în conformitate cu orientările TEN-T revizuite ([2]).

Deși accidentul de la Santiago a implicat material rulant de mare viteză, se pare că accidentul a avut loc pe partea convențională a rețelei care făcea legătura cu linia de mare viteză. Prin urmare, este posibil să nu fi existat obligația legală de utilizare a ERTMS. Dacă aceasta a fost situația, atunci administratorul de infrastructură avea datoria de a se asigura că sistemul de control al trenului era adecvat, dar întreprinderea feroviară era cea care trebuia să asigure autorizarea și compatibilitatea materialului rulant și care era răspunzătoare pentru acordarea permisului de conducere și pentru formarea profesională.

([1]) DIRECTIVA 2004/49/CE A PARLAMENTULUI EUROPEAN ȘI A CONSILIULUI din 29 aprilie 2004 privind siguranța căilor ferate comunitare și de modificare a Directivei 95/18/CE a Consiliului privind acordarea de licențe întreprinderilor feroviare și a Directivei 2001/14/CE privind repartizarea capacităților de infrastructură feroviară și perceperea de tarife pentru utilizarea infrastructurii feroviare și certificarea siguranței, JO L 164, 30.4.2004.

([2]) COM(2011) 650 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009478/13
to the Commission
Aldo Patriciello (PPE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Railway accident in Santiago de Compostela and safety of the European railway system

The recent railway tragedies in France, where a collision between two commuter trains resulted in six fatalities, and the even more serious disaster in Spain, where, on 24 July, 77 people were killed and 140 injured near Santiago de Compostela, due to the wicked recklessness of a train driver, have highlighted the problem of the technological shortcomings that are still present on many stretches of high speed railway lines in the EU.

The Alvia 730 series train derailed on a tight curve which is subject to a limit of 80 Km/h. The train, however, entered the bend at over 180 Km/h without any electronic system correcting the driver's error.

For some time now the EU has been making efforts to harmonise European rail traffic by increasing technological levels through the establishment of the ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System), whose job it is to prevent trains from exceeding speed limits by automatically slowing them down.

Through the ERMTS, the central base station — via the radio transmission of digital data — is almost constantly in contact with the train, and in case of emergency is able to automatically intervene by taking command of the train.

The train in question, a modern S-730, can run on any track in Spain and was equipped with the ERTMS system, but the railway infrastructure depended only on the Spanish ASFA system, which is able to stop a train travelling too fast only when a beacon signal is issued, which in this case did not happen.

Such fatal circumstances would have been avoidable if the infrastructure had been technologically appropriate. Given that, according to Commission Communication COM(2010) 0474 ([1]) of 17 September 2010, EU railway policy aims to facilitate the sustainable development of the EU economy by providing quality, reliable, safe and efficient services, does the Commission not think it should take action to step up efforts to harmonise EU traffic, which is a prerequisite for the establishment of a credible and safe European railway area?

Question for written answer E-009495/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Improved rail transport safety

Two major rail disasters have occurred over a period of less than two weeks (12-24 July 2013):

— near to Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, claiming 80 lives and leaving 140 injured;

— at Brétigny-sur-Orge near Paris, claiming six lives and leaving 200 injured.

In view of this:

What measures will the Commission take to improve transport safety in the European Union?

Will it specifically seek the installation on railways of automatic excess speed reduction devices and ensure the implementation of the European Rail Transport Management System (ERTMS)?

Joint answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission deeply regrets the recent rail accidents and expressed solidarity and support to the victims' families.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0474:EN:NOT

Under Directive 2004/49/EC ([2]), Member States have National Investigation Bodies (NIB), which must undertake safety investigations following serious accidents, establish their causes and identify possible measures to reduce recurrence. The NIBs reports into recent events should also address recommendations to the National Safety Authorities and other competent bodies, such as the European Railway Agency (ERA) and the Commission. The Commission must await the reports before drawing conclusions. If they reveal a need for futher EU level action, it will take the appropriate measures as a matter of urgency.

Concerning the safety signalling systems, the Commission initiated the development of ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System) to underpin a sustainable, harmonised and safe European railway area. The corresponding standard is mandatory for any new lines and rail vehicles. Under a European deployment plan (EDP) (2009), Member States are to equip some lines with ERTMS by 2015. The Commission will report later this year and launch an impact asessment on the best measures for completing ERTMS on the EU core network by 2030, in line with the revised TEN-T guidelines ([3]).

Although the Santiago accident involved high speed rolling stock, it appears the accident happened on part of the conventional network linking to the high speed line. As such, there may have been no legal obligation to deploy ERTMS. If so, it was for the infrastructure manager to ensure the train control system was appropriate, but for the railway undertaking to ensure authorisation and compatibility of the rolling stock and driver licensing and training.

([2]) Directive 2004/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on safety on the Community's railways and amending Council Directive 95/18/EC on the licensing of railway undertakings and Directive 2001/14/EC on the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the levying of charges for the use of railway infrastructure and safety certification (Railway Safety Directive), OJ L 164, 30.4.2004.

([3]) COM(2011) 650 final.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009479/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Roma, zona di Falcognana: possibile apertura di una nuova discarica provvisoria — Possibile incompatibilità con le normative comunitarie

Nelle scorse settimane il Commissario prefettizio di Roma ha proposto un sito per la realizzazione di un impianto per lo smaltimento dei rifiuti in località Falcognana, nel Comune di Roma. Si tratta di un'area in cui, già dal 2010, è presente una discarica per lo smaltimento di rifiuti pericolosi. Inoltre, vale la pena ricordare che il nuovo sito individuato nascerà a ridosso del Parco dell'Appia Antica e nelle vicinanze del Santuario del Divino Amore. Per di più, la stessa area, che ricade all'interno dell'Agro Romano, è servita da un'unica arteria che già rende trafficata l'intera zona; pertanto il passaggio continuo dei camion porterebbe a un congestionamento di tutta l'area, con gravi disagi per tutti i residenti.

Per questi motivi, tutti i comitati di quartiere hanno espresso forti preoccupazioni dal momento che la zona interessata è densamente popolata e sussistono sul territorio vincoli paesaggistici ed architettonici.

L'intera area dovrebbe essere utilizzata per i prossimi due anni per smaltire all'incirca 500 000 tonnellate di rifiuti trattati all'anno, in palese contrasto con quanto sostenuto dalla Commissione, che più volte si è espressa contro la costituzione di discariche temporanee e provvisorie.

Considerando quanto sopra indicato, può la Commissione sapere:

1. se è stata correttamente esperita la procedura di valutazione d'impatto ambientale preventiva e se esistono o meno le condizioni previste dalla direttiva 2011/92/CE?

2. Sono state effettuate le procedure obbligatorie di pubblicità e informazione della cittadinanza (VIA e VAS)?

3. Sono state prese adeguatamente in considerazione da parte delle autorità italiane le disposizioni contenute nella direttiva 2008/98/CE e nella decisione n. 2003/33/CE del Consiglio che stabilisce criteri e procedure per l'ammissione dei rifiuti nelle discariche?

4. È stato previsto un piano di bonifica e riqualificazione dell'intera zona di Falcognana, come prevede la direttiva 2004/35/CE, vista la presenza della discarica per lo smaltimento dei rifiuti pericolosi?

5. Quali garanzie ha fornito la Regione Lazio nell'ambito del procedimento d'infrazione 2011/4021 volto a garantire che le autorità italiane approntino sufficienti capacità per trattare tutti i rifiuti smaltiti nelle discariche della regione?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2013)

Conformemente all'articolo 2, paragrafo 1 della direttiva 2011/92/UE ([1]) (direttiva VIA), gli Stati membri devono provvedere affinché, prima del rilascio dell'autorizzazione per i progetti per i quali si prevede un notevole impatto ambientale per la loro natura, le loro dimensioni o la loro ubicazione, siano previste un'autorizzazione e una valutazione dell'impatto stesso. La direttiva VIA include «impianti di smaltimento dei rifiuti», di cui all'allegato I, che impongono di svolgere una procedura VIA anteriormente al rilascio dell'autorizzazione.

([1]) Direttiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 13 dicembre 2011, concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati, GU L 26 del 28.1.2012.

Dalle informazioni fornite dall'onorevole parlamentare, la Commissione non è stata in grado di identificare alcuna prova di una violazione della direttiva VIA, della direttiva VAS ([2]), della direttiva quadro sui rifiuti ([3]) o della decisione 2003/33/CE ([4]), dato che nessuna domanda di autorizzazione è stata ancora presentata per questo progetto, né della direttiva sulla responsabilità ambientale ([5]), poiché non è stato arrecato alcun danno corrispondente alle condizioni stabilite in tale direttiva. Tuttavia, ciò non impedisce che la Commissione investighi ulteriormente la questione nel caso in cui riceva prove concrete di un'eventuale violazione della normativa UE in materia ambientale.
La Commissione informa inoltre l'onorevole parlamentare sul fatto che in data 13.6.2013, all'interno dell'attuale procedimento d'infrazione 2011/4021, l'Italia è stata deferita alla Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea per aver omesso di prendere tutte le misure necessarie per garantire un adeguato sistema di gestione dei rifiuti nella regione Lazio. Per maggiori informazioni, si prega di consultare il comunicato stampa della Commissione (IP-13-250), disponibile al seguente indirizzo: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-250_it.htm.

([2]) Direttiva 2001/42/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 27 giugno 2001, concernente la valutazione degli effetti di determinati piani e programmi sull'ambiente, GU L 197 del 21.7.2001.
([3]) Direttiva 2008/98/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 19 novembre 2008, relativa ai rifiuti e che abroga alcune direttive, GU L 312 del 22.11.2008.
([4]) Decisione del Consiglio 2003/33/CE, del 19 dicembre 2002, che stabilisce criteri e procedure per l'ammissione dei rifiuti nelle discariche ai sensi dell'articolo 16 e dell'allegato II della direttiva 1999/31/CE, GU L 11 del 16.1.2003.
([5]) Direttiva 2004/35/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 21 aprile 2004, sulla responsabilità ambientale in materia di prevenzione e riparazione del danno ambientale, GU L 143 del 30.4.2004.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009479/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Falcognana, Rome — possible opening of a new temporary landfill site- may be in breach of EC law

In recent weeks, the interim Commissioner of Rome, appointed by the prefect, has proposed a site for the construction of a waste disposal plant in Falcognana, Municipality of Rome. It is an area which has already had, since 2010, a hazardous waste disposal facility. It is also worth remembering that this new site will be near the Appia Antica Park and the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Divine Love (*Divino Amore*). Moreover, the same area, which falls within the *Agro Romano* (rural area surrounding the City of Rome), has only one main road that already fills the entire area with traffic. The continuous passage of lorries would thus congest the whole area, creating major disruptions for all residents.

For these reasons, all the local neighbourhood committees have expressed their alarm, given that the area concerned is densely populated and has certain landscape and architectural constraints.

Apparently, the entire area, over the next two years, is to be used to dispose of some 500 000 tonnes of treated waste per year. This is in stark contrast to statements made by the Commission, which on several occasions has said that it is against the establishment of temporary landfills.

In the light of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Has the prior environmental impact assessment procedure been properly carried out andhave the conditions laid down in Directive 2011/92/EC been complied with?

2. Have the mandatory procedures to publicise the matter and inform the public beencarried out (EIA and SEA)?

3. Have the Italian authorities adequately taken into account the provisions laid down inDirective 2008/98/EC and Council Decision No 2003/33/EC establishing criteria andprocedures for the acceptance of waste at landfills?

4. Has provision been made for a clean-up and redevelopment plan for the entire Falcognanaarea, as required by Directive 2004/35/EC, given the presence of the hazardous wastedisposal facility?

5. What guarantees has the Lazio Region provided under the 2011/4021 infringementprocedure to ensure that the Italian authorities have sufficient capacity to treat allwaste disposed of in the region's landfill sites?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

According to Article 2(1) of the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU ([1]), Member States must ensure that, before consent is given, projects likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of their nature, size or location are made subject to a requirement for development consent and an assessment with regard to their effects. The EIA Directive includes 'waste disposal installations' in Annex I, requiring an EIA procedure to be carried out before development consent is given.

From the information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission could not identify any evidence of a breach of either the EIA Directive, SEA Directive ([2]), Waste Framework Directive ([3]) or Decision 2003/33/EC ([4]), as no request for development consent has yet been lodged for this project nor of the Environmental Liability Directive ([5]), as no damage corresponding to the conditions of this directive has been caused. However, this would not preclude the Commission investigating the matter further should they receive concrete evidence of a possible breach of the EU environmental law.

([1]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.
([2]) Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.
([3]) Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.
([4]) Council Decision of 19 December 2002 establishing criteria and procedures for the acceptance of waste at landfills pursuant to Article 16 of and Annex II to Directive 1999/31/EC, OJ L 11, 16.1.2003.
([5]) Directive 2004/35/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage, OJ L 143, 30.4.2004.

The Commission would also like to inform the Honourable Member that on 13/06/2013, within the ongoing infringement procedure 2011/4021, Italy was referred to the Court of Justice of the European Union for having failed to take all the necessary measures to ensure an adequate waste management system in Lazio Region. For more info, please consult Commission's press release 'IP-13-250' available at this link: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-250_en.htm.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009480/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Commemorazione del centenario della Grande guerra sul Monte Grappa: chiarimenti

Nella risposta all'interrogazione E-005694/2013 dal titolo «Commemorazione del centenario della Grande guerra sul Monte Grappa», la Commissione afferma che «non prevede di istituire, congiuntamente al Consiglio d'Europa, un itinerario culturale europeo dedicato ai luoghi della Grande guerra».

Il presidente Tajani, nelle recenti dichiarazioni sui «Cammini europei», ha sostenuto che «Innovazione costante e creatività devono guidare l'industria turistica europea. Gli itinerari turistico-culturali rappresentano proprio questo mix vincente. Essi rispondono alle nuove esigenze della domanda turistica di vivere — attraverso il viaggio — un'esperienza, esplorare la storia, la cultura, le tradizioni delle destinazioni visitate in un mutuo scambio di conoscenza e arricchimento reciproco. La diversità e la ricchezza dell'enorme patrimonio culturale, paesaggistico, naturale, storico e architettonico d'Europa — che gli itinerari culturali europei esprimono — è per un turista garanzia di un'esperienza inedita e unica in qualsiasi periodo dell'anno».

Considerando anche il valore storico e culturale del Monte Grappa derivato dagli eventi storici che vi hanno avuto luogo, come descritto nell'interrogazione precedente, sia per il popolo italiano sia per tutti i popoli coinvolti nei due conflitti mondiali, può la Commissione motivare la sua decisione di non istituire un itinerario culturale europeo dedicato ai luoghi della Grande guerra?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(3 ottobre 2013)

La Commissione sostiene lo sviluppo e il miglioramento degli itinerari culturali europei attraverso vari meccanismi di finanziamento, per i motivi espressi dal Vicepresidente della Commissione responsabile per l'Industria e l'imprenditoria (citati nell'interrogazione dell'onorevole parlamentare).

Vengono regolarmente pubblicati inviti a presentare proposte in materia di turismo culturale, nei quali si richiedono ad esempio proposte relative, tra l'altro, al turismo sui campi di battaglia. Uno dei finanziamenti del 2013 è stato destinato all'«Itinerario di liberazione dell'Europa» nella seconda guerra mondiale. Anche un itinerario culturale europeo incentrato specificamente sui siti della grande guerra sarebbe ammissibile al finanziamento.

La Commissione sostiene inoltre tecnicamente e finanziariamente l'impegno di certificazione del Consiglio d'Europa e del suo «Istituto europeo degli itinerari culturali» (istituito nel 1987). L'onorevole parlamentare troverà informazioni supplementari nella risposta all'interrogazione scritta E-11542/2012.

Né la Commissione né il Consiglio d'Europa sono tuttavia nella condizione di poter istituire itinerari culturali europei. Conformemente al principio di sussidiarietà l'UE lascia questo compito ai consorzi di soggetti pubblici e/o privati a livello locale, regionale e nazionale.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009480/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Commemoration on Monte Grappa of the centenary of the Great War: clarifications

In its answer to Question E-005694/2013, entitled 'Commemoration on Monte Grappa of the centenary of the Great War', the Commission stated that it was 'not planning to set up, together with the Council of Europe, a European cultural itinerary dedicated to Great War sites'.

In a recent statement on European cultural routes, Vice-President Tajani said: 'Innovation and creativity need to be the guiding principles for Europe's tourist industry. The cultural and tourist routes are prime examples of this winning combination. They are in tune with the desire for tourism to be an experience; an opportunity to explore the history, culture and traditions of the places visited; an enriching two-way process. The European cultural routes provide an insight into Europe's rich and diverse cultural, natural, historical and architectural heritage, offering tourists a unique and unforgettable experience at any time of year'.

In view of the historical and cultural significance of Monte Grappa and similar sites, both to Italians and to the other peoples involved in the two world wars, can the Commission explain its decision not to set up a European cultural route focusing specifically on Great War sites?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Commission supports the development and improvement of European Cultural Routes through various funding schemes and for the reasons expressed by the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship (quote in the Honourable Member's question).

Regular calls for proposals on cultural tourism are, for instance, inviting proposals dealing, among other themes, with battlefield tourism. One of the 2013 grants went to World War II's 'Europe Liberation Route'. A European cultural route focusing specifically on Great War sites would be equally eligible for funding.

The Commission also supports technically and financially the certification efforts of the Council of Europe and its 'European Institute of Cultural Routes' (scheme launched in 1987). The Honourable Member will find additional information in the answer to Written Question E-11542/2012.

However neither the Commission nor the Council of Europe is in a position to set up European Cultural Itineraries. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, the EU leaves this to consortia of public and/or private actors at a local, regional and national level.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009481/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Consumi in calo per il settore calzaturiero italiano

Assocalzaturifici, l'associazione italiana delle imprese del settore calzaturiero, lancia un allarme. In Italia, gli acquisti di calzature da parte delle famiglie hanno registrato nell'ultimo decennio un netto calo: i 161,4 milioni di paia venduti nel 2000 si sono ridotti nel 2012 a 149,2 milioni, con un calo del 7,5 % pari a circa 6,1 miliardi di euro. Il 2013 è iniziato con un ulteriore peggioramento: nei primi tre mesi gli acquisti hanno subito, una flessione del 4,7 % del volume di merci vendute, un calo del 7,2 % della spesa e del 2,6 % dei prezzi medi. La fascia di prezzo medio-alta risulta la più colpita in termini sia di volume sia di spesa, mentre aumentano gli acquisti nella fascia top, la sola a evidenziare un andamento favorevole.

Alla luce di quanto precede, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È informata dei fatti?

2. Considerando che il mercato interno rappresenta uno sbocco importante con quasi 31,8 milioni di paia a esso destinate nel 2012, come valuta la situazione dei numerosi distretti calzaturieri, apprezzati a livello internazionale per la qualità dei prodotti, diffusi sull'intero territorio nazionale?

3. Considerando che l'indotto assicura posti di lavoro a un gran numero di operatori, non ritiene che sostenere il settore significhi anche salvaguardare i posti di lavoro a esso relativi, in un periodo particolarmente critico come quello attuale?

4. Come si presenta la situazione del settore calzaturiero negli altri Stati membri?

Risposta di Antonio Tajani a nome della Commissione
(7 ottobre 2013)

La Commissione segue da vicino la situazione del settore calzaturiero. Secondo i dati più recenti, sembra che la produzione di calzature nell'UE si sia stabilizzata: nel primo trimestre del 2013 il volume di produzione nell'UE è aumentato del 4 % rispetto al primo trimestre del 2012.

L'attuale recessione nell'UE ha un impatto negativo sugli acquisti dei consumatori. Ciò è tuttavia in qualche misura compensato dalle esportazioni UE verso i paesi terzi: secondo i dati relativi al giugno 2013, le esportazioni extra-UE di calzature sono aumentate di più del 10 % rispetto allo stesso periodo del 2012.

L'importanza dell'industria della moda, comprendente l'industria delle calzature, è stata riconosciuta dal documento di lavoro dei servizi della Commissione sulla competitività del settore della moda nell'UE ([1]) pubblicato nel settembre 2012. Il documento propone un certo numero di azioni a sostegno di queste industrie. Alcune di queste azioni sono attualmente sviluppate ed attuate, come la campagna anti-contraffazione ([2]), il progetto pilota «Worth» ([3]), il programma COSME ([4]) o il progetto e-Biz ([5]).

Nel 2012 la Commissione ha realizzato lo studio «In-depth assessment of the situation of the European footwear sector and prospects for its future development» (Valutazione approfondita della situazione del settore europeo delle calzature e prospettive per il suo future sviluppo) ([6]). Questo studio comprende studi di casi particolareggiati incentrati sulla situazione in alcune importanti regioni in cui prevale la produzione calzaturiera (in Italia, ad esempio, la Lombardia, l'Emilia-Romagna e il Veneto). Lo studio mostra che l'industria calzaturiera in altri paesi — Spagna, Portogallo e Romania — deve affrontare sfide analoghe.

([1]) Documento SWD(2012)284 final/2.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/tajani/stop-fakes/index_en.htm
([3]) Il progetto pilota «Worth» si propone di collegare le PMI che operano nel settore dell'abbigliamento, delle calzature, degli articoli in pelle, ecc. con gli stilisti al fine di creare nuovi prodotti, processi o strategie.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/cip/cosme/index_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6892&lang=en&tpa_id=1028&title=Creating%2Dseamless%2Dcommunication%2Dthroughout%2Dthe%2Dfashion%2Dsuppl%2Dchain
([6]) Lo studio è stato trasmesso al comitato per lo sviluppo regionale del Parlamento europeo il 20 dicembre 2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009481/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Declining sales of footwear in Italy

Assocalzaturifici, , the Italian association of footwear businesses, is sounding the alarm. In Italy, purchases of footwear by families have fallen substantially in the past decade: in 2012, 149.2 million pairs were sold, as against 161.4 million in 2000 — a fall of 7.5%, equivalent to some EUR 6.1 billion. 2013 began with a further deterioration in the situation: in the first three months, there was a fall of 4.7% in the volume of goods sold, 7.2% in expenditure and 2.6% in average prices. The middle-to-high price range has been hardest hit in terms both of volume and of expenditure, while top-of-the-range products are the only ones where the trend is favourable.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation?

2. As the internal market provides an important outlet, with nearly 31.8 million pairs being sold there in 2012, what is the Commission's assessment of the situation of the numerous footwear-manufacturing districts, the quality of whose products — distributed throughout Italy — is internationally recognised?

3. As the industry also generates much secondary employment, would not support for the industry also serve to preserve jobs in the sectors concerned, during a particularly critical period such as the present one?

4. What is the situation in the footwear industry in other Member States?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

The Commission closely follows the situation in the footwear sector. According to the most recent data, EU footwear production seems to have stabilised: in the first quarter of 2013, EU production volume increased by 4% compared to the first quarter of 2012.

The current recession in the EU has a negative impact on consumers' purchases. This is however compensated, to a certain extent, by EU exports to third countries: according to the data for June 2013, extra-EU footwear exports grew by over 10% compared to the same period in 2012.

The importance of the fashion industry, including the footwear industry, has been recognised in the Staff Working Document on the competitiveness of the EU fashion sector ([1]) published in September 2012. The document proposes a number of actions to support these industries. Several of these actions are currently being developed and implemented, such as an anti-counterfeiting campaign ([2]), 'Worth' pilot project ([3]) and COSME ([4]) or e-Biz project ([5]).

In 2012, the Commission conducted a study 'In-depth assessment of the situation of the European footwear sector and prospects for its future development' ([6]). This study includes detailed case studies focused on the developments in a number of important footwear manufacturing regions (in Italy e.g. Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Veneto). The study shows that footwear industry in other countries, such as Spain, Portugal and Romania faces similar challenges.

([1]) SWD(2012) 284 final/2.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/tajani/stop-fakes/index_en.htm
([3]) The 'Worth' pilot project aims at linking SMEs active in the manufacturing of clothing, footwear, leather goods, etc. with designers in view of creating new products, processes or strategies.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/cip/cosme/index_en.htm
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=6892&lang=en&tpa_id=1028&title=Creating%2Dseamless%2Dcommunication%2Dthroughout%2Dthe%2Dfashion%2Dsupply%2Dchain
([6]) The study was transmitted to the EP Regional Development Committee on 20 December 2012.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009482/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Nuovi domini web nel settore vitivinicolo mettono a rischio le denominazioni d'origine

L'Organizzazione Internazionale della Vigna e del Vino (OIV) ha lanciato un allarme in seguito alla decisione di ICANN, l'organismo responsabile della gestione del sistema dei nomi di dominio Internet, di estendere il numero dei domini di primo livello generico. L'iniziativa prevede la creazione di domini «vin» e «wine», oltre che di domini abbinati a nomi famosi di vitigni come «prosecco» e «chianti», permettendo a chiunque li acquisti di commercializzare la propria attività nonostante essa non abbia nulla a che fare con i prodotti vitivinicoli di cui portano il nome. Quattro società hanno già avanzato la propria candidatura per gestire i domini .wine e .vin e per poter commercializzare tali nomi permettendo a qualsiasi privato, ente o organizzazione di combinarli con domini di secondo livello, creando ad esempio «chianti.wine» o «prosecco.vin». In caso di rilascio dell'autorizzazione da parte di ICANN, potrebbero essere immessi nel mercato prodotti vitivinicoli che non rispettano le attuali normative sulla commercializzazione dei prodotti, compresa la tutela della denominazione di origine di cui può vantare un gran numero di vini italiani.

La Commissione:

1. è informata dei fatti?

2. come valuta l'impatto dell'introduzione di tali domini sui produttori e su tutti gli altri operatori del settore in Italia e a livello comunitario?

3. ritiene necessario intervenire contro questa e altre forme di agropirateria del web ai danni del comparto vitivinicolo di qualità?

4. non ritiene che l'utilizzo di domini abbinati a nomi famosi di vitigni rischi di ingannare il consumatore finale sulla reale natura del prodotto, in un mercato che già necessita di maggiore chiarezza?

5. non ritiene che tale tipo di commercializzazione sia lesivo della reputazione del vino italiano, apprezzato in tutto il mondo per la sua qualità, e favorisca invece la diffusione di prodotti d'imitazione?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(23 settembre 2013)

La Commissione è certamente a conoscenza del programma gTLD della ICANN, l'organismo responsabile della gestione del sistema dei nomi di dominio Internet, e condivide i timori circa le potenziali implicazioni dei due domìni .wine e .vin per la protezione delle indicazioni geografiche nel settore vitivinicolo.

La Commissione ha rappresentato all'ICANN l'importanza economica e politica della questione per l'UE. Essa si adopera, nell'ambito del comitato consultivo governativo (GAC) dell'ICANN, per l'adozione di salvaguardie che permettano di tutelare l'interesse pubblico dell'UE e di rispettare la legislazione unionale e internazionale sulle indicazioni geografiche. A tal fine, dopo aver analizzato la situazione, i servizi della Commissione hanno discusso con i membri del comitato GAC dell'ICANN alcuni aspetti giuridici per evidenziare i motivi per cui i due domìni giustificherebbero l'adozione di maggiori salvaguardie e di particolari precauzioni all'atto della commercializzazione. Le salvaguardie in parola sono attualmente all'esame del comitato GAC dell'ICANN.

La Commissione è in stretto contatto con le organizzazioni di titolari di diritti dell'UE e i loro organi direttivi e sta seguendo gli sviluppi delle trattative con i richiedenti per pervenire a una soluzione soddisfacente. La Commissione si metterà anche in diretto contatto con il comitato direttivo dell'ICANN per garantire che gli interessi dell'UE siano presi nella dovuta considerazione prima di approvare i due nomi di dominio .wine e .vin.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009482/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Dangers posed to designations of origin by new Internet domains in the wine-growing industry

The International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) has sounded the alarm following the decision by ICANN, the organisation responsible for managing the Internet domain name system, to increase the number of generic first-level domains. The initiative envisages the creation of '.vin' and '.wine' domains, as well as domains linked to names of famous grape varieties such as 'prosecco' and 'chianti', permitting any person who acquires them to use them for their own commercial purposes even if they have nothing to do with the wine products whose name they bear. Four companies have already applied to manage the .wine and .vin domains and exploit them commercially, allowing any private individual, body or organisation to combine them with second-level domain names, for example to create 'chianti.wine' or 'prosecco.vin'. If ICANN authorises this, wine products could be placed on the market which do not comply with the existing rules on the marketing of products, including the protected designation of origin which has been granted to many Italian wines.

1. Is the Commission aware of this?

2. What is the Commission's assessment of the impact which the introduction of such domains will have on producers and on all the other operators in the industry in Italy and at Community level?

3. Does the Commission consider it necessary to take action against this and other forms of 'food piracy' which take advantage of the Internet, to the detriment of quality wine production?

4. Does not the Commission consider that the use of domain names linked to the names of famous grape varieties is liable to mislead final consumers as to the true nature of the product on a market which already needs greater clarity?

5. Does not the Commission consider that such commercial operations will damage the reputation of Italian wine, whose quality is recognised worldwide, and facilitate the distribution of imitation products?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

The Commission is fully aware of the ICANN gTLD programme and shares the concerns in relation to the potential implications of the two strings on the protection of geographical indications (GI) in the wine sector.

The Commission has stressed to ICANN the economic and political significance for the EU of the matter. The Commission is active in the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) of ICANN in establishing safeguards which will respect EU public policy concerns and EU and International legislation on GIs. To this end, having analysed the situation, the Commission services have shared with members of GAC legal arguments to underline why the two domains would warrant stronger safeguards and particular precautions when being commercialised. The safeguards are now being debated in the GAC.

The Commission is also in close contact with the EU right holders' organisations and governing bodies and is following the evolution of the negotiations with the applicants in order to reach a satisfactory solution. The Commission will also liaise directly with the ICANN board to ensure that EU interests are duly taken into account before the delegation of .wine and .vin.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009483/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Riso cinese taroccato: minaccia per la salute dei consumatori

Dopo lo scandalo del latte per neonati contaminato dalla melanina che, scoppiato nel 2008, causò la morte di undici bambini e l'intossicazione di altri 290 000 infanti, i media di Singapore lanciano una nuova denuncia di presunte irregolarità commesse nel comparto della produzione agroalimentare cinese: in Cina verrebbe venduto riso «taroccato». Secondo un giornale locale alcuni produttori avrebbero messo in circolazione nella città cinese di Taiyuan derrate di riso che, venduto a bassissimo costo e quindi conveniente per i grossisti che ne ricavano ingenti profitti, è prodotto con impasto di patate e resine sintetiche industriali.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. È a conoscenza dei fatti?

2. Come intende tutelare la salute dei consumatori europei che, attraverso i circuiti di distribuzione più diversi, ad esempio negozi e ristoranti etnici, potrebbero entrare in contatto con questo prodotto?

3. Non crede che sarebbe necessario fermare l'ingresso di tutti i prodotti alimentari provenienti dalla Cina fino a quando le autorità cinesi non dimostreranno un totale allineamento dei propri standard di sicurezza alimentare a quelli oggi in vigore nel mercato interno?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(20 settembre 2013)

La Commissione non era a conoscenza della pratica presumibilmente in corso in Cina cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare.

Esiste un ampio corpus legislativo volto a garantire che i prodotti alimentari importati nell'Unione siano conformi alle norme di sicurezza dell'UE. I due principali strumenti per il conseguimento di questo obiettivo sono il regolamento (CE) n. 178/2002 ([1]) e il regolamento (CE) n. 882/2004 ([2]). A norma dell'articolo 11 del regolamento (CE) n. 178/2002, gli Stati membri effettuano controlli sui prodotti importati ai fini della verifica della conformità con le norme dell'UE in materia di salute o con norme equivalenti.

In particolare, i prodotti a base di riso originari della Cina sono soggetti alla decisione di esecuzione 2011/884/UE ([3]) della Commissione, recentemente modificata dalla decisione di esecuzione 2013/287/UE ([4]) della Commissione. Ciascuna partita di prodotti a base di riso proveniente dalla Cina può essere immessa in libera pratica solo se accompagnata da un rapporto d'analisi comprovante l'assenza di riso geneticamente modificato e da un certificato sanitario rilasciato dalla *Entry Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau* (ufficio di ispezione e di quarantena d'entrata e d'uscita) della Repubblica popolare cinese (AQSIQ), attestante che la partita è stata prodotta, selezionata, manipolata, trasformata, confezionata e trasportata nel rispetto delle buone prassi in materia di igiene.

Nel 2010 la Commissione ha inoltre stabilito un elenco di alimenti e mangimi che richiedono un livello accresciuto di controlli prima di poter essere introdotti nell'UE. L'elenco figura nell'allegato I del regolamento (CE) n. 669/2009 ([5]) e viene periodicamente aggiornato in base alle informazioni sui rischi per la salute. Attualmente l'elenco comprende, tra l'altro, fragole congelate, «broccoli cinesi», paste alimentari secche, pomeli e tè provenienti dalla Cina. La Commissione ritiene che gli strumenti esistenti le consentiranno di agire tempestivamente qualora si presenti la necessità di rafforzare la vigilanza su altri prodotti originari della Cina.

([1]) GU L 31 dell'1.2.2002, pagg. 1-24.
([2]) GU L 165 del 30.4.2004, pagg. 1-141.
([3]) GU L 343 del 23.12.2011, pagg. 140-148.
([4]) GU L 162 del 14.6.2013, pagg. 10-14.
([5]) GU L 194 del 25.7.2009, pagg. 11-21.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009483/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Threat to consumer health from Chinese rice

Following the scandal brought to light in 2008 involving baby milk contaminated with melanin, which resulted in the deaths of eleven infants and 290 000 cases of food poisoning affecting children, reports in the Singapore media are drawing attention to possible new irregularities in the Chinese agri-foodstuffs industry: fake rice is allegedly being sold in China. According to a local newspaper, producers in the Chinese city of Taiyuan are openly marketing 'rice' produced from potato paste and synthetic industrial resins which is sold exceptionally cheaply, making it easy for wholesalers to rake in huge profits.

1. Is the Commission aware of this matter?

2. How does it intend to safeguard the health of European consumers who might come into contact with this product, for example when making purchases in ethnic shops or eating in ethnic restaurants?

3. Would it not make sense to ban imports of all food products from China until such time as the Chinese authorities have demonstrated that they have brought their own food safety standards completely into line with those currently in force on the internal market?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

The Commission was not aware of the practice allegedly taking place in China referred to by the Honourable Member.

There is a comprehensive body of legislation to ensure that food imported into the Union complies with EU safety standards. Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 ([1]) and Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 ([2]) are the two main tools in order to achieve this objective. Controls on imported products are carried out by Member States to verify compliance with EU health standards or with equivalent standards in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002.

In particular, rice products originating from China are subject to Commission Implementing Decision 2011/884/EU ([3]), recently amended by Commission Implementing Decision 2013/287/EU ([4]). Each consignment of rice products originating from China can be released for free circulation only if accompanied by an analytical report demonstrating the absence of genetically modified rice and by a health certificate, issued by the Entry Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ), certifying that it has been produced, sorted, handled, processed, packaged and transported in line with good hygiene practice.

The Commission also established in 2010 a list of food and feed which require an increased level of controls prior to their introduction into the EU. The list appears in Annex I to Regulation (EC) 669/2009 ([5]) and is regularly reviewed on the basis of information on risks for health. At present the list features, amongst others, frozen strawberries, 'Chinese Broccoli', dried noodles, pomelos and teas from China. Should the need to step up vigilance on other products originating from China arise, the Commission is confident that the existing tools will allow it to react promptly.

([1]) OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1-24.
([2]) OJ L 165, 30.4.2004, p. 1-141.
([3]) OJ L 343, 23.12.2011, p. 140-148.
([4]) OJ L 162, 14.6.2013, p. 10-14.
([5]) OJ L 194, 25.7.2009, p. 11-21.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009484/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Allevamento di bovini da carne: proteste degli allevatori italiani e francesi

Il 29 luglio scorso i rappresentati degli allevatori di bovini da carne della Fédération Nationale Bovine (FNB) e del Consorzio l'Italia Zootecnica (CIZ) hanno emanato un comunicato stampa sulla situazione economica e sulle prospettive future del settore. Gli operatori del settore denunciano una crescente riduzione del margine di redditività: pur ricevendo lo stesso compenso di 15 o 20 anni fa per i capi venduti, il prezzo della carne, soprattutto nella vendita al dettaglio, è aumentato considerevolmente senza alcun beneficio per i produttori. Gli allevatori chiedono inoltre che le disposizioni del regolamento (CE) n. 1760/2000 relativo all'etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine (art. 16,17 e 18) non siano abrogate, dando così agli Stati membri la possibilità di garantire ai consumatori informazioni certificate lungo tutta la filiera.

La Commissione:

1. è al corrente dei fatti?

2. alla luce delle difficoltà esposte nel comunicato, come valuta l'attuale situazione degli allevatori italiani e francesi?

3. intende adottare misure a favore degli allevatori e del settore?

4. non ritiene necessaria una regolazione del mercato a favore di una più equa distribuzione dei profitti all'interno della filiera, tale da garantire un giusto compenso ai produttori?

5. considerando che solo la distribuzione beneficia dell'aumento dei prezzi, come intende tutelare i consumatori finali sui quali ricade il costo complessivo di produzione?

6. ritiene che orientare gli aiuti della nuova PAC verso la produzione di carne bovina possa favorire un riequilibrio del reddito degli allevatori di bovini da carne?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(13 settembre 2013)

La Commissione è a conoscenza dei fatti segnalati dall'onorevole deputata.

I prezzi delle carni bovine sono aumentati costantemente negli ultimi dieci anni raggiungendo livelli eccezionalmente alti nel 2010 e attestandosi intorno ai 400 EUR/100 kg dal settembre 2012.

La media dei prezzi delle carni bovine nel 2013 è stata del 30 % superiore rispetto al quinquennio 2006-2010. L'andamento dei costi fissi operativi per la produzione di carni bovine (mangimi e vitelli) si è mantenuto stabile nel terzo trimestre del 2013 e ben al di sotto dei valori dello stesso periodo dei due anni precedenti. I prezzi dei mangimi sono calati dall'ultima impennata dell'estate 2012 e dovrebbero continuare a scendere.

Assicurare un tenore di vita equo alla comunità agricola è l'obiettivo principale della Commissione, che deve però anche prevenire l'uso di misure distorsive.

Nel quadro della riforma dell'OCM unica, l'accordo politico raggiunto nel giugno 2013 prevede che gli allevatori possano negoziare contratti collettivi per le carni bovine. Senza dubbio ciò conferirà ai produttori maggiore potere contrattuale e i consumatori saranno tutelati da una maggiore trasparenza.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009484/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Beef cattle farming: protests by French and Italian stockbreeders

On 29 July 2013 the Fédération Nationale Bovine (FNB) and the Consorzio l'Italia Zootecnica (CIZ), representing French and Italian stockbreeders respectively, issued a press release on the economic state of play in beef cattle farming and the outlook for the future. One subject of complaint is the increasingly steep decline in profitability levels: proceeds from stock sales have remained static for the past fifteen to twenty years, whereas meat prices, especially in the retail trade, have risen substantially, but without bringing benefit to producers. The stockbreeders also maintain that voluntary labelling of beef should continue as provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 (Articles 16, 17, and 18), so as to enable Member States to furnish consumers with proven information at every stage of the production chain.

1. Is the Commission aware of the above facts?

2. In the light of the difficulties mentioned in the press release, how does the Commission view the situation in which French and Italian stockbreeders now find themselves?

3. Will it take measures to help stockbreeders and support beef cattle farming?

4. Does it not believe that the market needs to be regulated in order to make for a more even share-out of profits within the sector, ensuring that producers receive a fair reward?

5. Given that only the distributive trades are benefiting from the higher prices, how will the Commission protect final consumers, to whom production costs are being passed on in full?

6. Does the Commission think that if aid under the new CAP were oriented towards beef production, the necessary adjustment could be made to the income of the stockbreeders who rear beef cattle?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of some of the facts reported by the Honourable Member.

Prices of beef have been steadily increasing during the past decade, reaching exceptional prices in 2010 and standing at around 400EUR /100kg for most of the time since September 2012.

The average beef price in 2013 has been more than 30% higher than the average beef price of the five-year-period 2006-2010. The evolution of fixed operational costs for beef production (feed prices and calves) remained stable in the third quarter of 2013 and well below the same period of the two previous years. The feed prices have decreased since the last surge in the summer of 2012 and are expected to continue decreasing.

Ensuring a fair standard of living for the agricultural community is the main objective of the Commission by ensuring at the same time that distortive market measures are not made use of.

In the framework of the reform of the single Common Market Organisation, the political agreement reached in June 2013 includes a provision to allow collective negotiation in the beef sector. This will certainly help producers to improve their bargaining power. More transparency will also protect consumers.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009485/13
aan de Commissie
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(5 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Toelating dierlijke GMO-producten

1. In hoeverre kunnen bedrijven op dit moment een aanvraag doen voor toelating van voedsel afkomstig van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren?

2. Vindt de Commissie het absoluut noodzakelijk dat er eerst een politiek debat plaatsvindt over de wenselijkheid van genetische manipulatie van dieren voordat een toelatingsprocedure kan worden gestart voor dierlijk genvoedsel?

3. Hoe ziet de Commissie het traject voor zich dat doorlopen moet worden alvorens voedsel afkomstig van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren op de EU-markt wordt toegelaten? Welke organisaties en politieke besluitorganen is de Commissie van plan te raadplegen voordat een dierlijk genproduct op de EU-markt komt?

4. Hoe gaat de Commissie voorkomen dat er straks, zonder dat er specifieke regelgeving voor is en zonder dat er een politiek debat over de wenselijkheid is geweest, dierlijk genvoedsel in de voedselketen terecht komt dat mogelijk niet is te onderscheiden van traditionele voedingsmiddelen? Hoe gaat de Commissie ervoor zorgen dat niet hetzelfde gebeurt als met kloonvlees dat tot op heden ongezien op de EU-markt terecht komt?

5. Is de Commissie van plan met een specifieke regelgeving te komen betreffende dierlijk genvoedsel? Zo ja, onder welke regelgeving wordt dierlijk genvoedsel ondergebracht? Of volgt er een aparte regelgeving? Hoe is de Commissie van plan om tot die tijd deze kwestie te reguleren?

6. Is een moratorium op dierlijk genvoedsel een optie voor de Commissie?

7. Wat is de reactie van de Commissie op het feit dat de Commissie in een brief aan NGO Compassion in World Farming enerzijds beweert dat gendieren worden beschermd door de „General Farm Directive 98/95/CE" terwijl de Commissie in haar „Strategy on the Welfare of Animals" schrijft dat Directive 98/95/CE te algemeen is om praktische effecten te hebben? Welke bescherming genieten gendieren in de praktijk in de EU?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(2 oktober 2013)

1-6. De ggo-wetgeving voorziet in een strikte procedure voor de risicobeoordeling en de toelating van ggo's (met inbegrip van de bewuste introductie van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren in het milieu) en het in de handel brengen van levensmiddelen en diervoeders die van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren afkomstig zijn. Bovendien waarborgt die wetgeving dat de consumenten via specifieke etikettering grondig worden geïnformeerd over de genetisch gemanipuleerde herkomst van levensmiddelen en diervoeders, zodat ze bij hun aankopen een doordachte keuze kunnen maken in overeenstemming met hun persoonlijke voorkeuren.

Er zijn momenteel geen aanvragen voor het in de handel brengen in de EU van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren of van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren afkomstige producten. De Commissie is echter op de hoogte van onderzoek op dit gebied. Om zich op mogelijke toelatingsaanvragen voor te bereiden heeft de Commissie de EFSA ([1]) verzocht richtsnoeren over de bovenstaande aspecten en het dierenwelzijn te ontwikkelen, evenals richtsnoeren over de milieurisicobeoordeling van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren. Deze richtsnoeren zijn respectievelijk in januari 2012 ([2]) en mei 2013 ([3]) gepubliceerd na ruime raadpleging van het publiek.

7. Er bestaat geen specifieke wetgeving inzake het dierenwelzijn van genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren. De voorschriften van Richtlijn 98/58/EG van de Raad inzake de bescherming van voor landbouwdoeleinden gehouden dieren ([4]) en van de EU-richtlijnen inzake het welzijn van kalveren, varkens en gevogelte zijn van toepassing op zowel niet-genetisch gemanipuleerde als genetisch gemanipuleerde dieren.

([1]) De Europese Autoriteit voor voedselveiligheid.
([2]) EFSA's guidance documents on the environmental, human and animal health risk assessment for GM animals and derived food and feed from GM animals; http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2501.htm
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3200.htm
([4]) PB L 221 van 8.8.1998, blz. 23.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009485/13
to the Commission
Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Authorisation of GMO products of animal origin

1. To what extent may businesses currently apply for authorisation of food derived from genetically modified animals?

2. Does the Commission consider it absolutely necessary that a political debate should first take place regarding the desirability of genetic modification of animals before an authorisation procedure can be initiated for GMO food of animal origin?

3. What procedures does the Commission believe must be completed before food derived from genetically modified animals is admitted to the EU market? Which organisations and political decision-making bodies does the Commission intend to consult before a GMO product of animal origin is placed on the EU market?

4. How will the Commission ensure that GMO food of animal origin which may be indistinguishable from traditional food does not enter the food chain without specific rules having been adopted on the subject and without a political debate having taken place concerning its desirability? How will the Commission ensure that the same does not happen as with cloned meat, which to this day is entering the EU market without being identified as such?

5. Will the Commission propose specific rules on GMO food of animal origin? If so, which existing legislation will be applied to it? Or will separate provisions be adopted? How does the Commission intend to regulate this field in the meantime?

6. Is a moratorium on GMO food of animal origin an option for the Commission?

7. What is the Commission's response to the fact that on the one hand, in a letter to the NGO Compassion in World Farming, the Commission asserts that genetically modified animals are protected by the General Farm Directive 98/95/EC while on the other hand, in its 'Strategy on the Welfare of Animals', the Commission writes that directive 98/95/EC is too general to have practical effects? What protection do genetically modified animals enjoy, in practice, in the EU?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

1-6. The GMO legislation provides a strict procedure for risk assessment and authorisation of GMOs, including deliberate release of GM animals in the environment, and the placing on the market of food and feed originating from GM animals. Furthermore, that legislation ensures that consumers are comprehensively informed via specific labelling on the GM origin of a food or feed product, allowing them to make an informed purchasing choice according to their individual preferences.

There are currently no applications for the placing on the market of GM animals or products derived from GM animals in the EU. However, the Commission is aware that research is carried out in this field. In order to prepare for possible applications for authorisation, the Commission requested EFSA ([1]) to develop a guidance on the abovementioned aspects as well as on animal welfare, and a guidance on the environmental risk assessment of GM animal, which were published respectively in January 2012 ([2]) and May 2013 ([3]), after wide consultation with the public.

7. No specific animal welfare legislation exists for GM animals. The rules laid down in Council Directive 98/58/EC ([4]) concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes and in the EU directives on the welfare of calves, pigs and poultry are applicable equally to both non-GM and GM animals.

([1]) The European Food Safety Authority.
([2]) EFSA's guidance documents on the environmental, human and animal health risk assessment for GM animals and derived food and feed from GM animals; http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/2501.htm
([3]) http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3200.htm
([4]) OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009486/13
aan de Commissie
Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL)
(5 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Naleving van uitspraken van het Europees Hof met betrekking tot passagiersrechten in het luchtverkeer

Op 19 november 2009 heeft het Europees Hof in de Sturgeon zaak (C-402/07 & C-432/07) gesteld dat passagiers voor vluchten die meer dan drie uur vertraagd zijn hetzelfde recht op compensatie hebben als passagiers wier vlucht is geannuleerd. In zijn uitspraak van 23 oktober 2012 (C-581/10 en C-629/10) heeft het Europees Hof deze uitspraak herhaald, en bovendien een positief oordeel geveld over de proportionaliteit van deze uitspraak. Artikel 16 van verordening nr. 261/2004, de Verordening waarop de bovenstaande uitspraken van het hof zijn gebaseerd, stelt dat de lidstaten verantwoordelijk zijn voor het naleven van deze richtlijn. Hierbij moeten vanzelfsprekend ook de uitspraken van het Hof worden meegenomen. In de praktijk lijkt hier echter een hiaat te zijn ontstaan. Passagiers worden van het kastje naar de muur gestuurd. Neem bijvoorbeeld het geval van Mr C. A. van Bennekom (klacht 0606-2012-OV), die problemen ondervond met een Duitse luchtvaartmaatschappij die weigerde hem te compenseren na 23 uur vertraging. De Duitse toezichthouder achtte zich niet bevoegd om deze klacht te onderzoeken en weigerde in het bijzonder na te gaan wat de oorzaak van de vertraging was.

1. Wat is het oordeel van de Commissie over bovengenoemde geval? In het bijzonder, hoe beoordeelt de Commissie het niet controleren van de aard van een vertraging door de Duitse toezichthoudende autoriteit en het niet opnemen van de gevolgen van bovenstaande uitspraken in de klachtenprocedure?

2. Deelt de Commissie mijn mening dat er sprake is van onduidelijkheid bij passagiers over de verantwoordelijke autoriteit, en dat lidstaten zouden moeten samenwerken om te zorgen voor betere communicatie tussen de verantwoordelijke autoriteiten, om zo vertragingen te voorkomen en passagiers sneller te kunnen assisteren?

3. Welke acties heeft de Commissie al ondernomen om de punten in vraag 2 te verbeteren?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(19 september 2013)

1. Een op grond van de verordening aangewezen NEB ([1]) beschikt onder meer over de bevoegdheid om, wanneer zij van oordeel is dat de verordening niet correct is toegepast, sanctieprocedures tegen luchtvaartmaatschappijen in te leiden, waarbij zij naar behoren rekening dient te houden met de arresten van het HvJ-EU ([2]). Met dat doel voor ogen worden klachten van passagiers geëvalueerd.

2. In het kader van de verordening kunnen de passagiers contact opnemen met om het even welke NEB. Als een NEB voor een specifieke zaak niet bevoegd is, geeft zij deze zaak door aan de bevoegde NEB ([3]). Tussen de NEB's is overeengekomen dat de bevoegde NEB de NEB is van het land waar het incident zich heeft voorgedaan of, als dit zich in een derde land heeft voorgedaan, de NEB van de lidstaat van bestemming ([4]). Deze informatie is terug te vinden in de voorlichtingscampagnes en -materialen van de Commissie ([5]) en in het EU-klachtenformulier ([6]).

Bovendien organiseert de Commissie regelmatig bijeenkomsten met de NEB's voor een betere samenwerking en coördinatie, onder meer wat betreft de overdracht van dossiers. Voorts heeft zij onlangs opnieuw een informatiecampagne gelanceerd om passagiers bewust te maken van hun rechten.

([1]) Nationale handhavingsinstantie (National Enforcement Body).
([2]) Hof van Justitie van de Europese Unie.
([3]) Punt 2 van de NEB-NEB-overeenkomst van 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/neb/ neb_complaint_handling_ procedures.pdf
([4]) Punt 1 van de NEB-NEB-overeenkomst.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/index.html
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/complain_form/eu_complaint_form_nl.pdf

3. In haar voorstel tot herziening van Verordening (EG) nr. 261/2004 ([7]) verduidelijkt de Commissie het onderscheid tussen algemene handhaving (d.i. het sanctiebeleid) en de behandeling van klachten. De klachtenbehandeling zou aan buitengerechtelijke entiteiten voor geschillenbeslechting worden toevertrouwd overeenkomstig de nieuwe Richtlijn 2013/11/EU ([8]) betreffende alternatieve beslechting van consumentengeschillen. De samenwerking tussen de Commissie, de nationale handhavingsinstanties en de geschillenbeslechtingsentiteiten zou worden gewaarborgd door artikel 17 van Richtlijn 2013/11/EU en de nauwere samenwerking in het kader van het voorstel tot herziening van Verordening (EG) nr. 261/2004.

([7]) COM(2013) 130 final.
([8]) PB L 165 van 18.6.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009486/13
to the Commission
Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Adherence to case-law of the Court of Justice concerning air passengers' rights

On 19 November 2009, the Court of Justice ruled in the Sturgeon case (C-402/07 and C-432/07) that passengers whose flights were delayed for more than three hours had the same right to compensation as passengers whose flight was cancelled. In its judgment of 23 October 2012 (C-581/10 and C-629/10), the Court of Justice reasserted this position and moreover ruled that it was proportionate. Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004, the regulation on which these judgments were based, stipulates that Member States are responsible for enforcement of the regulation. It goes without saying that the judgments of the Court of Justice must also be taken into account for this purpose. In practice, however, it seems that this is not what is happening. Passengers are being sent from pillar to post. Take, for example, the case of Mr C.A. van Bennekom (complaint 0606-2012-OV), who experienced problems with a German airline which refused to compensate him after a delay of 23 hours. The German supervisory authority did not consider itself competent to investigate the complaint and refused, in particular, to investigate the cause of the delay.

1. What view does the Commission take of the above case? In particular, what is its view of the failure by the German supervisory authority to investigate the nature of a delay and of the failure to take account, in the complaints procedure, of the implications of the aforementioned judgments given by the Court of Justice?

2. Does the Commission agree that it is not clear to passengers which authority is responsible and that Member States ought to cooperate to improve communication between the authorities responsible in order to prevent delays and be able to assist passengers more swiftly?

3. What action has the Commission already taken to improve the situation with regard to the points raised in Question 2?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

1. The functions of an NEB ([1]) designated under the regulation include the authority to initiate sanction proceedings on an air carrier where it concludes the regulation has been misapplied, taking due account of the judgments of the CJEU ([2]). Passenger's complaints are evaluated for this purpose.

2. Under the regulation passengers are able to contact any NEB. When an NEB is not competent regarding a specific case, it transfers it to the competent NEB ([3]). It was agreed between NEBs that the competent NEB is the NEB of the country where the incident happened or, when it happened in a third country, the NEB of the Member State of destination ([4]). This information is included in the materials arranged by the Commission ([5]), as well as in the EU complaint form ([6]).

Moreover, the Commission organises regular meetings with the NEBs in order to enhance cooperation and coordination, including regarding the transfer of files. It has also recently relaunched an information campaign which aims at making passengers aware of their rights.

3. In its proposal to revise Regulation 261/2004 ([7]), the Commission clarifies the distinction between general enforcement (i.e. sanctioning policy) and complaint-handling. The latter would be assumed by out-of-court resolution entities along the lines of the new Directive 2013/11/EU ([8]) on Alternative Dispute Resolution. Cooperation between the Commission, the National Enforcement Bodies and the dispute resolution entities would be ensured via Article 17 of Directive 2013/11/EU and the enhanced cooperation under the proposal for a revised Regulation 261/2004.

([1]) National Enforcement Body.
([2]) Court of Justice of the European Union.
([3]) Point 2 of the NEB-NEB agreement of 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/neb/neb_complaint_handling_procedures.pdf
([4]) Point 1 of the NEB-NEB agreement.
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passenger-rights/en/index.html
([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/air/doc/complain_form/eu_complaint_form_en.pdf
([7]) COM(2013) 130 final.
([8]) OJ L 165, 18.6.2013.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009487/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(5 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Beste praktijken voor meer duurzame stedelijke mobiliteit

Steeds meer mensen vestigen zich in de Europese steden, wat leidt tot een aantal problemen, zoals toenemende congestie, luchtvervuiling, meer ongevallen enzovoort…

Om de levenskwaliteit van stadsbewoners te verbeteren en ook de mobiliteit in de steden aan te pakken is dringend actie nodig. Deze bevoegdheid ligt vooral bij de lidstaten, maar toch heeft de Commissie al een aanstal stappen ondernomen. Zo kwam ze in 2009 met een actieplan „Stedelijke mobiliteit" en ook in het Witboek Transport werd een aantal initiatieven aangekondigd voor een meer duurzame stedelijke mobiliteit.

In veel steden werden al interessante projecten voor meer duurzame mobiliteit opgezet. Het zou goed zijn mocht de Commissie die beste praktijken bundelen en publiceren.

Vandaar de volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Deelt de Commissie de overtuiging dat een overzicht van beste praktijken een goed instrument kan zijn waaruit Europese steden inspiratie kunnen putten? Denkt de Commissie dat het haalbaar is om een dergelijk, publiek toegankelijk, overzicht samen te stellen? Is de Commissie van plan dergelijke actie te ondernemen, zodat Europese steden inspiratie kunnen putten uit een publiek register van Europese beste praktijken?

2. Denkt de Commissie dat het interessant zou zijn om bepaalde minimumstandaarden voor stedelijke mobiliteit op te leggen, rekening houdend met het feit dat de lidstaten de vrijheid krijgen om die verder uit te werken? Is de Commissie van plan een dergelijk initiatief te nemen?

3. Ziet de Commissie andere mogelijkheden om duurzame stedelijke mobiliteit in Europa te promoten? Zo ja, kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van de meest concrete opties?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(16 september 2013)

1. De Commissie is het ermee eens dat een uitwisseling van beste praktijken en ervaringen in de hele EU kan helpen steden en gemeenten te identificeren en oplossingen voor een betere en meer duurzame stedelijke mobiliteit met succes toe te passen. Om deze uitwisseling te bevorderen heeft de Commissie ELTIS, een portaalsite voor stedelijke mobiliteit, gecreëerd, die tot doel heeft relevante informatie te verzamelen en te verspreiden (http://www.eltis.org). Daarnaast vergemakkelijkt de Commissie de totstandbrenging van innovatieve oplossingen voor stedelijke mobiliteit door haar CIVITAS-initiatief (www.civitas.eu).

2. In haar Witboek Vervoer van 2011 ([1]) heeft de Commissie voorgesteld een scorebord stedelijke mobiliteit in te voeren. Het beoordelings- en auditsysteem dat recentelijk in het kader van het EU-project EcoMobility SHIFT is opgezet, zou het startpunt voor de invoering van een dergelijk scorebord kunnen zijn (http://www.eaci-projects.eu/iee/page/Page.jsp?op=project_detail & prid=2416). De Commissie promoot ook het concept van duurzame stedelijke mobiliteitsplannen en verzoekt de lidstaten dit concept aan hun specifieke omstandigheden aan te passen om ervoor te zorgen dat die plannen met succes kunnen worden ontwikkeld en uitgevoerd in de stedelijke gebieden op hun grondgebied.

3. Het Witboek vervoer geeft een opsomming van domeinen waarop de acties van de Commissie bij voorrang moeten worden gericht om de duurzame stedelijke mobiliteit te bevorderen. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn planning van stedelijke mobiliteit en vervoer, stedelijke logistiek, regelgeving inzake de bereikbaarheid van de steden en invoering van oplossingen in de vorm van intelligente vervoersystemen in de stad. De Commissie denkt eraan om vóór het einde van 2013 een pakket inzake stedelijke mobiliteit in te dienen, met voorstellen voor concrete acties op deze domeinen.

([1]) Witboek — Stappenplan voor een interne Europese vervoersruimte — werken aan een concurrerend en zuinig vervoerssysteem, COM(2011) 144 definitief.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009487/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Best practices for more sustainable urban mobility

More and more people are moving to urban areas in Europe, which is causing a number of problems, such as growing congestion, air pollution, more accidents, etc.

Action is urgently needed in order to improve the quality of life of town-dwellers and also to tackle the problem of urban mobility. This is mainly a matter for the Member States, but the Commission has already taken a number of steps with regard to it. In 2009, for example, it submitted an action plan on urban mobility, and in the White Paper on Transport it also announced a number of initiatives designed to bring about more sustainable urban mobility.

In many towns, interesting projects aimed at more sustainable urban mobility have already been launched. It would be good if the Commission could collect and publish information on best practices.

1. Does the Commission agree that an overview of best practices could be a useful instrument to provide inspiration for European towns? Does the Commission believe that it would be feasible to compile such a publicly accessible overview? Will the Commission take such action so that Europe's towns can derive inspiration from a public register of European best practices?

2. Does the Commission consider that it would be interesting to draw up certain minimum standards for urban mobility, taking account of the fact that the Member States would be at liberty to work out further details? Will the Commission take such an initiative?

3. Does the Commission see any other ways in which sustainable urban mobility could be promoted in Europe? If so, can the Commission provide an overview of the most specific options?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(16 September 2013)

1. The Commission agrees that an exchange of best practices and experiences across the EU can help towns and cities identify and successfully implement solutions for better and more sustainable urban mobility. To foster this exchange, the Commission has set up the ELTIS Urban Mobility Portal which seeks to collect and disseminate relevant information (http://www.eltis.org). The Commission also facilitates the development of innovative urban mobility solutions through its CIVITAS Initiative (www.civitas.eu).

2. In its Transport White Paper of 2011 ([1]), The Commission proposed the development of an urban mobility scoreboard. The assessment and audit scheme recently developed by the EU project EcoMobility SHIFT could be a starting point for the development of such a scoreboard (http://www.eaci-projects.eu/iee/page/Page.jsp?op=project_detail&prid=2416). The Commission also promotes the concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans and invites Member States to adapt this concept to their particular circumstances to ensure that such plans can be developed and implemented successfully for the urban areas in the territories.

3. The Transport White Paper identifies a number of areas on which Commission action should focus to foster sustainable urban mobility, such as urban mobility and transport planning; urban logistics; urban access regulations; deployment of urban Intelligent Transport System solutions. The Commission envisages presenting, before the end of 2013, an Urban Mobility Package that would propose concrete action in these areas.

([1]) White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM(2011)0144 final.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009488/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Aresztowanie katolickiego księdza na Białorusi

Kilka dni temu w białoruskich mediach pojawiły się niepokojące informacje na temat zatrzymania katolickiego księdza z Borysewa. Jeden z niezależnych portali podał, że miesiąc temu pod zarzutem szpiegostwa został aresztowany proboszcz parafii Zesłania Ducha Świętego w Borysewie ks. Władysław Łazar.

Obecnie ksiądz Łazar znajduje się w więzieniu śledczym KGB. Nie wiadomo, o co konkretnie jest oskarżony i jaki wyrok mu grozi. Doniesienia te są tym bardziej niepokojące, że to nie pierwszy problem, który w ostatnich tygodniach powstał na linii: białoruskie resorty siłowe a kościół katolicki. W maju Komitet Śledczy zatrzymał proboszcza jednej z parafii na Grodzieńszczyźnie i oskarżył go o podpalenie 2 pustych domów. W tym miesiącu natomiast organizator katolickiego przytułku dla bezdomnych został oskarżony o działanie w imieniu niezarejestrowanej organizacji, za co grozi do 2 lat pozbawienia wolności.

W związku z tym zwracam się z zapytaniem, czy Komisja zamierza podjąć interwencję w sprawie zatrzymania katolickiego księdza na Białorusi i zbadać pozostałe przypadki wszczynania spraw karnych wobec przedstawicieli kościoła katolickiego na Białorusi?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(25 września 2013 r.)

Unia Europejska uważnie śledzi sprawę księdza Władysława Lazara, która jest jej dobrze znana. Unia wykorzystuje każdą okazję do tego, by uświadomić władzom swoje zaniepokojenie. Dotyczy to m.in. warunków, w jakich przetrzymywany jest ks. W. Lazar, i faktu, że nawet najbliżsi krewni nie otrzymali żadnych informacji w sprawie jego zatrzymania i ogólnego stanu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009488/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Arrest of a Catholic priest in Belarus

A few days ago disturbing information appeared in the Belarusian media about the arrest of a Catholic priest in the city of Barysaw. An illegal website reported that Fr. Vladislav Lazar of the Descent of the Holy Spirit Parish in Barysaw had been arrested a month ago on charges of espionage.

Fr. Lazar is currently being detained in a KGB investigative prison. It is not known what exactly he is charged with or what punishment he might be facing. These reports are all the more worrying because this is not the first problem that has arisen in recent weeks between the law enforcement authorities and the Catholic Church. In May the Investigative Committee detained a parish priest from the Grodno region and accused him of setting fire to two empty houses. And this month the organiser of a Catholic shelter for the homeless was accused of acting on behalf of an unregistered organisation, which carries a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment.

In light of these events, does the Commission intend to take action over the detention of a Catholic priest in Belarus and investigate other instances of criminal charges being brought against representatives of the Catholic Church in Belarus?

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

The EU is well aware of the case of Fr. Vladislav Lazar and follows the case closely. The EU takes every opportunity to ensure that the authorities are made aware of the EU's concerns. This includes raising the question of Fr. V. Lazar's conditions of detention and the fact that even the closest relatives have not received any information on his case and condition.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009489/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Porwanie córki białoruskiego opozycjonisty

27 lipca nieznani sprawcy porwali 16-letnią córkę białoruskiego opozycjonisty Wiaczasłaua Szeleha. Uderzyli ją w głowę, wywieźli do lasu, 20 km od domu, oblali czarną farbą, porwali ubranie i porzucili.

Wiaczasłau Szeleh jest przekonany, że incydent ma związek z jego działalnością opozycyjną, a białoruskie władze starają się w ten sposób wywrzeć na nim presję i zastraszyć go. W 2010 r. pracował on bowiem w sztabie opozycyjnego kandydata na prezydenta Andreja Sannikaua, aktywnie działał w komisji antykorupcyjnej, obecnie jest aktywistą Białoruskiej Chrześcijańskiej Demokracji. Dodatkowo Szeleh jest w trakcie przygotowania skargi na dekret Aleksandra Łukaszenki do Komitetu Praw Człowieka.

To nie pierwszy taki przypadek, gdy w celu zastraszania osób, które krytykują białoruskie władze, stosuje się tego typu środki. W grudniu 2009 r. nieznani sprawcy wywieźli do lasu lidera „Młodego Frontu", Dzmitrija Daszkiewicza. W 2011 r. funkcjonariusze KGB i milicji zatrzymali w Mińsku aktywistki grupy FEMEN, wywieźli je do lasu, pobili, oblali olejem, a jedną z dziewczyn ogolili na łyso.

W związku z tym pragnę zapytać, czy Komisja ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie porwania córki białoruskiego opozycjonisty i przedsięwziąć kroki, by zatrzymać falę represji aktów zastraszania działaczy społecznych, przedstawicieli organizacji pozarządowych i opozycji w tym kraju?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(24 września 2013 r.)

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca jest świadoma stałej presji wywieranej na białoruskich członków opozycji i ich rodziny i ciągłego nękania ich. Akty zastraszania i agresji skierowane przeciwko członkom rodzin przedstawicieli opozycji są szczególnie godne potępienia.

Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca wykorzystuje każdą okazję, by z władzami Białorusi zająć się tymi problemami i by wzywać do natychmiastowego zaprzestania prześladowania opozycjonistów i ich rodzin.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009489/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Abduction of the daughter of a Belarusian opposition activist

On 27 July, the 16-year-old daughter of Belarusian opposition activist Viachaslau Sheleh was abducted by unknown assailants. She was hit on the head, taken to a forest 20 km from her home and covered with black paint. Her clothes were torn and she was left there.

Mr Sheleh is convinced that the incident is connected to his opposition activities, seeing this as an attempt by the Belarusian authorities to pressurise and intimidate him. In 2010 he was a member of the team of presidential candidate Andrei Sannikov; he has been an active member of the anti-corruption commission, and he is currently a member of the Belarusian Christian Democrats. He is also in the process of drawing up a complaint for submission to the Committee on Human Rights against a decree issued by President Lukashenko.

This is not the first incident in which such means have been used to intimidate a person who has criticised the Belarusian authorities. In December 2009, unidentified individuals took Dmitri Dashkevich, leader of the 'Young Front' organisation, away to a forest. In 2011, activists from the FEMEN group were arrested in Minsk by KGB and police officers, who took them to a forest, beat them and covered them with oil. One of them was shaved bald.

Does the Commission intend to intervene with regard to the abduction of the daughter of a Belarusian opposition activist and take steps to end the wave of repression and the intimidation of social activists, representatives of NGOs and opposition activists in Belarus?

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

The HR/VP is aware of the continued pressure and harassment against Belarusian members of the opposition and their families. Intimidating and aggressing the family members of opposition representatives is particularly condemnable.

The HR/VP uses every opportunity to address these issues with the Belarusian authorities and to call for their immediate discontinuation.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009490/13
do Komisji
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wyrok dla lidera rosyjskiej opozycji

Dzisiaj sąd w Kirowie uznał, że lider rosyjskiej opozycji, Aleksiej Nawalny świadomie naraził przedsiębiorstwo „Kirowles" na straty finansowe i skazał go na 5 lat kolonii karnej.

Nie ma najmniejszych wątpliwości, że proces Alieksieja Nawalnego i wyrok sądu mają charakter polityczny. Należy przypomnieć, że przeciwko opozycjoniście wytoczono jednocześnie kila spraw karnych. Demaskator skorumpowanych urzędników i lider rosyjskiej opozycji stał się w ocenie Kremla groźnym przeciwnikiem, którego należy osłabić, zniszczyć i wyeliminować z gry politycznej.

Sprawa Nawalnego po raz kolejny dobitnie pokazuje, że w Rosji, kraju uznawanym przecież za strategicznego partnera UE, sądy nie są niezależne i niezawisłe, a w pełni wypełniają instrukcje płynące z Kremla.

W związku z tymi doniesieniami, zwracam się z zapytaniem, czy Komisja ma zamiar podjąć interwencję w sprawie wyroku dla Alieksieja Nawalnego i wyrazić zdecydowany sprzeciw wobec niesprawiedliwych i motywowanych politycznie procesów w Rosji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(17 września 2013 r.)

Po kilku wydanych niedawno oświadczeniach wyrażających obawy dotyczące rozwoju sytuacji w obszarze praw człowieka i rządów prawa w Rosji, Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca, w oświadczeniu wydanym w dniu 18 lipca przez jej rzecznika, wyraziła również zaniepokojenie uznaniem przez sąd w Kirowie za winnych i skazaniem na wyroki więzienia przywódcy opozycji Aleksieja Nawalnego i jego współoskarżonego Piotra Oficerowa.

Zwrócono uwagę na fakt, że postawione im zarzuty nie zostały potwierdzone w trakcie postępowania sądowego. W oświadczeniu przypomina się, że społeczeństwo obywatelskie ma do odegrania istotną rolę w ujawnianiu nieprawidłowości i w obronie praw człowieka i w związku z tym nie powinno się utrudniać jego funkcjonowania. Wydanie takiego wyroku, zważywszy na zaistniałe niedociągnięcia proceduralne, budzi poważne wątpliwości co do stanu praworządności w Rosji. Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca wyraziła nadzieję, że wydane wyroki zostaną ponownie rozpatrzone w ramach postępowań odwoławczych.

Ponadto należy zauważyć, że w dniu 19 lipca sąd w Kirowie udzielił zgody na złożony przez oskarżenie rzadki wniosek, aby panów Nawalnego i Oficerowa, po nałożeniu ograniczeń w podróżowaniu, zwolnić z aresztu na czas postępowania odwoławczego, do czasu uprawomocnienia wyroków. Pan Nawalny może w związku z tym, jako kandydat, wziąć udział w kampanii wyborczej na mera Moskwy.

UE będzie w dalszym ciągu uważnie monitorować aresztowania przywódców opozycji i prowadzone przeciwko nim dochodzenia, będzie również nadal dawać wyraz swoim obawom podczas naszych spotkań dwustronnych z Rosją, a także na odpowiednich forach międzynarodowych, w szczególności jeżeli wobec działaczy wydawane będą budzące wątpliwości i nieproporcjonalne wyroki sądowe.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009490/13
to the Commission
Marek Henryk Migalski (ECR)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Sentencing of Russian opposition leader

A court in Kirov today found Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny guilty of embezzlement from the Kirovles company and sentenced him to 5 years in jail.

There can be no doubt that the trial and the sentence were politically motivated. It should be noted that a number of criminal proceedings were started against the opposition activist at the same time. As a whistle-blower on corrupt officials and as a leader of the Russian opposition, he has become a dangerous opponent in the eyes of the Kremlin, which considers that as such he must be weakened, neutralised and removed from the political arena.

This case once again shows clearly that in Russia — a country which is seen as a strategic partner of the EU — the courts are not independent and carry out instructions from the Kremlin to the letter.

In view of the above, does the Commission intend to intervene in the matter of the sentence passed on Alexei Navalny and take a firm stand against unjust and politically-motivated trials in Russia?

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

Following several statements expressing EU concerns regarding recent developments in the area of human rights and the rule of law in Russia, the HR/VP also expressed her concern about the guilty verdict and the prison sentences handed down by the Kirov Court against opposition leader Alexey Navalny and his co-defendant Pyotr Ofitserov in a statement by her spokesperson on 18 July.

It was noted that the charges against them had not been substantiated during the trial. The statement recalled the fact that civil society has a vital role to play in exposing wrongdoing and defending human rights, and it should not be stifled. This outcome, given the procedural shortcomings, raised serious questions as to the state of the rule of law in Russia. The HR/VP expressed hope that their sentences would be reconsidered in the appeal process.

It is furthermore to be noted that, on 19 July, the Kirov Court approved a rare prosecution request to release Mr Navalny and Mr Ofitserov from police custody during the appeal process with travel restrictions until their sentences come into effect. Mr Navalny is thus now able to campaign as candidate for Moscow mayor.

The EU will continue to closely monitor the arrests and investigations of opposition leaders, and will continue to raise its concerns during our bilateral meetings with Russia and also in relevant international fora especially if doubtful and disproportionate court sentences are handed down against activists.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009491/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de agosto de 2013)

Assunto: Apoio às PME

Visitámos recentemente uma pequena empresa com 30 trabalhadores situada num dos concelhos do interior de Portugal — Serpa. Esta empresa — a *Queijaria Guilherme* — foi criada em 2001, apostando nos produtos tradicionais, nomeadamente no queijo de cabra e de ovelha, tendo assumido uma enorme relevância económica e social, uma vez que se situa numa das zonas mais deprimidas do país. Com vista à sua expansão, ampliação e modernização, a empresa necessita de adquirir câmaras de cura prolongada, as quais seriam determinantes para as obras que pretendem realizar.

Assim, pergunto à Comissão, tendo em conta os apoios da UE para as pequenas e médias empresas, nomeadamente com vista à sua modernização, bem como os objetivos de coesão social e regional, que tipo de apoios estão disponíveis para a aquisição das máquinas acima referidas.

Resposta dada por Antonio Tajani em nome da Comissão
(30 de setembro de 2013)

De um modo geral, os programas de financiamento da União Europeia não assumem a forma de financiamento direto da Comissão a indivíduos ou empresas. A ajuda é normalmente canalizada através das autoridades locais, regionais ou nacionais, assim como através de intermediários financeiros, como bancos e fundos de capital de risco. Tais entidades encontram-se mais próximas dos beneficiários finais e estão, por conseguinte, bem qualificadas para julgar as suas necessidades numa base local.

A melhor maneira de tomar conhecimento de programas nacionais ou da UE suscetíveis de apoiar financeiramente um projecto específico é contactando a rede de apoio às empresas *Enterprise Europe Network*, que poderá guiar uma empresa na sua escolha de programas locais e da UE disponíveis num país ou região específicos. Esta rede dará informações sobre o modo como podem ser aproveitadas as possibilidades que existem. No sítio Web da EEN, as empresas podem encontrar os contactos dos parceiros da rede em Portugal ([1]).

Além disso, o sítio Web «Acesso a financiamento da UE» ajuda as empresas a apresentar um pedido de financiamento com a participação de fundos da UE disponíveis em Portugal e localizar os bancos ou os fundos de capital de risco que proporcionam financiamento com o apoio da UE ([2]).

Entre as fonte possíveis de financiamento com o apoio da UE em Portugal contam-se:

— empréstimos com o apoio da UE a partir do Programa-Quadro para a Competitividade e a Inovação ([3]),

— empréstimos de microcrédito a partir do Instrumento de Microfinanciamento «Progress» ([4]),

— empréstimos dos bancos e instituições financeiras intermediários do Banco Europeu de Investimento ([5]),

— oportunidade ao abrigo do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento Regional, designadamente para a modernização e a internacionalização ([6]),

— oportunidades ao abrigo do programa português de desenvolvimento regional do Fundo Europeu Agrícola de Desenvolvimento Rural ([7])

([1]) http://een.ec.europa.eu/about/branches/PT/
([2]) http://access2eufinance.ec.europa.eu/
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/multisite/eufinance/a2f/search?&search[country]=PT&search[language]=en&format=pdf
([3]) http://www.access2finance.eu/pt/Portugal/cip/index.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/ajax/countries.jsp?langId=en&intPageId=1390
([5]) http://www.eib.europa.eu/attachments/lending/inter_pt.pdf
([6]) Os programas são geridos diretamente pelas autoridades nacionais e regionais e, para obter mais informações sobre os tipos e possibilidades de financiamento disponíveis, deverá consultar o programa regional para a região o Alentejo ou contactar a autoridade de gestão do programa: Autoridade de gestão do PO InAlentejo, CCDR-Alentejo; Av. Eng. Arantes e Oliveira, n.° 193, 7004-514 Évora; Telefone: 800 205 238, endereço electrónico: inalentejo@ccdr-a.gov.pt./ www.inalentejo.qren.pt.
([7]) Oportunidades ao abrigo do sub-programa 1 — promover a competitividade; a informação sobre as condições de elegibilidade pode ser consultada no sítio Web do programa: http://www.proder.pt

As autoridades nacionais podem também conceder auxílios estatais, em conformidade com as regras da UE nesta matéria ([8]).

([8]) Concretamente:
Orientações comunitárias para os auxílios estatais no sector agrícola e florestal no período 2007-2013 (JO C 319 de 27.12.2006, p. 1.).
— o regulamento de isenção para certas categorias de auxílio no setor agrícola: Regulamento (CE) n.° 1857/2006 da Comissão, de 15 de dezembro de 2006, relativo à aplicação dos artigos 87.° e 88.° do Tratado aos auxílios estatais a favor das pequenas e médias empresas que se dedicam à produção de produtos agrícolas e que altera o Regulamento (CE) n.° 70/2001 (JO L 358 de 16.12.2006. p. 3).
— O regulamento geral de minimis, por força do qual os auxílios até 200 000 euros ao longo de um período de três exercícios fiscais não são considerados auxílio estatal: Regulamento (CE) n.° 1998/2006 da Comissão, de 15 de dezembro de 2006, relativo à aplicação dos artigos 87.° e 88.° do Tratado aos auxílios de minimis (JO L 379 de 28.12.2006, p. 5).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009491/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Support for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs)

We recently visited a small company with a workforce of 30 people in the municipality of Serpa, in the interior of Portugal. This enterprise — *Queijaria Guilherme* — has been in operation since 2001, producing traditional cheeses made from sheep and goat milk. Being located in one of the most depressed areas of the country, it has become highly important in social and economic terms. In order to expand, branch out and modernise, the firm needs to install maturing rooms, which are a crucial part of their future project.

In view of the support provided by the EU to small and medium-size enterprises, particularly for modernisation purposes, and its social and regional cohesion objectives, can the Commission say what types of aid are available for the acquisition of the abovementioned equipment?

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

The European Union financing programmes are generally not in the form of direct financing provided by the Commission to individuals or enterprises. Instead, aid is normally channelled through local, regional or national authorities, as well as through financial intermediaries, such as banks and venture capital funds. Such bodies are closer to the final beneficiaries and are therefore well qualified to judge their needs on a local basis.

The best way to find out whether there are any EU or national programmes able to help with the financing of a specific project is to contact the Enterprise Europe Network. They can guide a company through the range of EU and local programmes which may be available in specific country or region. They will then inform you on how any possibilities can be followed up. Through the EEN website a company can find addresses of the network partners in Portugal ([1]).

Moreover, the 'Access to EU Finance' website could help businesses to apply directly for finance supported by the EU available in Portugal. It helps locate banks or venture capital funds that provide finance supported by the EU ([2]).

Possible sources of EU-supported financing in Portugal include:

— EU-backed loans from the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme ([3]),

— microcredit loans from the Progress Microfinance ([4]),

— loans from the European Investment Bank's intermediary banks and financing institutions ([5]),

— opportunities under the European Regional Development Fund, namely namely for modernisation and internationalisation ([6]),

— opportunities under Portuguese Rural Development program of the European Agriculture Rural Development Fund ([7]).

([1]) http://een.ec.europa.eu/about/branches/PT/
([2]) http://access2eufinance.ec.europa.eu/
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/multisite/eufinance/a2f/search?&search[country]=PT&search[language]=en&format=pdf
([3]) http://www.access2finance.eu/en/Portugal/cip/index.htm
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/ajax/countries.jsp?langId=en&intPageId=1390
([5]) http://www.eib.europa.eu/attachments/lending/inter_pt.pdf
([6]) The programmes are managed directly by national and regional authorities and for further information on the types of funding and possibilities available it is advised to check the regional programme for the region of Alentejo or to contact the Managing authority of the programme: Autoridade de gestão do PO InAlentejo, CCDR-Alentejo; Av. Eng. Arantes e Oliveira, No 193, 7004-514 Évora; Tel: 800 205 238 / E-mail: inalentejo@ccdr-a.gov.pt./ www.inalentejo.qren.pt
([7]) Opportunities under the sub-program 1 — promoting competitiveness; information on the eligibility conditions should be consulted on the program website: http://www.proder.pt

In any case, national authorities may also grant state aid in accordance with EU rules in this area ([8]).

([8]) Specifically:
– Community guidelines for state aid in the agriculture and forestry sector for 2007-2013 (OJ C 319, 27.12.2006, p. 1).
– The exemption regulation for certain categories of aid in the agricultural sector: Commission Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006 of 15 December 2006 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty to state aid to small and medium-sized enterprises active in the production of agricultural products and amending Regulation (EC) No 70/2001 (OJ L 358, 16.12.2006, p.3).
– The general *de minimis* regulation, by virtue of which aid up to 200 000 EUR over a period of three fiscal years is not considered as state aid: Commission Regulation (EC) No 1998/2006 of 15 December 2006 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the Treaty to *de minimis* aid (OJ L 379, 28.12.2006, p. 5).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009492/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de agosto de 2013)

Assunto: Apoios à produção de pedra natural

Numa recente visita ao Cevalor — Centro Tecnológico para o Aproveitamento e Valorização das Rochas Ornamentais e Industriais, sediado no concelho de Borba, tomámos conhecimento da situação e dos problemas deste setor em Portugal.

Portugal é o 8° exportador, a nível mundial, de pedra natural. O país tem cerca de 600 empresas de extração da pedra e 2000 empresas de transformação, que empregam diretamente cerca de 25 000 trabalhadores. A título de exemplo, em 2012, o valor das exportações ascendeu aos 327 milhões de euros, representando o granito cerca de 53 % do total das exportações.

Assim, Portugal tem condições de competitividade excecionais neste setor. No entanto, os custos energéticos são demasiado elevados, representando cerca de 40 a 45 % dos custos totais da produção.

Pergunto, por conseguinte, à Comissão:

1. Dispõe a Comissão de informação comparativa relativa ao preço dos combustíveis, após impostos, para o setor da pedra natural nos vários Estados-Membros?

2. Tem a Comissão alguma perspetiva ou opinião sobre a possibilidade de a UE subsidiar o combustível industrial, nomeadamente das pequenas e médias empresas (PME)?

Resposta dada por Günther Oettinger em nome da Comissão
(20 de setembro de 2013)

1. No que respeita à eletricidade e ao gás natural, o Eurostat recolhe regularmente informações sobre 3 níveis de preços no consumidor final (líquidos de impostos; sem IVA e outros impostos recuperáveis; com todos os impostos incluídos) para os consumidores industriais, incluindo as empresas do setor das pedras naturais (NACE Rev.2 código 08.11, 23.7 e 43.33). Estes conjuntos de dados estão livremente disponíveis na seguinte página Web: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/energy/data/database

No que diz respeito aos combustíveis para motores, a Comissão publica o boletim petrolífero semanal (Weekly Oil Bulletin), em que os preços são indicados com e sem impostos, podendo ser livremente consultados na seguinte página Web: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/oil/bulletin_en.htm.

2. Em princípio, as empresas do setor da pedra natural devem adquirir os produtos energéticos necessários (combustíveis para motores, eletricidade e gás natural) no mercado interno da energia, como qualquer outra empresa. A título excecional, podem ser concedidas ajudas sob a forma de reduções de impostos sobre a energia, por exemplo se se garantir que as empresas continuam a pagar o nível mínimo de tributação estabelecido na Diretiva 2003/96/CE ([1]). É de notar, contudo, que os processos mineralógicos de serragem, corte e acabamento da pedra (NACE Rev.2 código 23.7) não entram no âmbito de aplicação desta diretiva, em conformidade com o seu artigo 2.°, n.° 4, alínea b).

([1]) Diretiva 2003/96/CE do Conselho, de 27 de outubro de 2003, que reestrutura o quadro comunitário de tributação dos produtos energéticos e da eletricidade (Texto relevante para efeitos do EEE), JO L 283 de 31.10.2003.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009492/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Support for natural stone production

During a recent visit to CEVALOR (Technological Centre for Ornamental and Industrial Stone Processing and Development), located in the municipality of Borba, we were informed of the situation and problems facing this sector in Portugal.

Portugal is the world's eighth largest exporter of natural stone, with some 600 stone extraction companies and 2 000 processing enterprises, which directly employ around 25 000 workers. By way of illustration, the value of exports from this sector in 2012 was EUR 327 million, with granite representing around 53% of total exports.

Portugal holds an exceptionally competitive position in this sector. However, the very high energy costs account for 40-45% of total production costs.

1. Does the Commission have any comparative information on fuel prices, after tax, in the natural stone sector in the Member States?

2. Can the Commission provide any outlook or opinion on the possibility of the EU subsidising industrial fuel for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs)?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

1. With regards to electricity and natural gas, Eurostat collects regular information on 3 levels of end consumer prices (net of taxes; VAT and other recoverable taxes excluded; all taxes included) for industrial consumers, including companies from the natural stone sector (NACE Rev.2 code 08.11, 23.7 and 43.33). These datasets are freely available on the following webpage: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/energy/data/database

With regards to motor fuels, the Commission publishes the Weekly Oil Bulletin, where prices are reported with and without taxes and freely available on the following webpage:
http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/oil/bulletin_en.htm

2. In principle, the companies from the natural stone sector should buy the required energy products (motor fuels, electricity and natural gas) on the internal market for energy, just like any other company is doing. Exceptionally, state aid may be granted in the form of reduced energy taxes, for instance if it is ensured that the companies still pay the minimum tax laid down in the directive 2003/96/EC ([1]). It should be pointed out however that the mineralogical processes of cutting, shaping and finishing of stone (NACE Rev.2 code 23.7) is out of the scope of this directive, according to Article 2 (4), point (b) of the abovementioned Directive.

([1]) Council Directive 2003/96/EC of 27 October 2003 restructuring the Community framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 283, 31.10.2003.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009493/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de agosto de 2013)

Assunto: Apoios às microempresas de zonas deprimidas

O concelho do Alandroal é um dos concelhos do interior de Portugal mais afetado pelo desemprego, pobreza e desertificação. Visitámos recentemente duas microempresas do concelho — a salsicharia «Sacaios» e a queijaria «Fátima Rosado», ambas dedicadas ao fabrico e venda de produtos regionais. Como microempresas que são, numa zona socialmente deprimida, sentem várias dificuldades, nomeadamente financeiras, que podem comprometer a viabilidade destas empresas, tão fundamentais na região. Essas dificuldades prendem-se, entre outros fatores, com o custo elevado das certificações dos produtos e com o IVA de 23 % a que está sujeita a venda destes produtos (no caso das carnes processadas).

Desta forma, questiono a Comissão:

1. Tem informação sobre o nível de IVA aplicado a carnes processadas entre os Estados-Membros? Existem diferenças significativas?

2. Como podem os procedimentos inerentes à certificação destes produtos serem simplificados e os seus custos diminuídos, de modo a facilitar a vida aos pequenos produtores?

Resposta dada por Algirdas Šemeta em nome da Comissão
(18 de setembro de 2013)

Nos termos da Diretiva IVA ([1]), os Estados-Membros são obrigados a aplicar uma taxa normal única, que deve ser de, pelo menos, 15 %. Podem também estabelecer, no máximo, duas taxas reduzidas não inferiores a 5 %, para aplicarem conforme considerem mais apropriado aos bens e serviços referidos no anexo III, nomeadamente aos géneros alimentícios para consumo humano e animal, incluindo a carne. Além disso, para as categorias de produtos indicadas no anexo III, os Estados-Membros têm a possibilidade de limitar a certos elementos da categoria o âmbito de aplicação das taxas reduzidas do IVA em vez de o aplicarem à totalidade dessa categoria.

No contexto deste quadro de base e em conformidade com o princípio da subsidiariedade, cabe a cada Estado-Membro, sem necessidade de autorização prévia, definir as respetivas taxas à luz da sua política fiscal ou orçamental, bem como de outras prioridades nacionais. Tendo em conta o que precede, o Senhor Deputado compreenderá que não nos é possível dar uma resposta mais precisa à sua pergunta. Poderá, no entanto, aceder a outras informações sobre as taxas do IVA aplicadas nos Estados-Membros, incluindo as que incidem sobre a categoria «géneros alimentícios», no sítio Web da Comissão ([2]).

Segundo o disposto na legislação da União Europeia, os produtos à base de carne produzidos na UE podem ser livremente colocados no mercado da UE sem necessitarem de qualquer certificação quando provenientes de estabelecimentos aprovados pelas autoridades competentes. A referida aprovação é obtida no início da atividade se o estabelecimento respeitar as regras da UE em matéria de higiene alimentar ([3]). O cumprimento destas exigências permite proporcionar flexibilidade, em geral, aos pequenos estabelecimentos e, especificamente, em relação aos alimentos produzidos tradicionalmente, podendo estas informações ser consultadas no nosso sítio Web ([4]).

([1]) Diretiva 2006/112/CE do Conselho, de 28 novembro de 2006, JO L 347 de 11.12.2006.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/rates/vat_rates_en.pdf
([3]) Regulamentos (CE) n.ºs 852/2004 e 853/2004, de 29 de abril de 2004 , JO L 139 de 30.4.2004.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/hygienelegislation/docs/faq_all_business_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009493/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Support for micro-enterprises in depressed areas

The municipality of Androal is one of those most affected by unemployment, poverty and desertification in the Portuguese interior. We recently visited two micro-enterprises in this municipality, the Sacaios sausage company and the Fátima Rosado cheese-making company, both of which produce and market regional products. As micro-enterprises, operating in a socially depressed area to which they are of vital importance, they face a number of difficulties, particularly financial ones, which threaten to undermine their viability. Among the causes of these difficulties are the high cost of product certification and the 23% VAT levied on the sale of processed meat products.

1. Does the Commission have any information on the rates of VAT applied to meat products in other Member States? Do these vary significantly?

2. How can the certification procedure for these products be simplified and the cost reduced, to make life easier for small-scale producers?

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

According to the VAT Directive ([1]), Member States are required to apply a single standard rate, which must be at least 15%. They may also have a maximum of two reduced rates set no lower than 5%, which they may apply, at their discretion, to goods and services listed in Annex III, which notably covers foodstuffs for human and animal consumption, thus including meat. In addition, within the categories of products listed in Annex III, Member States have the possibility to limit the application of the reduced VAT rates to certain elements of the category, rather than subject the whole category to a reduced VAT rate.

Within this basic framework and in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity, it is up to each Member State to set its rates, without prior authorisation, in accordance with its fiscal or budgetary policy and other national priorities. Against this background, the Honourable Member will understand that it is not possible to give a more precise answer to his question. However information on the VAT rates applied in the Member States, including those applied to the category 'foodstuffs', can be found on the Commission website ([2]).

As regard community law, meat products produced in the EU can be placed freely on the EU market without any certification from establishments approved by the competent authorities. Such approval is obtained at the start of the activity if the establishment complies with EU food hygiene requirements ([3]). These requirements provide flexibility in general for small establishments and specifically for traditionally produced food and these details can be found on our website ([4]).

([1]) Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 — OJ L 347, 11.12.2006.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/resources/documents/taxation/vat/how_vat_works/rates/vat_rates_en.pdf
([3]) Regulations (EC) Nos 852/2004 and 853/2004 of 29 April 2004 — OJ L 139, 30.4.2004.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/hygienelegislation/docs/faq_all_business_en.pdf

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009494/13
à Comissão
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 de agosto de 2013)

Assunto: Candidatura do cante alentejano a Património da Humanidade

O cante alentejano é um género musical tradicional da região do Alentejo e uma expressão cultural com uma longa história profundamente enraizada nos modos de vida do povo desta região.

No passado mês de março, foi formalizado o pedido português da potencial inscrição do cante alentejano na lista representativa do Património Cultural Imaterial da Humanidade da Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, Ciência e Cultura (Unesco), pedido esse que foi aceite. Esta candidatura baseia-se na relevância patrimonial do cante alentejano, no seu valor excecional como símbolo identificador da região do Alentejo e identitário dos alentejanos, no seu enraizamento profundo na tradição e história cultural do país e na sua importância como fonte de inspiração e de troca intercultural entre povos e comunidades.

Deste modo, pergunto à Comissão que apoios poderá a UE mobilizar para valorizar, apoiar e divulgar esta candidatura.

Resposta dada por Androulla Vassiliou em nome da Comissão
(23 de setembro de 2013)

A Comissão gostaria de informar o Senhor Deputado de que a União Europeia não é Parte na Convenção da Unesco para a salvaguarda do Património Cultural Imaterial (2003). O processo de candidatura do cante alentejano ao abrigo da Convenção não constitui, por conseguinte, uma questão da competência da UE.

Os Estados-Membros da UE que são partes na referida Convenção apresentam os seus pedidos a título individual.

A Comissão reconhece o significado cultural e histórico desta tradição musical para a região do Alentejo e deseja às autoridades portuguesas os maiores êxitos para o seu pedido.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009494/13
to the Commission
Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Application for world heritage status for Alentejan song

Altentejan choral singing is a form of music traditional to Portugal's Alentejo region. It is a cultural expression with a long history, deeply rooted in the way of life of the region's population.

In March 2013, Portugal made a formal application for Alentejan song to be included in the Unesco Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which was accepted. The application is based on the cultural significance of Alentejan singing, its exceptional value as a characteristic feature of the Alentejo region, which forms part of the identity of its inhabitants, its deep roots in the country's traditions and history and its importance as a source of inspiration and cultural exchange between peoples and communities.

What forms of assistance can the EU provide in order to promote, support and publicise this application?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the European Union is not a party to the Unesco Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). The application process to list Altentejan choral singing under the Convention is not therefore a matter of EU competence.

EU Member States which are parties to this Convention pursue their applications in their own capacity.

The Commission recognises the cultural and historical significance of this musical tradition to the Altentejo region and wishes the Portuguese authorities success with the application.

(Versiunea în limba română)

Întrebarea cu solicitare de răspuns scris E-009496/13
adresată Comisiei
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(5 august 2013)

Subiect: Stadiul de realizare a interfeței europene de informare și rezervare pentru toate modurile de transport (IEIR)

Acțiunea pregătitoare „Interfața europeană de informare și rezervare pentru toate modurile de transport" (IEIR) are ca scop interconectarea actualelor sisteme locale, regionale, naționale și internaționale de informare a călătorilor, precum și oferirea de informații publicului și crearea posibilității de a achiziționa bilete prin intermediul unei interfețe unice și multilingve. Prin intermediul acestei platforme, cetățenii europeni ar trebui să poată obține informații în timp real pentru orice călătorie în Europa și pentru orice mijloc de transport, inclusiv pentru călătorii multimodale, inclusiv informații privind drepturile călătorilor pentru orice mod de transport utilizat. De asemenea, IEIR va include un instrument de rezervare electronică care să faciliteze călătoriile în Europa, precum și un instrument de planificare a călătoriei, un instrument de calculare a prețului călătoriei, un instrument de gestionare a disponibilității și un instrument de integrare a biletelor, precum și conectarea sistemelor internaționale de informare a călătorilor.

Deoarece s-a prevăzut ca, într-o primă etapă, acțiunea pregătitoare să se aplice numai la câteva țări, la câteva limbi și la un set limitat de date, aș dori să întreb Comisia care este stadiul de realizare a interfeței IEIR, care sunt statele unde se implementează acțiunea pregătitoare și când consideră Comisia că interfața va putea fi implementată în toate statele membre?

Răspuns dat de dl Kallas în numele Comisiei
(24 septembrie 2013)

Comisia apreciază acțiunea pregătitoare ([1]) menționată de distinsul membru. Aceasta reflectă viziunea Cărții albe în ceea ce privește informarea și emiterea de bilete în cadrul unui sistem de transport de călători internațional integrat ([2]). Comisia a solicitat expertiză externă prin intermediul unui contract de servicii pentru un studiu de nouă luni care va stabili modul în care se dezvoltă piața informațiilor în timp real și emiterea integrată a biletelor, precum și măsurile care ar trebui luate la nivelul UE pentru un progres mai rapid. O a doua potențială etapă va începe în ianuarie 2014, constând în dezvoltarea unei interfețe care să faciliteze călătoriile în Europa, astfel cum se prevede în cadrul acțiunii pregătitoare.

Recunoscând că progresele către o mai bună integrare a călătoriilor/procesului de emitere a biletelor au fost lente — aceasta a fost principala problemă a reuniunii din iunie a părților interesate ([3]) — odată ce activitatea contractată este finalizată, UE va fi în măsură să decidă care va fi viitorul său rol în facilitarea implementării sistemului integrat de informare pentru călătoriile multimodale, de planificare a călătoriilor și de emitere inteligentă a biletelor pe întreg teritoriul Uniunii Europene.

Deoarece accesul la datele de călătorie și de trafic și maximizarea disponibilității datelor de bună calitate par a fi unul dintre principalele obstacole în calea furnizării la nivelul UE a unor servicii de informare și planificare pentru călătoriile multimodale, Comisia desfășoară în prezent o evaluare a impactului posibilelor măsuri care ar putea fi necesare în acest domeniu.

([1]) Anunțul privind contractul în JO S 2012-096803.

([2]) CARTE ALBĂ Foaie de parcurs pentru un spațiu european unic al transporturilor — Către un sistem de transport competitiv și eficient din punct de vedere al resurselor; COM(2011) 0144 final.

([3]) O reuniune a părților interesate a avut loc în 12 iunie, cu un număr de aproximativ 60 de participanți reprezentând toți actorii esențiali din sectorul transportului de călători, de la operatorii de transport public la furnizorii de servicii și dezvoltatorii de aplicații, precum și o serie de actori-cheie din cadrul autorităților statelor membre în domeniul transporturilor.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009496/13
to the Commission
Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D)
(5 August 2013)

Subject: Stage reached in creating the European information and booking interface across transport modes

The preparatory action 'European transport information and booking interface across transport modes' aims to link up existing local, regional, national and international traveller information systems, as well as to offer the public information and the possibility of purchasing tickets through a single, multilingual interface. Through this platform, European citizens would be able to obtain real-time information for any trip in Europe and for any transport mode, including multimodal journeys, as well as information on passenger rights for any transport mode they use. The interface will also include an online booking tool which would facilitate travelling through Europe, as well as a journey planner, a journey pricing tool, an availability management tool and a ticket integration tool, and establish a connection between international traveller information systems.

Bearing in mind that the first phase of the preparatory action involves only a limited number of countries and languages and a limited set of data, can the Commission say what stage has been reached in creating the European transport information and booking interface, in which countries the preparatory action is being implemented, and when it expects its implementation to be extended to all the Member States?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

The Commission appreciates the Preparatory Action ([1]) mentioned by the Honourable Member. It reflects the White Paper's vision on integrated, cross border passenger transport information and ticketing ([2]). The Commission has sought external expertise through a service contract for a nine month study that will establish how the market for real-time information and integrated ticketing is developing and what steps at EU level could help further advancement. The potential second phase will start in January 2014 to work on an interface that can facilitate travelling through Europe as envisaged in the preparatory action.

While recognising that progress towards better travel/ticketing integration has been slow — this was the key issue of the June Stakeholder's meeting ([3]) — once the contract's work is completed, the EU will be in a position to judge what its future role will be in facilitating the roll out of integrated, multimodal travel information, journey planning and smart ticketing services across the European Union.

As access to travel and traffic data as well as maximising the availability of data of good quality seems to be one of the main obstacles to the delivery of EU-wide multimodal travel information and planning services, the Commission is currently conducting an impact assessment on the potential measures that might be needed in this area.

([1]) Contract notice in OJ S 2012-096803.
([2]) White Paper Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system; COM(2011)0144 final.
([3]) A stakeholder meeting was held on 12 June and included around 60 participants representing all the major players in the passenger transport business from public transport operators to service suppliers and apps developers as well as several key players from Member States' transport authorities.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009497/13
do Komisji
Paweł Zalewski (PPE)
(6 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Blokowanie i usuwanie przez serwis Facebook profilów i stron Internetowych tureckiej opozycji

Tureccy blogerzy donoszą od niedawna o blokowaniu i usuwaniu przez serwis Facebook profilów i stron Internetowych należących do tureckiej opozycji. O problemie tym poinformował również na Twitterze dr Özgür Uçkan z Uniwersytetu Bilgi w Stambule, a kierowany przez niego zespół, wraz z Fundacją Elektroniczna Granica i Amerykańską Unią Wolności Obywatelskich przygotowuje szczegółowe sprawozdanie na ten temat. Według nich Facebook współpracuje z rządem tureckim, aby uciszyć opozycję. Z uwagi na to, że Turcja jest krajem stowarzyszonym z UE i aspiruje do pełnego członkostwa w przyszłości, incydenty takie – o ile zostaną potwierdzone – są niedopuszczalne.

1. Czy Komisji wiadomo o tych doniesieniach?

2. Gdyby wymienione zarzuty się potwierdziły, jaka byłaby reakcja Komisji?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg w imieniu Komisji
(1 października 2013 r.)

Komisja nie posiada informacji o jakichkolwiek ostatecznych lub publicznych sprawozdaniach w tej sprawie. Jednakże Komisja niezmiennie twierdzi, że, wolność i pluralizm mediów muszą być zagwarantowane jako podstawowy element demokracji, zgodnie z europejską konwencją praw człowieka (EKPC) i orzecznictwem Europejskiego Trybunału Praw Człowieka (ETPCz).

Komisja wielokrotnie podkreślała, że w Turcji potrzeba znacznie mniej ograniczeń swobody mediów. Wszelkie przepisy ograniczające dostęp do mediów społecznościowych dla użytkowników końcowych powinny być należycie uzasadnione, proporcjonalne i wprowadzane wyłącznie w stosownych przypadkach, gdy jest to niezbędne, i zgodnie z istniejącymi demokratycznymi standardami i prawami człowieka.

Promowanie wartości europejskich poza granicami UE było również tematem zaleceń niezależnej Grupy Wysokiego Szczebla ds. Wolności i Pluralizmu Mediów powołanej przez komisarz ds. agendy cyfrowej. Po przedstawieniu przez tę grupę sprawozdania Komisja rozpoczęła podwójne konsultacje społeczne – jedne na temat zaleceń grupy, a drugie właśnie na temat niezależności krajowych organów regulacyjnych sektora audiowizualnego. Przy podejmowaniu jakiejkolwiek decyzji w sprawie ewentualnych dalszych działań w granicach kompetencji UE pod uwagę będą brane wyniki tych konsultacji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009497/13
to the Commission
Paweł Zalewski (PPE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Blocking and removal of online profiles and pages of the Turkish opposition by Facebook

Recently some Turkish bloggers have reported on the blocking and removal of online profiles and pages of the Turkish opposition by Facebook. The issue has also been reported on Twitter by Dr Özgür Uçkan, of Istanbul Bilgi University, whose team, together with the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the American Civil Liberties Union, is preparing a detailed report on the matter. According to them, Facebook is cooperating with the Turkish Government to silence the opposition. As Turkey is a country associated with the EU and aspires to become a full member in the future, such incidents — if they happen to be true — are unacceptable.

1. Is the Commission aware of these reports?

2. If these allegations were to be true, what would the Commission's reaction to them be?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

The Commission is not aware of any final or public reports on this matter. However, the Commission constantly held that, as a fundamental aspect of a democracy, media freedom and pluralism need to be guaranteed, in line with the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

The Commission emphasised on numerous occasions that fewer rather than more restrictions on media are needed in Turkey. Any regulations restricting access to social media for end-users should be duly substantiated and only taken if appropriate, proportionate, necessary and in conformity with existing democratic safeguards and human rights.

Moreover, the promotion of European values beyond EU borders has been also addressed by the recommendations of the independent High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism set up by the Commissioner responsible for Digital Agenda. Following the presentation of the report by this group, the Commission launched two public consultations, one on the recommendations of the group and one specifically on the independence of national audiovisual regulatory authorities. Any decision on possible follow-up actions within the limits of the competences of the EU will take account of the responses to the consultations.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009498/13
an den Rat
Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE)
(6. August 2013)

Betrifft: Entlassungen von Lehrern in Griechenland

Vor kurzem gab das griechische Bildungsministerium die Liste mit den Namen von 2 122 Lehrern von Berufsfachschulen bekannt, die auf Forderung der Troika hin entlassen werden sollen.

Das Bildungsministerium hat praktisch die Hälfte aller Fachausbildungszweige in der Sekundarstufe in Griechenland abgeschafft und sich dabei unter anderem auf die Studie berufen, in der alle Fachausbildungssysteme in Europa verglichen werden.

Unter den entlassenen Lehrkräften befinden sich Lehrer, die nach schriftlichen Prüfungen vom Obersten Rat für Personalauswahl (ASEP) eingestellt worden waren und nicht nur Top-Qualifikationen besitzen sondern auch Berufserfahrung besitzen und bereits anerkanntermaßen einen Beitrag zum griechischen Bildungswesen geleistet haben.

Dabei wurden auch zahlreiche Lehrer entlassen, die vom griechischen Bildungsministerium Auszeichnungen für Innovation und die optimale Nutzung europäischer Programme erhalten haben, zum Beispiel für die Beteiligung an Kooperationsprogrammen und Schüleraustauschprojekten mit deutschen Schulen wie „Leonardo" und „Comenius".

Diesbezüglich wird der Rat um Beantwortung folgender Fragen ersucht:

— Welchen Zweck erfüllen solche Umstrukturierungsmaßnahmen im Bildungssektor in Griechenland, wenn sie zur Abwanderung von Wissenschaftlern führen und das Land seiner qualifizierten Lehrkräfte berauben?

— Wurden hierbei die sozialen, wirtschaftlichen und den Bildungssektor betreffenden Folgen bedacht?

— Welche Strategie verbirgt sich hinter der Finanzierung von Innovationsprojekten im europäischen Bildungswesen, wenn dabei ausgerechnet die Initiatoren von Neuerungen, die offiziell für ihre Errungenschaften ausgezeichnet wurden, im Rahmen solch kurzsichtiger Maßnahmen arbeitslos gemacht werden?

Antwort
(18. November 2013)

Nachdem sich die makroökonomische und haushaltspolitische Lage in Griechenland im Jahr 2010 verschlechtert hatte, hat der Rat am 10. Mai 2012 den Beschluss 2010/320/EU zwecks Ausweitung und Intensivierung der haushaltspolitischen Überwachung und zur Inverzugsetzung Griechenlands mit der Maßgabe, die zur Beendigung des übermäßigen Defizits als notwendig erachteten Maß-nahmen zu treffen ([1]), an Griechenland gerichtet. Dieser Beschluss wurde mehrfach geändert, und der Klarheit halber wurde eine Neufassung, nämlich der Beschluss 2011/734/EU des Rates vom 12. Juli 2011 ([2]), erstellt. In diesen Beschlüssen werden die wichtigsten Bedingungen für die Finanzhilfe durch den Europäischen Stabilitätsmechanismus (ESM) wiedergegeben und die wesentlichen Bestandteile des von Griechenland durchzuführenden Wirtschaftsprogramms beschrieben.

Die Durchführung der vereinbarten Reformen ist Sache der griechischen Behörden und unterliegt den innerstaatlichen Rechtsvorschriften und Verfahren, einschließlich der Einschätzung der Auswirkung der Reformen und der Kosten-Nutzen-Bewertung.

([1]) ABl. L 145 vom 11.6.2010, S. 6.
([2]) ABl. L 296 vom 15.11.2011, S. 38. Zuletzt geändert durch den Beschluss 2013/6/EU des Rates vom 4. Dezember 2012 (ABl. L 4 vom 9.1.2013, S. 40).

Fazit der dritten Überprüfung des zweiten Anpassungsprogramms für Griechenland im Juli 2013 war, dass die Regierung wichtige Schritte zur Rationalisierung des griechischen Bildungssystems unternommen hat, es jedoch weiterer Anstrengungen zur Steigerung der Qualität der Bildung bedarf, aber zugleich der Rationalisierungsprozess fortgesetzt werden muss. Dieser sollte sich auf eine umfassende Folgenabschätzung stützen, die auch die Kosteneffizienz, die künftige Quote bei Hochschulabschlüssen, die Eignung des Personals, die Forschungsergebnisse und die Qualität der Bildung einbezieht.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009498/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE)
(6 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Απολύσεις εκπαιδευτικών στην Ελλάδα

Ανακοινώθηκε από το Ελληνικό Υπουργείο Παιδείας η λίστα με ονόματα 2 122 εκπαιδευτικών τεχνικής εκπαίδευσης που τίθενται σε διαθεσιμότητα κατά απαίτηση της Τρόικα.

Το Υπουργείο Παιδείας κατάργησε περίπου τις μισές ειδικότητες τεχνικών σπουδών στη Δευτεροβάθμια Εκπαίδευση της χώρας, επικαλούμενο μεταξύ άλλων και συγκριτική μελέτη ευρωπαϊκών συστημάτων τεχνικής εκπαίδευσης.

Ανάμεσα στους απολυμένους είναι εκπαιδευτικοί που προσλήφθηκαν με γραπτές εξετάσεις του Ανωτάτου Συμβουλίου Επιλογής Προσωπικού (ΑΣΕΠ), με κορυφαίους τίτλους σπουδών, εκπαιδευτική εμπειρία αλλά και προσφορά στην εκπαίδευση που έχει αναγνωριστεί.

Υπάρχουν πολλές περιπτώσεις καθηγητών που τίθενται σε διαθεσιμότητα, οι οποίοι έχουν λάβει από το Ελληνικό Υπουργείο Παιδείας, Αριστείο Καινοτομίας για την βέλτιση αξιοποίηση ευρωπαϊκών προγραμμάτων εφαρμογών μέσα από τη συμμετοχή σε προγράμματα συνεργασίας και ανταλλαγών, κυρίως με σχολεία της Γερμανίας, όπως το «Leonardo» και το «Comenius».

Ερωτάται το Συμβούλιο:

— Ποιο είναι το όφελος από μια αναδιάρθρωση του δημόσιου τομέα στην Ελλάδα που οδηγεί στη μετανάστευση το επιστημονικό δυναμικό της χώρας και απομειώνει τη χώρα από εξειδικευμένα στελέχη;

— Υπολογίζονται οι κοινωνικές, οικονομικές και εκπαιδευτικές συνέπειες;

— Ποια αναπτυξιακή λογική υπηρετεί η χρηματοδότηση προγραμμάτων καινοτομίας στην ευρωπαϊκή εκπαίδευση όταν οι δημιουργοί καινοτόμων δράσεων, που βραβεύονται επίσημα, οδηγούνται με τυφλές αποφάσεις στην ανεργία;

Απάντηση
(18 Νοεμβρίου 2013)

Με την επιδείνωση της μακροοικονομικής και δημοσιονομικής κατάστασης στην Ελλάδα το 2010 ([1]), το Συμβούλιο, στις 10 Μαΐου 2010, απηύθυνε την απόφαση 2010/320/ΕΕ στην Ελλάδα για την ενίσχυση της δημοσιονομικής εποπτείας και για να αναλάβει η Ελλάδα μέτρα για τη μείωση του ελλείμματος που κρίθηκε αναγκαία προκειμένου να ανορθωθεί η κατάσταση του υπερβολικού ελλείμματος. Η απόφαση τροποποιήθηκε αρκετές φορές και αναδιατυπώθηκε για λόγους σαφήνειας με την απόφαση του Συμβουλίου 2011/734/ΕΕ της 12ης Ιουλίου 2011 ([2]). Στις αποφάσεις αυτές αποτυπώνονται οι κυριότεροι όροι για τη χρηματοδοτική ενίσχυση από τον Ευρωπαϊκό Μηχανισμό Σταθερότητας (ΕΜΣ) και ορίζονται οι ακρογωνιαίοι λίθοι του οικονομικού προγράμματος που καλείται να εφαρμόσει η Ελλάδα.

Η εφαρμογή των συμφωνηθεισών μεταρρυθμίσεων εναπόκειται στην ελληνική κυβέρνηση και υπόκειται στους εθνικούς νόμους και διαδικασίες, μεταξύ άλλων με την αξιολόγηση του αντικτύπου των μεταρρυθμίσεων και την αξιολόγηση σκοπιμότητας.

Από την τρίτη επανεξέταση του Δεύτερου Προγράμματος Προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα τον Ιούλιο του 2013, προκύπτει ότι η κυβέρνηση έλαβε σοβαρά μέτρα για τον εξορθολογισμό του εκπαιδευτικού συστήματος, αλλά απαιτούνται περαιτέρω προσπάθειες για τη βελτίωση της εκπαίδευσης, παράλληλα με τη διαδικασία εξορθολογισμού. Η διαδικασία αυτή θα πρέπει να βασίζεται σε συνολική αξιολόγηση του αντίκτυπου, μεταξύ άλλων και της σκοπιμότητας, μελλοντικά ποσοστά συμμετοχής στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση, καταλληλότητα του προσωπικού, προϊόν της έρευνας και ποιότητα της εκπαίδευσης.

([1]) ΕΕ L 145 της 11.6.2010, σ. 6.
([2]) ΕΕ L 296 της 15.11.2011, σ. 38. Η απόφαση τροποποιήθηκε για τελευταία φορά με την απόφαση του Συμβουλίου 2013/6/ΕΕ της 4ης Δεκεμβρίου 2012 (ΕΕ L 4 της 9.1.2013, σ. 40).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009498/13
to the Council
Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Teacher layoffs in Greece

The Greek Ministry of Education has published a list of 2 122 names of technical education teachers who are to be laid off at the demand of the Troika.

The Ministry of Education has abolished about half the technical study specialities in secondary education in the country, citing, *inter alia*, a comparative study of European technical education systems.

The teachers being made redundant include teachers recruited through written examinations of the Supreme Personnel Selection Council with top qualifications, teaching experience and whose contribution to teaching has been recognised.

There are many cases of teachers being made redundant, who have received Excellence in Innovation awards from the Greek Ministry of Education for the optimum utilisation of European programmes through participation in cooperative programmes and exchanges, particularly with schools in Germany, such as the 'Leonardo' and the 'Comenius' programmes.

In view of the above, will the Council say:

— What is the benefit of restructuring the public sector in Greece, if this leads to the emigration of the scientific potential of the country and deprives the country of specialised staff?

— Has any attempt been made to calculate the social, economic and educational consequences of such a move?

— What is the rationale behind funding innovation programmes in European education, when the creators of innovative actions, who have received official awards, are made redundant as a result of short-sighted decision-making?

Reply
(18 November 2013)

Following the deterioration of the macroeconomic and budgetary situation in Greece in 2010, on 10 May 2010 the Council addressed Decision 2010/320/EU to Greece with a view to reinforcing and deepening fiscal surveillance and giving notice to Greece to take measures for the deficit reduction judged necessary to remedy the situation of excessive deficit ([1]). This decision was amended several times and then recast in the interests of clarity by Council Decision 2011/734/EU of 12 July 2011 ([2]). These Decisions reflect the main conditions of the financial assistance provided by the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and outline the cornerstones of the economic programme to be implemented by Greece.

Implementation of the agreed reforms is the responsibility of the Greek authorities and subject to national laws and procedures, including assessment of the impact of the reforms and cost-benefit evaluation.

The third review of the Second Adjustment Programme for Greece in July 2013 concluded that the Government had taken important steps to rationalise the Greek education system, but further efforts were needed to improve the quality of education, while continuing the rationalisation process. The latter should be based on a comprehensive impact assessment, including cost-effectiveness, future tertiary education attainment rates, adequacy of staff, research output, and quality of education.

([1]) OJ L 145, 11.6.2010, p. 6.
([2]) OJ L 296, 15.11.2011, p. 38. Decision last amended by Council Decision 2013/6/EU of 4 December 2012 (OJ L 4, 9.1.2013, p. 40).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009499/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(6 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Έξοδος ΔΝΤ από την Τρόικα

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατες δηλώσεις της, η Αντιπρόεδρος της Επιτροπής και Επίτροπος Δικαιοσύνης Βίβιαν Ρέντινγκ, ζήτησε απεμπλοκή του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου (ΔΝΤ) από την αντιμετώπιση της κρίσης στην Ευρωζώνη και ανάληψη του έργου αποκλειστικά από ευρωπαϊκούς φορείς, με επίκεντρο την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, καλώντας σε «κατάργηση της τρόικας». Συνεχίζοντας, υποστήριξε, ότι η παρουσία του ΔΝΤ ήταν αναγκαία στην αρχική κατάσταση «έκτακτης ανάγκης», αλλά πλέον η ΕΕ έχει τα εργαλεία και την εμπειρία να διαχειριστεί το πρόβλημα. Ως εκ τούτου, η αποχώρηση του ΔΝΤ θα μπορούσε να γίνει σχετικώς άμεσα, και η Επιτροπή, η οποία διαθέτει και δημοκρατική νομιμοποίηση, αφού η εκλογή της εγκρίνεται από το Κοινοβούλιο, να αναλάβει την επίβλεψη της εφαρμογής των Μνημονίων.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

— Ασπάζεται την άποψη της Επιτρόπου για αποχώρηση του ΔΝΤ από την Τρόικα;

— Τι επιπτώσεις θα έχει τυχόν απεμπλοκή του ΔΝΤ για τα τρέχοντα προγράμματα προσαρμογής;

— Υπάρχουν εναλλακτικοί σχεδιασμοί, σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο, για μελλοντικές κρίσεις;

— Σε ποιο βαθμό βρίσκεται αναβάθμιση του Ευρωπαϊκού Μηχανισμού Σταθερότητας σε «Ευρωπαϊκό Νομισματικό Ταμείο»;

— Είναι σε θέση η Επιτροπή να αναλαμβάνει εξολοκλήρου την ευθύνη και διαχείριση μελλοντικών μνημονίων;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η συνεργασία στο πλαίσιο της Τρόικας όσον αφορά τις χώρες που έχουν ενταχθεί σε πρόγραμμα από το 2008 είναι πολύ καλή και αποτελεσματική, και υπάρχουν ισχυρά επιχειρήματα για τη συνέχιση της αποδοτικής και εποικοδομητικής συνεργασίας με άλλα μέλη της Τρόικας στις χώρες που έχουν ενταχθεί στο τρέχον πρόγραμμα. Το πρόσφατα εκδοθέν «δίπτυχο» επιβεβαιώνει επίσης ότι η Επιτροπή, κατά την παροχή βοήθειας στις χώρες που έχουν ενταχθεί σε πρόγραμμα, θα πρέπει να ενεργεί σε συνεννόηση με την Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα (ΕΚΤ) και, όπου είναι σκόπιμο, με το Διεθνές Νομισματικό Ταμείο (ΔΝΤ) ([1]). Η σύνθεση της Τρόικας επιτρέπει ελέγχους και ισορροπία όσον αφορά την καλύτερη στρατηγική για την αντιμετώπιση των οικονομικών και χρηματοπιστωτικών προκλήσεων, τη συζήτηση νέων ιδεών και τη χρήση των συγκριτικών πλεονεκτημάτων κάθε μέλους της. Η συνεργασία στο πλαίσιο της Τρόικας ήταν και παραμένει καλή. Παρά ταύτα, εξετάζουμε τις δυνατότητες για περαιτέρω βελτίωση στο πλαίσιο της Τρόικας όσον αφορά (i) τη συνεργασία των εταίρων, (ii) την επικοινωνία, (iii) την αλληλεπίδραση με το Εκτελεστικό Συμβούλιο Ευρωομάδας/ΔΝΤ. Οποιαδήποτε επαναξιολόγηση του τρόπου λειτουργίας της θα αφορά μόνο μελλοντικά προγράμματα.

Το τείχος προστασίας της ζώνης του ευρώ βελτιώθηκε σημαντικά κατά τη διάρκεια της κρίσης. Με βάση την εμπειρία της Ευρωπαϊκής Διευκόλυνσης Χρηματοπιστωτικής Σταθερότητας (ΕΔΧΣ) και του Ευρωπαϊκού Μηχανισμού Χρηματοοικονομικής Σταθεροποίησης (ΕΜΧΣ), δημιουργήθηκε ο Ευρωπαϊκός Μηχανισμός Σταθερότητας (ΕΜΣ), μόνιμος μηχανισμός χρηματοδοτικής συνδρομής. Ο ΕΜΣ αποτελεί το κύριο μέσο χρηματοδότησης νέων προγραμμάτων για τις χώρες της ζώνης του ευρώ μετά τις 8 Οκτωβρίου 2012. Εξασφαλίζει δε σημαντικές καινοτομίες για την αντιμετώπιση ενδεχόμενων νέων περιπτώσεων που σχετίζονται με την κρίση. Το θέμα του τοίχους προστασίας πρέπει να ληφθεί επίσης υπόψη στο πλαίσιο μελλοντικών μέτρων για τη βελτίωση της διακυβέρνησης της Ευρωπαϊκής Νομισματικής Ένωσης.

([1]) Άρθρο 7 παράγραφος 1 του κανονισμού (ΕΕ) αριθ.472/2013, της 21ης Μαΐου 2013, για την ενίσχυση της οικονομικής και δημοσιονομικής εποπτείας των κρατών μελών στη ζώνη του ευρώ τα οποία αντιμετωπίζουν ή απειλούνται με σοβαρές δυσκολίες αναφορικά με τη χρηματοοικονομική τους σταθερότητα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009499/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Exit of the IMF from the Troika

The Commission Vice-President and Commissioner for Justice, Viviane Reding, has recently called for the disengagement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from addressing the crisis in the Eurozone and for this task to be undertaken exclusively by European institutions, notably the Commission; she has also called for the Troika to be disbanded. She went on to argue that the presence of the IMF had been necessary at the outset when there had been a 'state of emergency', but that the EU now had the tools and experience to manage the situation. Hence the withdrawal of the IMF could take place relatively quickly, and the Commission, which enjoyed democratic legitimacy, since the choice of Commissioners was subject to Parliament's approval, should oversee the implementation of the Memoranda.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

— Does it agree with the Commissioner's view about the withdrawal of the IMF from the Troika?

— What impact will any disengagement of the IMF have on current adjustment programmes?

— Are there any alternative plans at European level for future crises?

— What stage have plans to upgrade the ESM into a 'European Monetary Fund' reached?

— Is the Commission able to assume fully the responsibility and management of future memoranda?

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

There has been very good and effective cooperation within the Troika on programme countries since 2008, and there are strong arguments to continue the fruitful and constructive partnership with the other Troika institutions in the current programme countries. The recently adopted 'Two Pack' has also confirmed that when assisting programme countries the Commission should act in liaison with the European Central Bank (ECB) and, where appropriate, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ([1]). The Troika configuration allows for checks and balance in terms of the best strategy to address the economic and financial challenges, to discuss new ideas and to use the comparative advantages of each institution. Cooperation within Troika has been and remains good. This notwithstanding, we are exploring possibilities for further improvement within the Troika framework with regards to (i) partners' cooperation, (ii) communication, (iii) interplay with Eurogroup/IMF board. Any reassessment of how it operates would be for future programmes only.

The Euro Area firewalls have been significantly improved in the course of the crisis. Following the experience of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM), a permanent financial assistance mechanism was created, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). The ESM is the main instrument to finance new programmes for euro area countries as of 8 October 2012. It brings about several important novelties to deal with possible new crisis cases. The issue of firewalls has to be seen also in the context of further steps to improve the governance of European Monetary Union.

([1]) Article 7(1) of Regulation (EU) No 472/2013 of 21 May 2013 on the strengthening of economic and budgetary surveillance of Member States in the euro area experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009500/13
alla Commissione
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(6 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Sospendere la procedura di adesione del Kosovo all'UE

La situazione del Kosovo è caratterizzata da livelli altissimi di disoccupazione, assenza di un apparato di piccole e medie imprese, carenza di investimenti dall'estero e alto tasso di corruzione.

La disoccupazione ha raggiunto il 40 % della forza lavoro e la povertà sta, di conseguenza, dilagando: un terzo dei 2 milioni di kosovari vive con meno di un dollaro al giorno.

Le PMI in Kosovo sono praticamente inesistenti. Le imprese kosovare sono in larghissima misura delle micro-imprese, che al massimo occupano quattro dipendenti. In molti casi si tratta di aziende individuali che coprono il 96,4 % del totale degli esercizi economici del paese.

I capitali dall'estero non arrivano in misura sufficiente anche perché, come rivela l'indice di percezione della corruzione del 2012 elaborato da Transparency International, il Kosovo è, insieme all'Albania, lo Stato in assoluto più corrotto dei Balcani. Lo ha esplicitato anche la Corte dei conti europea che, qualche mese fa, ha diffuso un rapporto in cui si precisava che le cattive abitudini politico-amministrative sono un grosso problema.

Alla luce di quanto indicato, non ritiene la Commissione che sia il caso di sospendere qualsiasi tipo di negoziato di adesione con il Kosovo, vista anche la crisi economica e finanziaria che l'Europa sta attraversando?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(16 settembre 2013)

La Commissione concorda con l'onorevole deputato nel giudicare problematica la situazione socioeconomica del Kosovo ([1]). Nel suo studio di fattibilità dell'ottobre 2012 relativo a un accordo di stabilizzazione e di associazione tra l'Unione europea e il Kosovo ([2]), la Commissione ha evidenziato una serie di questioni che vengono sollevate anche nell'interrogazione dell'onorevole deputato, tra cui il tasso elevatissimo di disoccupazione, le carenze del settore privato, la grande diffusione dell'economia informale e la necessità di migliorare il clima imprenditoriale, compreso lo Stato di diritto, per attrarre gli investimenti.

La Commissione ritiene che il percorso europeo del Kosovo e le condizioni associate al processo siano il modo migliore per incentivare le riforme necessarie, stimolare la crescita e rafforzare lo Stato di diritto in Kosovo. Nella relazione congiunta con l'Alta Rappresentante dell'Unione per gli affari esteri e la politica di sicurezza presentata in aprile ([3]), la Commissione concludeva che il Kosovo ha dimostrato il suo impegno nella lotta contro la criminalità organizzata e la corruzione. Ora il Kosovo deve adoperarsi per fornire prove concrete dei risultati ottenuti in questi ambiti.

Visto che il Consiglio ha autorizzato l'avvio di negoziati su un accordo di stabilizzazione e di associazione tra l'Unione europea e il Kosovo, la Commissione ritiene che il futuro accordo sia lo strumento adatto per assistere il Kosovo in tale contesto. Analogamente ad altri accordi di stabilizzazione e di associazione, l'accordo con il Kosovo porrà l'accento sulle relazioni commerciali per sostenerne lo sviluppo socioeconomico. Con questo accordo, inoltre, il Kosovo assumerà nei confronti dell'UE l'impegno giuridicamente vincolante di rafforzare lo Stato di diritto, in particolare la lotta contro la criminalità organizzata e la corruzione.

([1]) Tale designazione non pregiudica le posizioni riguardo allo status ed è in linea con la risoluzione 1244/99 dell'UNSC e con il parere della CIG sulla dichiarazione di indipendenza del Kosovo.
([2]) COM(2012)602 def.
([3]) JOIN (2013)8 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009500/13
to the Commission
Mario Borghezio (NI)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Suspending the procedure for Kosovo's accession to the EU

Kosovo suffers from very high levels of unemployment, a dearth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a lack of foreign investment and high levels of corruption.

With 40% of the Kosovan workforce now unemployed, poverty is on the rise. A third of Kosovo's two million inhabitants currently live on less than one dollar a day.

There are practically no SMEs in Kosovo. The vast majority of Kosovan firms are microbusinesses with a maximum of four employees and 96.4% of the country's firms are sole proprietorships.

Kosovo is suffering from a lack of foreign investment, not least because of the fact that it was rated in Transparency International's 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index as the most corrupt state in the Balkans, alongside Albania. Furthermore, the European Court of Auditors stated in a report which it produced a few months ago that political and administrative malpractice was a major problem in the country.

Given the above situation and the economic and financial crisis in the EU, would the Commission not agree that all talks with a view to Kosovo's accession to the EU should be put on hold?

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

The Commission shares the assessment of the Honourable Member that the socioeconomic situation in Kosovo ([1]) is challenging. In its Feasibility study for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo of October 2012 ([2]), the Commission highlighted a number of issues, which are also raised by the Honourable Member in his question. This includes very high unemployment, weaknesses of the private sector, widespread informalities and the need to improve the business environment, including the rule of law, to attract investment.

The Commission is of the opinion that Kosovo's European path and the conditionality of the process is the best tool to mobilise the necessary reforms, to stimulate growth and to strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo. In the April Joint report with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy ([3]), the Commission concluded that Kosovo demonstrated its commitment to the fight against organised crime and corruption. Now, Kosovo needs to focus on providing concrete evidence of the results in these areas.

Following the authorisation of the Council to open negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Kosovo, the Commission considers that the future Agreement is the appropriate instrument to assist Kosovo in this regard. Similarly to other Stabilisation and Association Agreements, the Agreement with Kosovo will put emphasis on trade relations with a view to supporting its socioeconomic development. Through this Agreement, Kosovo is also to make a legally binding commitment to the EU to improve the rule of law, notably the fight against organised crime and corruption.

([1]) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.
([2]) COM(2012) 602 final.
([3]) JOIN (2013) 8 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009501/13
to the Commission
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Plucking feathers from live birds

Several of my constituents have written to me to express their concerns surrounding the issue of plucking feathers from live birds.

Although Article 23(3) of the 1999 Council of Europe recommendation concerning domestic geese states that 'feathers, including down, shall not be plucked from live birds', it allows for the harvesting of feathers from live geese during the moulting period as it has been deemed by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that this practice causes no harm to the birds. Nevertheless, several Member States, in particular Poland and Hungary, continue to pluck feathers from live birds, even when they are not moulting. Plucking feathers from live birds outside of the moulting period causes great pain, injury and distress to the animals.

Furthermore, Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes states that Member States must ensure that 'animals are not caused any unnecessary pain, suffering or injury'.

1. What is the Commission doing to ensure that Member States comply with Directive 98/58/EC, particularly in the area of plucking feathers from birds?

2. What is the Commission's view on the continued practice by some Member States of plucking feathers from live birds outside of the moulting period?

3. Is the Commission currently taking any action with regard to Member States that do not comply with Directive 98/58/EC? If so, what action is being taken and is the Commission currently taking action regarding any Member States that pluck feathers from live birds outside of the moulting period?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-011289/2012, E-011524/2012 and E-001246/2013 ([1]).

The Food and Veterinary Office of the Commission's Health and Consumers Directorate General has performed audits also with regard to compliance with requirements laid down in Council of Europe recommendations ([2]). There are currently no infringement proceedings against Member States due to practices of feather plucking from live birds. The Commission is investigating alleged non-compliance with Directive 98/58/EC regarding four Member States. Infringement procedures are not necessarily the best tool to resolve cases of non-compliance and will often be used as a last resort. More appropriate methods to ensure proper enforcement of Union law are audits, increased knowledge through various training tools or discussions with the Member States (e.g. development of guidelines/best practices).

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Recommendation concerning turkeys
http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/biological_safety_and_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20Turkeys.asp#TopOfPage
Recommendation concerning domestic ducks
http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/biological_safety_and_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20ducks.asp#TopOfPage
Recommendation concerning domestic geese
http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/legal_cooperation/biological_safety_and_use_of_animals/farming/Rec%20geese.asp#TopOfPage

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009502/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(6 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Διαδικασία πρόσληψης προσωπικού στον νέο φορέα ραδιοτηλεόρασης

Η Ελληνική Κυβέρνηση δημοσίευσε στις 22 Ιουνίου την προκήρυξη «για τη λειτουργία δημόσιου φορέα ραδιοτηλεόρασης κατά το μεταβατικό χρονικό διάστημα μέχρι τη σύσταση νέου φορέα δημόσιας ραδιοτηλεόρασης» αποφασίζοντας τη διαδικασία πρόσληψης προσωπικού.

Σύμφωνα με την προκήρυξη αυτή, δημιουργείται μία «ειδική κατηγορία ανέργων» για τους υποψηφίους που έχουν απολυθεί λόγω κατάργησης της ΕΡΤ ΑΕ, οι οποίοι μοριοδοτούνται επιπλέον των υποψηφίων, με τα ίδια ή περισσότερα προσόντα, οι οποίοι προέρχονται από τον ιδιωτικό τομέα, καθώς και των νεότερων σε ηλικία υποψηφίων. Ενδεικτικό παράδειγμα: νέος 31 ετών, αριστούχος με βαθμό πτυχίου 9, με μεταπτυχιακό και διδακτορικό τίτλο (συναφείς στον τομέα) και πενταετή εργασιακή εμπειρία σε ιδιωτικό ραδιοτηλεοπτικό μέσο, λαμβάνει 1 080 μονάδες μοριοδότησης, ενώ υπάλληλος της πρώην ΕΡΤ με εξαετή προϋπηρεσία, κάτοχος πτυχίου με βαθμό 5, χωρίς άλλα τυπικά προσόντα, λαμβάνει 1 120 μονάδες μοριοδότησης και προσλαμβάνεται.

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη τα παραπάνω, την πολιτική κρίση η οποία δημιουργήθηκε από την κατάργηση της ΕΡΤ ΑΕ, τους λόγους οι οποίοι προβλήθηκαν γι' αυτή την απόφαση (αδιαφάνεια, μη αξιοκρατικές προσλήψεις, πελατειακό κράτος κ.ά.), καθώς και τις δεσμεύσεις που απορρέουν από το μνημόνιο συμφωνίας μεταξύ της Ελλάδας και της Τρόικα, μέλος της οποίας είναι η Επιτροπή, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Θεωρεί ότι η νέα διαδικασία πρόσληψης και μοριοδότησης που προκηρύχθηκε δημιουργεί διακρίσεις εις βάρος των ανέργων που δεν είχαν προηγούμενη σχέση εργασίας με την ΕΡΤ ΑΕ και άρα προέρχονται από τον ιδιωτικό τομέα;

— Συμμετείχε η Task Force για την Ελλάδα στις συζητήσεις για την πρόσληψη του προσωπικού του νέου φορέα και, αν ναι, ποια είναι η άποψή της για τα ανωτέρω;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(17 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η πρόσληψη προσωπικού υψηλής εξειδίκευσης είναι ζωτικής σημασίας για τον εκσυγχρονισμό του ελληνικού δημόσιου τομέα. Η διασφάλισης μιας τέτοιας έκβασης στη διαδικασία πρόσληψης αποτελεί ευθύνη της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης.

Η ειδική ομάδα εργασίας για την Ελλάδα δεν συμμετείχε στις συζητήσεις σχετικά με την πρόσληψη προσωπικού στη νέα οντότητα.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009502/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Procedure for recruitment of staff for the new radio and television broadcasting entity in Greece

On 22 June the Greek Government published an announcement 'on the operation of a public radio and television broadcasting entity during the transitional period until the establishment of a new public broadcasting entity' which sets out the staff recruitment procedure.

According to this announcement, a 'special category of unemployed person' is being created for candidates who have been made redundant due to the abolition of ERT. They will be awarded more points than other candidates with the same or better qualifications who come from the private sector and younger candidates. For example: a 31 year-old graduate with a grade 9 degree and with a postgraduate and doctoral degree (in related fields) and five years of work experience in private broadcasting will receive 1 080 units points, while a former employee of ERT with six years experience with a grade 5 degree and no other qualifications will receive 1 120 points. It is therefore the latter candidate rather than the former who will be recruited.

In view of the above, the political crisis created by the abolition of ERT, the reasons advanced for this decision (lack of transparency, non-meritocratic recruitment, client state, etc.) and the obligations arising from the Memorandum between Greece and the Troika, of which the Commission is a member, will the Commission say:

— Does it consider that the new recruitment procedure and points system that have been announced discriminate against unemployed persons who had no previous working relationship with ERT and thus come from the private sector?

— Was the Task Force for Greece involved in the discussions on the recruitment of staff for the new entity and, if so, what view does it take of the above?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2013)

The recruitment of highly qualified staff is of crucial importance for the modernisation of the Greek public sector. To ensure such an outcome in a recruitment process is the responsibility of the Greek Government.

The Task Force for Greece was not involved in the discussions on the recruitment of staff for the new entity.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009503/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(6 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Geldigheidsduur studentenvisum

De geldigheidsduur van een studentenvisum verschilt van lidstaat tot lidstaat. Dit beïnvloedt de keuze van het land waar studenten hun opleiding wensen te krijgen.

Een student die bewust kiest voor een studie buiten zijn continent heeft een langetermijn(carrière)planning en zal onderzoeken wat zijn kansen zijn op een baan. Hierbij is de duur van het studentenvisum één van de criteria voor het kiezen van een bepaalde studie/land.

Daarom de volgende vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Wat is de visie van de Commissie op de huidige verschillen tussen de lidstaten?

2. Is de Commissie zich bewust van de gevolgen van de verschillen tussen de lidstaten?

3. Zal de Commissie een Europees initiatief uitwerken om de verschillen weg te werken omtrent de geldigheidsduur van de studentenvisa en de voorwaarden na afloop van de studie?

Antwoord van mevrouw Malmström namens de Commissie
(1 oktober 2013)

Richtlijn 2004/114/EG bevat de voorwaarden voor de toelating van studenten uit derde landen. Deze richtlijn bepaalt dat aan een student uit een derde land die aan de respectieve criteria voldoet, een verblijfstitel moet worden afgegeven voor ten minste een jaar, met de mogelijkheid van verlenging zolang de houder ervan blijft voldoen aan de betreffende voorwaarden. Indien de studie korter duurt dan een jaar, wordt de verblijfstitel afgegeven voor de studieperiode. Deze richtlijn zorgt echter niet voor de harmonisatie van de procedures en praktijken inzake visumafgifte, welke tussen de lidstaten inderdaad nogal verschillen.

Dit is een van de redenen waarom de Commissie onlangs met een voorstel is gekomen tot wijziging van de bestaande „studentenrichtlijn" ([1]), dat de lidstaten de keuze biedt tussen de afgifte van verblijfstitels of visa voor verblijf van langere duur aan studenten uit derde landen en de voorwaarden voor de afgifte daarvan en voor de mogelijkheid van beroep tegen een weigering van een dergelijke afgifte, harmoniseert. De duur blijft minimaal een jaar en is gerelateerd aan de duur van de studie; verlenging is echter mogelijk. Belangrijk aan het voorstel is dat het studenten en onderzoekers uit derde landen ook de mogelijkheid biedt tot het zoeken van werk en ondernemerschap na de afronding van hun onderzoek of studie. Op grond van het voorstel mogen studenten en onderzoekers nog gedurende een periode van twaalf maanden op het grondgebied van de lidstaat blijven om werk te zoeken of een bedrijf op te richten, mits zij nog steeds aan bepaalde voorwaarden voldoen.

([1]) Zie COM(2013)151 final van 30.3.2013 (voorstel voor een Richtlijn van het Europees Parlement en de Raad betreffende de voorwaarden voor toegang en verblijf van onderdanen van derde landen met het oog op onderzoek, studie, scholierenuitwisseling, bezoldigde en onbezoldigde stages, vrijwilligerswerk of au-pairactiviteiten, waarbij de studentenrichtlijn (Richtlijn 2004/114/EG) en de onderzoekersrichtlijn (Richtlijn 2005/71/EG) worden herschikt).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009503/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Period of validity of student visas

The period of validity of student visas varies from Member State to Member State. This influences students' choice of country in which to study.

Students who specifically choose to study on another continent are planning their careers long-term and will try to establish what chances they have of finding work. The period of validity of the student visa is one of the criteria for choosing a particular course or country.

1. What view does the Commission take of the existing differences between the Member States?

2. Is the Commission aware of the consequences of the differences between Member States?

3. Will the Commission draft a European proposal to eliminate the differences in period of validity of student visas and the conditions which apply after studies have been completed?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

The conditions of admission of third-country national students are regulated in Directive 2004/114/EC. This provides that when a third-country national student meets the respective criteria, he or she should receive a residence permit for a period of at least one year, and that the permit should be renewed if the holder continues to meet the relevant conditions. Where the duration of the course of study is less than one year, the permit should be valid for the duration of the course. This directive does not, however, harmonise visa-issuance procedures and practices, which are indeed quite diverse amongst Member States.

This is one of the reasons why the Commission has recently presented a proposal to amend the current Students' Directive ([1]), which gives Member States the choice between issuing residence permits or long-stay visas to third-country national students and harmonises the conditions for their issuance and the possibility of appeals against a refusal. The duration remains a minimum of one year and is linked to the period of their studies; it can however be renewed. Importantly, the proposal also provides the possibility for job-searching and entrepreneurship for third-country national students and researchers after completion of studies or research. On the basis of the proposal, students and researchers would be entitled to stay on the territory of the Member State for a period of 12 months in order to look for work or set up a business, as long as certain conditions continue to be fulfilled.

([1]) See COM(2013)151 final of 30.3.2013 (proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, pupil exchange, remunerated and unremunerated training, voluntary service and au pairing, recasting the Students Directive (Directive 2004/114/EC) and the Researchers Directive (2005/71/EC)).

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009513/13
à Comissão (Vice-Presidente/Alta Representante)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(6 de agosto de 2013)

Assunto: VP/HR — Eritreia — ponto da situação

Pergunto à Alta Representante como caracteriza a situação política, social e económica da Eritreia.

Resposta dada pela Alta Representante/Vice-Presidente Catherine Ashton em nome da Comissão
(18 de outubro de 2013)

A Comissão remete o Senhor Deputado para a resposta dada à pergunta escrita E-9066/13 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009513/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Diogo Feio (PPE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Eritrea — update

How would the High Representative characterise the political, social and economic situation in Eritrea?

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

The Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E-9066/13 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009516/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Execution of Afzal Guru

Following the attack on the Indian Parliament in Delhi in 2001, Afzal Guru was convicted and was executed at Tihar prison in India on 9 February 2013.

Serious questions remain unanswered about Mr Guru's legal representation and the integrity of evidence placed before the court. A senior government official is reported as suggesting Indian government involvement in the attack.

Mr Guru was executed in secret, without the knowledge of his family, who have not been allowed to recover his body for a proper burial.

Could I ask the High Representative to emphasise, as a matter of urgency, the need for the Indian Government to conduct an independent and transparent enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the trial, conviction and execution of Afzal Guru?

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

In a statement issued on 11 February 2013 the HR/VP reiterated the EU's firm and principled opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, deploring the resumption of executions in India. Two executions took place in a time span of four months between November 2012 and February 2013 after a *de facto* moratorium of eight years. The secrecy that surrounded the execution of Afzal Guru, on death row seven years after the awarding of his death sentence and six years after his clemency petition to the President, lest it became subject of judicial review, has generated strong public reaction which the EU took note of.

Without going into the merits of the case, these developments appear to go against the principles of minimum standards the EU considers important to be met where states insist on maintaining the death penalty and in the event of an execution. The EU is also concerned at civil society reports about the lack of clarity on criteria in the application of Presidential pardon and the increasing rate of rejections of mercy pleas, particularly over the past year. In view of these developments, the EU will seize the opportunity to seek the Indian Government's position on capital punishment in the framework of the forthcoming local human rights dialogue.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009517/13
to the Commission
Nicole Sinclaire (NI)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Social and economic effects of zero-hours contracts

The 2010 Agency Workers Regulation (SI 2010/93), which implemented the 2008 Temporary and Agency Worker Directive (2008/104/EC), is considered to have contributed to the growth in zero-hours contracts.

As many as one million workers in the UK are now believed to be employed on zero-hours contracts, and many are therefore unable to budget adequately and have no security of income.

Recent research has indicated that greater use of zero-hours contracts in the UK social care sector, for example, has led to an increase in the non-payment of the minimum wage in that sector.

Many workers on such contracts have no entitlement to holiday or sick pay. The right of employers to reduce the holiday pay of workers employed on zero-hours contracts to zero has been confirmed by the European Court of Justice (Heimann and another v Kaiser GmbH Cases C-229/11 & 230/11 ECJ).

Does the Commission agree with me that EU legislation that allows such practices undermines the core principles of the European Social Model and contributes to exploitation of workers, job insecurity, and poverty?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

The Commission takes note of the recent research from the UK suggesting that substantially more UK workers than previously estimated are employed on zero-hour contracts. There is a need for more analysis of the impact of this form of employment and its advantages for, and its risks to, both employers and workers. The Commission awaits with interest the outcome of the UK Government's review.

There are no rules at EU level specifically regulating the issue of zero-hour contracts. Zero-hour workers do fall, in principle, within the scope of EU labour law. Such workers are entitled to paid annual leave in proportion to the time worked, as the UK Government website also states. Contrary to the Honourable Member's assertion, the CJEU judgment of 8 November 2012 in joined Cases C-229/11 and 230/11 ([1]) confirms that minimum paid annual-leave entitlements are accrued proportionally on the basis of the hours worked, thereby protecting the rights of zero-hour workers.

The Commission also notes that there is no evidence to suggest any relationship between Directive 2008/104/EC ([2]), or any other rules at EU level, and the use of zero-hour contracts. EU labour law lays down minimum common standards for the protection of workers across the Union. Member States are, of course, free to introduce rules at national level, where appropriate, to prevent the use and/or abuse of such contracts.

([1]) Alexander Heimann (C-229/11), Konstantin Toltschin (C-230/11) v Kaiser GmbH, not yet reported.
([2]) Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work, OJ L 327, 5.12.2008.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009518/13
an die Kommission
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D)
(6. August 2013)

Betrifft: Umsetzung der Patientenmobilitätsrichtlinie (2011/24/EU)

Die Richtlinie über die Ausübung der Patientenrechte in der grenzüberschreitenden Gesundheitsversorgung trat am 24. April 2011 in Kraft. Ihre Umsetzungsfrist von 30 Monaten endet am 25. Oktober 2013.

Welche Erkenntnisse liegen der Kommission über die Umsetzung der Patientenmobilitätsrichtlinie in Deutschland sowie in Frankreich vor?

Liegen der Kommission Informationen darüber vor, dass die Umsetzung der Richtlinie in einem oder mehreren Mitgliedstaaten mehr Zeit als vorgesehen in Anspruch nehmen könnte? Wenn ja, in welchen Mitgliedstaaten sind Verzögerungen bei der Umsetzung der Patientenmobilitätsrichtlinie zu erwarten?

Wie ist der Sachstand in Bezug auf grenzüberschreitende Patientenmobilität in den Verhandlungen über das Abkommen in den Bereichen Landwirtschaft, Lebensmittelsicherheit, Produktsicherheit und öffentliche Gesundheit mit der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft? Beabsichtigt die Schweiz eine Übernahme von Regelungen der Patientenmobilitätsrichtlinie?

Antwort von Tonio Borg im Namen der Kommission
(17. September 2013)

Die Kommission ist nicht in der Lage, Informationen zum Sachstand der Umsetzung in den Mitgliedstaaten zu geben, solange die Frist für die Umsetzung noch läuft.

Ebenso kann die Kommission keine Angaben dazu machen, ob die Schweiz die Richtlinie umsetzen wird, da die Verhandlungen über ein künftiges Abkommen zwischen der Europäischen Union und der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft in den Bereichen öffentliche Gesundheit, Verbraucherschutz, Tier- und Pflanzengesundheit, Tierschutz sowie Lebensmittelsicherheit noch nicht abgeschlossen sind.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009518/13
to the Commission
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Transposition of the Patient Mobility Directive (2011/24/EU)

The directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare came into force on 24 April 2011. The 30-month deadline for its transposition will expire on 25 October 2013.

What information does the Commission have about the transposition of this directive in Germany and France?

Does the Commission know whether the transposition of the directive might take longer than anticipated in any of the Member States? If so, in which Member States are delays expected?

What is the situation regarding cross-border patient mobility in terms of the negotiations on the agreement on agriculture, food safety, product safety and public health with the Swiss Confederation? Does Switzerland intend to take over rules from the Patient Mobility Directive?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2013)

During the ongoing transposition period the Commission is not in a position to give any information on the state of play of transposition in the Member States.

Equally, the Commission cannot indicate whether Switzerland will transpose the directive as the negotiations for a future agreement between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation in the areas of public health, consumer protection, animal and plant health, animal welfare, and food safety are ongoing.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009519/13
to the Commission
Rebecca Taylor (ALDE)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Testing for GM content of all rice products imported from China

Humdinger Ltd, a company operating in my constituency, is experiencing considerable disruption to its supply of rice crackers as a result of the testing requirements and regimes being imposed on rice and rice-containing products from China under Commission Implementing Decision 2011/884/EU, recently amended by Decision 2013/287/EU.

Humdinger reports that it has put a considerable amount of effort into maintaining the integrity of the products it sources. Despite this, the company has had two consignments of rice products tested positive for GM content by the Port Health Authority. On both occasions the company has had samples tested by both an independent laboratory and the Laboratory of Government Chemists (LGC): the results of the tests have been negative. Humdinger believes that the screening analysis methodology and the lack of scope of interpretation of test results are allowing false positive results to occur. The latest EC Decision states that there were 56 cases of rejection since initial implementation; however, there does not appear to be consideration of when there have been challenges which have been proved to be false.

The latest Commission Decision (2013/287/EU) also appears to have resulted in the local Chinese authorities ceasing to issue the GM-free hygiene certification. A statement released by AQSIQ (the Chinese quality standards authority) insists that documentation allowing the export of rice products which meet EU requirements is still being issued. This is not supported by Humdinger's experience in China.

Can the Commission state whether steps are being taken to ensure consistency in testing methodologies and interpretation of results, and whether support is available to assist companies affected by the current requirements?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(13 September 2013)

Following the continuing notifications by Member States of unauthorised genetically modified rice to the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), Commission Implementing Decision 2011/884/EU ([1]), as amended by Decision 2013/287/EU ([2]) was adopted.

The genetically modified rice contaminants were of an unknown type and nature and therefore, no specific test method could be proposed. However, in the interest of public health, the decisions aim at minimising the risk of false negatives.

The EU Reference Laboratory for GMOs (EURL-GMOs) is aiming at reducing the risk of false positive results, whilst assuring the food and feed safety of imported rice products and is assisting EU and Chinese official control laboratories and companies in implementing the decision. It has verified and confirmed the suitability of the screening methods provided for in the decisions and — to ensure a harmonised testing — it has published guidance on the use of these screening methods. A revised version of this guidance document is in preparation, taking account of the experience made and knowledge accumulated on the nature of the contamination. The document is currently under discussion by the European Network of GMO testing laboratories.

([1]) OJ L 343, 23.12.2011, p. 140.
([2]) OJ L 162, 14.6.2013, p. 10.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009520/13
an die Kommission
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D)
(6. August 2013)

Betrifft: Gewährleistung des Diskriminierungsverbots in der Preispolitik öffentlicher Einrichtungen/Unternehmen

Als feste Bestandteile des Vertrags über die Arbeitsweise der Europäischen Union sowie der EU-Grundrechtscharta haben der Gleichheitsgrundsatz und das Diskriminierungsverbot rechtlich bindende Wirkung für die Mitgliedstaaten der Union.

Vermehrt haben mich Bürgerinnen und Bürger auf die Ungleichbehandlung durch öffentliche Einrichtungen oder Unternehmen bei Eintritts- und Fahrpreisen hingewiesen. Demnach gewährt beispielsweise ein staatliches Museum in Schottland Schülergruppen aus dem Vereinigten Königreich freien Eintritt. Schulklassen aus anderen Mitgliedstaaten müssen jedoch einen Eintrittspreis entrichten. Ähnliche Praktiken von Ungleichbehandlung werden im Zusammenhang mit der Gewährung von Rabatten für Schulklassen durch öffentliche Verkehrsunternehmen berichtet.

Wie lässt sich die Diskriminierung bei Eintritts- oder Fahrpreisen öffentlicher Einrichtungen oder Unternehmen gegenüber Bürgerinnen und Bürgern aus anderen Mitgliedstaaten sachlich rechtfertigen?

Sind die beschriebenen Praktiken mit dem primärrechtlichen Gleichheitsgrundsatz und dem Diskriminierungsverbot vereinbar?

Liegen der Kommission Beschwerden über Fälle diskriminierender Preispolitik öffentlicher Einrichtungen oder Unternehmen vor?

Welche Maßnahmen gedenkt die Kommission zu ergreifen, um das Diskriminierungsverbot in Bezug auf die Preispolitik öffentlicher Einrichtungen und Unternehmen zu gewährleisten?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(24. September 2013)

Für alle Dienstleistungen, die unter die Richtlinie 2006/123/EG („Dienstleistungsrichtlinie") fallen, gilt das Diskriminierungsverbot gemäß Artikel 20 Absatz 1, wonach jegliche auf der Staatsangehörigkeit oder dem Wohnsitz beruhende Diskriminierung durch Behörden untersagt ist.

Wie der Gerichtshof der EU bereits entschieden hat, ist eine in einem Mitgliedstaat geltende Regelung über Eintrittspreise und Tarife für den Zugang zu Museen, Denkmälern, Galerien, antiken Ausgrabungsstätten sowie Parkanlagen und Gärten mit Denkmalcharakter, die eine Diskriminierung allein der ausländischen Touristen enthält, hinsichtlich der Angehörigen der anderen Mitgliedstaaten nach den Artikeln 18 und 56 AEUV untersagt ([1]). Dies gilt auch für Tarifvorteile, die lokale oder dezentrale staatliche Einrichtungen den Staatsangehörigen und den im Gebiet der die fragliche kulturelle Anlage betreibenden Stelle Ansässigen gewähren ([2]).

Bislang hat die Kommission keine Beschwerden über diskriminierende Preisgestaltungspraktiken öffentlicher Einrichtungen oder Unternehmen im Vereinigten Königreich erhalten.

Sollten der Frau Abgeordneten genauere Informationen zu öffentlichen Einrichtungen oder Unternehmen im Vereinigten Königreich vorliegen, die eine diskriminierende Preispolitik verfolgen, wird die Kommission diese Angelegenheit gerne eingehender untersuchen.

An dieser Stelle sei Ihnen versichert, dass sich die Kommission auch weiterhin für die Durchsetzung des in der Dienstleistungsrichtlinie verankerten Nichtdiskriminierungs-grundsatzes einsetzen wird.

([1]) Rechtssache C-45/93, Kommission gegen Spanien [1994], Slg. I-911; Rechtssache C-388/01, Kommission gegen Italien [2003], Slg. I-721.
([2]) Rechtssache C-388/01, Kommission gegen Italien, Slg. 2003, I-721.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009520/13
to the Commission
Evelyne Gebhardt (S&D)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Elimination of discrimination in the pricing policies of public institutions/undertakings

As established elements of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, the principle of equality and the ban on discrimination are legally binding on the EU Member States.

I have increasingly been receiving reports from members of the public about unequal treatment by public institutions or undertakings with regard to admission prices and fares. A State museum in Scotland, for example, grants free admission to groups of pupils from the United Kingdom. School classes from other Member States, however, are charged admission. Similar discriminatory practices are reported with regard to discounts for school classes granted by public transport undertakings.

How can discrimination in the admission charges or fares which public institutions or undertakings levy from citizens from other Member States be objectively justified?

Are the above practices compatible with the principle of equality enshrined in primary law and with the ban on discrimination?

Has the Commission received any complaints about discriminatory pricing policies pursued by public institutions or undertakings?

What measures will the Commission take to enforce the principle of non-discrimination in relation to the pricing policies pursued by public institutions and undertakings?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

For all services falling under Directive 2006/123/EC ('Services Directive'), any discrimination by public authorities that is based on grounds of nationality or the place of residence is generally forbidden by its Article 20, paragraph 1.

The Court of Justice of the EU has already held that national legislation on admission prices and fares to museums, monuments, galleries, archaeological digs, parks and gardens classified as public monuments of one Member State which entails discrimination affecting only foreign tourists is, for nationals of other Member States, prohibited by Articles 18 and 56 TFEU ([1]). This also applies to preferential rates granted by local or decentralised State authorities only in favour of nationals and persons resident within the territory of those authorities running the cultural sites in question ([2]).

To date, the Commission has not received any complaints about discriminatory pricing policies pursued by public institutions or undertakings in the United Kingdom.

Should the Honourable Member have more precise information about public institutions or undertakings in the United Kingdom that use discriminatory pricing policies, the Commission would be pleased to look further into the matter.

The Commission remains committed to enforcing the principle of non-discrimination as stipulated in the Services Directive.

([1]) Case C-45/93 Commission v Spain [1994] ECR I-911, Case C-388/01 Commission v Italy [2003] ECR I-721.
([2]) Case C-388/01 Commission v Italy [2003] ECR I-721.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009521/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(6 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Boete voor kritische tv-stations Turkije (vervolgvraag)

Op 5 augustus 2013 heeft de heer Füle namens de Commissie antwoord gegeven op schriftelijke vraag E-007264/2013. Daarin schrijft hij: „Elk land dat met de EU over toetreding onderhandelt, moet de naleving van de mensenrechten kunnen verzekeren, met inbegrip van de vrije meningsuiting en vrijheid van vergadering en vereniging overeenkomstig de artikelen 10 en 11 van het Europees Verdrag voor de rechten van de mens (EVRM) en de rechtspraak van het Europees Hof voor de rechten van de mens (EHRM)."

1. Is de Commissie ertoe bereid de onvermijdelijke conclusie te trekken dat Turkije de mensenrechten, met inbegrip van de vrije meningsuiting en vrijheid van vergadering en vereniging overeenkomstig de artikelen 10 en 11 van het Europees Verdrag voor de rechten van de mens (EVRM) en de rechtspraak van het Europees Hof voor de rechten van de mens (EHRM), met voeten treedt? Is de Commissie bijgevolg ertoe bereid de conclusie te trekken dat de toetredingsonderhandelingen aldus onrechtmatig zijn en onmiddellijk stopgezet dienen te worden? Zo neen, hoe verhoudt de vermeende „rechtvaardiging" van de toetredingsonderhandelingen zich dan tot het door de Commissie aangehaalde EVRM resp. de rechtspraak van het EHRM?

Voorts schrijft de heer Füle: „De huidige gebeurtenissen onderstrepen het belang van nadere betrokkenheid bij Turkije in het kader van het proces van toetreding tot de EU, inclusief met betrekking tot de onderhandelingshoofdstukken die het meest essentieel zijn voor het hervormingsproces: hoofdstuk 23 — Rechterlijke macht en fundamentele rechten en hoofdstuk 24 — Recht, vrijheid en veiligheid."

2. Is de Commissie ertoe bereid de onvermijdelijke conclusie te trekken dat Turkije zich simpelweg niet wíl en kán aanpassen aan de EU en bijgevolg nóóit tot de EU kan toetreden — hoeveel onderhandelingshoofdstukken ook worden geopend en hoezeer de Commissie Turkije ook bij de EU wenst te betrekken? Zo neen, hoe verklaart de Commissie haar naïviteit?

3. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat Turkije geenszins voor 's lands verwerpelijke houding „beloond" dient te worden? Zo ja, waarom pleit de Commissie dan toch voor „nadere betrokkenheid van Turkije bij de EU"?

4. Hoe verklaart de Commissie haar naïeve overtuiging dat Turkije ooit daadwerkelijk zal hervormen en dat de EU een rol daarin kan spelen?

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

In haar jaarlijkse voortgangsverslagen brengt de Commissie uitgebreid verslag uit over de mate waarin Turkije voldoet aan de toetredingscriteria, in het bijzonder de politieke criteria, die ook eerbiediging van de grondrechten inhouden. In oktober 2013 verschijnt het volgende voortgangsverslag.

In het onderhandelingskader uit 2005 waarbinnen de toetredingsonderhandelingen met Turkije plaatsvinden, zijn de voorwaarden vastgesteld voor opschorting van de onderhandelingen. De Commissie is niet van mening dat aan deze voorwaarden wordt voldaan.

De Commissie wijst erop dat Turkije en de Europese Unie in 2005 toetredingsonderhandelingen zijn begonnen met als gezamenlijk doel dat Turkije lid wordt van de EU op basis van objectieve criteria waaraan Turkije moet voldoen. Sinds 2005 heeft Turkije daarmee aanzienlijke vooruitgang geboekt, zoals ook blijkt uit de opeenvolgende voortgangsverslagen van de Commissie. De Commissie wijst op de conclusies van de Raad van december 2012, waarin wordt bepaald dat het „in het belang van beide partijen [is] dat de toetredingsonderhandelingen spoedig weer op tempo komen en ervoor wordt gezorgd dat de EU het ijkpunt voor hervormingen in Turkije blijft. Turkije [zal] het ritme van de onderhandelingen […] kunnen opvoeren door verder werk te maken van de ijkpunten en de vereisten van het onderhandelingskader en door zijn contractuele verplichtingen ten aanzien van de EU na te leven."

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009521/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(6 August 2013)

Subject: Fines for critical TV stations in Turkey (follow-up question)

On 5 August 2013, Mr Füle answered Written Question E-007264/2103 on behalf of the Commission. In his reply, he wrote: 'Any country negotiating its EU accession needs to guarantee human rights, including freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly and association, in line with Article 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).'

1. Will the Commission draw the inescapable conclusion that Turkey is breaching human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association as referred to in Articles 10 and 11 of the ECHR, and the case-law of the ECtHR? Will the Commission therefore draw the conclusion that the accession negotiations are accordingly unlawful and should be terminated immediately? If not, how can the supposed 'justification' for the accession negotiations be reconciled with the ECHR and the case-law of the ECtHR, to which the Commission refers?

Mr Füle also wrote: 'Current events underline the importance of further engagement with Turkey within the framework of the EU accession process, including on those negotiating chapters most fundamental to its reform efforts: Chapter 23 — Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24 — Justice, Freedom and Security.'

2. Will the Commission draw the inescapable conclusion that Turkey simply does not wish to, and cannot, adapt to the EU and consequently will never be able to accede to the EU, no matter how many negotiating chapters are opened or how eager the Commission is to have Turkey involved with the EU? If not, how does the Commission explain its naivety?

3. Does the Commission agree that Turkey should on no account be 'rewarded' for the country's reprehensible attitude? If so, why does the Commission advocate 'closer involvement of Turkey with the EU'?

4. How does the Commission explain its naïve conviction that Turkey will ultimately indeed reform itself and that the EU can play a role in this?

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

The Commission reports extensively on Turkey's compliance with the accession criteria, notably the political criteria which include respect for fundamental rights, in its annual progress reports. The next progress report will be published in October 2013.

The 2005 Negotiating Framework governing accession negotiations with Turkey defines the conditions for a suspension of the negotiations. The Commission does not consider that these conditions are met.

The Commission recalls that Turkey and the European Union have committed in 2005 to the accession negotiations with the shared goal of Turkey's EU Membership on the basis of objective criteria to be fulfilled by Turkey. Since 2005 Turkey has made significant progress in meeting these criteria, as documented in successive progress reports published by the Commission. The Commission recalls the Council Conclusions of December 2012 which state that 'it is in the interest of both parties that accession negotiations regain momentum soon, ensuring that the EU remains the benchmark for reforms in Turkey. Turkey will be able to accelerate the pace of negotiations by advancing in the fulfilment of benchmarks, meeting the requirements of the Negotiating Framework and by respecting its contractual obligations towards the EU.'

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009522/13
an die Kommission
Angelika Niebler (PPE)
(7. August 2013)

Betrifft: Kennzeichnungspflicht für geschälten Spargel

Während der Spargelzeit tritt vermehrt ein Problem mit der Kennzeichnungspflicht für geschälten Spargel auf.

Ausländischer Spargel, der auf den Großmärkten auch nach Tagen nicht verkauft werden kann, ist als frischer Spargel nicht mehr verkehrsfähig. Um den Verlust so gering wie möglich zu halten, wird dieser Spargel in der Regel unter dem Einkaufspreis an Verarbeitungs- und Schälbetriebe abgegeben.

Der Spargel wird geschält, erhält so wieder ein frischeres Aussehen und wird als geschälter Spargel weit unter dem üblichen Preis vor allem an Großabnehmer verkauft. Da geschälter Spargel wie ein verarbeitetes Produkt behandelt wird, muss nicht der tatsächliche Herkunftsort, sondern der Ort des heimischen Inverkehrbringers angegeben werden.

Wenn ausländischer, geschälter Spargel als heimischer Spargel verkauft wird, handelt es sich dabei ganz klar um eine Täuschung des Verbrauchers. Für Kunden ist die Herkunft des Spargels von besonderer Bedeutung. Spargel aus dem Spargelanbaugebiet um Schrobenhausen beispielsweise ist weit über die Region hinaus bekannt.

1. Ist die Kommission der Auffassung, dass diese Bestimmungen zu einer Täuschung des Verbrauchers führen?

2. Falls die Kommission ebenfalls der Auffassung ist, dass diese Bestimmungen zu einer Täuschung des Verbrauchers führen, plant die Europäische Kommission eine Änderung der Bestimmungen?

3. Warum wird bei geschältem, frischem Spargel keine Herkunftsangabe verlangt, während frisches Obst und Gemüse diese aufweisen muss?

Antwort von Herrn Cioloş im Namen der Kommission
(1. Oktober 2013)

1) In dem Fall, den die Frau Abgeordnete schildert, wird der ausländische, geschälte Spargel nicht als inländisches Erzeugnis verkauft. Der Name des Vertriebsunternehmens darf nicht mit der Ursprungsangabe verwechselt werden.

Für die Durchsetzung der EU-Vorschriften über die Kennzeichnung von Lebensmitteln sind die nationalen Behörden zuständig, wobei Informationen über Lebensmittel hinsichtlich des Ursprungslandes oder Herkunftsortes nicht irreführend sein dürfen.

2) Derzeit ist nicht geplant, die Kennzeichnungsvorschriften für Spargel zu ändern. Im Zusammenhang mit der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel [1] muss die Kommission dem Europäischen Parlament und dem Rat jedoch bis zum 13. Dezember 2014 verschiedene Berichte über die obligatorische Angabe des Ursprungslands oder Herkunftsorts bestimmter Lebensmittel, einschließlich von Lebensmitteln, die aus einer einzigen Zutat bestehen, vorlegen. Diese Berichte müssen die Notwendigkeit einer Information der Verbraucher, die Durchführbarkeit einer zwingend vorgeschriebenen Angabe des Ursprungslands oder des Herkunftsorts und die Kosten/Nutzen-Analyse für solche Maßnahmen, einschließlich der rechtlichen Auswirkungen auf den Binnenmarkt und der Auswirkungen auf den internationalen Handel, berücksichtigen. Je nach den Ergebnissen dieser Berichte kann die Kommission Vorschläge zur Änderung der einschlägigen EU-Vorschriften vorlegen oder gegebenenfalls neue Initiativen auf sektoraler Ebene ergreifen.

3) Frisches Obst und Gemüse muss bestimmten Vermarktungsnormen und einschlägigen Kennzeichnungsvorschriften, einschließlich Ursprungsangaben, entsprechen. Für „küchenfertig vorbereitetes“ Obst und Gemüse, zu dem auch geschälter Spargel gehört, gelten diese Vermarktungsnormen nicht, weil diese Erzeugnisse aufgrund ihrer Beschaffenheit bestimmten Anforderungen, etwa dass das Produkt unversehrt sein muss, nicht gerecht werden können.

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[1] Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 betreffend die Information der Verbraucher über Lebensmittel und zur Änderung der Verordnungen (EG) Nr. 1924/2006 und (EG) Nr. 1925/2006 des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates und zur Aufhebung der Richtlinie 87/250/EWG der Kommission, der Richtlinie 90/496/EWG des Rates, der Richtlinie 1999/10/EG der Kommission, der Richtlinie 2000/13/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates, der Richtlinien 2002/67/EG und 2008/5/EG der Kommission und der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 608/2004 der Kommission, ABl. L 304 vom 22.11.2011. Die Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1169/2011 gilt ab dem 13. Dezember 2014.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009522/13
to the Commission
Angelika Niebler (PPE)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Mandatory labelling for peeled asparagus

There are increasing instances of a problem with mandatory labelling for peeled asparagus during the asparagus season.

Foreign asparagus which cannot be sold after spending days in wholesale markets can no longer be marketed as fresh asparagus. In order to minimise the resultant losses, this asparagus is generally sold to processing and peeling firms below purchase price.

It is peeled, which gives it a fresher appearance, and is sold as peeled asparagus, mainly to large consumers, at way below the normal price. Since peeled asparagus is classified as a processed product, the location of the domestic distributor and not the actual place of origin must be indicated.

Selling foreign, peeled asparagus as domestic asparagus is a clear instance of misleading the consumer, for whom the origin of asparagus is especially important. For example, the product of the asparagus-growing area around Schrobenhausen is famous far beyond the region itself.

1. In the Commission's view, do these provisions cause consumers to be misled?

2. If so, does the Commission plan to have them changed?

3. Why is an indication of origin in the case of peeled, fresh asparagus not mandatory when it is a requirement for fresh fruit and vegetables?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

1) In the case quoted by the honourable Member, the foreign peeled asparagus is not sold as domestic product. The name of the distributor should not be confused with an indication of origin.

National Authorities are responsible for the enforcement of EU rules on food labelling providing that 'food information shall not be misleading as to the country of origin or place of provenance of the food'.

2) There are no plans for a change of labeling rules for Asparagus at present. However, in the context of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, ([1]) the Commission is required to submit a number of reports to the European Parliament and the Council regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for certain foods, including single ingredient products by 13 December 2014. These reports must take into account the need for the consumer to be informed, the feasibility of providing mandatory origin labeling and an analysis of the costs and benefits of such measures, including the legal impact on the internal market and the impact on international trade. Based on the outcome of these reports, the Commission may submit proposals to modify the relevant Union provisions or may take new initiatives, where appropriate, on a sectoral basis.

3) All fresh fruit and vegetables must comply with certain marketing standards and related particular labelling rules, including origin labelling. 'Kitchen ready' fruit and vegetables, the category under which peeled asparagus falls, are exempted from these marketing standards because by their nature they cannot comply with certain requirements, e.g. the requirement that the product must be intact.

([1]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011. Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 enters into application on 13 December 2014.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009523/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Abolizione dell'etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine: danni per i produttori e i consumatori europei

In riferimento alla risposta all'interrogazione E-004236/2013 «Modifica del regolamento (CE) n.1760/2000 sull'identificazione elettronica dei bovini e che sopprime le disposizioni relative all'etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine», la Commissione afferma che «la soppressione degli articoli relativi all'etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine nel regolamento (CE) n. 1760/2000 non agevolerebbe la distorsione e l'inganno dei consumatori in quanto nel regolamento (UE) n.1169/2011 relativo alle informazioni alimentari ai consumatori sono state stabilite disposizioni orizzontali sull'etichettatura di tutte le carni». Secondo l'analisi formulata dal consorzio «L'Italia zootecnica», il controllo dei prodotti a valle, così come previsto dal regolamento UE n. 1169/11 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio del 25 ottobre 2011, non garantisce a pieno il corretto flusso delle informazioni dal produttore al consumatore. Lo dimostrano i recenti scandali sui preparati alimentari la cui etichetta, pur risultando conforme alle norme previste dal suddetto regolamento, garantiva la presenza di sola carne di manzo mentre invece il contenuto era stato contaminato con carne di cavallo. Secondo l'analisi del consorzio «L'Italia Zootecnica», il controllo a valle dei prodotti, quale previsto dal regolamento, non solo non garantisce una corretta informazione per il consumatore finale circa le condizioni di allevamento e l'alimentazione somministrata, ma permette la circolazione di etichette non veritiere che, restando sul mercato per molto tempo, possono costituire un danno anche per i produttori.

La Commissione:

1. considerando che il sistema dell'etichettatura facoltativa ha permesso ai consumatori di essere correttamente informati sull'origine della carne, sulla razza e l'età del bovino, il mangime utilizzato e tutte le fasi della filiera dall'allevamento al punto vendita, in seguito all'abolizione del provvedimento ha previsto altri strumenti per garantire la tracciabilità delle carni bovine consumate dai cittadini europei?

2. considerando che l'etichettatura facoltativa rappresentava uno strumento in più per qualificare la produzione «made in Italy», come intende tutelare gli sforzi degli allevatori bovini italiani la cui qualità ed eccellenza delle produzioni trovava garanzia in esso?

3. considerando che l'abolizione del provvedimento rispondeva alla volontà di eliminare oneri amministrativi e costi, non ritiene che le conseguenze di tale decisione in termini di diffusione di etichette poco veritiere e perdita di fiducia del consumatore rappresentino un costo ben maggiore per l'intero settore?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(24 settembre 2013)

La proposta della Commissione COM(2011)525 definitivo, che modifica il regolamento (CE) n. 1760/2000 per quanto riguarda l'identificazione elettronica dei bovini e l'etichettatura delle carni bovine ([1]), elimina effettivamente le norme precedenti relative all'etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine, ritenute troppo onerose per gli operatori. Questa modifica non impedisce ai produttori di utilizzare sistemi di etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine.

Nel corso del dibattito tra il Parlamento europeo, il Consiglio e la Commissione è stato raggiunto un accordo politico in merito all'introduzione di prescrizioni specifiche in materia di etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine. In particolare, è previsto che l'etichettatura facoltativa delle carni bovine dovrà essere in linea con le disposizioni del regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio relativo alla fornitura di informazioni sugli alimenti ai consumatori ([2]); le autorità competenti dovranno verificare la veridicità di tali informazioni e disporre di adeguate sanzioni qualora gli operatori non si conformino alle disposizioni. Infine, la Commissione sarà autorizzata ad adottare atti delegati relativi alle definizioni e alle disposizioni applicabili ai termini o alle categorie di termini che possono figurare sulle etichette delle carni bovine preconfezionate, fresche e congelate.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0525:FIN:IT:PDF.

([2]) Regolamento (UE) n. 1169/2011 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 25 ottobre 2011 , relativo alla fornitura di informazioni sugli alimenti ai consumatori, che modifica i regolamenti (CE) n. 1924/2006 e (CE) n. 1925/2006 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio e abroga la direttiva 87/250/CEE della Commissione, la direttiva 90/496/CEE del Consiglio, la direttiva 1999/10/CE della Commissione, la direttiva 2000/13/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, le direttive 2002/67/CE e 2008/5/CE della Commissione e il regolamento (CE) n. 608/2004 della Commissione (GU L 304 del 22.11.2011).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009523/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Abolition of voluntary beef labelling — harmful to European producers and consumers

With reference to its answer to Written Question E-004236/2013 'Amendment of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 on the electronic identification of bovine animals and deleting the provisions on voluntary beef labelling', the Commission stated that 'the proposed deletion of the articles on voluntary beef labelling in Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 would not facilitate distortion and deception of consumers because horizontal provisions concerning labelling of all meats have been laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011(1) on food information to consumers.'

However, according to the consortium 'L'Italia zootecnica', the monitoring of products downstream, as required by EU Regulation No 1169/11 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011, does not fully guarantee an accurate flow of information from producers to consumers. This has been demonstrated by the recent scandals on pre-packaged foods, the labels of which complied with the rules laid down in the abovementioned regulation, but stated that only beef was contained in the product, when it had actually been contaminated with horse meat. According to tests carried out by the consortium 'L'Italia zootecnica', the downstream monitoring of products, as provided for by the regulation, not only fails to ensure that proper information is provided to final consumers about animal breeding and feeding conditions, but enables false labels to be circulated, which, if on the market for a long time, can be harmful to producers, too.

1. Given that the voluntary labelling system enabled consumers to be properly informedabout the origin of the meat, the breed and age of the cattle, the feed used and all stages ofthe supply chain from farm to sales outlet, following the abolition of this provision hasthe Commission made provision for any other instruments for ensuring the traceability ofthe beef consumed by Europeans?

2. Since the voluntary labelling system was an additional tool for highlighting Italianproduce, how does the Commission intend to protect the efforts made by Italian cattlefarmers, whose high-quality, excellent produce was guaranteed by that system?

3. Since this measure was abolished in order to eliminate red tape and reduce costs, does theCommission not agree that the consequences of that decision, in terms of thedissemination of untruthful labels and the loss of consumer confidence, might have amuch higher cost for the whole industry?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

The Commission proposal COM(2011) 525 final amending Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 as regards electronic identification of bovine animals and beef labelling ([1]) deletes indeed the previous provisions on voluntary beef labelling which were judged too burdensome for operators. This modification does not preclude producers to use voluntary beef labelling schemes.

In the course of the discussions between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, a political agreement has been reached to introduce specific requirements regarding voluntary beef labelling. In particular, it is foreseen that voluntary beef labelling will have to be in line with the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and Council on the provision of food information to consumers ([2]); competent authorities would have to verify the truthfulness of the voluntary information and to have adequate sanctions in place in case operators do not comply with these requirements. Finally, the Commission would be empowered to adopt delegated acts concerning definitions and requirements applicable to terms or categories of terms that may be put on the labels of pre-packed fresh and frozen beef and veal.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/identification/bovine/docs/bov_id_2011_525.pdf

([2]) Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission Regulation (EC) No 608/2004, OJ L 304, 22.11.2011.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009524/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Intimidazioni del governo turco: lancio di missili contro navi straniere

Il 31 luglio 2013 una nave militare turca ha lanciato un missile di avvertimento contro la Odin Finder, nave cargo battente bandiera italiana gestita per conto della Cyprus Telecommunications Authority. Nonostante l'imbarcazione, impegnata nel posizionamento di cavi per rilevare la presenza di idrocarburi nell'Egeo, non sia stata colpita, l'azione è stata interpretata come un'intimidazione da parte del governo turco contro la presenza cipriota in quel tratto di mare. L'area, rivendicata da Ankara ma di fatto appartenente alla zona economica esclusiva cipriota, è da anni oggetto di contesa tra i due paesi per la presenza di giacimenti di gas nel sottosuolo marino. Lo scorso novembre 2012 la Turchia aveva minacciato ritorsioni contro qualsiasi paese avesse collaborato con Cipro nelle operazioni di sfruttamento e aveva dichiarato che ogni ulteriore trivellazione da parte della Grecia sarebbe stata considerata come atto di guerra.

La Commissione:

1. è informata dei fatti?

2. come valuta la decisione del governo turco di rivendicare diritti di un'area di cui ufficialmente non risulta possessore, considerando che quello del 31 luglio è già il terzo episodio, il secondo avvenuto nella zona economica esclusiva occidentale, in cui navi da guerra turche minacciano navi straniere che operano per conto delle autorità cipriote, contestando la sovranità stessa di Cipro?

3. non ritiene che il comportamento intimidatorio di Ankara contrasti con l'impegno espresso dal paese di conformarsi all'acquis comunitario in vista di una futura adesione come Stato membro a pieno titolo nell'Unione?

4. come valuta l'impatto dell'azione turca del 31 luglio scorso sul nuovo capitolo negoziale tra l'Unione e la Turchia previsto in apertura il prossimo ottobre?

Risposta di Štefan Füle a nome della Commissione
(17 settembre 2013)

La Commissione è al corrente dei fatti a cui si riferisce l'onorevole deputato.

La Commissione ricorda che le relazioni di buon vicinato sono integrate nel quadro di negoziazione per la Turchia approvato a ottobre 2005, secondo cui nell'ambito dei negoziati di adesione i progressi vanno valutati anche quanto riguarda l'impegno inequivocabile della Turchia a mantenere relazioni di buon vicinato.

In questo contesto, le conclusioni del Consiglio adottate a dicembre 2012 sottolineano che la Turchia deve inequivocabilmente impegnarsi nelle relazioni di buon vicinato e nella soluzione pacifica delle controversie prevista dalla Carta delle Nazioni Unite, facendo eventualmente appello alla Corte internazionale di giustizia. Le conclusioni esprimono nuovamente grave preoccupazione ed esortano la Turchia ad evitare ogni tipo di minaccia o atto contro uno Stato membro o ogni fonte di attrito o azioni suscettibili di nuocere alle relazioni di buon vicinato e alla soluzione pacifica delle controversie. Le conclusioni, inoltre, sottolineano nuovamente tutti i diritti sovrani degli Stati membri dell'UE, che comprendono tra l'altro il diritto di stipulare accordi bilaterali e di esplorare e sfruttare le proprie risorse naturali, in conformità dell'acquis dell'Unione e del diritto internazionale, ivi inclusa la convenzione ONU sul diritto del mare.

L'UE solleva sistematicamente la questione durante le riunioni del consiglio di associazione e del comitato di associazione, nonché durante le riunioni del dialogo politico con la Turchia.

La Commissione continuerà a monitorare le relazioni della Turchia con i paesi vicini in base al principio della soluzione pacifica delle controversie transfrontaliere e riferirà in proposito nella relazione annuale sulla Turchia che sarà pubblicata a ottobre 2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009524/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Turkish Government intimidations — missile launches against foreign vessels

On 31 July 2013, a Turkish naval vessel fired a warning missile against Odin Finder, a cargo ship flying the Italian flag, managed on behalf of the Cyprus Telecommunications Authority. Even though the vessel, which was placing cables in order to detect the presence of hydrocarbons in the Aegean Sea, was not hit, this act was interpreted as an act of intimidation by the Turkish Government against the presence of Cyprus in that part of the sea. The area is being claimed by Ankara but in actual fact belongs to the exclusive economic zone of Cyprus. It has for years been the subject of dispute between the two countries due to the presence of gas fields in the marine subsoil. In November 2012, Turkey threatened to retaliate against any country which cooperated with Cyprus in such exploitation operations and had declared that any further drilling by Greece would be considered an act of war.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. What is its view of the Turkish Government's decision to claim rights over an area that officially does not belong to it, given that the act of 31 July is already the third such episode, the second having taken place in the western exclusive economic zone, in which Turkish warships are threatening foreign vessels working on behalf of the Cypriot authorities, thereby challenging the very sovereignty of Cyprus?

3. Does it not believe that the intimidating behaviour of Ankara runs counter to Turkey's undertaking to comply with the *acquis communautaire* with a view to future accession to the Union as a full Member State?

4. What impact will the Turkish action of 31 July have on the new negotiating chapter between the EU and Turkey scheduled to open in October this year?

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

The Commission is aware of the facts referred to by the Honourable Member.

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

In this context, the Council conclusions adopted in December 2012, underline that Turkey needs to commit itself unequivocally to good neighbourly relations and to the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter, having recourse, if necessary, to the International Court of Justice. The conclusions express once again serious concern, and urge Turkey to avoid any kind of threat or action directed against a Member State, or source of friction or actions, which could damage good neighbourly relations and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Council conclusions also stress again the sovereign rights of EU Member States which include, *inter alia*, entering into bilateral agreements, and to explore and exploit their natural resources in accordance with the EU *acquis* and international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The issue is systematically raised by the EU at Association Council and Association Committee meetings as well as at political dialogue meetings with Turkey.

The Commission will continue to monitor Turkey's relations with its neighbours in the light of the principle of peaceful settlement of border disputes and will report in its annual progress report on Turkey to be published in October 2013.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009525/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Tutela dei minori sul web: autorizzazione dei genitori per l'apertura di account sui social network

Dopo l'ultimo episodio ai danni di una ragazza di 14 anni di Novara, che si è tolta la vita in seguito alla diffusione di alcuni filmati ripresi durante una festa, il Movimento Italiano Genitori (Moige) ha richiamato l'attenzione sulla pericolosità dei social network per gli utenti più giovani. I siti di socializzazione sono diventanti uno dei principali strumenti con i quali i minori interagiscono e comunicano tra loro, spesso ignorando il potenziale di rischio, sotto forma di contenuti illeciti non adatti all'età o inappropriati, che vi si nasconde. L'utilizzo inconsapevole delle reti sociali virtuali da parte di adolescenti e minorenni li rende soggetti a episodi di cyberbullismo, pedopornografia, adescamenti e altre forme di violenza. Per tutelare i giovani utenti e le loro famiglie, il Moige ha proposto di introdurre l'autorizzazione obbligatoria da parte dei genitori di minorenni per l'apertura di account sui social network.

La Commissione:

1. è informata dei fatti?

2. come valuta l'iniziativa proposta dal Moige?

3. considerando che internet è diventato uno strumento nella vita quotidiana delle famiglie italiane e non solo, come intende promuovere un uso corretto e responsabile della rete affinché non si trasformi da opportunità in pericolo per i giovani utenti?

4. con riferimento alla relazione della Commissione al Parlamento europeo, al Consiglio, al Comitato economico e sociale europeo e al Comitato delle regioni, del 13 settembre 2011, sull'applicazione della raccomandazione «Tutela dei minori nel mondo digitale» (COM(2011)0556), può far sapere se e quali altri siti di socializzazione in rete, oltre ai 21 che già partecipano, hanno aderito all'«Accordo europeo su una socializzazione in rete più sicura»?

Risposta di Neelie Kroes a nome della Commissione
(10 settembre 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole del fatto che i giovani, che costituiscono un gruppo particolarmente vulnerabile in rete, necessitano di misure specifiche di protezione da qualsiasi tipo di comportamento o contenuto dannoso presente nei social network che possa condurre a casi di autolesionismo o di suicidio tra i minori.

La Commissione condanna il cyberbullismo e accoglie con favore le iniziative volte a rafforzare la tutela dei minori online, riconoscendo che tali iniziative debbano riflettere un equilibrio tra responsabilità delle imprese, responsabilità dei genitori e educazione a un comportamento corretto su internet. Non ci sono altri firmatari dell'accordo di socializzazione in rete, ma la Commissione ha continuato a collaborare con gli operatori del settore attraverso la catena del valore, nel contesto della Coalizione CEO per rendere internet un luogo migliore per i bambini (*Coalition to make the internet a better place for kids*) ([1]), al fine di sviluppare azioni di sostegno intese a dare maggiore visibilità e a semplificare l'utilizzo degli strumenti di segnalazione di contenuti, contatti e comportamenti dannosi, nonché a promuovere impostazioni di privacy consone all'età e la diffusione di strumenti di controllo genitoriale. La rete paneuropea di centri «Internet più sicuro» cofinanziata dalla Commissione accresce la consapevolezza dei possibili rischi presenti in rete e dei modi per farvi fronte, fornendo tra l'altro consigli e sostegno alle vittime del cyberbullismo. Al fine di sincronizzare questi sforzi, a maggio 2012 la Commissione ha definito una strategia europea globale per un internet migliore per i bambini ([2]), intesa a fornire ai bambini le competenze e gli strumenti digitali necessari per sfruttare i vantaggi della rete in sicurezza.

([1]) Coalizione di 31 aziende di punta operanti nel settore delle tecnologie e dei media, compresi i social network. I nomi delle aziende partecipanti e ulteriori informazioni sono disponibili all'indirizzo: http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/self-regulation-better-internet-kids.

([2]) Comunicazione della Commissione «Strategia europea per un internet migliore per i bambini», COM(2012)0196 def.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009525/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Protection of children on the web — parents' permission to open accounts on social networks

After the latest episode involving a 14-year-old girl from Novara, who took her own life after some video films shot at a party were posted online, the Italian Parents Movement (MOIGE) has drawn attention to the dangers of social networks for younger users. Social networking sites have become one of the main tools that children use to interact and communicate with one another, often unaware of the potential risks, in the form of the illegal content on such sites that is unsuitable for their age group or inappropriate. The unwitting use of virtual social networks by adolescents and children is making them vulnerable to incidents of cyber-bullying, child pornography, grooming and other forms of violence. To protect young users and their families, MOIGE has proposed introducing mandatory authorisation from the parents of minors to open accounts on social networks.

1. Is the Commission aware of these facts?

2. What is its view of MOIGE's initiative?

3. Given that the Internet has become a tool in the everyday lives of families in Italy andelsewhere, how does the Commission intend to promote the proper, responsible use of theNet so that the opportunities it offers do not turn into dangers for young users?

4. With reference to the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of theRegions of 13 September 2011 on the application of the recommendation on 'protecting children in the digital world' (COM(2011) 0556), can the Commission give the names of any social networking sites, other than the 21 already participating, that have adhered to the European agreement on safer social networking?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The Commission is aware that young people are a particularly vulnerable group online, needing special protection measures from any kind of harmful conduct or content on social networking sites, which can lead to incidents of self-harming and suicide amongst minors.

The Commission condemns cyberbullying and welcomes initiatives to enhance minors' protection online, recognising that these need to reflect the balance between companies' liability, parents' responsibilities and education for sensible behaviour on the net. There are no new signatories to the Social Networking Principles but the Commission has continued to work with industry across the value chain in the context of the CEO Coalition ([1]) to make the Internet a Better Place for Kids to develop supporting actions to make reporting harmful content, contact and conduct more visible and easy to use, on age-appropriate privacy settings as well as on deployment of parental control tools. The pan-European network of Safer Internet Centres co-funded by the Commission raises awareness about possible risks online and how to deal with them. This includes advice and support on cyberbullying. In order to synchronise all these efforts, in May 2012 the Commission set out a comprehensive European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children ([2]) to give children the digital skills and tools they need to fully and safely benefit from being online.

([1]) A Coalition of 31 leading technology and media companies, including social networks. For names of the participants and more information see http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/self-regulation-better-Internet-kids

([2]) Communication from the Commission 'European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children', COM(2012)/0196 final.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-009526/13
an die Kommission
Manfred Weber (PPE)
(7. August 2013)

Betrifft: Brutales Vorgehen der Polizei gegen friedliche Proteste in Bulgarien

Während die friedlichen Proteste in Bulgarien gegen die Regierung und ihre Verstrickung in Korruption und organisierte Kriminalität anhalten, ist keine Verbesserung der Lage zu beobachten. Zwar wurde die Ernennung von Deljan Peewski zum Chef des Sicherheitsdienstes wieder zurückgenommen, aber gleichzeitig müssen die bulgarischen Bürger mitansehen, wie ehemalige Sicherheitsbeamte des früheren kommunistischen Regimes wieder an Posten kommen und Russland erneut zunehmend an Einfluss gewinnt. Kommissarin Viviane Reding hat ihre Unterstützung für die Proteste gegen diese Entwicklungen zum Ausdruck gebracht und bekräftigt, dass die Grundrechte gewahrt werden müssen. Des Weiteren sagte sie, dass sie sich in die inneren Angelegenheiten Bulgariens zwar nicht einmischen werde, die Kommission aber „spürt, dass wir Ihnen beistehen müssen, da Sie es sind, die für die bulgarischen Werte eintreten, welche ja schließlich europäische Werte sind".

Eine wachsende Zahl bulgarischer Bürger, darunter Frauen und Kinder, verlässt aus Furcht vor Polizeibrutalität sowie wegen der Unterdrückung der Meinungsfreiheit und wegen der politischen Verfolgung von Menschen, die offen ihre Meinung äußern, ihr Land.

Wie sieht die Reaktion der Kommission auf die oben geschilderte Beschneidung der Grundrechte durch die neue bulgarische Regierung aus?

Wie wird die Kommission für die Sicherheit der Bürger Bulgariens sorgen, die sich gegen Korruption und das organisierte Verbrechen sowie für demokratische Verhältnisse aussprechen?

In welcher Weise gedenkt die Kommission abgesehen vom Fortschrittsbericht des Kooperations- und Kontrollverfahrens, Druck auf Bulgarien auszuüben, damit die Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Medienfreiheit dort aufrechterhalten werden? Wird die Kommission andere Schritte wie das Einfrieren von EU-Geldern, Vertragsverletzungsverfahren oder Maßnahmen gemäß Artikel 7 des Vertrags über die Europäische Union in Erwägung ziehen?

Wird die Kommission Beobachter nach Bulgarien entsenden, um den Vorwürfen des Stimmenkaufs zugunsten einer durch extremistische und radikale Gruppen unterstützten sozialistischen Regierung nachzugehen, und falls nein, warum nicht?

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

Die Kommission verfolgt die Entwicklungen in Bulgarien mit Besorgnis. Aufgrund des Kooperations- und Kontrollverfahrens, das der Kommission eine maßgebliche Rolle bei der Unterstützung und Überwachung der Fortschritte in Bulgarien in den Bereichen Justizreform sowie Bekämpfung von Korruption und organisierter Kriminalität überträgt, kommt der Kommission diesbezüglich eine besondere Verantwortung zu.

Die bulgarische Gesellschaft steht vor erheblichen wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Herausforderungen. Bulgarien muss die Reformen fortsetzen und in vielen Bereichen Ergebnisse präsentieren. Wenn Führungspersonal bereits bei Amtsantritt mit einem Klima des Misstrauens konfrontiert ist, erschwert dies die Erfüllung der anstehenden Aufgaben ungemein. Die Kommission wird jedoch ihre Unterstützung aufrechterhalten.

Die Kommission wird die Einhaltung des EU-Besitzstands in allen Bereichen weiterhin genau verfolgen. Dies gilt auch für die Grundrechte wie das Recht auf freie Meinungsäußerung. Meinungsfreiheit, Medienfreiheit und Pluralismus sind Grundpfeiler der Demokratie in Europa und als solche in der Charta der Grundrechte der Europäischen Union verankert.

Was die Frage bezüglich der Wahlen betrifft, so liegt es im Zuständigkeitsbereich der Mitgliedstaaten sicherzustellen, dass die einzelstaatlichen Wahlen den internationalen Standards entsprechen, und die zuständigen einzelstaatlichen Verwaltungs- und Justizbehörden müssen dafür Sorge tragen, dass diese Standards auch eingehalten werden. Etwaige Gesetzesverstöße müssen natürlich durch die Strafverfolgungsbehörden geahndet werden.

Die Kommission wird ihren Dialog mit Bulgarien fortsetzen und sich weiter einbringen. Dabei wird sie ihre Aufgaben als Hüterin der Verträge und ihre besondere Verantwortung im Rahmen des Kooperations- und Kontrollverfahrens wahrnehmen. Ein Hauptaugenmerk legt die Kommission hier auf die Achtung der Rechtsstaatlichkeit.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009526/13
to the Commission
Manfred Weber (PPE)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Police brutality in repression of peaceful protests in Bulgaria

Despite the ongoing peaceful protests in Bulgaria against the current government and its complicity with corruption and organised crime, no improvement in the situation can be observed. Although the appointment of Deelyan Peevski as head of the security services has been annulled, Bulgarian citizens are witnessing the return of former security officers from the communist regime, as well as renewed Russian influence. Commissioner Reding has expressed her support for the protests against these developments and has confirmed that fundamental rights must be safeguarded. The Commissioner has further said that, while she will not interfere in Bulgaria's internal affairs, the Commission 'feels by heart that we have to come to help you because you fight actually for Bulgarian values, yes, but those are European values'.

Increasing numbers of Bulgarian citizens are leaving the country out of fear of police brutality, repression of freedom of speech and political persecution of those who express their opinions freely, including women and children.

What is the Commission's response to the repression of fundamental rights by the new Bulgarian Government as described above?

How will the Commission ensure the safety of those Bulgarian citizens who speak up against corruption and organised crime and in favour of democracy?

How does the Commission intend to exercise pressure, other than through the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) report, for the rule of law and media freedom to be upheld in Bulgaria? Will it consider means such as the freezing of EU funding, infringement proceedings or action under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union?

Will the Commission send observers to Bulgaria to investigate the allegations of vote-buying by those aiming to establish a socialist government supported by extremist and radical groups? If not, why not?

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

The Commission continues to monitor with concerns the situation in Bulgaria. The Commission has a special responsibility with the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism (CVM) which gives it a particular role in supporting and monitoring progress in Bulgaria in judicial reform, tackling corruption and organised crime.

Bulgarian society faces important economic and social challenges and must pursue reforms and show results in many fields. For the responsible leaders to start their work under a cloud of controversy makes their task that much more difficult. But the Commission is committed to help.

The Commission remains vigilant with regard to respect of the EU *acquis* in all areas, including issues concerning fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression. Freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism are fundamental pillars of democracy in Europe, enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

As regards the question on elections, the Member States are competent to determine the conditions for the conduct of national elections in line with the international norms and it is up to the competent national administrative and judicial authorities to ensure compliance with these norms. Any violations of the law are of course for the law enforcement authorities to pursue.

The Commission will continue its dialogue with Bulgaria, and remain closely involved, exercising its responsibilities as guardian of the Treaties and in discharging its special responsibility under the CVM. It will pay close attention to respect for the rule of law.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009527/13
προς την Επιτροπή (Αντιπρόεδρος/Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος)
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: VP/HR — Απαγωγή Ορθόδοξων Μητροπολιτών στη Συρία

100 μέρες συμπληρώθηκαν από τότε που απήχθησαν στη Συρία 2 ορθόδοξοι μητροπολίτες και έκτοτε αγνοείται η τύχη τους. Ο ένας είναι ο Μητροπολίτης Χαλεπίου Πέτρος (κατά κόσμον Μπούλος Γιαζιτζί, αδελφός του Πατριάρχη της Αντιοχείας) και ο άλλος είναι ο Γιοχάνα Ιμπραχίμ, επικεφαλής της συρορθόδοξης μητρόπολης του Χαλεπίου. Η αντιπαράθεση των άκρων έχει προκαλέσει πολύ αίμα στη Συρία. Το τίμημα, όμως, πληρώνουν και όσοι είναι «στη μέση» και που, όπως ο Μητροπολίτης Πέτρος, διακηρύττουν ότι η συνύπαρξη μεταξύ ανθρώπων με διαφορετική θρησκεία και διαφορετικές πολιτικές απόψεις είναι ακόμα εφικτή.

Ερωτώ,

1. Η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος έχει εκφράσει την ανησυχία της για την άγνωστη τύχη των δύο Επισκόπων στις 26 Απριλίου 2013, όπως καταγράφεται σε σχετική απάντηση της, σε προηγούμενη ερώτησή μου (E-005189/2013 — Απάντηση 3.7.2013). Έκτοτε, έχουν ήδη παρέλθει μήνες χωρίς καμία περαιτέρω πληροφόρηση.

Τι σκοπεύει να πράξει η κ. Άστον ξανά, σήμερα, εκ μέρος της ΕΕ για να πιέσει ώστε να εντοπιστούν και να απελευθερωθούν οι δύο απαχθέντες, αν είναι ακόμη ζωντανοί;

2. Γιατί η ΕΕ αρκείται σε ένα τόσο παθητικό ρόλο στην προκειμένη περίπτωση;

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου κ. Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος εκφράζει την έντονη ανησυχία της για την υπόθεση των απαχθέντων μητροπολιτών. Το Συμβούλιο Εξωτερικών Υποθέσεων, κατά τη σύνοδο που πραγματοποιήθηκε στις 22 Μαΐου 2013 υπό την προεδρία της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου, αποφάσισε να περιληφθεί στα επίσημα συμπεράσματά του έκκληση υπέρ των μητροπολιτών. «Η ΕΕ ανησυχεί σοβαρά εξαιτίας της αύξησης της βίας κατά θρησκευτικών ή εθνοτικών ομάδων και ζητεί την άμεση απελευθέρωση των δύο ορθόδοξων μητροπολιτών που απήχθησαν πρόσφατα.» Έκτοτε, η υπόθεση αυτή αποτέλεσε αντικείμενο πολυάριθμων συζητήσεων της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου και άλλων εκπροσώπων της ΕΕ με ευρύ φάσμα συνομιλητών, συμπεριλαμβανομένων παραγόντων στη Συρία.

Η βία κατά αμάχων εν γένει και η βία που σχετίζεται με θέματα ταυτότητας ειδικότερα, όπως είναι η θρησκεία ή η εθνοτική καταγωγή, είναι απαράδεκτη. Πολίτες διαφορετικής θρησκευτικής ή εθνοτικής ταυτότητας έχουν πέσει θύματα τέτοιου είδους βίας, την οποία η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος καταδικάζει διαρρήδην. Πολλά περιστατικά απαγωγών, εξαφανίσεων και αυθαίρετων κρατήσεων έχουν σημειωθεί στη Συρία. Η Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπος/Αντιπρόεδρος έχει επανειλημμένως καταστήσει σαφές ότι τέτοιες απαράδεκτες πρακτικές πρέπει να σταματήσουν και ότι όλα τα θύματα απαγωγών ή παράνομων κρατήσεων θα πρέπει να απελευθερωθούν το συντομότερο δυνατόν.

Η ΕΕ προσεγγίζει σφαιρικά τη σύγκρουση στη Συρία λαμβάνοντας υπόψη την τεράστια πολυπλοκότητά της και καταβάλλει προσπάθειες για την καταπολέμηση των περιστατικών καταπάτησης των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων τα οποία ευθύνονται για τα δεινά που ταλανίζουν εκατομμύρια σύριους πολίτες, ενώ συγχρόνως αναζητά λύσεις για την τρέχουσα κρίση.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009527/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Abduction of Orthodox Metropolitans in Syria (2)

One hundred days have now passed since two Orthodox Metropolitans were abducted in Syria and their fate is unknown. One is Pavlos Yazigi, the Greek Orthodox Bishop of Aleppo (the brother of the Patriarch of Antioch), and the other is Yohanna Ibrahim, Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo and Antioch. The clash of extremes has led to much bloodshed in Syria. The price, however, is also being paid by those who are caught in the middle and who, like Bishop Pavlos, proclaim that coexistence between peoples of different religions and political views is still possible.

In view of the above, will the High Representative say:

1. The High Representative/Vice-President expressed her concern over the fate of the two Bishops on 26 April 2013, as recorded in her answer to my earlier question (E-005189/2013 — Answer on 03/07/2013). Since then, months have passed without any further information being forthcoming.

What does Baroness Aston now intend to do, on behalf of the EU, to apply pressure to locate and obtain the release of the two abducted metropolitans, if they are still alive?

2. Why does the EU content itself with playing such a passive role in this case?

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

The HR/VP shares the grave concern at the situation of the kidnapped bishops. The Foreign Affairs Council of 27 May 2013, chaired by the High Representative/Vice-President, decided to include an appeal concerning the case of the bishops in its official conclusions: 'The EU is deeply concerned with the rise of religiously or ethnically motivated violence. The EU calls for the immediate release of the two recently kidnapped orthodox bishops.' The case of the bishops has since been subject of a number of conversations between the HR/VP and other EU representatives with a range of interlocutors, including players on the ground in Syria.

Any violence against civilians in general, and based on identity issues such as religion or ethnicity in particular, is unacceptable. Civilians of different religious and ethnic identity have been victims of such violence, which the HR/VP condemns in the strongest terms. There have been numerous cases of kidnapping, disappearance and arbitrary detention in Syria. The HR/VP has repeatedly made clear that such appalling practices must stop and all those kidnapped or arbitrarily detained be released without delay.

The EU addresses the Syrian conflict in its entirety and vast complexity by means of a comprehensive approach, which includes efforts to work against the widespread violations of human rights, causing suffering to millions of Syrian people and seeking a solution to the ongoing crisis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009528/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Whaling in the Faroe Islands

I have received several letters from my constituents who are concerned about the practice of whaling in the Faroe Islands.

Every summer hundreds of pilot whales are killed in the Faroe Islands. Last year the number of whales killed reached 590. The killings aren't carried out by people with licences; they are carried out by local residents and anyone can take part. Meat and blubber from the animals is sold in the Faroe Islands for human consumption, despite evidence of high levels of mercury and toxins being found in pilot whale meat. This led to the Faroe Islands' Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientist jointly writing a letter to the Danish Government on 8 August 2008 stating that pilot whales should no longer be used for human consumption. Thus the consumption of pilot whale meat is also dangerous to human health.

Although this whaling practice has been part of the culture of the Faroe Islands for over 1000 years, it is cruel and must be stopped.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative condemn the practice of whaling in the Faroe Islands?

2. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that action must be taken to stop this practice from continuing?

3. What steps will the Vice-President/High Representative take to ensure that the Faroese authorities stop their citizens from continuing the practice of killing hundreds of pilot whales every year?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

The Commission has already expressed concerns about whaling in the Faroe Islands and will continue to take advantage of opportunities to raise this sensitive issue with the relevant authorities.

As far as international measures are concerned, the hunting of pilot whales is currently not regulated by the IWC.

Moreover, while Denmark is a member of both the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), the Faroe Islands has been excluded from the scope of application of both conventions.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009529/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(7 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατασκευή φράγματος στην πόλη Hasankyef της Τουρκίας και προστασία της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς. Συμπεριφορά ευρωπαϊκών εταιρειών

Σύμφωνα με πρόσφατα γαλλικά δημοσιεύματα ([1]), επανέρχεται το θέμα της κατασκευής από την Τουρκική κυβέρνηση 22 φραγμάτων και 19 υδροηλεκτρικών έργων στο πλαίσιο του Προγράμματος Νοτιοανατολικής Ανατολίας (GAP), μεταξύ των οποίων ένα γιγάντιο φράγμα απειλεί με καταστροφή την αρχαία πόλη Hasankeyf, μία πόλη μεταξύ των ποταμών Τίγρη και Ευφράτη με ιστορία 12 000 χρόνων και μνημεία παγκόσμιας πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς. Η κατασκευή του φράγματος θα έχει ως αποτέλεσμα σύμφωνα με μελέτες να πλημμυρίσει η πόλη, να καταστραφούν αρχαιολογικοί θησαυροί και να αναγκαστούν οι κάτοικοι της πόλης και των περιχώρων σε επανεγκατάσταση στη «νέα Hasankeyef». Το θέμα αυτό απασχολεί τους κατοίκους και τη διεθνή κοινότητα εδώ και μισό αιώνα και παρά την παρακολούθηση και παρέμβαση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, τις έντονες αντιδράσεις από εγχώριες και διεθνείς μη κυβερνητικές οργανώσεις, όπως η Europa Nostra ([2]), η τουρκική κυβέρνηση δείχνει ανένδοτη επιλέγοντας μάλιστα να μην συμπεριληφθεί η πόλη αυτή στη λίστα Μνημείων Παγκόσμιας Κληρονομιάς της Unesco παρότι πληρούνται τα 9 από τα 10 κριτήρια. Η στάση αυτή της Τουρκίας αντιβαίνει στο κοινοτικό κεκτημένο (*acquis communautaire*) και σε βασικές ευρωπαϊκές αρχές ως προς το σεβασμό της πολιτισμικής κληρονομιάς αλλά και των δικαιωμάτων των πολιτών.

Η πίεση της Επιτροπής προς την Τουρκία μέσα από την Εταιρική Σχέση ΕΕ-Τουρκίας και τις ενταξιακές διαπραγματεύσεις φαίνεται να μην έχει αποδώσει καρπούς. Ποια η αντίδραση της ΕΕ; Πώς και με ποιους άλλους τρόπους σκέφτεται η Επιτροπή να εντείνει τις πιέσεις προς την Τουρκία προς αυτήν την κατεύθυνση;

Το 2002, οι αντιδράσεις των κατοίκων της Hasankeyf, αλλά και οι φωνές της δημόσιας κοινής γνώμης, ανάγκασαν κάποιες ευρωπαϊκές εταιρείες να αποσύρουν τη συμμετοχή τους από το έργο. Παρακολουθεί η Επιτροπή και είναι ενήμερη για τη συμμετοχή άλλων ευρωπαϊκών εταιρειών άμεσα ή έμμεσα στην κατασκευή του φράγματος;

Υπάρχει κώδικας δεοντολογίας ευρωπαϊκών εταιρειών για την αντιμετώπιση παρόμοιων καταστάσεων;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή είναι ενήμερη για τα προβλήματα που αφορούν τον ιστορικό χώρο που ανέφερε το αξιότιμο Μέλος.

Πρέπει να υπογραμμιστεί ότι η ΕΕ δεν χρηματοδοτεί την κατασκευή φραγμάτων ή υδροηλεκτρικών έργων του προγράμματος (GAP) νοτιοανατολικής Ανατολίας. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, η Επιτροπή δεν παρακολουθεί τη συμμετοχή ευρωπαϊκών εταιρειών στο πρόγραμμα GAP.

Καθώς οι ενδιαφερόμενες διεθνείς τράπεζες αποσύρθηκαν από τη χρηματοδότηση του εν λόγω προγράμματος, λόγω των αμφιλεγόμενων επιπτώσεών του, η Τουρκική Κυβέρνηση αποφάσισε να χρηματοδοτήσει το πρόγραμμα με δικούς της πόρους.

([1]) http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30J&objet_id=1239352&xtmc=flot_de_scandales&xtcr=5
([2]) http://www.europanostra.org/UPLOADS/FILS/Declaration_Hasankeyf_Allianoi_RLA_20100922.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009529/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Construction of a dam near the city of Hasankyef in Turkey, protection of cultural heritage and conduct of European enterprises

According to recent French press reports ([1]), the issue of the construction by the Turkish government of 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric projects as part of the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) is back on the table; this project includes a giant dam which threatens to destroy Hasankeyf, an ancient city situated between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers with a 12,000 year history which contains many world heritage site monuments. According to studies that have been carried out, the construction of the dam will result in the city being flooded, destroying archaeological treasures and forcing the residents of the city and the surrounding area to resettle in the 'New Hasankyef'. This issue has been a matter of concern for residents and the international community for half a century, and despite the fact that the Commission has monitored the situation and intervened and despite strong opposition from domestic and international NGOs such as Europa Nostra ([2]), the Turkish government has refused to yield, even choosing not to include this city in the Unesco World Heritage list, despite the fact that it meets 9 of the 10 criteria. This attitude by Turkey is at odds with the *acquis communautaire* and basic European principles as regards respect for the cultural heritage and citizens' rights.

The pressure exerted by the Commission on Turkey through the EU-Turkey Partnership and the accession negotiations does not appear to have had any effect. What is the EU's response to this? How and by what other means does the Commission to step up its pressure on Turkey in this connection?

In 2002, the opposition of the residents of Hasankeyf and public opinion forced some European companies to withdraw their participation from the project. Is the Commission is aware of, the participation of other European companies directly or indirectly in the construction of the dam and is it monitoring the situation? Does a code of conduct exist for European companies in addressing situations of this kind?

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

The Commission is aware of the problems concerning the historical site mentioned by the Honourable Member.

It must be underlined that the EU does not contribute funds for the construction of dams or hydroelectric projects within the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) project. In this context, the Commission is not monitoring the participation of EU companies in the GAP project.

As international banks have withdrawn from funding the said project due to its controversial effects, the Turkish government has decided to fund the project with its own funds.

([1]) http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30J&objet_id=1239352&xtmc=flot_de_scandales&xtcr=5
([2]) http://www.europanostra.org/UPLOADS/FILS/Declaration_Hasankeyf_Allianoi_RLA_20100922.pdf

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009530/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(7 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Επιπτώσεις της δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής στους φορείς διαχείρισης προστατευόμενων περιοχών και στην προστασία τους

Τα τελευταία 25 χρόνια η ΕΕ έχει δημιουργήσει ένα τεράστιο δίκτυο, το Natura 2000, από 26 000 προστατευόμενες περιοχές σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη που καλύπτουν το 18% της εδαφικής έκτασης της ΕΕ. Το δίκτυο Natura 2000 αποτελεί το μεγαλύτερο δίκτυο προστατευόμενων περιοχών στον κόσμο και αποδεικνύει τη δέσμευση της ΕΕ για την προστασία της βιοποικιλότητας. Πρόσφατες έρευνες της Επιτροπής μάλιστα αναδεικνύουν και τα οικονομικά προτερήματα του δικτύου Natura με τα έσοδα να υπολογίζονται στα 200 έως 300 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ/χρόνο, με τους τουρίστες που επισκέπτονται τις περιοχές αυτές να φτάνουν τους 1,2-2,2 δισεκατομμύρια/χρόνο και με τις θέσεις εργασίας που δημιουργούνται να ανέρχονται σε 4,4 εκατομμύρια με 405 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ ετήσιο κύκλο εργασιών ([1]).

Πρόσφατα, στην Ελλάδα, λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης και των αυστηρών μέτρων δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής, οι φορείς διαχείρισης προστατευόμενων περιοχών δηλώνουν δημόσια ότι αντιμετωπίζουν σοβαρά προβλήματα, με πολλούς από αυτούς να συγχωνεύονται, να έχουν σοβαρές ελλείψεις προσωπικού, αδυνατώντας έτσι να ανταποκριθούν στις απαραίτητες πάγιες λειτουργικές ανάγκες, στις οικονομικές τους υποχρεώσεις (π.χ. μισθοδοσίες) και στα καθήκοντα προστασίας, επόπτευσης και φύλαξης των χώρων, ειδικά εν μέσω αντιπυρικής περιόδου του καλοκαιριού.

Με βάση τα παραπάνω, ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Έχοντας στόχο η ΕΕ το μηδενισμό απώλειας βιοποικιλότητας μέχρι το 2020, πώς προτίθεται να αντιμετωπίσει τις επιπτώσεις της δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής στις προστατευόμενες περιοχές;

2. Δεδομένου ότι η χρηματοδότηση για τη λειτουργία των φορέων αυτών κυρίως στην Ελλάδα βασίζεται σχεδόν αποκλειστικά σε κοινοτικά κονδύλια, πώς μπορεί να εξασφαλίσει η Επιτροπή τον έλεγχο της σωστής απορρόφησης και μέγιστης αξιοποίησης τους;

3. Σκοπεύει να προτείνει συμπληρωματικά κονδύλια και πολιτικές για την αποτελεσματικότητα των πολιτικών της και την επίτευξη των στόχων;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. Μολονότι την κύρια ευθύνη για τη χρηματοδότηση της ΕΕ όσον αφορά τη βιοποικιλότητα και την προστασία της φύσης, συμπεριλαμβανομένου του δικτύου Natura 2000, φέρουν τα κράτη μέλη, πολλά ταμεία της ΕΕ παρέχουν ευκαιρίες για χρηματοδότηση μέσω της αποκαλούμενης «ολοκληρωμένης προσέγγισης». Τα ταμεία αυτά περιλαμβάνουν τα ταμεία αγροτικής ανάπτυξης, θαλάσσιου περιβάλλοντος και αλιείας, τα ταμεία περιφερειακής ανάπτυξης και συνοχής και το πρόγραμμα LIFE. Τα πλαίσια δράσης προτεραιότητας για το Natura 2000 παρέχουν τη δυνατότητα στα κράτη μέλη να αξιολογούν χρηματοδοτικές ανάγκες του δικτύου και να ιεραρχούν τις αναγκαίες επενδύσεις, ιδίως όσον αφορά κονδύλια της ΕΕ. Η Επιτροπή ενθαρρύνει τα κράτη μέλη να αξιοποιήσουν τις ευκαιρίες αυτές σε συνάρτηση με τον προγραμματισμό των ταμείων της ΕΕ για την περίοδο 2014-2020. Στη στρατηγική της ΕΕ για τη βιοποικιλότητα ([2]) η Επιτροπή τόνισε επίσης τον ρόλο των καινοτόμων χρηματοδοτικών μηχανισμών, συμπεριλαμβανομένων των αγορακεντρικών μέσων, όπως οι ενισχύσεις για τις οικοσυστημικές υπηρεσίες.

2. Η Επιτροπή έχει επανειλημμένως προτρέψει τις ελληνικές αρχές να κάνουν την καλύτερη δυνατή χρήση των διαθέσιμων κονδυλίων των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων της ΕΕ και να εντοπίσουν κατάλληλους μηχανισμούς για τη διασφάλιση της οικονομικής βιωσιμότητας των φορέων διαχείρισης. Ωστόσο, στο πλαίσιο της επιμερισμένης διαχείρισης, οι εθνικές αρχές είναι πρωτίστως υπεύθυνες για τη διασφάλιση της έγκαιρης υλοποίησης των συγχρηματοδοτούμενων έργων.

3. Η χρηματοδότηση της ΕΕ για τη στρατηγική σχετικά με τη βιοποικιλότητα και το δίκτυο Natura 2000 παρέχεται μέσω του πολυετούς δημοσιονομικού πλαισίου και των διαφόρων ταμείων και μέσων του. Η κατανομή των πόρων σε επιμέρους επενδυτικές προτεραιότητες αποτελεί επί του παρόντος αντικείμενο διαπραγματεύσεων μεταξύ των θεσμικών οργάνων της ΕΕ, καθώς και μεταξύ της Επιτροπής και των κρατών μελών. Επιπλέον, η ΕΤΕπ και η Επιτροπή ανέλαβαν τη δέσμευση να δημιουργήσουν μια χρηματοδοτική διευκόλυνση για το φυσικό κεφάλαιο όσον αφορά τη μόχλευση της ιδιωτικής χρηματοδότησης για έργα φυσικού κεφαλαίου.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/Economic%20Benefits%20Factsheet.pdf
([2]) COM 2011(244).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009530/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Impact of fiscal adjustment on the management bodies of protected areas and the protection of these areas

Over the past twenty-five years, the EU has created a huge network, Natura 2000, comprising 26 000 protected areas in all Member States covering 18% of the land area of the EU. The Natura 2000 network is the largest network of protected areas in the world and demonstrates the EU's commitment to the protection of biodiversity. Recent Commission studies also highlight the economic benefits of the Natura network: it generates revenue estimated at between EUR 200 and EUR 300 billion a year, attracts between 1.2 and 2.2 billion tourists a year and has created 4.4 million jobs with an annual turnover of EUR 405 billion ([1]). Recently, due to the economic crisis and the severe fiscal adjustment measures in Greece, the management bodies of protected areas have publicly declared that they are facing serious problems: many of them are merging and face serious staff shortages; they are therefore unable to meet the necessary standing operational needs and their financial obligations (e.g. wages) and fulfil their mission of protecting, overseeing and guarding sites, especially in the midst of the summer forest fire season. In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Since the EU has set zero biodiversity loss by 2020 as one of its goals, how does it intend to deal with the effects of fiscal adjustment in protected areas?

2. Since funding for the operation of these bodies particularly in Greece relies almost exclusively on EU funds, how can it ensure a satisfactory take-up rate and the optimum use of these funds?

3. Does it intend to propose additional funding to ensure that its policies are effective and that its goals are attained?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

1) Whilst the main responsibility for financing EU biodiversity and nature protection, including Natura 2000, lies with the Member States, several EU funds provide opportunities for funding through the so-called 'integration approach'. These funds include rural development, marine and fisheries funds, regional and cohesion funds and the LIFE programme. Prioritized Action Frameworks for Natura 2000 provide an opportunity for Member States to assess financial needs of the network and prioritise necessary investments, particularly with regard to EU funds. The Commission encourages the Member States to avail themselves of these opportunities in the context of programming EU funds for the period 2014-2020. In the EU Biodiversity Strategy ([2]) the Commission has also emphasised the role of innovative financing mechanisms, including market based instruments, such as payments for ecosystem services.

2) The Commission has repeatedly advised the Greek authorities to make the best use of available EU structural funds and to identify appropriate mechanisms to ensure financial sustainability of the management bodies. However, in the context of shared management, national authorities are primarily responsible for ensuring timely implementation of the co-funded projects.

3) EU funding for the biodiversity strategy and Natura 2000 is provided through the Multiannual Financial Framework and its different funds and instruments. Allocation of funds to individual investment priorities is being negotiated now among the EU institutions and between the Commission and the Member States. In addition, the EIB and the Commission have undertaken to set up a Natural Capital Financing Facility to leverage private financing for natural capital projects.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/Economic%20Benefits%20Factsheet.pdf
([2]) COM 2011(244).

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009531/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(7 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ευρωπαϊκή μπλε κάρτα και ανταγωνιστικότητα της ΕΕ

Σύμφωνα με την Παγκόσμια Έκθεση Ανταγωνιστικότητας 2012-2013 ([1]) του Παγκόσμιου Οικονομικού Φόρουμ, παρατηρείται ανισότητα στην ανταγωνιστικότητα της ΕΕ με τα κράτη μέλη του Νότου καθώς και της Κεντρικής και Ανατολικής Ευρώπης να υστερούν σε επιδόσεις. Στο ίδιο πνεύμα κινείται και η Έκθεση Ευρωπαϊκής Ανταγωνιστικότητας 2012 ([2]), η οποία τονίζει ότι το χάσμα καινοτομίας μεταξύ των κρατών μελών στην ΕΕ μεγαλώνει. Παράλληλα, η στρατηγική «Ευρώπη 2020» τονίζει ότι προτεραιότητα της ΕΕ αποτελεί μία ανάπτυξη πιο έξυπνη, διατηρήσιμη και χωρίς αποκλεισμούς, ενώ η Ένωση Καινοτομίας αποτελεί μία από τις εμβληματικές πρωτοβουλίες προς αυτήν την κατεύθυνση.

Μέσα στο πλαίσιο της αύξησης της ανταγωνιστικότητας της ΕΕ, που αποτελεί στόχο και ανάγκη σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο, εντάσσεται και η πρωτοβουλία θεσμοθέτησης το 2009 (με ισχύ από το 2011) της ευρωπαϊκής μπλε κάρτας για την προσέλκυση εργαζομένων από χώρες εκτός ΕΕ με ιδιαίτερα επαγγελματικά προσόντα. Παράλληλα, νομοσχέδιο για τη μετανάστευση που προωθείται στις ΗΠΑ προβλέπει τροποποίηση των όρων και αύξηση των αριθμών χορήγησης της αντίστοιχης βίζας H-1B για εξειδικευμένους αλλοδαπούς εργαζομένους από 65 000 στις 115 000 και στις 180 000 αργότερα.

Ερωτάται η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή:

1. Έχει στοιχεία για την απόδοση του μέτρου αυτού στην αύξηση της ανταγωνιστικότητας της ΕΕ σε διεθνές επίπεδο; Είναι ελκυστική η πολιτική που εφαρμόζει η ΕΕ για την προσέλκυση εργαζομένων με ιδιαίτερα επαγγελματικά προσόντα; Ποια η αξιολόγηση;

2. Έχει λάβει ετήσια στατιστικά στοιχεία από τα κράτη μέλη για τον αριθμό υπηκόων τρίτων χωρών στους οποίους έχει χορηγηθεί, ή όχι, η μπλε κάρτα, όπως προβλεπόταν για το 2013; Ποια τα συγκριτικά αποτελέσματα;

3. Πως προσαρμόζεται η πολιτική της μπλε κάρτας βάσει των νέων δεδομένων; Η οικονομική κρίση στην ΕΕ και η υψηλή ανεργία, η εσωτερική μετανάστευση από το Νότο στην βόρεια Ευρώπη αλλάζουν τους σχεδιασμούς και τους στόχους;

Απάντηση της κ. Malmström εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Στα τέλη Ιουλίου 2013, η Eurostat δημοσίευσε στοιχεία για 14 κράτη μέλη: έχουν χορηγηθεί συνολικά 3 013 μπλε κάρτες ([3]). Συγκριτικά, τα στοιχεία της Eurostat δείχνουν ότι το 2012 χορηγήθηκαν 29 561 άδειες για εργαζομένους με υψηλή ειδίκευση στο πλαίσιο εθνικών συστημάτων σε 11 κράτη μέλη.

Παρά τις μεγάλες διαφορές στη ζήτηση εργατικού δυναμικού μεταξύ των κρατών μελών, η διαφορά στη χρήση της μπλε κάρτας μπορεί να οφείλεται στη δυνατότητα που παρέχει η οδηγία για την μπλε κάρτα να διατηρούν τα κράτη μέλη τα εθνικά συστήματα παράλληλα με την μπλε κάρτα. Τα εθνικά αυτά συστήματα επιτρέπονται ρητά στην οδηγία για την μπλε κάρτα ([4]). Ο ελάχιστος ακαθάριστος ετήσιος μισθός που απαιτείται προκειμένου να είναι κάποιος επιλέξιμος για μπλε κάρτα ([5]) αυξάνει επίσης την αποκλειστικότητά της σε σύγκριση με τα εθνικά συστήματα και τη θεώρηση H-1B των ΗΠΑ.

Η οδηγία για την μπλε κάρτα παρέχει επίσης ρητά τη δυνατότητα στα κράτη μέλη να λαμβάνουν υπόψη την κατάσταση της αγοράς εργασίας στην επικράτειά τους, δεδομένου ότι διατηρούν το δικαίωμα να καθορίζουν τον αριθμό υπηκόων τρίτων χωρών που γίνονται δεκτοί για απασχόληση υψηλής ειδίκευσης ([6]) και μπορούν να διεξάγουν έλεγχο της αγοράς εργασίας προτού αποφασίσουν σχετικά με μια αίτηση ([7]). Σύμφωνα με το άρθρο 79 παράγραφος 5 της ΣΛΕΕ, τα κράτη μέλη διατηρούν το δικαίωμα να καθορίζουν τον όγκο των εισερχομένων υπηκόων τρίτων χωρών, προερχομένων από τρίτες χώρες, με σκοπό την αναζήτηση εργασίας.

([1]) http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalCompetitivenessReport_2012-13.pdf
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/competitiveness-analysis/european-competitiveness-report/index_en.htm
([3]) Βέλγιο 0, Βουλγαρία 15, Τσεχική Δημοκρατία 62, η Δανία δεν απάντησε, Γερμανία 2 584, Εσθονία 16, Ιταλία 6, Λουξεμβούργο 183, Ουγγαρία 1, Μάλτα 0, Αυστρία 124, Πολωνία 2, Σλοβενία 9, Σλοβακία 7, Φινλανδία 4. Τα στατιστικά στοιχεία για την Ιρλανδία, την Ελλάδα, την Ισπανία, τη Γαλλία, την Κύπρο, τη Λετονία, τη Λιθουανία, τις Κάτω Χώρες, την Πορτογαλία, τη Ρουμανία και τη Σουηδία δεν είναι ακόμη διαθέσιμα.
Στην πρώτη δεκάδα των χωρών προέλευσης είναι η Ινδία (639), η Κίνα με το Χονγκ Κονγκ (267), η Ρωσία (251), οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες (197), η Ουκρανία (139), η Συρία (103), η Αίγυπτος (101), η Τουρκία (99), η Ιαπωνία (79) και το Ιράν (71).
([4]) Άρθρο 3 παράγραφος 4 της οδηγίας 2009/50/ΕΚ.
([5]) Άρθρο 5 παράγραφος 3 της οδηγίας 2009/50/ΕΚ.
([6]) Άρθρο 6 της οδηγίας 2009/50/ΕΚ.
([7]) Άρθρο 8 παράγραφος 2 της οδηγίας 2009/50/ΕΚ.

Η Επιτροπή θα υποβάλει την πρώτη έκθεσή της σχετικά με την εφαρμογή και τις επιπτώσεις της οδηγίας για την μπλε κάρτα το 2014 ([8]). Με βάση την αξιολόγηση αυτή, η Επιτροπή θα προτείνει ενδεχομένως τυχόν τροποποιήσεις που κρίνει αναγκαίες.

Το Ευρωπαϊκό Δίκτυο Μετανάστευσης διεξάγει επί του παρόντος μελέτη για τη χάραξη πολιτικών και τον καθορισμό συγκεκριμένων πρακτικών μέτρων στα κράτη μέλη με στόχο την προσέλκυση υπηκόων τρίτων χωρών (υψηλής) ειδίκευσης, αφενός μέσω της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ και αφετέρου μέσω εθνικών πολιτικών. Τα αποτελέσματα θα είναι σύντομα διαθέσιμα στον δικτυακό τόπο του ΕΔΜ ([9]).

([8]) Άρθρο 21 της οδηγίας 2009/50/ΕΚ.
([9]) http://emn.intrasoft-intl.com

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009531/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: European Blue Card and EU competitiveness

According to the Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013 ([1]) of the World Economic Forum, EU competitiveness is uneven, with the Member States of Southern as well as Central and Eastern Europe lagging behind. The same conclusion is reached by the European Competitiveness Report 2012 ([2]), which emphasises that the innovation gap between Member States in the EU is growing. Furthermore, the Europe 2020 strategy stresses that the EU's priority is to achieve smarter, more sustainable and inclusive growth, with the Innovation Union being one of the flagship initiatives in this connection.

Efforts to boost EU competitiveness, which is both an objective and a requirement at European level, include the launching of the European Blue Card initiative in 2009 (with effect from 2011) to attract workers from countries outside the EU with special professional qualifications. In a parallel development, immigration legislation promoted in the US provides for an amendment of the terms governing H-1B visas granted to skilled foreign workers and an increase in the number of such visas from 65 000 to 115 000 and subsequently to 180 000.

In view of the above, will the Commission state:

1. Does it have any data on the effectiveness of this measure in increasing the EU's international competitiveness? Is the EU's policy to attract workers with special qualifications proving attractive? What is its assessment of the situation?

2. Has it received annual statistics from Member States on the number of third-country nationals who have been granted — or refused — the Blue Card, as scheduled for 2013? What are the comparative results?

3. How will Blue Card policy be adjusted in the light of the new data? Are the financial crisis in the EU, high unemployment and internal migration from Southern to Northern Europe leading to a revision of plans and goals?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

End of July 2013 Eurostat published the 2012 numbers for 14 Member States: in total 3013 Blue Cards were delivered ([3]). In comparison, Eurostat data shows that there were 29561 permits delivered for highly skilled workers under national schemes in 11 Member States in 2012.

While there are large differences between labour demand in Member States, the variance in the use of the Blue Card can be explained by the possibility given to Member States by the Blue Card Directive to keep national schemes in parallel to the Blue Card. Such national schemes are explicitly allowed in the Blue Card Directive ([4]). The minimum gross annual salary required to be eligible for a Blue Card ([5]) also increases its exclusivity compared to national schemes and to the US H-1B visa.

The Blue Card Directive also explicitly allows Member States to take their labour market situation into account, as they retain the right to determine the number of third-country nationals being admitted for the purposes of highly qualified employment ([6]) and they may apply a labour market test before taking the decision on an application ([7]). According to Art 79(5) TFEU, Member States retain the right to determine volumes of admission of third-country nationals coming from third countries in order to seek work.

([1]) http://www.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/acheter.cgi?offre=ARCHIVES&type_item=ART_ARCH_30J&objet_id=1239352&xtmc=flot_de_scandales&xtcr=5
([2]) http://www.europanostra.org/UPLOADS/FILS/Declaration_Hasankeyf_Allianoi_RLA_20100922.pdf
([3]) Belgium 0, Bulgaria 15, Czech Republic 62, Denmark n/a, Germany 2584, Estonia 16, Italy 6, Luxembourg 183, Hungary 1, Malta 0, Austria 124, Poland 2, Slovenia 9, Slovakia 7, Finland 4. The 2012 statistics for Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Sweden are not yet available. .
The top 10 countries of origin are India (639), China including Hong Kong (267), Russia (251), United States (197), Ukraine (139), Syria (103), Egypt (101), Turkey (99), Japan (79) and Iran (71).
([4]) Art 3(4) Directive 2009/50/EC.
([5]) Art 5(3) Directive 2009/50/EC.
([6]) Art 6 Directive 2009/50/EC.
([7]) Art 8(2) Directive 2009/50/EC.

The Commission will present its first report on the application and impact of the Blue Card Directive in 2014 ([8]). Based on this assessment the Commission may propose any amendments that it deems necessary.

The European Migration Network is currently conducting a study to outline policies and concrete practical measures in Member States that aim to attract (highly) qualified third-country nationals, both through EU legislation and national policies. The results will be available shortly on the EMN's website ([9]).

([8]) Art 21 Directive 2009/50/EC.
([9]) http://emn.intrasoft-intl.com

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009532/13
to the Commission
Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Re-domiciled PLCs

Is the Commission aware of a research note from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) entitled 'The Effect of Re-domiciled PLCs on GNP and the Irish Balance of Payments'? If so, has it any comments to make on the note?

The Irish Government has stated in response to parliamentary questions that the effect of re-domiciled PLCs on Irish GNI figures led to an extra EUR 45 million being paid by Ireland to the EU in 2011.

Does the Commission believe this to be fair? Does it have any information on how the contributions of any other Member States might similarly be affected by re-domiciled PLCs?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the referred research note and discussed the findings with the author. The Commission does not comment on third party publications in general. It must be noted, however, that while the impact of re-domiciliation cannot be denied, the improvement in Ireland's current account balance has been driven by improved fundamentals and international competitiveness ([1]).

According to the current Own Resources Decision ([2]) Gross National Income (GNI) shall be the basis for what constitutes currently the quantitatively most important own resource of the EU budget. The current statistical standard for the calculation of GNI for Own Resources purposes is the European System of Accounts (ESA95) ([3]) ([4]). The Commission applies these provisions fairly and equally to all Member States.

GNI better reflects Member States' ability to contribute to the EU budget than the gross domestic product (GDP) since it also contains the balance of profits, compensation of employees and property income vis-à-vis the rest of the world. It is important to bear in mind that GDP is a production concept (i.e. activity is recorded in the country where it takes place), whilst GNI is a revenue concept which takes, *inter alia*, account of the reallocation of profits towards the headquarters of the owner.

The Commission is not required to track data on the impact of re-domiciled Public Limited Companies (PLC) in Member States. Nonetheless, the Commission wishes to point out that profits of PLC's are part of reinvested earnings on direct foreign investment recorded in national accounts. The increase in GNI linked to reinvested earnings attributed to companies in Ireland was overcompensated by reinvested earnings attributed to foreign companies.

([1]) See for example European Commission, European Economy, Occasional Paper 154.
([2]) Art 2 (1c) of Council Decision (2007/436/EC,Euratom) of 7 June 2007.
([3]) Art 2 (7) of Council Decision (2007/436/EC,Euratom) of 7 June 2007.
([4]) Council Regulation (EC) No 2223/96 of 25 June 1996, as amended.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009533/13
to the Commission
Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL)
(7 August 2013)

Subject: Irish contribution to rebates

Can the Commission state how much of Ireland's contribution to the EU for the previous seven years has gone to the funding of rebates for other Member States, and break these figures down by year and Member State?

Answer given by Mr Lewandowski on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

The Honourable Member can find the information requested in Annex to this reply.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009540/13
an die Kommission
Monika Hohlmeier (PPE)
(8. August 2013)

Betrifft: EU-Mittel für Bulgarien

Bulgarien (BGR) ist seit 2007 Mitglied in der EU und bereitet sich seitdem auch für den Beitritt zum Schengen-Raum vor.

Welche Finanz- bzw. Sachmittel stehen oder standen Bulgarien seitens der EU zur Erfüllung des Schengener Grenzkodex und zur Ausstattung von Polizei und Grenzschutz zur Verfügung?

In welcher Höhe, wann und zu welcher Verwendung wurden Finanz- oder Sachmittel durch Bulgarien abgerufen und wie garantiert die EU, dass sie nicht durch die neue Regierung gegen friedliche Demonstranten verwandt werden?

Ist beziehungsweise war die Ausschüttung dieser Mittel an Bedingungen geknüpft? Wenn ja: welche?

Wurden bzw. werden Bulgarien finanzielle Mittel verwehrt, gesperrt oder von ihm zurückgefordert? Wenn ja: in welcher Höhe und aus welchen Gründen (beispielsweise wegen Gewalt gegen Personen, die frei ihre Meinung äußern, und politisch Andersdenkende)? Wie stellt die Kommission die sachgerechte Verwendung dieser Mittel sicher?

Wie stellt die Kommission angesichts der aktuellen Fälle von Polizeigewalt gegen friedliche Demonstranten sicher, dass EU-Mittel von der aktuellen bulgarischen Regierung nicht missbraucht werden, um Grundrechte wie Versammlungsfreiheit oder Redefreiheit zu unterdrücken oder politisch Andersdenkende zu verfolgen?

Beabsichtigt die Kommission, die aktuelle bulgarische Regierung über die Vorwürfe von Polizeigewalt und die Berufung von zweifelhaften und nicht qualifizierten Personen in sicherheitsrelevante Positionen im Zusammenhang mit EU-Mitteln zu befragen? Wenn nicht: wieso nicht?

Antwort von Frau Malmström im Namen der Kommission
(3. Oktober 2013)

Im Rahmen der Schengen-Fazilität (2007-2009), einem zeitlich befristeten Instrument für die Kontrolle der Außengrenzen der Union und zur Durchführung des Schengen-Besitzstands, wurden Bulgarien 129 Mio. EUR für Investitionen in Infrastruktur an den Grenzübergängen und entsprechende Gebäude, technische Ausrüstung (Schengener Infomationssystem), Ausbildung von Grenzschutzbeamten usw. zugewiesen. Laut einem Audit im Jahr 2011 musste Bulgarien der Kommission 2,7 Mio. EUR zurückzahlen, da die Mittel nicht für Grenzkontrollen, sondern zur Verhinderung von Straftaten verwendet worden waren.

Mit einer Mittelausstattung von insgesamt 38 Mio. EUR für den Zeitraum 2010-2013 wurden aus dem Außengrenzenfonds Grenzkontrollmaßnahmen in Bulgarien unterstützt, darunter ein Integriertes Überwachungssystem, Ausrüstung für Grenzkontrollen und Modernisierung von Konsulaten, um dem Schengenstandard zu genügen.

Gemäß der Rechtsgrundlage sind die Mitgliedstaaten im Rahmen der geteilten Mittelverwaltung in erster Linie für die sachgemäße und effektive Verwendung der Mittel verantwortlich. Die Mittel müssen jedoch im Einklang mit den einschlägigen EU-Rechtsvorschriften verwendet werden.

Im Rahmen des Kooperations- und Kontrollverfahrens wacht die Kommission über die Fortschritte, die Bulgarien hinsichtlich seiner Beitrittsverpflichtungen bei der Bekämpfung von Korruption und organisiertem Verbrechen erzielt. Das Verfahren bleibt wirksam, bis alle Zielvorgaben zufriedenstellend erfüllt sind.

Nach einem Treffen mit Premierminister Oresharski am 21. Juni 2013 forderte Präsident Barroso umfassende Konsultationen zu wichtigen Ernennungen in den Bereichen Bekämpfung von Korruption und organisiertes Verbrechen. Die Kandidaten sollten aufgrund von Verdiensten ausgewählt werden und die höchsten Integritätsstandards aufweisen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009540/13
to the Commission
Monika Hohlmeier (PPE)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: EU funds for Bulgaria

Bulgaria has been a member of the EU since 2007, since when it has also been preparing to join the Schengen Area.

What financial or physical resources are being or have been made available to Bulgaria by the EU to enable it to comply with the Schengen Borders Code and to equip the police and border guard services?

When, in what amount and to what purpose have financial or physical resources been taken up by Bulgaria? How can the EU guarantee that these will not be used by the new government against peaceful demonstrators?

Is / was the provision of these resources tied to any conditions? If yes, what are they?

Have financial resources been — or are they being — withheld, blocked or recovered from Bulgaria? If so, what are the amounts and what are the reasons (for example, because of violence against people openly expressing their opinions and political dissidents)? How does the Commission ensure that such resources are put to proper use?

In view of the recent instances of police brutality against peaceful demonstrators, how does the Commission ensure that EU funds are not used by the current Bulgarian government for the purpose of suppressing fundamental rights such as freedom of assembly or speech or persecuting political dissidents?

Is the Commission planning to challenge the current Bulgarian government regarding allegations of police brutality and the appointment of dubious, unqualified people to security-related posts in the context of EU funding? If not, why not?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Schengen Facility (2007-2009), a temporary instrument for the control of the external borders of the Union and the implementation of the Schengen acquis, has allocated to Bulgaria EUR 129 million for investments in border crossing infrastructure and related buildings, operating equipment (Schengen Information System), training of border guards, etc. Following an audit in 2011, the Commission recovered from Bulgaria EUR 2.7 million as the funds had not been used for border control purposes but to prevent criminal activities.

The External Borders Fund in Bulgaria, with a total allocation for the period 2010-2013 of EUR 38 million, supported border control activities, among which, an Integrated System for Surveillance, equipment for border control and upgrading of consulates to Schengen standards.

Under the shared management mode, according to the legal basis, Member States are primarily responsible for the proper and the effective use of the funds, while the use of the funds is subject to compliance with the relevant provisions of EC law.

Under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism, the Commission is monitoring Bulgaria's progress in achieving its accession commitments in fighting corruption and organised crime. The mechanism will remain in place until all benchmarks have been satisfactorily fulfilled.

After meeting Prime Minister Oresharski on 21 June 2013, President Barroso called for wide consultations on key appointments in the areas of the fight against corruption and organised crime. The candidates chosen should be based on merit and should have the highest standards of integrity.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009541/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: 39 χρόνια Κατεχόμενη Αμμόχωστο

Την Κυριακή, 4 Αυγούστου 2013, χιλιάδες εκτοπισμένοι κάτοικοι της Αμμοχώστου διαδήλωσαν για 39η χρονιά την απαίτηση τους να επιστρέψουν στην κατεχόμενη από τα τουρκικά στρατεύματα πόλη τους, η οποία παραμένει περίκλειστη, ως «πόλη φάντασμα», από τον Αύγουστο του 1974, όταν ο τουρκικός στρατός εισήλθε στην πόλη.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Θεωρεί δικαιολογημένη τη συμπεριφορά της Τουρκίας, να κρατά μια ολόκληρη πόλη όμηρο και τους κατοίκους της πρόσφυγες, με προφανή σκοπό την χρησιμοποίηση της ως διπλωματικό χαρτί στο τραπέζι των διαπραγματεύσεων, προωθώντας έτσι τα δικά της άνομα επεκτατικά σχέδια;

2. Γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή άλλο παρόμοιο παράδειγμα τέτοιας βάρβαρης, αυθαίρετης συμπεριφοράς σε ολόκληρο τον κόσμο, σήμερα;

3. Τι προτίθεται να πράξει ώστε να τερματιστεί το δράμα των κατοίκων της πόλης της Αμμοχώστου όπως και όλων των προσφύγων στο 37% των κατεχόμενων εδαφών της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(23 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η επιστροφή της περίκλειστης περιοχής της Αμμοχώστου Βαρόσια στους νόμιμους κατοίκους της αποτελεί μέρος των διαπραγματεύσεων για την επίτευξη συνολικής διευθέτησης του κυπριακού προβλήματος μεταξύ των δύο κοινοτήτων υπό την αιγίδα των Ηνωμένων Εθνών. Οι ηγέτες των δύο κοινοτήτων πρέπει να καταλήξουν σε συμφωνία για την επιστροφή της Αμμοχώστου στους νόμιμους κατοίκους της.

Το ζήτημα που θίγει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου καταδεικνύει για μία ακόμη φορά την ανάγκη ταχείας και συνολικής διευθέτησης του κυπριακού προβλήματος.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009541/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: 39 years of Turkish occupation of Famagusta

On Sunday, 4 August 2013, thousands of displaced residents of Famagusta voiced their demand for the 39th year to be allowed to return to their Turkish-occupied city, which has been partially sealed off, making it a 'ghost town' since August 1974, when the Turkish army entered.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Does it consider that Turkey is justified in holding an entire city hostage and forcing its residents to remain refugees, with the obvious purpose of using this as a diplomatic bargaining chip in furtherance of its illegal expansionist plans?

2. Is it aware of any another example of a state behaving in such a barbaric and arbitrary manner in the world today?

3. What will it do to end the plight of the residents of the city of Famagusta and of all the refugees from the 37% of the territory of the Republic of Cyprus that are occupied by Turkey?

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

The return of the sealed-off Varosha area of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants is part of the negotiations on a comprehensive Cyprus settlement between both communities under the auspices of the United Nations. It is for the leaders of the two communities to find an agreement on the return of Famagusta to its lawful inhabitants.

The issue raised by the Honourable Member emphasises once again the urgency of reaching a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009542/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: CIA — Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν για τις βρετανικές βάσεις της Κύπρου

Η Κύπρος, όπως και πολλές άλλες χώρες, δεν «εξαιρείται» από τις αποκαλύψεις του πρώην υπάλληλου της CIA, Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν. Όπως έγραψε χθες η εφημερίδα Guardian, το μισό από το κόστος λειτουργίας των εγκαταστάσεων συλλογής πληροφοριών ασφαλείας στις βρετανικές βάσεις της Κύπρου καλύπτεται από την Αμερικανική Υπηρεσία Εθνικής Ασφαλείας NSA.

Σύμφωνα με το σχετικό δημοσίευμα της εφημερίδας Guardian και με βάση πάντα τα απόρρητα έγγραφα που έχει θέσει στη διάθεση της ο πρώην υπάλληλος της CIA Έντουαρντ Σνόουντεν, αναφέρεται ότι σε αντάλλαγμα για την οικονομική βοήθεια της NSA, η αντίστοιχη βρετανική GCHQ που διαχειρίζεται αυτές τις πληροφορίες ασφαλείας, «πρέπει να λαμβάνει υπόψη την αμερικανική άποψη όταν αποφασίζει πού θα δώσει προτεραιότητα».

1. Πως σχολιάζει η Επιτροπή αυτές τις δημοσιεύσεις;

2. Αν οι πιο πάνω ισχυρισμοί αληθεύουν, τι προτίθεται να πράξει η Επιτροπή για αντιμετώπιση της κατάστασης;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή ανησυχεί εξαιτίας των πρόσφατων δημοσιευμάτων του τύπου σχετικά με τα προγράμματα παρακολούθησης που φαίνεται ότι επιτρέπουν την πρόσβαση, σε ευρεία κλίμακα, στα προσωπικά δεδομένα των Ευρωπαίων και την επεξεργασία αυτών των δεδομένων.

Όσον αφορά ειδικότερα τις εικαζόμενες πρακτικές στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο, ενώ οι εθνικές αρχές, μεταξύ των οποίων και οι εποπτικές αρχές για την προστασία των δεδομένων, είναι αρμόδιες να διασφαλίζουν την ορθή εφαρμογή και επιβολή της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ για την προστασία των προσωπικών δεδομένων έναντι δημοσίων και ιδιωτικών φορέων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, η Επιτροπή, ως θεματοφύλακας των Συνθηκών, γνωρίζει αυτούς τους ισχυρισμούς και λαμβάνει τα κατάλληλα μέτρα. Ειδικότερα, κάλεσε τις αρχές του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου να διευκρινίσουν το πεδίο του λεγόμενου προγράμματος «Tempora», τα στοιχεία αναλογικότητάς του και τον βαθμό δικαστικής εποπτείας που ισχύει.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009542/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: Former CIA agent Edward Snowden's revelations on the British bases in Cyprus

Like many other countries, Cyprus is the subject of revelations by former CIA agent Edward Snowden. As the Guardian newspaper wrote yesterday, half the operating costs of intelligence-gathering at the British bases in Cyprus are met by the US National Security Agency, NSA.

According to the relevant article in the Guardian, also on the basis of confidential documents made available to it by former CIA agent Edward Snowden, in return for financial assistance from the NSA, GCHQ which manages this intelligence data must take into account the US view when deciding where to prioritise.

1. How does the Commission view these reports?

2. If the above allegations are true, what will it do to address the situation?

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

The Commission is concerned about recent media reports on surveillance programmes which appear to enable, on a large scale, access to and processing of data of Europeans.

As regards more specifically alleged practices in the UK, while it is for national authorities, including data protection supervisory authorities, 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, in its role as guardian of the Treaties, is aware of these allegations and is taking the appropriate steps. In particular, it has asked the UK authorities to clarify the scope of the so-called 'Tempora programme', its proportionality, and the extent of judicial oversight that applies

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009543/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Συνέχιση τουρκικού εμπάργκο σε κυπριακά πλοία και αεροπλάνα

Απαντώντας στη γραπτή ερώτηση μου με αριθ. E-4581/2009, ημερομηνίας 29 Σεπτεμβρίου 2009, αναφορικά με το πιο πάνω θέμα, η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή τόνισε, μεταξύ άλλων:

«Βάσει της συμφωνίας σύνδεσης ΕΚ-Τουρκίας, η οποία περιλαμβάνει την τελωνειακή ένωση μεταξύ ΕΚ και Τουρκίας, η Τουρκία έχει δεσμευθεί να επιτρέπει την ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία των αγαθών με όλα τα κράτη μέλη της Ένωσης. Οι περιορισμοί στην αποστολή δεν επιτρέπουν στους φορείς να επιλέγουν τον οικονομικότερο τρόπο μεταφοράς και ως εκ τούτου αποτελούν φραγμό στην ελεύθερη κυκλοφορία των εμπορευμάτων και το εμπόριο. Με την υπογραφή του Πρόσθετου Πρωτοκόλλου, τον Ιούλιο του 2005, η Τουρκία ανέλαβε περαιτέρω δεσμεύσεις έναντι της ΕΕ και όλων των κρατών μελών της, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας».

Σήμερα, τέσσερα ολόκληρα χρόνια μετά την πιο πάνω απάντηση της Επιτροπής, δεν έχει σημειωθεί καμιά πρόοδος στο σοβαρό αυτό θέμα. Προφανώς θίγονται ζωτικά συμφέροντα της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας αλλά και αμφισβητείται, από μια υπό ένταξη χώρα, η ίδια η οντότητα και η διεθνής αναγνώριση ενός κράτους μέλους της ΕΕ.

Ερωτάται η ΕΕ:

1. Τέσσερα χρόνια δεν ήταν αρκετά για να υπάρξει πρόοδος στο σοβαρό αυτό ζήτημα;

2. Τι έπραξε η ΕΕ όλο αυτό το διάστημα, ώστε να υπάρξει συμμόρφωση της Τουρκίας προς τις υποχρεώσεις της έναντι της Ένωσης και των κρατών μελών;

3. Δεν έχει ωριμάσει ο χρόνος ώστε η ΕΕ να θέσει ξεκάθαρα στην Τουρκία ότι η ενταξιακή της πορεία τερματίζεται, αφού η ίδια αρνείται να εκπληρώσει τις υποχρεώσεις της;

4. Εξακολουθεί ακόμα η ΕΕ να τρέφει την ψευδαίσθηση ότι με το άνοιγμα νέων κεφαλαίων ή θωπεύοντας την Τουρκία θα την πείσει να συνεργαστεί και να εκπληρώσει τις υποχρεώσεις της;

5. Πέρα από τη συνέχιση των ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων, η ΕΕ δεν διαθέτει άλλους μοχλούς πίεσης έναντι της Τουρκίας;

6. Αν η απάντηση στο ερώτημα 5 είναι καταφατική, γιατί δεν χρησιμοποιούνται τέτοιοι μοχλοί;

Απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η ΕΕ έχει λάβει σαφή θέση επί του θέματος που ανέφερε το Αξιότιμο Μέλος. Το 2005, η ΕΕ αποφάσισε ότι δεν θα αρχίσουν διαπραγματεύσεις για οκτώ κεφάλαια και ότι δεν θα κλείσει προσωρινά κανένα κεφάλαιο έως ότου η Επιτροπή επιβεβαιώσει ότι η Τουρκία προχώρησε στην πλήρη εφαρμογή του πρόσθετου πρωτοκόλλου της συμφωνίας σύνδεσης.

Η ΕΕ επανέλαβε αυτή τη θέση της κατά τις επαφές της με τις τουρκικές αρχές — πλέον πρόσφατα στις 14 Μαΐου 2013 επ' ευκαιρία του 51ου Συμβουλίου Σύνδεσης ΕΕ-Τουρκίας, όπου στην κοινή θέση της ΕΕ αναφέρονται τα εξής: «Η ΕΕ σημειώνει με βαθιά λύπη ότι η Τουρκία, παρά τις επανειλημμένες εκκλήσεις, εξακολουθεί να αρνείται να τηρήσει την υποχρέωσή της για πλήρη και χωρίς διακρίσεις εφαρμογή του πρόσθετου πρωτοκόλλου της συμφωνίας σύνδεσης προς όλα τα κράτη μέλη. Η ΕΕ υπογραμμίζει ότι αυτό μπορεί να δώσει σημαντική ώθηση στη διαδικασία διαπραγμάτευσης. Ελλείψει προόδου στο θέμα αυτό, το Συμβούλιο θα διατηρήσει τα μέτρα του από το 2006, τα οποία θα συνεχίσουν να επηρεάζουν τη συνολική πρόοδο των διαπραγματεύσεων. Επιπλέον, η Τουρκία δεν έχει ακόμη σημειώσει πρόοδο προς την απαραίτητη εξομάλυνση των σχέσεών της με την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία. Η ΕΕ θα συνεχίσει να παρακολουθεί και να μελετά εκ του σύνεγγυς την πρόοδο που σημειώνεται στα θέματα που καλύπτει η δήλωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Κοινότητας και των κρατών μελών της με ημερομηνία 21 Σεπτεμβρίου 2005. Θα πρέπει τώρα να σημειωθεί πρόοδος χωρίς περαιτέρω χρονοτριβή».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009543/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: Continuing Turkish embargo on Cypriot ships and planes

In its answer to my written question No. E-4581/2009 of 29 September 2009 on the above issue, the Commission had stressed, *inter alia*:

'According to the EC-Turkey Association Agreement, which includes the Customs Union between the EC and Turkey, Turkey is committed to allow the free movement of goods with all Member States. Restrictions on shipping do not allow operators to choose the most economical way of transport and therefore are a barrier to the free movement of goods and to trade. By signing the Additional Protocol in July 2005, Turkey has made further commitments towards the EU and all its Member States, including the Republic of Cyprus.'

Today, four whole years after the above answer from the Commission, there has been no progress on this important issue. Vital interests of the Republic of Cyprus are clearly affected and the very existence and international recognition of an EU Member State are being called into question by a candidate country, namely Turkey.

In view of the above, will the EU state:

1. Have four years not been enough time for progress to be made on this important issue?

2. What has the EU done throughout this time to prevail upon Turkey to honour its obligations towards the Union and the Member States?

3. Is it not now time for the EU to spell out to Turkey that its accession process is being terminated since it refuses to meet its obligations?

4. Is the EU still under the illusion that by opening new chapters or cajoling Turkey it will convince it to cooperate and to fulfil its obligations?

5. Apart from the prospect of continuing the accession negotiations, does the EU not have any other means of putting pressure on Turkey?

6. If the answer to question 5 is yes, why not use such means?

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

The EU has taken a clear position on the issue referred to by the Honourable Member. In 2005, the EU decided that negotiations will not be opened on eight chapters and no chapter will be provisionally closed until the Commission confirms that Turkey has fully implemented the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement.

The EU has reiterated its position in its contacts with the Turkish authorities most recently on 14 May 2013 at the occasion of the 51st Association Council with Turkey where the EU common position stated: 'the EU notes with deep regret that Turkey, despite repeated calls, continues refusing to fulfil its obligation of full, non-discriminatory implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement towards all Member States. The EU underlines that this could provide a significant boost to the negotiation process. In the absence of progress on this issue, the Council will maintain its measures from 2006, which will have a continuous effect on the overall progress of the negotiations. Furthermore, Turkey has regretfully still not made progress towards the necessary normalisation of its relations with the Republic of Cyprus. The EU will continue to closely follow and review progress made on all issues covered by the declaration of the European Community and its Member States of 21 September 2005. Progress is now expected without any further delay.'

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009544/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Απαγωγή του Ελληνορθόδοξου και του Συρορθόδοξου αρχιεπίσκοπου

Αρκετοί μήνες έχουν περάσει από την απαγωγή του Ελληνορθόδοξου και του Συρορθόδοξου αρχιεπισκόπου Χαλεπίου, σεβασμιοτάτου Παύλου Γιαζίγκι και σεβασμιοτάτου Γιοχάν Ιμπραήμ. Οι φήμες για την τύχη τους και τη φερόμενη αιχμαλωσία τους στην Τουρκία διαδίδονται ακόμα σαν αστραπή. Αυτή δεν είναι η πρώτη φορά που τα ΜΜΕ (ιδιαίτερα τα τουρκικά ΜΜΕ) κυκλοφόρησαν ανεπιβεβαίωτες αναφορές ή και πλαστές ιστορίες σχετικά με την προαναφερθείσα απαγωγή. Στην πραγματικότητα, ο τηλεοπτικός σταθμός al-Alam αναφέρει ότι, σύμφωνα με κορυφαίους Αμερικανούς και Βρετανούς διπλωμάτες, οι απαχθέντες αρχιεπίσκοποι κρατούνται στην Τουρκία.

Είναι ξεκάθαρο ότι τέτοιες πληροφορίες πρέπει να διαλευκανθούν οριστικά ώστε να αποφευχθούν οι ανεξέλεγκτες φήμες και να είναι εξίσου ξεκάθαρο ότι μπορούν να γίνουν περισσότερα προκειμένου να απελευθερωθούν οι δύο Αρχιεπίσκοποι.

Επομένως ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Σκοπεύει να ζητήσει από την τουρκική κυβέρνηση να προβεί σε επίσημη δήλωση επιβεβαιώνοντας η διαψεύδοντας τα δημοσιεύματα των ΜΜΕ, καθώς και να ξεκαθαρίσει το ζήτημα αυτό;

Απάντηση της κ. Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η ΥΕ/ΑΕ παρακολουθεί με εξαιρετική προσοχή τα τεκταινόμενα στη Συρία και βρίσκεται σε πολύ τακτική επαφή με τον Υπουργό Εξωτερικών της Τουρκίας σχετικά με όλες τις πτυχές της κρίσης.

Η ΕΥΕΔ δεν διαθέτει ουδεμία πληροφορία σχετικά με τον τόπο στον οποίο βρίσκονται οι απαχθέντες αρχιεπίσκοποι της Ελληνορθόδοξου και της Συρορθόδοξου Εκκλησίας Χαλεπίου, σεβασμιότατοι Παύλος Γιαζίγκι και Γιοχάν Ιμπραήμ. Η ΥΕ/ΑΕ συμμερίζεται πλήρως τις ανησυχίες που εκφράστηκαν σχετικά με την υγεία τους και συμφωνεί ως προς τη σημασία της απελευθέρωσής τους. Στα συμπεράσματα του Συμβουλίου Υπουργών Εξωτερικών του Μαΐου αναφέρεται ότι «η ΕΕ ανησυχεί σοβαρά εξαιτίας της αύξησης της βίας κατά θρησκευτικών ή εθνοτικών ομάδων και ζητεί την άμεση απελευθέρωση των δύο ορθόδοξων επισκόπων οι οποίοι απήχθησαν πρόσφατα.».

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009544/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: Abduction of Greek and Syrian Orthodox archbishops

Several months have now passed since the abduction of the Greek and Syrian Orthodox Archbishops of Aleppo, Msgr Boulos Yazigi and Msgr Yuhanon Ibrahim. Rumours about their fate and alleged captivity in Turkey are still circulating like wildfire. It is not the first time that the media (particularly Turkish media) have circulated unconfirmed reports and even concocted stories about the aforementioned abduction. In fact, on Sunday, 4 August 2013 the al-Alam TV channel reported that, according to top US and British diplomats, the kidnapped archbishops are being held in Turkey.

It is clear that the facts need to be confirmed once and for all in order to prevent the rumours from flying out of control, and it is equally clear that more can be done to secure the release of the two archbishops.

Does the Commission intend to ask the Turkish Government to make an official statement confirming or denying the media reports and to clarify the matter?

Answer given by Ms Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

The HR/VP is following events in Syria extremely closely and is in very regular contact with the Turkish Foreign Minister about all aspects of the crisis.

The EEAS has no information on the whereabouts of the abducted Greek and Syrian Orthodox bishops of Aleppo, Msgr Boulos Yazigi and Msgr Yuhanon Ibrahim. The HR/VP very much shares the concerns expressed regarding their welfare and the importance of their release. The conclusions of the 27 May Foreign Affairs Council stated that 'The EU is deeply concerned with the rise of religiously or ethnically motivated violence. The EU calls for the immediate release of the two recently kidnapped orthodox bishops.'

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009545/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Πώληση πληροφοριών προσωπικού χαρακτήρα από τη βρετανική κυβέρνηση στις ΗΠΑ

Εάν ισχύει ότι η βρετανική κυβέρνηση πωλεί πράγματι πληροφορίες προσωπικού χαρακτήρα Ευρωπαίων πολιτών στις ΗΠΑ, έναντι 150 εκατομμυρίων λιρών τον χρόνο, θα μπορούσε η Επιτροπή να εκφράσει τις απόψεις της σχετικά με τα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

1. Καθώς είναι τελείως διαφορετικό πράγμα η συλλογή πληροφοριών για την προστασία των πολιτών σε σχέση με τη συλλογή πληροφοριών, από την βρετανική κυβέρνηση, ως επιχειρηματική δραστηριότητα με σκοπό το κέρδος, συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή με αυτές τις πρακτικές;

2. Εάν ο παραπάνω ισχυρισμός είναι αληθής, τι μέτρα σκοπεύει να λάβει η Επιτροπή προκειμένου να διορθώσει την κατάσταση;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή δεν είναι ενήμερη για το συγκεκριμένο είδος πρακτικής το οποίο αναφέρεται στην ερώτηση του Αξιότιμου Μέλους του Κοινοβουλίου.

Η Επιτροπή παραπέμπει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος στις απαντήσεις της σε γραπτές ερωτήσεις E-006783/13.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009545/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: British Government selling personal data to the US

If it is true that the British Government is actually selling the personal data of EU citizens to the US, for GBP 150 million a year, will the Commission express its views on the following:

1. As it is one thing to collect this information to protect citizens, and a totally different thing for the British Government to collect it as a business operation for profit, does the Commission agree with such practices?

2. If the above allegation is true, what action does the Commission intend to take to remedy the situation?

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

The Commission is not aware of the specific type of practice referred to in the question of the Honourable Member.

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-006783/13.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009546/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Πρόγραμμα παρακολούθησης των ΗΠΑ

Μπορεί η Επιτροπή να απαντήσει στα εξής ερωτήματα σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα παρακολούθησης των ΗΠΑ στο πλαίσιο επιχειρηματικών δραστηριοτήτων, όπως η συμφωνία ελεύθερων συναλλαγών;

1. Πώς μπορεί η ΕΕ να έχει συμφωνία ελεύθερων συναλλαγών με τις ΗΠΑ, όταν οι Αμερικανοί διεξάγουν βιομηχανική κατασκοπεία μέσω εξόρυξης δεδομένων πολύ εμπιστευτικού ή «ευαίσθητου» επαγγελματικού χαρακτήρα σε παγκόσμια κλίμακα;

2. Πώς μπορεί η ΕΕ να δεσμευτεί και να ανταγωνιστεί σε ένα σύστημα υποχρεωτικής ανταγωνιστικής προσφοράς όταν τέτοιες πληροφορίες σχετικά με προσφορές υποκλέπτονται από τους Αμερικανούς;

3. Συμφωνεί η Επιτροπή ότι η εν λόγω πρακτική εξόρυξης δεδομένων από τους Αμερικανούς προκαλεί απέχθεια ακόμα και σε μικρή έως μια μεσαία επιχειρηματική κλίμακα, και ότι, οι ισχυρισμοί ότι αυτό γίνεται για την καταπολέμηση της τρομοκρατίας αποτελεί απλώς ένα μανδύα για τον πραγματικό στόχο, ο οποίος είναι η απόκτηση αθέμιτων ανταγωνιστικών πλεονεκτημάτων έναντι άλλων χωρών μέσω αθέμιτων επιχειρηματικών πρακτικών;

4. Πώς μπορούν να διεξάγονται έντιμες ανταγωνιστικές δραστηριότητες ανά τον κόσμο υπό αυτές τις συνθήκες, τη στιγμή που είναι ξεκάθαρο ότι οι Αμερικανοί έχουν αυτού του είδους το ανταγωνιστικό πλεονέκτημα έναντι άλλων χωρών;

Απάντηση της κ. Reding εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Οι διαπραγματεύσεις ΕΕ-ΗΠΑ για τη διατλαντική εταιρική σχέση στον τομέα του εμπορίου και των επενδύσεων (TTIP) έχουν αρχίσει και βρίσκονται εν εξελίξει. Όσον αφορά τις αποκαλύψεις των μέσων ενημέρωσης σχετικά με τα προγράμματα κατασκοπείας των ΗΠΑ, έχει συγκροτηθεί ομάδα εργασίας ad hoc υψηλού επιπέδου. Επί τη βάσει των πληροφοριών που θα συγκεντρώσει, η Επιτροπή θα υποβάλει έκθεση στο Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο και το Συμβούλιο τον Οκτώβριο.

Είναι προφανές ότι, προκειμένου να επιτυγχάνουν διαπραγματεύσεις με τις ΗΠΑ όπως οι διεξαγόμενες σχετικά με τη διατλαντική εταιρική σχέση στον τομέα του εμπορίου και των επενδύσεων (TTIP), είναι αναγκαία η ύπαρξη εμπιστοσύνης, διαφάνειας και σαφήνειας μεταξύ των εταίρων.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009546/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: US surveillance programme

Can the Commission answer the following questions relating to the US surveillance programme in connection with business issues such as the free trade agreement?

1. How can the EU have a free trade agreement with the US when the Americans are conducting industrial espionage by engaging in data mining of highly confidential and sensitive business information on a global scale?

2. How can the EU engage in, and compete under, a system of compulsory competitive tendering when information on the tenders is being intercepted by the Americans?

3. Does the Commission agree that even on a small to medium business scale this data mining practice by the Americans is repugnant, and that to claim it is done for purposes of combating terrorism is just a cloak for the real objective, which is to gain unfair competitive advantage over other countries by means of unfair business practices?

4. How can honest competitive businesses around the world function under such conditions, when it is clear that the Americans have this kind of competitive advantage over other countries?

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

The EU-US negotiations on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) have been launched and are ongoing. With regards to the media revelations on US intelligence programs, an ad-hoc high-level working group on data protection has been established; based on the information gathered, the Commission will report back to the European Parliament and the Council in October.

It is clear that for negotiations with the US such as the current ones on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) to succeed, there need to be confidence, transparency and clarity among the negotiating partners.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009547/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Παγκόσμιες συναλλαγές στο χρηματιστήριο αξιών

Στα χρηματιστήρια αξιών ανά τον κόσμο, είναι, κατ' αρχήν, παράνομη η χρησιμοποίηση πληροφοριών σχετικά με τις πράξεις προσώπων τα οποία είναι κάτοχοι εμπιστευτικών πληροφοριών. Προφανώς οι λειτουργίες εξόρυξης δεδομένων από τους Αμερικανούς παραβιάζει αυτή την αρχή.

Επομένως ζητείται από την Επιτροπή να εκφράσει τις απόψεις της σχετικά με τα ακόλουθα ερωτήματα:

1. Δεν υποβιβάζει αυτή η συστηματική κατάχρηση των πολιτικών δικαιωμάτων των επενδυτών την εμπιστοσύνη και τη νομιμότητα των χρηματιστηρίων αξιών ανά τον κόσμο;

2. Πόσοι μικροεπενδυτές και συνταξιοδοτικά ταμεία έχουν χάσει χρήματα ή χρεοκοπήσει ως αποτέλεσμα αυτής της παράνομης πρακτικής;

3. Σκοπεύει η Επιτροπή να λάβει μέτρα για την αντιμετώπιση τέτοιων παράνομων δραστηριοτήτων;

Απάντηση του κ. Barnier εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η κατάχρηση αγοράς είναι επιζήμια για την ακεραιότητα των χρηματοπιστωτικών αγορών και την εμπστοσύνη του κοινού στις κινητές αξίες και στα παράγωγα μέσα. Η ομαλή λειτουργία των αγορών κινητών αξιών και η διατήρηση της εμπιστοσύνης του κοινού σε αυτές αποτελούν απαραίτητες προϋποθέσεις για την οικονομική ανάπτυξη και την ευημερία. Για τον λόγο αυτό, η οδηγία περί κατάχρησης αγοράς ([1]) απαγορεύει σε οιοδήποτε πρόσωπο κατέχει εμπιστευτικές πληροφορίες να τις χρησιμοποιεί, αγοράζοντας ή πωλώντας τα χρηματοπιστωτικά μέσα που αφορούν οι εν λόγω πληροφορίες.Η απαγόρευση αυτή ισχύει ρητά για τα πρόσωπα που κατέχουν εμπιστευτικές πληροφορίες λόγω της πρόσβασης που έχουν στις πληροφορίες αυτές κατά την άσκηση της εργασίας, του επαγγέλματος ή των καθηκόντων τους. Η κατοχή εμπιστευτικών πληροφοριών ή η συμμετοχή σε δραστηριότητες που παρέχουν πρόσβαση σε εμπιστευτικές πληροφορίες, μεταξύ των οποίων η άντληση δεδομένων, δεν απαγορεύονται στο πλαίσιο της νομοθεσίας περί κατάχρησης αγοράς, υπό την προϋπόθεση ότι δεν διαπιστώνεται εκμετάλλευση προνομιακών πληροφοριών από πρόσωπα που τις κατέχουν με σκοπό το κέρδος. Σε περίπτωση που πρόσωπα τα οποία επιδίδονται σε άντληση δεδομένων, αποκτούν πρόσβαση σε εμπιστευτικές πληροφορίες όσον αφορά ευρωπαϊκά χρηματοπιστωτικά μέσα, τους απαγορεύεται η δυνατότητα συναλλαγών στα εν λόγω χρηματοπιστωτικά μέσα, είτε στο πλαίσιο του χρηματιστηρίου, είτε σε άλλο πλαίσιο. Η Επιτροπή δεν διαθέτει στοιχεία για ζημίες ή πτωχεύσεις που να σχετίζονται με το εν λόγω θέμα. Η εφαρμογή των εν λόγω διατάξεων άπτεται της αρμοδιότητας των εθνικών αρχών.

Η Επιτροπή εκφράζει την ανησυχία της όσον αφορά τα πρόσφατα δημοσιεύματα στα μέσα μαζικής ενημέρωσης σχετικά με προγράμματα παρακολούθησης των ΗΠΑ τα οποία φαίνεται πως επιτρέπουν την πρόσβαση σε δεδομένα ευρωπαίων πολιτών καθώς και την επεξεργασία των εν λόγω δεδομένων. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή ζήτησε διευκρινίσεις από τους ομολόγους της στις ΗΠΑ, συγκεριμένα όσον αφορά τον αντίκτυπο των εν λόγω προγραμμάτων στα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα των Ευρωπαίων. Η Επιτροπή προέβη επίσης στη σύσταση, από κοινού με το Συμβούλιο, ομάδας δράσης ad hoc ΕΕ-ΗΠΑ με στόχο την περαιτέρω εξέταση των προαναφερόμενων θεμάτων. Η Επιτροπή θα υποβάλει σχετική έκθεση στο Κοινοβούλιο και στο Συμβούλιο τον Οκτώβριο.

([1]) 2003/6/ΕΚ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009547/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: Global trade on the stock exchange

In stock exchanges around the world it is, in principle, illegal to use information connected with insider trading. Evidently the data mining operations carried out by the Americans breach this principle.

The Commission is therefore asked to give its views on the following questions:

1. Does not this systematic abuse of investors' civil rights undermine confidence in, and the legitimacy of, stock exchanges around the world?

2. How many small investors and pension funds have lost money or gone bankrupt as a result of this unlawful practice?

3. Does the Commission intend to take any action to combat such illegal activities?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

Market abuse harms the integrity of financial markets and public confidence in securities and derivatives. The smooth functioning of securities markets and public confidence in markets are prerequisites for economic growth and wealth. For these reasons the Market Abuse Directive ([1]) prohibits any person who possesses inside information from using that information by acquiring or disposing of financial instruments to which that information relates. This prohibition applies explicitly to persons who possess inside information by virtue of their having access to the information through their employment, profession or duties. Possessing inside information or engaging in activities which give access to inside information, including data mining, are not prohibited under market abuse legislation, provided that no insider trading takes place. If those involved in data mining exercises were to gain access to inside information on European financial instruments, they would be prohibited from trading in those financial instruments, be it on stock exchanges or anywhere. The Commission has no data on losses or bankruptcies in this regard. The enforcement of these provisions is the competence of national authorities.

The Commission is concerned regarding the recent media reports on US surveillance programs which appear to enable access and processing data of Europeans. The Commission has requested clarifications from the US counterparts, in particular regarding the impact of these programs on the fundmental rights of Europeans. The Commission has also set up, together with the Council and an ad hoc EU-US working group to further examine these matters. The Commission will report back to the Parliament and the Council in October.

([1]) 2003/6/EC.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009548/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(8 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Κατευθύνσεις του ΔΝΤ για τις κατώτατες αποδοχές στην Ελλάδα και σχετικές εκτιμήσεις της ΕΕ

Σύμφωνα με τα τελευταία διαθέσιμα στοιχεία ([1]) για τον μηνιαίο κατώτατο μισθό στα 28 κράτη μέλη, στην Ελλάδα το 2012 το σχετικό ποσό ήταν 683,76 ευρώ, το οποίο ήταν το ενδέκατο χαμηλότερο στην ΕΕ (για το 2012 σε επτά κράτη μέλη δεν υφίστανται δεδομένα λόγω αναθεώρησης τους) και το τέταρτο χαμηλότερο στην ευρωζώνη. Επιπρόσθετα, στην Ελλάδα, βάσει του νόμου 4093 ([2]), ο κατώτατος μεικτός μισθός στην Ελλάδα, για τους υπαλλήλους άνω των 25 ετών ορίστηκε ακόμα χαμηλότερα στο ποσό των 586,08 ευρώ και για τους υπαλλήλους μικρότερης ηλικίας στο ποσό των 510,95 ευρώ. Παράλληλα σε πρόσφατη απάντηση ([3]) σε κοινοβουλευτική ερώτηση μου τον Απρίλιο του 2013 για τον κατώτατο μισθό στην Ελλάδα, τονίσθηκε πως θα υπάρξει επανεξέταση του πλαισίου των κατώτατων αποδοχών έως το Μάρτιο του 2014 με σκοπό τη βελτίωση της αποτελεσματικότητας αλλά και ότι επιβάλλεται εμπεριστατωμένη ανάλυση πριν από τη λήψη σχετικής απόφασης.

Ωστόσο, σε πρόσφατη έκθεση ([4]) του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου για τις πολιτικές στην ευρωζώνη, στο πλαίσιο των προτάσεων για την Ελλάδα, τονίζεται πως θα πρέπει να υπάρξει μείωση της φορολογικής επιβάρυνσης της εργασίας κατά ουδέτερο δημοσιονομικό αντίκτυπο και λήψη επιπρόσθετων μέτρων για τη μείωση του μοναδιαίου εργατικού κόστους. Με δεδομένες τις προσπάθειες της ελληνικής κυβέρνησης και των κοινωνικών εταίρων και λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι κλιμάκια της Task Force και της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζας εποπτεύουν και ενισχύουν το έργο ενδυνάμωσης της ανταγωνιστικότητας της ελληνικής οικονομίας, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

— Μετά τη ψήφιση του νόμου 4093, πως καθορίζεται ο ελληνικός κατώτατος μισθός συγκριτικά με τα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη;

— Συμφωνεί με τις εκτιμήσεις του Διεθνούς Νομισματικού Ταμείου; Πως αντιλαμβάνεται και πως συγκεκριμενοποιεί τις κατευθύνσεις του ΔΝΤ για τη λήψη επιπρόσθετων μέτρων με σκοπό τη μείωση του εργατικού κόστους πέραν της μείωσης της φορολογικής επιβάρυνσης της εργασίας;

— Θεωρεί πως υπάρχουν περιθώρια περαιτέρω μείωσης του κατώτατου μισθού στην ελληνική αγορά δεδομένης της πρωτόγνωρης μείωσης της αγοραστικής δύναμης των Ελλήνων;

— Διαθέτει εκτιμήσεις για το βαθμό με τον οποίο η μείωση του κατώτατου μισθού έως τώρα έχει ενισχύσει την ελληνική ανταγωνιστικότητα αλλά και για τα σχετικά οφέλη που θα προσφέρει μία νέα αναθεώρηση του; Τι κατευθύνσεις ως προς αυτό το θέμα προσφέρουν τα συμπεράσματα της Task Force και των κλιμακίων της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζας;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(25 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Από στοιχεία για τους κατώτατους μισθούς προκύπτει ότι σε τιμές εκφραζόμενες τόσο σε ευρώ όσο και σε ΜΑΔ, η Ελλάδα βρίσκεται στο μέσον των κρατών μελών της ΕΕ· όσο για τον κατώτατο μισθό ως ποσοστό των μέσων αποδοχών, στην Ελλάδα ήταν 50% το 2011, ήτοι το υψηλότερο ποσοστό στην ΕΕ ([5]).

Όπως αναφέρθηκε και στην απάντηση στην παρόμοια ερώτηση P-002029/2013 που το Αξιότιμο Μέλος του Κοινοβουλίου υπέβαλε ([6]) τον Απρίλιο του 2013, η ελληνική κυβέρνηση συμφώνησε να προβεί σε επανεξέταση του πλαισίου των κατώτατων αποδοχών ως τον Μάρτιο του 2014, με σκοπό να διασφαλιστεί υγιές περιβάλλον από πλευράς οικονομίας και αγοράς εργασίας που θα υποστηρίζει τον καθορισμό των κατώτατων μισθών στο μέλλον, προκειμένου, ιδίως, να μπορέσει η Ελλάδα να ξεπεράσει τα πολύ υψηλά επίπεδα ανεργίας. Δεν υπάρχει προειλημμένη απόφαση σχετικά με το αποτέλεσμα της επανεξέτασης αυτής. Η Επιτροπή είναι της άποψης ότι επιβάλλεται όντως να πραγματοποιηθεί ανάλογη εμπεριστατωμένη ανάλυση πριν τη λήψη οποιασδήποτε απόφασης.

([1]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=earn_mw_cur&lang=en
([2]) http://goo.gl/YjwVD
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2013-002029&language=EL
([4]) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2013/cr13231.pdf
([5]) Η Eurostat δημοσιεύει στατιστικά στοιχεία σχετικά με τους κατώτατους μισθούς στα κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ στα οποία οι κατώτατοι εθνικοί μισθοί επιβάλλονται από τη νομοθεσία. Τα στοιχεία των ακαθάριστων μηνιαίων κατώτατων μισθών παρουσιάζονται εκεί με τρεις τρόπους: σε ευρώ, σε μονάδες αγοραστικής δύναμης (ΜΑΔ) και ως ποσοστό επί των μέσων μηνιαίων αποδοχών.
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/el/parliamentary-questions.html

Ενώ η μείωση της φορολογικής επιβάρυνσης της εργασίας μπορεί να ενισχύσει την απασχόληση και την ανταγωνιστικότητα, τα πιθανά οφέλη πρέπει να σταθμιστούν σε σχέση με την επίπτωση της μείωσης των φορολογικών εσόδων στους λογαριασμούς του Δημοσίου σε ένα περιβάλλον ιδιαίτερα αναγκαίας δημοσιονομικής βιωσιμότητας.

Εκτός από τις μισθολογικές εξελίξεις υπάρχουν και άλλα στοιχεία, όπως παραγωγικότητα, παράγοντες εκτός της τιμής (π.χ. ποιότητα των προϊόντων, περιεχόμενο της έρευνας, κανονιστικό περιβάλλον) και μη μισθολογικά κόστη που επηρεάζουν την ανταγωνιστικότητα μιας χώρας. Οι ελληνικές αρχές και η Ομάδα Δράσης για την Ελλάδα επεξεργάζονται, με την υποστήριξη της Παγκόσμιας Τράπεζας και άλλων οργανισμών, σειρά σχεδίων (π.χ. διευκόλυνση του εμπορίου και μεταρρύθμιση του τελωνειακού συστήματος, εξάλειψη των κανονιστικών και διοικητικών εμποδίων για νέες επενδύσεις) ([7]) για τη βελτίωση του γενικότερου επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος και την αποτελεσματικότερη λειτουργία των αγορών προϊόντων και υπηρεσιών.

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/pdf/qr4_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009548/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(8 August 2013)

Subject: IMF recommendations regarding minimum wages in Greece and EU assessment

According to the latest available data ([1]) on the monthly minimum wage in the 28 Member States, the figure in Greece in 2012 was EUR 683.76, which was the eleventh lowest in EU (for 2012 no data was available for seven Member States, due to a review) and the fourth lowest in the eurozone. Furthermore, under Law 4093 ([2]), the minimum gross salary in Greece for employees aged over 25 was set even lower at EUR 586.08 and EUR 510.95 for younger employees. A recent answer ([3]) to a parliamentary question I had tabled in April 2013 on the minimum wage in Greece stressed that there would be a review of the minimum wage framework by March 2014 with a view to improving effectiveness and that a thorough analysis should precede any decision. However, a recent report ([4]) by the International Monetary Fund on its policies in the eurozone emphasised, in the context of the proposals for Greece, that there should be a reduction in the labour tax wedge in a budget-neutral way and that additional measures should be taken to lower unit labour costs. Given the efforts of the Greek Government and the social partners and the fact that the Task Force and the World Bank are monitoring and enforcing the project of enhancing the competitiveness of the Greek economy, will the Commission say:

— Following the enactment of Law 4093, how does the Greek minimum wage compare with that of other Member States?

— Does it agree with the International Monetary Fund's views? How does it understand — and what specific measures will it take to implement — the IMF's recommendations on additional measures to be taken to reduce labour costs in addition to reducing the tax burden on labour?

— Does it believe that there is room for a further reduction in the minimum wage in the Greek market, given the unprecedented decline in the purchasing power of Greek citizens?

— Does it have any estimates of the extent to which the reduction in the minimum wage has so far boosted Greek competitiveness, and also of the benefits which a new review of the minimum wage might produce? What recommendations do the conclusions of the Task Force and the World Bank team make in this connection?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

Data for minimum wages show that, both in euro terms and in PPS, Greece is in the middle of the EU countries; as for the minimum wage as a share of average earnings, Greece had a figure of around 50% in 2011 — the highest in the EU. ([5])

As mentioned in the reply to the similar Question P-002029/2013 placed by the Honourable Member ([6]) in April 2013, the Greek Government agreed to carry out a review of the minimum wage framework by March 2014, with a view to ensure a sound economic and labour market underpinning to the setting of the minimum wage going forward, notably in order to help Greece overcoming the very high levels of unemployment. There is no pre-judgment on the outcome of that review and the Commission's position is that such a solid analysis should indeed precede any decision.

While a lower tax burden on labour can favour employment and competitiveness, those potential benefits have to be balanced against the drag of lower tax revenues on the government accounts in the environment of the much needed fiscal sustainability.

([1]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=earn_mw_cur&lang=en
([2]) http://goo.gl/YjwVD
([3]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2013-002029&language=EL
([4]) http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2013/cr13231.pdf
([5]) Eurostat publishes data on minimum wages for the EU Member States where there is a nationwide minimum wage enforced by law. The gross monthly minimum wage data are presented therein in three ways: in euro terms; in purchasing power standards (PPS); and, as a proportion of average monthly earnings.
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

In addition to wage developments, other elements such as productivity, non-price factors (e.g. quality of products, research content, regulatory environment) and costs other than wages influence the competitiveness of a country. The Greek authorities are pursuing with the Task Force for Greece a series of projects with the support of the World Bank and other institutions (e.g. trade facilitation and customs reform, removal of regulatory and administrative obstacles to new investment) ([7]) to improve the overall business environment and the efficiency of product and services markets.

([7]) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/pdf/qr4_en.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009549/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Costo dell'immigrazione musulmana per i cittadini europei

Il ricercatore egiziano Ali Abd al-Aal, intervistato da una TV libanese, ha affermato che almeno l'80 % dei 50 milioni di musulmani presenti in Europa si appoggia ai sussidi sociali concessi dai paesi ospitanti.

I sistemi di assistenza sociale di alcuni paesi dell'Unione starebbero dunque funzionando come una calamita, attivando quel fenomeno noto come «turismo del welfare» per cui soggetti che non hanno mai contribuito con il loro lavoro al sistema sociale di uno Stato membro ne fruiscono in maniera massiccia, mentre i cittadini del paese vengono continuamente penalizzati a causa dei tagli dettati dall'insufficienza delle risorse disponibili.

La Commissione:

— in un periodo già particolarmente difficile per i cittadini europei che devono affrontare la crisi economica internazionale e le politiche di austerity nazionali, non ritiene importante avviare degli studi per capire quali sono gli Stati membri più interessati dal turismo del welfare?

— non ritiene che ogni Stato membro debba poter rifiutare l'assistenza sociale agli immigrati che non abbiano mai lavorato prima entro i suoi confini?

— come valuta l'attuale sistema di assistenza sociale adottato dagli Stati membri, che garantisce contributi statali in funzione della sola indigenza senza monitorare caso per caso le reali necessità degli immigrati?

— non ritiene che un'ampia concessione di sussidi statali disincentivi gli immigrati a trovare un'occupazione che consenta loro il sostentamento e nello stesso tempo li renda contribuenti attivi nel paese ospitante?

Risposta di Cecilia Malmström a nome della Commissione
(24 ottobre 2013)

Da uno studio del 2011 sull'inclusione attiva degli immigrati ([1]) risulta che non ci sono prove concrete del fatto che gli immigrati sono particolarmente propensi a ricorrere ai sussidi sociali; al contrario, i dati esistenti confermano che la loro fruizione dell'assistenza sociale non supera di molto quella dei cittadini nazionali. Tale conclusione è ribadita da un recente studio sull'impatto dell'immigrazione sulle finanze pubbliche, condotto nel 2013 dall'OCSE, che ha riscontrato poche differenze nel ricorso all'assistenza sociale tra immigrati e famiglie autoctone ([2]).

La vigente normativa relativa alla migrazione legale ([3]) contiene disposizioni intese a garantire la parità di trattamento e la non discriminazione dei cittadini di paesi terzi rispetto ai cittadini dell'UE, ad esempio per quanto riguarda le condizioni di lavoro, l'istruzione e la formazione professionale, il riconoscimento dei diplomi e i settori della sicurezza sociale di cui al regolamento (CE) n. 883/2004. Si tratta di disposizioni importanti che consentono di evitare lo sfruttamento dei lavoratori provenienti da paesi terzi. Esistono tuttavia alcune deroghe e limitazioni (ad esempio per quanto riguarda gli assegni familiari o l'erogazione di borse di studio e prestiti), a seconda della condizione dei cittadini dei paesi terzi (lavoratore, familiare, ecc.) e della durata del soggiorno negli Stati membri (ad esempio, più o meno di sei mesi).

Inoltre, alcune normative vigenti dell'UE sulla migrazione dei lavoratori includono disposizioni che impediscono agli immigrati di ricorrere all'assistenza sociale o che addirittura consentono agli Stati membri di revocare il permesso di soggiorno o rifiutarne il rinnovo se il titolare del permesso chiede l'assistenza sociale ([4]).

([1]) Cfr. http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1160&furtherNews=yes.
([2]) OCSE (2013), pag. 155-6. International Migration Outlook 2013, pubblicazione OCSE. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-en.
([3]) Ad esempio, la direttiva sulla Carta blu per i lavoratori altamente qualificati (2009/50/CE), la direttiva sul permesso unico (2011/98/UE) e la direttiva sui soggiornanti di lungo periodo (2003/109/CE).
([4]) Cfr., ad esempio, la direttiva 2009/50/CE, articolo 9, paragrafo 3, lettere b) e d).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009549/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: Cost of Muslim immigration to EU citizens

The Egyptian researcher Ali Abd al-Aal, interviewed by a Lebanese TV station, said that at least 80% of the 50 million Muslims in Europe are living on social welfare benefits granted by their host countries.

The social welfare systems of some EU countries are therefore acting like a magnet, encouraging what is commonly known as 'welfare tourism', whereby individuals who have never contributed through their work to the welfare system of a Member State are making the absolute most of its benefits while the citizens of that country are being continually penalised due to the cuts made necessary by the insufficiency of available resources.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

— At a time that is already particularly difficult for EU citizens, who are having to deal with the international economic crisis and national austerity policies, does it not think that studies should be conducted to find out which Member States are the most affected by welfare tourism?

— Does it not agree that a Member State should be able to deny social assistance to immigrants who have never worked there before?

— What is its view of the current social welfare system adopted by Member States, which provides government contributions based solely on poverty, without monitoring the true needs of immigrants on a case-by-case basis?

— Does it not agree that granting across-the-board state benefits discourages immigrants from finding jobs to support themselves, which would, at the same time, enable them to become active taxpayers in their host country?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(24 October 2013)

A 2011 study on 'Active inclusion of migrants' ([1]) highlights that there is no clear evidence that migrants are particularly welfare prone and that, on the contrary, existing data show that migrants do not use social support more excessively than natives. A recent study (2013) on the fiscal impact of migrants carried out by the OECD confirms that there are few differences between the take-up of social benefits by immigrants as compared native-born households ([2]).

Legal migration legislation in force ([3]) include provisions that ensure equal treatment and non-discrimination of third-country nationals compared to EU citizens, for instance as regards working conditions, education and vocational training, recognition of diplomas, and branches of social security regulated by Regulation (EC) No 883/2004. These are important provisions to avoid exploitation of third-country workers. However, certain derogations and limitations exist (e.g. as regards family benefits or the provision of study grants and loans), depending on the status of the third-country nationals (worker, family member etc.) and the duration of his or her stay in the Member States (e.g. more or less than six months).

Moreover, certain existing EU legislation in the field of labour migration includes provisions to ensure that migrants will not have recourse to social assistance, or even allows Member States to withdraw or refuse to renew residence permits if the permit holder applies for social assistance ([4]).

([1]) See: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1160&furtherNews=yes
([2]) OECD (2013), p. 155-6. International Migration Outlook 2013, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/migr_outlook-2013-en
([3]) For instance the Blue Card Directive for highly skilled workers (2009/50/EC), the Single Permit Directive (2011/98/EU), and the Long-term residents Directive (2003/109EC).
([4]) See, for example, Directive 2009/50/EC, Article 9(3) b and d.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009550/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Decreto «svuota carceri» e rischio per i cittadini

Dopo la condanna definitiva della Corte europea dei diritti dell'Uomo per le condizioni critiche del suo sistema carcerario, l'Italia ha approvato il decreto legge «svuota carceri» quale misura per affrontare il problema del sovraffollamento degli istituti penitenziari del Paese.

Questo provvedimento permetterà a migliaia di detenuti di lasciare il carcere e ad altrettanti di passare agli arresti domiciliari.

— Considerate le ripercussioni di questa scelta per l'incolumità e la sicurezza dei cittadini italiani,

— considerate le difficoltà che la Polizia italiana, il cui organico è stato sensibilmente ridotto dai tagli per il contenimento della spesa pubblica, ha manifestato rispetto a questa decisione del Governo italiano definendo il provvedimento una «sconfitta dello Stato»,

— preso atto che stringere accordi con i paesi di provenienza dei detenuti stranieri, permettendo loro di scontare la pena nel proprio paese di origine, consentirebbe allo Stato di ridurre il numero dei detenuti, garantendo un risparmio milionario per le casse dello Stato;

— considerata la decisione quadro 2008/909/GAI del Consiglio, del 27 novembre 2008, relativa all'applicazione del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle sentenze penali che irrogano pene detentive o misure privative della libertà personale, ai fini della loro esecuzione nell'Unione europea,

— alla luce dei contenuti del Libro verde della Commissione, del 14 giugno 2011, sull'applicazione della normativa dell'UE sulla giustizia penale nel settore della detenzione — Rafforzare la fiducia reciproca nello spazio giudiziario europeo (COM(2011)0327 definitivo),

per evitare che a fare le spese delle inefficienze statali siano sempre e solo i cittadini che vedono restringersi la sfera delle proprie libertà e della propria sicurezza, non ritiene la Commissione che la reintroduzione degli accordi bilaterali per far scontare ai detenuti la pena nel proprio paese d'origine possa rappresentare una valida soluzione al problema del sovraffollamento delle carceri europee e a quello della sicurezza dei cittadini?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(2 ottobre 2013)

La decisione quadro 2008/909/GAI ([1]) consente il trasferimento dei detenuti verso il paese dell'UE di cittadinanza, residenza abituale o un altro paese dell'UE con il quale hanno stretti legami entro un preciso termine massimo di 120 giorni.

La data di attuazione della decisione quadro è scaduta il 5 dicembre 2011. Fino ad oggi quattordici Stati membri ([2]) hanno notificato alla Commissione le relative misure di recepimento. La Commissione segue attentamente l'attuazione della decisione quadro da parte degli Stati membri. A tal fine, e per accelerare il processo ha organizzato due riunioni di esperti nel 2012 e ne organizzerà un'altra nel novembre 2013. Inoltre, la Commissione intende pubblicare nelle prossime settimane una relazione di attuazione su tre decisioni quadro adottate nel settore della detenzione.

I dati che la Commissione ha ricevuto dagli Stati membri che hanno attuato la decisione quadro indicano che quest'ultima sembra essere regolarmente applicata da detti Stati membri.

([1]) Decisione quadro 2008/27/GAI del Consiglio, del 27 novembre 2008, relativa all'applicazione del principio del reciproco riconoscimento alle sentenze penali che irrogano pene detentive o misure privative della libertà personale, ai fini della loro esecuzione nell'Unione europea (GU L 327 del 5.12.2008, pag. 27).

([2]) AT, BE, DK, FI, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SK e UK.

Prima dell'adozione della decisione quadro, i trasferimenti dei detenuti erano regolati in base alla convenzione del Consiglio d'Europa del 1983 e al relativo protocollo addizionale del 1997. Per quanto riguarda i detenuti non UE, i trasferimenti continuano ad essere effettuati mediante la convenzione o tramite altri accordi multilaterali o bilaterali conclusi con paesi terzi.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009550/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: 'Empty prisons' decree and risks for citizens

Since the final judgment of the European Court of Human Rights concerning the critical condition of its prison system, Italy has adopted the so-called empty prisons decree to address the problem of overcrowding in the country's prisons.

This measure will allow thousands of inmates to leave prison and will allow the same number to be put under house arrest.

This decision has considerable implications for the safety and security of Italian citizens.

The Italian police force, whose personnel has been significantly reduced due to public spending cuts, has expressed its dismay over this decision by the Italian Government, calling the measure a 'State defeat'.

Drawing up agreements with the countries of origin of foreign prisoners, allowing them to serve their sentences in those countries, would enable the government to reduce the number of prisoners, thereby saving the public purse millions.

In view of:

— Council Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA of 27 November 2008 on the application ofthe principle of mutual recognition to judgments in criminal matters imposing custodialsentences or measures involving deprivation of liberty for the purpose of theirenforcement in the European Union;

— the Commission Green Paper of 14 June 2011 on the application of EU criminal justicelegislation in the field of detention — Strengthening mutual trust in the European judicialarea (COM(2011) 0327);

— given, moreover, that it is always only the citizens that pay the price for governmentinefficiencies, by having their freedom and safety reduced, does the Commission notagree that the reintroduction of bilateral agreements to allow inmates to serve theirsentences in their own countries of origin could be a viable solution to the problem ofovercrowding in Europe's prisons and that of public safety?

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

Framework Decision 2008/909/JHA ([1]) allows for the transfer of convicted prisoners back to their EU country of nationality, habitual residence or another EU country with which they have close ties within a fixed time limit of maximum 120 days.

The implementation date of the framework Decision passed on 5 December 2011. To date, 14 Member States ([2]) have notified the Commission that they have implemented it. The Commission is closely monitoring the implementation of the framework Decision by Member States. To this effect, and to speed up the implementation process, the Commission organised two Experts' meetings in 2012 and will organise another one in November 2013. Moreover, the Commission intends to publish in the coming weeks an implementation report on the three Framework Decisions adopted in the field of detention.

The figures, which the Commission received from the Member States who have implemented, indicate that the framework Decision already seems to be used on a regular basis by these Member States.

([1]) Framework Decision 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.

([2]) AT, BE, DK, FI, HR, HU, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SK and UK.

Before the adoption of the framework Decision, prisoner transfers were dealt with by the Council of Europe Convention of 1983 and its additional Protocol of 1997. With respect to non-EU prisoners, transfers continue to be carried out through this Convention or through other multi- or bilateral agreements concluded with non-EU Member States.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009551/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(12 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Omzetting Richtlijn 2010/40/EU en gebruik van intelligente vervoerssystemen in de lidstaten

Op 20 juni 2013 daagde de Europese Commissie België voor het Europese Hof van Justitie wegens het niet tijdig omzetten van Richtlijn 2010/40/EU inzake intelligente vervoerssystemen (ITS).

ITS is een deel van de oplossing voor de toenemende congestie in steden, op snelwegen en dergelijke meer. De lidstaten moeten zich ten volle inzetten om de ITS-richtlijn in nationale wetgeving om te zetten. Verder moeten de lidstaten ook voldoende vrijheid krijgen om innovatieve ideeën uit te werken.

Ik wil graag volgende vragen aan de Commissie richten:

1. Heeft de Commissie de indruk dat lidstaten voldoende inzetten op ITS en het belang ervan inzien voor een vlottere doorstroming van het verkeer?

2. Kan de Commissie de lidstaten voldoende motiveren om de belangrijke ITS-richtlijn correct om te zetten in nationale wetgeving?

3. Plant de Commissie verdere stappen tegen België voor het niet tijdig omzetten van de richtlijn?

4. Erkent de Commissie het belang van innovatie als speerpunt voor betere mobiliteit? Ziet de Commissie dit als een prioriteit bij het opstellen van nieuwe actieplannen, mededelingen en wetgevingsvoorstellen?

Antwoord van de heer Kallas namens de Commissie
(19 september 2013)

Technologische innovatie die nauw samenhangt met wettelijke voorschriften is essentieel om een modern, doeltreffender en duurzaam Europees vervoerssysteem tot stand te brengen.

De lidstaten zijn het erover eens dat intelligente vervoerssystemen bijdragen tot een verbetering van de kwaliteit van vervoerdiensten en van de doeltreffendheid van vervoersactiviteiten, zowel voor personen- als vrachtvervoer. Dit engagement wordt weerspiegeld door de vaststelling van het ITS-actieplan ([1]), de ITS-richtlijn ([2]) en de technische specificaties met betrekking tot eCall ([3]) en verkeersinformatiediensten inzake verkeersveiligheid en informatiediensten voor veilige en beveiligde parkeerplaatsen voor vrachtwagens die binnenkort worden gepubliceerd.

Alle lidstaten, met uitzondering van België, hebben de ITS-richtlijn omgezet in nationale wetgeving. Aangezien België op de in die richtlijn vastgestelde datum voor omzetting de Commissie niet in kennis heeft gesteld van op federaal niveau vastgestelde maatregelen, heeft zij België voor het Europese Hof van Justitie gedaagd.

([1]) Mededeling van de Commissie — Actieplan voor de invoering van intelligente vervoerssystemen in Europa; COM(2008) 886.
([2]) Richtlijn 2010/40/EU van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 7 juli 2010 betreffende het kader voor het invoeren van intelligente vervoerssystemen op het gebied van wegvervoer en voor interfaces met andere vervoerswijzen; PB L 207 van 6.8.2010.
([3]) Gedelegeerde Verordening (EU) nr. 305/2013 van de Commissie van 26 november 2012 tot aanvulling van Richtlijn 2010/40/EU van het Europees Parlement en de Raad, wat de geharmoniseerde voorziening in de gehele Unie van een interoperabele eCall betreft; PB L 91 van 3.4.2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009551/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: Transposition of Directive 2010/40/EU and use of intelligent transport systems in the Member States

On 20 June 2013, the Commission brought proceedings against Belgium before the Court of Justice for failing to transpose Directive 2010/40/EU on intelligent transport systems (ITS) in time.

ITS forms part of the solution to the growing congestion in towns, on motorways and so on. The Member States are required to make every effort to transpose the ITS Directive into national law. They must also be allowed sufficient freedom to devise innovative ideas.

1. Does the Commission have the impression that the Member States are making sufficient efforts to implement ITS and that they recognise the importance of such systems in enabling traffic to flow better?

2. Can the Commission sufficiently motivate the Member States to transpose the vital ITS Directive correctly into national law?

3. Is the Commission planning any further steps against Belgium for failing to transpose the directive by the deadline?

4. Does the Commission acknowledge the importance of innovation as a prime way of attaining better mobility? Does the Commission regard it as a priority in drawing up new action plans, communications and legislative proposals?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

Technological innovation that works hand in hand with regulatory requirements is fundamental to achieve a modern, more efficient and sustainable European Transport System.

There is a consensus amongst Member States on the contribution of intelligent transport systems in increasing the quality of transport services and the efficiency of transport operations, both for passengers and freight. The adoption of the ITS Action Plan ([1]), the ITS Directive ([2]), the technical specifications in relation to eCall ([3]), as well as road safety related traffic information services and information services for safe and secure truck parking soon to be published, reflect that commitment.

All Member States, except Belgium, notified national measures transposing the ITS Directive. Since at the date set out in this directive for its transposition Belgium did not communicate the measures adopted for the federal level, the Commission referred Belgium to the European Court of Justice.

([1]) Communication from the Commission — Action plan for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in Europe; COM(2008)886.
([2]) Directive 2010/40/EU of the European parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport; OJ L 207 of 6.8.2010.
([3]) Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 305/2013 of 26 November 2012 supplementing Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the harmonised provision for an interoperable EU-wide eCall; OJ L 91 of 3.4.2013.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-009552/13
an die Kommission (Vizepräsidentin/Hohe Vertreterin)
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(12. August 2013)

Betrifft: VP/HR — Wahlen in Kambodscha

Die vergangenen Parlamentswahlen in Kambodscha wurden von massiven Vorwürfen über Unregelmäßigkeiten und offensichtliche Wahlfälschungen begleitet. Viele nichtstaatliche Organisationen, wie z. B. Transparency International oder Human Rights Watch, das unabhängige Wahlkomitee COMFREL usw., haben ihr Befremden über die Vorgänge zum Ausdruck gebracht.

Die Wahlen stellten einmal mehr unter Beweis, dass in der kambodschanischen Bevölkerung ein großes Bedürfnis nach unabhängiger Information (z. B. TV-Stationen, die insbesondere auf dem Land die einzige Quelle darstellen), Transparenz, Mitsprache und Beteiligung herrscht. Eine als sehr wahrscheinlich einzustufende Wahlmanipulation muss auch vor diesem Hintergrund bewertet werden.

1. Über welche Informationen verfügt der EAD?

2. Ist die Hohe Vertreterin bereit, Bemühungen um eine objektive und umgehende Untersuchung der Vorfälle und insbesondere eine zumindest zum Teil international besetzte Kommission zu unterstützen, wie die USA das bereits gemacht haben?

3. Sollten sich die Beschuldigungen als richtig erweisen, ist die Hohe Vertreterin bereit, die Forderung nach einer Neuauszählung unter internationaler Aufsicht zu unterstützen?

Antwort von Frau Ashton — Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin im Namen der Kommission
(30. September 2013)

Die EU verfolgt die Lage in diesem Land aufmerksam, insbesondere durch die beiden Wahlexperten, die für die Überwachung der Vorbereitung der Wahlen sowie die Folgemaßnahmen zuständig sind. Die EU hat ferner Mittel für einen technischen Sachverständigen bereitgestellt, um den nationalen Wahlausschuss in Bezug auf Medienfreiheit und Transparenz der Ergebnisse zu unterstützen.

Nach den Wahlen hat die EU eine Erklärung veröffentlicht, in der sie dazu aufrief, alle Streitigkeiten fair und zügig gerichtlich aufarbeiten zu lassen.

Die EU-Delegation in Phnom Penh steht in regelmäßigem Kontakt mit den Oppositionsführern sowie mit Vertretern der Regierung, um zu gewährleisten, dass Streitigkeiten in demokratischem und friedlichem Geiste beigelegt werden. Die Hohe Vertreterin/Vizepräsidentin hat in einem Schreiben vom 12. August Oppositionsführer Sam Rainsy zu den bemerkenswerten Stimmengewinnen seiner Partei beglückwünscht. Sie ermutigte seine Partei, rasch eine Einigung mit allen Beteiligten zu erzielen und einen friedlichen und demokratischen Geist zu wahren.

Zum Zeitpunkt der Abfassung dieser Antwort prüft der kambodschanische Verfassungsrat die von der Opposition eingelegten Beschwerden und in einigen Fällen hat der nationale Wahlausschuss die Öffnung der Stimmzettelpakete angeordnet. Die EU wird besonderes Augenmerk auf die Bekanntgabe der Ergebnisse durch den Verfassungsrat am 8. September richten und danach alle Optionen prüfen.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009552/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Elections in Cambodia

The recent parliamentary elections in Cambodia were marked by wide-scale accusations of irregularities and clear electoral fraud. Many NGOs, such as Transparency International, Human Rights Watch and COMFREL, the independent Committee for Free and Fair Elections, have expressed their indignation at what happened.

The elections showed, once again, that there is a great need among the Cambodian population for independent information (e.g. television stations, which are the sole source of information, particularly in the countryside), transparency, people's right to make their voices heard and participation. The vote rigging which seems almost certain to have taken place must also be assessed in this context.

1. What information does the EEAS have on this matter?

2. Is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to back efforts to have these events thoroughly and objectively investigated and, in particular, to support a commission made up — at least in part — of different nationalities, as has been done in the case of the USA?

3. If the accusations prove justified, is the Vice-President/High Representative prepared to support calls for a recount under international supervision?

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

The EU has been closely following the situation in the country, in particular through the two electoral Experts in charge of monitoring the preparation of the election, as well as the follow-up. The EU has also funded a technical expert to support the National Election Committee on media freedom and transparency of results.

Following the elections, the EU published a statement calling for all disputes that have been addressed to the established through judicial mechanisms to be dealt with fairly and swiftly.

The EU Delegation in Phnom Penh has been in regular contacts with the opposition leaders, as well as with representatives of the Government to ensure that disputes are settled in a democratic and peaceful spirit. The HRVP has written to opposition leader Mr Sam Rainsy on 12 August to congratulate him for the remarkable gains of his party. She encouraged his party to swiftly come to an agreement with all the stakeholders involved and to maintain a paceful and democratic spirit.

At the time of writing, the Cambodian Constitutional Council is examining the complaints filed by the opposition and, in some cases, has ordered the National Election Committee to open the ballots' packages. The EU will pay particular attention to the results to be announced by the Council on 8 September and will examine all options accordingly.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009553/13
an die Kommission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(12. August 2013)

Betrifft: Wettbewerbsrecht — Gemeindeordnung des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz (Bereiche Wasser- und Energieversorgung und öffentlicher Nahverkehr)

Mit der Gesetzesnovelle zur Gemeindeordnung in Rheinland-Pfalz im Jahr 2009 wurde die sogenannte Subsidiaritätsklausel für die Bereiche Wasser- und Energieversorgung und den öffentlichen Nahverkehr abgeschafft (§ 85 „Grundsätze"). Das heißt, dass Kommunen in diesen Bereichen nun selbst dann wirtschaftliche Unternehmen errichten, übernehmen oder wesentlich erweitern dürfen, wenn nicht einmal Leistungsparität mit privaten Anbietern besteht.

1. Ist es EU-rechtskonform, wenn Kommunen diese Aufgaben erfüllen, obwohl private Unternehmen die gleichen Aufgaben besser und wirtschaftlicher anbieten könnten, und somit der freie Wettbewerb verzerrt wird?

2. Sind der Kommission in diesen Bereichen Beschwerden von privaten Anbietern bekannt?

3. Wurden entsprechende beihilferechtliche Verfahren in Deutschland und speziell in Rheinland-Pfalz nach der Gesetzesnovelle von 2009 eingeleitet bzw. abgeschlossen?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(27. September 2013)

1) Nach europäischem Recht dürfen die Gemeinden entweder selbst in den Bereichen Energie- und Wasserversorgung und öffentlicher Nahverkehr tätig werden oder aber private Betreiber mit diesen Aufgaben betrauen. Das europäische Recht ist gegenüber öffentlichem oder privatem Eigentum an Unternehmen neutral (Artikel 345 AEUV). Infolgedessen müssen öffentliche und private Unternehmen dieselben europäischen Rechtsvorschriften einhalten. Zudem können nach dem europäischen Wettbewerbsrecht auch Gemeinden als Unternehmen eingestuft werden, wenn sie wirtschaftliche Tätigkeit ausüben.

2) Die Kommission hat keine Kenntnis von Beschwerden privater Anbieter in Bezug auf die von dem Herrn Abgeordneten angeführte Gesetzesänderung.

3) Die Kommission hat keine Kenntnis von beihilferechtlichen Verfahren in Deutschland in Bezug auf die von dem Herrn Abgeordneten angeführte Gesetzesänderung.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009553/13
to the Commission
Jürgen Creutzmann (ALDE)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: Competition law — Municipal Code of Rhineland-Palatinate (water and energy supply and local public transport)

By means of an amendment to the Municipal Code in Rhineland-Palatinate in 2009, the so-called subsidiarity clause was abolished for the fields of water and energy supply and local public transport (Article 85, 'Principles'). This means that municipalities are now themselves permitted to set up, take over or substantially expand commercial undertakings in these fields when their performance is not even on a par with that of private providers.

1. Does it comply with EC law if municipalities undertake these tasks despite the fact that private businesses can offer the same services better and more economically, thereby distorting free competition?

2. Is the Commission aware of any complaints from private providers in these fields?

3. Have any procedures been initiated or completed in Germany relating to public aid in these fields, particularly in Rhineland-Palatinate since the legislative amendment of 2009?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

1) Whether the municipality will itself operate in the field of energy, public transport or water supply or whether it will entrust private operators with the task is not as such contrary to European law. European law is neutral as regards the public or private ownership of undertakings (Article 345 TFEU). As a consequence public and private undertakings must abide by the same European law provisions. Moreover, for the purposes of European competition law also municipalities can classify as undertakings if they engage in economic activity.

2) The Commission is not aware of any complaint from private provider in relation to the legislative amendment mentioned by the Honourable Member.

3) The Commission is not aware of any state aid procedure in Germany in relation to the legislative amendment mentioned by the Honourable Member.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009554/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(12 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Sankcje wobec Rosji

USA przyjęło prawo, na mocy którego można odmówić wjazdu do USA rosyjskim urzędnikom jako karę za łamanie praw człowieka. Unia Europejska podobne rozwiązanie stosuje wobec Białorusi. Tzw. Ustawa Magnickiego w USA, umożliwia także zamrożenie aktywów bankowych osób odpowiedzialnych za łamanie praw człowieka w Rosji.

Część przedstawicieli rosyjskiej opozycji domaga się przyjęcia analogicznych rozwiązań w Unii Europejskiej. Wprowadzenie podobnego rozwiązania mogłoby być korzystne dla ograniczenia łamania praw człowieka w Rosji.

Proszę o odpowiedź:

Czy Komisja zamierza wprowadzić rozwiązania podobne do „ustawy Magnickiego"?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(2 października 2013 r.)

UE regularnie wzywa Rosję do przestrzegania praw człowieka oraz od dawna nalega na przeprowadzenie odpowiedniego dochodzenia celem zapewnienia, by wszelkie osoby odpowiedzialne za śmierć S. Magnickiego oraz aferę korupcyjną, którą odkrył, zostały postawione przed sądem. UE ponownie podniosła tę kwestię podczas szczytu UE-Rosja w dniach 3-4 czerwca oraz przy okazji wizyty Komisji złożonej rosyjskiemu rządowi w dniach 21-22 marca 2013 r. Nasze stanowisko jest jednoznaczne: tylko przeprowadzenie wiarygodnego i skrupulatnego dochodzenia pomoże w Rosji zbudować zaufanie do państwa prawa.

Dlatego, jak podkreśliła Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca w oświadczeniu wydanym 20 marca 2013 r., decyzja Rosji o przedwczesnym zamknięciu przedmiotowej sprawy oraz równoczesne wszczęcie pośmiertnego procesu przeciwko S. Magnickiemu stanowią dodatkowe źródło obaw co do funkcjonowania należytych procedur prawnych w Federacji Rosyjskiej.

Komisja oraz Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca przyjęli do wiadomości amerykańską ustawę im. Siergieja Magnickiego o odpowiedzialności za łamanie zasad praworządności, którą prezydent Obama podpisał 4 grudnia 2012 r. Inicjatywy podjęte dotychczas przez Parlament Europejski i niektóre parlamenty narodowe podkreślają znaczenie, jakie dla obywateli europejskich mają ta i podobne sprawy. Komisja i Wysoka Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodnicząca będą nadal jasno wyrażać nasze oczekiwania dotyczące wznowienia dochodzenia w tej sprawie i tego, że będzie ono prowadzone w odpowiedni sposób.

Sankcje stanowią część zintegrowanego i kompleksowego podejścia do polityki UE i są traktowane jako środek ostateczny. Środki ograniczające powinny być brane pod uwagę wyłącznie w szczególnych sytuacjach i zgodnie z ustalonymi wytycznymi UE. Są to środki zapobiegawcze, które wymagałby wsparcia politycznego na najwyższym poziomie i można by je wprowadzić wyłącznie za jednomyślną zgodą państw członkowskich UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009554/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: Sanctions against Russia

The USA has a law under which it can refuse entry to the USA to Russian officials as a way of penalising them for human rights violations. The EU has a similar system in the case of Belarus. The USA's Magnitsky Act also enables the bank assets of individuals responsible for violating human rights in Russia to be frozen.

Some representatives of the Russian opposition are calling for the EU to adopt a similar measure, which might help to reduce violations of human rights in Russia.

Does the Commission intend to introduce a similar provision to the Magnitsky Act?

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

The EU regularly calls on Russia to pursue human rights violations, and has for a long time been insisting on the need for a proper investigation that ensures that any person responsible for the death of Mr Magnitsky and for the corruption scandal he uncovered is brought to justice. The EU raised the case again at highest level at the EU-Russia Summit on 3-4 June and during the Commission visit to the Russian government on 21-22 March 2013. Our position is clear: only a credible and thorough judicial investigation will help creating confidence in the rule of law in Russia.

Therefore, as was said in the HR/VP's statement of 20 March, the Russian decision to close this case prematurely, while at the same time opening a posthumous trial against Magnitsky himself is an additional source of concern as to the state of the due process of law in the Russian Federation.

The Commission and the HR/VP have taken note of the Sergey Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act in the U.S. which was signed into law by President Obama on 4 December 2012. Initiatives already taken in the European and some national Parliaments underscore the importance the European public attaches to this and similar cases. The Commission and HR/VP will continue to make clear our expectation that the investigation of this case be resumed and taken forward appropriately.

Sanctions are a part of an integrated and comprehensive EU policy approach and are considered a measure of last resort. Restrictive measures should only be considered in specific situations and in accordance with established EU guidelines. They are a preventive instrument, which would require the highest level of political support and could only be introduced by unanimous agreement of EU Member States.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009555/13
do Komisji
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(12 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Rozprzestrzenianie się chorób wśród zwierząt na wschodnich granicach UE

W ostatnim czasie naukowcy informują o bardzo dużym zagrożeniu jakie niesie ze sobą afrykański pomór świń – niezwykle niebezpieczna choroba rozprzestrzeniana wśród zwierząt. Śmiertelność zarażonych świń wynosi prawie 100 %. Choroba ta jest niemal nieuleczalna, a europejskie zwierzęta nie są na nią odporne. Występowanie choroby stwierdzono między innymi na Białorusi, a jej ogniska obserwowane są coraz bliżej granic Unii Europejskiej. Import mięsa z Białorusi blokuje Rosja, a także Polska, Łotwa i Ukraina. Wprowadza się różnego rodzaju zabezpieczenia. Na przejściach granicznych zainstalowano specjalne maty dezynfekujące. Przyjezdni nie powinni wwozić do Polski żywności. Jednak chorobę mogą przenosić także dziki, które swobodnie wędrują między granicami.

W związku z epidemią wirusa Litwa, chce wybudować płot graniczny, który uniemożliwiałby przechodzenie dzikich zwierząt. Wybudowanie podobnego płotu rozważa się również na granicy między Polską, a Białorusią.

W związku z powyższym proszę o odpowiedź:

Czy Komisja popiera pomysł budowania płotu mającego zmniejszyć ryzyko rozprzestrzeniania się chorób wśród zwierząt?

Czy Komisja rozważa wprowadzenie innych zabezpieczeń mających zmniejszyć to niebezpieczeństwo?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Tonia Borga w imieniu Komisji
(20 września 2013 r.)

W celu ograniczenia ryzyka rozprzestrzenienia się w Unii afrykańskiego pomoru świń wprowadzono już szeroki zakres unijnych środków. Obejmują one: (i) zakaz przywozu z Rosji i Białorusi żywych świń, ich materiału biologicznego wykorzystywanego do rozrodu oraz wieprzowiny lub produktów z wieprzowiny, które mogą powodować zagrożenie rozprzestrzenieniem się afrykańskiego pomoru świń; (ii) kontrole prywatnych przesyłek produktów pochodzenia zwierzęcego kupionych przez podróżnych wjeżdżających na teren Unii; (iii) dodatkowe środki mające zagwarantować, że pojazdy, których użyto do transportu zwierząt w Rosji i na Białorusi, mogą ponownie wjeżdżać do Unii dopiero po odpowiednim oczyszczeniu i dezynfekcji.

Ponadto Komisja ściśle współpracuje z państwami członkowskimi bardziej zagrożonymi wprowadzeniem afrykańskiego pomoru świń, aby zapewnić podjęcie dalszych działań zapobiegawczych, polegających np. na niedopuszczaniu do kontaktu dzików ze świniami domowymi trzymanymi w gospodarstwach przydomowych mieszczących się blisko granicy UE z Rosją i Białorusią. Nawiązano również kontakty z krajami sąsiadującymi dotkniętymi tą chorobą.

Jeśli chodzi o budowę ogrodzenia przeciw dzikim zwierzętom jako dodatkowego sposobu zapobiegania przechodzeniu dzikich zwierząt przez granicę oraz ograniczenia ryzyka rozprzestrzenienia się afrykańskiego pomoru świń tą drogą, Komisja omawia obecnie z niektórymi państwami członkowskimi kwestie wyboru odpowiedniego momentu, wykonalności, trwałości i skuteczności budowy infrastruktury na tak wielką skalę. Należy wziąć pod uwagę również inne niepożądane skutki. Jak dotąd Komisja nie otrzymała informacji, które ostatecznie umożliwiłyby stwierdzenie, że budowa ogrodzenia jest opłacalna.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009555/13
to the Commission
Filip Kaczmarek (PPE)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: Spread of animal diseases at the EU's eastern borders

Scientists have recently highlighted the very high risk posed by African swine fever, which is an extremely dangerous disease in animals. The mortality rate for affected pigs is nearly 100%. The disease is virtually incurable and European animals have no resistance to it. One of the places the disease has been found is Belarus, and outbreaks are appearing ever closer to the EU border. Russia, Poland, Estonia and Ukraine have banned meat imports from Belarus. Various safeguards are being put in place. Special disinfectant mats have been installed at border crossings. Travellers are not allowed to bring food into Poland. However, the disease can be transmitted by wild animals, which roam freely across borders.

In response to the epidemic of this virus, Lithuania wants to build a fence to prevent wild animals crossing the border. Construction of a similar fence on the border between Poland and Belarus is also being considered.

In this connection:

Does the Commission support the idea of building a fence intended to reduce the risk of the spread of animal diseases?

Is the Commission considering introducing other safeguards to reduce this risk?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(20 September 2013)

A wide range of EU measures are already in place to mitigate the risk of ASF spreading into the Union. Provisions in place include: (i) a prohibition to import live pigs, their germinal products and pork, or pork products that may pose an ASF risk from Russia and Belarus; (ii) controls on personal consignments of products of animal origin brought by travellers entering the Union; (iii) additional measures to ensure that vehicles which were used for the transport of animals in Russia and Belarus can only re-enter the Union if they are appropriately cleansed and disinfected.

Furthermore, the Commission is currently working in close contact with Member States at higher risk of ASF introduction to ensure that further preventive actions are taken, for example to prevent contacts of domestic pigs kept in backyard holdings located close to the EU border with Russia and Belarus with the wild boar. In addition, contacts with the affected bordering countries are also ongoing.

As regards the building of a wildlife-proof fence as an additional tool to prevent wildlife crossing the borders and to reduce the risk of African swine fever (ASF) spread thorough that route, the Commission is currently discussing with some Member States timeliness, feasibility, sustainability and effectiveness of building such a large scale infrastructure. Other undesired effects should also be considered. At present, the Commission has not received information that would finally allow concluding that the cost/effectiveness of this fence is favourable.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-009556/13
alla Commissione
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(12 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Incendio «cereria» 14 luglio 2013: emergenza sanitaria e ambientale nell'Agro nolano (NA)

La Commissione europea, anche grazie alle segnalazioni dei cittadini, non ultima quella giunta dal movimento civico «Rifiutarsi» con la petizione al PE 1180/2012, è al corrente della gravissima situazione sanitaria e ambientale di diverse zone della Campania, tra cui quella dell'agro nolano (nella provincia di Napoli). A una serie preoccupante di casi di discariche illegali a cielo aperto, di sversamenti di rifiuti di tutti i tipi (inclusi quelli tossici, compreso l'amianto) che periodicamente vengono bruciati, con conseguente emanazione di nubi tossiche (cariche di diossina) che si spostano e diffondono verso i vicinissimi centri abitati (Nola, Marigliano, Pomigliano d'Arco, Acerra, San Vitaliano, Saviano, Palma Campania, ecc.), si sono aggiunti negli ultimi mesi eventi di assoluta rilevanza ambientale e sanitaria.

Il 26 aprile 2013 a Polvica di Nola si è verificato un incendio di un agglomerato industriale; il 14 luglio un incendio ha invece colpito un altro agglomerato industriale situato tra i comuni di Saviano e Nola, generando una nube tossica che ha investito le popolate aree limitrofe e i terreni coltivati per un area pari a 15 chilometri quadri. Tra la cittadinanza e tra i vigili del fuoco intervenuti si sono manifestati sintomi da avvelenamento. Le amministrazioni locali non hanno fornito tempestivamente direttive ai cittadini su come fronteggiare la situazione. A tutt'oggi non sono stati fatti controlli atti a monitorare lo stato di contaminazione di acque e terreni, mentre per ciò che riguarda le analisi dell'aria non vi è stata possibilità di avervi accesso per i cittadini che ne hanno fatto richiesta, preoccupati per il proprio stato di salute. Le dichiarazioni degli amministratori locali a tal proposito appaiono contraddittorie. Emerge che le rilevazioni fatte non hanno tenuto in considerazione la presenza di diossine nell'aria.

Può pertanto la Commissione precisare quanto segue:

— È essa a conoscenza dell'emergenza sanitaria e ambientale della zona in questione?

— Intende essa chiedere informazioni alle autorità italiane e sollecitare l'esecuzione tempestiva di tutti i controlli e le rilevazioni necessarie per avere un quadro chiaro del rischio, sia immediato sia a medio e lungo termine, che corrono i cittadini delle zone coinvolte nonché dati riguardo alle contromisure che è opportuno prendere?

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

Preso atto delle informazioni comunicate dall'onorevole deputato, la Commissione chiederà alle autorità italiane di identificare gli stabilimenti industriali nei quali hanno avuto luogo gli incendi per verificare se rientrano nel campo d'applicazione della direttiva Seveso (direttiva 96/82/CE ([1])) e, se così fosse, accertarsi che siano stati rispettati gli obblighi della stessa.

([1]) GU L 10 del 14.1.1997.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009556/13
to the Commission
Sonia Alfano (ALDE)
(12 August 2013)

Subject: Fire in a wax factory on 14 July 2013 — health and environmental emergency in the Agro Nolano area of Naples

The Commission, thanks also to complaints from citizens, not least that from the civic movement 'Rifiutarsi' in its petition No 1180/2012 to Parliament, is aware of the very serious health and environmental situation in various parts of the Campania region, including that of the Agro Nolano area (province of Naples). Over the past few months, a number of events have occurred which are of great significance for the environment and public health. These come in the wake of an alarming series of cases of illegal open-air waste dumps and discharges of all kinds of waste (including toxic waste such as asbestos) that are periodically burned, resulting in toxic dioxin-laden clouds which move towards nearby towns (Nola, Marigliano, Pomigliano d'Arco, Acerra, San Vitaliano, Saviano, Palma Campania, etc.).

On 26 April 2013, in Polvica di Nola, an industrial estate caught fire; on 14 July another fire broke out on another industrial estate between the towns of Saviano and Nola, creating a toxic cloud that reached surrounding populated areas and farmland, covering an area of 15 square kilometres. The members of the public and fire brigade who intervened showed symptoms of poisoning. The local authorities did not provide timely instructions to citizens on how to deal with the situation. To date, no checks have been carried out to monitor the possible contamination of the water and soil, while those citizens who asked to see the results of the tests carried out on the air, concerned about their state of health, were denied such access. Statements issued by the local authorities on the matter appear to be contradictory. The tests conducted did not, apparently, take into account the presence of dioxins in the air.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

— Is it aware of the health and environmental emergency in the area in question?

— Will it request information from the Italian authorities and call for the prompt executionof all necessary inspections and tests, in order to get a clear picture of the immediate andmedium- and long-term risks to citizens in the affected areas, in addition to informationregarding the countermeasures that should be taken?

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

Further to the information provided by the Honourable Member, the Commission will ask the Italian authorities to identify the industrial estates where the fires took place in order to verify whether these establishments are covered by the Seveso Directive (Directive 96/82/EC ([1])) and, if so, to verify whether the abovementioned obligations have been complied with.

([1]) OJ L 10, 14.1.1997.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-009557/13
alla Commissione
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(13 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Possibili finanziamenti per le attività svolte dalla polizia locale

È opinione comune che le funzioni dell'agente di polizia locale siano limitate alla viabilità e alla regolazione del traffico. In realtà le attività della polizia locale sono più complesse e variegate e si ricollegano alle funzioni di polizia amministrativa, giudiziaria e di sicurezza in base a leggi e regolamenti nazionali.

Nell'ambito del territorio dei comuni italiani, la polizia locale svolge infatti numerosi compiti, tra i quali: tutelare i beni municipali; vigilare sul regolare svolgimento della libertà, della sicurezza dei cittadini e sul regolare andamento dei pubblici servizi; esercitare la vigilanza sulle attività del commercio con compiti di prevenzione e repressione degli abusi in danno del consumatore; verificare che nei mercati e nei pubblici esercizi vengano osservate le norme igienico-sanitarie; effettuare i controlli sulla salubrità del suolo, degli aggregati urbani e delle abitazioni; assicurare che nel territorio di competenza l'attività edilizia si svolga in conformità alle leggi, adoperandosi affinché non vengano commessi abusi in materia di costruzioni, demolizioni, restauri. Inoltre, la polizia locale ha funzioni di polizia stradale e di polizia giudiziaria ed esercita funzioni e compiti che risultano analoghi a quelli esercitati dalle altre forze di polizia dello Stato.

Ciò premesso, può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

1. quali programmi o finanziamenti sono previsti per le attività ed i compiti svolti dalla polizia locale nell'ambito della programmazione 2007-2013 (anche in termini di risultati attesi ed obiettivi raggiunti) ed in quella 2014-2020?

2. Come intende la Commissione valorizzare i compiti e le mansioni oggi svolti dalle polizie locali?

3. Può fornire un'analisi dei modelli organizzativi e delle buone pratiche delle polizie locali in Europa?

4. Può fornire un quadro generale della situazione?

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

Tra le modalità di intervento del Fondo europeo di sviluppo regionale (FESR) non è contemplato il cofinanziamento di attività e compiti di specifica competenza delle forze di polizia locale. Poiché tuttavia la sicurezza rappresenta un fattore essenziale per lo sviluppo economico delle regioni meno sviluppate dell'Italia meridionale il FESR ha cofinanziato il programma nazionale «Sicurezza per lo sviluppo», direttamente gestito dal Ministero dell'Interno italiano nell'intento di rafforzare la sicurezza nelle quattro regioni dell'obiettivo Convergenza (Sicilia, Puglia, Calabria e Campania). Tra i principali progetti cofinanziati nel quadro del programma figurano l'addestramento delle forze di polizia di Stato, il miglioramento degli strumenti tecnologici in uso alle forze di polizia, la lotta al lavoro sommerso, l'incentivazione della trasparenza negli appalti pubblici, l'integrazione degli immigrati e la gestione dei beni confiscati alle organizzazioni criminali.

Analogamente a quanto esposto per il FESR, anche nel quadro del Fondo sociale europeo (FSE) non sono previsti in Italia provvedimenti specifici destinati alle forze di polizia locale. Le forze di polizia locale possono peraltro giovarsi di iniziative volte a migliorare lo spirito di adattamento degli operatori e/o a potenziare le capacità istituzionali cofinanziate nell'ambito del FSE.

Il programma «Prevenzione e lotta contro la criminalità» (ISEC 2007-2013) mira a promuovere la cooperazione operativa tra le forze di polizia e garantire il mantenimento dell'ordine e della sicurezza pubblica nell'UE. Dal periodo 2014-2020 in poi il programma ISEC sarà sostituito dal Fondo per la sicurezza interna (FSI), che si occuperà in particolare di cooperazione di polizia, prevenzione e lotta alla criminalità nonché gestione delle crisi. La base giuridica del Fondo per la sicurezza interna è ancora da decidere.

La Commissione non è in grado di fornire un'analisi dei modelli organizzativi e delle prassi ottimali seguite dalle forze di polizia locale in Europa.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009557/13
to the Commission
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Possibility of funding for the work of the local police

It is commonly thought that the duties of local police officers are limited to road duties and directing traffic. In actual fact, the work done by the local police is more complex and varied and is related to administrative, judicial and security policing under national laws and regulations.

In Italian municipalities, the local police perform numerous tasks, including: protecting municipal assets; ensuring that citizens are able to move around freely and safely and that public services are working properly; supervising business activities, preventing and punishing any abuses against consumers; checking that markets, shops, restaurants, etc. comply with health and hygiene regulations; carrying out checks on the health of the soil, of urban areas and housing; ensuring that in their area all construction activity complies with the law, endeavouring to ensure that no unlawful deeds are committed with regard to construction, demolition or renovation. The local police also perform the duties of traffic police and judicial police and carry out tasks and duties that are similar to those carried out by other state police forces.

Can the Commission therefore:

1. say what programmes or funding are available for the activities and tasks carried out bylocal police under the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods (in terms also ofexpected results and targets achieved);

2. say how it intends to highlight the duties and tasks currently performed by thelocal police;

3. provide an analysis of organisational models and best practices of local police forces inEurope;

4. give an overview of the situation?

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

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) does not foresee the co-financing of activities and tasks specifically carried out by local police forces. However, since security is a key asset for the economic development of the less developed regions in the South of Italy, the ERDF has co-financed a national programme 'Security for Development' directly managed by the Italian Ministry of Interior with a view to strengthening security in the four Convergence regions (Sicily, Apulia, Calabria and Campania). The main measures co-financed by the programme are the training of national police forces, improving technological equipment of police forces, combating illegal work, promoting the transparency of public procurement, integrating immigrants and managing goods confiscated from criminal organisations.

As under the ERDF, there are no specific measures targeting local police forces under the European Social Fund (ESF) in Italy. However, local police forces may benefit from actions aiming to improve the adaptability of workers and/or enhance institutional capacity which are co-financed under the ESF.

The programme 'Prevention of and fight against crime' (ISEC 2007-2013) aims at promoting operational police cooperation and guaranteeing security and public order in the EU. From 2014-2020 onwards, the ISECprogramme will be replaced by the Internal Security Fund (ISF) in particular covering police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management. The ISF legal basis is still to be adopted.

The Commission is not in the position to provide an analysis of organisational models and best practices of local police forces in Europe.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009558/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(13 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Gestolen hulpgoederen, in Somalië en elders

Het Britse Department for International Development (DFID) bevestigde dat de aan Al Qaeda gelieerde moslimterreurgroep Al Shahaab voor GBP 480 000 aan hulpgoederen „in beslag genomen" heeft in Somalië. Het ontvreemden van hulpgoederen gebeurt wellicht ook in andere landen.

Beschikt de Commissie over cijfers, of schattingen, betreffende EU-steun die gestolen wordt (ook wanneer de hulp verstrekt wordt via ngo's)? Graag cijfers over de jaren 2010, 2011 en 2012.

Antwoord van de heer Piebalgs namens de Commissie
(4 oktober 2013)

De EU heeft in het kader van het tiende EOF 422 miljoen EUR vrijgemaakt voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking met Somalië in de periode 2008-2013. Het grootste deel van deze middelen gaat naar toegankelijke gebieden met een adequate veiligheid en een transparant bestuur (Somaliland en Puntland). De ontwikkelingshulp van de EU aan Zuid- en Centraal-Somalië, waar Al-Shabaab voornamelijk opereert, is vooral gericht op Mogadishu en nabije omgeving, waar de veiligheidssituatie zodanig is dat de ontwikkelingspartners doorgaans kunnen opereren. De EU is niet op de hoogte van de ontvreemding van humanitaire of ontwikkelingshulpgoederen in Somalië of in andere landen, maar zij erkent dit risico.

Om dit risico te beperken, heeft het bureau voor humanitaire hulp van de EU een controlesysteem ingevoerd dat bestaat uit een reeks controles vooraf of achteraf. Tijdens de uitvoering van projecten worden regelmatig controles en evaluaties verricht via bezoeken ter plaatse en tussentijdse en eindevaluaties. In een bijzonder moeilijke context als de door Al Shahaab gecontroleerde zones in Somalië hebben de diensten van de Commissie getracht de hulpverlening te verbeteren door een strenge selectie van partners en programma's. Over de hele wereld wordt door een 140-tal deskundigen in regio's waar financiering voor humanitaire hulp het meest nodig is voortdurend toezicht gehouden op en gerapporteerd over de gefinancierde maatregelen en de prestaties van de partners. Daarnaast worden op zeer regelmatige basis controles bij de centrale diensten in Brussel en ter plaatse verricht.

Door het voortdurende conflict en de onveiligheid kunnen donoren weliswaar worden gehinderd in hun toegang ter plaatse en de controle op de projecten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009558/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Theft of aid supplies in Somalia and elsewhere

The British Department for International Development (DFID) has confirmed that Al Shahaab, a Muslim terrorist group with links to Al-Qaida, has 'confiscated' GBP 480 000 worth of aid supplies in Somalia. It is possible that the theft of aid supplies also occurs in other countries too.

Does the Commission possess any figures or estimates concerning EU aid that has been stolen (including when such aid is supplied via NGOs)? I should be glad if the Commission could provide figures for 2010, 2011 and 2012.

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

The EU has mobilised EUR 422 million in development cooperation for Somalia between 2008-2013 under the 10th EDF, and the majority of these funds are targeted towards accessible areas with adequate security and transparent governance, allowing for the appropriate access (Somaliland and Puntland). EU development aid to South-Central Somalia where the Al-Shabaab is primarily active, is mainly targeting Mogadishu and direct surroundings where security conditions do generally allow for development partners to intervene. The EU is not aware of the theft of humanitarian or development aid supplies in Somalia nor in other countries, although it recognises this risk exists.

To mitigate this risk, the EU humanitarian aid department has put in place a control system consisting of several layers of *ex-ante* or *ex-post* checks. During project implementation, regular monitoring and evaluations are carried out through field visits and mid-term and end-term evaluations. In a very difficult context like Al Shabaab controlled areas in Somalia, the Commission's departments have sought to improve the delivery of aid through rigorous selection of partners and programmes. About 140 experts are based around the world, in the regions where humanitarian aid funding is most needed, to constantly monitor and report back on the operations funded and on partners' performance. Field and headquarters audits of humanitarian operations also take place on a very regular basis.

However, the ongoing conflict and insecurity can jeopardise donors' capacity to gain access to the field and to monitor projects.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009559/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(13 augustus 2013)

Betreft: OIC-vertegenwoordiging bij de EU

De Organisatie voor Islamitische Samenwerking (OIC) beschikt sinds kort over een officiële vertegenwoordiging bij de Europese Unie.

De OIC verzet zich openlijk tegen de vrije meningsuiting, door elke kritiek op de islam te laten brandmerken als „islamofobie" en door de EU-lidstaten onder druk te zetten „islamofobie" strafbaar te maken. De organisatie beschikt ook over een islamitische verklaring voor de rechten van de mens — de Caïroverklaring — waarvan artikel 24 bepaalt: „All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this Declaration are subject to the Islamic Shari'ah".

De sharia staat, om het zacht uit te drukken, op gespannen voet met de Europese democratische waarden. Waarom wordt de vertegenwoordiging van de OIC desondanks erkend door de Europese Unie?

Wat houdt de erkenning van een organisatie als de OIC concreet in? Krijgen de vertegenwoordigers een diplomatieke status?

Antwoord van hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie
(23 oktober 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 het grootste deel van de moslimwereld. De OIC is in het afgelopen decennium aanzienlijk veranderd. De organisatie heeft ook haar samenwerkingsagenda uitgebreid naar gebieden als economie, cultuur, wetenschap, ontwikkeling en humanitaire kwesties.

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

De overeenkomst inzake het hoofdkantoor tussen de organisatie en het ontvangende land, die onder meer de diplomatieke status regelt, verzekert de toepassing van de door de internationale verdragen vastgestelde bepalingen.

Vrijheid van meningsuiting is op grond van de EU-wetgeving een van de belangrijkste pijlers van democratische samenlevingen, als neergelegd in artikel 11, lid 1, van het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie. De interpretatie van dit artikel volgt de jurisprudentie van het Hof van Justitie van de Europese Unie en het Europees Hof voor de rechten van de mens. Dit recht beschermt niet alleen informatie of ideeën die gunstig worden onthaald of die worden beschouwd als ongevaarlijk of onverschillig, maar ook ideeën die beledigen, schokken of storen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009559/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Representation of the OIC to the EU

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) recently established an official representation to the European Union.

The OIC openly opposes freedom of expression by having any criticism of Islam branded as 'Islamophobia' and by putting pressure on EU Member States to make 'Islamophobia' a criminal offence. The organisation also has an Islamic declaration of human rights — the Cairo Declaration — Article 24 of which stipulates 'All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this Declaration are subject to the Islamic Shari'ah'.

Sharia law is — to put it mildly — difficult to reconcile with European democratic values. Why is the OIC's representation nonetheless recognised by the European Union?

What does the recognition of an organisation such as the OIC specifically entail? Will the representatives be granted diplomatic status?

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission
(23 October 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 also enlarged its cooperation agenda to encompass economic, culture, scientific, development and humanitarian areas.

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 is scope for fostering better understanding. 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 cooperation.

The headquarters agreement between the organisation and the host country, regulating the diplomatic status among other issues, ensures the application of the provisions laid down by the relevant international conventions.

Under EC law, freedom of expression constitutes one of the essential foundations of democratic societies, enshrined in Article 11(1) of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The interpretation of this article draws from the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human rights. This right protects not only information or ideas that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also those that offend, shock or disturb.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009560/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(13 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Deelname commissarissen aan Bilderbergconferentie (2)

Als antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-006615/2013 over de deelname van de voorzitter van de Commissie en de vicevoorzitter voor Justitie, grondrechten en burgerschap aan de Bilderbergconferentie, die in juni 2013 plaatsvond in het Grove-hotel in Hertfordshire, antwoordt de heer Barroso namens de Commissie dat zij niet hebben deelgenomen als vertegenwoordigers van de Commissie. Nochtans stonden zij in die hoedanigheid vermeld op de deelnemerslijst die door de Bilderberggroep was bekendgemaakt. De situatie van de Europese Unie was ook aangekondigd als agendapunt.

Wie heeft de reis- en verblijfskosten van beide commissarissen betaald?

De heer Barroso meldt verder dat er over de discussies die tijdens de conferentie zijn gevoerd, geen verslag aan de Commissie is uitgebracht. Is dat een beletsel om de teksten van de toespraken van beide commissarissen alsnog vrij te geven, in het kader van de openbaarheid van bestuur?

Antwoord van de heer Barroso namens de Commissie
(26 september 2013)

De Commissie is niet verantwoordelijk voor de publicatie van de deelnemerslijst van de Bilderbergconferentie. Hoewel zij lid zijn van de Europese Commissie, hebben voorzitter Barroso en vicevoorzitter Reding de Bilderbergconferentie van 2013 op persoonlijke titel bijgewoond en niet als vertegenwoordigers van de Commissie. Hetzelfde geldt voor de deelname van andere leden van de Commissie aan eerdere Bilderbergconferenties.

In aanvulling op haar antwoord op parlementaire vraag E-007204/2013 kan de Commissie verduidelijken dat de deelname van de voorzitter aan de Bilderbergconferentie geen extra kosten voor de Uniebegroting met zich mee heeft gebracht, aangezien de heer Barroso op 6 juni 2013 toch al voor een officiële dienstreis in Londen moest zijn. Wat de reis- en verblijfkosten van vicevoorzitter Reding betreft, verwijst de Commissie het geachte Parlementslid naar het antwoord op parlementaire vraag E-7306/2011 over een soortgelijk onderwerp.

Wat de verslagen over de eventuele bijdragen van de heer Barroso en mevrouw Reding aan de conferentie betreft, kan de Commissie niets toevoegen aan de antwoorden die zij heeft gegeven op de parlementaire vragen E-006615/2013 en E-007204/2013.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009560/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Participation by Commissioners in the Bilderberg Conference (2)

In reply to Written Question E-006615/2013 concerning participation by the President of the Commission and the Vice-President responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship in the Bilderberg Conference at the Grove Hotel in Hertfordshire in June 2013, Mr Barroso wrote on behalf of the Commission that they had not attended the conference as representatives of the Commission. Nonetheless, they were identified as such on the list of participants published by the Bilderberg Group. It was also announced that the situation of the European Union was among the items on the agenda.

Who paid the travel and subsistence expenses of the two Commissioners?

Mr Barroso also states that the Commission did not receive any report on the discussions held during the conference. Does it follow that the texts of the addresses delivered by the two Commissioners cannot now be released, in the interests of open government?

Answer given by Mr Barroso on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The Commission is not responsible for the publication of the list of participants to the Bilderberg conference. Albeit being members of the European Commission, President Barroso and Vice-President Reding attended the 2013 Bilderberg conference in their personal capacity and not as representatives of the Commission, as it was the case in the past concerning the participation of other Members of the Commission to previous Bilderberg conferences.

In addition to answer to Parliamentary Question E-007204/2013, the Commission can clarify that the President's participation to the Bilderberg conference did not involve additional costs to the Community Budget, as President Barroso was already in London on official mission on 6 June 2013. As regards Vice-President Reding's mission costs, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable member to the answer given to Parliamentary Question E- 7306/2011 on a similar topic.

As regards reports concerning their possible interventions, there is nothing to add to the answers already given to Parliamentary Questions E-006615/2013 and E-007204/2013.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009561/13
aan de Commissie
Laurence J. A. J. Stassen (NI)
(13 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Misbruik ontwikkelingshulp door corrupte regimes

Volgens de Daily Mail ([1]) is er voldoende bewijs dat leiders van een reeks ontwikkelingslanden er een exorbitante levensstijl op nahouden, terwijl deze landen ook ontvangers zijn van grote sommen ontwikkelingsgeld. Naar aanleiding hiervan heb ik de volgende vragen:

1. Kan de Commissie een overzicht geven van alle landen die ontwikkelingshulp ontvangen via de EU en kan de Commissie daarnaast een indicatie geven van de privévermogens van de leiders van deze landen, incl. roerende en onroerende goederen?

2. Kan de Commissie verzekeren dat deze vermogens en bezittingen niet door corruptie of met ontwikkelingsgeld verkregen zijn? Zo nee, is de Commissie bereid alle EU-hulp aan deze landen per direct stop te zetten?

3. Deelt de Commissie de mening dat ontwikkelingshulp niet bijdraagt aan het welzijn van de bevolking, maar corruptie in de hand werkt en dictatoriale leiders in staat stelt zich nog meer te verrijken? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Piebalgs namens de Commissie
(8 oktober 2013)

1. Een lijst van de landen waaraan EU-ontwikkelingshulp wordt verleend, wordt jaarlijks gepubliceerd op de website van EuropeAid ([2]). De Commissie kan geen overzichten bijhouden van het privévermogen van buitenlandse leiders.

2. De uitbetaling van EU-ontwikkelingshulp wordt geregeld in bilaterale en multilaterale overeenkomsten met bepalingen ter voorkoming van onregelmatigheden, fraude en corruptie. Met een degelijk controlesysteem dat voorziet in controles voorafgaand aan, tijdens en na de financiering, wordt ervoor gezorgd dat de financiering in overeenstemming is met de beginselen van wettigheid en regelmatigheid. Partnerlanden dienen de Commissie in kennis te stellen van vermeende fraude en corruptie, waarna OLAF een onderzoek instelt. Steun kan onmiddellijk worden opgeschort wanneer de financiële belangen en de reputatie van de EU dit vereisen. In het algemeen moet de reactie op een verslechtering van het beheer van de overheidsfinanciën en het politiek bestuur geleidelijk en proportioneel tot stand komen en moet hierbij rekening worden gehouden met de behoeften van de armen. In voorkomend geval moeten de EU, de lidstaten en andere donoren gezamenlijk maatregelen ontwerpen om de gevolgen voor de armen te beperken.

3. In het algemeen draagt door de donorgemeenschap verstrekte ontwikkelingshulp zowel direct als indirect bij tot het welzijn van de plaatselijke bevolking. De Europese Commissie streeft naar snelle en efficiënte hulpverlening in de landen waar hulp het hardst nodig is, waarbij de financiering slechts na een zorgvuldige analyse van de situatie wordt verstrekt. Door het uitoefenen van toezicht wordt ervoor gezorgd dat de hulpverlening doeltreffend is en beantwoordt aan kwaliteitsnormen. De EU voert een zeer krachtdadig beleid op het vlak van corruptiebestrijding, aangezien corruptie een fundamentele hinderpaal is voor het bereiken van ontwikkelingsdoelstellingen en wordt beschouwd als een symptoom van slecht bestuur. Goed bestuur is daarom de voorbije jaren een belangrijke ontwikkelingsdoelstelling geworden en is een centraal thema in de externe bijstand van de EU.

([1]) http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2386482/So-right-UKIP-MEP-Godfrey-Blooms-comments-caused-storm--ample-evidence-claims.html#ixzz2bTIeQpRm.

([2]) COM(2013) 594 final, blz. 189-199, online beschikbaar op: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/documents/annual-reports/europeaid_annual_report_2013_full_en.pdfpdf.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009561/13
to the Commission
Laurence J.A.J. Stassen (NI)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Misuse of development aid by corrupt regimes

According to the Daily Mail ([1]) there is ample evidence that leaders of a number of developing countries enjoy an extravagant lifestyle, while their countries are in receipt of large sums in development aid. I should therefore like to ask the following questions:

1. Can the Commission list all the countries which receive development aid via the EU, together with an indication of the private fortunes of these countries' leaders (including both moveable and immoveable property)?

2. Can the Commission guarantee that these fortunes and possessions were not acquired via corruption or with development money? If not, is it prepared to halt all EU aid to these countries immediately?

3. Does the Commission agree that development aid does not contribute to the welfare of a country's population but merely aids and abets corruption, enabling dictatorial leaders to enrich themselves still further? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Piebalgs on behalf of the Commission
(8 October 2013)

1. A list of recipient countries of EU development aid is published annually on the EuropeAid website. ([2]) The Commission is not in a position to maintain lists of foreign leaders' private wealth.

2. The disbursement of EU development aid is governed by bilateral and multilateral agreements with provisions on the prevention of Irregularities, Fraud and Corruption. A solid control system, with checks prior to, during and after implementation of funding, ensures that funding follows legality and regularity criteria. Partner countries are bound to inform the Commission of alleged fraud and corruption. OLAF carries out investigations of alleged fraud and corruption. Aid can be suspended immediately when EU financial interests and reputation so require. Generally the response to deterioration of conditions pertaining to public financial management and political governance should be progressive and proportionate taking into account the needs of the poor. Where appropriate, measures to limit the impact on the poor should be designed jointly by the EU and Member States and other donors.

3. Development aid provided by the broader donor community contributes to the welfare of the local population both directly and indirectly. The European Commission seeks to deliver aid quickly and efficiently where it is most needed after a careful analysis before committing any funding. Monitoring ensures that actions are effective and meet quality standards. The EU takes an extremely firm stance on corruption which is a major obstacle to achieving development goals and is seen as a symptom of poor governance. Therefore governance as a development policy objective has been considerably strengthened in recent years and is a central feature of EU external assistance.

([1]) http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2386482/So-right-UKIP-MEP-Godfrey-Blooms-comments-caused-storm--ample-evidence-claims.html#ixzz2bTleQpRm

([2]) COM(2013) 594 final, p.189 — 199, available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/documents/annual-reports/europeaid_annual_report_2013_full_en.pdf

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor P-009562/13
upućeno Komisiji
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(13. kolovoza 2013.)

Predmet: Revizija projekta TEN-T (Hrvatska)

Europska unija trenutno redefinira svoju prometnu politiku te su već poduzeti neki od najvažnijih koraka. Izrađena je nova karta TEN-T koja prikazuje nove osnovne pravce i cjelokupnu prometnu mrežu, a izvještaj dobro napreduje u okviru zakonodavnog postupka. Kao buduća država članica Hrvatska je u određenoj mjeri bila uključena u izradu nove politike, ali glavna prometna pitanja ostala su neriješena, naročito ona koja se odnose na susjedne države koje nisu članice EU-a. Osim toga, Hrvatska ima i kopnenu i morsku granicu te je stoga suočena s brojnim izazovima koje nemaju druge države članice koje ne graniče s državama koje nisu članice EU-a.

Optimalno definiranje prometnih veza između jugoistočne i srednje Europe odlučujući je element za povezivanje tih regija. Europski pravac E59 koji povezuje srednju i jugoistočnu Europu jedan je od primjera takvih vitalnih veza. Osim što će to donijeti korist državama članicama EU-a, boljom prometnom infrastrukturom stvorit će se dodatna vrijednost kao stabilizirajući faktor za države regije koje nisu članice EU-a.

U tom kontekstu, nova reforma prometne politike planirana za 2023. trebala bi obuhvatiti i opsežnu reviziju i redefiniranje određenih prometnih pravaca.

U sklopu pripreme za to, trebalo bi osnovati interesnu skupinu sastavljenu od predstavnika država članica. Smatra li Komisija to mogućim, te unutar kojeg pravnog okvira?

Odgovor g. Kallasa u ime Komisije
(4. rujna 2013.)

Nakon Komisijinog prijedloga Uredbe Europskog parlamenta i Vijeća o smjernicama Unije za razvoj transeuropske prometne mreže (TEN-T) ([1]), oba su zakonodavca u svibnju 2013. dogovorila novi pravni okvir za politiku mreže TEN-T. Hrvatska je bila u potpunosti uključena u završne pregovore, posebno u pogledu karata TEN-T-a iz Priloga I. budućoj Uredbi. Zakonodavci Uredbu još uvijek trebaju formalno odobriti. Nakon toga će provedba novog političkog okvira postati prioritet.

U vezi s revizijom provedbe središnje mreže, što će se u skladu s Uredbom izvršiti do 2023., Komisija će se savjetovati s državama članicama i odgovarajućim dionicima. Upravljačke će strukture koridora središnje mreže, kako je utvrđeno u Uredbi, biti jedno od mjesta gdje će predstavnici država članica moći razmjenjivati informacije, što može dovesti do moguće revizije provedbe središnje mreže.

([1]) COM(2011)0650 završna verzija/3.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009562/13
to the Commission
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: TEN-T overhaul (Croatia)

The European Union is currently redefining its transport policy and some key steps have already been taken. The new TEN-T map showing the new core and comprehensive transport networks has been drawn up and the report has made substantial progress through the legislative procedure. As a future Member State, Croatia was, to some extent, involved in the shaping of the new policies, but many key transport issues have been left undefined, especially those concerning neighbouring non-EU countries. Furthermore, Croatia has both land and sea borders, and as such faces a number of challenges that other Member States not bordering non-EU countries do not experience.

The optimum definition of transport links between south-eastern and central Europe is a crucial element for the cohesion of those regions. One example of those vital links is European route E59 that connects central Europe with the south-east. As well as benefiting EU countries, better transport infrastructure will also create added value as a stabilising factor for non-EU countries in the region.

In this context, the next transport policy reform scheduled for 2023 should encompass a comprehensive overhaul and redefinition of certain transport routes.

In preparation for this, an interest group consisting of Member States' representatives should be formed. Does the Commission consider this to be possible, and within what legal framework?

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

Following the Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) ([1]), both legislators agreed in May 2013 on a new legal framework for the TEN-T policy. Croatia was fully involved in the final negotiations, in particular as regards the maps of the TEN-T set out in Annex I to the future Regulation. The latter still has to be formally approved by the legislators. The implementation of the new policy framework will then be the priority.

As regards the review of the implementation of the core network, which according to the new Regulation will be carried out by 2023, the Commission will consult Member States and relevant stakeholders. The governance structures of the core network corridors, as provided for in the new Regulation, will be one of the venues for Member States' representatives to exchange information leading to a possible review of the implementation of the core network.

([1]) COM(2011)0650final/3.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009563/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(13. august 2013)

Om: Mærkning af samtlige ingredienser i medicin

Har Kommissionen initiativer på vej med henblik på at gøre mærkning af samtlige ingredienser i medicin — dvs. også ikke-aktive stoffer som fx gelé i kapsler og bindemiddel til piller — obligatorisk?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Tonio Borg
(30. september 2013)

I EU-lovgivningen om lægemidler ([1]), som fastsætter, hvilke oplysninger der skal fremgå af mærkningen af lægemidler, er opmærksomheden rettet mod alle ingredienser, herunder ikke virksomme stoffer, dvs. hjælpestoffer som f.eks. gelatine i kapsler. I henhold til lovgivningen skal etiketten være påført en fortegnelse over de hjælpestoffer, som har en erkendt virkning, og som er fastsat i »Guideline on excipients in the label and package leaflet of medicinal products for human use« (retningslinjer for hjælpestoffer på etiket og indlægsseddel for lægemidler til mennesker) ([2]). Hvis der er tale om injektionspræparater, et præparat til lokal anvendelse eller et øjenmiddel, skal samtlige hjælpestoffer fremgå af mærkningen. Derudover skal der på indlægssedlen gives oplysninger om sammensætningen, udtrykt gennem en fuldstændig kvalitativ angivelse (i virksomme stoffer og hjælpestoffer).

Siden den sidste revision af ovennævnte retningslinjer i juli 2003 er der afdækket flere sikkerhedsproblemer vedrørende hjælpestoffer, som i øjeblikket ikke er omfattet af retningslinjerne. Europa-Kommissionen har besluttet at tage retningslinjerne op til revision, og i 2012 blev der offentliggjort et oplæg om behovet for en sådan revision ([3]). I forbindelse med den løbende revision af retningslinjerne offentliggjorde Det Europæiske Lægemiddelagentur i april 2013 forslag til retningslinjer med henblik på en offentlig høring om phthalater og parabener som hjælpestoffer ([4]) ([5]).

Kommissionen har i øjeblikket ingen planer om at foreslå ændringer af lægemiddellovgivningen for så vidt angår mærkningen af ingredienser i lægemidler.

([1]) Direktiv 2001/83/EF, EFT L 311 af 28.11.2001.
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003412.pdf.
([3]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2012/03/WC500123804.pdf
([4]) Guideline on the use of phthalates as excipients in human medicinal products (Draft), http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2013/05/WC500143140.pdf
([5]) Draft reflection paper on the use of methyl- and propylparaben as excipients in human medicinal products for oral use, http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2013/05/WC500143139.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009563/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Labelling of all ingredients in medicines

Does the Commission plan any initiatives aimed at making it mandatory to label all ingredients in medicines, i.e. including non-active substances such as gelatine in capsules and excipients in pills?

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

The EU legislation on medicinal products ([1]), which determines the information that should appear on the labelling of a medicinal product, pays attention to all ingredients including non-active substances, i.e. excipients, such as gelatine in capsules. The legislation requires that a list of those excipients known to have a recognised action or effect and included in the 'Guideline on excipients in the label and package leaflet of medicinal products for human use' ([2]) appears on the labelling. If the product is injectable, or a topical or eye preparation, all excipients must be stated on the labelling. In addition, a full qualitative composition of the medicinal product (in active substances and excipients) has to be included in package leaflet.

Since the last revision of the abovementioned guideline in July 2003 several safety concerns regarding excipients have been identified which are not currently addressed in the guideline. The European Commission has decided to revise the 'Guideline on excipients' and a concept paper on the need for such revision has been published in 2012 ([3]). Within the framework of the ongoing revision of the guideline, the European Medicines Agency published draft documents for public consultation on phthalates and parabens as excipients in April 2013 ([4]),([5]).

The Commission currently does not plan to propose amendments to the pharmaceutical legislation as regards labelling of the ingredients of the medicinal products.

([1]) Directive 2001/83/EC, OJ L 311, of 28.11.2001,
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2009/09/WC500003412.pdf
([3]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2012/03/WC500123804.pdf
([4]) Guideline on the use of phthalates as excipients in human medicinal products (Draft), http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2013/05/WC500143140.pdf
([5]) Draft reflection paper on the use of methyl- and propylparaben as excipients in human medicinal products for oral use, http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Scientific_guideline/2013/05/WC500143139.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009564/13
an die Kommission
Paul Rübig (PPE)
(13. August 2013)

Betrifft: Betrügerischer Missbrauch des Systems der Drittanbieterabrechnung bei Mobilfunkrechnungen

Bei der Drittanbieterabrechnung handelt es sich um ein System, bei welchem unter anderem Anbieter von Dienstleistungen (zum Beispiel Website-Betreiber) ihre Dienste dem Kunden direkt über die Mobilfunkrechnung verrechnen können. Dieses System scheint strukturell missbraucht zu werden, indem betrügerische Vereinigungen den vorgesehenen mehrstufigen Prozess, der das System des Fernabsatzes sicher gestalten sollte, umgehen. Dies geschieht zum Beispiel durch die Auflösung des Prozesses durch Schadprogramme oder durch die einfache Behauptung eines Vertragsverhältnisses. Sowohl vom Standpunkt des Verbraucherschutzes als auch von einer gesamtwirtschaftlichen Perspektive ist der betrügerische Gebrauch der Direktverrechnung ein großes Problem.

1. Ist sich die Kommission bewusst, dass dieses Problem existiert und aufgrund der supranationalen Aktionsfelder der betrügerischen Vereinigungen ein „europäisches" Problem ist, welches auf europäischer Ebene gelöst werden muss?

2. Was plant die Kommission zu tun, um diese in der Europäischen Union weit verbreitete und die Grenzen zwischen den einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten oftmals überschreitende Praxis abzustellen?

3. Plant die Kommission zur Lösung dieses Problems eventuell die Umstellung des momentanen „Opt-OUT"-Systems bei Mobiltelefonverträgen, bei welchem der Kunde eines Mobilfunkanbieters bei Vertragsabschluss automatisch dem System der Drittanbieterabrechnung — oftmals unwissentlich — zustimmt, in ein „Opt-IN"-System, bei welchem er sich für die Möglichkeit der Direktabrechnung bewusst entscheiden müsste?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(25. September 2013)

Es entstehen neue Geschäftsmodelle zwischen Mobilfunknetzbetreibern und Anbietern digitaler Inhalte, bei denen die Abrechnung durch den Netzbetreiber als Zahlungsinstrument verwendet wird. Die Kommission nimmt die Besorgnis des Herrn Abgeordneten über betrügerische Praktiken, bei denen die Bezahlung per Mobilfunkrechnung missbraucht wird, zur Kenntnis. Die Regulierungskonzepte der Mitgliedstaaten sind unterschiedlich und umfassen unter anderem: eine vorherige Registrierung von Drittanbietern (Inhalteanbietern) bei bestimmten Behörden, die Überwachungs- und Sanktionsbefugnisse wahrnehmen; eine Verpflichtung zur Einhaltung von Verhaltenskodizes/vorbildlichen Praktiken; Verpflichtungen in Bezug auf Preisangaben und eine vorherige Zustimmung der Verbraucher sowie die Verpflichtung, die Erbringung der Dienstleistung jederzeit auf Verlangen des Verbrauchers zu beenden. Einige Mobilfunknetzbetreiber beschränken die Möglichkeit der Bezahlung per Telefonrechnung, indem sie beispielsweise Höchstbeträge für Transaktionen festlegen oder bestimmte Dienstleistungen ausschließen.

Der gegenwärtig geltende EU-Rechtsrahmen für die elektronische Kommunikation umfasst zwar keine Vorschriften über die Bezahlung per Mobilfunkrechnung, er enthält aber eine Reihe von Vorschriften zum Schutz der Verbraucher, z. B. in Bezug auf Methoden zur Kostenkontrolle und Streitbeilegungsverfahren, die in den Mitgliedstaaten umgesetzt werden müssen. Der neue Kommissionsvorschlag für eine Verordnung über den europäischen Binnenmarkt der elektronischen Kommunikation und die Harmonisierung der Rechte der Endnutzer, umfasst neue Maßnahmen zum Schutz der Verbraucher auch in Bezug auf unerwartet hohe Rechnungen und die Kostenkontrolle. Außerdem wirkt die Kommission in Fällen von Betrug und Missbrauch im Bereich der elektronischen Kommunikation gemeinsam mit dem GEREK ([1]) auf eine verstärkte Zusammenarbeit auf EU-Ebene hin.

([1]) Gremium europäischer Regulierungsstellen für elektronische Kommunikation (GEREK).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009564/13
to the Commission
Paul Rübig (PPE)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Mobile phone bills: third-party billing fraud

Third-party billing enables service providers (website operators, for example) to charge customers for their services via the customers' mobile phone bills. It appears that this system is being fundamentally abused to the extent that scammers are colluding in order to circumvent the multi-stage process designed to make distance selling secure. One way in which they do this is by crippling the process with malware; alternatively, they can simply invoke a contractual relationship. Both from a consumer protection viewpoint and in macroeconomic terms, third-party billing fraud is a serious problem.

1. Is the Commission aware of this situation, and does it realise that, given the supranational scale of the collusion, what is involved is a 'European' problem that has to be dealt with at European level?

2. What will the Commission do to halt this practice, which occurs widely within the EU and frequently extends beyond the confines of individual Member States?

3. Does it have any plans to resolve the problem in such a way that the present 'opt-out' arrangement, whereby a customer, when entering into a contract with a mobile phone network operator, agrees automatically — and more often than not unknowingly — to third-party billing, would be replaced by an 'opt-in' arrangement, whereby the third-party billing option would be allowable only if the customer deliberately chose to accept it?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(25 September 2013)

New business models are emerging between mobile network operators and digital content providers, where carrier billing is used as a payment instrument. The Commission takes note of the concerns of the Honourable Member with regard to the existence of fraudulent practices that abuse these carrier billing schemes. Regulatory approaches vary among Member States and include: prior registration of third-party service (content) providers with specific authorities which have supervisory and sanctioning power; imposing obligations to respect codes of conduct/best practices; imposing obligations to display prices and prior consent of consumers, obligations to allow consumer to stop the service at any time. Some mobile network operators impose restrictions on the carrier billing payments such as limits on the amount of transactions and exclusion of certain services.

While the current EU regulatory framework for electronic communications does not provide rules on third party billing it contains a number of provisions protecting consumers regarding cost control facilities and dispute resolution mechanisms to be implemented in the Member States. The new Commission proposal for a regulation concerning the European single market for electronic communications, through the harmonisation of rights of end-users, includes new measures to protect consumers including as regards 'bill shocks' and cost control. The Commission is also working with BEREC ([1]) as regards reinforced cooperation at EU level in cases of fraud and misuse in the electronic communications sector.

([1]) Body of European Regulators for electronic communications.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009565/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(13 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Richtlijn 2005/32/EG inzake ecologisch ontwerp voor het elektriciteitsverbruik

De Richtlijn 2005/32/EG had tot doel de „stand by"-functie van toestellen niet teveel elektriciteit te doen verbruiken en toestellen in het algemeen met een schakelaar te voorzien als ze die nog niet hadden.

De bestaande producten om de signalen voor kabeltelevisie te distribueren naar kabelmodems, tv's, telefoons en dergelijke meer staan gewoonlijk in het netwerk van de internet/tv-operatoren (zoals Telenet in België), al staan ze soms ook bij de mensen thuis. Deze producten zijn wel geïnstalleerd maar niet in de handel gebracht door de operatoren. Nu willen ze dat wel doen en wordt naar de schakelaar gevraagd.

Buiten de bijkomende kosten van zo'n schakelaar, is dit ook een bron van problemen. Klanten die het toestel uitschakelen hebben geen tv, internet en telefoon meer en het is voor zeer veel eindconsumenten erg moeilijk te begrijpen dat dat is omdat ze het kastje hebben uitgeschakeld. Het is daarom eerder een nutteloze schakelaar omdat deze normaal niet zal worden uitgeschakeld (men wil immers steeds kunnen bellen).

Daaromtrent enkele vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Wat is de visie van de Commissie op de toepassing van deze richtlijn?

2. Was het de bedoeling om dergelijke toestellen op te nemen in dit kader?

3. Indien deze toestellen niet hoeven te beschikken over een schakelaar, op grond van welke regel(s) mag deze dan worden weggelaten?

Antwoord van de heer Oettinger namens de Commissie
(26 september 2013)

Met de richtlijn ecologisch ontwerp 2009/125/EG (herschikking, voorheen Richtlijn 2005/32/EG) ([1]) is het kader tot stand gebracht voor de vaststelling van productspecifieke regelgevingsmaatregelen, waarmee eisen worden vastgelegd om de milieueffecten van producten te verbeteren. Een van de uitvoeringsverordeningen is de „stand-by-verordening" (Verordening (EG) nr. 1275/2008 ([2])), waarin eisen zijn vastgesteld voor de stand-by-stand en de uit-stand van elektrische en elektronische huishoud- en kantoorapparaten. Verordening (EG) nr. 642/2009 ([3]) inzake ecologisch ontwerp is specifiek van toepassing op televisies.

Momenteel omvatten enkel Verordening (EG) nr. 642/2009 en Verordening (EU) nr. 1062/2010 ([4]) (inzake energie-etikettering voor televisies) eisen met betrekking tot een netschakelaar. Deze verordeningen verplichten fabrikanten er niet toe om televisies van netschakelaars te voorzien, maar geven wel prikkels om dat te doen ([5]). Als een televisie een dergelijke netschakelaar heeft, kan de consument zelf beslissen of hij deze al of niet gebruikt. Apparatuur die onder de „stand-by-verordening" valt, moet verplicht overschakelen op een stand-by/uit-stand. Uit de effectbeoordeling die met betrekking tot deze verordening is verricht, is gebleken dat een horizontale aanpak voor een reeks producten haalbaar en kosteneffectief was.

([1]) Richtlijn 2009/125/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad van 21 oktober 2009 betreffende de totstandbrenging van een kader voor het vaststellen van eisen inzake ecologisch ontwerp voor energiegerelateerde producten, PB L 285 van 31.10.2009, blz. 10.

([2]) Verordening (EG) nr. 1275/2008 van de Commissie van 17 december 2008 tot vaststelling van uitvoeringsbepalingen van Richtlijn 2005/32/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad, wat betreft voorschriften inzake ecologisch ontwerp voor het elektriciteitsverbruik van elektrische en elektronische huishoud- en kantoorapparatuur in de stand by-stand en de uit-stand, PB L 339 van 18.12.2008, blz. 45.

([3]) Verordening (EG) nr. 642/2009 van de Commissie van 22 juli 2009 tot uitvoering van Richtlijn 2005/32/EG van het Europees Parlement en de Raad betreffende eisen inzake ecologisch ontwerp voor televisies, PB L 191 van 23.7.2009, blz. 42.

([4]) Gedelegeerde Verordening (EU) van de Commissie nr. 1062/2010 van 28 september 2010 houdende aanvulling van Richtlijn 2010/30/EU van het Europees Parlement en de Raad met betrekking tot de energie-etikettering van televisies, PB L 314 van 30.11.2010, blz. 64.

([5]) Zie deel 2, punt 2, onder a), van bijlage I bij Verordening (EG) nr. 642/2009 en deel 1, onder a), punt VI, van bijlage V bij Verordening (EU) nr. 1062/2010, PB L 314 van 30.11.2010, blz. 64.

Voor netwerkgebonden apparatuur, zoals routers, modems en digitale ontvangers/decoders enz., geldt momenteel nog een uitzondering met betrekking tot de eisen op het gebied van de stand-by/uit-stand, aangezien deze eisen kunnen worden beschouwd als „niet geschikt met het oog op de gebruiksbestemming" van deze apparatuur. Op basis van een wijzigingsverordening (Verordening (EU) nr. 801/2013 ([6])), die is vastgesteld op 22 augustus 2013, moet netwerkgebonden apparatuur naar een „netwerkgebonden stand-by-stand" overschakelen, waarin de apparatuur veel minder energie verbruikt, maar nog wel via het netwerk kan worden gereactiveerd.

([6]) Verordening (EU) nr. 801/2013 van de Commissie van 22 augustus 2013 tot wijziging van Verordening (EG) nr. 1275/2008 wat betreft voorschriften inzake ecologisch ontwerp voor het elektriciteitsverbruik van elektrische en elektronische huishoud- en kantoorapparatuur in de stand-by- en uit-stand, en tot wijziging van Verordening (EG) nr. 642/2009 betreffende eisen inzake ecologisch ontwerp voor televisies, PB L 225 van 23.8.2013, blz. 1.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009565/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(13 August 2013)

Subject: Directive 2005/32/EC on ecodesign requirements for energy-using products

The purpose of Directive 2005/32/EC was to prevent excessive power consumption in standby mode and ensure that switches were installed on devices not yet fitted with them.

Existing cable television signal routers linked to modems, television sets, telephones etc., are generally incorporated in the network used by Internet/television operators (such as Telenet in Belgium), although they may also be located in the home. These devices are installed by operators, who do not, however, market them. They are now seeking to do so, giving rise to the question of switches.

In addition to the supplementary costs incurred, problems arise when users turn off the device, thereby disconnecting their televisions, Internet access and telephones, a fact which many of them fail to grasp. This effectively renders the switch useless since, under normal circumstances, it can never be turned off (given that people always need to be able to use the telephone).

In view of this:

1. What are the Commission's views regarding implementation of the directive?

2. What was the purpose of including such devices in the provisions thereof?

3. What provisions make it possible to dispense with a switch if the devices in question do not in fact require one?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

The Ecodesign Directive 2009/125/EC (recast, previously 2005/32/EC) ([1]) establishes the framework for adopting product-specific regulatory measures that lay down requirements to improve the environmental impact of products. One of the implementing regulations is the 'Standby-Regulation' 1275/2008 ([2]), which lays down requirements for standby/off mode of electric and electronic household and office equipment. Televisions are specifically addressed by Ecodesign Regulation 642/2009 ([3]).

Currently, only Regulations 642/2009 and 1062/2010 ([4]) (Energy Labelling requirements for televisions) include 'hard off switch' requirements. However, these Regulations do not impose an obligation on manufacturers to install 'hard switches' in TVs but only give incentives to do so ([5]). If a TV has such a 'hard off switch', consumers can freely decide to use it or not to use it. Equipment in the scope of the 'Standby-Regulation' is required to switch into a standby/off operating mode. The impact assessment carried out for the regulation showed that a horizontal approach addressing a range of products was feasible and cost-effective.

Networked equipment like routers, modems and digital receivers/decoders etc., has up to now been capable of being exempted from the standby/off- requirements on the basis that these requirements could be considered 'inappropriate for the intended use'. An amending Regulation 801/2013 ([6]), adopted on 22 August 2013, will require networked equipment to switch into a mode of 'networked standby' in which the equipment consumes considerably less energy but can still be reactivated over the network.

([1]) Directive 2009/125/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for energy-related products, OJ L 285, 31/10/2009 p. 10.

([2]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 1275/2008 of 17 December 2008 implementing Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to ecodesign requirements for standby and off mode electric power consumption of electrical and electronic household and office equipment, Official Journal L 339 , 18/12/2008 Pp. 0045 — 0052.

([3]) Commission Regulation (EC) No 642/2009 of 22 July 2009 implementing Directive 2005/32/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to ecodesign requirements for televisions, Official Journal L 191 , 23/07/2009 Pp. 0042 — 0052.

([4]) Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1062/2010 of 28 September 2010 supplementing Directive 2010/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to energy labelling of televisions.

([5]) Please see point 2(2)(a) of Annex I to Regulation 642/2009 and point 1(a)(VI) of Annex V to Regulation 1062/2010.

([6]) Commission Regulation (EU) No 801/2013 of 22 August 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1275/2008 with regard to ecodesign requirements for standby, off mode electric power consumption of electrical and electronic household and office equipment, and amending Regulation (EC) No 642/2009 with regard to ecodesign requirements for televisions, Official Journal L 225, 23/08/2013 Pp. 0001 — 0012.

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-009566/13
Komisi
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(14. srpna 2013)

Předmět: Směrnice o průmyslových emisích 2010/75/EU (IED) – úrovně emisí spojené s nejlepšími dostupnými technikami

Směrnice 2010/75/EU Evropského parlamentu a Rady ze dne 24. listopadu 2010 o průmyslových emisích (dále jen směrnice) zavádí nové a přísnější mezní hodnoty emisí, které budou závazné pro spalovací zařízení v EU od ledna 2016. Tato ustanovení by měla předejít, snížit a v nejvyšší možné míře odstranit znečištění vyplývající z průmyslové činnosti v souladu se zásadou „znečišťovatel platí" a se zásadou prevence znečištění. Aby poskytly jednotlivým zařízením dostatek času na přizpůsobení se požadavkům směrnice, mohou členské státy na základě ustanovení v článku 32 směrnice sestavit a provádět přechodný národní plán pro spalovací zařízení. Spalovací zařízení, na něž se plán bude vztahovat, mohou být osvobozena od povinnosti dodržovat ustanovení směrnice od ledna 2016 a mezní hodnoty emisí pro ně tak začnou platit až od 1. července 2020. Mezitím musí být tato zařízení modernizována tak, aby bylo zaručeno dodržování směrnice.

Směrnice rovněž vyžaduje, aby příslušné orgány stanovily mezní hodnoty emisí tak, aby za normálních provozních podmínek nepřesáhly úroveň emisí spojené s nejlepšími dostupnými technikami (BAT-AEL). Pro stanovení nejlepších dostupných technik, pokud jde o úroveň emisí z průmyslové činnosti, je třeba revidovat referenční dokumenty o nejlepších dostupných technikách (dále jen referenční dokumenty o BAT) každých 8 let. Na závěry o BAT by se mělo odkazovat při stanovení podmínek povolení a zařízení by měla tyto podmínky splnit do 4 let od zveřejnění rozhodnutí o závěrech o BAT.

Proces revize stávajících referenčních dokumentů týkajících se velkých spalovacích zařízení byl oficiálně zahájen v roce 2011 a měl by být dokončen v roce 2014.

1. V kapitole 10 návrhu referenčního dokumentu je uvedeno, že BAT-AEL jsou stanoveny, aniž by byla jakkoli započítána nejistota měření. Ustanovení směrnice o průmyslových emisích umožňují započítání nejistoty. Je pravda, že pravidla IED mají přednost, a že pokud jde o BAT-AEL, je možné vzít nejistotu měření v úvahu?

2. Jak se budou BAT-AEL a závěry o BAT vztahovat na zařízení, která spadají pod výjimku stanovenou ve směrnici o průmyslových emisích (přechodné národní plány)?

Odpověď pana Potočnika jménem Komise
(17. října 2013)

Referenční dokument o nejlepších dostupných technikách (BAT) pro velká spalovací zařízení se v současné době přezkoumává podle směrnice 2010/75/EU o průmyslových emisích (IED) ([1]). Komise nedávno vydala návrh dokumentu a postoupila jej členům technické pracovní skupiny k připomínkám. Pokud jde o nejistotu měření, v kapitole 10 tohoto návrhu dokumentu vysvětlují obecné poznámky, jak jsou vyjádřeny navrhované úrovně emisí spojených s BAT (BAT-AEL). Pravidla pro určení platné průměrné hodnoty stanovené v příloze V směrnice 2010/75/EU jsou určena pro účely posouzení dodržování mezních hodnot emisí stanovených v této příloze, a proto nemají pro úrovně emisí spojených s BAT žádné přímé důsledky.

Po zveřejnění nových závěrů o BAT v Úředním věstníku budou mít příslušné orgány maximálně čtyři roky, aby přehodnotily a aktualizovaly veškerá povolení pro velká spalovací zařízení (včetně těch, na která se vztahují přechodné národní plány), aby se zajistilo dodržování směrnice 2010/75/EU a vyhovělo se příslušným ustanovením o pružnosti. Komise v současnosti zvažuje, jak toho lze nejlépe dosáhnout. Jelikož mají být závěry o BAT schváleny a zveřejněny do konce roku 2014, lhůta pro aktualizaci a zajištění souladu s povoleními bude přibližně konec roku 2018. Odpovědi na často kladené otázky ohledně provádění směrnice 2010/75/EU jsou k dispozici na internetových stránkách Komise ([2]), které jsou pravidelně aktualizovány na základě otázek členských států a zúčastněných stran.

([1]) Úř. věst. L 334, 17.12.2010.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/pollutants/stationary/ied/faq.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009566/13
to the Commission
Pavel Poc (S&D)
(14 August 2013)

Subject: Directive on industrial emissions 2010/75/EU (IED) — emission levels associated with the best available techniques

Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (hereinafter the directive) introduces new and more stringent emission limit values which will be binding for combustion plants in the EU from January 2016. These provisions should prevent, reduce and as far as possible eliminate pollution arising from industrial activities, in compliance with the 'polluter pays' principle and the principle of pollution prevention. In order to provide for a sufficient timespan for individual plants to comply with the requirements of the directive, Member States may, pursuant to the provisions of Article 32 of the directive, draw up and implement a transitional national plan covering combustion plants. Combustion plants covered by the plan may be exempted from compliance from January 2016 and the emission limit values will only apply from1 July 2020. In the meantime the plants in question are to be modernised so as to guarantee their compliance with the directive.

The directive also requires the competent authorities to set emission limit values that, under normal operating conditions, do not exceed the emission levels associated with the best available techniques (BAT-AEL). In order to determine the best available techniques as regards the level of emissions from industrial activities, reference documents for best available techniques (hereinafter BAT reference documents) are to be reviewed every 8 years. BAT conclusions should be the reference for setting permit conditions, and installations should comply with those permit conditions within 4 years of publication of decisions on BAT conclusions.

The revision process of the existing reference document concerning large combustion plants officially started in 2011 and is due to be completed in 2014.

1. In Chapter 10 of the draft reference document it is stated that BAT-AELs are set without any subtraction of measurement uncertainty. However, the provisions of the Industrial Emissions Directive do allow the subtraction of uncertainty. Is it correct that the IED rules prevail and that uncertainty modalities can be used in terms of BAT-AELs?

2. How will the BAT-AELs and BAT conclusions apply to plants that are covered by a derogation under the Industrial Emissions Directive (TNPs — transitional national plans)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(17 October 2013)

The reference document on the best available techniques (BAT) for large combustion plants is currently under revision under Directive 2010/75/EU on industrial emissions (IED) ([1]). The Commission has recently issued a draft document for comments by the technical working group members. The general considerations in Chapter 10 of this draft document clarify how the proposed emission levels associated with the BAT (BAT-AELs) are expressed, in relation to the measurement uncertainty. The rules for determining the validated average values set out in Annex V of the IED are intended for the purpose of assessing compliance with the emission limit values set out in that Annex, and therefore have no direct implications for BAT-AELs.

Competent authorities will have a maximum of four years after the new BAT conclusions have been published in the Official Journal to reconsider and update all permits for large combustion plants, including those covered by the TNP, to ensure compliance with the IED taking into account its respective flexibility provisions. The Commission is currently assessing how this can best be achieved. As the adoption and publication of the BAT conclusions is foreseen by the end of 2014, the deadline for the updating of and compliance with the permits will be around the end of 2018. Responses to frequently asked questions on the implementation of the IED are available on the Commission's website ([2]) which is regularly updated on the basis of questions raised by Member States and stakeholders.

([1]) OJ L 334, 17.12.2010.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/air/pollutants/stationary/ied/faq.htm

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009567/13
aan de Commissie
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(14 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Racistische opmerkingen door Griekse parlementsleden in het Griekse parlement

Leden van de Griekse politieke partij Gouden Dageraad maken zowel binnen ([1]), als buiten ([2]) het Griekse parlement herhaaldelijk racistische en xenofobische opmerkingen. Helaas treden de Griekse autoriteiten hier niet tegen op. De parlementsleden van Gouden Dageraad richten zich niet alleen tegen de joodse gemeenschap in Griekenland, maar ook tegen andere minderheden, zoals de Turken in West-Thracië.

Het EU-Kaderbesluit 2008/913/JBZ betreffende de bestrijding van bepaalde vormen en uitingen van racisme en vreemdelingenhaat beoogt de harmonisatie van de bestrijding van racistische misdrijven in de nationale strafrechtstelsels en de vaststelling van doeltreffende straffen voor racistische en xenofobische overtredingen in de lidstaten. De termijn voor de omzetting van dit Kaderbesluit in de nationale wetgeving was november 2010. Griekenland heeft het besluit niet omgezet en de uitwerking van antiracismewetgeving in het Griekse parlement is tot stilstand gekomen.

1. Is de Commissie op de hoogte van de antisemitische en racistische opmerkingen van parlementsleden en leden van Gouden Dageraad?

2. Wat is — tegen de achtergrond van Kaderbesluit 2008/913/JBZ — het standpunt van de Commissie ten aanzien van deze opmerkingen?

3. Gaat de Commissie haar inspanningen gericht op het veroordelen van „hate speech" en het ontkennen van de holocaust door personen in het publieke domein en politici intensiveren?

4. Gaat de Commissie erop toezien dat Griekenland een alomvattend wetgevingspakket betreffende de bestrijding van racisme en xenofobie vaststelt? Welke instrumenten staan de Commissie ter beschikking om te zorgen voor een correcte omzetting van het hierboven vermelde kaderbesluit in de Griekse wetgeving?

5. Is de Commissie van oordeel dat het Handvest van de grondrechten van de Europese Unie in dit soort gevallen van toepassing is, gezien het feit dat het kaderbesluit onderdeel uitmaakt van het recht van de Unie zoals bedoeld in artikel 51, lid 1, van het Handvest? Zo ja, is de Commissie met mij van mening dat deze racistische opmerkingen een inbreuk vormen op meerdere artikelen van het Handvest, waaronder de artikelen 1, 6, 7 en 10?

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

De Europese Commissie heeft herhaaldelijk alle vormen en uitingen van racisme en xenofobie veroordeeld, aangezien die onverenigbaar zijn met de voornaamste waarden waarop de EU is gegrondvest. Zij volgt deze ontwikkelingen nauwlettend en stelt vast dat de recente incidenten in Griekenland en elders aanleiding geven tot ernstige bezorgdheid.

De Commissie bekijkt momenteel de maatregelen waarmee de lidstaten uitvoering geven aan Kaderbesluit 2008/913/JBZ. Naar verwachting zal hierover in december 2013 een uitgebreid verslag worden gepubliceerd.

Het zijn de nationale autoriteiten die bevoegd zijn om een onderzoek in te stellen naar tot haat aanzettende uitspraken of holocaustontkenning en om de plegers van dergelijke strafbare feiten te vervolgen.

([1]) http://news247.gr/eidiseis/politiki/kasidiarhs_arnhthhke_to_olokautwma_mesa_sth_voylh.2284457.html
([2]) http://www.star.gr/Pages/Politiki_Oikonomia.aspx?art=183821&artTitle=arneitai_to_olokaftoma_kai_o_vouleftis_tis_chrysis_avgis_m_arvanitis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009567/13
to the Commission
Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE)
(14 August 2013)

Subject: Racist statements made by Greek MPs in the Greek Parliament

Members of the Greek political party 'Golden Dawn' have made numerous racist and xenophobic statements both inside ([1]) and outside ([2]) the Greek Parliament. Unfortunately, these racist statements have not been punished by the Greek authorities. Golden Dawn MPs target not only the Jewish community in Greece, but also other minorities such as the Turks of Western Thrace.

The EU Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia (2008/913/JHA) aims to harmonise the method of dealing with racist crimes in national penal law systems and seeks to impose effective sanctions on racist and xenophobic offences in the Member States. The deadline for transposing this framework Decision into national law was November 2010. Greece did not transpose the decision, and anti-racism legislation has come to a standstill in the Greek Parliament.

1. Is the Commission aware of the anti-semitic and racist statements made by MPs and members of the Golden Dawn party?

2. What is the Commission's view of these statements in the light of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA?

3. Will the Commission step up its efforts to condemn hate speech and Holocaust denial by public and political figures?

4. Will the Commission ensure that Greece adopts comprehensive legislation on racism and xenophobia? What instruments does the Commission have at its disposal to ensure the correct transposition of this framework Decision?

5. Does the Commission consider that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is applicable in such cases, since the framework Decision is part of Union law as mentioned in Article 51(1) of the Charter? If so, does it agree that these racist statements are in breach of several Articles of the Charter, including Articles 1, 6, 7 and 10?

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

The European Commission has repeatedly condemned all forms and manifestations of racism and xenophobia, as they are incompatible with the principal values the EU is founded on. It closely follows developments in the field and notes that the recent incidents in Greece and elsewhere give rise to serious concerns.

The Commission is currently monitoring Member State's implementing measures of Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA and a comprehensive report on this matter is scheduled for publication in December 2013.

It is the competence of national authorities to investigate any instances of hate speech or Holocaust denial and to prosecute the perpetrators of such offences.

([1]) http://news247.gr/eidiseis/politiki/kasidiarhs_arnhthhke_to_olokautwma_mesa_sth_voylh.2284457.html
([2]) http://www.star.gr/Pages/Politiki_Oikonomia.aspx?art=183821&artTitle=arneitai_to_olokaftoma_kai_o._vouleftis_tis_chrysis_avgis_m_arvanitis.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009568/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE)
(14 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Aktywność międzynarodowa regionów, zawierane przez nie porozumienia oraz rozstrzyganie zaistniałych na tym tle sporów

Region/województwo – jednostka samorządu terytorialnego ma kompetencje do prowadzenia działań międzynarodowych, np. polska ustawa z 5 czerwca 1998 r. o samorządzie województwa daje uprawnienia władzom województwa do prowadzenia współpracy zagranicznej. Tego typu działania regionów/województw powodują praktyczne trudności. Niejasny jest status zawieranych przez ich władze umów oraz porozumień z ich odpowiednikami w innych państwach. Ponadto włączają się one w działalność zrzeszeń regionalnych o charakterze międzynarodowym – uczestniczą w obrocie prawnym, płacą składki, zaciągają zobowiązania. Brak jest jasnego stanowiska odnośnie charakteru ich odpowiedzialności prawnej w związku z międzynarodową współpracą. Brak jest jasnych regulacji rozwiązywania sporów związanych z naruszeniami porozumień między mini a ich partnerami zagranicznymi. Trudności z określeniem trybu rozwiązywania sporów prawnych powstających w związku ze współpracą międzynarodową polskich regionów/województw. W związku z powyższym zwracam się z prośbą o udzielenie odpowiedzi na następujące pytania:

1. Jaki status prawny mają porozumienia międzynarodowe regionów/województw? Czy są umowami międzynarodowymi? Czym są dokładnie w świetle prawa?

2. Jaki jest status prawny międzynarodowych zrzeszeń regionów, typu: CPMR, EUREGHA, ENCORE itp.? Czym są w świetle prawa UE i w świetle prawa międzynarodowego?

3. Jaka w świetle prawa jest odpowiedzialność międzynarodowa regionów/województw z tytułu ich międzynarodowej współpracy? Czy ma ona charakter międzynarodowy, krajowy czy inny– jaki?

4. Jaki jest tryb rozwiązywania sporów prawnych związanych z międzynarodową współpracą regionów/województw? Jeśli się zakończyły, proszę wskazać – jakie oraz tryb ich rozwiązania.

5. Jakiej jurysdykcji podlegają owe spory, gdy strony w umowie lub porozumieniu jej nie określiły?

6. Czy arbitraż ma zastosowanie w sporach z udziałem regionów/województw? Jeśli tak, to proszę o możliwie obszerne informacje o arbitrażu i sporach, które były w ten sposób rozpatrywane.

7. Czy przewiduje się rozpoczęcie prac nad stworzeniem rozwiązań prawnych?

8. Jakie trudności mogą wpływać na sprawną międzynarodową współpracę regionów/województw?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Johannesa Hahna w imieniu Komisji
(11 października 2013 r.)

1-3. Regionalne stowarzyszenia nie są przedmiotem międzynarodowego prawa publicznego, a zatem nie można uznać żadnego porozumienia zawartego przez nie za układ międzynarodowy.

Regionalne stowarzyszenia są ustanawiane jako podmioty prawne zgodnie z wybranym prawem krajowym ([1]). Po otrzymaniu przez stowarzyszenie statusu osoby prawnej, może ono ubiegać się o status beneficjentawybranego programu UE.

Jako podmioty prawne zarejestrowane na mocy prawa krajowego, stowarzyszenia mogą zawierać umowy z innymi osobami fizycznymi lub prawnymi, również w odniesieniu do stosunków transgranicznych. Komisja ma ograniczone kompetencje, jeżeli chodzi o międzynarodową działalność regionalnych lub lokalnych władz poszczególnych państw członkowskich. Warunki i procedury dotyczące współpracy wykraczającej poza granice państw są określone w konstytucji lub prawie krajowym każdego państwa członkowskiego.

([1]) Np. CPMR jest stowarzyszeniem powstałym na mocy prawa francuskiego – zob. art. 1 statutu.

Jeśli współpraca transgraniczna realizowana jest przez organy z dwóch lub większej liczby państw członkowskich, działania mogą dotyczyć Europejskiej współpracy terytorialnej ([2]) w obrębie UE w ramach polityki spójności. Działania Europejskiej współpracy terytorialnej podlegają odpowiednim przepisom unijnym. Za kontrolowanie przestrzegania tych przepisów unijnych i krajowych przepisów wykonawczych odpowiadają w ramach zarządzania dzielonego organy krajowe.

Komisja nie posiada kompetencji, aby ocenić, czy dany urząd wojewódzki podejmujący działania współpracy międzyregionalnej dokonuje tego zgodnie z prawem krajowym. Komisja nie nadzoruje działań transgranicznych stowarzyszeń regionalnych ([3]).

4-5. Jeżeli między stowarzyszeniami regionalnymi powstanie spór prawny, można odwołać się do przepisów międzynarodowego prawa publicznego, aby określić właściwą jurysdykcję i dokonać wyboru prawa mającego zastosowanie w przypadku danego sporu.

6-8. Komisja nie ma kompetencji w odniesieniu do tych kwestii i nie może przedstawić uwag na ten temat.

([2]) Europejska współpraca terytorialna.
([3]) Takich jak CPMR, EUREGHA, ENCORE.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009568/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Krzysztof Lisek (PPE)
(14 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — International cooperation between regions involving formal agreements, and settlement of disputes arising from these

Regions/provinces may engage in international activities. For example, the Polish law of 5 June 1998 on provincial government authorises provincial authorities to engage in cross-border cooperation. This kind of regional/provincial activity gives rise to practical difficulties. The status of agreements entered into by the authorities of regions/provinces with their counterparts in other countries is not clear. They also take part in the activities of cross-border regional associations in connection with which they are involved in legal transactions, pay contributions and take on commitments. The nature of their legal responsibilities when involved in international cooperation is unclear. There is also a lack of dispute-settlement regulations in connection with violations of agreements entered into with cross-border partners. In general, it is difficult to establish how legal disputes arising from international cooperation engaged in by Polish regions/provinces are settled.

1. What is the legal status of agreements entered into with regions/provinces in other countries? Are they deemed to be international agreements? What exactly are they, in legal terms?

2. What is the legal status, under EU and international law, of international regional associations such as CPMR, EUREGHA, ENCORE, etc?

3. What responsibility do regions/provinces have under the law when engaged in international cooperation? Is this of an international or a national nature, or of some other kind, and if so, which?

4. How are legal disputes arising in connection with the international cooperation of regions/provinces resolved? In the case of disputes which have been resolved, please state which these are and what methods were used.

5. If no jurisdiction has been determined by the parties to an agreement, by what jurisdiction are they governed?

6. Is mediation used in disputes involving regions/provinces? If so, please provide comprehensive details on the mediation used and the disputes resolved thereby.

7. Are there any plans to start work on formulating legal solutions for this situation?

8. What problems can arise in connection with international cooperation involving regions/provinces?

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

1-3. Regional associations are not subjects of public international law, therefore no agreement entered into by them can be recognised as an international treaty.

Regional associations are established as legal entities under a chosen national law ([1]). When established as a legal person, they may apply to become a beneficiary under any EU programme.

As legal entities registered under national law, these associations can enter into contracts with other natural or legal persons, also concerning cross-border relations. The Commission has limited competence concerning international activities of regional or local authorities of Member States. The Constitution or national law of each Member State sets out the conditions and procedures for cooperation across national borders.

If cooperation across borders takes place between authorities from 2 or more Member States, activities may concern ETC ([2]) inside the EU under cohesion policy. ETC activities are governed by the applicable EU legislation. Under shared management, national authorities are responsible for controlling the respect of these EU rules and national implementing rules.

([1]) e.g. CPMR is an association under French law — see Article 1 of its statutes.
([2]) European territorial cooperation.

The Commission is not competent to assess whether a provincial authority entering into interregional cooperation activities is in accordance with national law. The activities of cross-border regional associations ([3]) are not monitored by the Commission.

4-5. If a cross-border legal dispute arises between regional associations, the rules of public international law can be resorted to in order to determine the relevant jurisdiction and the choice of law governing the dispute.

6-8. The Commission is not competent on these issues and cannot comment.

([3]) like CPMR, EUREGHA, ENCORE.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009569/13
an die Kommission
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(19. August 2013)

Betrifft: Lagerhaltung und Industrietätigkeit von Händlern und Finanzinstituten

In den Vereinigten Staaten wird gegen einige Finanzinstitute und Rohstoffhändler ermittelt, und zwar im Zusammenhang mit deren Industrie- und Lagertätigkeit. Beispielsweise untersucht die Bundesaufsicht der US-Banken (Federal Reserve), ob US-Banken weiterhin eigene physische Rohstofflager halten dürfen.

Kann die Kommission in diesem Zusammenhang folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Gibt es EU-Vorschriften, wonach EU-Banken in Bezug auf den Besitz physischer Vermögenswerte (Rohstoffe in Lagerhäusern) und die Ausübung von Industrietätigkeiten (etwa in der Speditions- oder Logistikbranche, u. a. den Betrieb von Öltankern und Lagerhäusern) bestimmten Einschränkungen unterliegen, wie es in den USA der Fall ist? Falls ja, kann sie die betreffenden Vorschriften im Einzelnen angeben bzw. erläutern, inwieweit der Besitz dadurch eingeschränkt wird?

2. Welche Dienststelle in der Kommission befasst sich mit den Ermittlungen, die von der US-amerikanischen Aufsichtsbehörde für den Warenterminhandel (CFTC — Commodity Futures Trading Commission) durchgeführt werden? Hat die Kommission sich um Informationen in dieser Sache bemüht bzw. sind ihr gegenüber Angaben dazu vonseiten der EU-Industrie gemacht worden? Führt die Kommission ähnliche Ermittlungen durch oder plant sie die Durchführung derartiger Ermittlungen im Anschluss an ihre gründliche Untersuchung, in deren Rahmen sie der Festsetzung der Ölpreise auf den Grund ging? Immerhin hat die Kartellaufsichtsbehörde der USA FTC (Federal Trade Commission) beschlossen, diesem Beispiel zu folgen!

3. In ihrer Mitteilung von 2011: „Grundstoffmärkte und Rohstoffe: Herausforderungen und Lösungsansätze" erklärt die Kommission, sie bemühe sich um Verbesserungen bei der Transparenz auf den Rohstoffmärkten. Was hat die Kommission in dieser Hinsicht unternommen?

4. Haben die Kartellbehörden der EU eine Untersuchung der Lagerhaltungsbranche, in der eine zunehmende Marktkonzentration stattgefunden hat, in Erwägung gezogen?

5. Haben die Kartellbehörden der EU bei ihrer Untersuchung der Fusion von Glencore und Xstrata auch die industriellen Aktivitäten des fusionierten Unternehmens (d. h. Lagerung, Logistik, Finanzierung) unter die Lupe genommen? Sind sie dabei auf Anhaltspunkte gestoßen, die Anlass zu Bedenken geben?

Antwort von Herrn Almunia im Namen der Kommission
(9. Oktober 2013)

Derzeit gibt es im EU-Bankenrecht keine expliziten Vorschriften, nach denen Banken in der EU in Bezug auf den Besitz physischer Vermögenswerte Einschränkungen unterliegen. Die Bankenaufsichtsbehörden in der EU können allerdings im Rahmen von aufsichtlichen Überprüfungen befugt sein, einzelne Banken aufzufordern, bestimmte Tätigkeiten einzuschränken oder einzustellen, wenn sie der Auffassung sind, dass eine Bank durch den Rohstoffhandel unannehmbaren Risiken ausgesetzt ist.

Die Kommission arbeitet regelmäßig mit den US-amerikanischen Regulierungsbehörden in kartellrechtlichen Fragen im Zusammenhang mit allen Wirtschaftszweigen und insbesondere mit Rohstoffmärkten zusammen. Sie will jedoch die Integrität ihrer Monitoring- und Durchsetzungsmaßnahmen schützen und hält es daher zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt nicht für angemessen, zu Maßnahmen Stellung zu nehmen, die in Europa oder den Vereinigten Staaten ergriffen werden könnten.

Im Einklang mit den G20-Verpflichtungen hat die Kommission eine Reihe von Regulierungsinitiativen gestartet, um die Integrität und Transparenz der Märkte für Rohstoffderivate zu erhöhen. Hierzu gehören Vorschläge zur Präzisierung der Arten von Handel auf den Rohstoffderivatemärkten, bei denen es sich um Marktmissbrauch handelt, Vorschläge, nach denen einschlägige Produkte ausschließlich an geregelten Handelsplätzen gehandelt werden dürfen und die Handelstätigkeiten transparent sein müssen, sowie Vorschläge, die eine umfassende Kontrolle von Rohstoffderivate-Positionen vorschreiben.

Im Rahmen der Untersuchung der Kommission zum Zusammenschluss von Glencore und Xstrata wurden hinsichtlich der vom Zusammenschluss betroffenen Produkte die Tätigkeiten der beiden Unternehmen in den Bereichen Lagerung, Logistik und Finanzierung untersucht. Die Europäische Kommission kam zu dem Schluss, dass ein Zusammenschluss kartellrechtlich bedenklich wäre, da Glencore nach dem Zusammenschluss in der Lage sein könnte, das Angebot an Zinkmetall im EWR zu kontrollieren, unter anderem durch seine Kontrolle über von der Londoner Metallbörse (London Metal Exchange — LME) zertifizierte Lagerhäuser.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009569/13
to the Commission
Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Warehousing and industrial activity by traders and financial institutions

In the US, several financial institutions and commodity traders are under investigation in relation to their industrial and warehousing activity. For example, the Federal Reserve is investigating whether US banks should still be allowed to own physical commodity assets.

In this context, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Are there EU rules restricting EU banks from owning physical assets (commodities in warehouses) and engaging in industrial activity (e.g. in the transportation/logistics sector in such cases as oil tankers and warehouses), as in the US? If so, can it specify the rules concerned and the ways in which they restrict ownership?

2. Which unit in the Commission is following the investigation being carried out by the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC)? Has the Commission asked for and received input from EU industry on this issue? Is the Commission engaging or considering engaging in a similar investigation, following its probe into oil price setting, an inquiry which the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has decided to follow?

3. In its 2011 communication on 'Tackling Challenges in Commodity Markets', the Commission states that it will promote improvements in transparency in physical commodity markets. What has the Commission undertaken in this regard?

4. Have the EU antitrust authorities considered an investigation into the warehousing sector, which has been subject to increasing market concentration?

5. Did the EU antitrust authorities, in their investigation into the Glencore-Xstrata merger, also look into the industrial activity of the merged entity (i.e. warehousing activity, logistics, financing)? Did it find any reason for concern in this regard?

Answer given by Mr Almunia on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

There are currently no explicit prohibitions as such in EU banking legislation that would restrict EU banks from owning physical assets, although EU banking supervisors may be able to use powers under supervisory review to require individual banks to limit or abandon certain activities, if they consider that commodity trading exposes the bank to unacceptable risk.

The Commission regularly cooperates with US regulators in respect of antitrust matters relating to all industries and to the commodity markets in particular. However, in order to protect the integrity of its monitoring and enforcement activities, the Commission believes that it would not at this stage be appropriate to comment on any action that might be taken in either Europe or the United States.

In line with G20 commitments, the Commission has launched a number of regulatory initiatives to increase the integrity and transparency of commodity derivatives markets. This includes proposals to clarify the types of trading in these markets that constitute market abuse, as well as proposals to require that these products be traded exclusively on regulated trading venues, that these trading activities be transparent, and a comprehensive oversight of commodity derivative positions.

The Commission's investigation of the Glencore Xstrata merger covered the parties' activities in warehousing, logistics and financing in the products affected by the merger. The European Commission concluded that the merger would lead to concerns in zinc metal because it would enable Glencore to control the level of zinc metal available in the EEA, *inter alia* through its control of LME-approved warehouses.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009570/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Πορεία έργου «Εθνικό Ληξιαρχείο»

Σε απάντησή της η Επιτροπή (E-009351/2012), σε σχέση με την πορεία υλοποίησης του συγχρηματοδοτούμενου από το ΕΣΠΑ προγράμματος «Εθνικό Ληξιαρχείο», μου είχε αναφέρει ότι «το πρόγραμμα "Εθνικό Ληξιαρχείο" εγκρίθηκε από τη διαχειριστική αρχή του προγράμματος "Ψηφιακή Σύγκλιση" στις 30 Απριλίου 2009 με προϋπολογισμό 44 εκατομμύρια ευρώ. Το εν λόγω πρόγραμμα αφορά την ψηφιοποίηση του μητρώου των πολιτών, τόσο σε επίπεδο δήμων, όσο και σε εθνικό επίπεδο. Το πρόγραμμα σχεδιάστηκε και εγκρίθηκε εκ νέου στις 26 Οκτωβρίου 2011 και βρίσκεται, επί του παρόντος, στο στάδιο της υποβολής προτάσεων, ενώ αναμένεται να έχει ολοκληρωθεί έως το τέλος του 2015 […]· το πρόγραμμα αυτό περιλαμβάνεται στον κατάλογο των προγραμμάτων προτεραιότητας».

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Σε ποιο στάδιο βρίσκεται η υλοποίηση του προγράμματος;

2. Ποιο είναι το ποσό που έχει απορροφηθεί ως τώρα;

3. Είναι ικανοποιητική η πορεία του έργου; Εάν όχι, γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή γιατί υπάρχει καθυστέρηση;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή, εκτός από τις πληροφορίες που παρείχε στην απάντησή της στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-009351/2012 ([1]), ενημερώνει τον αξιότιμο βουλευτή ότι:

1. Το κόστος του έργου στην απόφαση χρηματοδότησης ανέρχεται σε 42 εκατ. ευρώ. Προς το παρόν, κανένα στοιχείο του δεν έχει αποτελέσει αντικείμενο συμβάσεων.

2. Καθώς καμία δαπάνη δεν έχει πραγματοποιηθεί μέχρι σήμερα, δεν έχει καταβληθεί κανένα ποσό.

3. Ο ανασχεδιασμός της τεχνικής σύλληψης του έργου και η διαδικασία επανέγκρισης είχαν ως αποτέλεσμα να καθυστερήσει η ολοκλήρωση των αναθεωρημένων εγγράφων της πρόσκλησης υποβολής προσφορών. Η Επιτροπή κρίνει ότι το σχέδιο θα έπρεπε να βρισκόταν στο στάδιο της πραγματικής υλοποίησής του.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009570/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Progress of the 'National Registry Office' project

In its answer to my Written Question E-009351/2012 on progress in implementing the 'National Registry Office' project co-financed by the NSRF, the Commission had stated that 'the National Registry project was approved by the managing authority of the programme Digital Convergence on 30 April 2009 for a budget of EUR 44 million. It concerns the digitalisation of the citizens' registry at municipal and national level. The project was redesigned and re-approved on 26 October 2011 and is currently in the tendering phase and scheduled for completion by the end of 2015. […] This project is included in the priority project list…'

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What stage has implementation of the programme reached?

2. What amount has been taken up so far?

3. Is progress with the project satisfactory? If not, does the Commission know why there has been a delay?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

In addition to the information provided in its answer to Written Question E-009351/2012 ([1]), the Commission informs the Honourable Member that:

1. The project cost in the funding decision amounts to EUR 42 million. Nothing has been contracted so far.

2. As no expenditure has occurred so far, no payments have been made.

3. The redesign of the technical concept of the project and the re-approval process resulted in a delay in the conclusion of the revised tendering documents. The Commission is of the opinion that project should have enterered its real implementation phase.

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

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009571/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Συγχρηματοδοτούμενα έργα για το Κτηματολόγιο της Ελλάδας

Το έργο με τίτλο «Κτηματολόγιο» έχει ενταχθεί στο ελληνικό ΕΣΠΑ 2007-2013, στο πρόγραμμα «Ψηφιακή Σύγκλιση», με προϋπολογισμό 130 000 000 ευρώ. Επίσης από το ΕΣΠΑ 2000-2006, για την κατάρτιση του κτηματολογίου, δόθηκαν από την ΕΕ περίπου 80 εκατ. ευρώ, αλλά το έργο δεν ολοκληρώθηκε σε εκείνη την προγραμματική περίοδο.

Ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιο είναι το φυσικό αντικείμενο του έργου «Κτηματολόγιο» του ΕΣΠΑ 2007-2013 που έχει εκτελεστεί; Τι ποσοστό των κονδυλίων έχει απορροφηθεί; Ποια είναι η προθεσμία υλοποίησης του έργου;

2. Με δεδομένο ότι υπήρξαν δημοσιεύματα στον ελληνικό Τύπο ότι η Επιτροπή έχει προβλήματα να κλείσει τον φάκελο του έργου που χρηματοδοτήθηκε από το ΕΣΠΑ 2000-2006, μπορεί η Επιτροπή να δώσει σχετικές πληροφορίες;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(27 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

1. Μέχρι σήμερα, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει λάβει ακόμη αίτηση για τη συγχρηματοδότηση της υλοποίησης του σχεδίου για το κτηματολόγιο. Η προθεσμία για την ολοκλήρωση όλων των συγχρηματοδοτούμενων σχεδίων είναι η 31η Δεκεμβρίου 2015.

2. Όπως εξηγείται στην απάντηση της Επιτροπής στη γραπτή ερώτηση E-4317/13, το σχέδιο για το κτηματολόγιο του 2000-2006 συμπεριλήφθη στον κατάλογο των «ημιτελών σχεδίων» για την εν λόγω προγραμματική περίοδο. Η προθεσμία για την ολοκλήρωση είναι η 31η Δεκεμβρίου 2013. Τον Απρίλιο του 2013, οι ελληνικές αρχές ενημέρωσαν την Επιτροπή ότι οι υπόλοιπες εργασίες έχουν ολοκληρωθεί και ότι το σχέδιο θεωρείται πλέον ολοκληρωμένο.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009571/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Co-funded land registry projects in Greece

The 'Land Registry' project has been included in the Greek NSRF 2007-2013, in the 'Digital Convergence' programme, and endowed with a budget of EUR 130 million. Under the NSRF for 2000-2006, the EU had already allocated some EUR 80 million for drawing up the land registry, but the project was not completed during that programming period.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. What specific work has been carried out on the 'Land Registry' project in the NSRF 2007-2013? What percentage of funds has been taken up? What is the deadline for implementation of the project?

2. Given that reports have appeared in the Greek press that the Commission has problems in closing the dossier of the project co-funded by the NSRF for 2000-2006, can it provide information on this subject?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

1. To date, the Commission has not yet received any request to co-finance the land registry project application. The deadline for the completion of all co-funded projects is 31 December 2015.

2. As explained in the Commission's reply to Written Question E-4317/13, the 2000-2006 land registry project was included in the list of 'unfinished projects' for the that programming period. The deadline for completion is 31 December 2013. In April 2013, the Greek authorities informed the Commission that the remaining works had been concluded and that the project is now considered completed.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009572/13
aan de Commissie
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(19 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Europese eierproducenten gaan failliet door Europese regels

Volgens een krantenbericht ([1]) wordt de eierhandel dankzij Brusselse regels in een wurggreep gehouden. Vrijhandelsakkoorden van de EU met de Verenigde Staten, India en de Zuid-Amerikaanse Mercosur zijn in de maak die de zaak dreigen te verergeren.

EU-wetgeving heeft Europese boeren verplicht op diervriendelijke wijze te produceren, zo zijn legbatterijen bijvoorbeeld uit den boze. Deze boeren hebben de afgelopen jaren dan ook fors geïnvesteerd in scharrelschuren. Tegelijkertijd zet de Commissie de deur wagenwijd open voor invoer van dieronvriendelijke batterij-eieren uit landen als India, de Verenigde Staten, de Oekraïne en Argentinië.

In de beantwoording op eerdere vragen over de terugkeer van batterij-eieren in de EU (E-010734/2012) ([2]) heeft de Commissie geen enkele blijk gegeven zorg te hebben voor de boeren of de dieren.

1. Is de Commissie zich bewust van de dramatische situatie waarin veel Europese eierproducenten zich dankzij EU-beleid bevinden zoals onder andere is beschreven in de Telegraaf?

2. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat het niet de bedoeling kan zijn dat EU-beleid leidt tot het einde van een bedrijfstak in Europa en tot stijgende werkloosheid en economische teloorgang?

3. Is de Commissie het met de PVV eens dat haar regels voor dierenwelzijn in de pluimveesector contraproductief en zelfs hypocriet zijn als er tegelijkertijd dieronvriendelijke legbatterij-eieren van buiten de Europese Unie ingevoerd mogen worden? Is dierenleed binnen de Europese Unie anders van aard of erger dan dierenleed buiten de Europese Unie?

4. Is de Commissie net als de PVV van mening dat het beter is als de Commissie stopt zich overal mee te bemoeien en het maken van wetten en beleid aan de lidstaten overlaat? Zo ja, wanneer wordt dit zichtbaar? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Borg namens de Commissie
(2 oktober 2013)

1. De Commissie is zich bewust van de verandering van de situatie waarmee de Europese eierenproducenten worden geconfronteerd. De prijs van eieren was uitzonderlijk hoog in 2012 na een tekort aan eieren in verband met de tenuitvoerlegging van het verbod op conventionele kooien. In 2013 heeft de eierprijs zich hersteld naar aanleiding van een overschot aan eieren en de prijzen liggen nu al een aantal maanden rond het vijfjarige gemiddelde van de periode 2008-2012. De situatie van de eierproducenten zal zich naar verwachting spoedig verbeteren ten gevolge van de verdere daling van de graanprijzen en de traditionele stijging van de vraag naar eieren in de herfst.

2. In de verdragen wordt de Unie opgeroepen zich in te zetten voor de duurzame ontwikkeling van Europa, op basis van onder andere een evenwichtige economische groei en van prijsstabiliteit en een sociale markteconomie met een groot concurrentievermogen die gericht is op volledige werkgelegenheid en sociale vooruitgang (artikel 3, lid 3 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie ([3])) maar worden beleidsmakers ook opgeroepen er rekening mee te houden dat dieren wezens met gevoel zijn (artikel 13 van het Verdrag betreffende de werking van de Europese Unie ([4])).

3. De aangepaste regelgeving van de Unie inzake de bescherming van legkippen ([5]) weerspiegelt het evenwicht tussen de bezorgdheid van de burgers voor het dierenwelzijn en de belangen van de betreffende bedrijfstak.

([1]) http://www.telegraaf.nl/mijnbedrijf/21812033/__Eierhandel_zit_klem_in_Brusselse_regels__.html
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-010734+0+DOC+XML+V0//NL&language=nl, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-010734&language=NL.
([3]) PB C 326 van 26.10.2012, blz. 13-390.
([4]) PB C 326 van 26.10.2012, blz. 13-390.
([5]) Richtlijn 1999/74/EG van de Raad tot vaststelling van minimumnormen voor de bescherming van legkippen (PB L 203 van 3.8.1999, blz. 53).

Met betrekking tot derde landen en de onderhandelingen van vrijhandelsovereenkomsten verwijst de Commissie naar haar antwoorden op de vragen E-6291/2013 en E-4842/2013 ([6]).

4. De Commissie werkt binnen het kader van de verdragen. Hierbij past zij beginselen van subsidiariteit en evenredigheid toe zoals die zijn vastgelegd in artikel 5 van het Verdrag betreffende de Europese Unie.

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009572/13
to the Commission
Patricia van der Kammen (NI)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Bankruptcies among European egg producers due to European rules

According to a newspaper report ([1]), the egg trade finds itself in a stranglehold due to the rules imposed by Brussels. Free trade agreements are being negotiated between the EU and the USA, India and the South American Mercosur which are liable to make matters worse.

EC law requires European farmers to comply with animal welfare standards in producing their eggs: for example, chicken batteries are deemed to be wrong. Accordingly, these farmers have in recent years made substantial investments in free-range barns. At the same time, the Commission welcomes with open arms imports of battery eggs from such countries as India, the USA, Ukraine and Argentina which do not comply with animal welfare standards.

In the answer to a previous question concerning the re-emergence of battery eggs in the EU (E-010734/2012) ([2]), the Commission displayed no concern whatsoever about either farmers or the birds.

1. Is the Commission aware of the dramatic situation facing many European egg producers thanks to EU policy, as described *inter alia* by 'de Telegraaf'?

2. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it cannot be the intention that EU policy should destroy an industry in Europe, causing rising unemployment and economic losses?

3. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that its rules on animal welfare in the poultry industry are counterproductive and even hypocritical if at the same time it is permitted to import battery eggs from outside the European Union which do not meet animal welfare standards? Is the suffering of animals within the European Union different in nature, or worse, in comparison with such suffering elsewhere?

4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it would be better if the Commission stopped interfering in all kinds of fields and left it to the Member States to adopt legislation and policies? If so, when will this become apparent? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of the change of situation faced by European egg producers. Egg prices were exceptionally high in 2012 following a shortage of eggs linked to the implementation of the ban on conventional cages. In 2013, egg prices readjusted due to an oversupply of eggs and have been around the 2008-2012 five year average for several months. The situation of egg producers is expected to improve shortly with further decrease in cereal prices and a traditionally higher demand for eggs in autumn.

2. The Treaties call on the Union to work for a sustainable development of Europe based on, amongst others, balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress (Article 3 (3) on the Treaty on European Union ([3])) but also call on decision-makers to consider that animals are sentient beings (Article 13 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union ([4])).

3. The adopted Union rules on the protection of laying hens ([5]) reflect the balance struck between the concerns of citizens for animal welfare and the interests of the economic sector concerned.

With regard to third countries and negotiations of Free Trade Agreements the Commission would refer to its answers to questions E-6291/2013 and E-4842/2013 ([6]).

([1]) http://www.telegraaf.nl/mijnbedrijf/21812033/__Eierhandel_zit_klem_in_Brusselse_regels__.html
([2]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-010734+0+DOC+XML+V0//NL&language=nl, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-010734&language=NL
([3]) OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 13-390.
([4]) OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 13-390.
([5]) Council Directive 1999/74/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of laying hens (OJ L 203, 3.8.1999, p. 53).
([6]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

4. The Commission works within the framework of the Treaties. In this it applies the principle of proportionality and subsidiarity as enshrined in Article 5 on the Treaty on the European Union.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009573/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR), Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR) oraz Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR)
(19 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – Sytuacja polityczna w Gruzji

Po pokojowym przejęciu władzy w Gruzji przez koalicję Gruzińskie Marzenie Bidziny Iwaniszwilego nowy rząd pod hasłem „przywrócenia sprawiedliwości" rozpoczął masowe aresztowania wysokich funkcjonariuszy i urzędników państwowych, posłów oraz członków poprzednich władz, w tym byłego ministra obrony Baczo Achalaję. W ostatnich miesiącach represje dotknęły również działaczy samorządowych – zatrzymano 23 urzędników merostwa i członków rady miejskiej Tbilisi, należących do partii Zjednoczony Ruch Narodowy (UNM) prezydenta Saakaszwilego.

W dniu 20 maja do aresztu trafił były premier Vano Merabiszwili, który uważany był za potencjalnego kandydata UNM w jesiennych wyborach prezydenckich. Jest on przetrzymywany w surowych warunkach, pozbawiony kontaktu z rodziną oraz ze światem zewnętrznym.

Ponieważ Gruzja jest ważnym partnerem UE na Kaukazie Południowym oraz w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego, kluczowe jest dbanie o jak najwyższe demokratyczne standardy w tym kraju.

W związku z tym prosimy Wysoką Przedstawiciel o informacje:

1. Czy uważa, że – ze względu na czysto polityczny charakter aresztowań – rząd premiera Iwaniszwilego może spełnić warunki postawione we wspólnym oświadczeniu Catherine Ashton i Štefana Füleho wzywającym do prowadzenia dochodzenia „w sposób uczciwy, transparentny i niezależny, w pełni odpowiadający międzynarodowym standardom"? Jakie dalsze działania w tej sprawie są podejmowane lub zostaną podjęte?

2. Czy Wysoka Przedstawiciel lub kierowana przez nią Służba Działań Zewnętrznych prowadzą rozmowy z rządem premiera Iwaniszwilego w sprawie zatrzymań byłego premiera, urzędników i posłów z UNM?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez Wysoką Przedstawiciel/Wiceprzewodniczącą Catherine Ashton w imieniu Komisji
(8 października 2013 r.)

Ugrupowanie Gruzińskie Marzenie wygrało wybory w październiku 2012 r., obiecując przywrócić sprawiedliwość oraz uporać się z nadużyciami z przeszłości. UE nie może ingerować w prowadzone w Gruzji postępowania sądowe. Jeżeli nadużycia zostały popełnione sprawcy powinni zostać postawieni przed sądem zgodnie z gruzińskim prawem. W kontaktach z rządem Gruzji UE podkreślała i nadal podkreślać będzie, że nie może być mowy o bezkarności, ale postępowania powinny być przejrzyste, prowadzone w duchu sprawiedliwości proceduralnej oraz praworządności, w sposób bezstronny i wolny od jakichkolwiek względów politycznych.

UE z zadowoleniem przyjmuje publiczne zapewnienia rządu Gruzji w tym zakresie. Przedstawiciele rządu Gruzji powinni jednak postępować w sposób nienaruszający zasady sprawiedliwości proceduralnej i domniemania niewinności. UE uważnie śledzi rozwój sytuacji, w tym za pośrednictwem swojej delegatury w Tbilisi i specjalnego doradcy UE ds. konstytucyjnych, prawnych i praw człowieka w Gruzji.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009573/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR), Ryszard Antoni Legutko (ECR) and Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Political situation in Georgia

Following the peaceful handover to the Georgian Dream coalition led by Bidzina Ivanishvili, under the guise of 'restoring justice' the new government embarked on a wave of arrests of senior central government officials, MPs and members of the previous government, including the former defence minister, Bacho Akhalaia. Over recent months, the repression has been targeted at local government figures as well, with 23 Tbilisi City Council officials and members belonging to former-President Sakaashvili's United National Movement (UNM) party being detained.

The former prime minister, Vano Merabishvili, seen as a potential UNM candidate for the presidential elections to be held in the autumn, was arrested on 20 May 2013, and is still being held under harsh conditions and deprived of contact with his family and the outside world.

Given that Georgia is a key EU partner in the Southern Caucasus and within the Eastern Partnership, it is of essential importance to ensure that the highest democratic standards are maintained within the country.

1. Given that the above arrests were clearly politically motivated, does the High Representative believe that Mr Ivanishvili's government is likely to satisfy the requirements laid down in her joint statement with Commissioner Füle, which called for the legal proceedings to be 'fair, transparent and independent, in full accordance with international standards'? What further action has been or is being taken in this connection?

2. Is the High Representative or the External Action Service which she heads up holding discussions with Mr Ivanishvili's government about the arrest of the former prime minister and officials and MPs belonging to the UNM?

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

Georgian Dream won the October 2012 election with the promise to restore justice and to tackle past abuses. It is not for the EU to interfere with the judicial processes in Georgia. If abuses were committed, the perpetrators should be brought to justice in line with Georgian law. The EU has made and will continue to make the point to the Georgian Government that, while there can be no impunity, prosecutions should be transparent, respecting due process, and applying the rule of law in an impartial way, free of political motivation.

The EU welcomes the Georgian Government's public assurances in this regard. However, Georgian Government representatives should conduct themselves in a way which does not undermine due process and the presumption of innocence. The EU closely follows developments, including through its Delegation in Tbilisi and through the EU's Special Adviser to Georgia on constitutional, legal and human rights.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009574/13
aan de Commissie
Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(19 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Stakingen Duitse sluiswachters

De afgelopen weken hebben Duitse ambtenaren van de Wasser- und Schifffahrts Verwaltung (WSV), onder andere verantwoordelijk voor het beheer van de sluizen in Duitsland, verschillende keren gestaakt in verband met een aangekondigde reorganisatie. Deze ambtenaren hebben nog steeds geen overeenstemming bereikt met het Duitse Verkeersministerie en hebben al aangekondigd desnoods nog weken door te gaan met het lamleggen van het Duitse kanalennet en verschillende rivieren. Door deze stakingen wordt het vrij verkeer van goederen zeer gehinderd. De Europese binnenvaartsector lijdt hierdoor veel schade.

1. Deelt de Commissie de opvatting dat deze stakingen het vrij verkeer van goederen in de EU disproportioneel hindert? Zo nee, waarom niet?

2. Is de Commissie bereid de Duitse overheid aan te spreken op haar verdragsrechtelijke verplichtingen betreffende het vrij verkeer van goederen? Zo nee, waarom niet?

Antwoord van de heer Tajani namens de Commissie
(9 oktober 2013)

1. De lidstaten hebben de verantwoordelijkheid om alle noodzakelijke adequate maatregelen te treffen teneinde het vrije verkeer van goederen te waarborgen en te verhinderen dat acties van particulieren dit belemmeren (zaak C 265/95 Commissie tegen Franse Republiek, Jurispr. 1997, blz. I-6959). Niettemin wordt er tevens op gewezen dat, zoals expliciet vermeld in Verordening (EG) nr. 2679/98 ([1]), deze maatregelen „geen afbreuk mogen doen aan de uitoefening van de grondrechten, met inbegrip van het stakingsrecht of de stakingsvrijheid".

2. In Verordening (EG) nr. 2679/98 wordt een mechanisme vastgesteld voor de uitwisseling van informatie als er belemmeringen voor het vrij verkeer van goederen zijn ontstaan. De Commissie onderhoudt de noodzakelijke contacten met de Duitse autoriteiten. Voor zover de Commissie bekend is, voeren beide partijen momenteel besprekingen over een voorstel van het bevoegde ministerie om een overeenkomst te bereiken en het arbeidsconflict zo snel mogelijk op te lossen.

Gezien de informatie waarover de Commissie thans beschikt, treffen de Duitse autoriteiten kennelijk de noodzakelijke maatregelen om te voldoen aan hun verplichtingen op grond van zowel Verordening (EG) nr. 2679/98 als de artikelen 34 t/m 36 VWEU. De Commissie volgt de situatie van nabij en zal verdere maatregelen overwegen indien nodig.

([1]) PB L 237 van 12.12.1998, blz. 8.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009574/13
to the Commission
Peter van Dalen (ECR)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Strikes by German lock-keepers

In recent weeks officials of the German Waterways Agency (Wasser- und Schifffahrtsverwaltung, WSV), which is responsible among other things for the management of canal locks in Germany, have repeatedly gone on strike in response to a planned reorganisation. The officials in question have still not reached any agreement with the German Transport Ministry and have already announced that they will continue paralysing the German canal network and a number of rivers for weeks more if necessary. These strikes are severely impairing the free movement of goods, and causing much damage to the European internal waterways transport sector.

1. Does the Commission agree that these strikes are disproportionately impairing the free movement of goods in the EU? If not, why not?

2. Is the Commission prepared to approach the German Government about its Treaty obligations concerning the free movement of goods? If not, why not?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

1. Member States have the responsibility of adopting all necessary and proportionate measures in order to ensure the free movement of goods and to prevent them from being obstructed by actions of private individuals (Case C 265/95 *Commission vs French Republic*, ECR 1997 p. I 06959). Nevertheless, it must also be emphasised that, as explicitly stated in Council Regulation (EC) No 2679/98 ([1]), those measures 'must not affect the exercise of fundamental rights, including the right or freedom to strike'.

2. Regulation (EC) No 2679/98 establishes a mechanism for the exchange of information when obstacles to the free movement of goods occur. The Commission undertook the necessary contacts with the German authorities. To the knowledge of the Commission both parties are currently discussing a proposal of the responsible ministry with a view to reaching an agreement and solving the labour conflict as timely as possible.

Thus, in light of the information currently available to the Commission, the German authorities seem to be taking the necessary measures to fulfil their obligations under both Regulation (EC) No 2679/98 and Articles 34-36 TFEU. However, the Commission is closely monitoring the situation and will consider further action if necessary.

([1]) OJ L 237, 12/12/1998, p. 8.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009575/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(19 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Hypotheekleningen — woonboten

Eerder dit jaar werd er in triloog een akkoord bereikt over de richtlijn woningkredietovereenkomsten. De richtlijn stelt dat kredietovereenkomsten die gewaarborgd worden door een hypothecair krediet of door een andere vergelijkbare zekerheid op een woning onder de werkingssfeer vallen.

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat een lening die gewaarborgd wordt door een andere vergelijkbare zekerheid voor de aankoop van een woonboot ook onder de werkingssfeer van de richtlijn valt?

2. Is de Commissie van mening dat voor de aankoop van een woonboot hypothecaire kredieten of kredieten die gewaarborgd worden door een andere vergelijkbare zekerheid van toepassing zijn? Of zijn hier andere consumentenkredieten van toepassing? Of is de lidstaat vrij in deze keuze?

Antwoord van de heer Barnier namens de Commissie
(8 oktober 2013)

Een van de doelstellingen van de richtlijn inzake kredietovereenkomsten betreffende niet-zakelijk onroerend goed, die hopelijk dit najaar door de medewetgevers definitief zal worden afgerond, is te garanderen dat consumenten die kredietovereenkomsten betreffende niet-zakelijk onroerend goed aangaan een hoog niveau van bescherming genieten. De nieuwe regels zullen gelden voor kredieten die gedekt worden door niet-zakelijk onroerend goed of door een andere vergelijkbare zekerheid die in een lidstaat gebruikelijk is in verband met niet-zakelijk onroerend goed, of gedekt worden door een recht betreffende een niet-zakelijk onroerend goed, ongeacht het doel van het krediet (d.w.z. ongeacht het feit of de lening bestemd is om een schip, een auto of een appartement te kopen). De richtlijn zal ook gelden voor kredietovereenkomsten die tot doel hebben eigendomsrechten in een gebouw te verwerven of te behouden.

Of een bepaald goed al dan niet als een niet-zakelijk onroerend goed te beschouwen is, zal afhangen van de nationale definities van onroerend goed. Zo kwalificeren gemotoriseerde woonboten of woonboten die niet permanent aangemeerd liggen mogelijk niet in alle lidstaten als onroerend goed.

Voor woonboten die volgens het nationale recht niet als onroerend goed of gebouw gelden, zouden de voor de aankoop gebruikte leningen onder het toepassingsgebied van de richtlijn inzake kredietovereenkomsten vallen mits het krediet kleiner is dan 75 000 EUR.

De Commissie dankt het geachte lid om deze kwestie naar voren te brengen. Aangezien woonboten, hoewel niet noodzakelijkerwijs technisch „onroerend", door particulieren als woonst worden gebruikt, zal de Commissie tijdens het omzettingsprroces met de lidstaten nagaan wat hun bedoelingen zijn ten aanzien van dergelijke leningen, en zal zij proberen een logische en consistente tenuitvoerlegging te bevorderen.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009575/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Mortgage loans — houseboats

Earlier this year, agreement was reached in a trialogue on the directive concerning credit agreements relating to residential property. The directive stipulates that credit agreements which are secured by a mortgage loan or another comparable security in the form of a dwelling fall within its scope.

1. Does the Commission consider that a loan which is secured by another comparable security for the purchase of a houseboat likewise falls within the scope of the directive?

2. Does the Commission consider that mortgage loans or loans secured by another comparable security apply to the purchase of a houseboat? Or are other forms of consumer credit applicable here? Or is the Member State free to choose?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(8 October 2013)

One of the objectives of the directive on credit agreements relating to residential immovable property, which will hopefully be finally adopted by the colegislators this autumn, is to ensure that consumers entering into credit agreements relating to residential immovable property benefit from a high level of protection. The new rules will apply to credits secured by residential immovable property or by another comparable security commonly used in a Member State on residential immovable property or secured by a right related to residential immovable property, regardless of the purpose of the credit (e.g. regardless of whether the loan is to purchase a boat, a car or an apartment). The directive will also apply to credit agreements the purpose of which is to acquire or retain property rights in a building.

Whether a given property can be considered as a residential immovable property or not will depend on the national definitions of immovable property. For instance, houseboats with an engine or which are not permanently anchored might not qualify as immovable property in all Member States.

For houseboats not considered under national law as immovable property or buildings, the loans used for the purchase would fall under the scope of the Consumer Credit Directive, provided that the credit is below EUR 75 000.

The Commission thanks the Honourable Member for pointing out this issue. Considering that houseboats are boats used by individuals as their home while not necessarily being technically 'immovable', the Commission will check with Member States during the transposition process what their intentions are regarding such loans, and will endeavour to foster a logic and consistent implementation.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-009576/13
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19. kolovoza 2013.)

Predmet: Pregovori Europske komisije sa zemljama članicama CEFTA-e

Pristupanjem Europskoj uniji Hrvatska je preuzela ugovorne i trgovinske odnose koje Europska unija ima s trećim zemljama. Za Hrvatsku je svakako najznačajniji ugovorni i trgovinski odnos koji je na snazi između Europske unije i zemalja potpisnica Ugovora o izmjeni, dopuni i pristupanju Srednjoeuropskom ugovoru o slobodnoj trgovini (CEFTA), s obzirom da se pristupanjem Europskoj uniji Hrvatska povukla iz Ugovora CEFTA 2006, a upravo su zemlje članice CEFTA-e, nakon zemalja EU, drugi najveći trgovinski partner Hrvatske. Od 1. srpnja 2013. godine hrvatski gospodarstvenici s Republikom Albanijom, Bosnom i Hercegovinom, Crnom Gorom, Republikom Makedonijom i Republikom Srbijom primjenjuju Sporazume o stabilizaciji i pridruživanju (SSP), dok s Moldavijom i Kosovom primjenjuju MFN carine.

Budući da je Republika Hrvatska postala članica Europske unije, Europska komisija je zadužena za pregovore u ime Republike Hrvatske i svih država članica o prilagodbi SSP-a sa svakom pojedinom zemljom CEFTA-e s osnovnim ciljem zadržavanja tradicionalne trgovine, odnosno opsega trgovačke razmjene. Ovakva praksa nije novina jer je EU isto načelo uspješno primjenjivala i pri ranijim proširenjima, a Hrvatska je tada novim članicama EU-a koje su napustile CEFTA-u dopustila uvoz prema povlaštenim uvjetima.

Izlaskom s tržišta CEFTA-e Hrvatska je privremeno izgubila pravo na povlaštene carine i uvjete za izvoz. Tom odredbom najviše su pogođene domaća prehrambena industrija i poljoprivreda, koje na to tržište izvoze 45 % svoje ukupne proizvodnje. O važnosti ishoda pregovora Komisije i zemalja članica CEFTA-e, kako za Hrvatsku kao punopravnu članicu, tako i za EU u cijelosti, govore predviđanja kako bi hrvatska poljoprivreda već u prvoj godini izlaska iz CEFTA-e mogla izgubiti oko 220 milijuna dolara i 0,5 posto BDP-a.

Budući da je za rujan najavljena nova runda pregovora koji su se do sada vodili na tehničkoj razini između predstavnika Europske komisije i predstavnika zemalja članica CEFTA-e, koje mjere Komisija planira poduzeti kako bi se očuvao trgovački opseg razmjene između zemalja članica EU-a i CEFTA-e nakon pristupanja Hrvatske, te ujedno olakšao plasman hrvatskih proizvoda na tržišta zemalja koje su do sada bile izuzetno važan trgovački partner?

Odgovor g. De Guchta u ime Komisije
(1. listopada 2013.)

Komisija je svjesna poteškoća s kojima je suočena hrvatska prehrambena industrija zbog različitih uvjeta u trgovini poljoprivrednim proizvodima između tržišta Srednjoeuropskog ugovora o slobodnoj trgovini (CEFTA) i tržišta EU-a. Hrvatskoj će koristiti prilagodba međunarodnih sporazuma koje je EU potpisao ili sklopio, a koju Komisija provodi kako bi se u obzir uzela tradicionalna povlaštena trgovina između Hrvatske i trećih zemalja. To se posebno odnosi na povećanje carinskih kvota za poljoprivredne proizvode, prerađene poljoprivredne proizvode te ribu i ribarske proizvode s iznosa u okvirima EU 27 na iznose u EU 28. Konačan cilj je osigurati da se povlaštena koncesija utemeljena na tradicionalnoj trgovini između Hrvatske i njezinih partnera iz CEFTA-e prenese u sporazume koje EU potpisuje sa zemljama zapadnog Balkana.

Mišljenja partnera iz EU-a razilaze se u pogledu toga je li navedena prilagodba isključivo tehničke naravi. No Komisija je odlučna u provedbi prilagodbe kako bi se osigurao nastavak tradicionalnog tijeka trgovanja između Hrvatske i njezinih prijašnjih partnera iz CEFTA-e.

Poput svake nove države članice, Hrvatska ima koristi od pristupanja EU-u zbog potpunog sudjelovanja na unutarnjem tržištu EU-a i trgovinskih sporazuma koje je EU sklopio s trećim zemljama.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009576/13
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Commission negotiations with CEFTA member countries

By joining the EU Croatia has entered into the contractual and trading relations which the EU has with non-EU countries. Of these the most significant from Croatia's point of view is undoubtedly the contractual and trading relationship existing between the EU and the signatory countries of the Agreement on Amendment of and Accession to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), bearing in mind that, when it joined the EU, Croatia withdrew from CEFTA 2006, but the CEFTA countries are, after the EU Member States, Croatia's second largest trading partner. Since 1 July 2013 Croatian businesspeople have been observing the stabilisation and association agreements (SAAs) with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia, whereas, as far as Moldova and Kosovo are concerned, they have been applying MFN duties.

Now that Croatia has joined the EU, the Commission is responsible for conducting negotiations, on behalf of Croatia and all the Member States, with each individual CEFTA country on the necessary adaptation of the SAAs, the essential aim being to maintain traditional trade, that is to say, the trading volume. This way of proceeding does not constitute an innovation: the EU applied the same principle to good effect at the time of earlier enlargements, and, on those occasions, Croatia granted preferential import terms to the new EU Member States leaving CEFTA.

By withdrawing from the CEFTA market Croatia has temporarily forfeited the entitlement to preferential duties and import terms. The sectors being hardest hit by that provision are the Croatian food industry and the agricultural sector, which export 45% of their total production onto the CEFTA market. That a great deal depends on the outcome of the Commission's negotiations with the CEFTA member countries — both for Croatia as a fully fledged EU Member State and for the EU as a whole — can be seen in the predictions that in Croatia's first year outside CEFTA, the Croatian agricultural sector might lose as much as USD 220 million (0.5% of GDP).

Bearing in mind that a new round of negotiations, which to date have been conducted at technical level between Commission representatives and representatives of the CEFTA member countries, has been announced for September, what steps will the Commission take to ensure that trade between EU Member States and CEFTA countries can continue on the same scale following Croatia's accession to the EU and, moreover, that Croatian products can be readily placed on the markets of countries which until now have been particularly important trading partners?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

The Commission is aware of the difficulties faced by the Croatian food industry, because of the different conditions in trade for agricultural products between the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) market and the EU market. Croatia will benefit from the adaptation exercise that the Commission is carrying out for the international agreements signed or concluded by the EU to take into account the preferential traditional trade between Croatia and third countries. This means in particular to increase tariff-rate quotas from an EU 27 to an EU 28 situation for agricultural products, processed agricultural products, and fish and fisheries products. Hence, the aim is to ensure that the preferential concession based on the traditional trade between Croatia and its CEFTA partners will be eventually transferred into the agreements signed by the EU with the western Balkans countries.

Not all the EU partners see this adaptation exercise as purely technical. However, the Commission remains committed to carrying out the adaptation exercise in an effort to ensure that the traditional flows between Croatia and its former CEFTA partners will continue.

Croatia, as any other new Member State, profits of its EU-accession by its full participation in the EU Internal Market and also benefits from the trade agreements that the EU has concluded with other third countries.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-009577/13
upućeno Komisiji
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19. kolovoza 2013.)

Predmet: Zaštita autohtonih hrvatskih vina prošeka i terana

Uredbom Upravljačkog odbora za zajedničku organizaciju tržišta za vino i alkohol pri Europskoj komisiji usvojenoj 9. srpnja 2013. (s primjenom od 1. srpnja 2013.) sve količine svih vrsta vina proizvedene do 30. lipnja 2013. i označene prema nacionalnom sustavu koji je vrijedio do tog roka smiju se nesmetano plasirati na tržište Europske unije. Budući da je na dan donošenja uredbe Hrvatska već bila u punopravnom članstvu Unije ta je mjera automatizmom postala važeća i za sve hrvatske vinare.

Takva odluka je samo privremeno odgodila problem hrvatskih proizvođača autohtonih hrvatskih vina prošeka i terana, budući da još uvijek nisu poznate regulacije plasmana njihovih proizvoda proizvedenih nakon 1. srpnja na tržište Europske unije.

Brojni su, kako povijesni, tako i tehnološki argumenti da hrvatski prošek i talijanski prosecco, odnosno slovenski i hrvatski teran nisu istovjetni proizvodi, te da se radi o autohtonim hrvatskim proizvodima čija je proizvodnja rezultat višestoljetne tradicije, a geografsko porijeklo neupitno.

Prošek je desertno vino dobiveno preradom grožđa sušenog u hladu koje se u Hrvatskoj proizvodi otkad se vinova loza uzgaja u hrvatskom primorju, dok je talijanski prosecco pjenušavo vino. U prilog autohtonosti ovih proizvoda govori i činjenica da se teran u Hrvatskoj i teran u Sloveniji proizvode od različitih sorti grožđa, hrvatski teran se proizvodi od autohtone sorte Teran, a slovenski od sorte Refošk.

Uzimajući u obzir prethodno iznesene argumente, koja je pozicija Komisije spram problema zaštite autohtonih hrvatskih vina prošeka i terana kao izvorno hrvatskih proizvoda?

Razmatra li Komisija provođenje mjera podrške putem nekih od instrumenata EU-a kako bi hrvatskim vinarima, proizvođačima prošeka i terana, olakšala plasman njihovih proizvoda na europsko tržište tijekom prijelaznog razdoblja dok je proces zahtjeva za zaštitom izvornosti ovih proizvoda još uvijek u tijeku?

Odgovor M. Cioloș u ime Komisije
(7. listopada 2013.)

U pogledu prvog pitanja o mogućoj zaštiti hrvatskih izraza „Prošek” i „Teran” u EU-u, napominjem da to pitanje nije obuhvaćeno Ugovorom o pristupanju Hrvatske niti su hrvatska tijela vlasti službama Komisije podnijela zahtjev za zaštitu tih naziva.

U pogledu drugog pitanja, hrvatska vina već imaju puni pristup EZ-u ako poštuju pravila Zajednice. Osim toga, hrvatski vinarski sektor moći će iskoristiti fondove EU-a putem nacionalnog programa potpore za vino, primjenjivog od 16. listopada 2013.

Međutim, provedba nacionalnog programa potpore za vino ne ovisi o zahtjevima za registraciju imena kao oznake izvornosti.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009577/13
to the Commission
Tonino Picula (S&D)
(19 August 2013)

Subject: Protecting indigenous Croatian 'Prošek' and 'Teran' wines

Pursuant to a regulation of the Commission's Management Committee for the common market Organisation for wine and alcohol, adopted on 9 July 2013 and having effect from 1 July 2013, wine of any variety and in any quantity which was produced by 30 June 2013 and labelled in accordance with the relevant national rules in force up to that date may be freely placed on the EU market. Given that Croatia had already become an EU Member State by the date of the regulation's adoption, its provisions automatically became binding for all Croatian winemakers.

This decision only postpones temporarily the problems facing the producers of indigenous Croatian 'Prošek' and 'Teran' wines, since the rules governing the placing of such products produced after 1 July 2013 on the EU market are still unknown.

There are numerous historical and technical arguments which back up the assertion that Croatian 'Prošek' and Italian 'Prosecco', or Slovenian 'Teran' and Croatian 'Teran', are different products. 'Prošek' and 'Teran' are indigenous Croatian products produced according to centuries-old traditions, and their geographical origins are undisputable.

'Prošek' is a dessert wine obtained by processing grapes that are dried in the shade, and it has been produced in Croatia for as long as grapes have been cultivated in the country's coastal regions. Italy's 'Prosecco' is, on the contrary, a sparkling wine. The indigenous character of these products is borne out by the fact that Croatian 'Teran' and Slovenian 'Teran' are produced from different grape varieties: the Croatian wine is produced from indigenous 'Teran' grapes, while the Slovenian wine is made using 'Refošk' grapes.

In this connection, what is the Commission's opinion as regards protecting the indigenous Croatian 'Prošek' and 'Teran' wines by classifying them as original Croatian products?

Is the Commission considering using EU instruments to help Croatian producers of 'Prošek' and 'Teran' wines gain easier access to the EU market for their products in the interim period while the request for Protected Designation of Origin status for those products is processed?,

Answer given by M.Cioloș on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

As regards the first question on a possible protection of the Croatian terms 'Prošek' and 'Teran' in the EU, this issue is not covered by the Accession Treaty of Croatia and no application for protection of these denominations was submitted by Croatian authorities to the Commission services.

Concerning the second question, Croatian wines have already full access to the EC if they comply with the Community rules. In addition, the Croatian wine sector will be able to benefit from EU funds through the national wine support programme, applicable from 16 October 2013.

However, the national wine support programme implementation is independent from any application for registration of a name as designation of origin.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009578/13
til Kommissionen
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(20. august 2013)

Om: Kommissionens rolle i forsinkelserne i betalingerne fra offentlige instanser i Italien

1. Hvilken rolle har Kommissionen spillet i fastlæggelsen af retsgrundlaget for lovdekret nr. 35 af 8. april 2013 og gennemførelseslov nr. 64 af 6. juni 2013, hvorved der indføres midlertidige bestemmelser, som gør det muligt at forsinke de kollektive udbetalinger fra offentlige instanser til kreditorer med gyldige fakturaer fra før og umiddelbart efter april 2012 (med to betalinger på mellem 30 og 40 mia. EUR i henholdsvis 2013 og 2014)?

2. Er Kommissionen klar over, at lovdekret nr. 35 af 8. april 2013 og gennemførelseslov nr. 64 af 6. juni 2013 giver de italienske myndigheder mulighed for at forsinke betalingerne til kreditorer, herunder små og mellemstore virksomheder, i indtil to år efter arbejdets afslutning og udstedelsen af fakturaen, hvilket er i modstrid med de forpligtelser, der påhviler offentlige myndigheder i henhold til direktiv 2011/7/EU ([1])?

3. Kan Kommissionen acceptere, at offentlige myndigheder i EU udskriver licitationer uden at have pengene til at betale for det arbejde, der udføres i henhold til licitationen?

4. Tror Kommissionen, at det vil fremme handelen med varer og tjenesteyder på det indre marked, at regionale og nationale regeringer i EU får lov til at anvende små og mellemstore virksomheder som ufrivillige banker, når myndighederne ikke er i stand til at finansiere deres betalingsbevillinger? Er tillid, retssikkerhed og lige vilkår ikke afgørende for at forbedre EU's konkurrenceevne og evne til at skabe og bevare arbejdspladser?

5. Vil den lovlige undtagelse, som er skabt af lovdekret nr. 35 af 8. april 2013, skabe præcedens for fremtidige forsøg fra regioners og medlemsstaters side på at opfylde EU's økonomiske og finansielle stabilitetskriterier?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Antonio Tajani
(3. oktober 2013)

Kommissionen er opmærksom på, at forsinkede betalinger har en negativ indflydelse på beskæftigelsen og væksten. Heri ligger eksistensberettigelsen for direktiv 2011/7/EU. Direktiv 2011/7/EU fastlagde klare regler for offentlige betalinger. Særligt og for første gang harmoniserer det betalingsperioden for alle offentlige myndigheder i Europa (nationale, lokale og regionale). Som hovedregel skal de betale for de ydelser og varer, de køber, inden for 30 kalenderdage og kun under særlige omstændigheder inden for 60 dage. Disse frister kan ikke forlænges. Dog er ratebetalinger tilladt under den forudsætning, at hver rate betales inden for den nævnte betalingsfrist.

Med hensyn til den bestemte sag i Italien har de nationale myndigheder bekendtgjort direktivets gennemførelse i national ret. Kommissionen kan dog på det nuværende stadium ikke anse direktivet for fuldstændigt og korrekt gennemført. Kommissionen har i øjeblikket kontakt til de italienske myndigheder for at afklare nogle forhold, som synes ikke at stemme overens med direktivet.

Kommissionen har ikke kendskab til den italienske nationale lovgivning, som det ærede medlem henviser til, men vil straks kontakte de italienske myndigheder og bede dem præcisere Decreto legge 8 aprile 2013 (lovdekret af 8. april 2013) og legge de Conversione 6 giugno 2013 (gennemførelseslov af 6. juni 2013). Hvis denne nationale lovgivning er i strid med forpligtelserne i direktiv 2011/7/EU, vil Kommissionen bede de italienske myndigheder ophæve dem øjeblikkeligt.

Endelig bør medlemsstaterne, som hovedregel, altid respektere deres forpligtelser.

([1]) Som eksempel kan nævnes sagen med Rohde Nielsen A/S, der arbejdede som underleverandør for ACMAR (Consorzio Ravennate delle cooperative di Produzione e Lavoro Soc. Coop p.a. e Ing. Giuseppe Sarti & C. Impresa Construzionni S.p.a) i et større kystforvaltningsprojekt i den italienske region Lazio fra april til juli 2012, og som indsendte to fakturaer på i alt 6 037 500 EUR henholdsvis den 21. juni 2012 og den 19. juli 2012 uden at have modtaget nogen som helst betaling fra de regionale eller nationale myndigheder i Italien.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009578/13
to the Commission
Bendt Bendtsen (PPE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Commission involvement in Italy delaying public payments

1. What role has the Commission played in setting the legal framework for *Decreto-Legge 8 aprile 2013, no. 35* and *Legge de Conversione 6 giugno 2013, no. 64*, which establish temporary rules allowing for the delayed payment of Italian public appropriations to creditors with valid invoices dating from before and immediately after April 2012 (two payments of approximately EUR 30-40 billion, in 2013 and 2014 respectively)?

2. Is the Commission aware that *Decreto-Legge 8 aprile 2013, no. 35* and *Legge de Conversione 6 giugno 2013, no. 64* allow Italian authorities to delay payments to creditors, including SMEs, for up to two years from the completion of work and invoicing, contrary to the obligations regarding public authority payments laid down in Directive 2011/7/EU? ([1])

3. Does the Commission find it acceptable that public authorities in the EU launch procurement projects without having the funds to pay for the work carried out in accordance with the procurement contract?

4. Does the Commission believe that allowing regional and national governments in the EU to use SMEs as involuntary banks, given the authorities' failure to finance their payment appropriations, will encourage trade in goods and services in the internal market? Are trust, legal certainty and a level playing field not crucial to improving the EU's competitiveness and ability to create and maintain jobs?

5. Will the legal exception offered by *Decreto-Legge 8 aprile 2013, no. 35* create a precedent for future attempts by regions and Member States to live up to the EU's economic and financial stability criteria?

Answer given by Mr Tajani on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Commission is aware that late payment has a negative impact on employment and growth. This is the raison d'être of Directive 2011/7/EU. Directive 2011/7/EU established clear rules when referring to public payments. In particular and for the first time it harmonises the payment period of all European public authorities (national, local and regional). The general rule is that they have to pay for the services and goods they procure within 30 calendar days and in very exceptional cases in 60 days. There is no possibility to extend these deadlines. However payments by instalments are allowed providing that each instalment respects the payment period mentioned.

As regards the specific case of Italy, the national authorities notified the national transposition of the directive. However at this stage the Commission cannot consider it as a complete and correct transposition. The Commission is currently in contact with the Italian authorities in order to clarify some issues that seem not to be in compliance with the directive.

The Commission is not aware of the Italian national laws to which the Honourable Member refers but it will immediately contact the Italian authorities to ask for clarifications as regards the Decreto legge 8 aprile 2013 and legge de Conversione 6 giugno 2013. If these national laws are contrary to the obligations laid down in Directive 2011/7/EU, the Commission will ask the Italian authorities to repeal them immediately.

Lastly, as a general principle, Member States should always respect their commitments.

([1]) Cf. the case of Rohde Nielsen A/S which worked as a sub-contractor for ACMAR (Consorzio Ravennate delle cooperative di Produzione e Lavoro Soc. Coop p.a. e Ing. Giuseppe Sarti & C. Impresa Construzionni S.p.a.) on a major coastal management project in the Italian Region of Lazio in April-July 2012. It submitted two invoices amounting to a total of EUR 6.037.500 on 21 June 2012 and 19 July 2012 and has yet to receive any payment whatsoever from the regional or national authorities in Italy.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009579/13
an die Kommission
Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE)
(20. August 2013)

Betrifft: Novelle der Abfallrahmenrichtlinie 2008/98/EG sowie weiterer Vorschriften des Abfallrechts

Anfang 2013 legte die Kommission einen Fahrplan vor, der die Überprüfung der Zielvorgaben aus dem EU-Abfallrecht sowohl auf ihr Fortentwicklungspotenzial als auch auf ihre Kohärenz zu weiteren Politiken und Rechtsgebieten der Union hin skizziert. Die Ergebnisse sollen 2014 präsentiert werden und evtl. zu konkreten Überarbeitungsvorschlägen existierender Rechtsvorschriften führen. Die Überprüfung setzt drei Schwerpunkte: 1. Überprüfung und ggf. Anpassung der Quoten zur Verminderung der Abfalldeponierung sowie zur Steigerung des Recyclings und der Verwertung; 2. Überprüfung der Wirksamkeit der fünf stoffstromspezifischen Richtlinien des Abfallrechts; 3. Analyse zur qualitativ hochwertigeren Bewirtschaftung von Kunststoffabfällen.

In diesem Zusammenhang stellen sich folgende Fragen:

1. In der Vergangenheit wurden oft negative Rückkopplungen einzelner Regelungen beklagt. Wie wird die Kommission sicherstellen, dass bei der Vielzahl der betroffenen Richtlinien die Kohärenz (besser) gewährleistet wird?

2. Wird die Kommission in diesem Zusammenhang auch die Abfallhierarchie und ihre Anwendung überprüfen? Wie bewertet die Kommission die Anwendung bzw. Leitwirkung der Abfallhierarchie?

3. Wie bewertet die Kommission konkret, dass ein immer größer werdender Teil der Abfälle verbrannt wird? Liegen der Kommission Zahlen zu den (Über-)Kapazitäten der Abfallverbrennungsanlagen vor?

4. Noch immer werden fast 40 % der EU-weit anfallenden Siedlungsabfälle deponiert. Wie will die Kommission Sorge dafür tragen, dass dieses Rohstoffpotenzial künftig besser genutzt werden kann? Werden ein Deponieverbot bzw. eine Deponiesteuer diskutiert?

5. Wie will die Kommission konkret sicherstellen, dass Mitgliedstaaten europäische Regelungen (besser) einhalten?

6. Wie bewertet die Kommission die Entwicklungen im Bereich „Abfall-Ende-Kriterien"? Welche weiteren Initiativen (Stoffströme) sind in diesem Bereich geplant?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(26. September 2013)

1. Die Kommission arbeitet zurzeit daran ([1]), mögliche rechtliche Lücken und Unstimmigkeiten zu ermitteln, um die Klarheit, Wirksamkeit und Durchsetzbarkeit des EU-Abfallrechts zu verbessern.

2. Die Abfallhierarchie als solche bleibt weiterhin gültig und wird nicht überprüft. Die derzeit laufenden Arbeiten dürften ihre Umsetzung jedoch im Einklang mit den Zielen des Siebten Umweltaktionsprogramms unterstützen ([2]).

3. Den Daten von EUROSTAT ([3]) zufolge wurden im Jahr 2011 in der EU 23 % der Siedlungsabfälle verbrannt; dies ist 1 % mehr als 2010. EUROSTAT ([4]) hat 2010 eine Statistik über die Anzahl der Müllverbrennungsanlagen und deren Kapazitäten veröffentlicht.

4. Die Kommission bewertet zurzeit verschiedene Maßnahmen zur Erreichung der Ziele des Siebten Umweltaktionsprogramms bezüglich der Reduzierung von Müllkippen.

5. Die Kommission veranstaltet Seminare ([5]), um die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Einhaltung des Abfallrechts und beim Erreichen der EU-Ziele im Bereich der Abfallwirtschaft zu unterstützen.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/target_review.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/pdf/7EAP_Proposal/de.pdf
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-13-33_de.htm
([4]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/waste/data/database
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm

6. Im Laufe des Jahres 2014 wird die Kommission beobachten, wie sich die „Abfall-Ende-Kriterien“ für Metallschrott auswirken. Außerdem prüft sie gegenwärtig, ob entsprechende Kriterien auch für Plastik- und biologisch abbaubare Abfälle sinnvoll wären.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009579/13
to the Commission
Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Amendments to Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and other legislation on waste

At the beginning of 2013, the Commission submitted a roadmap providing for a review of the targets laid down by the EU's legislation on waste, both to establish their potential for further development and to assess their consistency with other policies and fields of Union law. It is intended that the results should be presented in 2014, possibly leading to specific proposals for amending existing legislation. The review is focusing on three main areas: 1. a review and possible adjustment of quotas to reduce landfilling and to increase recycling and recovery; 2. a review of the effectiveness of the five EU Directives dealing with separate waste streams; 3. an analysis of better ways of managing plastic waste.

1. In the past, there were often complaints about negative feedbacks from individual instruments. Given the multiplicity of directives involved, how will the Commission ensure that a (more) coherent approach is achieved?

2. In this context, will the Commission also review the waste hierarchy and its application? What is the Commission's assessment of the application/guidance effect of the waste hierarchy?

3. What view does the Commission take of the fact that an increasingly large proportion of waste is being incinerated? Does the Commission have any statistics on the capacity (or overcapacity) of waste incineration plants?

4. It is still the case that nearly 40% of domestic waste in the EU is landfilled. How will the Commission ensure that the raw materials potential which it represents can be put to better use in future? Is a ban on landfilling or else a tax on it under discussion?

5. How, in practical terms, will the Commission ensure that Member States comply — or comply more fully — with European law?

6. What is the Commission's assessment of trends in the field of 'end-of-waste criteria'? What further initiatives (waste streams) are planned in this field?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

1. The Commission is in the process ([1]) of evaluating possible gaps and legal inconsistencies so as to make EU waste legislation clearer, more effective and more easily enforceable.

2. The waste hierarchy itself remains valid and will not be reviewed. However, this process should strengthen its application in line with the objectives set out in the 7th Environmental Action Program ([2]).

3. According to Eurostat ([3]) the average amount of municipal waste incinerated in the EU in 2011 was 23%, 1 percentile more than in 2010. Eurostat ([4]) has published statistics on the number of incineration plants and their capacities in 2010.

4. The Commission is assessing a range of measures to achieve the objectives set out in the 7th Environmental Action Program relating to the elimination of landfill.

5. The Commission is using compliance-assistance seminars ([5]) to help Member State with achieving EU waste management objectives.

6. During 2014, the Commission will monitor the effects created by the adoption of end-of-waste criteria for metal scrap. The Commission is currently considering whether such criteria for plastic waste and biodegradable waste would be appropriate.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/target_review.htm
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/newprg/pdf/7EAP_Proposal/en.pdf
([3]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-13-33_en.htm
([4]) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/waste/data/database
([5]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/framework/support_implementation.htm

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009580/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Deroga al divieto di irrorazione di pesticidi mediante mezzi aerei in provincia di Treviso per l'anno 2013 concessa in possibile violazione della direttiva 2009/128/CE

Sabato 18 maggio 2013 è accaduto un fatto increscioso e preoccupante: i clienti (fra i quali alcuni turisti stranieri) che stavano pranzando ai tavoli all'aperto di un ristorante ubicato sulla collina di San Gallo a Farra di Soligo (TV) venivano colpiti da una pioggia di pesticida alla deriva rilasciato da un elicottero impegnato nel trattamento di un vigneto. Poco distante, inoltre, alcuni bambini che giocavano nel campo sportivo comunale venivano anch'essi irrorati della soluzione pesticida.

Anche per l'anno 2013, infatti, le competenti autorità hanno autorizzato l'irrorazione aerea di pesticidi per il trattamento dei vigneti nei comuni della provincia di Treviso di produzione del «Prosecco di Conegliano — Valdobbiadene» DOCG (Denominazione di origine controllata e garantita), in deroga al divieto imposto dall'articolo 9, paragrafo 1, della direttiva 2009/128/CE ([1]), nonostante non sembrino sussistere le rigide condizioni richieste al paragrafo 2, prime tra tutte, alla lettera a), l'assenza di alternative praticabili o la presenza di evidenti vantaggi in termini di impatto ridotto sulla salute umana e sull'ambiente rispetto all'applicazione di pesticidi da terra. In un sopralluogo compiuto in loco il 27 maggio scorso, infatti, lo scrivente deputato ha avuto modo di accertare personalmente la facile accessibilità di tali vigneti mediante mezzi agricoli tradizionali. Sembrano essere del tutto assenti, inoltre, gli evidenti vantaggi suindicati: si segnala, in proposito, l'inspiegabile e sospetto ritardo accumulato da parte delle competenti autorità nel rendere pubblici gli esiti di un'indagine relativa agli effetti dei fitofarmaci compiuta sulle urine di un campione di residenti (per buona parte composto da bambini), attesi sin dalla fine del 2012 ma ancora ignoti ([2]).

In risposta alla prima interrogazione presentata dallo scrivente deputato in relazione agli accadimenti dell'anno 2012 (n. E-002699/2012 dell'8 marzo 2012), la Commissione ribadiva che la direttiva 2009/128/CE vieta l'irrorazione aerea con la possibilità di eventuali deroghe in condizioni estremamente limitate e controllate e precisava l'intenzione di contattare le competenti autorità italiane in merito.

Sulla base di quanto esposto:

1. Può la Commissione rendere noto l'esito dei contatti intercorsi con le competenti autorità italiane in proposito?

2. Non intende la Commissione raccogliere ulteriori informazioni al fine di verificare la possibile violazione della direttiva 2009/128/CE da parte dell'Italia in relazione al corrente anno 2013?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(23 settembre 2013)

1) In occasione della riunione del gruppo di lavoro sull'uso sostenibile a norma della direttiva 2009/128/CE ([3]), tenutasi il 18 aprile 2012, la Commissione ha comunicato agli Stati membri le informazioni raccolte dall'onorevole parlamentare con la sua interrogazione E-002699/2012 ([4]). Sebbene non sussista alcun obbligo giuridico di informare la Commissione, gli Stati membri sono stati invitati a comunicare le informazioni sulle deroghe concesse rispetto all'irrorazione aerea, con particolare riferimento alle disposizioni sul monitoraggio ed alle modalità di avviso ai residenti. Finora non sono pervenute informazioni in tal senso.

2) La Commissione contatterà formalmente le competenti autorità italiane al fine di ottenere maggiori informazioni circa le autorizzazioni concesse per l'irrorazione aerea cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare.

([1]) Autorizzazione della Giunta della Regione Veneto — Unità periferica per i Servizi fitosanitari del 10 maggio 2013, protocollo. n. 197244.

([2]) Si segnala in argomento che l'associazione WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) — AltaMarca ha recentemente depositato presso la prefettura di Treviso un esposto sulla questione dell'uso dei fitofarmaci, chiedendo di imporre il rispetto di leggi nazionali e comunitarie ai sindaci dei 15 comuni di produzione del «Prosecco Conegliano — Valdobbiadene» DOCG, con particolare attenzione all'applicazione del principio di precauzione. Cfr. http://www.trevisotoday.it/cronaca/wwf-altamarca-presenta-esposto-prefetto.html

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

([4]) GU L 309 del 24.11.2009.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009580/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Derogation from the ban on the aerial spraying of pesticides in the province of Treviso for 2013 — possibly in breach of Directive 2009/128/EC

On Saturday, 18 May 2013, a regrettable and alarming incident occurred in Italy: some customers (including foreign tourists) who were having lunch on the terrace of a restaurant on the hill of San Gallo a Farra di Soligo (TV) were struck by a shower of drifting pesticide being sprayed from a helicopter that was treating a vineyard. Nearby, moreover, some children playing in a local municipal sports field were also sprayed with the pesticide solution.

The reason for this is that, for the year 2013 too, the relevant authorities have authorised the aerial spraying of pesticides to treat vineyards in the municipalities of the province of Treviso which produce 'Prosecco di Conegliano — Valdobbiadene' DOCG (Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin), by way of derogation from the prohibition laid down in Article 9(1) of Directive 2009/128/EC ([1]). This is despite the fact that the stringent conditions laid down, first and foremost, in Article 9(2)(a) do not appear to have been met, namely the absence of viable alternatives, or clear advantages in terms of reduced impacts on human health and the environment as compared with land-based application of pesticides.

Indeed, in an on-site survey I personally carried out on 27 May 2013, I was able to see with my own eyes how easy it would be to access these vineyards using traditional agricultural vehicles. In addition, the clear advantages mentioned above appear to be entirely lacking. It is worth noting, in this regard, the inexplicable and suspicious delay on the part of the competent authorities to publish the results of tests into the effects of pesticides that were carried out on the urine of a sample of residents (mostly children). These results have been awaited since the end of 2012 but have still not emerged ([2]).

In answer to the first written question I submitted in relation to events in 2012 (No E-002699/2012 of 8 March 2012), the Commission reiterated that directive 2009/128/EC prohibited aerial spraying, with provisions for possible derogations under very restricted and monitored conditions, and stated its intention to contact the competent Italian authorities in relation to the matter.

1. Can the Commission therefore say what the outcome was of its contacts with the relevant Italian authorities?

2. Will the Commission not attempt to seek further information in order to ascertain whether there may have been any breaches of Directive 2009/128/EC by Italy in relation to the year 2013?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(23 September 2013)

1) The Commission informed Member States on the information obtained by the Honourable Member in his Question E-002699/2012 ([3]) in the Working Group Meeting on the Sustainable Use Directive 2009/128/EC ([4]) carried out on 18 April 2012. Although Member States are not legally obliged to inform the Commission, they were invited to share the relevant information on aerial spraying derogations, in particular on monitoring provisions and residents warning. So far, no information was received.

2) The Commission will formally contact the Italian competent authorities in order to get details about the authorisations of the aerial spraying mentioned by the Honourable Member.

([1]) Authorisation granted by the Veneto Regional Council — Peripheral Plant Health Services Unit — on 10 May 2013, Ref. No 197244.

([2]) The WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) AltaMarca association has recently submitted a complaint to the Prefecture of Treviso on the use of pesticides, calling for the mayors of the 15 municipalities in which Prosecco Conegliano — Valdobbiadene DOCG is produced to be required to comply with national and EC laws, paying particular attention to the precautionary principle. See http://www.trevisotoday.it/cronaca/wwf-altamarca-presenta-esposto-prefetto.html

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

([4]) OJ L 309/71, 24.11.2009.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009581/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Progetto Mo.S.E.: possibile violazione degli indirizzi comunitari sul monitoraggio della sua realizzazione e sorveglianza sulle misure volte a limitarne l'impatto ambientale

Con nota ENV (2008) 13085 del 15 luglio 2008 la Commissione richiedeva in merito al progetto Mo.S.E. ([1]) che le attività connesse al monitoraggio della realizzazione dell'opera fossero poste sotto la responsabilità di un ente indipendente da quello direttamente o indirettamente coinvolto nell'esecuzione dei lavori. In ottemperanza a ciò, il successivo accordo di programma dell'11 dicembre 2008 intercorso tra MATTM (Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare), MIT (Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti) — Magistrato alle Acque di Venezia e Regione Veneto individuava tale ente indipendente nell'ISPRA (Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale); le attività demandate a quest'ultimo venivano quindi individuate e conferite per un periodo di tre anni nel successivo accordo siglato tra MATTM, MIT — Magistrato alle Acque di Venezia e ISPRA in data 13 luglio 2009. Allo scadere del termine dei tre anni, tuttavia, un nuovo accordo di programma intercorso tra gli stessi enti che avevano concluso il primo revocava tale incarico all'ISPRA, stabilendo contestualmente che a subentrare nelle relative funzioni fosse la Regione Veneto ([2]); l'incarico di dare esecuzione a tali nuove disposizioni veniva conferito all'Unità di progetto Coordinamento commissioni VAS-VINCA-NUVV. Tale ente, facendo parte della Segreteria regionale per le Infrastrutture del Veneto, non sembrerebbe soddisfare il requisito dell'indipendenza richiesto nella nota della Commissione richiamata in apertura.

Si ricorda, inoltre, che in merito al progetto Mo.S.E. in passato è stata avviata una procedura d'infrazione per possibili violazioni della direttiva «Habitat» 92/43/CEE, successivamente archiviata in ragione delle misure proposte dalle autorità italiane volte a limitare l'entità dei danni agli ecosistemi e a compensare l'impatto dell'opera e in considerazione delle finalità del progetto; la Commissione precisava tuttavia la volontà di sorvegliare l'applicazione delle misure annunciate ([3]).

Tutto ciò premesso:

1. Quali iniziative intende la Commissione intraprendere al fine di verificare se le autorità italiane con il nuovo accordo di programma abbiano disatteso le indicazioni da essa fornite nella nota succitata?

2. Può la Commissione rendere noto l'esito dell'attività di sorveglianza svolta in merito alla realizzazione delle misure proposte dalle autorità italiane in occasione della chiusura della procedura di infrazione?

3. È la Commissione a conoscenza dell'indagine giudiziaria del luglio 2013 che ha condotto agli arresti domiciliari ben 7 ([4]) persone ?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(27 settembre 2013)

La Commissione valuterà le implicazioni del nuovo accordo, al fine di verificarne la coerenza con il requisito, concordato con le autorità italiane alla chiusura della procedura d'infrazione, dell'indipendenza dell'organismo di controllo.

Spetta alle autorità italiane garantire la piena attuazione delle misure di mitigazione e compensazione del progetto che sono state concordate. La Commissione non intende redigere una relazione in materia. Tuttavia, nel caso ricevesse informazioni circostanziate secondo cui le condizioni in base alle quali è stata chiusa la procedura d'infrazione non sono state rispettate, essa s'informerà presso le autorità italiane.

La Commissione è a conoscenza dell'indagine giudiziaria cui fa riferimento l'onorevole parlamentare.

([1]) Modulo sperimentale elettromeccanico, sistema di difesa dell'isola di Venezia e della relativa laguna dalle acque alte.
([2]) Cfr. delibera della Giunta regionale n. 33 del 21 gennaio 2013 di approvazione del nuovo accordo di programma, figurante all'allegato A: http://bur.regione.veneto.it/BurvServices/Pubblica/DettaglioDgr.aspx?id=245408.
([3]) Cfr. comunicato stampa della Commissione: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-09-553_it.htm?locale=en.
([4]) Cfr. http://goo.gl/3FiZO0.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009581/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: MOSE project — possible breach of EU guidelines on the monitoring of the project and supervision of the measures designed to limit its environmental impact

In its note ENV (2008) 13085 of 15 July 2008, with reference to the MOSE floodgate project ([1]), the Commission had requested that all activities related to the monitoring of the work be placed under the responsibility of a body that was independent of the organisation directly or indirectly involved in the execution of the work. In compliance with this, the subsequent agreement of 11 December 2008 between the MoE (Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea), MIT (Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport), the Venice Water Authority and the Veneto Region stipulated that the independent body in question would be ISPRA (Institute for Environmental Protection and Research). This institute was thus given responsibility for the activities in question for a period of three years in the subsequent agreement signed by the MoE, MIT, Venice Water Authority and ISPRA on 13 July 2009. At the end of that three-year period, however, a new agreement between the same authorities cancelled this contract with ISPRA, establishing that its responsibilities were to be taken over by the Veneto Region ([2]). The task of implementing these new provisions was given to the 'VAS-VINCA-NUVV' Committee Coordination Project Unit. Since this body is part of the Veneto Region's Secretariat for Infrastructure, it would not appear to meet the requirement of independence called for in the abovementioned Commission note.

It should also be noted that with regard to the MOSE project an infringement procedure has already once been initiated for possible infringements of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The procedure was subsequently closed due to the measures proposed by the Italian authorities to limit the damage to ecosystems and to offset the impact of the work, and in view of the aims of the project. The Commission did, however, state that it would supervise the implementation of the announced measures ([3]).

1. What steps will the Commission take in order to check whether the Italian authorities, with their new agreement, have ignored the instructions provided by the Commission in its abovementioned note?

2. Will the Commission make public the outcome of its supervision of the implementation of the measures proposed by the Italian authorities at the closure of the infringement procedure?

3. Is the Commission aware of the criminal investigation of July 2013, which led to the house arrest of as many as seven people ([4])?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

The Commission will assess the implications of the new agreement in order to verify its coherence with the requirement of independence of the monitoring body agreed with the Italian authorities at the closure of the infringement procedure.

It is the responsibility of the Italian authorities to ensure full implementation of the agreed mitigation and compensation measures of the project. The Commission does not intend to establish a report on this subject. However, in the event that it receives substantiated information that the basis upon which the infringement procedure was closed has not been respected, it will investigate with the Italian authorities.

The Commission is aware of the criminal investigation mentioned by the Honourable Member.

([1]) Experimental electromechanical module: a system to defend the island of Venice and its lagoon from high water levels.
([2]) See Regional Council Decision No 33 of 21 January 2013, adopting the new agreement (Annex A): http://bur.regione.veneto.it/BurvServices/Pubblica/DettaglioDgr.aspx?id=245408
([3]) See Commission press release: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-09-553_en.htm?locale=en
([4]) See http://goo.gl/3FiZO0

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009582/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Progetto di costruzione di un impianto eolico sul monte Pizzoc a Fregona (TV) lungo un'importante rotta migratoria e conseguente pericolo per l'avifauna

Con deliberazione n. 71 del 5.6.2013 la Giunta del Comune di Fregona (TV) ha approvato l'installazione temporanea di una torre anemometrica sul Pizzoc, monte delle Prealpi che si trova nel territorio comunale e che raggiunge i 1.565 metri d'altitudine; tale atto rappresenta il primo passo verso la realizzazione di un impianto eolico lungo il crinale del monte. Secondo quanto riportato dalla stampa locale, il progetto prevederà l'installazione di 4/5 piloni alti circa 50 metri dotati di pale eoliche dal diametro compreso tra i 23 e i 27 metri che svilupperanno una velocità angolare di circa 15 chilometri l'ora ([1]).

Un simile progetto desta numerose perplessità in seno alle locali associazioni ambientaliste e a parte della cittadinanza residente in loco ([2]), secondo le quali l'opera rischierebbe di avere un ingente impatto ambientale senza al contempo comportare un'efficiente resa energetica, trattandosi di area scarsamente ventilata ([3]).

L'aspetto più importante lamentato dagli oppositori al progetto consiste nel rischio che la costruzione di simili mastodontici impianti potrebbe rappresentare per la salvaguardia dell'avifauna locale, soprattutto migratoria: il progetto verrà infatti realizzato a ridosso di una ZPS (Zona di protezione speciale, tutelata ai sensi della direttiva «Uccelli» 2009/147/CE), lungo un'importantissima rotta migratoria ([4]). È noto, infatti, l'alto tasso di mortalità per l'avifauna dovuto a collisioni con le pale eoliche ([5]).

Sul punto, si segnala che l'ISPRA (Istituto superiore per la per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale), interpellato in proposito dall'interrogante, nella sua lettera di risposta del 2.7.2012 n. 0024905 non ha escluso che la realizzazione di tale progetto nell'area del Monte Pizzoc non finisca col comportare un impatto negativo sull'avifauna locale (in particolare sui Chirotteri).

Tutto ciò premesso, la Commissione:

1. che giudizio da' del futuro della produzione di energia mediante grandi impianti eolici nell'Unione europea, essendo emerso da tempo che tali opere tendono ad avere scarsa resa energetica a fronte di un rilevante impatto ambientale e di alti costi di installazione?

2. quali iniziative intende intraprendere per approfondire la questione della mortalità dell'avifauna a causa degli impianti eolici?

Risposta di Janez Potočnik a nome della Commissione
(27 settembre 2013)

1. L'UE ha fissato obiettivi ambiziosi e vincolanti per il consumo di energie rinnovabili in ogni Stato membro entro il 2020 ([6]). L'energia eolica dovrà fornire un contributo importante per la realizzazione di questi obiettivi nella maggior parte degli Stati membri. Il costo di installazione delle turbine eoliche è sceso notevolmente negli ultimi anni e il progresso tecnologico ha gradualmente migliorato la loro efficienza. A seconda delle risorse esistenti in luoghi specifici i fattori di capacità raggiungono circa il 30 % a terra e possono raggiungere quasi il 50 % offshore ([7]), che rappresenta lo stesso ordine di grandezza delle centrali idroelettriche o a carbone. Nonostante questi sviluppi la Commissione ha già constatato nella sua recente relazione intermedia ([8]) che è necessario un rinnovato impegno politico per raggiungere i nostri obiettivi, dato che la produzione totale di energia eolica potrebbe risultare inferiore alle aspettative a causa dei ridotti sforzi nazionali e di difficoltà infrastrutturali.

([1]) V. http://goo.gl/6xjhoF.
([2]) V. http://www.cansiglio.it/home-diario/salvaguardia/236-eolico-affare.html
([3]) A riprova di ciò si segnala, per un'opportuna consultazione, il link a un atlante eolico interattivo d'Italia: http://goo.gl/17a7oZ.
([4]) SIC/ZPS IT3230077 «Foresta del Cansiglio».
([5]) Per l'analisi dettagliata presente nel sito internet del CABS (Commitee Against Bird Slaughter), v. http://goo.gl/0vC9oK.
([6]) Direttiva sulle energie rinnovabili (2009/28/CE), GU L 140 del 5.6.2009.
([7]) Ad esempio, la centrale eolica offshore danese Horns Rev 2 ha raggiunto un fattore di capacità superiore al 46 % nel primo anno e mezzo di attività.
([8]) COM(2013)175 relazione sui progressi nelle energie rinnovabili.

2. I parchi eolici e i progetti di energia eolica sono soggetti alle disposizioni delle direttive sulla valutazione ambientale strategica (VAS) ([9]) e sulla valutazione dell'impatto ambientale (VIA) ([10]).

Inoltre, i parchi eolici che potrebbero avere un effetto negativo su un sito Natura 2000 devono essere oggetto di un'opportuna valutazione a norma dell'articolo 6 della direttiva sugli habitat ([11]). Per facilitare lo svolgimento di valutazioni appropriate nel contesto dell'energia eolica, la Commissione ha pubblicato un documento di orientamento specifico ([12]).

La qualità di tali valutazioni di impatto ambientale rientra nella responsabilità in primo luogo dei committenti e infine delle autorità nazionali competenti.

L'Italia è tenuta ad assicurare che la legislazione UE in materia di ambiente sia correttamente applicata. La Commissione prenderà contatto con le autorità italiane solo se riceverà una prova di una possibile violazione della normativa dell'UE.

([9]) Direttiva 2001/42/CE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 27 giugno 2001, concernente la valutazione degli effetti di determinati piani e programmi sull'ambiente, GU L 197 del 21.7.2001.

([10]) Direttiva 2011/92/UE del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 13 dicembre 2011, concernente la valutazione dell'impatto ambientale di determinati progetti pubblici e privati, GU L 26 del 28.1.2012.

([11]) Direttiva 92/43/CEE del Consiglio, del 21 maggio 1992, relativa alla conservazione degli habitat naturali e della flora e della fauna selvatiche, GU L 206 del 22.7.1992.

([12]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Wind_farms.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009582/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Danger for birds due to plan to build a wind farm on Mount Pizzoc in Fregona (TV) along an important bird migration route

By resolution No 71 of 5 June 2013 the Town Council of Fregona (TV) approved the temporary installation of a 1565-metre high meteorological mast on Mount Pizzoc, in the Alpine foothills. This was the first step towards the construction of a wind farm along the mountain ridge. According to local press reports, the project will involve the installation of four or five 50 metre high pylons with wind turbine blades measuring between 23 and 27 metres in diameter, with an angular velocity of around 15 km per hour ([1]).

Local environmental groups and some local residents have a number of doubts about this project ([2]), however. According to them, the wind farm could have a major environmental impact without having an efficient energy yield, given that it is a poorly ventilated area ([3]).

The most important negative aspect, according to the opponents to the project, is the risk that the construction of such mammoth wind turbines could pose to local birds, especially migratory birds. Indeed, the wind farm will be built close to an SPA (Special Protection Area, protected under the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC) along a very important migration route ([4]). The high bird mortality rate due to collisions with wind turbines is a well-known fact ([5]).

In this regard, in its letter of 2 July 2012 (No 0024905), in reply to a letter of mine, ISPRA (Institute for Environmental Protection and Research) did not rule out that such a wind farm in the Mount Pizzoc area could have a negative impact on local fauna and avifauna (particularly bats).

1. What, therefore, is the Commission's view of the future of energy production by means of large wind farms in the EU, given that for some time now it has emerged that these farms tend to have a low energy yield with a significant environmental impact and high installation costs?

2. What measures will the Commission take to look into the issue of bird and animal mortality due to wind farms?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(27 September 2013)

1. The EU has set ambitious and binding targets for renewable energy consumption in each Member State by 2020 ([6]). Wind energy will have to make an important contribution towards meeting these objectives in most Member States. The cost of installing wind turbine has dropped substantially over the last years and technological progress has gradually improved the efficiency of wind turbines. Depending on the resources in specific locations capacity factors reach around 30% onshore and can reach close to 50% offshore ([7]), which is the same order of magnitude as is the case for hydroelectric or coal-fired plants. Despite these developments the Commission has noted in its recent progress report ([8]) that renewed policy efforts are needed to reach our targets, as total wind generation may fall short of expectations due to reduced national efforts and infrastructure difficulties.

2. Wind farm plans and projects are subject to the provisions of the directives on Strategic Environmental Assessment ([9]) (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment ([10]) (EIA) respectively.

([1]) See http://goo.gl/6xjhoF
([2]) See http://www.cansiglio.it/home-diario/salvaguardia/236-eolico-affare.html
([3]) For evidence of this, see this link to an interactive wind atlas of Italy: http://goo.gl/17a7oZ
([4]) SCI/SPA IT3230077 Cansiglio Forest.
([5]) For a detailed analysis, see the CABS website (Committee Against Bird Slaughter) — http://goo.gl/0vC9oK
([6]) Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC), OJ L 140, 5.6.2009.
([7]) E.g. the Danish offshore wind farm Horns Rev 2 reached a capacity factor of over 46% in the first 1.5 years of its operation.
([8]) COM(2013) 175 Renewable energy progress report.
([9]) Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001.
([10]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, OJ L 26, 28.1.2012.

In addition, wind farms likely to have an adverse effect on a Natura 2000 site must be subject to an appropriate assessment according to Art. 6 of the Habitats Directive ([11]). To facilitate the process of appropriate assessments in the context of wind energy, the Commission issued a specific guidance document ([12]).

The quality of these environmental impact assessments is a reponsibility firstly of the developers and finally of the national competent authorities.

It is Italy's obligation to ensure that the EU environmental legislation is correctly implemented. Only if the Commission receives evidence of a possible breach of EC law, it will contact the Italian authorities.

([11]) 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.
([12]) http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/Wind_farms.pdf

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009583/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Tutela dell'Asiago DOP «prodotto di montagna»: problematiche legate al nuovo regolamento n. 1151/2012

Fin dal 2006 il Consorzio di tutela del formaggio Asiago utilizza, sul proprio formaggio Asiago DOP, la menzione di «prodotto di montagna». Al fine di rispettare tutti i criteri previsti dal regolamento (CE) n. 510/2006, ottenere l'approvazione del proprio disciplinare di produzione dall'UE e poter far uso di questa indicazione, il Consorzio ha lavorato duramente riorganizzando in termini molto più restrittivi le diverse fasi della produzione, compresi l'alimentazione dei bovini, la stagionatura e il confezionamento del prodotto.

Nel 2012, con l'introduzione del nuovo regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012 in materia di regimi di qualità dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari, l'articolo 31, definendo le caratteristiche del «prodotto di montagna», precisa alla lettera a) che «*sia le materie prime che gli alimenti per animali provengono essenzialmente da zone di montagna*».

La Commissione, facendo ricorso agli atti delegati, sta ora discutendo un nuovo articolato che vorrebbe condizionare l'uso dell'indicazione facoltativa «prodotto di montagna» a vincoli ancora più stringenti riguardo all'origine dell'alimentazione dei bovini da cui si ricava il latte per la produzione in questione.

Considerando che, se l'articolo 31 lettera a) venisse applicato in senso letterale e con valore retroattivo, il disciplinare dell'Asiago DOP, approvato con regolamento (CE) n. 1200/2007 perché rispettoso dell'allora vigente normativa, rischierebbe la perdita della denominazione «prodotto di montagna»; preso atto che, se la bozza di atto delegato attualmente in discussione fosse confermata, sarebbero fissati limiti troppo stringenti sulla provenienza dell'alimentazione da somministrare agli animali, tali da pregiudicare il mantenimento degli standard del disciplinare in vigore; considerato che già oggi l'intera fase di produzione e stagionatura avviene interamente in zona montana; considerando, infine, le conseguenze socioeconomiche per le imprese e per i lavoratori veneti la cui sussistenza si lega alla filiera di produzione dell'Asiago DOP Prodotto di Montagna;

la Commissione:

1. intende concedere una deroga ai prodotti che utilizzano oggi l'indicazione prodotto di montagna in quanto hanno già ricevuto l'approvazione del proprio disciplinare prima dell'entrata in vigore del nuovo regolamento?

2. per quanto riguarda l'applicazione di norme più stringenti sui vincoli di origine dell'alimentazione degli animali da latte, intende applicare delle deroghe ex articolo 31, paragrafo 3, del regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012, al fine di consentire al Consorzio di tutela del formaggio Asiago di mantenere gli standard produttivi attuali, che rispettano il disciplinare approvato dall'UE nel 2007?

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009585/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Il «prodotto di montagna»: problematiche legate al nuovo regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012

Il 21 novembre 2012 è stato adottato il nuovo regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012 e varata una nuova disciplina in materia di regimi di qualità dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari, che ha sostituito quella contenuta nei precedenti regolamenti n. 509 e n. 510 del 2006.

In base alla vecchia normativa potevano ricevere la denominazione facoltativa di qualità «prodotto della montagna» tutti i prodotti DOP e IGP già registrati in ambito della Comunità europea le cui zone di produzione e/o trasformazione si collocassero in un territorio classificato come montano ai sensi dell'articolo 18 del regolamento (CE) n. 1257/1999.

Successivamente l'articolo 31 del nuovo regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012, occupandosi del tema di «prodotto di montagna» come indicazione facoltativa di qualità, precisa alla lettera a) che per questi prodotti «*sia le materie prime che gli alimenti per animali provengono essenzialmente da zone di montagna*».

Oggi, la Commissione, ricorrendo agli atti delegati, previsti dallo stesso articolo 31, paragrafo 4, del regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012, vorrebbe modificare questa procedura e propone, per il conferimento della denominazione «prodotto di montagna», l'inserimento di vincoli più stringenti riguardanti l'origine dell'alimentazione degli animali, circostanza che, se realizzata, impedirebbe a prodotti di montagna già esistenti, che hanno già ottenuto l'approvazione da parte dell'UE del loro disciplinare, di mantenere tale indicazione di qualità.

La Commissione:

1. ritiene possibile rivedere il testo degli atti delegati attualmente in discussione, escludendo dall'articolo 2.2 degli stessi i prodotti DOP-IGP approvati dall'UE per i quali siano già previste, nel disciplinare di produzione, specifiche norme di alimentazione del bestiame e/o una specifica previsione per prodotto della/di montagna?

2. qualora non fosse possibile escludere i prodotti summenzionati, ritiene possibile apporre una deroga ai disposti previsti dalla bozza di atto delegato in discussione per tutti i prodotti DOP e IGP che hanno ottenuto l'approvazione da parte dell'UE all'introduzione del «prodotto della/di montagna» nel loro disciplinare di produzione prima dell'introduzione del nuovo regolamento?

3. in caso di risposta negativa alla domanda di cui sopra, ha valutato le conseguenze socioeconomiche per le aree montane che, negli anni, hanno consolidato quelle prassi di produzione e allevamento che conferiscono al prodotto di montagna tratti di unicità?

Risposta congiunta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(26 settembre 2013)

Il regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012 sui regimi di qualità dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari ([1]) che istituisce l'indicazione «prodotto di montagna» come indicazione facoltativa di qualità è entrato in vigore il 3 gennaio 2013. Gli Stati membri non possono conservare norme nazionali su indicazioni facoltative di qualità oggetto del regolamento. Anche le denominazioni di origine protetta (DOP) e le indicazioni geografiche protette (IGP) registrate ai sensi del regolamento in questione, le cui specifiche di prodotto fanno riferimento a «prodotto di montagna», devono essere conformi ai requisiti di cui all'articolo 31, paragrafi 1) e 2), per utilizzare in aggiunta l'indicazione facoltativa di qualità «prodotto di montagna». Tuttavia, conformemente all'articolo 43 del regolamento, un nome registrato come DOP/IGP che contiene il termine «prodotto di montagna» può continuare a essere utilizzato anche quando tali requisiti non sono rispettati.

La Commissione ha facoltà di adottare atti delegati che derogano alle condizioni di utilizzo del termine «prodotto di montagna» per tenere conto di vincoli naturali che incidono sulla produzione agricola nelle aree montane. La Commissione può quindi attenuare le condizioni di utilizzo previste dal regolamento ma non può introdurre vincoli più severi né deroghe specifiche per DOP/IGP.

Per preparare l'atto delegato, la Commissione sta prendendo atto dello studio sull'etichettatura di prodotti agricoli e alimentari dell'agricoltura montana ([2]).

Il rispetto delle condizioni di uso dell'indicazione «prodotto di montagna» lascia impregiudicato il diritto di utilizzare il nome «Asiago», registrato come denominazione di origine protetta (DOP) in base al regolamento (CE) n. 1107/96 ([3]) della Commissione, per il formaggio prodotto conformemente alle specifiche del prodotto.

([1]) GU L 343 del 14.12.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/mountain-farming_en.htm
([3]) GU L 148 del 21.6.1996. Regolamento da ultimo modificato dal regolamento (CE) n. 2156/2005 (GU L 342 del 24.12.2005).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009583/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Protection of Asiago PDO cheese — a 'mountain product'- difficulties with the new Regulation No 1151/2012

Since 2006 the Asiago Cheese Consortium has been using, on its Asiago PDO cheese, the term 'mountain product'. In order to comply with all the criteria laid down in Regulation No 510/2006, to secure EU approval of its product specification and to be able to use this term, the Consortium has worked hard to reorganise, in a much more restrictive manner, its various stages of production, including the feeding of the cattle, maturing of the cheese and product packaging.

In 2012, with the introduction of the new Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, Article 31, which defines the characteristics of 'mountain products', stipulates under point (a) that 'both the raw materials and the feedstuffs for farm animals' must 'come essentially from mountain areas'.

The Commission, making use of delegated acts, is currently discussing a new article which would subject the use of the optional term 'mountain product' to even more stringent constraints with regard to the origin of the feed for the dairy cattle which produce the milk in question.

If Article 31(a) were to be applied literally and retroactively, the specification for Asiago PDO cheese, approved by Regulation (EC) No 1200/2007 in that it complied with existing legislation, would risk losing the name 'mountain product'. Moreover, if the draft delegated act currently under discussion were to be confirmed, excessively stringent limits would be set on the origin of the feedstuffs for the animals, to such an extent as to make it difficult to maintain the standards of the specification currently in force. It is worth also bearing in mind that, at present, the entire production and maturation stage already takes place entirely in a mountain area. In view of this, and considering the socioeconomic impact this could have on businesses and workers in the Veneto region, whose livelihood is linked to the supply chain for the production of Asiago PDO Mountain Product, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Will it grant a derogation for products which currently use the 'mountain product' definition, given that they were already granted approval for their specification beforethe entry into force of the new regulation?

2. As regards the application of more stringent rules on the origin of feedstuffs for dairyanimals, does it intend to grant derogations under Article 31(3) of Regulation (EU) No1151/2012, in order to enable the Asiago Cheese Consortium to maintain its currentproduction standards, which comply with the specification approved by the EU in 2007?

Question for written answer E-009585/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: 'Mountain products'- difficulties with the new Regulation No 1151/2012

On 21 November 2012 the new Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 was adopted and new rules were introduced concerning quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, replacing those set out in the previous regulations No 509/2006 and No 510/2006.

Under the old rules, the optional quality term 'mountain product' could be given to all PDO and PGI products that were already registered with the European Community and whose areas of production and/or processing were in an area classified as a mountain area under Article 18 of Regulation (EC) No 1257/1999.

Subsequently, Article 31 of the new Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, defining 'mountain product' as an optional quality term, stipulated under point (a) that 'both the raw materials and the feedstuffs for farm animals' had to 'come essentially from mountain areas'.

Now, the Commission, using the delegated acts provided for under that same Article 31, paragraph 4, of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, would like to change this procedure and is proposing that in order to be able to make use of the name 'mountain product', more stringent constraints should be introduced with regard to the origin of animal feed. If these changes were to be adopted, existing mountain products, which have already received EU approval for their product specification, would be prevented from retaining the quality term in question.

1. Does the Commission think it might be possible to revise the text of the delegated actscurrently under discussion, to exclude from Article 2.2 of those acts all PDO-PGIproducts that have been approved by the EU and the product specification for whichalready lays down specific feeding standards for livestock and/or a specific provisionformountain products?

2. Should it not be possible to exclude the abovementioned products, might it be possibleto attach a derogation to the provisions laid down in the draft delegated act in question forall PDO and PGI products that were approved by the EU as 'mountain products' intheir product specifications before the introduction of the new regulation?

3. Should this too not be possible, has the Commission assessed the social and economicconsequences for mountain areas which, over the years, have consolidated productionand farming practices that make mountain products so unique?

Joint answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(26 September 2013)

Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs ([1]) establishing the optional quality term 'mountain product' has entered into force on 3 January 2013. Member States may not maintain national rules on optional quality terms which are covered by the regulation. Also protected designations of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indications (PGI) registered under this regulation whose product specification refers to 'mountain product' have to comply with the requirements of Article 31 (1) and (2) for additionally using the optional quality term 'mountain product'. However, in line with Article 43 of the regulation, the use of a name registered as a PDO/PGI which contains the term 'mountain product' may continue even where such requirements are not met.

The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts derogating from the conditions of use for the term 'mountain product' to take into account natural constraints affecting agricultural production in mountain areas. The Commission may thus mitigate the conditions of use of the regulation but not introduce more stringent constraints nor provide specific derogations for PDO/PGI.

The Commission is notably taking into account the Study on labelling of agricultural and food products of mountain farming ([2]), to prepare the delegated act.

Respect of the conditions of use for the term 'mountain product' does not affect the right of using the name 'Asiago', registered as a protected designation of origin (PDO) on the basis of Commission Regulation (EC) No 1107/96 ([3]), for cheese produced in line with the product specification.

([1]) OJ L 343, 14.12.2012.
([2]) http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/mountain-farming_en.htm
([3]) OJ L 148, 21.6.1996. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 2156/2005 (OJ L 342, 24.12.2005).

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009584/13
alla Commissione
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Asiago DOP e assenza di tutela nel mercato americano e canadese

Asiago Dop è un formaggio veneto tipico delle province di Trento, Vicenza e della parte orientale di quelle di Treviso e Padova. La denominazione «Asiago» è tutelata dal regolamento (UE) n. 1151/2012 che prevede la tutela dell'uso di tale termine solo per uno specifico formaggio italiano mentre la sua preparazione segue scrupolosamente il disciplinare di produzione, le cui ultime modifiche sono state approvate con regolamento (CE) n. 1200/2007. Il Consorzio di tutela del formaggio Asiago, per ottenere il riconoscimento internazionale e la tutela del proprio marchio negli Stati Uniti d'America e in Canada, sta riscontrando grandi problemi e sostenendo ingenti spese. Nei due paesi, infatti, non sono riconosciute le indicazioni geografiche comunitarie che definiscono il carattere unico e non delocalizzabile delle produzioni DOP e IGP mentre i vari tentativi di registrazione della denominazione effettuati sin ora non sono andati a buon fine in quanto gli uffici brevetti e marchi di fabbrica dei paesi sopra citati qualificano «Asiago DOP» come denominazione semi-generica. A queste difficoltà si aggiunge la concorrenza di marchi locali che sfruttano il fenomeno dell'«Italian Sounding» per imporsi sul mercato interno e togliere quote di vendita ai prodotti europei; caso eclatante è quello dell'Asiago del Wisconsin, un formaggio che non ha nulla a che fare con l'Asiago DOP.

Il caso dell'Asiago del Wisconsin è stato posto all'attenzione della Commissione nel 2011 quando se ne scoprì l'esistenza durante lo svolgimento di una fiera di settore a Colonia che — a seguito di specifica denuncia da parte del Consorzio tutela formaggio Asiago — è stato immediatamente posto sotto sequestro dalle autorità tedesche in quanto violava la normativa comunitaria relativa alla protezione delle indicazioni geografiche e delle denominazioni d'origine dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari. In risposta a tale presa di posizione le autorità statunitensi hanno incrementato nell'ultimo trimestre del 2011 la frequenza dei controlli sui campioni delle importazioni di Asiago per le verifiche sanitarie bloccando in dogana grandi quantitativi di Asiago DOP e rallentandone notevolmente i volumi di vendita mettendo così in atto un sistema protezionistico fatto di barriere non tariffarie.

La Commissione, considerato l'elevato livello di notorietà e l'ampia diffusione di Asiago DOP negli USA:

1. intende supportare il Consorzio nell'iter legale che sta percorrendo al fine di registrare il proprio marchio in questi due paesi?

2. può far sapere lo stato dell'arte dei negoziati bilaterali attualmente in corso fra UE, USA e Canada e come intende agire per far sì che le indicazioni geografiche comunitarie vengano tutelate fattualmente e non considerate come nomi generici?

Risposta di Dacian Cioloş a nome della Commissione
(7 ottobre 2013)

La Commissione è consapevole dell'importanza di garantire una maggiore protezione delle indicazioni geografiche (IG) dell'UE nel quadro dei negoziati bilaterali in corso con gli Stati Uniti e il Canada riguardanti, rispettivamente, un partenariato per gli scambi e gli investimenti transatlantici (TTIP) e un accordo economico e commerciale globale (CETA). La Commissione è altresì a conoscenza delle difficoltà specifiche che il formaggio Asiago DOP incontra sul mercato nordamericano, sia in termini di tutela dei diritti di proprietà intellettuale che in relazione agli ostacoli non tariffari.

La Commissione non può stare in giudizio in cause promosse dal Consorzio per la tutela del formaggio Asiago al fine di registrare il proprio marchio in questi paesi; continuerà tuttavia ad adoperarsi per ottenere un risultato ambizioso per le indicazioni geografiche dell'UE nel quadro di tali negoziati, al fine di conseguire un adeguato livello di protezione direttamente attraverso questi accordi, compreso per quei termini presumibilmente percepiti come generici sul mercato nordamericano. Nello stesso contesto, la Commissione si prefigge di eliminare gli ostacoli inutili agli scambi, tra cui gli attuali ostacoli non tariffari.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009584/13
to the Commission
Mara Bizzotto (EFD)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Asiago PDO cheese and lack of protection on the US and Canadian markets

Asiago PDO is a typical Veneto cheese produced in the provinces of Trento, Vicenza and the eastern part of the provinces of Treviso and Padua. The name 'Asiago' is protected under Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, which provides for the protection of the use of that name only for a specific Italian cheese, which is made in strict compliance with the product specifications, the latest amendments to which were adopted by Council Regulation (EC) No 1200/2007. The Asiago Cheese Consortium, with a view to securing international recognition and protection of its brand in the United States and Canada, is having major problems and incurring huge expenses. These two countries, in fact, do not recognise the EU geographical indications which define the unique local character of PDO and PGI products, while the various attempts that have been made to register the name have so far been unsuccessful in that the patent and trademark offices in those countries classify Asiago PDO as a semi-generic name. These difficulties are compounded by competition from local brands that take advantage of the 'Italian sounding' phenomenon to assert themselves on the domestic market, thereby taking over market shares from European products. A striking example of this is 'Wisconsin Asiago', a cheese that has nothing to do with Asiago PDO.

The case of 'Wisconsin Asiago' was brought to the Commission's attention in 2011 when its existence was discovered at a trade fair in Cologne. Further to a specific complaint by the Asiago Cheese Consortium, the product was immediately impounded by the German authorities on the grounds that it infringed EC law concerning the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs. In response to that stance, in the last quarter of 2011 the US authorities increased the frequency of their health and hygiene checks on samples of imported Asiago, blocking large quantities of Asiago PDO at customs and greatly slowing down sales, thereby implementing a protectionist system of non-tariff barriers.

1. Given that Asiago PDO is well known and widespread in the USA, will the Commissionsupport the Consortium in the legal action it is taking with a view to registering itstrademark in these two countries?

2. Can the Commission say what the latest developments are in the bilateral negotiationscurrently under way between the EU, the USA and Canada and what action it intends totake to ensure that EU geographical indications are properly protected and not merelyconsidered generic names?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

The Commission is aware of the importance to secure an enhanced protection for EU geographical indications (GIs) in the context of bilateral negotiations under way with the U.S. and Canada towards, respectively, a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). The Commission is equally aware of the specific difficulties encountered in the North-American market by the Asiago PDO cheese, both in terms of protection of intellectual property rights and in relation to non-tariff barriers.

The Commission is not entitled to be a party in legal actions the Asiago Consortium is taking with a view to register its trademark in these countries. However, the Commission will continue to pursue an ambitious outcome for EU GIs within the framework of these negotiations, as to achieve a proper level of protection directly through the agreements, including for those terms allegedly perceived as generics in the North-American market. In the same context, the Commission will aim at removing unnecessary obstacles to trade, including existing non-tariff barriers.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009586/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE)
(20 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Αλβανικό Κράτος και Αυτοκέφαλη Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία της Αλβανίας: Επεισόδια και βανδαλισμοί στην Πρεμετή

Βίαια επεισόδια, βανδαλισμοί και πράξεις ιεροσυλίας σημειώθηκαν την Παρασκευή 16 Αυγούστου στον Ιερό Ναό των Εισοδίων της Θεοτόκου στην πόλη Πρεμετή της Αλβανίας, ακριβώς μία ημέρα μετά την εξόχως σημαντική για την Ορθόδοξη Χριστιανοσύνη εορτή της Παναγίας. Συγκεκριμένα, άνδρες ιδιωτικής εταιρείας security, ενεργώντας για λογαριασμό του αλβανικού κράτους, απομάκρυναν βιαίως τους κληρικούς και τους πιστούς της ορθόδοξης ενορίας της Πρεμετής και παρεμπόδισαν την είσοδο προσκυνητών στον ναό με σκοπό να τον «σφραγίσουν». Πέραν αυτών, διεπράχθησαν βανδαλισμοί και πράξεις ιεροσυλίας, καθώς αφαιρέθηκαν ιερές εικόνες, κατασχέθηκαν λατρευτικά σκεύη από τον ιερό ναό και γκρεμίστηκε η καμπάνα του.

Τονίζεται ότι σήμερα, Δευτέρα 19 Αυγούστου, σημειώθηκε νέα ένταση στον ίδιο χώρο μεταξύ αλβανικών αστυνομικών αρχών, χριστιανών κληρικών και πιστών, και ακολούθησε βίαιος λιθοβολισμός κατά της Προξενικής Αρχής της Ελλάδας στη πόλη του Αργυροκάστρου.

Οι προαναφερόμενες ενέργειες, που έχουν καταγγελθεί και καταδικαστεί από την Αυτοκέφαλη Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία της Αλβανίας, παραβιάζουν καταφανώς τη θεμελιώδη ευρωπαϊκή αρχή και το κεκτημένο του σεβασμού της θρησκευτικής ελευθερίας και της ανεμπόδιστης άσκησης των θρησκευτικών καθηκόντων, καθώς και την αρχή του σεβασμού των ιερών χώρων. Σημειώνεται ότι η Διάσκεψη των Ευρωπαϊκών Εκκλησιών έχει επανειλημμένα υπογραμμίσει την ανάγκη απολύτου σεβασμού όλων των ιερών χώρων. Επίσης, ιδιαίτερη μνεία πρέπει να γίνει στην πρόσφατη συμφωνία μεταξύ Κυβέρνησης και Θρησκευτικών Κοινοτήτων της Αλβανίας για την επιστροφή σε αυτές όλων των θρησκευτικών ιδρυμάτων.

Κατόπιν αυτών, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Είναι ενήμερη για τα εν λόγω γεγονότα; Ζήτησε σχετική ενημέρωση τόσο από την αλβανική κυβέρνηση όσο και από την Αυτοκέφαλη Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία της Αλβανίας;

2. Καταδικάζει τις ενέργειες αυτές;

3. Ποια είναι η άποψή της αναφορικά με τον σεβασμό των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων στην Αλβανία, που επιθυμεί να ενταχθεί στην ΕΕ;

4. Θα συμπεριλάβει η Επιτροπή τα προαναφερόμενα γεγονότα στην υπό διαμόρφωση ετήσια έκθεση για την πρόοδο της Αλβανίας στην προοπτική εντάξεώς της στην ΕΕ;

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009606/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(21 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Βίαια επεισόδια εναντίον της ορθόδοξης κοινότητας στην Αλβανία

Στις 16 Αυγούστου, μόλις μία ημέρα μετά την γιορτή της Παναγίας, σημειώθηκαν βίαια επεισόδια στον Ναό των Εισοδίων της Θεοτόκου στην πόλη Πρεμετή της Αλβανίας. Με απόφαση της Δημοτικής Αρχής της πόλης στάλθηκε ιδιωτική αστυνομία, η οποία με τρόπους «αχαρακτήριστους» απομάκρυνε τους κληρικούς, αφαίρεσε εικόνες και ιερά σκεύη, σφράγισε τον Ναό και παρεμπόδισε τους πιστούς να προσέλθουν στον χώρο της θρησκευτικής λατρείας.

Με δεδομένα: ότι η Αλβανία, είναι υποψήφια προς ένταξη χώρα, τις διαρκείς δοκιμασίες που υπέστη ο Ναός αυτός από την ίδρυσή του τον 17ο αιώνα, τη Συμφωνία που υπάρχει από τον Ιανουάριο 2010 μεταξύ της Κυβέρνησης της Αλβανίας και των Θρησκευτικών Κοινοτήτων για επιστροφή σε αυτές όλων των θρησκευτικών ιδρυμάτων, καθώς και την επίθεση από αγνώστους εναντίον του Γενικού Προξενείου της Ελλάδας στο Αργυρόκαστρο,

ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. αν καταδικάζει απερίφραστα τις ενέργειες αυτές·

2. αν ο σεβασμός της θρησκευτικής ελευθερίας, η προστασία των χώρων λατρείας και η ανεμπόδιστη άσκηση των θρησκευτικών καθηκόντων, που είναι θεμελιώδεις αρχές του κοινοτικού κεκτημένου, αποτελούν προϋπόθεση για τις υποψήφιες προς ένταξη χώρες·

3. αν στην προσεχή έκθεση προόδου για την Αλβανία θα συμπεριληφθεί παράγραφος σχετικά με την παραβίαση των θρησκευτικών ελευθεριών.

Κοινή απάντηση του κ. Füle εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(10 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή γνωρίζει τα περιστατικά που προέκυψαν στην Πρεμετή μετά τις ενέργειες που ανέλαβε το γραφείο του δικαστικού επιμελητή για την εκτέλεση δικαστικής απόφασης του 2002 βάσει της οποίας αναγνωρίζεται η κυριότητα από τον Δήμο ενός κτιρίου το οποίο χρησίμευσε ως τόπος λατρείας από την Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία της Αλβανίας. Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί το θέμα από κοντά, ιδίως μέσω της Αντιπροσωπείας της ΕΕ στα Τίρανα.

Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι ο εποικοδομητικός διάλογος μεταξύ των ενδιαφερόμενων μερών, που βρίσκεται σε εξέλιξη εξ όσων γνωρίζει η Επιτροπή, θα μπορούσε να παράσχει το πλαίσιο για την επίτευξη αποδεκτής λύσης για όλα τα μέρη. Πρέπει να ληφθεί υπόψη η συμφωνία για τη ρύθμιση των σχέσεων μεταξύ της Αλβανίας και της Αυτοκέφαλης Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας της Αλβανίας, ενώ παράλληλα πρέπει να διασφαλιστεί η ύπαρξη κράτους δικαίου και ο σεβασμός των δικαιωμάτων ιδιοκτησίας, θρησκευτικής ελευθερίας και λατρείας.

Η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι το νομικό και πολιτικό πλαίσιο της Αλβανίας που διέπει τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα έχει εν πολλοίς δημιουργηθεί και ότι, σε γενικές γραμμές, ανταποκρίνεται στα ευρωπαϊκά και διεθνή πρότυπα. Παραμένει η ανάγκη να καταβληθούν περαιτέρω προσπάθειες δεδομένου ότι παρατηρείται ανισότητα όσον αφορά την αποτελεσματική εφαρμογή τους.

Ο σεβασμός των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων αποτελεί ουσιαστικό στοιχείο των κριτηρίων της Κοπεγχάγης για ένταξη στην ΕΕ και ως εκ τούτου έχει μεγάλη σημασία για τον διάλογο της ΕΕ με την Αλβανία. Η αξιολόγηση του σεβασμού των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων αποτελεί αναπόσπαστο μέρος των τακτικών εκθέσεων προόδου της Επιτροπής οι οποίες λαμβάνουν υπόψη τις επιδόσεις μιας χώρας στο πεδίο των αστικών και πολιτικών δικαιωμάτων, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της ελευθερίας συνείδησης και της θρησκευτικής ελευθερίας.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009586/13
to the Commission
Georgios Koumoutsakos (PPE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: The Albanian state and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania: violent incidents and vandalism in Përmet

Violent incidents, vandalism and acts of sacrilege occurred on Friday, 16 August at the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the town of Përmet in Albania, just one day after the celebration of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, a key date in the Orthodox calendar. More specifically, men belonging to a private security company, acting on behalf of the Albanian state, forcibly removed the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox parish of Përmet and impeded the faithful from approaching so as to 'seal' the Church. Vandalism and acts of sacrilege also occurred: sacred icons were removed, holy vessels were seized and the church bell was shattered.

Today, Monday, 19 August, there has been a fresh standoff in the same place between the Albanian police authorities and the clergy and the Christian faithful. Afterwards a mob hurled stones at the Greek Consulate in the town of Gjirokastër.

These actions, which have been denounced and condemned by the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania, represent a gross violation of the fundamental Community principle and Community *acquis* of respect for religious freedom and the unhindered exercise of religious observances, and the principle of respect for sacred places. It is worth pointing out that the Conference of European Churches has repeatedly stressed the need for absolute respect for all holy places. Special mention must also be made of the recent agreement between the government and the religious communities in Albania for all religious institutions to be returned to them.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is it aware of these incidents? Has it requested clarifications from the Albanian government and from the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania?

2. Does it condemn these actions?

3. What is its opinion on respect for human rights in Albania, a country which seeks EU membership?

4. Will it include the above incidents in the annual progress report on Albania?

Question for written answer P-009606/13
to the Commission
Maria Eleni Koppa (S&D)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Violence directed at the Orthodox community in Albania

On 16 August, just one day after the celebration of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, violent incidents occurred at the Church of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the town of Përmet in Albania. , The municipal authorities had decided to despatch a private security force to the church: behaving outrageously, they removed the clergy, took away icons and holy vessels, sealed the building and prevented the faithful from entering this place of religious worship.

Given that Albania is a candidate country and given the constant tribulations endured by this church since its foundation in the 17th century, the agreement existing since January 2010 between the government of Albania and the religious communities to restitute all religious institutions to them and the attack by unknown persons against the Consulate-General of Greece in *Gjirokastër,*

Will the Commission say:

1. Does it strongly condemn these actions?

2. Do respect for religious freedom, the protection of places of worship and unhindered exercise of religious observances, which are fundamental principles of the Community *acquis*, constitute a prerequisite for candidate countries?

3. Will the next progress report on Albania include a paragraph on the violation of religious freedoms in the country?

Joint answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(10 September 2013)

The Commission is aware of the incidents which arose in the town of Përmet following actions taken by the bailiff office to execute a court order of 2002 recognising ownership by the municipality of a building which served as a place of worship by the Orthodox Church of Albania. The Commission is following the issue closely, notably through the EU Delegation in Tirana.

The Commission considers that a constructive dialogue among the relevant stakeholders, which is ongoing according to the Commission's knowledge, could provide the framework for reaching a solution acceptable to all parties. The agreement regulating the relations between Albania and the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Albania needs to be taken into account whilst ensuring due respect for the rule of law and property rights, as well as for the right to freedom of religion and worship.

The Commission considers that the Albanian legal and policy framework regulating human rights is largely in place and broadly corresponds to European and international standards. Further efforts are still necessary as effective implementation is uneven.

Respect for human rights is an essential element of the Copenhagen criteria for accession to the EU and as such it is an issue of great importance in the EU's dialogue with Albania. The assessment of respect for human rights is an integral part of the Commission's regular Progress Reports which take into account the performance of a country in the area of civil and political rights, including freedom of conscience and religion.

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009587/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(20. august 2013)

Om: Nægtet indrejse i USA

En ung mand fra Danmark er blevet nægtet indrejse i USA. Han havde kort før afrejse til USA fået nyt telefonnummer, som tidligere har tilhørt en person, der har været overvåget af myndighederne for forbindelser til terrorisme. Det vidste han selvfølgelig ikke, men telefonnummeret er åbenbart den eneste grund til afvisningen af indrejsetilladelse.

Den unge mand har forgæves forsøgt at komme i forbindelse med de amerikanske myndigheder for at forklare og rense sit navn, men uden held. Dette kan potentielt få alvorlige konsekvenser for manden — for eksempel vil der være jobs, han ikke kan varetage, fordi han ikke kan komme til USA.

Den unge mand er ikke den eneste, der kommer i klemme og uretmæssigt kobles til terror af de amerikanske myndigheder. Jeg beder derfor Kommissionen om at gå ind i sagen og hjælpe manden med at komme i forbindelse med de rette amerikanske myndigheder. Det er helt umuligt som enkeltperson at råbe USA op.

Vil Kommissionen overveje at oprette en enhed, som kan bistå EU-borgere, der kommer i klemme i forhold til de amerikanske myndigheder?

Det er ikke første gang og næppe heller sidste gang, at det sker.

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Cecilia Malmström
(17. oktober 2013)

Kommissionen er ikke i stand til at vurdere, hvorvidt det var berettiget eller ej, at de amerikanske myndigheder i netop denne sag gav afslag på indrejse.

I lyset af de fremlagte oplysninger ser det dog ud til, at det i dette tilfælde ville have været muligt at benytte DHS' (USA's ministerium for national sikkerhed) Traveler Redress Inquiry Program, også kalder DHS TRIP.

Dette program er rettet mod passagerer, som er blevet nægtet ombordstigning på et fly, eller hvis ombordstigning er blevet forsinket, hvis adgang til fly er blevet forhindret eller forsinket, hvis indrejse i eller udrejse af USA ved et indrejsested eller en grænseovergang er blevet forhindret eller forsinket, eller som gentagne gange har måttet gennemgå en supplerende sikkerhedsscreening. Disse passagerer har ret til at klage, og deres klage vil blive sendt til det relevante kontor i USA's ministerium for national sikkerhed med henblik på undersøgelse og afgørelse i sagen. På DHS' websted findes et onlineskema til brug ved klager: http://www.dhs.gov/dhs-trip.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009587/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Refusal of entry to the USA

A young man from Denmark has been refused entry into the USA. Shortly before he left to go to the USA, he had been given a new telephone number which had belonged to a person who was being monitored by the authorities for links with terrorism. Naturally he did not know this, but the phone number was apparently the only reason for his being refused an entry visa.

The young man tried to contact the American authorities to explain and clear his name, but without success. This could potentially have serious consequences for him — for example, there will be jobs he cannot accept because he cannot travel to the USA.

This young man is not the only one to have run into difficulties and been unjustifiably linked with terrorism by the American authorities. I would therefore ask the Commission to investigate this case and help him to contact the correct American authorities. As an individual it is quite impossible to make one's voice heard by the USA.

Will the Commission consider setting up a unit to assist EU citizens who run into difficulties with the American authorities?

This is not the first time this has happened, and is unlikely to be the last.

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(17 October 2013)

The Commission is not in a position to assess whether or not the refusal of entry by the American authorities was justified in this specific case mentioned.

However in light of the information provided, it seems that in this case the US Department of Homeland Security Traveller Redress Inquiry Program, also called DHS TRIP, should be used.

This program is designed for passengers who have been denied or delayed airline boarding; have been denied or delayed entry into or exit from the U.S. at a port of entry or border crossing; or have been repeatedly referred to additional (secondary) screening. Such passengers are entitled to seek redress and their request will be routed to the appropriate DHS office for review and adjudication. An online application to apply for redress is available on the DHS website: http://www.dhs.gov/dhs-trip .

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009588/13
an die Kommission
Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE)
(20. August 2013)

Betrifft: Digitale Agenda/Abschaffung des Roamings, grenzüberschreitende Gewerbegebiete

Im Rahmen der Digitalen Agenda kündigte Kommissarin Kroes im Juli im EP-Industrieausschuss an, einen Vorschlag vorzulegen, der u. a. auch die Abschaffung des Roamings vorsieht. In der Presse wird hierfür ein Datum „Juli 2014" angenommen. Auch der EP-Industrieausschuss sprach sich im Juli einstimmig für eine Abschaffung des Roamings aus.

Im Grenzgebiet zwischen Deutschland und den Niederlanden gibt es mehrere grenzüberschreitende Wohn- und Gewerbegebiete. Roaming bzw. die unterschiedliche Verfügbarkeit von nationalen Netzen (oftmals ist auf deutschem Gebiet nur der niederländische Anbieter verfügbar und umgekehrt) stellt die Bewohner und Unternehmen hier vor große Probleme und verursacht hohe Kosten, die der Idee des Binnenmarkts entgegenstehen.

Eine Abschaffung des Roamings bzw. einheitliche/ gemeinsame Telekommunikationszonen wären insbesondere für derartige, dem Gedanken des europäischen Binnenmarktes verbundene Aktivitäten sehr hilfreich.

In diesem Zusammenhang stellen sich folgende Fragen:

1. Welche konkreten Pläne verfolgt die Kommission in Bezug auf das Roaming bzw. dessen Abschaffung?

2. In welchem Zeithorizont rechnet die Kommission mit einer Abschaffung des Roamings? Welche Maßnahmen sind konkret vorgesehen?

3. Ist der Kommission die Problematik von grenznahen Gebieten bzw. grenzüberschreitenden Gebieten bekannt?

4. Wie bewertet die Kommission Möglichkeiten, als Zwischenschritt besondere „gemeinsame Telekommunikationszonen" einzurichten, um Gebiete grenzüberschreitender Aktivität besonders zu fördern?

5. Welche weiteren Initiativen sind der Kommission bekannt, um derartigen Gebieten zu helfen?

6. Gibt es hierzu Gespräche mit Telekommunikationsunternehmen?

7. Könnten derartige Gebiete als „Leuchtturmprojekte" gefördert werden?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(1. Oktober 2013)

Die Kommission ist fest entschlossen, Roamingaufschlägen in der EU ein Ende zu setzen und dazu für stärker wettbewerbsorientierte Marktbedingungen zu sorgen, um das in der Digitalen Agenda für Europa festgelegte Ziel — die möglichst vollständige Beseitigung der Unterschiede zwischen Roaming- und Inlandstarifen — zu erreichen. Der Legislativvorschlag für einen Telekommunikationsbinnenmarkt, den die Kommission am 12. September 2013 angenommen hat, baut auf den wettbewerbsfördernden Maßnahmen der Roamingverordnung aus dem Jahr 2012 auf.

Nach dem Vorschlag sollen (ab Juli 2014) bei Reisen in EU-Ländern keinerlei Gebühren mehr für die Entgegennahme eines Anrufs berechnet werden. Ebenfalls im Juli 2014 soll das neue Konzept des „Roamings zu Inlandspreisen" eingeführt werden. Mobilfunknutzer würden dann beim Roaming in einem anderen EU-Land genau dieselben Preise für Anrufe, SMS und Datenübertragung zahlen wie in ihrem Heimatland und hätten — unter der Voraussetzung eines „üblichen Nutzungsumfangs" — keine zusätzlichen Kosten mehr zu tragen. Von einem solchen „Roaming zu Inlandspreisen" würden auch die Anbieter profitieren, da sie bestimmte Verpflichtungen aus der derzeit geltenden Roamingverordnung dann nicht mehr erfüllen müssten. In Bezug auf das „versehentliche Roaming" verweist die Kommission den Herrn Abgeordneten auf ihre Antwort auf die schriftliche Anfrage E-005918/2012.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009588/13
to the Commission
Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Digital Agenda / abolition of roaming fees, cross-border commercial areas

At the July meeting of the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Commissioner Kroes announced that, as part of the Digital Agenda, a proposal was to be submitted which would provide for the abolition of roaming fees, among other things. According to reports in the press, roaming fees are to disappear by July 2014. At the July meeting, members of the Industry Committee were unanimous in backing the plans to put an end to roaming costs.

The border region between Germany and the Netherlands is home to a number of cross-border residential and industrial areas. Roaming costs and the varying availability of national networks (often only the Dutch network is available on the German side of the border and vice versa) pose significant problems for inhabitants and companies, and result in high costs which run counter to the idea of the internal market.

Abolishing roaming fees and/or creating single/joint telecommunications areas would be particularly useful for these types of activity, which are fully in the spirit of the European internal market.

1. What specific action does the Commission plan to take with regard to roaming fees and the abolition thereof?

2. What timescale does the Commission envisage for the abolition of roaming fees? What specific measures are planned?

3. Is the Commission aware of the problems faced by cross-border areas and areas close to national borders?

4. What is the Commission's view of the possibility of setting up 'joint telecommunications areas' as an interim step in order to promote cross-border activity?

5. What further initiatives in support of these areas is the Commission aware of?

6. Are talks being held with telecommunications companies in this regard?

7. Could these areas be promoted as flagship projects?

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

The Commission is strongly committed to putting an end to roaming surcharges in the EU by reinforcing competitive market conditions that would allow achieving the target set by the Digital Agenda for Europe so that the difference between roaming and national tariffs would approach zero. The Telecoms Single market proposal that the Commission adopted on 12 September 2013 builds on the pro-competitive measures of the 2012 Roaming Regulation.

The proposal ends all together (as of July 2014) the charge for receiving a call while travelling within the EU. Also from July 2014, the proposal introduces a new concept of 'roam like at home', so that mobile users can benefit from exactly the same calling, texting, and data rates when roaming in any other EU country as they would in their home country, at no extra cost subject to the reasonable use criterion. As long as they offer such 'roam like at home' deals, operators can in turn benefit because they would no longer have to apply certain obligations contained in the current Roaming Regulation. As regards inadvertent roaming, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the answers given in reply to Question E-005918/2012.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009589/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(20. August 2013)

Betrifft: Abhebe-Limit bei Bankpleiten

Dem Vernehmen nach haben die EU-Kommission und die aktuelle litauische EU-Ratspräsidentschaft vor, dass künftig Bankkunden im Fall einer Pleite ihres Finanzinstituts nur mehr 100 bis 200 EUR täglich abheben dürfen. Damit sind für den angeblich vorgesehenen Zeitraum von bis zu drei Wochen nicht nur Kleinanleger von ihrem eigenen Geld auf ihrem Gehalts- oder Pensionskonto abgeschnitten, betroffen sind davon auch kleine und mittlere Unternehmen. Bei den geplanten Regelungen können diese weder ihre Lieferanten noch ihre Angestellten, Miete, die Abgabenschulden an Finanzamt und Sozialversicherung etc. zahlen. Kritiker sehen darin auch eine Aushebelung der bis dahin als sicher angepriesenen Einlagensicherung bis zu 100 000 EUR.

1. Gibt es auf EU-Ebene tatsächlich diesbezügliche Pläne?

2. Falls ja, wie schauen diese im Detail aus und in wie weit soll im Rahmen der Regelungen sichergestellt sein, dass es keine Probleme mit den Überweisungen von Mietbeiträgen, sowie der Abgaben für Strom, Wasser und Co. gibt?

3. Wie steht die Kommission zur diesbezüglichen Kritik, dass damit die bis dahin als sicher angepriesene Einlagensicherung bis zu 100 000 EUR ausgehebelt wird?

4. In wie weit soll die Gefahr einer Bevorzugung von Großbanken, die ja als systemrelevant gelten und damit eher vom Staat gerettet werden, verhindert werden?

Antwort von Herrn Barnier im Namen der Kommission
(3. Oktober 2013)

Die Kommission teilt die Besorgnis des Herrn Abgeordneten, dass die mehrwöchige Frist für die Entschädigung der Einleger bei Bankinsolvenzen zu lang ist. Einleger müssen ständigen Zugang zu ihrem Geld haben, um Lebensmittel zu kaufen, Rechnungen zu bezahlen usw. Haben KMU während eines längeren Zeitraums keinen Zugang zu ihren Bankkonten, kann dies eine Insolvenz der betreffenden Unternehmen zur Folge haben. Daher sah der Kommissionsvorschlag zu den Einlagensicherungssystemen aus dem Jahr 2010 vor, die Auszahlungsfrist von derzeit 20 Arbeitstagen auf 7 Kalendertage zu verkürzen.

Bei den Verhandlungen über die Einlagensicherungssysteme setzte sich das Parlament für eine Verkürzung der Auszahlungsfrist auf 5 Werktage ab 2017 ein. Bis Ende 2016 würde demnach weiterhin die derzeitige Frist gelten, wobei die Einlagensicherungssysteme den Einlegern jedoch auf Antrag ihr Guthaben bis zur Höhe von 5 000 EUR innerhalb einer Frist von 5 Werktagen auszahlen müssten. Im Hinblick auf eine Kompromisslösung werden auch andere Optionen einer Teilauszahlung (z. B. 100-200 EUR pro Tag auf Antrag) erwogen. Konkret bedeutet dies, dass die Einleger dank der teilweisen Auszahlung praktisch unmittelbar nach Eintritt der Bankinsolvenz an ihr Geld kämen, wohingegen sie derzeit 20 Tage lang überhaupt keinen Zugang zu ihren Einlagen bei der zahlungsunfähigen Bank haben (nach dem Richtlinienvorschlag wären es 7 Tage).

Was die letzte Frage betrifft, geht die Kommission mit ihrem Vorschlag zur Bankensanierung und -abwicklung die „Too-big-to-fail"-Problematik an, die in der Vergangenheit mehrfach zu staatlichen Bankenrettungsmaßnahmen geführt hat, insbesondere wenn systemrelevante Banken betroffen waren. Im Gegensatz zum „Bail-out" sieht der Vorschlag zur Sanierung und Abwicklung von Banken ein „Bail-in" vor. Ziel ist es, staatliche Interventionen bei Bankenkrisen auf ein Minimum zu beschränken. Das Instrument des „Bail-in" wird es ermöglichen, Banken so abzuwickeln, dass Verluste zunächst von Anteilseignern und Gläubigern und nicht vom Steuerzahler zu tragen sind. Darüber hinaus sehen beide Richtlinienvorschläge vor, dass Banken Beiträge zu den Einlagensicherungssystemen in einer Höhe leisten, die ihrem individuellen Risikoprofil entspricht.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009589/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: Withdrawal limit from banks which fail

Apparently the Commission and the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council have proposed that in future when a bank fails its clients should only be allowed to withdraw EUR 100 to 200 per day. Thus for a period of (allegedly) up to three weeks not only small investors but also SMEs would be cut off from their own money in the accounts into which their salary or pension are paid. The proposed rules would prevent SMEs from paying their suppliers and employees, as well as their rent, tax and social security, etc. Critics also see this as undermining the savings guarantee of up to EUR 100 000 which has hitherto been claimed to be secure.

1. Are such plans really being considered at EU level?

2. If so, what do they look like in detail and to will there be rules to ensure that problems do not arise with rental payments and bills for electricity, water, etc.?

3. What is the Commission's response to criticism that this is undermining the savings guarantee of up to EUR 100 000 which has hitherto been claimed to be secure?

4. What is being done to avert the risk of giving an unfair advantage to the major banks, which are seen as systemically relevant and thus more likely to be rescued by the state?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Commission shares the concerns of the Honourable Member that the deadline of several weeks for reimbursing depositors after a bank failure is too long since depositors need constant access to their funds to buy food, pay bills, etc. Also, the lack of SMEs access to bank accounts for a long period of time might lead to a failure of the enterpise. Therefore, in the 2010 proposal on Deposit Guarantee Schemes (DGS), the Commission proposed to reduce the payout deadline from the current 20 working days to 7 calendar days.

During the DGS negotiations Parliament wanted to shorten the payout deadline to 5 working days from 2017. By end-2016, the current deadline would be maintained, but on request, the DGS shall pay depositors a credit of up to EUR 5 000 within 5 working days. In order to find a compromise, other options of the partial payout are being considered as well (e.g. EUR 100-200 per day, on request). In practice, this means that thanks to a partial payout depositors would receive some money practically immediately after a bank failure, while currently they have to wait 20 days without access to any money at the failed bank (or 7 days under the DGS proposal).

As to the last question, the Commission proposal on Bank Recovery and Resolution (BRR) is to address the issue of the 'too-big-to-fail' problem, which resulted in the past in several state bailouts of banks, notably the systemically important ones. The BRR proposal introduces bail in as opposed to bail out. In order to minimise state involvement in bank crises, the bail-in tool will allow a bank to be resolved by imposing losses on shareholders and creditors rather than on taxpayers. Moreover, the DGS and BRR proposals stipulate that banks have to pay contributions reflecting their individual risk profiles.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009590/13
to the Commission
Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)
(20 August 2013)

Subject: EU Waste Framework Directive

Following reports in the UK media related to Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (Waste Framework Directive) can the Commission confirm whether the terms of the directive can impose restrictions on local authorities with respect to the following:

1. The frequency of collections both for recycled and unrecycled waste?

2. The number of types of recycling bins/containers which must be provided by local authorities, including an obligation on residents to sort waste into a minimum of five different types?

If the implementation of the directive is to include restrictions on weekly refuse collections and impose five or more types of bin/container on an unwilling public, can the Commission explain how this fits in with the principle of subsidiarity under which local authorities make decisions which best reflect the needs of local residents?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(9 September 2013)

The Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC ([1])) does not impose specific obligations as to the frequency of waste collection, nor the number of recycling bins to be provided by local authorities. These matters are left to the discretion of the competent authorities in Member States.

The directive does require (Article 11.1) Member States to set up separate waste collection for at least paper, metal, plastic and glass by 2015.

([1]) OJ L 312, 22.11.2008.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009591/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Legality of Gibraltar border checks

Earlier this month, Spain announced it was considering imposing a fee of EUR 50 for each vehicle entering and exiting Gibraltar through its border. In the days that have followed, the Spanish authorities have enforced additional checks at the border, allegedly aimed at tackling smuggling, causing unprecedented queues in and out of the British territory.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. Can the Commission provide its opinion on the legality of the border checks imposed by the Spanish authorities on vehicles and citizens entering and exiting the British territory of Gibraltar, taking into account the recent escalation in activities?

2. What sanctions could the European Union impose on Spain for continued illegal acts at its border with Gibraltar, including any potential border fee, which would jeopardise freedom of movement across the EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(3 October 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to Written Question E- 009281/2013 by Mr Daniel Hannan.

In addition, the Commission has always made clear that these checks must fully respect EC law and remain proportionate.

Following questions from Honourable Members and complaints from citizens alleging long waiting times at the crossing point of La Línea de la Concepción, the Commission contacted the Spanish authorities to obtain further clarifications. The Spanish authorities replied that the checks are carried out in compliance with EC law, that they are proportionate and that the delays are only occasional. To have a better understanding of the situation on the ground and to be able to finalise its assessment, the Commission is organising a technical visit to the area. The Commission will then decide if further action is necessary.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009593/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Zimbabwe elections

Earlier this month, Robert Mugabe was re-elected as Zimbabwe's president with 61% of the vote, despite claims of electoral fraud and an ongoing legal challenge by his main rival, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai.

1. Can the Commission provide its assessment as regards adherence — or otherwise — to fair and democratic practices during the recent elections in Zimbabwe?

2. What steps have been taken at EU level to address political corruption, better realise the principles of democracy, and secure fundamental rights in Zimbabwe?

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

The European Union has taken note of the announced results of elections in Zimbabwe and the assessments of the Southern African Development Community and the African Union which assess elections as peaceful, transparent and generally credible. It has welcomed the generally peaceful and orderly manner in which the elections were conducted. The EU has also expressed its concern over reported irregularities and identified weaknesses in the electoral process and a lack of transparency. It underlines the importance and the need to continue strengthening democratic reforms in Zimbabwe to ensure that future elections are fully transparent and credible as well as peaceful. The EU is currently reviewing its relations with Zimbabwe, taking previous and ongoing political developments into account. The EU's goal is to support the Zimbabwean people in achieving a more prosperous and democratic Zimbabwe.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009594/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Message of congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge

Can the Commission state whether it sent a message of congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the recent birth of their baby boy, Prince George Alexander Louis?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(18 September 2013)

The President of the European Commission sent a personal letter of congratulations to their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the occasion of the birth of their baby boy.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009595/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Increasing Internet access in the Member States

According to research recently published by the British Office of National Statistics (ONS), 17% of homes in the United Kingdom still do not have access to the Internet. Of those unconnected, one in five said they lacked the necessary skills and expertise to get online.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. What steps are being taken at EU level to increase Internet access among citizens and households across the Member States?

2. What provisions exist at EU level to raise awareness of the social benefits of accessing the Internet, and to equip EU citizens, including older people, with the necessary skills to avail of online resources?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

The EU level strategy to increase Internet access among citizens and households was set out in the Digital Agenda for Europe ([1]) and further developed in its mid-term review ([2]). Progress against these targets are measured in the annual Digital Agenda Scoreboard, according to which UK is among the best performing countries ([3]).

The 2012 review stressed that more private investment is needed in high speed fixed and mobile broadband networks. Enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion is enshrined in the Digital Agenda, addressing, *inter alia*, the needs of disadvantaged people, such as the disabled and the elderly. The Commission supports these goals *inter alia* through cohesion policy funds and the Research and Innovation Programmes where a number of research projects targeting accessibility, including for disadvantaged people have been co-funded. Adding to this, the recent proposals on the Telecoms Single Market will help to create the positive investment climate necessary for the rollout of broadband Internet for all.

The Commission also agrees with the Honourable Member that raising awareness on the social benefits of Internet and digitally empowering citizens are key to facilitate their integration into society and improve their quality of life and employability. The Commission will continue to facilitate exchange of best practices, contributing to engaging people and organisations across Europe and recognising excellence and good practice in using ICT to tackle social and digital exclusion.

([1]) Digital Agenda for Europe COM(2010)0245.
([2]) The Digital Agenda for Europe — Driving European growth digitally COM(2012)784.
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/UK%20Internet%20use_0.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009596/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Implementation of the House of European History project

The House of European History is expected to open in Brussels in autumn 2015.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. Can the Commission provide a status report as to the implementation of the House of European History project, including a comprehensive account of past, present and future expenditure on it?

2. What level of funding will be made available within the EU budget for the implementation and management of the House of European History project for the 2014-2020 programming period?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

The House of European History project was created on the initiative of the European Parliament which supervises the general management of the project through the Board of Trustees. The Commission sits on the Board together with other institutions. The Board is advised by an international, interdisciplinary Academic Committee and an Academic Project Team composed of museum professionals and historians from all over Europe. The European Parliament is therefore best placed to know about the implementation status of the project including its management and funding plan.

More information on the House of the European History project can be found on the Parliament's website: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/visits/historyhouse.html

Under Heading 3 of its Draft Budget 2014, the Commission has proposed the specific budget line 'Article 16 03 04 — House of European History', assigning EUR 800 000 for commitment appropriations and EUR 400 000 for payment appropriations. The Commission has indicated in its budgetary comments that 'the appropriation is intended to contribute towards operational expenditure of the House of European History, which will increase knowledge, awaken curiosity, and create opportunities to reflect on European history by means of a modern exhibition and documentation centre'.

The same level of funding in commitment appropriations is foreseen for the entire next MFF period and has been inserted in the financial programming annexed to the Draft Budget 2014 ([1]).

([1]) See http://www.cc.cec/budg/bud/proc/adopt/procedure-2014-en.html — Statement of estimates of the European Commission for the financial year 2014 — page 145.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009597/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: EU funding for cancer research

According to Eurostat, cancer is the second most common cause of death in the European Union, accounting for 29% of deaths among men and 23% among women.

In this context, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Given that cancer is a disease that permeates EU borders, can the Commission detail what funding will be made available during the 2014-2020 programming period for cancer research and related projects aimed at alleviating the burdens of those diagnosed with the disease?

2. What steps have been taken at EU level to support the families of EU citizens suffering from cancer, including parents and young siblings?

Answer given by Ms Geoghegan-Quinn on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

1. Horizon 2020 through its 'Health, demographic change and well-being' societal challenge has the overall objective of bringing health and wellbeing to all via a horizontal approach, not focused on specific disease indications.

As such, the challenge will address areas of high relevance to cancer research including enabling healthy ageing, prevention, screening, understanding common disease mechanisms, innovative and personalised treatments and care as well as self-management of health and disease. Other aspects of importance for cancer research and care could be covered within the 'Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies' objective of the priority 'Industrial leadership'.

2. Psychosocial wellbeing and support is an important part of comprehensive cancer care and should be encouraged. Under the EU Health Programme ([1]), the joint action on the European Partnership for Action Against Cancer (EPAAC) ([2]), includes activities in relation to psychosocial support in the healthcare work package, as a contribution to quality of cancer care. Other instruments of the Commission, such as the PROGRESS Programme ([3]) and the European Disability Strategy ([4]) can also be applicable.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/programme/policy/index_en.htm
([2]) http://www.epaac.eu/
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=327
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/disability-strategy/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009598/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Impact of Directive 2011/82/EU

Directive 2011/82/EU — which is to be implemented across the EU by 7 November 2013 — will ensure that Member States can exchange data on motoring offences, meaning that EU citizens adjudged to have committed a speeding offence in another Member State would still be subject to a fine.

In this context, can the Commission respond to the following queries:

1. Can the Commission confirm that several Member States, including the United Kingdom, have opted out of the remit of Directive 2011/82/EU, thus ensuring that their citizens will not face road offence fines when travelling abroad?

2. Has the Commission conducted an assessment as to the social and economic impact of the new legislation, including the consequences for holidaymakers who travel throughout the EU in their vehicles?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(8 October 2013)

1. Yes. In accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol (No 21) on the Position of the United Kingdom and Ireland in respect of the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, annexed to the Treaties, those Member States did not take part in the adoption of Directive 2011/82 and are not bound by it or subject to its application. However, the United Kingdom or Ireland may at any time after the adoption of this measure notify its intention to accept that measure; neither Member State has so far expressed that intention. Moreover, in accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of the Protocol (No 22) on the position of Denmark, annexed to the Treaties, Denmark did not take part in the adoption of this directive and is not bound by it or subject to its application; the application of the directive in Denmark would require an international agreement to be concluded for that purpose between Denmark and the Union.

2. An impact assessment is available and has accompanied the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council facilitating cross-border enforcement in the field of road safety ([1]). A further assessment will be conducted by the Commission in accordance with Article 11 of Directive 2011/82/EU of the European parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 facilitating the cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offenses ([2]).

([1]) SEC(2008) 351/2.
([2]) OJ L 288, 5.11.2011.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009599/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Follow-up to Written Question E-007401/2013 on sow stall ban

Within the response that I received to Written Question E-007401 on 2 August 2013, it was stated that 13 Member States had reached full compliance with the sow stall ban, as laid down in Council Directive 2008/120/EC.

Can the Commission provide a list of the remaining Member States that have yet to become compliant?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

The following 13 Member States are fully compliant with the requirement for group housing of sows ([1]):

Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

([1]) Council Directive 2008/120/EC laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs; OJ L 47, 18.2.2009, p. 5.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009600/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Commemoration of terrorism in Northern Ireland

On 11 August 2013, a parade passed through the town of Castlederg in my constituency, Northern Ireland, commemorating Irish Republican terrorists who died during the Troubles. This included the commemoration of two IRA terrorists who were killed when the bomb they were transporting into the town exploded prematurely in 1973. In total, the IRA murdered 29 people in the Castlederg area during the period, causing untold pain and suffering to their families, and to the 3 000-strong local population left devastated by relentless acts of terrorism.

With due regard to the EU's Stockholm programme, which states that victims of terrorism require 'special attention, support and social recognition', would the Commission agree that such parades represent a gross insult to the victims of crime and terrorism in my constituency, and across all regions of the EU?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

Acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable. The Commission strongly condemns all use of terrorist violence to advance political causes, whatever their origin.

The Commission is very much involved in the commemoration and support of victims of terrorism. Every year since 2005, on 11 March, the Commission takes an active role in the European Day on Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism.

In addition to funding of projects, the Commission is in the process of establishing a new European Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism aimed at enhancing the representation of victims' interests at European Union level, and raising awareness among European citizens, in order to strengthen European solidarity with victims of terrorism.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009601/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Impact of the abolition of milk quotas after 2015

Can the Commission provide an assessment of the projected impact of the abolition of milk quotas after 2015 for each Member State in the following areas:

1. the change in the number of dairy cows, including the percentage change;

2. the change in the amount of milk delivered to dairies, including the percentage change?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(17 September 2013)

A series of studies have been carried out on the impact of the expiry of the milk quota regime in 2015. The Honourable Member is referred to an external study ordered by the Commission at the time of the CAP Health Check — when the legislator confirmed the abolition of the milk quota system — that is available on the Europa website at the following address: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/milkquota/full_report_en.pdf.

The information requested by the Honourable Member is notably available in Table 8 on page 27 and Table 17 on page 39 with regard to projected changes in the number of dairy cows and in milk production for each Member State, including the percentage change.

As is the case for all prospective studies, this 'Economic Impact of the Abolition of the Milk Quota Regime — Regional Analysis of the Milk Production in the EU' analyses possible impacts according to defined scenarios. This study, financed by the Commission, was undertaken by IPTS/Sevilla. Its conclusions and opinions are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Commission.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009602/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Fonterra

Can the Commission state whether any whey protein concentrate (WCP80) manufactured by New Zealand dairy company Fonterra has entered the European market? If so, can it specify where this occurred and the quantity imported?

What measures are currently in place to ensure that dairy products are safe for consumption by EU citizens?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

The Commission has been in close contact with the New Zealand competent authorities since the beginning of the suspicion of contamination. The information received indicates that no batches suspected of contamination have been imported into the EU. Furthermore, on 28 August 2013 the New Zealand competent authorities informed the Commission that the contamination was due to a non-toxigenic species of Clostridia — Clostridium sporogenes.

The EU Food Law provides that food and feed imported into the EU shall comply with the relevant requirements of the EU Food Law or conditions recognised by the EU to be at least equivalent. Consignments of dairy products imported into the EU are undergoing import checks at the approved EU Border Inspection Posts in accordance with the relevant provisions of Directive 97/78/EC ([1]), to verify their compliance with the EC law.

([1]) OJ L 24, 30.1.1998, p. 9.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009603/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Release of 26 Palestinian prisoners

On 14 August, Israel released 26 Palestinian prisoners as part of an agreement aimed at resuming peace talks between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. These talks, brokered by the United States, will be the first to take place in three years.

Within the context of Israel's gesture, what support is the Commission providing in order to assist the upcoming peace talks, and what hopes does it have for progress towards resolution and reconciliation?

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

The HR/VP has warmly welcomed the resumption of direct substantial negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides in August 2013. The Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process adopted on 22 July 2013 make it clear that the Union will remain fully engaged with both parties and will continue to contribute, together with other regional and international partners, including within the Quartet, to a negotiated solution on all final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, security, water and refugees. Furthermore, the Council Conclusions establish that the European Union will give active and concrete support to help ensure negotiations between the parties are successful, including through support to any international arrangements aimed at underpinning a peace agreement. The HR/VP is fully committed to these aims and strongly hopes that the renewed negotiation process between the parties will be successful and lead to an agreement that will end all claims.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009604/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Land Parcel Information Systems (LPIS)

Can the Commission detail all Member States and regions that have been charged for weaknesses in their Land Parcel Information System — Geographical Information Systems (LPIS-GIS), and the subsequent value of disallowance penalties imposed?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(1 October 2013)

It should be clarified that the Commission does not as such audit regions but rather Paying Agencies. Depending on the Member State the latter can be organised in a centralised or decentralised manner. Furthermore, it does not impose charges or penalties but rather financial corrections as under Regulations (EC) No 1258/1999 ([1]) and (EC) No 1290/2005 ([2]), only agricultural expenditure which has been incurred in a way that complies with European Union rules may be financed. You will find in the annex a table indicating the total amount of corrections at Paying Agency level based on weaknesses in LPIS-GIS systems covering financial years 2005 to 2010, on the basis of the following Commission Implementing Decisions: 2008/582/EC, 2009/721/EC, 2010/152/EU, 2010/399/EU, 2010/668/EU, 2011/244/EU, 2011/689/EU, 2012/89/EU, 2012/500/EU, 2013/123/EU, 2013/433/EU.

([1]) OJ L 160, 26.6.1999.
([2]) OJ L 209, 11.8.2005.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009605/13
to the Commission
Diane Dodds (NI)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Response to the horsemeat scandal

What steps have been taken at EU level to ensure that the horsemeat scandal of February 2013 does not happen again, and to rebuild confidence in beef?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(2 October 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answers to written questions E-4275/2013 and E-4773/2013 ([1]).

Regarding official controls, the Commission has recently adopted a proposal to review existing rules ([2]). The proposal requires Member States to include unannounced official controls to detect fraud, calls for better cooperation in tackling cross-border non-compliances, and allows the Commission to adopt mandatory coordinated control plans in cases such as the horsemeat scandal. The principles governing sanctions in cases of intentional violations have also been reinforced, to ensure that where financial penalties are applied for intentional violations of agri-food chain rules, the fines are set at a level which is higher than the expected gain stemming from those violations.

([1]) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) COM(2013)265 final ; 2013/0140 (COD) of 6 May 2013.

(Version française)

Question avec demande de réponse écrite P-009607/13
à la Commission
Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE)
(21 août 2013)

Objet: Obsolescence programmée/information des consommateurs/marché intérieur

Les pouvoirs publics doivent veiller à protéger le consommateur contre l'obsolescence programmée. S'agissant du consommateur, l'information nécessaire pour qu'il fasse les bons choix doit être facilement accessible et compréhensible. D'où l'importance de l'information, notamment sur l'emballage, l'étiquette, ou sur les supports publicitaires.

Si, pour un produit particulier, il y a une réglementation européenne sur l'étiquetage, ce type de réglementation oblige à donner de façon harmonisée des indications, auxquelles aucun État ne peut déroger. Mais les directives n'interdisent pas aux États membres de prévoir des indications supplémentaires.

Une législation nationale qui oblige à faire figurer les données essentielles de durée de vie et d'usage sur l'étiquette et sur l'emballage, ainsi que des données sur la disponibilités des pièces d'usure et de rechange à mettre sur l'emballage est-elle compatible avec les règles du marché intérieur?

La directive sur la protection des consommateurs (2011/83/UE) permet aux États membres d'adopter des mesures plus protectrices que celles qui sont énumérées dans la directive. C'est explicitement prévu à l'article 5, paragraphe 4. D'autre part, ce même article 5, au paragraphe 1, précise qu'une information claire et compréhensible doit être donnée au consommateur notamment sur «les principales caractéristiques du bien ou du service (…)».

La Commission peut-elle confirmer que l'intensité de l'usage d'un bien, la durée de vie estimée d'un bien etc. peuvent faire partie des caractéristiques principales d'un produit dont le législateur national peut imposer la publication?

Le législateur national peut-il imposer que cette information figure sur les publicités relatives aux produits?

Réponse donnée par M. Mimica au nom de la Commission
(4 octobre 2013)

La Commission convient que les pouvoirs publics devraient protéger les consommateurs contre l'obsolescence programmée et intègre cet objectif dans ses politiques ([1]).

En ce qui concerne l'information précontractuelle, la directive relative aux droits des consommateurs ([2]) exige que les professionnels fournissent aux consommateurs des informations sur les produits et leurs principales caractéristiques avant la conclusion du contrat. En ce qui concerne les contrats conclus dans les établissements commerciaux des professionnels, l'article 5, paragraphe 4, de la directive précitée permet aux États membres d'adopter ou de maintenir des exigences supplémentaires en matière d'information. En ce qui concerne les contrats à distance et hors établissement, des exigences supplémentaires en matière d'information peuvent être imposées conformément à la directive relative aux services et à la directive sur le commerce électronique, sous réserve des conditions définies à l'article 6, paragraphe 8, de la directive relative aux droits des consommateurs et de celles de la directive sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales ([3]). Cette dernière directive est une directive horizontale qui complète les directives sectorielles. Elle a pleinement harmonisé les règles sur les pratiques commerciales des entreprises vis-à-vis des consommateurs et empêche les États membres d'imposer des exigences plus strictes.

Pour ce qui est de l'étiquetage, dans le domaine des produits industriels non alimentaires (jouets, matériel électrique, par exemple), la législation sectorielle de l'Union ([4]) fixe certaines exigences harmonisées en matière de marquage et d'étiquetage (marquage «CE», marquage sectoriel spécifique, nom et adresse du fabricant, par exemple). Cette législation garantit également la libre circulation des produits conformes à ses prescriptions. Par conséquent, les États membres ne peuvent fixer d'exigences supplémentaires en matière d'étiquetage obligatoire pour les produits relevant de cette législation.

([1]) À cet égard, l'auteur de la question est invité à se référer aux réponses données par la Commission aux questions E-3441/2013, E-5352/2013 et E-6339/2013. Voir http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/fr/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directive 2011/83/UE.
([3]) Directive relative aux services (2006/123/CE), directive sur le commerce électronique (2000/31/CE), directive sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales (2005/29/CE).
([4]) Une liste des actes législatifs est disponible à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/documents/internal-market-for-products/new-legislative-framework/index_en.htm

Pour les produits qui ne relèvent pas de la législation d'harmonisation de l'Union, les exigences nationales doivent être conformes aux articles 34 à 36 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne (libre circulation des marchandises).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009607/13
to the Commission
Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Planned obsolescence and consumer protection

The public authorities should protect consumers against the practice of planned obsolescence. The information consumers require if they are to make informed decisions must be clear and readily available, hence the need for it to appear on packaging and labels and in product advertising.

Where EU labelling rules apply, all Member States must ensure that product labels contain an agreed set of basic items of information. However, there is nothing to stop Member States from stipulating that additional information must be included.

Would national laws making it compulsory to include on packaging and labels essential information concerning a product's service life or the availability of spare and wear parts be consistent with internal market rules?

Article 5(4) of the Consumer Rights Directive (2011/83/EU) expressly allows Member States to adopt measures which afford consumers greater a greater degree of protection than those set out in the directive. Paragraph 1 of that article states that consumers must be given clear information about 'the main characteristics of the goods or services (…)'.

Can the Commission confirm that individual Member States are free to stipulate that the main product characteristics about which consumers must be informed should include a product's wear rate or service life?

Can Member States stipulate that such information must be included in product advertising?

Answer given by Mr Mimica on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

The Commission agrees that public authorities should protect consumers against planned obsolescence and reflects this objective in its policies. ([1])

As regards pre-contractual information, the Consumer Rights Directive ([2]) (CRD) requires traders to provide consumers with information about the products before the conclusion of the contract, including their main characteristics. With regard to contracts concluded on traders' business premises, Article 5(4) of the CRD allows Member States to adopt or maintain additional information requirements. In relation to distance and off-premises contracts, additional information requirements can be imposed in accordance with the Services Directive and the e-Commerce Directive, subject to the conditions laid down in Article 6(8) of the CRD, and the requirements of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD) ([3]). The UCPD is a horizontal Directive which complements sectoral Directives. It has fully harmonised the rules on business-to-consumers commercial practices and prevents MS from imposing stricter requirements.

As regards labelling, in the area of industrial, non- food products (e.g. toys, electrical equipment), sectoral Union legislation ([4]) sets certain harmonised marking and labelling requirements (e.g. CE marking, specific sectoral marking, name and address of manufacturer). This legislation also guarantees the free movement of products complying with the legislation in question. Therefore, Member States cannot set additional mandatory labelling requirements for products subject to this legislation.

Concerning products not subject to Union harmonisation legislation, national requirements need to be in line with Article 34-36 TFEU (free movement of goods).

([1]) In this regard, the Honourable Member is invited to refer to Commission replies to questions E-3441/2013, E-5352/2013 E-6339/2013 . Seehttp://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html
([2]) Directive 2011/83/EC.
([3]) Services Directive 2006/123/EC, e-Commerce Directive 2000/31/EC, Unfair Commercial Practices Directive 2005/29/EC.
([4]) A list of the legislative acts is available at : http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/single-market-goods/documents/internal-market-for-products/new-legislative-framework/index_en.htm

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009608/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(21 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: ΠΕΠ Μακεδονίας-Θράκης

Με την ελληνική οικονομία να βρίσκεται στην 5η συνεχόμενη χρονιά ύφεσης, οι ελληνικές περιφέρειες βιώνουν κυριολεκτικά μια οικονομική και κοινωνική καταστροφή. Χαρακτηριστικά παραδείγματα είναι οι περιφέρειες Ανατολική Μακεδονία και Θράκη με ανεργία στο 22,5%, η περιφέρεια της Κεντρικής Μακεδονίας με ανεργία 26% και η περιφέρεια Δυτικής Μακεδονίας με σχεδόν 30% ανεργία (στοιχεία Eurostat 2012).

Με δεδομένα τα παραπάνω αλλά και το γεγονός ότι η αξιοποίηση και η καλύτερη χρήση των κοινοτικών κονδυλίων, και συγκεκριμένα των Περιφερειακών Επιχειρησιακών Προγραμμάτων, θα μπορούσαν να βοηθήσουν στην ανάσχεση της οικονομικής κατάρρευσης των ελληνικών περιφερειών, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Ποιο είναι το ποσοστό απορροφητικότητας του ΠΕΠ Μακεδονίας-Θράκης της περιόδου 2007-2013 για κάθε χωρική ενότητα και για τους αντίστοιχους Άξονες Προτεραιότητας; Ποιοι από αυτούς τους άξονες παρουσιάζουν τα μεγαλύτερα προβλήματα και καθυστερήσεις, και γιατί; Διαθέτει σχετικούς πίνακες;

2. Ποια είναι, κατά τη γνώμη της Επιτροπής, τα σημαντικότερα έργα που παρουσιάζουν καθυστερήσεις και τι μέτρα προτείνει για την αύξηση της απορροφητικότητας του συγκεκριμένου ΠΕΠ; Έχουν δρομολογηθεί αλλαγές στη δομή και την κατεύθυνσή του, ώστε να συνάδει με τις νέες οικονομικές και κοινωνικές ανάγκες των συγκεκριμένων περιφερειών;

Απάντηση του κ. Hahn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(9 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

1. Ο κ. βουλευτής θα βρει έναν συνημμένο πίνακα (στοιχεία που απέστειλαν οι ελληνικές αρχές στις 15 Σεπτεμβρίου 2013), στον οποίο παρουσιάζεται η δημοσιονομική πρόοδος ανά περιφέρεια και ο άξονας προτεραιότητας του επιχειρησιακού προγράμματος «Μακεδονία & Θράκη» 2007-2013.

Παρόλο που ο ρυθμός απορρόφησης του προγράμματος είναι ικανοποιητικός, για ορισμένα έργα υπάρχουν καθυστερήσεις λόγω των οικονομικών δυσκολιών των τελικών δικαιούχων, της διαδικασίας πρόσκλησης υποβολής προσφορών για τη σύναψη συμβολαίων και των χρονοβόρων διαδικασιών απαλλοτρίωσης ή λόγω διαφόρων αναγκών αδειοδότησης. Περαιτέρω πληροφορίες σχετικά με την πρόοδο της εφαρμογής των έργων που υποστηρίζονται από το πρόγραμμα «Μακεδονία & Θράκη» μπορείτε να βρείτε στον ακόλουθο δικτυακό τόπο: www.anaptyxi.gov.gr

2. Η Επιτροπή έχει ήδη λάβει μέτρα υπέρ της Ελλάδας για να αντισταθμίσει τις αρνητικές επιπτώσεις της κρίσης, όπως είναι η αύξηση του ποσοστού συγχρηματοδότησης σε 85% και η περαιτέρω προσαύξηση 10%. Τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012, αναθεωρήθηκαν τα περιφερειακά προγράμματα με σκοπό την ενίσχυση της ανταγωνιστικότητας μέσω στοχοθετημένων ενεργειών για την υποστήριξη των ΜΜΕ. Επιπλέον, αυτή την εποχή προγραμματίζεται νέα αναθεώρηση. Όσον αφορά τα καθυστερημένα έργα, η Επιτροπή θεωρεί ότι το μετρό της Θεσσαλονίκης είναι ένα από τα σημαντικότερα έργα που καθυστερεί.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009608/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: ROP Macedonia — Thrace

With the Greek economy experiencing its fifth consecutive year of recession, the Greek regions are literally facing an economic and social disaster. The following examples are typical: in the regions of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace unemployment stands at 22.5%, while the corresponding figures for the region of Central Macedonia and the region of Western Macedonia are 26% and almost 30%, respectively (data Eurostat 2012).

Given the above and the fact that a better use of EU funds, in particular the Regional Operational Programmes, could help to halt the economic collapse of the Greek regions, will the Commission say:

1. What is the take-up rate for the ROP Macedonia — Thrace in 2007-2013, broken down by territorial unit and priority axis? Which of these axes present the most serious problems and delays and why? Does it have any tables in this connection?

2. What, in the Commission's opinion, are the most important projects which are behind schedule and what measures does it propose taking to increase the take-up rate for this specific ROP? Have any changes been introduced in its structure and orientation so as to reflect the new economic and social needs of specific regions?

Answer given by Mr Hahn on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

1. The Honourable Member will find attached a table (data sent by the Greek authorities on 15 September 2013) which presents the financial progress by region and priority axis for the operational programme 'Macedonia & Thrace' 2007-2013.

Even though the absorption rate of the programme is satisfactory, some projects face delays due to financial difficulties of the final beneficiaries, the tendering procedure for contracts and the lengthy expropriation procedures or various needs of licensing. Further information concerning progress of implementation of projects supported by the programme 'Macedonia & Thrace' can be found on the following website: www.anaptyxi.gov.gr

2. §The Commission has already taken measures in favour of Greece to offset the negative effects of the crisis, such as the increase of the co-financing rate to 85% and a further top-up of 10%. In December 2012, a revision of the regional programmes took place with a view to reinforcing competitiveness through targeted actions for SME support. Moreover, currently a new revision is planned. As regards delayed projects, the Commission considers the Thessaloniki metro as one of the most important projects lagging behind.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009609/13
to the Commission
Julie Girling (ECR)
(21 August 2013)

Subject: Withholding taxes on EU-funded projects

An environmental engineering company based in my constituency, CQA International Ltd, recently completed an EU-funded Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) project in Turkey to develop waste management infrastructure. Even though the contract clearly states that the payment is exclusive of all taxes, the Turkish Government is now applying a 20% withholding tax to the invoices.

Can the Commission comment on the reasons why such a tax has been allowed to be levied?

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

The European Commission is aware of the matter indicated by the Honourable Member. The competent Commission services and the EU Delegation in Ankara have been following closely the problem of withholding tax on contracts financed by EU funds..

This issue has been raised with the Turkish authorities on various occasions including at a IPA Component I Monitoring Committee meeting in March 2013. Following the above, the Commission is pleased to inform the Honourable Member that Law no. 6456 amending the regulation of Public Financing and Debt Management has been adopted by the Turkish authorities and has entered into force on 18 April 2013. The amended law abolishes the withholding tax on EU services and works contracts. The EU Delegation is now clarifying with the Turkish authorities how the amended law will be applied to ongoing contracts.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-009610/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(22 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: L-eliminazzjoni tad-differenza fil-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa fl-UE

L-objettiv li titneħħa d-differenza fil-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa ilha waħda mill-prijoritajiet tal-UE sa mit-Trattat ta' Ruma. Minn dak iż-żmien 'l hawn, l-UE adottat leġiżlazzjoni li tindirizza d-diskriminazzjoni fil-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa, bħad-Direttiva 2006/54/KE ([1]), u impenjat ruħha sabiex tqajjem kuxjenza f'dan ir-rigward, fost l-oħrajn permezz ta' diversi komunikazzjonijiet u inizjattivi.

Għalkemm huma stabbiliti tali liġijiet u qed jiġu organizzati kampanji ta' sensibilizzazzjoni, in-nisa xorta jaqilgħu madwar 16 % inqas fis-siegħa mill-irġiel fl-UE.

B'riżultat ta' dan, in-nisa jispiċċaw jaqilgħu inqas matul ħajjithom, u dan iwassal għal pensjonijiet aktar baxxi u riskju ogħla li jiffaċċjaw problemi finanzjarji ladarba jilħqu l-età tal-pensjoni.

F'dan il-kuntest:

1. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tippubblika xi valutazzjoni interim li twettqet dwar is-suċċess jew in-nuqqas tiegħu tal-Istrateġija tagħha għall-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel 2010 — 2015 (COM(2010) 491 finali tal-21 ta' Settembru 2010)?

2. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tipprovdi data statistika komparattiva u aġġornata madwar l-UE 28 li tkun maqsuma f'kategoriji professjonali dwar is-sitwazzjoni attwali fir-rigward tad-differenzi fil-pagi tan-nisa u l-irġiel?

3. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tipprovdi informazzjoni dwar l-applikazzjoni u l-infurzar madwar l-UE 28 tad-dispożizzjonijiet għal pagi indaqs li qegħdin fid-Direttiva 2006/54/KE dwar l-implimentazzjoni tal-prinċipju ta' opportunitajiet indaqs u ta' trattament ugwali tal-irġiel u n-nisa fi kwistjonijiet ta' impjiegi u xogħol (tfassil mill-ġdid)?

4. Tista' l-Kummissjoni tipprovdi programm pluriennali li jkun jinkorpora skeda ta' żmien għall-objettivi li huma mmirati li jeliminaw b'mod permanenti d-differenza fil-pagi tal-irġiel u n-nisa?

5. X'inizjattivi speċifiċi qed tikkunsidra li tressaq il-Kummissjoni biex tindirizza l-kwistjoni assoċjata tad-differenza fil-pensjonijiet tan-nisa u l-irġiel?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(3 ta' Ottubru 2013)

L-Istrateġija għall-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel 2010-2015 ([2]) hija l-programm pluriennali tal-Kummissjoni biex tippromwovi l-ugwaljanza bejn is-sessi. Waħda mis-sitt prijoritajiet tagħha hija paga ugwali għal xogħol ugwali u xogħol ta' valur ugwali. Fid-Dokument ta' Ħidma tal-Persunal tal-Kummissjoni ([3]) li jakkumpanja l-Istrateġija hemm lista ta' azzjonijiet biex tiġi indirizzata u titnaqqas id-differenza fil-pagi bejn is-sessi tinsab.

L-Istrateġija tipprevedi rieżami ta' nofs it-term li qed jitħejja u li se jiġi ppubblikat f'Settembru 2013.

Kull 4 snin tiġi pprovduta dejta statistika dwar id-differenzi fil-pagi bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel skont il-kategorija professjonali mill-Istħarriġ dwar l-Istruttura tal-Qligħ (SES). Id-dejta l-aktar riċenti mis-SES2010 tinsab fuq is-sit elettroniku tal-Eurostat ([4]).

Ir-Rapport tal-Kummissjoni dwar l-applikazzjoni tad-Direttiva 2006/54/KE ([5]), li se tiġi adottata aktar tard din is-sena, se jivvaluta l-implimentazzjoni tad-dispożizzjonijiet dwar il-pagi ugwali fl-Istati Membri kollha.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:204:0023:0036:MT:PDF
([2]) COM (2010) 491 final.
([3]) SEC (2010) 1079/2.
([4]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupModifyTableLayout.do?&state=new&currentDimension=DS-256490ISCO08
([5]) Id-Direttiva 2006/54/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tal-5 ta Lulju 2006 dwar l-implimentazzjoni tal-prinċipju ta' opportunitajiet indaqs u ta' trattament ugwali tal-irġiel u n-nisa fi kwistjonijiet ta' impjiegi u xogħol (tfassil mill-ġdid), ĠU L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23-36.

Il-Kummissjoni dan l-aħħar ippubblikat studju mill-esperti dwar id-diskrepanza bejn is-sessi fil-pensjonijiet ([6]) li juri li n-nisa jirċievu pensjonijiet medji li huma 39 % iktar baxxi meta mqabbla ma' dawk tal-irġiel, l-aktar minħabba d-differenzi bejn is-sessi fis-sigħat tax-xogħol, fid-durata tal-ħajja tax-xogħol u fir-remunerazzjoni. Fil-White Paper tagħha dwar il-Pensjonijiet ([7]) il-Kummissjoni tistabbilixxi qafas ta' politika biex tappoġġja lill-Istati Membri fl-iżgurar ta' pensjonijiet adegwati, sikuri u sostenibbli. Din tenfasizza li l-ugwaljanza fl-etajiet tal-pensjoni għan-nisa u l-irġiel, li tagħmel il-krediti ta' kura disponibbli għaż-żewġ sessi u tiżgura aċċess għal servizzi ta' kura ta' kwalità, tista' tikkontribwixxi biex jiġu indirizzati d-diskrepanzi bejn is-sessi fil-pensjonijiet.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130530_pensions_en.pdf
([7]) COM (2012) 55 final.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009610/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(22 August 2013)

Subject: Elimination of the gender pay gap in the EU

The aim of closing the gender pay gap has been one of the priorities of the EU since the Treaty of Rome. Since then, the EU has enacted legislation addressing gender pay discrimination, such as Directive 2006/54/EC ([1]), and it has strived to raise awareness in this regard, *inter alia*, through various communications and initiatives.

Even though such laws are in place and awareness campaigns are being organised, women still earn approximately 16% less per hour than men across the EU.

As a result, women end up earning less during their lifetime and this leads to lower pensions and to the higher risk of facing financial problems upon reaching pensionable age.

In this context:

1. Can the Commission publish any interim assessment conducted on the success or otherwise of its Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010 — 2015 (COM(2010) 491 final of 21 September 2010)?

2. Can the Commission provide up-to-date comparative statistical data across the EU-28 subdivided into professional categories for the current state of play with respect to wage disparities between women and men?

3. Can the Commission provide information about the application and enforcement across the EU-28 of the equal pay provisions contained in Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast)?

4. Can the Commission provide a multi-annual programme which would incorporate a timeline of targets aimed at permanently eliminating the gender pay gap?

5. What specific initiatives is the Commission considering to put forward to deal with the associated issue of the pension gap between women and men?

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

The strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 ([2]) is the Commission's multiannual programme to promote gender equality. One of its six priorities is equal pay for equal work and work of equal value. A list of actions to tackle and reduce the gender pay gap is in the Commission Staff Working Document ([3]) accompanying the strategy.

The strategy foresees a mid-term review that is under preparation and will be published in September 2013.

Statistical data on wage differences between women and men by professional category come every 4 years from the Structure of Earnings Survey (SES). The most recent data from SES2010 are on the Eurostat website ([4]).

The Commission's Report on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC ([5]), to be adopted later this year, will assess the implementation of the equal pay provisions in all Member States.

([1]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:204:0023:0036:en:PDF
([2]) COM(2010) 491 final.
([3]) SEC(2010) 1079/2.
([4]) http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/setupModifyTableLayout.do?&state=new&currentDimension=DS-256490ISCO08
([5]) Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23-36.

The Commission has recently published an expert study on the gender gap in pensions ([6]) showing that women receive average pensions which are 39% lower compared to those of men, mainly due to gender differences in working hours, duration of working lives and remuneration. In its White Paper on Pensions ([7]) the Commission sets a policy framework to support Member States in ensuring adequate, safe and sustainable pensions. It stresses that equalising pensionable ages for women and men, making care credits available to both genders and ensuring access to quality care services can contribute to tackle gender gaps in pensions.

([6]) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130530_pensions_en.pdf
([7]) COM(2012) 55 final.

(Hrvatska verzija)

Pitanje za pisani odgovor E-009611/13
upućeno Komisiji
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(22. kolovoza 2013.)

Predmet: Mine u Hrvatskoj

Ulaskom Hrvatske u EU, Unija je postala bogatija za malenu zemlju velikih prirodnih ljepota. One uključuju jadransku obalu i njezinih tisuću otoka na jugu, Nacionalni park Plitvička jezera u središnjoj Hrvatskoj i Park prirode Kopački rit u istočnoj Hrvatskoj, jednu od najočuvanijih fluvijalnih močvara u Europi koju su stvorile rijeke Dunav i Drava. Nažalost, osim ovih prirodnih čuda, Hrvatska nosi i težak teret kao posljedicu rata koji se u njoj vodio prije dvadeset godina: područja ugrožena minama. U doba kad su ratni ožiljci većinom zacijelili, mine i dalje predstavljaju gospodarski, ekološki i sigurnosni problem.

Od osnivanja Hrvatskog centra za razminiranje 1998., središnje javne ustanove zadužene za organizaciju i provedbu razminiranja, više od 2,4 milijarde kuna (otprilike 320 milijuna eura) javnih sredstava utrošeno je na rješavanje tih pitanja. Unatoč iznimnim naporima, problem mina još je prisutan u nekim dijelovima Hrvatske, a petina stanovništva i dalje živi u blizini područja ugroženih minama. Ulaskom Hrvatske u EU, ti su građani postali europski građani, a mine su postale europski problem.

Kao zastupnicu u Parlamentu koja dolazi iz dijela Hrvatske koji je vjerojatno najviše zahvaćen minama, zanima me što Komisija i ostale europske institucije mogu učiniti kako bi se poduprli napori za rješavanje navedenog problema.

Odgovor g. Hahna u ime Komisije
(11. listopada 2013.)

Sredstvima iz proračuna EU-a već su financirane aktivnosti razminiranja u Hrvatskoj u okviru nekoliko pretpristupnih programa, uključujući programe prekogranične suradnje.

Nakon pristupanja Hrvatske EU-u moguće je financiranje iz europskih strukturnih i investicijskih fondova u skladu s programskim okvirom za razdoblje 2014. — 2020. Okvirom je predviđeno da se naglasak stavi na ona integrirana ulaganja za koja se socio-ekonomskim analizama dokaže da najviše pridonose pametnom, održivom i uključivom rastu pojedine države.

Hrvatsko Ministarstvo regionalnoga razvoja i fondova Europske unije, u suradnji s partnerskim organizacijama, upravo priprema prijedlog sporazuma o partnerstvu za razdoblje 2014. — 2020., za koji je potrebna suglasnost Komisije. Tim će se dokumentom utvrditi investicijski prioriteti za strukturne i investicijske fondove EU-a usmjereni na konkurentnost, rast i zapošljavanje, u skladu sa strategijom Europa 2020.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009611/13
to the Commission
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(22 August 2013)

Subject: Landmines in Croatia

The EU was enriched by the accession of Croatia — a small country of great natural beauty. This beauty manifests itself along the Adriatic coast and in its thousands of islands in the south, the Plitvice lakes national park in central Croatia and the Kopački Rit nature park in eastern Croatia, one of Europe's best preserved fluvial wetlands, fed by the Danube and Drava rivers. Unfortunately, notwithstanding these marvels, Croatia still bears the heavy burden of the war waged twenty years ago, with landmines littering certain areas. At a time when most of the war scars are gone, landmines continue to pose economic, ecological and security problems.

Since the foundation of the Croatian Mine Action Centre in 1998 as the main public body responsible for the organisation and execution of demining activities, more than HRK 2.4 billion (approximately EUR 320 million) of public money has been spent on tackling these issues. Despite great efforts, the landmine problem still plagues some parts of Croatia and one fifth of its citizens still live in proximity to mine-infested areas. With Croatia's accession to the EU these citizens became EU citizens and the landmines became an EU problem.

As a Member coming from the part of Croatia which is possibly most infested with landmines, I am asking the following:

What steps can the Commission and other EU institutions take to support the efforts to resolve this issue?

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

The EU budget has contributed to de-mining activities in Croatia through several pre-accession programmes including cross-border cooperation ones.

Following the accession of Croatia to the EU, funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds may be possible, subject to compliance with the programming framework for the 2014-2020 period. The framework requires concentration on types of integrated investments that are proven, through socioeconomic analysis, to contribute the most to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in a given country.

The Croatian Ministry of Regional Development and EU funds, in cooperation with partner organisations, is currently preparing a proposal for its Partnership Agreeement for the 2014-2020 period which needs to be agreed with the Commission. The document will contain investment priorities for the EU Structural and Investment Funds targeted at competitiveness, growth and jobs, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

(Wersja polska)

Pytanie wymagające odpowiedzi pisemnej E-009612/13
do Komisji (Wiceprzewodniczącej/Wysokiej Przedstawiciel)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(22 sierpnia 2013 r.)

Przedmiot: Wiceprzewodnicząca/Wysoka Przedstawiciel – W sprawie relacji handlowych Ukraina – Rosja

W minionym tygodniu służby celne Federacji Rosyjskiej zaostrzyły kontrolę ukraińskich towarów eksportowanych do tego kraju, w sposób znamionujący blokadę importu.

Krok ten jest jednoznacznie komentowany, jako próba storpedowania proeuropejskiej polityki Kijowa, a głównym celem kremlowskich władz wydaje się być niedopuszczenie do podpisania przez Ukrainę umowy stowarzyszeniowej z Unią Europejską. Ponadto, działania takie stanowią niepokojący sygnał dla pozostałych krajów uczestniczących w programie Partnerstwa Wschodniego, implikując tym samym zagrożenie dla interesów Wspólnoty na Wschodzie.

W nawiązaniu do zaistniałej sytuacji zwracam się z prośbą o informacje:

1. Jaka jest opinia Wysokiej Przedstawiciel w przedmiotowej sprawie oraz czy rozważane jest czynne zaangażowanie instytucji europejskich w rozwiązanie wyżej opisanego konfliktu?

2. Jakie kroki zostaną podjęte za pośrednictwem europejskiej dyplomacji, celem wzmocnienia pozycji Ukrainy w stosunkach handlowych z Rosją?

3. Czy w relacjach z Moskwą podjęte zostaną działania zapobiegające ewentualnym kolejnym próbom torpedowania współpracy krajów partnerskich z UE, szczególnie w obliczu niezwykle ważnego listopadowego szczytu Partnerstwa Wschodniego?

Odpowiedź udzielona przez komisarza Štefana Füleg w imieniu Komisji
(11 października 2013 r.)

UE jasno wyraziła stanowisko, że rozwój Eurazjatyckiej Unii Gospodarczej musi opierać się na poszanowaniu suwerennych decyzji poszczególnych krajów, oraz że niedopuszczalne są jakiekolwiek groźby ze strony Rosji związane z ewentualnym podpisaniem układów o stowarzyszeniu z Unią Europejską, przewidujących m.in. pogłębioną i kompleksową strefę wolnego handlu (DCFTA). Odnosi się to do wszelkich form nacisku, w tym sztucznych utrudnień wymiany handlowej. Takie działania stanowią wyraźne naruszenie zasad, do przestrzegania których zobowiązały się wszystkie państwa europejskie, w tym helsińskich zasad OBWE. Unia Europejska będzie wspierać i pomagać tym, którzy są przedmiotem niewłaściwych nacisków. Kwestia ta została poruszona w ramach dwustronnego dialogu politycznego UE z Rosją.

UE podkreśliła również, że układy o stowarzyszeniu/pogłębionych i kompleksowych strefach wolnego handlu nie są zawierane kosztem Rosji. Wręcz przeciwnie, również Rosja odniesie ogromne korzyści z szeroko zakrojonej integracji państw Partnerstwa Wschodniego z gospodarką europejską. W perspektywie długoterminowej układy te powinny przyczynić się do ostatecznego stworzenia wspólnej przestrzeni gospodarczej sięgającej od Lizbony do Władywostoku, opartej na zasadach WTO. Zachęcamy zatem naszych partnerów do pogłębiania stosunków z Rosją, w sposób, który jest zgodny ze zobowiązaniami wynikającymi z układów o stowarzyszeniu/pogłębionych i kompleksowych strefach wolnego handlu.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009612/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Adam Bielan (ECR)
(22 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — Trade relations between Ukraine and Russia

Last week the customs authorities of the Russian Federation tightened up their checks on Ukrainian goods exported from Ukraine in a way which is tantamount to placing a blockade on imports.

This action is seen as a clear attempt to torpedo Kiev's pro-European policy. The main objective of the Russian authorities seems to be to prevent Ukraine from signing an association agreement with the EU. In addition, Russia's actions are a disturbing sign to the other countries in the Eastern Partnership, suggesting that EU interests in the east may be under threat.

1. What is the High Representative's view on this matter? Are there plans for the active involvement of the European institutions in resolving this dispute?

2. What steps will be taken through the EU diplomatic service in order to reinforce Ukraine's position in its trade relations with Russia?

3. Has any action been taken to prevent Moscow repeating its attempts to torpedo the cooperation of partner countries with the EU, particularly given November's extremely important Eastern Partnership Summit?

Answer given by Mr Füle on behalf of the Commission
(11 October 2013)

The EU has made clear that the development of the Eurasian Economic Union project must respect countries' sovereign decisions and that any threats from Russia linked to the possible signing of the Association Agreements, with their Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (AA/DCFTA), with the European Union are unacceptable. This applies to all forms of pressure, including artificial trade obstacles. Such actions clearly breach the principles to which all European states have subscribed, including the Helsinki Principles of the OSCE. The European Union will support and stand by those who are subject to undue pressures. The issue has been raised in the EU's bilateral political dialogue with Russia.

The EU has also underlined that AA/DCFTAs are not conceived at Russia's expense. On the contrary, Russia will also benefit greatly from the integration of the Eastern Partnership countries into the wider European economy. These agreements should contribute in the long term to the eventual creation of a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, based on WTO rules. So we encourage our partners to deepen their ties with Russia, but in a way which is compatible with AA/DCFTA obligations.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009613/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23. August 2013)

Betrifft: AKW — Nationale Beihilfen und EIB-Kredite

Ohne staatliche Finanzierung rechnen sich Atomkraftwerke nicht. Bei der EU-Kommission wurde daher anscheinend interveniert, um nationale Beihilfen für den Bau und den Betrieb von AKWs zu erlauben. Bereits in der Vergangenheit wurden Atommeiler über die EIB finanziert. Dem Vernehmen nach sollen mit den neuen Finanzierungsrichtlinien der EIB für Energieprojekte nun sowohl der Bau als auch die Laufzeitverlängerung mit günstigen EIB-Krediten finanziert werden können.

1. Wird die Kommission tatsächlich nationale Beihilfen für den Bau und den Betrieb von AKW erlauben?

2. Sollen im Rahmen der neuen Finanzierungsrichtlinien der EIB für Energieprojekte nun tatsächlich sowohl der Bau als auch die Laufzeitverlängerung mit günstigen EIB-Krediten finanziert werden können?

3. In welchem Ausmaß wurden bis dato Atomkraftwerke über die EIB finanziert?

Antwort von Herrn Oettinger im Namen der Kommission
(9. Oktober 2013)

1. Der Kommission sind die Pläne einiger Mitgliedstaaten zur Unterstützung des Baus und des Betriebs von Atomkraftwerken bekannt. Zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt wurden bei ihr allerdings noch keine diesbezüglichen nationalen Finanzierungsprogramme angemeldet, und sie hat auch keine Kenntnis von der Gewährung entsprechender Beihilfen. Solche Programme müssten mit den Beihilferegeln der Europäischen Union (EU) und den Binnenmarktvorschriften vereinbar sein.

2. Bau und Laufzeitverlängerung von Atomkraftwerken könnten für eine Finanzierung durch die EIB infrage kommen, sofern solche Vorhaben technisch solide und umweltverträglich angelegt sowie unter Berücksichtigung der damit verbundenen über die gesamte Lebensdauer anfallenden Kosten finanziell und wirtschaftlich vertretbar und rentabel sind. Eine Finanzierung durch die EIB wäre nur für diejenigen Vorhaben möglich, denen die Kommission gemäß den Artikeln 41-43 Euratom-Vertrag zugestimmt hat.

Weitere Informationen zur Prüfung und Bewertung von Nuklearprojekten finden sich in den unlängst überarbeiten Kriterien der EIB für die Kreditvergabe im Energiebereich:
http://www.eib.org/attachments/strategies/eib_energy_lending_criteria_en.pdf

3. Was die Daten zum Ausmaß der bisherigen Finanzierung von Atomkraftwerken durch die EIB betrifft, bitten wir den Herrn Abgeordneten, sich mit seinen Fragen direkt an die EIB zu wenden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009613/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23 August 2013)

Subject: Nuclear power plants — national subsidies and EIB loans

Nuclear power plants are not financially viable without state financing. For this reason, it seems, representation has been made to the Commission to allow national subsidies for the construction and operation of such plants; financing for these has in the past been available through the EIB. Rumour now has it that, under the EIB's new financing instruments for energy projects, it will be possible to finance both the construction and the extension of the operating lifetime of nuclear plants with sizeable EIB loans.

1. Will the Commission really permit national subsidies to be used for the construction and operation of nuclear power plants?

2. Will it really be possible, under the EIB's new financing instruments for energy projects, to finance both the construction and the extension of the operating lifetime of nuclear plants with sizeable EIB loans?

3. How much financing through the EIB has there been for nuclear power plants until now?

Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

1. The Commission is aware of plans in some Member States in support of the construction and operation of nuclear power plants. At this stage however it has not been formally notified of any national financing scheme in support of the construction and operation of nuclear power plants and is not aware of any such aid having been given. Such schemes would have to be compatible with European Union (EU) state aid rules and internal market rules.

2. The construction and lifetime extension of nuclear plants could be eligible for EIB financing, provided that the projects are technically and environmentally sound; as well as financially and economically justified and viable, taking into account the associated lifetime costs. EIB financing would be possible only for projects which have received positive views of the Commission under Articles 41-43 of the Euratom Treaty.

Please find more information on screening and assessment of nuclear projects in the recently revised EIB energy lending criteria: http://www.eib.org/attachments/strategies/eib_energy_lending_criteria_en.pdf

3. With respect to data on the extent of financing from the EIB for nuclear power plants to date, the Honourable Member is kindly asked to address his questions directly to the EIB.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009614/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23. August 2013)

Betrifft: Hochwasserschutz — Ausweichräume für Überflutung

Zum Schutz vor Hochwasser sind laut österreichischer Wehrbetriebsordnung die Betreiber von Staumauern an großen Flüssen verpflichtet, gezielt manche Gegenden zu überschwemmen, damit Hochwasserschäden in Ballungsräumen vermieden werden. Im Rahmen der Raumordnungen wurden indes — wie die jüngste Hochwasserkatastrophe gezeigt hat — keine ausreichenden unbebauten Flutungsräume eingeplant, mit denen der Pegelstand eines großen Flusses unter Kontrolle gehalten werden könnte. Zudem war die Kommunikation nicht komplett durchdacht, wodurch die Verständigung der Flutungsgebiete nicht oder zu spät erfolgte.

1. Gibt es auf EU-Ebene Absprachen bzw. Pläne hinsichtlich hochwasserschutz-technischer Flutung bei grenzüberschreitenden großen Flüssen?

2. Werden im Rahmen der EU-Pläne für Restrukturierung im Rahmen der Wasserrahmenrichtlinie etc. auch Flutungsräume (u. a. entlang grenzüberschreitender Flüsse) eingeplant?

Antwort von Herrn Potočnik im Namen der Kommission
(24. September 2013)

1. Nein.

2. Gemäß der Hochwasserrichtlinie ([1]) müssen die Hochwasserrisikomanagementpläne die besonderen Merkmale der von ihnen abgedeckten Gebiete berücksichtigen tragen und maßgeschneiderte Lösungen vorsehen. Die Pläne sollten eine Koordinierung innerhalb der Flussgebietseinheiten sicherstellen und dürfen keine Maßnahmen enthalten, die das Hochwasserrisiko flussaufwärts oder flussabwärts im selben Einzugsgebiet oder Teileinzugsgebiet erheblich erhöhen, es sei denn, diese Maßnahmen wurden koordiniert und es wurde zwischen den betroffenen Mitgliedstaaten eine gemeinsame Lösung gefunden.

Die Hochwasserrisikomanagementpläne sollten Hochwasserabflusswege und Gebiete mit dem Potenzial zur Retention von Hochwasser (z. B. natürliche Überschwemmungs-gebiete) einbeziehen, und vor der Durchführung von Projekten für „graue“ Infrastrukturen zur Hochwasservermeidung und zum Hochwasserschutz sollten diese Pläne berücksichtigt werden.

([1]) Richtlinie 2007/60/EG, ABl. L 288 vom 6.11.2007.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009614/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23 August 2013)

Subject: Flood control by means of flood zones

In the interest of flood control the operators of dams on major rivers are required under the Austrian Weir Operating Rules to carry out targeted flooding in some areas so as to avoid flood damage in large cities. However, as the recent flood disaster has shown, regional plans have not allowed for sufficient undeveloped flood zones to keep the water levels of major rivers under control. Furthermore, the communication policy was not properly thought through, which meant that those in the flood zones were not contacted, or only too late.

1. Are there agreements or plans at EU level for deliberate flooding in the interests of flood control on major rivers which pass through a number of Member States?

2. Do the restructuring plans in the Water Framework Directive include plans for flood zones (e.g. along the courses of rivers which pass through more than one Member State)?

Answer given by Mr Potočnik on behalf of the Commission
(24 September 2013)

1. No.

2. According to the Floods Directive ([1]), the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP) should take into account the particular characteristics of the areas they cover and provide for tailored solutions. They should ensure coordination within river basin districts and should not contain measures that significantly increase flood risks upstream or downstream in the same river basin or sub-basin unless these measures have been coordinated and a solution has been agreed by Member States concerned.

FRMPs should take into account conveyance routes and areas which have the potential to retain flood water, such as natural floodplains, and should be considered prior to grey infrastructure projects designed for flood prevention and protection.

([1]) Directive 2007/60/EC, OJ L 288, 6.11.2007.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009615/13
an die Kommission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23. August 2013)

Betrifft: Sicherheitslücke auf SIM Karten

Eine Berliner Sicherheitsfirma hat herausgefunden, dass die veraltete Verschlüsselungstechnik von SIM-Karten Hacker-Angriffe ermöglicht. Der Endkunde hat keine Möglichkeit sich vor den Angriffen auf seine SIM-Karte zu schützen. Es macht auch keinen Unterschied, ob ein altes Handy oder ein Smartphone benutzt wird.

So können sich Angreifer unbemerkt Zugang zu fremden Handys verschaffen und anschließend Gespräche oder Nachrichten mithören bzw. -lesen. Im Zuge dessen soll es auch möglich sein, durch das ungewollte Anrufen von Mehrwertnummern massive Kosten zu verursachen. Obwohl dieses bereits seit 2000 als unsicher gilt, soll die Mobilfunkbranche noch immer SIM-Karten mit dem unsicheren Verschlüsselungssystem „Single DES" verwenden. Die älteren SIM-Karten sollen vor allem in Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern in Umlauf sein, auch in der Europäischen Union sind ältere SIM-Karten betroffen.

1. Wie steht die Kommission zu dieser Problematik?

2. Gibt es EU-weite Sicherheitsvorgaben für die Verschlüsselungstechnik von SIM-Karten?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(4. Oktober 2013)

Es gibt keine EU-weiten Rechtsvorschriften für die in SIM-Karten anzuwendende Verschlüsselungstechnik. Nach Ansicht der Europäischen Kommission wären Rechtsvorschriften mit solch spezifischen technischen Anforderungen angesichts des raschen technischen Wandels schnell überholt. Das Europäische Institut für Telekommunikationsnormen (ETSI) arbeitet jedoch kontinuierlich an der Aktualisierung der Sicherheitsmerkmale von SIM-Karten.

Nach EU-Recht müssen Telekommunikationsunternehmen Risikomanagementverfahren einführen ([1]). Die Hersteller von SIM-Karten und Mobiltelefonen ([2]) sowie die Mobilfunkanbieter ([3]) sind verpflichtet, angemessene Maßnahmen zum Schutz personenbezogener Daten zu ergreifen und dabei den Stand der Technik und die Umsetzungskosten gebührend zu berücksichtigen. Die Entscheidung über Sanktionen bei Nichteinhaltung bleibt derzeit den Mitgliedstaaten überlassen. Die Kommission hat jedoch vorgeschlagen, Sanktionen auf bis zu 2 % des Umsatzes ([4]) festzusetzen.

Die Gewährleistung einer lückenlosen Sicherheit hängt von vielen Akteuren ab. Die Kommission hat daher im Rahmen der Cybersicherheitsstrategie der Europäischen Union eine öffentlich-private Plattform für Netz- und Informationssicherheit ([5]) eingerichtet. In deren Rahmen arbeiten Vertreter zahlreicher Branchen wie etwa der Mobilfunkindustrie daran, empfehlenswerte Risikomanagementverfahren zu ermitteln, ihre Verbreitung zu fördern und künftige Anforderungen an Forschung und Technik zu bestimmen.

Eine weitere Priorität der Strategie ist die Sensibilisierung der Öffentlichkeit. Die Agentur der Europäischen Union für Netz- und Informationssicherheit (ENISA) hat daher den Monat Oktober 2013 gemeinsam mit den EU-Mitgliedstaaten zum „Europäischen Monat der Cybersicherheit" (European Cybersecurity Month, ECSM) ([6]) erklärt. Ziel des ECSM ist es, die Bürgerinnen und Bürger durch Veranstaltungen der teilnehmenden Organisationen in EU-Mitgliedstaaten auf Fragen der Cybersicherheit aufmerksam zu machen.

([1]) Artikel 13a der Rahmenrichtlinie über elektronische Kommunikation.
([2]) Artikel 17 der Datenschutzrichtlinie 95/46/EG, die durch den Vorschlag für eine Datenschutz-Grundverordnung (KOM(2012)11) aktualisiert wird.
([3]) Artikel 4 der Richtlinie 2002/58/EG (Datenschutzrichtlinie für elektronische Kommunikation).
([4]) Artikel 79 Absatz 6 Buchstabe e des Vorschlags für die Datenschutz-Grundverordnung, KOM(2012)11.
([5]) https://resilience.enisa.europa.eu/nis-platform
([6]) http://cybersecuritymonth.eu/

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009615/13
to the Commission
Andreas Mölzer (NI)
(23 August 2013)

Subject: Security loophole in SIM cards

A Berlin security firm has found that the outdated encryption technology used for SIM cards enables hackers to launch attacks. End users have no way of protecting themselves against such attacks. Nor does it matter whether they are using an old mobile phone or a smartphone.

Hackers can gain access undetected to other people's mobiles and listen to conversations or read information. It is also possible for users to run up enormous costs as a result of premium-rate numbers inadvertently being called. Although the 'Single DES' encryption system for SIM cards has been known to be insecure since 2000, it is said to be still in use by the mobile phone industry. Older SIM cards are in circulation primarily in developing and emerging countries, although the situation also applies to such cards in the EU.

1. What is the Commission's position on this situation?

2. Are there EU-wide security requirements governing the encryption technology used inSIM cards?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

There are no EU-wide regulatory requirements regarding what encryption technology to use in SIM cards. The European Commission believes that setting specific technical requirements through legislation would quickly become obsolete in view of rapid technological change. There is ongoing work within the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) to continuously update the security features of SIM cards.

EU legislation requires telecom actors to adopt risk management practices ([1]). SIM card, mobile phone manufacturers ([2]) and mobile operators ([3]) are required to take appropriate measures to protect personal data. These measures are to be taken with due regard to the state of the art and the cost of their implementation. Sanctions for non-compliance are currently left to Member States to decide. The Commission has made a proposal to establish sanctions at up to 2% of turnover ([4]).

End-to-end security depends on many actors. The Commission has launched a public-private NIS platform ([5]) as part of the Cybersecurity Strategy for the European Union. The platform gathers a broad range of industries, including the mobile industry, with the aim of identifying and facilitating the up-take of risk management best practices and identifying future research and technological needs.

Another priority of the strategy is awareness raising. The European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA) is organising, together with EU Member States, the European Cybersecurity Month (ECSM) in October 2013 ([6]). The ECSM aims to promote cybersecurity among citizens through events organised by participating organisations in EU Member States.

([1]) Article 13a of Electronic Communications Framework Directive.
([2]) Article 17 of the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC, being updated through proposal for data protection regulation COM(2012)11.
([3]) Article 4 of the ePrivacy Directive 2002/58/EC.
([4]) Article 79 (6)e of proposal for data protection regulation COM(2012)11.
([5]) https://resilience.enisa.europa.eu/nis-platform
([6]) http://cybersecuritymonth.eu/

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009616/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(23 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Λαθρεμπόριο δερμάτων λύκων από την Αθήνα στο Πεκίνο

Σύμφωνα με τον ελληνικό Τύπο, οι κινεζικές αρχές ανακάλυψαν και κατάσχεσαν 645 δέρματα λύκων σε πτήση που αφίχθη στο Πεκίνο από το Αεροδρόμιο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος, στις 29 Ιουλίου 2013. Σύμφωνα με τα ίδια δημοσιεύματα, «πρόκειται για το μεγαλύτερο φορτίο λαθρεμπορίου προϊόντων που προέρχονται από απειλούμενα είδη και που έχουν κατασχεθεί στη χώρα, εδώ και μία δεκαετία» και η αξία του εκτιμάται περί τις 125 000 ευρώ. Δεν έχει ακόμη διευκρινιστεί η ταυτότητα του εξαγωγέα, ούτε και η προέλευση των δερμάτων, τα οποία εάν υποτεθεί ότι αποτελούνται μόνο από ζώα με προέλευση την Ελλάδα, αυτό θα ισοδυναμούσε σχεδόν με ολόκληρο τον πληθυσμό λύκων της χώρας, που αριθμεί περίπου 700 ζώα ([1]).

Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι ο λύκος είναι προστατευόμενο είδος σύμφωνα με την κοινοτική νομοθεσία και ότι υπάρχει συγκεκριμένο νομικό πλαίσιο για το διεθνές εμπόριο της άγριας ζωής (EU Wildlife Trade Legislation) το οποίο όχι μόνο εφαρμόζει τη διεθνή συνθήκη CITES αλλά, σε ορισμένες περιπτώσεις, πηγαίνει και πέρα από τις απαιτήσεις αυτής, αποδεικνύοντας τη σημασία του θέματος για την Ευρώπη, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

Είναι ενήμερη για το παραπάνω περιστατικό λαθρεμπορίου;

Εάν ναι, έχει έρθει σε επαφή με τις τελωνειακές αρχές των δύο αεροδρομίων καθώς και με τη διαχειριστική αρχή CITES του Υπουργείου Περιβάλλοντος, Ενέργειας και Κλιματικής Αλλαγής ώστε να διευκρινίσει τις συνθήκες υπό τις οποίες έγινε αυτή η μεταφορά; Έχουν οι αρχές αυτές διαλευκάνει την υπόθεση ώστε να αποδοθούν οι ευθύνες (προέλευση δερμάτων, εξαγωγέας, άδειες μεταφοράς);

Εάν δεν έχει έρθει σε επαφή με τις αρμόδιες αρχές, σκοπεύει να το πράξει και, εάν ναι, πότε;

Θεωρεί το επίπεδο εφαρμογής της συνθήκης CITES και της σχετικής κοινοτικής νομοθεσίας στην Ελλάδα, ικανοποιητικό ή όχι;

Διαθέτει στοιχεία για το λαθρεμπόριο άγριων ζώων που σχετίζεται με κράτη μέλη, καθώς και για τη ζημία που έχει αυτό για την ευρωπαϊκή βιοποικιλότητα;

Απάντηση του κ. Potočnik εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή ενημερώθηκε από δημοσιεύματα του Τύπου για την υπόθεση που περιγράφει το Αξιότιμο Μέλος. Η Επιτροπή ήλθε σε επαφή με τις ελληνικές αρχές, οι οποίες ανέφεραν ότι αρχικά τα δέρματα που κατασχέθηκαν χαρακτηρίστηκαν εσφαλμένα ως δέρματα λύκων, ωστόσο περαιτέρω έρευνες έδειξαν ότι επρόκειτο για δέρματα κογιότ (*Canis latrans*). Συνεπώς, οι ελληνικές αρχές συμπέραναν ότι η συγκεκριμένη εμπορική δραστηριότητα δεν συνιστά παραβίαση της νομοθεσίας της ΕΕ ή του διεθνούς δικαίου.

Η Επιτροπή παρακολουθεί στενά και συνεργάζεται με την Ελλάδα, καθώς και με τα υπόλοιπα κράτη μέλη, ώστε να διασφαλίζει την ορθή εφαρμογή των κανόνων που διέπουν το εμπόριο άγριων ειδών στην ΕΕ. Στον παρακάτω σύνδεσμο δημοσιεύεται επισκόπηση των κατασχέσεων που πραγματοποιήθηκαν στο πλαίσιο αυτό το 2012:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/Overview%20significant%20seizures.pdf

Επίσης, στον παρακάτω σύνδεσμο δημοσιεύονται πληροφορίες για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο πραγματοποιείται το εμπόριο άγριων ειδών στην ΕΕ: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/analysis_2009-2010.pdf

([1]) http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=379417

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009616/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(23 August 2013)

Subject: Smuggling of wolf pelts from Athens to Beijing

According to the Greek press, the Chinese authorities discovered and seized 645 wolf pelts on a flight that arrived in Beijing from Eleftherios Venizelos (Athens) Airport on 29 July 2013. According to the same reports, 'this is the largest shipment of contraband products derived from endangered species seized in the country for a decade'; its value is estimated at approximately EUR 125 000. Neither the identity of the exporter nor the origin of the pelts has yet been established; however, if it is assumed that this consignment consists only of animals from Greece, this would equate to virtually the entire wolf population of the country, consisting of approximately 700 animals ([1]).

Bearing in mind that the wolf is a protected species under Community law and that there exists a specific legal framework for the international trade in wildlife (EU Wildlife Trade Legislation) which not only implements the international CITES Convention, but in some cases goes beyond from the requirements of that Convention, thereby demonstrating the importance of this issue for the EU, will the Commission say:

Is it aware of the above contraband incident?

If so, has it contacted the customs authorities of the two airports in question and the CITES Management Authority of the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change in order to shed light on the conditions under which this shipment was made? Have these authorities clarified the case so as to be able to determine who is responsible (origin of the pelts, identity of exporter, transfer licences)?

If it has not contacted the competent authorities, does it intend to do so and, if so, when?

Does it consider the level of implementation of the CITES Convention and of the relevant Community legislation in Greece to be satisfactory or not?

Does it have any information on trafficking in wild animals relating to Member States and the damage thereby inflicted on European biodiversity?

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

The Commission was made aware through press reports of the case described by the Honourable Member. The Commission contacted the Greek authorities, which indicated that the skins seized had been initially wrongly qualified as wolf skins, but which upon further investigation turned out to be skins of coyotes (*Canis latrans*). Consequently, the Greek authorities concluded that such trade was not in breach of EU or international law.

The Commission follows closely and works with Greece and all other EU Member States to ensure that the rules governing wildlife trade are properly implemented in the EU. An overview of the seizures carried out in this context in 2012 is available under the following link:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/Overview%20significant%20seizures.pdf

A compilation of information on the implementation of wildlife trade in the EU is also available under the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/cites/pdf/analysis_2009-2010.pdf

([1]) http://www.enet.gr/?i=news.el.article&id=379417

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta P-009617/13
alla Commissione
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(26 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Epidemia di influenza aviaria nel Nord-Est dell'Italia e possibili gravi inadempimenti delle autorità locali — Richiesta di sospensione dell'attività di caccia e delle fiere degli uccelli

Nel Nord-Est dell'Italia, nei comuni dell'Emilia Romagna di Ostellato (FE), Mordano (BO) e Portomaggiore (FE), dal 14 agosto è stata rilevata dalle autorità sanitarie locali la presenza del virus sottotipo H7N7 noto come influenza aviaria. Si tratta di tre allevamenti: Ostellato con 128 000 galline ovaiole, Mordano con 586 000 galline ovaiole e Portomaggiore con 18 000 tacchini, i cui animali sono stati uccisi su disposizione delle autorità. A Occhiobello (RO) comune della Regione Veneto, è stata disposta in via preventiva l'uccisione delle 200 000 galline ovaiole di un allevamento. Nonostante le decisioni della Commissione ([1]), le autorità italiane e locali, ad avviso dello scrivente, in questi anni non sempre hanno adottato tutte le misure necessarie e utili a evitare il diffondersi e il contagio di questo potenziale pericoloso virus. Ad esempio, sono state attuate delle ingiustificate e incomprensibili quanto pericolose deroghe al regime di prevenzione della propagazione del virus nei confronti dei cacciatori che si avvalgono di richiami vivi e delle fiere degli uccelli. La Regione Veneto, con delibera di Giunta del 16.7.2013 ([2]), ha concesso nell'attività venatoria l'uso e la movimentazione di richiami vivi, anatre comprese, e in data 21.9.2012 ([3]), in seguito a un caso di H5N1, ha vietato fiere, mostre e mercati di avifauna consentendo però le fiere dedicate agli uccelli ornamentali, ovvero le sagre degli uccelli nelle quali sono presenti, in particolare, anche anatre usate come richiami vivi nella caccia. L'attività venatoria agli uccelli partirà tra poco, a settembre, e con essa la movimentazione di migliaia di anatre utilizzate come richiami vivi e centinaia di migliaia di anatre selvatiche abbattute; con le fiere di uccelli, inoltre, in questi giorni e sino ad ottobre, verranno movimentate tra le Regioni di Friuli V.G., Veneto, Lombardia, Emilia Romagna e Toscana migliaia di anatre e altri uccelli utilizzati come richiami vivi nella caccia.

Ritiene la Commissione che la movimentazione, nell'area colpita dal virus, di migliaia di uccelli vivi utilizzati come richiami nella caccia, di uccelli selvatici morti abbattuti nella caccia e di uccelli destinati alle fiere ornitologiche sia compatibile con le misure di prevenzione e salvaguardia previste dalle normative comunitarie? Inoltre, non ritiene la Commissione che sia utile come misura preventiva e cautelativa la sospensione di ogni attività di caccia agli uccelli migratori e di ogni fiera degli uccelli nelle regioni interessate dal virus dell'influenza aviaria?

Risposta di Tonio Borg a nome della Commissione
(12 settembre 2013)

L'attuale focolaio verificatosi in Italia è causato dal virus H7N7 che è all'origine dell'influenza aviaria ad alta patogenicità (HPAI). Dalle informazioni disponibili emerge che un virus H7N7 a bassa patogenicità è penetrato in un allevamento di galline ovaiole ad Ostellato (provincia di Ferrara), probabilmente a seguito di contatti con uccelli selvatici, e ha subito quindi una mutazione in un virus HPAI nel pollame.

Diversamente dal caso del virus H5N1 dell'HPAI arrivato in Europa anni fa, che ha indotto la Commissione ad adottare tutta una gamma di misure speciali tra cui rigorose restrizioni nell'uso di richiami vivi, non disponiamo di informazioni a riprova dell'ipotesi che questo virus H7N7 dell'HPAI possa essere diffuso dall'avifauna selvatica.

La legislazione dell'UE in materia di controllo dell'influenza aviaria ([4]) non contiene disposizioni tali da obbligare l'Italia ad applicare le misure suggerite in relazione all'uso di richiami vivi e alla caccia di uccelli selvatici.

Tuttavia, conformemente alla legislazione dell'UE, l'Italia ha sospeso i raduni di uccelli vivi, come ad esempio le fiere e i mercati, nelle zone colpite.

([1]) 2005/692/CE, 2005/734/CE, 2005/731/CE, 2005/732/CE, 2005/726/CE, 2006/574/CE e 2012/248/UE.
([2]) Delibera 1286 con oggetto: «Regime di deroga al divieto di utilizzo di volatili appartenenti agli Ordini degli Anseriformi e Caradriformi nell'attività venatoria (…) Disposizioni esecutive per la stagione venatoria 2013/2014».
([3]) Circolare dell'Unità di Progetto Veterinaria n. 424939, Class. E.740.20.10.
([4]) Direttiva 2005/94/CE del Consiglio, del 20 dicembre 2005, relativa a misure comunitarie di lotta contro l'influenza aviaria e che abroga la direttiva 92/40/CEE (GU L 10 del 14.1.2006, pag. 16).

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009617/13
to the Commission
Andrea Zanoni (ALDE)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Bird flu epidemic of in north-eastern Italy and possible serious non-compliance by the local authorities — call to suspend bird hunting and bird fairs

In north-eastern Italy, in the Emilia Romagna municipalities of Ostellato, Mordano and Portomaggiore, local health authorities have, since 14 August, detected the presence of the virus subtype H7N7, otherwise known as bird flu. Three farms are involved: Ostellato, which has 128 000 laying hens, Mordano, with 586 000 laying hens and Portomaggiore, with 18 000 turkeys. These birds have now been killed, on the orders of the authorities. In Occhiobello, a municipality in the Veneto Region, the precautionary cull of 200 000 laying hens on a farm has been ordered.

Despite the decisions issued by the Commission ([1]), the Italian and local authorities, in recent years, have not, in my opinion, always taken all the necessary and useful measures to prevent the spread and transmission of this potentially dangerous virus. For example, a number of unjustified, incomprehensible and dangerous exemptions from the programme to prevent the spread of the virus were granted to hunters who use live decoys and attend bird fairs. The Veneto Region, by decision of the Regional Council of 16 July 2013 ([2]), authorised the use and handling in hunting of live decoys, including ducks and, on 21 September 2012 ([3]), following a case of H5N1, banned all bird fairs, exhibitions and markets. However, it continued to allow fairs devoted to ornamental birds — namely, bird festivals in which ducks used as decoys in hunting, in particular, are also present. Bird hunting will start shortly, in September, and with it the movement of thousands of ducks used as live decoys, with the killing of hundreds of thousands of wild ducks. Moreover, as regards bird fairs, in the coming days and until October, in the regions of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany, thousands of ducks and other birds used as decoys in hunting will be moved around.

Does the Commission believe that the movement, in the area affected by the virus, of thousands of live birds used as decoys in hunting, of dead wild birds killed by hunters and of birds destined for bird fairs is compatible with the preventive measures and safeguards provided for under Community legislation? Does the Commission not think it would be helpful, as a preventive and precautionary measure, to suspend all hunting of migratory birds and every bird fair in the regions affected by the bird flu virus?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(12 September 2013)

The current outbreak in Italy is caused by a highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus H7N7. The information available indicates that a low pathogenicity H7N7 virus entered a laying-hens holding in Ostellato (province of Ferrara), possibly due to contacts with wild birds, and then it mutated into a HPAI virus in the poultry.

Differently from the HPAI H5N1 virus that entered Europe years ago, leading the Commission to adopt a wide range of special measures including stringent restrictions for the use of decoy birds, there is no information supporting the hypothesis that this HPAI H7N7 can spread via wild birds.

EU legislation on the control of avian influenza ([4]) does not include provisions that would oblige Italy to apply the suggested measures on decoy birds and hunting of wild birds.

However, in conformity with EU legislation, Italy has suspended gatherings of live birds, such as fairs and markets, in the affected areas.

([1]) 2005/692/EC, 2005/734/EC, 2005/731/EC, 2005/732/EC, 2005/726/EC, 2006/574/EC and 2012/248/EU.
([2]) Decision 1286 concerning 'Derogations from the prohibition of the use of birds belonging to the orders of Anseriformes (water fowl) and Charadriiformes (shorebirds and gulls) in hunting (…). Implementing rules for the 2013-2014 hunting season'.
([3]) In a circular from the Veterinary Project Unit, No 424939, Class. E.740.20.10.
([4]) Council Directive 2005/94/EC of 20 December 2005 on Community measures for the control of avian influenza and repealing Directive 92/40/EEC (OJ L 10, 14.1.2006, p. 16).

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-009618/13
Komisi
Oldřich Vlasák (ECR)
(26. srpna 2013)

Předmět: Interpelace ve věci zákazu léčiv obsahujících účinnou látku tetrazepam

Dne 29. května 2013 Evropská komise přijala rozhodnutí o zákazu léčiv obsahujících účinnou látku tetrazepam.

Následovala tak rozhodnutí výborů Evropské lékové agentury, konkrétně pak Farmakovigilančního výboru pro hodnocení rizik (Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee – PRAC) a Koordinační skupiny pro vzájemné uznávání a decentralizaci procedur (Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedures – Human – CMDh), ze 24. dubna 2013, které zhodnotily rizika a přínosy tetrazepamu a většinovým rozhodnutím přijaly rozhodnutí pozastavit prodej léčiv s účinnou látkou tetrazepam do doby, než výrobci léčiv prokážou, že u specifické skupiny pacientů přínos tetrazepamu převyšuje možná rizika.

Vzhledem k tomu, že jsem opakovaně oslovován pacienty trpícími chronickými křečemi, kteří po desetiletí užívali léčiva obsahující účinnou látku tetrazepam (kupříkladu Myolastan od firmy Sanofi), ke kterým dle jejich stanoviska neexistuje adekvátní náhrada bez nepříznivých vedlejších účinků, rád bych se Komise dotázal:

1. Zda při svém rozhodování znala a zvážila možné negativní důsledky pro občany – pacienty trpící chronickými křečemi?

2. Jaké doporučení by adresovala postiženým občanům, kteří budou bez řešení své zdravotní situace omezeni v participaci na pracovním a osobním životě a vystaveni vyššímu riziku sociálního vyloučení?

Předem děkuji za odpověď.

Odpověď Tonia Borga jménem Komise
(9. října 2013)

Léčivé přípravky obsahující tetrazepam byly schváleny ve 13 členských státech EU k léčbě bolestí, jako jsou např. bolesti bederní a krční páteře či křečovitost svalů (přílišná tuhost svalů).

Na základě zpráv o závažných kožních reakcích na tyto léčivé přípravky ve Francii byl v rámci celé EU zahájen přezkum ([1]), ([2]). Agentura vyzvala všechny zúčastněné strany (např. pracovníky ve zdravotnictví, organizace pacientů a veřejnost), aby **předložily údaje** relevantní pro toto řízení ([3]). Po posouzení všech dostupných údajů, včetně poregistračních údajů a publikované literatury, došel Farmakovigilanční výbor pro posuzování rizik léčiv k závěru, že užívání tetrazepamu se pojí se zvýšeným rizikem závažných kožních reakcí. Výbor rovněž poznamenal, že dostupné údaje o účinnosti tetrazepamu nebyly dostatečně spolehlivé, aby podpořily jeho užití pro registrované indikace.

Rozhodnutí Komise ze dne 29. května 2013 ([4]) obsahuje podmínku pro zrušení pozastavení registrace: „pokud společnosti uvádějící na trh tyto léčivé přípravky poskytnou údaje identifikující specifickou skupinu pacientů, u nichž přínosy užívání přípravků obsahujících tetrazepam převažují nad jeho riziky."

Dále byly poskytnuty pacientům tyto informace: „Tetrazepam byste neměl(a) náhle přestat užívat, aniž byste se poradil(a) se svým lékařem. Léčbu pomocí tohoto přípravku konzultujte se svým ošetřujícím lékařem. Váš lékař může rovněž zvážit vhodnou alternativní léčbu."

([1]) Ustanovení článku 107i směrnice 2001/83/ES.
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/referrals/Tetrazepam_containing_medicinal_products/human_referral_prac_000015.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac05805c516f.
([3]) Ustanovení čl. 107j odst. 1 směrnice 2001/83/ES.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/html/ho24900.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009618/13
to the Commission
Oldřich Vlasák (ECR)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Ban on medicines containing the active substance tetrazepam

On 29 May 2013, the Commission adopted a decision to ban medicines containing the active substance tetrazepam.

This came after recommendations were made by committees of the European Medicines Agency, specifically the Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) and the Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedures — Human (CMDh) of 24 April 2013. The committees evaluated the risks and benefits of tetrazepam before reaching a majority decision that the sale of medicines with the active substance tetrazepam should be suspended until medicine manufacturers have demonstrated that the benefits for a particular group of patients outweigh the possible risks.

I am regularly contacted by members of the public suffering from chronic seizures who have been using medicines containing the active substance tetrazepam (e.g. Myolastan, produced by Sanofi) for decades. They feel that no suitable alternative exists that does not have unpleasant side-effects.

1. As it was reaching its decision, was the Commission aware of and did give considerationto the negative impact on patients suffering from chronic seizures?

2. What recommendations would it make to affected members of the public who, leftwithout a solution to their health problems, will be unable to participate to the samedegree in social and professional life and will thus be at higher risk of social exclusion?

Thank you for your response.

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

Medicines containing tetrazepam have been approved in 13 EU Member States to treat painful conditions such as low-back pain and neck pain and spasticity (excessive stiffness of muscles).

The EU-wide review ([1]),[(2)] was initiated following reports of serious skin reactions with these medicines in France. The Agency invited all stakeholders (e.g. healthcare professionals, patients' organisations and the general public) to **submit data** relevant to this procedure ([3]). Having assessed all available data, including post-marketing data and the published literature, the Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) concluded that tetrazepam is associated with an increased risk of serious skin reactions. The PRAC also noted that, the available data on the effectiveness of tetrazepam were not sufficiently robust to support its use in the authorised indications.

The Commission decision of 29 May 2013 ([4]) contains a condition for lifting of the suspension of the marketing authorisation: 'if the companies that market these medicines provide data identifying a specific group of patients for whom the benefits of tetrazepam-containing medicines outweigh the risks.'

In addition, the following information has been provided to patients: 'You should not suddenly stop taking tetrazepam without your doctor's advice. You should make an appointment with your treating doctor to discuss your treatment. Your doctor may also consider an appropriate alternative treatment for you.'

([1]) Article 107i of Directive 2001/83/EC.
([2]) http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/medicines/human/referrals/Tetrazepam_containing_medicinal_products/human_referral_prac_000015.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac05805c516f
([3]) Article 107j(1) of Directive 2001/83/EC.
([4]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/documents/community-register/html/ho24900.htm

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009619/13
an die Kommission
Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE)
(26. August 2013)

Betrifft: EIB-Förderung für Braunkohlekraftwerk Ptolemaida V in Griechenland

Der griechische Stromkonzern Public Power Corporation S.A. (PPC) will ein Braunkohlekraftwerk Ptolemaida V mit 660 MW Leistung bauen. Griechische Umweltschützer warnen vor dem Neubau. Neben den Gesundheits- und Umweltbelastungen sorgen sie sich vor allem um die langfristigen Folgen dieser Entscheidung. Ein neues Braunkohlekraftwerk läuft mindestens 40 Jahre. Dadurch wird der Ausbau der erneuerbaren Energien gebremst und die griechische Abhängigkeit von fossilen Brennstoffen verlängert. Zudem wird durch den Bau die Verwirklichung der EU-Klimaziele (80-95 % bis 2050) infrage gestellt. Es deutet sich zudem an, dass die hohen Investitionskosten und die zukünftigen Emissionsabgaben eine Erhöhung des Strompreises zur Folge haben werden ([1]). Das würde einen Großteil der Bevölkerung empfindlich treffen.

Arthuros Zervos (CEO von PPC) stellte am 21.3.2012 im Handels- und Produktionsausschuss des griechischen Parlaments den Finanzplan für Ptolemaida vor, nach dem die Europäische Investitionsbank 18 % zur Finanzierung beitragen soll. Bisherige Nachfragen bei der EIB ergaben, dass die Bank das Projekt kenne, aber noch kein Antrag gestellt worden sei.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Hat die Kommission Kenntnis darüber, ob sich die EIB mit einer möglichen Finanzierung von Ptolemaida beschäftigt, gegebenenfalls in Form einer Vorprüfung/Beratung im Vorfeld einer konkreten Antragstellung?

2. Wird die Bank den Antrag prüfen, wenn er gestellt wird, oder dies aufgrund der EU-Klimaschutzziele ablehnen?

3. Wird die Kommission im Prüfverfahren Einfluss nehmen, um die Gefährdung der EU-Klimaziele durch Investitionen der EIB zu verhindern?

Antwort von Herrn Rehn im Namen der Kommission
(22. Oktober 2013)

Laut Auskunft der EIB ist sie nicht am Projekt zur Errichtung des Braunkohlekraftwerks Ptolemaida V in Griechenland beteiligt.

([1]) http://www.rae.gr/site/categories_new/about_rae/factsheets/general/11122012_2.csp (7.4.2013).

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009619/13
to the Commission
Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: EIB funding for the Ptolemaida V lignite power station in Greece

A lignite power station with a generating capacity of 660 megawatts, the Ptolemaida V, is currently being planned by the Greek Public Power Corporation. However, Greek environmentalists are expressing concern, at not only the adverse impact thereof on public health and the environment but also the long-term consequences, given that a new power station can be expected to operate for at least 40 years, thereby slowing down moves towards the increased use of energy from renewable sources, prolonging Greek dependence on fossil fuels and compromising efforts to achieve EU climate objectives (80-95% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050). Furthermore, the high investment costs and future emission levies are likely to increase the cost of electricity ([1]), causing considerable hardship for much of the population.

On 21 March 2012, Arthuros Zervos, the Public Power Corporation's CEO, presented the Ptolemaida financial plan to the Greek parliamentary committee for trade and production, intimating that 18% of funding would be provided by the European Investment Bank. The EIB, however, has indicated in response to enquiries that it has not yet received any such funding application, although it is aware of the project.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission know whether the EIB is currently engaged in initial inspections or consultations prior to a possible funding application for the Ptolemaida power station?

2. Will the Bank examine any such application or, on the contrary, reject it as incompatible with EU climate protection objectives?

3. Will the Commission seek to influence the initial assessment procedure in a bid to prevent EU climate objectives being compromised by EIB-funded projects?

Answer given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission
(22 October 2013)

According to the EIB, it is not involved in the Ptolemaida V lignite power station in Greece Project.

([1]) http://www.rae.gr/site/categories_new/about_rae/factsheets/general/11122012_2.csp (7.4.2013)

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009620/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(26 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Έλεγχος των καταγγελιών για χρήση χημικών όπλων στη Συρία

Στα διεθνή μέσα και σε ιστοσελίδες της Συριακής αντιπολίτευσης δημοσιεύονται video στα οποία καταγγέλλεται η χρήση χημικών όπλων στη Συρία και καταγράφονται σκηνές που ειδικοί εκτιμούν ([1]) ότι υπάρχει αξιόλογη πιθανότητα να προέρχονται από επίθεση με χρήση χημικών όπλων. Η συγκεκριμένη χώρα ουδέποτε έχει υπογράψει την συνθήκη κατά των χημικών όπλων (Chemical Weapons Convention — CWC), ούτε έχει επικυρώσει την συνθήκη για βιολογικά και τοξικά όπλα (Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention — BTWC), και έτσι ουδέποτε έχει τυπικά διακοινώσει αν διαθέτει αυτού του είδους τα όπλα.

Με δεδομένο ότι η Συριακή κυβέρνηση — παρά το γεγονός ότι αρνείται εντελώς τις σχετικές κατηγορίες — δεν φαίνεται να διευκολύνει τον σχετικό έλεγχο από τους επιθεωρητές του ΟΗΕ, ενώ η πάροδος του χρόνου οδηγεί σύμφωνα με τους ειδικούς στην αποδυνάμωση της αξίας των σχετικών στοιχείων και κινδυνεύει να καταστήσει τα όποια συμπεράσματα του ελέγχου αναξιόπιστα, τι άμεσες πρόσθετες πρωτοβουλίες σκοπεύει να αναλάβει η Επιτροπή για να ελεγχθεί το ταχύτερο η βασιμότητα των καταγγελιών για επιθέσεις με χημικά όπλα στη Συρία.

Απάντηση της Ύπατης Εκπροσώπου/Αντιπροέδρου Ashton εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(11 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ εξέφρασε την ικανοποίησή της για τη δημοσίευση της έκθεσης του ΟΗΕ σχετικά με τα γεγονότα που διαδραματίστηκαν στις 21 Αυγούστου 2013 στη Συρία. Χάρη στην έκθεση αυτή, υπάρχουν σήμερα αξιόπιστα στοιχεία που επιβεβαιώνουν ότι τη συγκεκριμένη ημερομηνία εξαπολύθηκε μεγάλης κλίμακας χημική επίθεση με τη χρήση του αερίου «σαρίν». Επίσης, η έκθεση επιβεβαιώνει ότι σε τέσσερις περιοχές της Δαμασκού χρησιμοποιήθηκαν ρουκέτες εδάφους-εδάφους που περιείχαν το αέριο νεύρων «σαρίν». Αυτές είναι ενδείξεις που θα συμβάλουν στον προσδιορισμό των αυτουργών.

Η ΕΕ καταδικάζει ομόφωνα, με τον πιο κατηγορηματικό τρόπο, αυτή τη φοβερή επίθεση που συνιστά ταυτόχρονα παραβίαση του διεθνούς δικαίου, έγκλημα πολέμου και έγκλημα κατά της ανθρωπότητας. Οι επιθέσεις αυτές δεν μπορούν να παραμείνουν ατιμώρητες και οι αυτουργοί τους πρέπει να λογοδοτήσουν. Η δημοσίευση της έκθεσης υπογραμμίζει τη σημασία που έχει η τρέχουσα διεθνής πρωτοβουλία για να διασφαλιστεί η ταχεία και ασφαλής καταστροφή των χημικών όπλων της Συρίας. Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ εξέφρασε επίσης την ικανοποίησή της για τη συμφωνία που επιτεύχθηκε μεταξύ των ΗΠΑ και της Ρωσίας στις 14 Σεπτεμβρίου, και επανέλαβε την έκκλησή της προς το Συμβούλιο Ασφαλείας των Ηνωμένων Εθνών να αναλάβει τις ευθύνες του για την ταχεία επίτευξη συμφωνίας όσον αφορά την έκδοση αποτελεσματικού ψηφίσματος που θα επιτρέπει να κινηθεί η σχετική διαδικασία.

Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ επανέλαβε την πλήρη υποστήριξη της ΕΕ για την άμεση υλοποίηση του συμφωνηθέντος σχεδίου. Η ΥΕ/ΑΠ κάλεσε όλους τους εταίρους της διεθνούς κοινότητας να αξιοποιήσουν τη δυναμική που έχει αναπτυχθεί και να συναινέσουν ευρύτερα για μια πολιτική επίλυση της σύγκρουσης μέσω διαπραγματεύσεων, προκειμένου να τεθεί τέρμα στα δεινά του λαού της Συρίας.

([1]) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23806491

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009620/13
to the Commission
Theodoros Skylakakis (ALDE)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Verification of allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria

Videos are circulating in the international media and on Syrian opposition websites denouncing the use of chemical weapons in Syria and recording scenes which, according to experts ([1]), quite probably show the aftermath of an attack using chemical weapons. Syria has never signed the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), nor has it ratified the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and so has never formally declared whether or not it possesses these kinds of weapon.

Despite the fact that the Syrian government totally rejects the accusations made against it, it does not appear to be facilitating the work of the UN inspectors; moreover, according to experts, the passage of time will diminish the value of the evidence and risks undermining the reliability of the findings of the inspection team. Given this situation, what immediate additional steps will the Commission take to verify as soon as possible the validity of allegations of attacks using chemical weapons in Syria?

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

The HR/VP has welcomed the publication of the UN report on the events in Syria that unfolded on 21 August 2013. With this report, there is now reliable evidence confirming that a large-scale chemical attack was perpetrated on that day with the use of sarin gas. The report also corroborates that surface-to-surface rockets containing the nerve agent sarin were used in four areas of Damascus. These are indications that will help identify the perpertrators.

The EU stands united in condemning, in the strongest terms, this horrific attack which constititutes a violation of international law, a war crime, and a crime against humanity. There can be no impunity and perpertrators of the attacks must be held accountable. The publication of the report underlines the importance of the current international initiative for ensuring the swift and secure destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. The HR/VP also welcomed the agreement between the US and Russia on 14 September and reiterated her call on the UNSC to assume its responsibilities in agreeing swiftly on an effective resolution that will authorise the process.

The HR/VP has reiterated the full support of the EU for the immediate implementation of the agreed plan. She has called on all partners in the international community to seize the momentum to reach a broader consensus for a negotiated political solution to the conflict in order to end the suffering of the Syrian people.

([1]) http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23806491

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009621/13
aan de Commissie
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(26 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Werkomgeving — minimum aantal vierkante meters werkvloer

Deze vraag betreft de Europese richtlijn die de voorschriften inzake arbeidsplaatsen regelt m.b.t. gezondheid en veiligheid op het werk (89/654/EEC).

Enkele lidstaten gaan verder en hebben een norm die vanuit ergonomisch oogpunt de minimumeisen voor de hoeveelheid vloeroppervlakte van werkplekken in administratieve ruimtes en kantoren vastlegt.

De verschillende afmetingen die vastgelegd worden zijn:

1. minimumoppervlakte voor de medewerkers;

2. minimumoppervlakte van de kantoorwerktafel;

3. minimumoppervlakte vergaderruimte.

Hieromtrent enkele vragen aan de Commissie:

1. Is de Commissie van mening dat de huidige regelgeving voldoende is voor de bescherming van de werkenden?

2. Acht de Commissie het wenselijk om de huidige richtlijn te herzien en ergonomische normen mee op te nemen? Indien ja, wat is de timing hiervoor?

3. Heeft de Commissie al stappen gezet in deze richting?

Antwoord van de heer Andor namens de Commissie
(16 oktober 2013)

De Commissie is van oordeel dat de bestaande wetgeving betreffende ergonomische voorschriften met betrekking tot de minimumeisen voor vloeroppervlakte die van toepassing zijn op administratieve ruimtes en kantoren, en die in paragraaf 15 van bijlage I bij Richtlijn 89/654/EEG ([1]) worden behandeld, voldoet.

De Commissie heeft zich ertoe verbonden om een alomvattende evaluatie van de 24 EU-richtlijnen inzake gezondheid en veiligheid uit te voeren, met inbegrip van de richtlijnen met betrekking tot werkplaatsen. Deze evaluatie zal gericht zijn op relevantie, onderzoek en nieuwe wetenschappelijke inzichten op de diverse relevante gebieden. De Commissie zal de andere Europese instellingen en organen in kennis stellen van de resultaten (die uiterlijk eind 2015 beschikbaar zullen zijn) en van eventuele suggesties over hoe de werking van het regelgevingskader kan worden verbeterd.

([1]) Richtlijn 89/654/EEG van de Raad van 30 november 1989 betreffende minimumvoorschriften inzake veiligheid en gezondheid voor arbeidsplaatsen, PB L 393 van 30.12.1989.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009621/13
to the Commission
Philippe De Backer (ALDE)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Minimum surface areas (square metres) at the workplace

With regard to Council Directive 89/654/EEC concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace, a number of Member States have adopted additional ergonomic provisions in respect of minimum surface areas applicable to administrative premises and offices.

These provisions relate to the following:

1. Minimum space for staff;

2. Minimum desk sizes;

3. Minimum area of meeting rooms.

In view of this:

1. Does the Commission consider that the existing legislation is adequate for the wellbeing of staff?

2. Does the Commission consider it necessary, and if so over what period, to review the current directive and adopt additional ergonomic provisions?

3. Has the Commission already taken steps in this direction?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 October 2013)

The Commission considers that the existing legislation on ergonomic requirements in terms of minimum surface area applicable to administrative premises and offices, which are addressed in paragraph 15 of Annex I to Directive 89/654/EEC ([1]), is adequate.

It has undertaken to carry out a comprehensive review of the 24 EU health and safety Directives, including those that concern workplaces. The review will address relevance, research and new scientific knowledge in the various fields in question. The Commission will inform the other EU institutions and bodies of the results (available by the end of 2015 at the latest) and of any suggestions on how to improve the operation of the regulatory framework.

([1]) Council Directive 89/654/EEC of 30 November 1989 concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace, OJ L 393, 30.12.1989.

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung P-009622/13
an die Kommission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(26. August 2013)

Betrifft: Abwicklung der Verbrauchssteuer auf Wein in Großbritannien

Der Bundesverband der Deutschen Weinkellereien und des Weinfachhandels e.V. sowie die Industrie- und Handelskammer in Trier haben auf die nicht binnenmarktkonforme Abwicklung der Verbrauchssteuer auf Wein in Großbritannien aufmerksam gemacht, die den europäischen Binnenmarkregeln widerspricht und darüber hinaus in erheblichem Maße wettbewerbsverzerrend ist. Die englischen Steuerbehörden unterscheiden zwischen dem Import von Fasswein und dem Import von fertigen aromatisierten weinhaltigen Getränken. Wird das Endprodukt in Großbritannien zubereitet, so fällt keine Steuer auf das fertige Produkt an. Die durch die Zubereitung verbundene Volumenvermehrung ist steuerfrei. Wird dagegen ein fertiges Produkt des Vermarkters aus Deutschland in Großbritannien eingeführt, das den gleichen Weinanteil hat wie im Fall zuvor, dann entfällt dieses Endprodukt der Weinsteuer.

Der Anteil, der durch alkoholfreie Zutaten zur Volumenvermehrung geführt hat und bei der Produktion in England steuerfrei bleibt, wird also nicht besteuert.

Damit wird die Weiterverarbeitung und Abfüllung der Grunderzeugnisse in Großbritannien verbrauchsteuerrechtlich deutlich besser gestellt als importierte Erzeugnisse.

Kann die Kommission dazu folgende Fragen beantworten:

1. Ist diese Praxis der britischen Steuerbehörden bekannt?

2. Wie beurteilt die Kommission die damit verbundenen Wettbewerbsverzerrungen?

3. Was wird die Kommission unternehmen, um in dieser Frage den europäischen Binnenmarkt und eine wettbewerbsneutrale Besteuerung sicherzustellen?

Antwort von Herrn Šemeta im Namen der Kommission
(24. September 2013)

Der betreffende Beschwerdeführer hat sich auch direkt mit den Dienststellen der Kommission in Verbindung gesetzt. In dem betreffenden Fall scheint keine Diskriminierung vorzuliegen. Gemäß Artikel 8 der Richtlinie 92/83/EWG und Artikel 4 der Richtlinie 92/84/EWG unterliegt jeder Wein, der unter die KN-Codes 2204 und 2205 fällt, grundsätzlich der Verbrauchsteuer, die in Form eines bestimmten Betrags je Hektoliter festgesetzt ist. Daher führen Mengenerhöhungen (z. B. durch Verdünnung), während sich der Wein unter Steueraussetzung befindet, zu höheren Verbrauchsteuern, sobald diese fällig werden. Dieselben Grundsätze gelten auch in Deutschland. Der Beschwerdeführer hat dies jedoch nie bemerkt, weil in Deutschland für Wein ein Steuersatz von 0 % gilt. Bei der Ausfuhr in ein Land wie das Vereinigte Königreich, das Verbrauchsteuer auf Wein erhebt, wird dem Beschwerdeführer diese Erhöhung bewusst.

Vor diesem Hintergrund:

1. Die Kommission kennt die Praxis der Steuerbehörden des Vereinigten Königreichs.

2. Die Kommission kann keine Verzerrungen erkennen, die nicht mit den Verbrauchsteuervorschriften der EU vereinbar sind.

3. Die Kommission hat derzeit nicht die Absicht, weiter zu intervenieren.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009622/13
to the Commission
Werner Langen (PPE)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Excise duty on wine in the United Kingdom

The Association of German Wine Producers and Traders and the Trier Chamber of Industry and Trade have expressed concern at arrangements regarding excise duty on wine in the United Kingdom, which are infringing European internal market provisions and causing considerable distortion of competition. Regarding imports, the British tax authorities make a distinction between wines from the cask and aromatised wine-based drinks. If the end-product is prepared in the United Kingdom it is not subject to duty. The resulting increase in volume is duty-free. However, an end-product with the same wine content marketed in Germany and imported into the United Kingdom is taxed as wine.

Alcohol-free additional content exempt from duty if produced in England remains exempt.

As a result, products processed and bottled in the United Kingdom enjoy a distinct advantage over imported products in terms of excise duty.

In view of this:

1. Is the Commission aware of this practice followed by the British tax authorities?

2. What view does the Commission take of the resulting distortions in competition?

3. What action will the Commission take to uphold European internal market principles in this connection and ensure that competition is not distorted by the imposition of duties?

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

The Commission services have also been contacted directly by the complainant concerned. No discriminative practices appear to be involved in this specific case. In accordance with Articles 8 of Directive 92/83/EEC and 4 of Directive 92/84/EEC any wine coming under CN Codes 2204 and 2205 is in principle subject to excise duty and the tax is an amount per hectolitre. Consequently increases in quantity (for example by dilution) while wine is under duty suspension will generate higher excise duties when they become due. The same principles also apply in Germany. It is just that the complainant has never noticed this because Germany applies the rate 0 on wine. When exporting to a country like the UK which applies excise duties on wine, the complainant realises this increase.

In view of this:

1. The Commission is aware of the practice of the UK tax authorities.

2. The Commission does not see distortions which are inconsistent with EU excise duty provisions.

3. The Commission does not intend to further intervene at this stage.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009623/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Παραβίαση ωρών εργασίας ιατρών και η αντίδραση της Επιτροπής

Σύμφωνα με την ανακοίνωση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής στις 29.9.2011, έχουν ξεκινήσει διαδικασίες επί παραβάσει κατά της Ελλάδας, σχετικά με την παραβίαση της οδηγίας για τις ώρες εργασίας στον τομέα των ιατρικών υπηρεσιών. Ωστόσο, από το Σεπτέμβρη του 2011 μέχρι και σήμερα, η Επιτροπή δεν έχει πράξει απολύτως τίποτα, δηλώνοντας μάλιστα, στην απάντησή της (E-007844/2013), ότι «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»

Με δεδομένη την ανοχή που επιδεικνύει στην παραβίαση της οδηγίας για τις ώρες εργασίας και στην καταστρατήγηση των δικαιωμάτων των ιατρών και της ασφάλειας και της υγείας των ασθενών, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς είναι δυνατόν για δύο συναπτά έτη να παρατηρεί, μέσω «εκτενών συζητήσεων» με τις ελληνικές αρχές, την παραβίαση της οδηγίας για τις ώρες εργασίας των ιατρών, χωρίς να έχει λάβει κανένα συγκεκριμένο μέτρο; Γιατί κωφεύει πάντα όταν παραβιάζονται εργασιακά δικαιώματα και καλύπτει τις εθνικές κυβερνήσεις, ενώ την ίδια στιγμή σπεύδει, με υπερβάλλοντα ζήλο, να υπερασπιστεί επιχειρηματικά προνόμια και συμφέροντα;

2. Σκοπεύει επιτέλους να λάβει, άμεσα, τα απαραίτητα μέτρα ώστε να προστατευθεί η υγεία και η ασφάλεια, τόσο των ιατρών-εργαζομένων, όσο και των ασθενών, ή της το απαγορεύει η Τρόικα και το ελληνικό Μνημόνιο, που προβλέπουν περικοπές στις δαπάνες υγείας;

Απάντηση του κ. Andor εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή εκφράζει μεγάλη ανησυχία για την κατάσταση και τις επιπτώσεις στην υγεία και την ασφάλεια των γιατρών και των ασθενών. Μετά την κίνηση της διαδικασίας επί παραβάσει, όπως αναφέρει ο κύριος βουλευτής, η Επιτροπή συμμετέχει ενεργά και συνεχώς σε εκτενείς συζητήσεις με τις εθνικές αρχές. Στόχος της Επιτροπής είναι να διασφαλίσει ότι η Ελλάδα θα αντιμετωπίσει τις υπερβολικές ώρες εργασίας των γιατρών στις υπηρεσίες δημόσιας υγείας και θα καταφέρει να συμμορφωθεί με την οδηγία το συντομότερο δυνατό. Η Επιτροπή διατηρεί το δικαίωμα να λάβει όλα τα περαιτέρω μέτρα που ενδέχεται να κριθούν αναγκαία για τη διασφάλιση της εν λόγω συμμόρφωσης και συγκεκριμένα να παραπέμψει την Ελλάδα στο Δικαστήριο.

Επιπλέον, οι υπηρεσίες της Επιτροπής συνεργάζονται στενά για να διασφαλίσουν ότι τα μέτρα για την επίτευξη μακροπρόθεσμης συμμόρφωσης με την οδηγία περιλαμβάνονται επίσης στη συνολική προγραμματισμένη μεταρρύθμιση των εθνικών υπηρεσιών δημόσιας υγείας. Ειδικότερα, η ομάδα δράσης για την Ελλάδα βοηθά επί του παρόντος τις ελληνικές αρχές στην αξιολόγηση ολόκληρου του συστήματος διαχείρισης ανθρώπινων πόρων υγειονομικής περίθαλψης. Η αξιολόγηση αυτή θα οδηγήσει σε αναθεώρηση του σχεδίου δράσης στο πλαίσιο της στρατηγικής «υγεία εν δράσει», ένας από τους κύριους στόχους της οποίας είναι να παρακολουθεί και να βοηθά τις δημόσιες υπηρεσίες υγείας στη συμμόρφωση με την οδηγία για τον χρόνο εργασίας. Τέλος, το μνημόνιο συμφωνίας με τις ελληνικές αρχές παραπέμπει στην αναδιοργάνωση και την αναδιάρθρωση της παροχής υπηρεσιών ΕΣΥ για τη βελτίωση της κινητικότητας του προσωπικού και την ευθυγράμμιση της οργάνωσης της εργασίας με την οδηγία 2003/88/ΕΚ.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009623/13
to the Commission
Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Violation of doctors' working hours and the Commission's response

According to the Commission communication of 29.9.2011, proceedings have been initiated against Greece for infringing the Working Time Directive in respect of the working hours of doctors in public health services. However, since September 2011 , the Commission has done absolutely nothing, while stating in its answer to Written Question E-007844/2013, that: 'At this stage, the Commission reserves the right to take all further measures which may be necessary to ensure compliance with the directive.'

Given the tolerance it shows towards the infringement of the Working Time Directive and the violation of the rights of doctors and the health and safety of patients, will the Commission say:

1. How can it spend two consecutive years observing, through ' extensive discussions' with the Greek authorities, the infringement of the Working Time Directive in respect of doctors, without taking any specific measure to remedy the situation? Why does it always turn a deaf ear when labour rights are being violated, and backs national governments, while at the same time rushing with excessive zeal to defend business interests and privileges?

2. Will it finally take forthwith the necessary measures to protect the health and safety of both medical workers and patients, or do the Troika and the Greek Memorandum, which provide for cuts in health spending, forbid it from doing so?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 October 2013)

The Commission is very concerned at the situation and the implications for the health and safety of doctors and patients. Following the initiation of the infringement procedure, as the Honourable Member notes, the Commission is actively and continuously engaged in extensive discussions with the national authorities. The Commission's objective is to ensure that Greece addresses the excessive working hours of doctors in public health services, and achieves compliance with the directive as soon as possible. It reserves the right to take all further measures that may be necessary to ensure such compliance, namely to refer Greece to Court.

In addition, the Commission services are cooperating closely in order to ensure that measures to achieve long-term compliance with the directive are also integrated into the planned overall reform of the national public health services. In particular, the Task Force for Greece is currently assisting the Greek authorities in assessing the overall healthcare human resources management system. This assessment will lead to a reform action plan under the 'Health in Action' strategy, one of the main objectives of which is to monitor and assist the public health services in achieving compliance with the Working Time Directive. Finally, the memorandum of understanding with the Greek Authorities refers to the reorganisation and restructuring of NHS service provision to improve the mobility of staff and align working organisation with Directive 2003/88/EC.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009624/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(26 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Europeade, subsidie

In juli 2013 werd in de Thüringse stad Gotha (Duitsland) de 50ste editie gevierd van de Europeade. Dit is een grootschalige jaarlijkse bijeenkomst van volkskunstgroepen uit nagenoeg alle landen van de Europese Unie waarbij op een hartelijke wijze wordt verbroederd en aan culturele uitwisseling wordt gedaan. De Europeade is hiermee uitgegroeid tot een van de grootste culturele grensoverschrijdende activiteiten in de EU.

Naar aanleiding van dit 50-jarig jubileum heeft Raadsvoorzitter Herman Van Rompuy een enthousiast voorwoord geschreven in het programmaboek van de editie 2013. De Europeade was overigens een van de eerste organisaties die haar deuren wagenwijd openzette voor de ontmoeting met culturele organisaties uit de voormalige Oostbloklanden en heeft de voorbije jaren dan ook sterk bijgedragen tot de Europese verstandhouding en tot vriendschap tussen de volkeren. Toch werden subsidies door de EU in het verleden steevast geweigerd, onder het voorwendsel dat de Europeade „onvoldoende vernieuwend" zou zijn.

Deze houding is onbegrijpelijk, juist omdat deze Europeade al 50 jaar lang door haar openheid en hulde aan de Europese diversiteit onophoudelijk blijk heeft gegeven van vernieuwingsgezindheid. Dit evenement, dat tot op heden louter steunt op vrijwilligerswerk en bijdragen van de deelnemers, kost niettemin handenvol geld.

Kan de Commissie meedelen of zij bereid is alsnog haar standpunt te herzien en vanaf het komende jaar een substantiële subsidie te verstrekken?

Zo nee, wat zijn de motieven voor de weigering?

Antwoord van mevrouw Vassiliou namens de Commissie
(9 oktober 2013)

Het Europeade-festival heeft subsidies aangevraagd in het kader van het programma Cultuur. Alle aanvragen zijn beoordeeld op basis van de criteria in de oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen. Daarbij is de hulp ingeroepen van externe onafhankelijke deskundigen om de aanvragen zo goed mogelijk te evalueren overeenkomstig de beginselen van transparantie en gelijke behandeling.

Op basis van die evaluatie en vergeleken met de andere aanvragen werden de aanvragen van het Europeade-festival niet hoog genoeg gerangschikt om voor financiële steun in aanmerking te komen. Het festival scoorde niet alleen voor innovatie maar ook voor de andere criteria relatief laag.

Subsidiebesluiten kunnen niet worden herzien omdat dit zou indruisen tegen het beginsel van gelijke behandeling van alle aanvragers. Het Europeade-festival kan in de toekomst uiteraard een nieuwe subsidieaanvraag indienen.

Opgemerkt zij dat het huidige programma Cultuur ten einde loopt en binnenkort door het programma Creatief Europa wordt vervangen. Het nieuwe programma treedt in werking op 1 januari 2014 en de eerste oproepen tot het indienen van voorstellen worden naar verwachting voor het eind van 2013 gepubliceerd ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009624/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(26 August 2013)

Subject: Subsidy for Europeade

In July 2013, in Gotha, Thuringia (Germany), Europeade was held for the 50th time. It is the biggest annual festival for popular/folk art groups from virtually every country in the European Union, at which people fraternise in amicable fashion and engage in cultural exchanges. As a result, Europeade has become the largest crossborder cultural event in the EU.

To mark the festival's 50th anniversary, Council President Herman Van Rompuy wrote an enthusiastic preface for the 2013 programme. Europeade was also, incidentally, one of the first organisations which welcomed with open arms cultural organisations from the countries of the former Eastern Bloc, and in recent years it has, accordingly, made a major contribution to European understanding and amity among peoples. Despite this, the EU has consistently refused to subsidise the event in the past, under the pretext that Europeade was 'not sufficiently innovative'.

This attitude is incomprehensible when one considers that for 50 years Europeade has constantly been demonstrating its openness and commitment to European diversity, thus showing a willingness to innovate. This event, which so far has been kept going purely by means of voluntary work and donations from participants, nonetheless costs a lot of money.

Can the Commission indicate whether it is prepared to review its position and provide a substantial subsidy as from next year?

If not, what are the reasons for its refusal?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

The Europeade festival has applied for funding under the Culture Programme. All applications received were assessed against the criteria set out in the calls for proposals. The assessment was conducted with the help of external independent experts in order to ensure the best possible evaluation of the applications, in accordance with the principles of transparency and equal treatment.

Based on that evaluation and compared to the other applications received, applications from the Europeade festival were not ranked sufficiently high to be awarded financial support. This is the result of relatively low scores not only for innovation, but also for the other award criteria listed in the calls for proposals.

Past grant award decisions cannot be reviewed as this would breach the principles of equality of treatment with other applicants. The Europeade festival is of course welcome to apply for funding in the future.

It should be noted that the current Culture Programme is coming to an end and will soon be replaced by the Creative Europe programme. The new programme will enter into force on 1 January 2014 and it is expected that the first calls for proposals will be published before the end of 2013 ([1]).

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita P-009625/13
a la Comisión
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(27 de agosto de 2013)

Asunto: Conflicto pesquero con Gibraltar

Como la Comisión sabe, a finales del mes de julio las autoridades gibraltareñas vertieron ilegalmente en la Bahía de Algeciras unos setenta bloques de hormigón de grandes dimensiones y armados con ganchos, con el fin de crear arrecifes artificiales.

Dicha actuación impide faenar a los pescadores en el caladero de la Bahía de Algeciras, lo que conlleva pérdidas económicas para los pescadores afectados que repercuten negativamente en el empleo y en la situación económica de la zona, ya de por si maltrecha.

Por ello, ¿supone la decisión unilateral del Gobierno de la colonia de Gibraltar un delito al lanzar bloques de hormigón indiscriminadamente al medio marino, lo que pudiera afectar el mantenimiento de los fondos marinos así como a los derechos de los pescadores de faenar en la zona?

¿Tiene previsto la Comisión indemnizar económicamente a los pescadores afectados ante la imposibilidad de faenar en estas condiciones y ser vulnerados sus derechos?

Respuesta de la Sra. Damanaki en nombre de la Comisión
(7 de octubre de 2013)

En relación con la pregunta de si las actuaciones de las autoridades gibraltareñas constituyen un incumplimiento de la legislación de la UE, la Comisión está realizando una evaluación tras el memorando enviado por el Reino de España. Hasta que no concluya dicha evaluación, la Comisión no puede pronunciarse a ese respecto.

Indemnizar económicamente a los pescadores españoles por las posibles pérdidas no forma parte de las atribuciones de la Comisión. Corresponde al Estado miembro determinar la pertinencia y el alcance de la indemnización, siguiendo las normas de la UE.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009625/13
to the Commission
Dolores García-Hierro Caraballo (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Fishing dispute with Gibraltar

As the Commission is aware, at the end of July 2013 the Gibraltarian authorities illegally dumped around 70 large hook-studded concrete blocks in the Bay of Algeciras, with a view to creating an artificial reef.

This action has made it impossible for fishing boats to operate in the waters of the Bay of Algeciras, causing economic losses for the fishermen involved and a knock on effect on employment and the already faltering local economy.

Does the unilateral decision by the Government of the colony of Gibraltar to indiscriminately throw concrete blocks into the marine environment, possibly affecting seabed conservation and the rights of fishermen to carry out their activities in the area, constitute a crime?

Does the Commission intend to financially compensate the fishermen who are now unable to fish because of this situation and whose rights have been violated?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

With regard to whether the actions of the authorities of Gibraltar constitute a breach of EC law, the Commission is currently undertaking an evaluation following the memorandum sent by the Kingdom of Spain. Until this evaluation has been completed, the Commission is unable to pronounce its views on the issue.

Compensation of Spanish fishermen for possible losses is not in the remit of the Commission. It will be for the Member State concerned to determine the pertinence and extent of the compensation in accordance with EU rules.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub P-009626/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: L-indirizzar taż-żieda tax-xogħol prekarju fl-UE

Ix-xogħol prekarju sar kwistjoni persistenti u theddida għall-istabbiltà tal-impjiegi, għas-sigurtà tax-xogħol u għal pagi ta' livell xieraq.

Tipi mhux standard ta' relazzjonijiet tax-xogħol iwasslu biex il-ħaddiema jisfaw imċaħħda mill-benefiċċji tal-welfare u mill-protezzjoni tal-impjiegi. Dawn il-kwistjonijiet għandhom relevanza għal-leġiżlazzjoni tal-UE dwar ix-xogħol u b'hekk jeskludu għadd ta' ħaddiema li l-kuntratti tax-xogħol tagħhom ma jissodisfawx l-istandards stipulati fil-liġijiet tal-UE dwar ix-xogħol.

1. Il-Kummissjoni xi proposti speċifiċi qed tikkunsidra li tressaq biex tadatta l-qafas ġuridiku eżistenti fil-qasam tal-impjiegi għar-realtà l-ġdida ta' relazzjonijiet tax-xogħol mhux standard?

2. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tippubblika programm ta' azzjoni rigward il-protezzjoni ta' dawk il-gruppi li l-aktar li jinsabu fir-riskju minħabba x-xogħol prekarju, bħalma huma n-nisa, l-istudenti u l-ħaddiema żgħażagħ?

3. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tfassal programm programm multiannwali li jinkorpora skeda ta' żmien għall-ilħiq ta' miri maħsuba biex inaqqsu sostanzjalment ix-xogħol prekarju fl-UE?

4. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tagħti definizzjoni ġuridika tax-xogħol prekarju?

5. Il-Kummissjoni tista' tagħti informazzjoni dwar x'azzjoni ta' segwitu ttieħdet wara r-Riżoluzzjoni tal-Parlament Ewropew tad-19 ta' Ottubru 2010 dwar il-ħaddiema prekarji nisa?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(19 ta' Settembru 2013)

1. Id-direttivi tal-UE jkopru diversi tipi ta' relazzjonijiet ta' impjieg mhux standard, partikolarment fil-qasam tax-xogħol part-time ([1]), ix-xogħol għal żmien fiss ([2]), ix-xogħol temporanju permezz ta' aġenzija ([3]) u l-istazzjonar tal-ħaddiema ([4]). Il-Kummissjoni tissorvelja l-implimentazzjoni tagħhom mill-Istati Membri u teżaminahom b'mod regolari biex tivverifika jekk dawn għandhomx bżonn jiġu aġġornati.

Il-Kummissjoni ilha ssegwi l-kwistjoni tax-xogħol prekarju minn żmien il-Green Paper ([5]) tagħha tal-2006. Fil-qafas ta' proġett pilota ([6]), kien hemm studju ([7]) li sab li ż-żieda fil-forom mhux standard ta' impjieg qed tikkontribwixxi għal żieda fir-riskju tal-prekarjetà għal għadd sinifikanti ta' ħaddiema.

2. F'Diċembru 2013 il-Kummissjoni se tippreżenta proposta dwar qafas ta' kwalità għat-traineeships sabiex tiżgura li t-traineeships jagħtu liż-żgħażagħ esperjenza ta' xogħol ta' kwalità għolja taħt kundizzjonijiet sikuri.

3. Il-Kummissjoni qiegħda ssegwi mill-qrib l-implimentazzjoni tal-Istrateġija Ewropa 2020, inklużi l-miri għall-impjiegi u t-tnaqqis tal-faqar/l-esklużjoni soċjali. Il-valutazzjoni u r-rakkomandazzjonijiet tal-Kummissjoni fil-proċedura annwali tas-Semestru Ewropew jinkludu suġġetti bħall-pagi, it-tassazzjoni għal dawk li jaqilgħu paga baxxa, l-impjieg mhux standard u s-segmentazzjoni tas-suq tax-xogħol.

4. Ix-xogħol prekarju mhuwiex kunċett ġuridiku. Dan ġej minn taħlita ta' fatturi, inklużi s-sistema assistenzjali fis-seħħ u tas-sitwazzjoni tal-familja tal-ħaddiem, u għalhekk jista' jaffettwa lill-ħaddiema bi kwalunkwe forma ta' kuntratt ta' impjieg.

([1]) Id-Direttiva tal-Kunsill 97/81/KE tal-15 ta' Diċembru 1997 li tikkonċerna il-Ftehim Qafas dwar ix-xogħol part-time konkluż mill-UNICE, miċ-CEEP u mill-ETUC, ĠU L 14, 20.1.1998.

([2]) Id-Direttiva tal-Kunsill 1999/70/KE tat-28 ta' Ġunju 1999 dwar il-ftehim qafas dwar xogħol għal żmien fiss konkluż mill-ETUC, mill-UNICE u miċ-CEEP, ĠU L 175, 10.7.1999.

([3]) Id-Direttiva 2008/104/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tad-19 ta' Novembru 2008 dwar xogħol temporanju permezz ta' aġenzija, ĠU L 327, 5.12.2008.

([4]) Id-Direttiva 96/71/KE tal-Parlament Ewropew u tal-Kunsill tas-16 ta' Diċembru 1996 dwar l-impjieg ta' ħaddiema fil-qafas ta' prestazzjoni ta' servizzi, ĠU L 18, 21.1.1997.

([5]) Il-"Green Paper li timmodernizza l-liġi dwar ix-xogħol biex taffaċċa l-isfidi tas-seklu 21" (COM(2006) 708 finali tat-22 Novembru 2006).

([6]) Il-proġett pilota "L-għall-inkoraġġiment tal-konverżjoni ta' xogħol b'kundizzjonijiet prekarji għal xogħol bi drittijiet" li twettaq fl-2011 u l-2012.

([7]) "Study on precarious work and social rights", 2012, imwettaq għall-Kummissjoni mil-London Metropolitan University.

5. Il-Kummissjoni qiegħda timplimenta l-Istrateġija tagħha għall-ugwaljanza bejn in-nisa u l-irġiel (2010-15) adottata fl-2010, li l-prijoritajiet tagħha huma marbutin parzjalment max-xogħol prekarju tan-nisa ([8]). Dalwaqt se tiġi ppubblikata analiżi ta' nofs it-terminu tal-Istrateġija, li se turi l-istat attwali għal kull azzjoni ppjanata.

([8]) Tnejn mill-hames prijoritajiet tal-Istrateġija (dwar l-indipendenza ekonomika u paga ugwali għall-istess xogħol u xogħol tal-istess valur) għandhom x'jaqsmu direttament max-xogħol prekarju tan-nisa.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009626/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Tackling the increase of precarious work in the EU

Precarious work has become a persistent issue and a threat to the stability of employment, to job security and to an appropriate level of payment.

Non-standard types of employment relationships result in workers being denied welfare benefits and employment protection. These issues have a bearing on EU labour law and thus exclude a substantial number of workers whose employment contracts do not provide for the standards set out in EU labour law.

1. What specific proposals is the Commission considering to put forward in order to bring the existing legal framework in the area of employment into line with the new reality of non-standard employment relationships?

2. Can the Commission publish a programme of action with regard to the protection of those groups most at risk from precarious work, such as women, students and young workers?

3. Can the Commission provide a multiannual programme which would incorporate a timeline of targets aimed at substantially reducing precarious work in the EU?

4. Can the Commission provide a legal definition of precarious work?

5. Can the Commission provide information as to what follow-up action was pursued after the European Parliament Resolution of 19 October 2010 on precarious women workers (2010/2018/INI)?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(19 September 2013)

1. EU directives cover several types of non-standard employment relationships, notably in the field of part-time work ([1]), fixed-term work ([2]), temporary agency work ([3]) and posting of workers ([4]). The Commission monitors their implementation by the Member States and reviews them regularly to check whether they need to be updated.

The Commission has been tackling the issue of precarious work in the wake of its 2006 Green Paper ([5]). In the framework of a pilot project ([6]), a study ([7]) found that the growth of non-standard forms of employment contributes to increasing the risk of precariousness for a significant number of workers.

2. In December 2013 the Commission will present a proposal on a quality framework for traineeships to help ensure that traineeships provide young people with high-quality work experience under safe conditions.

3. The Commission closely monitors the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, including the targets for employment and reducing poverty/social exclusion. The Commission's assessment and recommendations in the yearly European Semester procedure include such topics as wages, taxation of low-income earners, non-standard employment and segmentation of the labour market.

4. Precarious work is not a legal concept. It arises from a combination of factors, including the welfare system in place and the worker's family situation, and thus can affect workers with any form of employment contract.

([1]) Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the framework agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC, OJ L 14, 20.1.1998.
([2]) Council Directive 1999/70/EC of 28 June 1999 concerning the framework agreement on fixed-term work concluded by ETUC, UNICE and CEEP, OJ L 175, 10.7.1999.
([3]) Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work, OJ L 327, 5.12.2008.
([4]) Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, OJ L 18, 21.1.1997.
([5]) Green Paper 'Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century' (COM(2006) 708 final of 22 November 2006).
([6]) Pilot project 'Encourage conversion of precarious work into work with rights' carried out in 2011 and 2012.
([7]) Study on precarious work and social rights, 2012, carried out for the Commission by London Metropolitan University.

5. The Commission has been implementing its Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-15) adopted in 2010, the priorities of which relate partly to precarious work by women ([8]). A mid-term review of the strategy, giving the state of play for each action planned, is to be published soon.

([8]) Two of the strategy's five priorities (on equal economic independence and equal pay for equal work and work of equal value) relate directly to precarious work by women.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-009627/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: Il-finanzjament ta' proġetti dwar il-politika soċjali fl-UE

L-Unjoni Ewropea adottat strateġija għall-UE kollha sabiex 20 miljun ċittadin tal-UE jinħarġu mill-faqar sal-2020. Id-data turi li n-numru ta' persuni f'riskju ta' faqar żdied fl-UE matul dawn l-aħħar snin. Wieħed mill-komponenti ewlenin ta' din l-istrateġija kien l-istabbiliment tal-Pjattaforma Ewropea kontra l-Faqar u l-Esklużjoni Soċjali (EPAP).

Skont studju reċenti tal-COPE ([1]), madankollu, dan il-korp mhux qed jingħata r-riżorsi li jeħtieġ sabiex jilħaq il-potenzjal tiegħu. Barra minn hekk, l-EPAP mhix involuta fl-abbozzar tal-politiki ewlenin tal-UE li jirregolaw il-prijoritajiet tal-Istati Membri. Dawn jinkludu stħarriġ annwali dwar it-tkabbir u politiki ta' riforma nazzjonali. Dan, flimkien mal-fatt li l-EPAP m'għandhiex membri speċifiċi għall-Istati Membri fl-istruttura tagħha, iżid mal-kwistjoni li l-korp ma jingħatax l-importanza li tistħoqqlu.

Liema miżuri speċifiċi se tieħu l-Kummissjoni matul it-12-il xahar li ġejjin biex tiżgura li:

1. il-politika soċjali tingħata importanza ugwali daqs il-politika fiskali u ekonomika fl-indirizzar tal-kriżi ekonomika;

2. l-EPAP tingħata r-riżorsi meħtieġa biex tissodisfa l-objettivi ddikjarati tagħha?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur László Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(21 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Il-Pjattaforma Ewropea kontra l-Faqar u l-Esklużjoni Soċjali ([2]) tappoġġa l-ilħiq tal-mira ewlenija ta' Ewropa 2020 għat-tnaqqis b'20 miljun tan-nies fil-faqar sal-2020. Fiha 64 inizjattiva tal-Kummissjoni biex jiġu appoġġati l-Istati Membri li għandhom ir-responsabbiltà ewlenija għat-tnaqqis tal-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali. Dan l-appoġġ jinkludi l-involviment qawwi tal-partijiet interessati.

Bil-Pakkett tal-Investiment Soċjali ([3]), il-Kummissjoni tat impetu mġedded lill-ġlieda lill-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali bħala parti mill— modernizzazzjoni tal-politiki soċjali permezz ta' riformi strutturali, iż-żieda fl-effikaċja u fl-effiċjenza u enfasi akbar fuq l-investiment soċjali. Rakkomandazzjoni dwar il-ġlieda kontra l-faqar tat-tfal hija parti mill-pakkett. Diġà fis-Semestru Ewropew tal-2013, l-approċċ tal-investiment soċjali rriżulta f'żieda fin-numru ta' rakkomandazzjonijiet ta' politika soċjali. ([4]) Aktar reċentement, bil-ħsieb li tissaħħaħ il-koordinazzjoni fl-oqsma soċjali u tal-impjiegi, il-Kummissjoni adottat komunikazzjoni dwar it-tisħiħ tad-dimensjoni soċjali tal-UEM. ([5])

Fir-rigward tar-riżorsi disponibbli, tinġibed l-attenzjoni tal-Onorevoli Membru lejn il-fatt li l-qafas finanzjarju multiannwali li jmiss mistenni jiddedika sehem akbar tal-finanzjament tal-politika ta' koeżjoni biex il-Fond Soċjali Ewropew jappoġġa l-investiment fil-kapital uman. Dan huwa kkumplimentat mill-Fond Ewropew għall-Iżvilupp Reġjonali fil-qasam tas-saħħa, il-kura tat-tfal, l-akkomodazzjoni u l-infrastrutturil tal-edukazzjoni. Il-programm EASI ([6]) sejjer barra minn hekk jappoġġa l-kondiviżjoni tal-aħjar prassi, il-bini tal-kapaċità u l-ittestjar tal-innovazzjonijiet soċjali, filwaqt li l-Fond il-ġdid għal Għajnuna Ewropea għall-Persuni l-Aktar fil-Bżonn se jinidrizza d-deprivazzjoni tal-ikel, il-problema tal-persuni mingħajr dar u l-privazzjoni materjali tat-tfal.

([1]) "The European Arenas of Active Inclusion Policies": (http://cope-research.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/The_European_Arenas_of_Active_Inclusion_Policies.pdf) minn Chiara Agostini, Sebastiano Sabato u Matteo Jessoula,Università ta' Milan, Dipartiment tax-Xjenzi Soċjali u Politiċi (Mejju 2013).
([2]) "Il-Pjattaforma Ewropea kontra l-Faqar u l-Esklużjoni Soċjali: Qafas Ewropew għall-koeżjoni soċjali u territorjali" (COM(2010) 758 finali).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=mt&newsId=1807&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news
([4]) Koperti l-inklużjoni, it-tnaqqis tal-faqar, il-pensjonijiet, is-saħħa u l-kura fit-tul.
([5]) COM(2013) 690 tat-2.10.2013.
([6]) L-Impjiegi u l-Innovazzjoni Soċjali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009627/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Funding of social policy projects in the EU

The European Union has adopted an EU-wide strategy in order to bring 20 million EU citizens out of poverty by 2020. Data show that the number of people at risk of poverty has risen within the EU over recent years. One of the main components of this strategy was the setting-up of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAP).

According to a recent COPE study ([1]), however, this body is not being granted the resources it requires in order to realise its potential. Moreover, the EPAP is not involved in the drafting of the major EU policies which govern Member States' priorities. These include annual growth surveys and national reform policies. This, combined with the fact that the EPAP has no Member State-specific members within its structure, adds to the issue of the body not being given the importance that it deserves.

What specific measures will the Commission be taking during the next 12 months to ensure that:

1. social policy is put on a par with fiscal and economic policy in dealing with the economic crisis;

2. the EPAP is provided with the resources required to fulfil its stated objectives?

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

The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion ([2]) supports meeting the Europe 2020 headline target for reducing the number of people in poverty by 20 million by 2020. It contains 64 Commission initiatives to support Member States which have the primary responsibility for reducing poverty and social exclusion. This support includes a strong stakeholder involvement.

With the Social Investment Package ([3]), the Commission has given renewed impetus to fighting poverty and social exclusion as part of the modernisation of social policies through structural reforms, the increase in effectiveness and efficiency and a stronger emphasis on social investment. A recommendation on fighting child poverty is part of the package. Already in the 2013 European Semester the social investment approach resulted in an increase in the number of social policy recommendations ([4]). Most recently, with a view to reinforcing coordination in the employment and social areas, the Commission adopted a communication on strengthening the social dimension of the EMU ([5]).

Concerning the resources available, the Honourable Member's attention is drawn to the fact that the next multi-annual financial framework is expected to devote a greater share of cohesion policy funding to the European Social Fund supporting human capital investment. This is complemented by the European Regional Development Fund in the field of health, childcare, housing and education infrastructures. The EASI ([6]) programme will furthermore support the sharing of best practices, capacity-building and testing of social innovations while the new Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived addresses food deprivation, homelessness and material deprivation of children.

([1]) 'The European Arenas of Active Inclusion Policies' (http://cope-research.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/The_European_Arenas_of_Active_Inclusion_Policies.pdf) by Chiara Agostini, Sebastiano Sabato and Matteo Jessoula, University of Milan, Department of Social and Political Sciences (May 2013).
([2]) 'The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: A European framework for social and territorial cohesion' (COM(2010) 758 final).
([3]) http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1044&langId=en&newsId=1807&moreDocuments=yes&tableName=news
([4]) Covering inclusion, poverty reduction, pensions, health and long-term care.
([5]) COM(2013) 690 of 2.10.2013.
([6]) Employment and Social Innovation.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-009628/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: L-użu ta' indikaturi tal-faqar differenti mill-Istati Membri

Il-mira tal-Ewropa 2020 tal-Kummissjoni hija ċara ħafna: 20 miljun persuna jridu jinħarġu mill-faqar sas-sena 2020. Għalkemm il-mira hija ċara, l-Istati Membri adottaw indikaturi tal-faqar differenti, u dan juri nuqqas ta' uniformità fl-istadju tal-implimentazzjoni tal-politika.

Fid-dawl ta' dan t'hawn fuq, liema miżuri se tieħu l-Kummissjoni biex tindirizza din il-kwistjoni u biex tgħin fit-tiswiħ tal-istadju tal-implimentazzjoni tal-istrateġija Ewropea?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Andor f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(16 ta' Ottubru 2013)

L-Istati Membri jistabbilixxu l-miri tagħhom abbażi ta' dawk l-indikaturi li jqiesu l-aktar xierqa u jikkunsidraw l-pożizzjonijiet inizjali relattivi tagħhom u ċ-ċirkostanzi nazzjonali, fir-rigward tal-prinċipju tas-sussidjarjetà. L-Istati Membri jridu jirrappurtaw dwar il-progress lejn il-mira tagħhom fil-Programmi Nazzjonali ta' Riforma. Il-progress huwa ssorveljat mill-qrib mill-Kummissjoni bħala appoġġ biex tintlaħaq il-mira tat-tnaqqis tal-faqar ġenerali fl-Ewropa.

Il-Kummissjoni ħadet diversi azzjonijiet biex jitnaqqsu l-faqar u l-esklużjoni soċjali b'mod partikolari fil-kuntest tad-dimensjoni tat-tkabbir inklużiv tal-istrateġija Ewropa 2020. Mill-bidu tal-Istrateġija fl-2010 kien hemm żieda fir-Rakkomandazzjonijiet Speċifiċi għall-Pajjiż (CSRs) ([1]) maħruġa dwar l-isfidi tal-faqar u l-esklużjoni. Dan jirrifletti monitoraġġ aktar intensiv tal-politiki soċjali tal-Istati Membri u jenfasizza l-importanza li l-Istati Membri jieħdu miżuri konkreti sabiex jintlaħqu l-miri tal-faqar tal-UE u nazzjonali.

Il-Pakkett ta' Investiment Soċjali (SIP) ta' Frar 2013 joffri gwida dwar kif jistgħu jitjiebu l-prestazzjoni u l-effiċjenza tal-politiki soċjali nazzjonali. Bħala parti mill-Pakkett, ir-Rakkomandazzjoni dwar l-Investiment fit-Tfal jagħti spinta ġdida lill-ġlieda kontra l-faqar fost it-tfal u jiġi żgurat il-benessri tagħhom. Il-fondi tal-UE huma strumentali fl-appoġġ tal-implimentazzjoni tas-SIP. Fl-aħħar nett, il-Komunikazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni ([2]) tat-2 ta' Ottubru 2013 dwar id-dimensjoni soċjali tal-EMU titlob li jkun hemm iktar tiswiħ tas-sorveljanza tal-impjiegi u l-iżviluppi soċjali.

([1]) Sebgħa minn 42 CSRs maħruġa dwar l-Inklużjoni Soċjali u l-Ħarsien Soċjali.
([2]) Ara http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/10/pdf/20131002_1-emu_en.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009628/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Use of different poverty indicators by Member States

The Commission's Europe 2020 poverty target is very clear: 20 million people have to be brought out of poverty by the year 2020. Although the target is clear, Member States have adopted different poverty indicators, showing a lack of uniformity in the policy's implementation stage.

In light of the above, what measures will the Commission take to address this issue and to help strengthen the implementation stage of the European strategy?

Answer given by Mr Andor on behalf of the Commission
(16 October 2013)

Member States set their targets on the basis of what they considered the most appropriate indicators and taking account of their relative starting positions and national circumstances, in respect of the principle of subsidiarity. Member States have to report on progress towards their their target in the National Reform Programmes. Progress is closely monitored by the Commission to support reaching the overall European poverty reduction target.

The Commission has taken various actions to reduce poverty and social exclusion notably within the context of the inclusive growth dimension of the Europe 2020 strategy. Since the start of the strategy in 2010 there is an increase in Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) ([1]) issued on poverty and exclusion challenges. This reflects a more intensive monitoring of Member States social policies and underlines the importance for Member States to take tangible measures to achieve the EU and national poverty targets.

The Social Investment Package (SIP) of February 2013 gives guidance on how to improve the performance and efficiency of national social policies. As part of the Package, the recommendation on Investing in Children gives a new impetus to combatting child poverty and ensuring their well-being. EU funds are instrumental in supporting the implementation of the SIP. Finally, the Commission Communication ([2]) of 2 October 2013 on the social dimension of the EMU calls for a further strengthening of the surveillance of employment and social developments.

([1]) Seven out of forty two CSRs issued on Social Inclusion and Social protection.
([2]) See http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/10/pdf/20131002_1-emu_en.pdf

(České znění)

Otázka k písemnému zodpovězení E-009629/13
Komisi
Andrea Češková (ECR)
(27. srpna 2013)

Předmět: Rostoucí hrozby antimikrobiální rezistence – oddělení předpisu od prodeje veterinárních léků

Zpráva o mikrobiální výzvě – rostoucí hrozby antimikrobiální rezistence (P7_TA(2012)0483) ze dne 15. 11. 2012 spadající do působnosti Výboru pro životní prostředí, veřejné zdraví a bezpečnost potravin uvádí, že je třeba zavést účinná opatření na snížení antimikrobiální rezistence například oddělením práva předepisovat antimikrobiální látky od práva tyto látky prodávat, a odstranit tak zištnou pobídku pro jejich předepisování.

V této souvislosti si dovoluji položit Komisi následující otázky a požádat o jejich individuální zodpovězení:

1. Mohla by Komise objasnit, zda se jedná pouze o antibiotika (antimikrobiální látky) nebo zda půjde o všechny léky?

2. Mohla by Komise vysvětlit, kým budou veterinární léky prodávány, zda lékárnou nebo jinou pověřenou či nově vytvořenou organizací, jestliže tyto léky nemůže prodávat veterinář?

3. Mohla by Komise objasnit, zda se toto oddělení předpisu od prodeje bude vztahovat pouze na velkochov hospodářských zvířat nebo i na majitele domácích zvířat?

Odpověď komisaře Borga jménem Komise
(4. října 2013)

Komise si dovoluje odkázat váženou paní poslankyni na svoji odpověď na otázky k písemnému zodpovězení E-003124/2013 a E-002862/2013 ([1]).

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

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009629/13
to the Commission
Andrea Češková (ECR)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Rising threats from antimicrobial resistance — separation of the right to prescribe and the right to sell veterinary medicines

The report on the microbial challenge — rising threats from antimicrobial resistance (P7_TA(2012)0483) of 15 November 2012, for which the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety is responsible, states that it is necessary to take effective measures to reduce antimicrobial resistance, for example by separating the right to prescribe from the right to sell antimicrobials, thereby eradicating economic incentives to prescribe.

In this connection, I should like to ask the Commission to provide an answer to each of the following questions:

1. Could the Commission clarify whether this will apply only to antibiotics (antimicrobial agents) or to all medicines?

2. Could the Commission explain who is to sell veterinary medicines — pharmacies or some other kind of authorised or newly created organisation — if veterinarians are no longer to be allowed to sell them?

3. Could the Commission clarify whether this separation of the right to prescribe and the right to sell will apply only to the factory farming of livestock or also to the owners of domestic animals?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to written questions E-003124/2013 and E-002862/2013 ([1]).

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

(Dansk udgave)

Forespørgsel til skriftlig besvarelse E-009630/13
til Kommissionen
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(27. august 2013)

Om: E-numre 153 og 171, som ofte bruges til at farve lakrids sort, indeholder nanopartikler

Det har vist sig, at de to E-numre 153 og 171, som ofte bruges til at farve lakrids sort, indeholder nanopartikler. Det er videnskabeligt bevist, at nanopartikler er skadelige for især lungerne ved indånding. Og nu har danske forskere lavet dyreforsøg, som peger på, at indtagelse af nogle typer nanopartikler kan skade leveren, lungerne og kredsløbet.

Mit spørgsmål til Kommissionen er derfor:

Kan det virkelig være lovligt at bruge disse E-numre, som potentielt kan være skadelige for mennesker at indtage? Kan Kommissionen garantere de europæiske forbrugeres sikkerhed?

Svar afgivet på Kommissionens vegne af Tonio Borg
(4. oktober 2013)

For at kunne beskytte menneskers sundhed bør anvendelsen af tilsætningsstoffer i fødevarer gøres betinget af en sikkerhedsvurdering, før de markedsføres i EU. Derudover har Kommissionen iværksat et program, som går ud på, at Den Europæiske Fødevaresikkerhedsautoritet (»EFSA«) skal genevaluere sikkerheden ved de fødevaretilsætningsstoffer, der allerede var godkendt i EU inden den 20. januar 2009 ([1]). Tilstedeværelsen af nanopartikler og deres virkning udgør en integreret del af EFSA's sikkerhedsvurdering af alle fødevaretilsætningsstoffer.

EFSA genevaluerede sikkerheden ved vegetabilsk kulstof (E 153) i 2012 ([2]). Konklusionen var, at det kan udelukkes, at der forekommer nanopartikler i vegetabilsk kulstof i de produkter, der allerede er på markedet. Hvad angår titandioxid (E 171), undersøger EFSA de foreliggende oplysninger for at kunne afgive en videnskabelig udtalelse inden den 31. december 2015.

Kommissionen følger genevalueringsprogrammet nøje, og hvis det bliver nødvendigt, vil der blive truffet passende foranstaltninger på baggrund af resultaterne i den videnskabelige udtalelse.

([1]) EUT L 80 af 26.3.2010, s. 19.
([2]) EFSA Journal 2012;10(4):2592.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009630/13
to the Commission
Christel Schaldemose (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Substances E 153 and E 171, often used as colourings in liquorice, contain nanoparticles

It has been established that substances E 153 and E 171, often used as colourings in liquorice, contain nanoparticles. It has been scientifically proven that nanoparticles, when inhaled, are harmful to the lungs in particular. Danish researchers have now carried out animal experiments which indicate that ingesting some types of nanoparticle can be harmful to the liver, lungs and circulatory system.

Would the Commission therefore answer the following questions.

Can it really be lawful to make use of those E number substances, which, if ingested, may be harmful to human health? Can the Commission guarantee the safety of European consumers?

Answer given by Mr Borg on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

In order to protect human health, the safety of additives for use in foodstuffs for human consumption must be assessed before they are placed on the Union market. In addition, the Commission set up a programme for the re-evaluation, by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), of the safety of food additives that were already permitted in the Union before 20 January 2009 ([1]). The presence of nanomaterials and their impact constitute an integral part of the safety assessment for all food additives carried out by EFSA.

EFSA re-evaluated the safety of vegetable carbon (E 153) in 2012 ([2]). It was concluded that the presence of nanoparticles in vegetable carbon products currently on the market can be excluded. As for titanium dioxide (E 171) EFSA is reviewing the available information to provide its scientific opinion by 31 December 2015.

The Commission is closely following the re-evaluation programme and if needed, appropriate measures will be taken based on the outcomes indicated in the scientific opinions.

([1]) OJ L 80, 26.3.2010, p. 19.
([2]) EFSA Journal 2012;10(4):2592.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009631/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(27 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ηλεκτρική διασύνδεση της νησιωτικής Ελλάδας

Με αφορμή το πρόσφατο ηλεκτρικό black out στο νησί της Σαντορίνης αναδείχθηκε το πρόβλημα της ελλιπούς ηλεκτροδότησης των ελληνικών νησιών. Καθίσταται πλέον αναγκαία η υποθαλάσσια ηλεκτρική διασύνδεση των ελληνικών νησιών. Αρκετά από τα ελληνικά νησιά έχουν ήδη υποβάλει αιτήσεις για την ένταξή τους στα «Έργα Κοινού Ενδιαφέροντος» (Projects of Common Interest) της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Περιφερειακή Πολιτική, η οποία έχει και σαν στόχο της τη χρηματοδότηση της ανάπτυξης και διασύνδεσης των απομακρυσμένων περιοχών της Ένωσης, μπορεί να συμβάλει στην κάλυψη του κόστους της ηλεκτροδότησης το οποίο αυτή τη στιγμή είναι αβάσταχτο για την ελληνική κυβέρνηση, λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης.

Υπό αυτές τις συνθήκες, θα μπορούσε να εξεταστεί θετικά η ένταξη όλων αυτών των αιτήσεων στη κοινοτική χρηματοδότηση;

Θα ήταν μια σημαντική συμβολή της Επιτροπής στη προσπάθεια που καταβάλλει η ελληνική κυβέρνηση για την ανάπτυξη του τουρισμού.

Απάντηση του κ. Oettinger εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(21 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή αναγνωρίζει τη σπουδαιότητα της ασφαλούς ηλεκτροδότησης των ελληνικών νησιών και τις ιδιαίτερες προκλήσεις λόγω της οικονομικής κρίσης στην Ελλάδα. Για αρκετά ελληνικά έργα διασύνδεσης έχουν υποβληθεί αιτήσεις με σκοπό την ένταξή τους στα «Έργα Κοινού Ενδιαφέροντος». Τα εν λόγω έργα, τα οποία εμφανίζουν διασυνοριακές επιπτώσεις σε τουλάχιστον δύο κράτη μέλη, επιβεβαιώθηκαν ως έργα «κοινού ενδιαφέροντος» από τα κράτη μέλη και την Επιτροπή στις 24 Ιουλίου 2013.

Το κατά πόσο τα έργα κοινού ενδιαφέροντος, ή οποιοδήποτε άλλο έργο διασύνδεσης των ελληνικών νησιών, θα λάβουν οικονομική στήριξη μέσω της διευκόλυνσης «Συνδέοντας την Ευρώπη» ή μέσω των διαρθρωτικών ταμείων θα αποτελέσει αντικείμενο περαιτέρω αξιολόγησης, βάσει αντικειμενικών κριτηρίων που καθορίζονται στους σχετικούς κανονισμούς.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009631/13
to the Commission
Niki Tzavela (EFD)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Electricity link with the Greek islands

The recent electricity blackout on the island of Santorini has highlighted the fragile electricity supply situation on the Greek islands. It is now necessary to supply them with electricity through submarine cables. A number of Greek islands have already applied to be included in the EU's 'Projects of Common Interest'.

The European Regional Policy, whose objective is to fund the development and link-up of remote areas of the Union, could contribute to the cost of supplying them with electricity, which at the moment is beyond the means of the Greek Government due to the economic crisis.

Under these conditions, could all these applications for EU funding be examined in a favourable light?

If so, the Commission would be making a significant contribution to efforts being undertaken by the Greek Government to develop tourism.

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

The Commission acknowledges the importance of a secure electricity supply on the Greek islands and the particular challenges due to the economic crisis in Greece. Several Greek interconnection projects have been submitted to apply for the status of 'project of common interest'. Those projects demonstrating a cross-border impact on at least two Member States have been confirmed as being of 'common interest' by Member States and the Commission on 24 July 2013.

Whether the projects of common interest, or any other projects interconnecting the Greek islands, will receive EU financial support through the Connecting Europe Facility or the Structural Funds, will be subject to further assessment, on the basis of objective criteria set out in the relevant regulations.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-009632/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: It-tnaqqis tal-promozzjoni tal-alkohol fl-isport (2)

Nirreferi għall-mistoqsija Parlamentari E-007501/2013 tas-26 ta' Ġunju 2013 u għar-risposta mogħtija mill-Kummissarju Dr Tonio Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni Ewropea nhar l-14 ta' Awwissu 2013.

Tenut kont li l-mistoqsija Parlamentari E-007501/2013 kienet intiża sabiex tittratta s-suġġett tar-reklamar ta' prodotti alkoħolici fil-kamp sportiv, ninsab sorpriża li fir-risposta tagħha l-Kummissjoni naqset li tagħmel riferenza għal din it-tema. Għaldaqstant, mill-ġdid nistieden lill-Kummissjoni Ewropea sabiex tinforma lil dan il-Parlament dwar:

1. X'inhuma l-ħsibijiet tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea fir-rigward tar-riklamar ta' prodotti alkoħolici waqt, u/jew sponsorizzazzjoni ta', avvenimenti sportivi minn ditti li jbigħu prodotti alkoħoliċi?

2. Taqbel il-Kummissjoni Ewropea li avvenimenti sportivi li jsiru kemm fost l-Istati Membri tal-Unjoni Ewropea u/jew fuq skala Ewropea jkunu sponsorizzati minn u/jew jagħtu spazju għar-reklamar ta' prodotti alkoħoliċi?

3. Taqbel il-Kummissjoni Ewropea li tali sponsorizzar u/jew reklamar għandhom l-effett li jħallu impronta fuq iż-żgħażagħ b'tali mod li jagħmluha aktar faċli għalihom li jitħajru jikkonsmaw prodotti alkoħoliċi?

4. Taqbel il-Kummissjoni Ewropea li prodotti alkoħoliċi għandhom jirċievu l-istess trattament bħal dawk tat-tabakk fejn jidħol ir-reklamar u l-isponsorizzar ta' avvenimenti sportivi?

5. X'miżuri biħsiebha tniedi l-Kummissjoni Ewropea — u f'liema temp ta' żmien — sabiex tiżgura li avvenimenti sportivi ma jibqgħux jiġu użati bħala vetrina għall-prodotti alkoħoliċi fl-Unjoni Ewropea?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sur Borg f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(21 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Il-konsum perikoluż u ta' ħsara tal-alkohol għandu impatt kbir fuq is-saħħa pubblika. Ir-reklamar tal-alkohol iżid il-probabilità li l-adoloxxenti jibdew jużaw l-alkohol u jixorbu iktar jekk diġà jixorbu l-alkohol. ([1])

Il-prevenzjoni tal-ħsara relatata mal-alkohol hija l-għan ewlieni tal-istrateġija tal-alkohol tal-UE. Madankollu, huwa f'idejn l-Istati Membri li jiddeċiedu dwar il-livell ta' protezzjoni u l-miżuri li għandhom jintużaw biex jipproteġu s-saħħa pubblika. Permezz tal-Istrateġija dwar l-Alkohol ([2]), il-Kummissjoni tista' ttejjeb il-kooperazzjoni bejn l-Istati Membri, tappoġġa l-iskambju tal— informazzjoni, pereżempju dwar l-aħjar prattiki, u tappoġġa lill-Istati Membri fl-isforzi tagħhom.

Filwaqt li l-Kummissjoni ma għandha l-ebda pjan bħalissa għal azzjoni regolatorja f'dan il-qasam, issegwi mill-qrib u tħeġġeġ it-twettiq ta' azzjonijiet awtoregolatorji mill-partijiet interessati. Hemm bosta impenji volontarji dwar ir-reklamar minn membri tal-Forum Ewropew dwar l-Alkohol u s-Saħħa.

Id-Direttiva 2010/13/UE ([3]) tiddikjara li komunikazzjonijiet kummerċjali awdjoviżivi għall-alkohol m'għandhomx ikunu mmirati lejn il-minuri u li r-reklamar fuq it-televiżjoni m'għandux jgħaqqad il-konsum tal-alkohol mal-prestazzjoni fiżika mtejba. Se jiġi varat studju fl-2013 ([4]) sabiex jiġi vvalutat l-impatt fuq il-minorenni ta' dawn il-komunikazzjonijiet kummerċjali rigward l-esponiment l-imġiba tal-konsumatur, u l-effikaċja tar-restrizzjonijiet tad-Direttiva.

Il-Kummissjoni se tkompli l-isforzi tagħha fi ħdan l-Istrateġija tal-Alkohol biex tnaqqas il-ħsara relatata mal-alkohol, u se tħeġġeġ lill-Istati Membri u lill-partijiet interessati jieħdu miżuri li jikkonċernaw ir-reklamar tal-alkohol, inklużi avvenimenti sportivi.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/Forum/docs/science_o01_en.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/mt/com/2006/com2006_0625mt01.pdf
([3]) Id-Direttiva dwar is-Servizzi tal-Media Awdjoviżiva, 2010/13/UE. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:095:0001:0024:MT:PDF
([4]) Kif imħabbar fl-ewwel rapport ta' implimentazzjoni tad-Direttiva dwar is-Servizzi tal-Midja Awdjoviżiva: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0203:FIN:MT:HTML

Il-Kummissjoni ser tuża wkoll id-djalogu strutturat tagħha fil-qasam tal-isport biex tindirizza r-riskji relatati mar-reklamar tal-alkoħol.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009632/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Reducing the promotion of alcohol in sport (2)

I refer to my Parliamentary Question E-007501/2013 of 26 June 2013 and to the answer given by Commissioner Dr Tonio Borg on behalf of the European Commission on 14 August 2013.

Given that Parliamentary Question E-007501/2013 was about advertising alcoholic products in the field of sport, it is surprising that the Commission failed to refer to this theme in its answer. I therefore call upon the Commission once again to provide Parliament with answers to the following questions:

1. What are the European Commission's views on the advertising of alcoholic products during, and/or sponsorship of, sporting events by firms marketing alcoholic products?

2. Does the European Commission find it acceptable that sporting events held in Member States of the European Union and/or at European level are sponsored by and/or offer advertising space to alcoholic products?

3. Does the European Commission agree that such sponsorship and/or advertising has an impact on the young, such that it makes it easier for them to be enticed to consume alcoholic products?

4. Does the European Commission agree that alcoholic products should be treated in the same way as tobacco products with regard to advertising in and sponsorship of sporting events?

5. What measures does the European Commission intend to take — and in what time frame — to ensure that sporting events are no longer treated as shop windows for alcoholic products in the European Union?

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

Harmful and hazardous alcohol consumption has a major impact on public health. Alcohol advertising increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol and to drink more if they are already using alcohol ([1]).

Prevention of alcohol-related harm is the main goal of the EU Alcohol Strategy. However, it is for the Member States to decide on the level of protection and the measures to use to protect public health. Through the Alcohol Strategy ([2]), the Commission can enhance cooperation between Member States, support exchange of information, e.g. on best practises, and support Member States in their efforts.

While the Commission has currently no plans for regulatory action in this area, it follows closely and encourages the performance of self-regulatory actions of stakeholders. There are many voluntary commitments on advertising by members of the European Alcohol and Health Forum.

Directive 2010/13/EU ([3]) states that audiovisual commercial communications for alcohol must not be aimed at minors and that TV advertising must not link the consumption of alcohol to enhanced physical performance. A study will be launched in 2013 ([4]) to assess the impact on minors of such commercial communications as regards exposure, consumption behaviour, and the effectiveness of the directive's restrictions.

The Commission will continue its efforts within the Alcohol Strategy to reduce alcohol related harm, and encourage Member States and stakeholders to take measures concerning alcohol advertising, including sporting events.

The Commission will also use its structured dialogue in the field of sport to address the risks related to alcohol advertising.

([1]) http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/Forum/docs/science_o01_en.pdf
([2]) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2006/com2006_0625en01.pdf
([3]) The 'Audiovisual Media Services Directive' 2010/13/EU: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:095:0001:0024:EN:PDF
([4]) As announced in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive's first implementation report: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0203:FIN:EN:HTML

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009633/13
to the Commission
Julie Girling (ECR)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Vehicle defects and accidents

In a press release issued on 2 July 2013 on vehicle roadworthiness (MEMO/13/637), the Transport Commissioner cites some statistics on vehicle defects and accidents:

'Technical defects contribute heavily to accidents. They are responsible for 6% of all car accidents, translating into 2 000 fatalities and many more injuries yearly. 8% of all motorcycle accidents are linked to technical defects.'

Could the Commission please provide the source of such statistics?

Answer given by Mr Kallas on behalf of the Commission
(4 October 2013)

Statistics relating to motorcycle accidents is taken from MAIDS' study
(http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/projects/maids.pdf)
as well as DEKRA's motorcycle report (http://www.dekra.com/en/home).

Data on car accidents is found in SWOV Fact sheet 'Periodic Vehicle Inspection of cars' (SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research, 2009; www.swov.nl/UK/Research/factsheets.htm).

The Commission also refers the Honourable Member to its answers to Written Question P-010344/2012 and E-011090/2012 ([1]).

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

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-009634/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: Sforzi biex jintemm il-bullying ta' persuni LGBT

Skont l-"istħarriġ tal-Unjoni Ewropea dwar il-leżbjani, l-omosesswali u l-persuni transġeneru" ("Stħarriġ tal-UE dwar l-LGBT"), li ġie ppubblikat reċentement mill-Aġenzija tal-Unjoni Ewropea għad-Drittijiet Fundamentali, ħafna ċittadini Ewropej LGBT huma esposti għal xi forma ta' bullying l-iskola, anke qabel l-età ta' 18-il sena. Fil-fatt, l-istħarriġ juri li żewġ terzi minn dawk li wieġbu, li kienu 93 000 b'kollox, u li kienu ġejjin mid-dinja kollha, ħbew is-sesswalità tagħhom waqt li kienu l-iskola. L-istħarriġ sab li "l fuq minn 80 % ta" dawk li wieġbu kienu xhieda ta' forma ta' bullying ta' wieħed jew waħda minn sħabhom l-iskola li kien(et) meqjusa bħala LBGT.

1. X'inhuma l-fehmiet tal-Kummissjoni dwar din id-data?

2. Liema miżuri konkreti se ddaħħal fis-seħħ il-Kummissjoni, u f'liema perjodi ta' żmien, sabiex tiżgura li l-kwistjoni tal-bullying relatat mal-orjentazzjoni sesswali tiġi indirizzata fi ħdan is-sistemi edukattivi tagħna?

3. Il-Kummissjoni tqis effettiv li tinbeda kampanja immedjata mal-UE kollha fl-iskejjel kollha, favur ir-rispett għall-oħrajn irrispettivament mill-orjentazzjoni sesswali u li fl-istess ħin tinforma lill-istudenti milquta dwar il-punti ta' kuntatt kollha disponibbli, biex b'hekk tippermettilhom jiżvelaw kwalunkwe sitwazzjoni abbużiva potenzjali u jieħdu passi biex jissewwew sitwazzjonijiet bħal dawn?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sinjura Reding f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(16 ta' Ottubru 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni hija konxja tar-riżultati tal-istħarriġ ippubblikat mill-Aġenzija tal-Unjoni Ewropea għad-Drittijiet Fundamentali dwar id-diskriminazzjoni kontra l-LGBT u ttenni l-impenn tagħha fil-ġlieda kontra l-omofobija u t-transfobija fil-forom kollha tagħhom fi ħdan is-setgħat mogħtija lilha mit-Trattati.

Il-Kummissjoni m'għandhiex il-kompetenza biex tindaħal fis-sistemi nazzjonali tal-edukazzjoni li għalihom l-Istati Membri huma responsabbli b'mod sħiħ. Il-Kummissjoni tappoġġja l-isforzi tal-Istati Membri biex tiġi miġġielda d-diskriminazzjoni abbażi tal-orjentament sesswali u l-identità tal-ġeneru, inkluż fl-iskejjel, billi torganizza seminars regolari dwar l-iskambju tal-aħjar prassi f'dan il-qasam.

It-tmien Forum Ewropew dwar id-drittijiet tat-tfal, organizzat mill-Kummissjoni fis-17 u t-18 ta' Diċembru 2013, se jiffoka, fost l-oħrajn, fuq l-irwol tas-sistemi għall-ħarsien tat-tfal li jħarsu lit-tfal mill-ibbuljar u l-ibbuljar ċibernetiku. F'workshop speċjali, il-parteċipanti se jiddiskutu l-kawżi sottostanti, inklużi l-ibbuljar relatat mal-orjentazzjoni sesswali, u r-reazzjonijiet possibbli tal-politika għal dan il-fenomenu.

Il-Kummissjoni tqiegħed ukoll fondi disponibbli permezz tal-programm PROGRESS kemm għall-Istati Membri kif ukoll għall-organizzazzjonijiet tas-soċjetà ċivili biex iwettqu attivitajiet għall-ġlieda kontra l-omofobija u t-transfobija, inklużi kampanji fl-iskejjel. Barra minn hekk il-programm Żgħażagħ fl-Azzjoni appoġġa aktar minn 150 proġett mill-2007, immirati għaż-żgħażagħ u marbuta mal-ġlieda kontra d-diskriminazzjoni bbażata fuq l-orjentazzjoni sesswali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009634/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Putting an end to LGBT bullying

According to the 'European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey' ('EU LGBT survey'), recently published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, many European LGBT persons are exposed to some form of bullying in school, even before reaching the age of 18. In fact, the survey shows that two thirds of the 93 000 respondents, who came from all over the world, hid their sexuality while they were at school. The survey found that over 80% of the respondents had witnessed some form of bullying of a schoolmate who had been perceived to be LGBT.

1. What are the Commission's views regarding these data?

2. What concrete measures will the Commission be putting into effect — and within what timeframes — in order to ensure that the issue of bullying related to sexual orientation is tackled within our educational systems?

3. Would the Commission consider it effective to embark upon an immediate EU-wide campaign in all schools, advocating respect for others irrespective of sexual orientation and at the same time informing affected students of all available points of contact, thereby enabling them to bring to light any potentially abusive situations and take steps to remedy such situations?

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

The Commission is aware of the results of the survey published by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency on LGBT discrimination and reiterates its commitment to fight homophobia and transphobia in all their forms within the powers conferred to it by the Treaties.

The Commission does not have competence to interfere in national education systems for which Member States are fully responsible. The Commission supports Member States' efforts to fight discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, including at schools, by organising regular good practice exchange seminars in this area.

The 8th European forum on the rights of the child, organised by the Commission on 17 and 18 December 2013, will focus among others on the role of child protection systems in protecting children from bullying and cyber bullying. In a dedicated workshop the participants will discuss the underlying causes, including bullying related to sexual orientation, and possible policy responses to this phenomenon.

The Commission also makes funding available through the PROGRESS programme to both Member States and civil society organisations to carry out activities to combat homophobia and transphobia, including campaigns at schools. Furthermore the Youth in Action programme has supported more than 150 projects since 2007, targeting young people and related to the fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

(Versión española)

Pregunta con solicitud de respuesta escrita E-009635/13
a la Comisión
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(27 de agosto de 2013)

Asunto: Opinión del Sr. Schultz sobre importaciones

El pasado 6 de julio, el Presidente del Parlamento Europeo, Martin Schulz, hizo unas declaraciones en Madrid en el contexto de la posible sanción de la Comisión al Reino de España por el «*tax lease*» de los astilleros.

Según cuenta la prensa, después de señalar que hay países que juegan con reglas sociales y ambientales diferentes a las europeas, el Sr. Schulz afirmó que la UE no debería importar esas condiciones y que habría que introducir unas «normas mínimas de salarios, medioambientales… aquellos que quieran comerciar con nosotros que respeten nuestras normas, porque los europeos somos más de 500 millones de personas».

Comparto plenamente las opiniones del Sr. Schulz

¿Comparte la Comisión la idea del Sr. Schulz de aplicar algún tipo de norma a importaciones de terceros países que no respetan los estándares salariales, sociales o medioambientales de la UE?

En caso afirmativo, ¿tiene la Comisión previsto estudiar la posible aplicación de alguna medida concreta?

¿Considera la Comisión que alguna medida de tipo fiscal podría ayudar a impulsar a terceros países a mejorar sus estándares sociales y ambientales?

Respuesta del Sr. De Gucht en nombre de la Comisión
(30 de octubre de 2013)

Los instrumentos internacionales, como los acuerdos multilaterales sobre medio ambiente (AMMA) o los convenios de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, establecen las normas sociales y ecológicas básicas y aplicables en todo el mundo. También representan una base común de las normas sociales y ecológicas adoptadas por la UE y sus Estados miembros.

La UE apoya la aplicación por todos los países, incluidos sus socios comerciales, de tales reglas y normas internacionales, y persigue este objetivo a través de sus diferentes políticas. De modo multilateral, la UE coopera activamente con los organismos internacionales pertinentes. De modo bilateral, utiliza diferentes canales de diálogo para fomentar la adhesión de terceros países a las normas laborales y ecológicas acordadas en todo el mundo. En relación con la política comercial, la Comisión pretende incorporar a los acuerdos comerciales con terceros países un capítulo sobre comercio y desarrollo sostenibles, que incluya el compromiso de respetar las normas laborales fundamentales y los AMMA. El respeto de estos principios también es un requisito del régimen especial de la UE en el marco del sistema de preferencias generalizadas (SPG+) para países en vías de desarrollo ([1]).

Además, la Comisión promueve el comportamiento responsable de las empresas haciendo que adopten las directrices y los principios de la responsabilidad social de las empresas, incluidas las prácticas laborales y ecológicas.

La Comisión considera que la UE ya dispone de una amplia combinación de políticas para abordar estas cuestiones de manera efectiva y no estudia actualmente otras medidas específicas al respecto.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2012/october/tradoc_150025.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009635/13
to the Commission
Iñaki Irazabalbeitia Fernández (Verts/ALE)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Mr Schulz' opinion on imports

While visiting Madrid on 6 July 2013, the President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, made a number of comments in context of the possibility that the Commission may penalise Spain for the tax lease system used applied to its shipyards.

According to press reports, Mr Schulz observed that some countries play according to different social and environmental rules from those used in Europe, adding that the EU should not import these conditions and that it is important to lay down minimum environmental and wage standards and that 'those who wish to trade with us should respect our standards, because we are over 500 million people here in Europe'.

I fully agree with Mr Schulz.

Does the Commission share Mr Schulz' view that some sort of rule should be applied to third countries which do not respect the EU's social, environmental and wage standards?

If so, does the Commission plan to assess the possibility of introducing a specific measure?

Does the Commission think that some form of tax measure could help encourage third countries to improve their social and environmental standards?

Answer given by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission
(30 October 2013)

International instruments, such as Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) or the International Labour Organisation Conventions do set core social and environmental standards and rules which apply worldwide. These also represent a common basis underlying social and environmental rules adopted by the EU and its Member States.

The EU supports the implementation by all countries, including its trading partners, of such international rules and standards, and pursues this objective through its different policies. At the multilateral level, the EU actively cooperates with the relevant international bodies. Bilaterally, it uses different channels of dialogue to foster adherence by third countries to internationally agreed labour and environmental rules. Concerning trade policy, the Commission seeks to include in trade agreements with third countries a trade and sustainable development chapter, including commitments to respect core labour standards and MEAs. Respect for such principles is also a requirement in the EU's special arrangement under the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) for developing countries ([1]).

In addition, the Commission promotes responsible business conduct, contributing to the uptake of internationally recognised Corporate Social Responsibility guidelines and principles, including on labour and environmental practices.

The Commission considers that the EU has a comprehensive policy mix to address these issues in an effective manner and is currently not working on additional specific measures in this regard.

([1]) http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2012/october/tradoc_150025.pdf

(Deutsche Fassung)

Anfrage zur schriftlichen Beantwortung E-009636/13
an die Kommission
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(27. August 2013)

Betrifft: Tracking von MAC-Nummern zu Werbezwecken

Im Sommer 2013 hat die Firma Renew in London zwölf Mistkübel mit digitalem Display mit „Tracking Software" der Firma Presence Orb aufgestellt. Die Mistkübel können dadurch die Media Acces Control Address, ein Identifizierungsmerkmal von Smartphones (MAC), feststellen und so Passantinnen und Passanten verfolgen, um personalisierte Werbung anzubieten. Das passiert ohne Wissen der Passantinnen und Passanten, die dafür nur ihr WiFi eingeschaltet haben müssen — sie werden darüber auch nicht informiert. Um verzeichnet zu werden, reicht es schon, einmal mit eingeschaltetem WiFi an einem der Mistkübel vorbei zu gehen (oder einem anderen Geschäft, Lokal etc., das diese Technologie verwendet). Hinsichtlich des Datenschutzes und Verbraucherschutzes für die europäischen BürgerInnen stellen sich dadurch mehrere Fragen.

1. Welchen Standpunkt vertritt die Kommission unter datenschutzrechtlichen Aspekten?

2. Welche Unternehmen (Modeketten, Fast-Food Restaurants, …) setzen die Technologie von Presence Orb oder vergleichbare Technologien ein?

3. Gibt es Pläne der Kommission, die „Cookie — Directive" (Richtlinie 2009/136/EG) zu überarbeiten, um Smartphone-Besitzerinnen und Besitzer vor unerwünschtem Tracking zu schützen?

4. Welchen Radius haben diese Gadgets? Können diese zum Beispiel auch Bürgerinnen und Bürger erfassen, die eine Wohnung in der Nähe eines Geräts haben, das mit der erwähnten Software ausgestattet ist?

5. Inwiefern ist diese Art von Tracking und Targeting Marketing (ohne Zustimmung und Wissen der Verbraucher und Verbraucherinnen) mit EU-Recht vereinbar?

Antwort von Frau Kroes im Namen der Kommission
(11. Oktober 2013)

Wenn die Technik mit der Erhebung personenbezogener Daten verbunden ist oder Auswirkungen auf den Schutz der Privatsphäre hat, muss sie den nationalen Rechtsvorschriften zur Umsetzung der Datenschutzrichtlinie bzw. der Datenschutzrichtlinie für elektronische Kommunikation (95/46/EG und 2002/58/EG) entsprechen. Die Artikel-29-Datenschutzgruppe hat bestätigt, dass eine Kombination aus eindeutiger MAC-Nummer und dem berechneten Standort des WiFi-Zugangs zu den personenbezogenen Daten zählt [1]. Nach Artikel 9 der Datenschutzrichtlinie für elektronische Kommunikation setzt die Erhebung von Standortdaten die Zustimmung des Nutzers voraus. Die Kommission kann keine Schlussfolgerungen darüber ziehen, ob die Nutzer von personalisierter Werbung profitieren.

Der Kommission liegen keine Informationen über die Zahl der Unternehmen vor, die die Technik von Presence Orb oder vergleichbare Technologien nutzen.

Nach Artikel 5 Absatz 3 der Datenschutzrichtlinie für elektronische Kommunikation ist das „Tracking" durch Speicherung von Informationen (z. B. einer Kennung) oder den Zugriff auf Informationen, die auf Endgeräten wie Mobiltelefonen gespeichert sind, nur dann gestattet, wenn der Nutzer darüber informiert wurde und seine Zustimmung erteilt hat. Diese Vorschrift, die im Jahr 2009 aktualisiert wurde, gewährleistet ein hohes Datenschutzniveau.

Bei der Bestimmung der Reichweite einzelner Geräte spielen verschiedene Faktoren eine Rolle. Sie liegt jedoch in Gebäuden in der Regel zwischen 20 und 40 m und kann im Freien größer sein.

Wie im ersten Absatz erwähnt, müssen gezielte Marketing-Maßnahmen dieser Art den einschlägigen Rechtsvorschriften für den Datenschutz und den Schutz der Privatsphäre entsprechen.

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[1] Stellungnahme 13/2011 vom 16. Mai 2011 zu Geolokalisierungsdiensten bei intelligenten Mobilgeräten.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009636/13
to the Commission
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Tracking MAC addresses for advertising purposes

In summer 2013 the firm Renew in London installed tracking software from the company Presence Orb in 12 rubbish bins equipped with LCD displays. Using the media access control (MAC) address embedded in smartphones as an identification code, these rubbish bins can detect passersby and track them so as to display customised adverts. As all passersby need to have done is to have their Wi-Fi turned on, they are tracked without their knowledge — and nor are they notified of it. A person only has to walk once past one of these rubbish bins (or any one of the firms, premises, etc. that use this technology) with their Wi-Fi turned on for the MAC number to be recorded. This raises several questions in regard to data protection and consumer protection for EU citizens.

1. What is the Commission's view of the data protection aspects here?

2. Which firms (fashion chains, fast food restaurants, etc.) use Presence Orb's technology or similar technologies?

3. Does the Commission plan to revise the 'Cookie Directive' (Directive 2009/136/EC) in order to protect smartphone users from unwelcome tracking?

4. What is the radius of these gadgets? Could they, for example, capture data from members of the public who live near to a device equipped with the aforementioned software?

5. To what extent is tracking and targeting marketing of this kind (without the consumer's consent or knowledge) compatible with EC law?

Answer given by Ms Kroes on behalf of the Commission
(11 October 2013)

If this technology involves the collection of personal data or impinges upon individual's privacy, it must comply with the national provisions implementing the data protection directive and ePrivacy Directives respectively (95/46/EC and 2002/58/EC). The article 29 Working Party has confirmed that the combination of the unique MAC address and the calculated location of a WiFi access point should be treated as personal data ([1]). Article 9 of the ePrivacy Directive requires user consent to collect his/her location data. The Commission is not in a position to infer whether users may find benefits from customised adverts.

The Commission does not have information about the number of companies that use Presence Orb's or equivalent technology.

Article 5.3 of the ePrivacy Directive requires users' informed consent to track users by either storing information (such as an identifier) or accessing information stored in their terminal equipment, including mobile phones. This provision, updated in 2009, provides a high level of privacy protection.

Different factors play a role in determining the range of different devices. However, as a general rule ranges are between 20 and 40 meters indoors and may be greater outdoors.

Targeting marketing of this kind must comply with the relevant data protection and privacy legislation, as outlined in the first paragraph.

([1]) Opinion 13/2011 on Geolocation services on smart mobile devices, adopted on 16th May 2011.

(Versão portuguesa)

Pergunta com pedido de resposta escrita E-009637/13
ao Conselho
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) e Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(27 de agosto de 2013)

Assunto: Repressão de ativistas agrários e sociais na Colômbia

Organizações agrárias e populares da Colômbia iniciaram no dia 19 de agosto uma Greve Nacional, Agrária e Popular, reivindicando uma Reforma Agrária Estrutural que, no quadro da procura de uma solução para o conflito social e armado, assegure a justiça social, o direito à terra e ao território enquanto única forma de assegurar a soberania nacional do país.

Para além das justas reivindicações sobre o direito à terra e de outras exigências históricas dos camponeses colombianos, a mobilização chama a atenção para as consequências ruinosas dos Tratados de Livre Comércio (TLC), nomeadamente com a UE, exigindo o seu fim imediato. As autoridades colombianas estão a reprimir fortemente as paralisações. Durante os oito dias que decorreram desde o seu início, foram detidas mais de 200 pessoas, 80 ficaram feridas, muitos delas com armas de fogo e uma pessoa foi assassinada.

O governo colombiano tem-se recusado até agora a qualquer diálogo com a Mesa Nacional de Interlocução Agrária (MIA), onde está representado um elevado número de organizações de diferentes setores. Ontem foi detido Huber Ballesteros, porta-voz do MIA, Membro do Comité Executivo da Central Unitária de Trabalhadores e membro do Conselho Nacional da organização social e política Marcha Patriótica. Está também marcada para 29 de agosto uma grande jornada de protestos e de apoio à Greve Nacional.

Perguntamos, por isso, ao Conselho:

— Condena os atos repressivos das autoridades colombianas contra o livre exercício dos direitos políticos e democráticos da oposição e o desrespeito das autoridades colombianas pelos direitos fundamentais do seu povo?

— Pretende efetuar algum tipo de diligência junto das autoridades colombianas para o fim imediato das prisões de ativistas sindicais, sociais e políticos e a libertação dos ativistas presos?

— Que consequências têm estes atos repressivos para o relacionamento com o governo colombiano?

— Não considera que, uma vez mais, fica demonstrado que os TLC apenas favorecem as grandes multinacionais e que os trabalhadores, os camponeses e os pequenos agricultores, os pequenos e médios empresários e comerciantes são as suas principais vítimas?

Resposta
(28 de outubro de 2013)

A UE tem acompanhado de perto a recente evolução política e social na Colômbia, nomeadamente as greves a que os Senhores Deputados se referem. Tal como os Senhores Deputados, a UE considera necessário que as questões relacionadas com a agricultura e a utilização das terras sejam parte integrante de qualquer resolução do conflito armado, havendo efetivamente indicações claras de que tais questões estão no cerne das conversações de Havana.

A UE apoia firmemente a liberdade de expressão e reunião, especialmente no que respeita aos representantes dos trabalhadores e dos sindicatos, que devem poder manifestar as suas opiniões e levar a cabo protestos pacíficos. A Delegação da UE na Colômbia acompanha de perto a situação de alguns sindicalistas, entre os quais Huber Ballesteros. A observância efetiva dos direitos humanos continua a estar no centro do diálogo UE-Colômbia sobre direitos humanos.

A UE continua convicta de que a aplicação do acordo de comércio, que prevê salvaguardas significativas e é acompanhado de consideráveis medidas de apoio, criará oportunidades importantes para as empresas colombianas e peruanas, seja qual for a sua dimensão, ao dar-lhes a possibilidade de colherem os frutos da liberalização progressiva e controlada do comércio.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009637/13
to the Council
João Ferreira (GUE/NGL) and Inês Cristina Zuber (GUE/NGL)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Repression of agrarian activists in Colombia

On 19 August 2013, a National, Agrarian and Popular Strike was launched in Colombia by a number of agrarian and popular organisations. The strike calls for a structural agrarian reform to be included in any solution found to the social and armed conflict, to ensure social justice and land and territorial rights as the only means of guaranteeing national sovereignty.

Apart from presenting justified demands for land rights and other historic claims upheld by Colombia's agrarian workers, the movement draws attention to the disastrous impact of the Free Trade Agreements (FTA), such as that with the EU, and calls for their immediate cancellation. The Colombian authorities have taken repressive action against the strike: in the eight days since the start of the protest over 200 people have been arrested, 80 wounded — many with firearms — and one killed.

The Colombian Government has so far refused any form of dialogue with the National Board of Agrarian Interchange (MIA), which represents a large number of organisations from different sectors. Yesterday saw the arrest of the MIA's spokesperson, Huber Ballesteros, who is also a member of the trade union association Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) and a member of the Marcha Patriótica social and political association. A major day of protest and support for the national strike is planned for 29 August 2013.

Can the Council say:

— whether it condemns the Colombian Government's repressive actions aimed at preventing the opposition from freely exercising its political and democratic rights and the Colombian authorities' lack of respect for the Colombian people's fundamental rights?

— whether it intends to make representations to the Colombian authorities to immediately stop imprisoning trade union, social and political activists and to release those activists being held in detention?

— what impact this repression will have on relations with the Colombian Government?

— whether it sees these events as providing yet further evidence that FTAs only benefit major multinationals and that workers, peasants, small-scale farmers, small and medium-size enterprises and traders are the main victims of such agreements?

Reply
(28 October 2013)

The EU has been closely following recent political and social developments in Colombia, including the strikes to which the Honourable Members refer. The EU shares the Members' views that agriculture and land use issues need to be part of any settlement of the armed conflict, and there are indeed clear indications that these issues are at the centre of the Havana talks.

The EU strongly supports freedom of expression and assembly, especially for workers and trade union representatives who should be able to voice their views and carry out peaceful protests. The EU Delegation to Colombia is closely following the situation of a number of trade union officials, including Mr Ballesteros. Effective respect for human rights remains at the centre of the EU-Colombia dialogue on human rights.

The EU remains convinced that the application of the trade agreement, which provides for significant safeguards and is backed by considerable support measures, will create important opportunities for Colombian and Peruvian businesses of all sizes by enabling them to reap the benefits of a progressive and controlled liberalisation of trade.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009638/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Desirability of ending discriminatory pricing policies by utilities

The former UK Secretary of State for Energy, Chris Huhne, announced when still in office that the UK Government would end the practice, common amongst utility companies, of offering cheaper pricing plans only to new customers. The practice is by no means confined to utility companies: those taking out car insurance will frequently encounter deals for new customers that are not available to existing customers. Nevertheless, utilities provide items such as gas, electricity and water that constitute basic needs for EU citizens.

For the companies engaged in such discriminatory pricing, the practice is seen as an expression of healthy competition. However, critics argue that it discriminates against existing loyal customers. Critics also point out that it particularly discriminates against those without easy access to the Internet (in 2012 it was identified that 20% of the population in the UK lacked home Internet access, with lower levels of access in other Member States).

Has the Commission considered an impact assessment of such pricing policies, and does it consider this to be a reasonable commercial practice which does not require any additional regulation?

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

In a liberalised and competitive market, such as that foreseen in EU's legislation on the internal energy market (namely the so called Third Energy Package), the level of competition should result in sufficient choice of alternatives for the consumer so that consumers can react to pricing strategies that they do not like by changing the supplier. Where energy companies operate under regulated prices, it is the responsibility of the national regulatory agencies that the interest of the consumer be reflected in the price-setting decisions.

Energy company retail pricing policies could be examined under the EU competition rules as long as they have an effect on trade between Member States.

The EU competition rules prohibit anticompetitive agreements between companies and anticompetitive abuses by companies in a dominant position. If there is no agreement on pricing policy between suppliers, the question of whether a pricing policy that gives new customers lower prices than those charged to existing customers could be regarded as an abuse of dominance would have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009639/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Future of production within the common agricultural policy

Since the MacSharry reforms of the early 1990s, a succession of Agriculture Commissioners have taken a series of important and valuable measures that have reduced the overall cost of the common agricultural policy (CAP) and all but eliminated the butter mountains and wine lakes of earlier years. The principal reason for this has been the gradual move away from exclusive reliance on price support levels and towards direct income support, and, since 2000, a greater emphasis on environmental objectives through the mechanism of set-aside.

The strategic aim of retaining viable agricultural sectors throughout the Union, as well as delivering food at an affordable price, is entirely rational. Subsidies were common throughout Europe after the war, and even if a Member State were to leave the Union, it seems extremely unlikely that it would abandon agricultural subsidies altogether.

The Commission has recently introduced new proposals designed, *inter alia*, to protect the quality of soil and to ensure that agricultural methods are designed to minimise water wastage, particularly in countries where water is scarce. There remains a debate over the balance between production and non-production (i.e. environmental) objectives.

Is it the case that the Commission is responding to World Trade Organisation pressure to further reduce support for production, and, if so, does the Commission feel that the Cairns Group is on stronger ground when it opposes export subsidies rather than simply the maintenance of indigenous agricultural sectors within the Union?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(9 October 2013)

The EU is ready to substantially reduce the trade distorting domestic support for agriculture, eliminate all forms of export subsidies and establish disciplines on export measures with equivalent effect but only as part of a comprehensive, ambitious and balanced deal across all pillars of the Doha Development Agenda.

The EU position in the WTO was further strengthened on 26 June when the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the reform package of the EU Common Agricultural Policy which provide that export subsidies cannot be used outside of crisis situations.

The reform package on the future CAP is currently subject to final adoption by the co-legislators. It is envisaged to be finalised by the end of the year and will then have to be put into practice with a view to ensure a timely, efficient and effective implementation.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009640/13
to the Commission
Charles Tannock (ECR)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Impact in the UK of supermarket pricing for milk on the objectives of the common agricultural policy

Ensuring the availability of supplies was one of the founding principles of the common agricultural policy (CAP).

In the UK there is a reported problem of large supermarket chains forcing down milk prices (through the medium of milk wholesalers) to such an extent that less is paid for the milk than it costs to produce, and dairy farmers in the UK are going out of business at an alarming rate. This has received considerable publicity in the UK, although government efforts have so far been focused on trying to encourage some kind of voluntary agreement. Apart from the threat to the long-term survivability of the dairy industry, a possible consequence of this state of affairs is that the EU taxpayer is now indirectly subsidising supermarkets through a policy that is designed to protect agricultural supply.

One solution might be for the Commission to consider allowing governments or municipal licensing authorities to require retailers to pay a minimum price for milk, with the Commission itself indicating the price below which it would refer a Member State to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). Has the Commission considered this option, and would it be compatible with World Trade Organisation rules on agricultural support? Furthermore, would a minimum pricing solution for an agricultural product, if supported by the Commission, be legal under current EC law?

Answer given by Mr Cioloş on behalf of the Commission
(22 October 2013)

The potential negative effects of retailers' practices have already triggered a number of investigations by National Competition Authorities (NCAs) in the EU. Further, complaints against retailers' practices vis-à-vis their suppliers have lead a certain number of NCAs to carry out monitoring actions. The recent published ECN Report provides an overview of these actions ([1]).

The question of the difficulties faced by dairy farmers in negotiating with the other actors of the food chain was at the core of the recently adopted Regulation 261/2012 ([2]) (the so called Milk Package). In order to strengthen the position of farmers when negotiating with dairy processors, the new rules give farmers the possibility to jointly negotiate contract terms, including price. To maintain effective competition on the dairy market the negotiation cannot cover more than a certain volume of raw milk, and should not exclude competition or seriously harm SME processors.

The Commission does not consider allowing governments or municipal licensing authorities to require retailers to pay a minimum price for milk. This would hinder competition, slow down innovation and prevent allowing consumers to benefit from greater choice and competitive prices.

([1]) 'ECN Activities in the Food Sector — Report on competition law enforcement and market monitoring activities by European competition authorities in the food sector', http://ec.europa.eu/competition/ecn/documents.html#reports

([2]) Regulation (EU) 261/2012 of 14 March 2012 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards contractual relations in the milk and milk products sector, OJ L 94, 30.3.2012.

(Verżjoni Maltija)

Mistoqsija għal tweġiba bil-miktub E-009641/13
lill-Kummissjoni
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 ta' Awwissu 2013)

Suġġett: Is-semplifikazzjoni tal-proċeduri tal-viża għall-ivvjaġġar għan-negozju u għall-btala

It-turiżmu u l-investiment tan-negozji jikkontribwixxu konsiderevolment għall-PDG ta' għadd ta' Stati Membri tal-UE. F'Malta, pereżempju, it-turiżmu waħdu jikkontribwixxi għal madwar 23 % tal-PDG. Madankollu, kemm it-turiżmu kif ukoll l-ivvjaġġar għan-negozju minn pajjiżi mhux fl-UE lejn Malta jeħtieġu viża ta' Schengen, li xi drabi xxekkel għadd ta' investituri, peress li l-proċeduri attwali tal-viża fiż-żona ta' Schengen kultant idumu ħames ġimgħat u spiss jieħdu wisq ħin biex ikunu attraenti għal vjaġġi għal negozju u għall-btala. Għalhekk, ħafna investiment barrani potenzjali u għadd ta' opportunitajiet relatati mat-turiżmu qed jintilfu. Dan huwa partikolarment importanti fi żmien meta l-investiment barrani huwa essenzjali għat-tkabbir ekonomika fiż-Żona Ekonomika Ewropea.

Fid-dawl ta' dan, liema possibbiltajiet u miżuri fattibbli qed tippjana l-Kummissjoni biex tħaffef u tissemplifika l-proċeduri tal-viża għal ċittadini mhux tal-UE li jkunu beħsiebhom jivvjaġġaw għan-negozju jew għall-btala lejn Stati Membri tal-UE?

Tweġiba mogħtija mis-Sra Malmström f'isem il-Kummissjoni
(14 ta' Novembru 2013)

Il-Kummissjoni tirrikonoxxi l-kontribut sinifikanti li politika aktar intelliġenti dwar il-viżi jista' jkollha għat-tkabbir ekonomiku tal-UE, b'mod partikolari għas-settur tat-turiżmu. Dan għamlitu ċar fil-Komunikazzjoni tagħha ta' Novembru 2012 ([1]) dwar "L-implimentazzjoni u l-iżvilupp tal-politika komuni dwar il-viżi sabiex jiġi xprunat it-tkabbir fl-UE". Il-Kummissjoni stqarret li l-evalwazzjoni tal-implimentazzjoni tal-Kodiċi dwar il-Viżi tista' "toffri opportunità oħra sabiex jinstabu modi biex il-proċeduri jitjiebu u jiġu ffaċilitati għall-vjaġġaturi bona fide filwaqt li tkompli tippermetti li jiġu indirizzati r-riskji b'rabta mal-migrazzjoni rregolari jew is-sigurtà minn xi vjaġġaturi."

Il-Kummissjoni bħalissa qed tħejji rapport ta' evalwazzjoni dwar l-implimentazzjoni tal-Kodiċi dwar il-Viżi (kif mitlub skont l-Artikolu 57(1) tal-Kodiċi dwar il-Viżi) li se jiġi ppreżentat fix-xhur li ġejjin flimkien ma' proposta għar-reviżjoni tal-Kodiċi dwar il-Viżi. Ir-rapport ta' evalwazzjoni se jindirizza kwistjonijiet imqajma mill-Onorevoli Membru; il-proposta se timmira li tiffaċilita iktar l-ivvjaġġar leġittimu billi tissimplifika u tarmonizza sew il-proċeduri. Dan x'aktarx li jinkludi miżuri biex tiżdied l-emissjoni ta' viżi għal dħul multiplu b'perjodi itwal ta' validità.

([1]) COM(2012) 649 finali.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009641/13
to the Commission
Claudette Abela Baldacchino (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Simplifying visa procedures for business and leisure trips

Tourism and business investment contribute considerably to the GDP of a number of EU Member States. In Malta, for instance, tourism alone contributes to around 23% of GDP. However, both tourism and business travel from non-EU countries to Malta require a Schengen visa, which at times deters a number of investors, as current visa procedures in the Schengen zone sometimes take up to five weeks and are often too time-consuming to be attractive for business and leisure trips. Therefore, much potential foreign investment and numerous tourism opportunities are lost. This is of particular importance at a time when foreign investment is key to economic growth in the European Economic Area.

In light of this, what possibilities and feasible measures does the Commission envisage to speed up and simplify visa procedures for non-EU nationals intending to travel for business or leisure to EU Member States?

Answer given by Ms Malmström on behalf of the Commission
(14 November 2013)

The Commission acknowledges the significant contribution that a smarter visa policy would make to the EU's economic growth, in particular to the tourism sector. It made this clear in its November 2012 ([1]) Communication on 'Implementation and development of the common visa policy to spur growth in the EU'. The communication stated that the evaluation of the implementation of the Visa Code would 'offer an additional opportunity to further explore ways to improve and facilitate procedures for bona fide travellers while continuing to allow addressing the risks posed for irregular migration or security by some travellers.'

The Commission is currently preparing an evaluation report of the implementation of the Visa Code (as required under Article 57(1) of the Visa Code) that will be submitted together with a proposal for revising the Visa Code in the coming months. The evaluation report will address the issues raised by the Honourable Member; the proposal will aim to further facilitate legitimate travel by streamlining and fully harmonising procedures. This will likely include measures to increase the issuance of multiple entry visas with longer periods of validity.

([1]) COM(2012) 649 final.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009642/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(27 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Διεθνής ανταγωνιστικότητα ευρωπαϊκών πανεπιστημίων

Στις 15 Αυγούστου 2013 δημοσιεύθηκε η ετήσια διεθνής κατάταξη πανεπιστημίων της Σαγκάης για το 2013 ([1]). Στην έκδοση αυτή επιβεβαιώνεται η πρωτοκαθεδρία των ΗΠΑ και η άνοδος των ασιατικών πανεπιστημίων, αν και τα κριτήρια περιορίζονται περισσότερο στην έρευνα και τη σχετική με αυτήν απόδοσή τους. Από τα ευρωπαϊκά πανεπιστήμια ξεχωρίζουν ορισμένα από την Μ. Βρετανία και, πιο κάτω στην κατάταξη, από την Γερμανία και την Γαλλία. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή εγκαινίασε τον Ιανουάριο του 2013 δικό της σύστημα αξιολόγησης, το U-Multirank ([2]), το οποίο αφορά στην κατάταξη πανεπιστημίων βασισμένης σε μεγαλύτερο αριθμό κι ευρύτερο πεδίο κριτηρίων από αυτά της Σαγκάης και θα αποδώσει τα πρώτα αποτελέσματα στις αρχές του 2014 ([3]). Παρόλ' αυτά, ερωτάται η Επιτροπή:

1. Πώς αξιολογεί τα ευρήματα της παγκόσμιας κατάταξης της Σαγκάης;

2. Ποια τα συμπεράσματα για τις επιδόσεις των ευρωπαϊκών πανεπιστημίων και τις κατευθύνσεις που πρέπει να έχει η πολιτική της ΕΕ και των κρατών-μελών στον τομέα αυτόν;

3. Πού οφείλεται η υστέρηση στην ανταγωνιστικότητα των ευρωπαϊκών πανεπιστημίων, παρά τις πολυετείς χρηματοδοτήσεις της έρευνας;

4. Δεδομένου ότι η έρευνα και η ανάπτυξη αποτελούν έναν από τους 5 στόχους της στρατηγικής «Ευρώπη 2020», με ειδικότερο στόχο το 3% του ΑΕΠ της ΕΕ να επενδύεται εκεί ως το 2020, ποια η πρόοδος μέχρι σήμερα στην υλοποίηση των επιμέρους ετήσιων στόχων;

Απάντηση της κ. Βασιλείου εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(24 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Η Επιτροπή εκφράζει την ικανοποίησή της για το γεγονός ότι υπάρχει ποικιλία κατατάξεων στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση και έχει βελτιωθεί το επίπεδο διαφάνειας στην τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Πέρα από ορισμένες αξιοσημείωτες εξαιρέσεις, η ακαδημαϊκή κατάταξη της «Λίστας της Σαγκάης» υποδηλώνει ότι τα ευρωπαϊκά πανεπιστήμια εξακολουθούν να υστερούν σε σχέση με τους κύριους ανταγωνιστές τους και ως εκ τούτου θα πρέπει να βελτιώσουν τις επιδόσεις τους.

Ωστόσο, η Επιτροπή θεωρεί επίσης ότι οι υπάρχουσες κατατάξεις που βασίζονται κυρίως στην έρευνα, δεν παρέχουν πλήρη εικόνα για την επίδοση των εκπαιδευτικών ιδρυμάτων σε όλο το φάσμα των αποστολών τους. Αυτός είναι ο λόγος για τον οποίο η Επιτροπή υποστηρίζει μια νέα πρωτοβουλία κατάταξης, την U-Multirank, που θα καλύπτει πολλούς τομείς, όπως η επίδοση όσον αφορά τη διδασκαλία και τη μάθηση, η μεταφορά γνώσης, ο διεθνής προσανατολισμός και η περιφερειακή δέσμευση, καθώς και η έρευνα. Οι χρήστες θα είναι σε θέση να επιλέγουν την κατηγορία του εκπαιδευτικού ιδρύματος και τους δείκτες επιδόσεων που τους ενδιαφέρει να εξετάσουν.

Η πρόσφατη ανακοίνωση της Επιτροπής σχετικά με την ευρωπαϊκή τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση στον κόσμο ([4]), περιέχει διάφορες συστάσεις σχετικά με τον τρόπο με τον οποίο τα ευρωπαϊκά πανεπιστήμια μπορούν να βελτιώσουν τις επιδόσεις τους και το διεθνές τους κύρος.

Η χρηματοδότηση της έρευνας ωφέλησε πολλά άριστα ευρωπαϊκά πανεπιστήμια και ο πίνακας αποτελεσμάτων για την Ένωση Καινοτομίας το 2013 επισημαίνει τη μεγάλη ανάπτυξη της ΕΕ στις διεθνείς επιστημονικές συνδημοσιεύσεις. Παρά τους δημοσιονομικούς περιορισμούς, οι συνολικές δαπάνες για έρ. και αν. σε σύγκριση με το ΑΕΠ αυξήθηκαν από 1,85% το 2007 σε 2,03% το 2011. Παρ' όλο που το ποσοστό αύξησης παραμένει ανεπαρκές για την ΕΕ για να επιτευχθεί ο στόχος του 3% για το 2020, αρκετά κράτη μέλη έχουν προχωρήσει πολύ πιο δυναμικά και βρίσκονται ήδη σε καλό δρόμο για να επιτύχουν τους εθνικούς τους στόχους (βλ. πίνακα στο παράρτημα). Εντούτοις, το ποσοστό αύξησης ήταν μικρότερο σε ένδεκα κράτη μέλη σε σύγκριση με το ποσοστό αύξησης του ΑΕΠ από τότε που ξεκίνησε η κρίση.

([1]) http://www.shanghairanking.com/Academic-Ranking-of-World-Universities-2013-Press-Release.html
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-66_el.htm
([3]) http://www.u-multirank.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/UMR_key_questions_and_answers.pdf
([4]) COM(2013)499 τελικό.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009642/13
to the Commission
Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: International competitiveness of European universities

On 15 August 2013, the 2013 Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities was published ([1]). This year's ranking confirms the primacy of US and the rise of Asian universities, although the criteria used are to a great extent restricted to research and research-related performance. As far as European universities are concerned, a number of UK universities do well, followed further down the ranking, by German and French universities. In January 2013, the Commission launched its own evaluation system, U-Multirank ([2]), which classifies universities on the basis of a larger number and wider range of criteria than the Shanghai ranking: the first results will be published in early 2014 ([3]). Despite this, can the Commission say:

1. How does it evaluate the findings of the Shanghai international ranking?

2. What conclusions can be drawn regarding the performance of European universities and the direction EU and Member State policy in the field should now take?

3. Why are European universities lagging behind, despite years of research funding?

4. Since research and development are one of the five objectives of the 'Europe 2020 strategy', with a target of 3% of EU GDP to be invested in this area by 2020 , what progress has been made so far in implementing the annual goals ?

Answer given by Ms Vassiliou on behalf of the Commission
(24 October 2013)

The Commission welcomes the fact that there is a variety of rankings in higher education and that they have improved the level of transparency in higher education. Despite some notable exceptions, the Shanghai ranking indicates that European universities continue to be out-performed by those of major competitors and ought to be doing better.

However, the Commission also considers that existing rankings, being heavily research-based, do not give the full picture of how institutions perform across their full range of missions. This is why the Commission is supporting a new ranking initiative, U-Multirank, which will cover many areas such as performance in teaching and learning, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement, as well as in research. Users will be able to choose the type of institution and the performance indicators they are interested in reviewing.

The recent Commission Communication on European Higher Education in the World ([4]) contains various recommendations on how European universities can improve their performance and their international standing.

Research funding has benefitted many excellent European universities and the Innovation Union Scoreboard 2013 points to high growth in the EU in international scientific co-publications. Despite fiscal constraints, overall R&D spending compared to GDP increased from 1.85% in 2007 to 2.03% in 2011. While such a rate of increase is still insufficient for the EU to reach its 3% target in 2020, several Member States have progressed much more vigorously and are already on-track to reach their national targets (see table in annex). However, in eleven Member States it has grown less than GDP since the beginning of the crisis.

([1]) http://www.shanghairanking.com/Academic-Ranking-of-World-Universities-2013-Press-Release.html
([2]) http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-66_el.htm
([3]) http://www.u-multirank.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/UMR_key_questions_and_answers.pdf
([4]) COM(2013) 499 final.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009643/13
aan de Commissie
Philip Claeys (NI)
(27 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Geweld tegen eurosceptische partij in Duitsland

Tijdens de campagne voor de komende verkiezingen in Duitsland waren er verschillende incidenten waarbij deelnemers aan activiteiten van de eurosceptische partij „Alternative für Deutschland" fysiek werden aangevallen. In Bremen werd de voorzitter van deze partij, Bernd Lucke, tijdens een toespraak weggeduwd van het podium en met pepperspray bewerkt. Een medestander van Lucke raakte gewond door een messteek. Verschillende andere mensen kregen traangas of pepperspray in het gezicht. Het was het zoveelste geval van fysiek geweld tegen de AfD, na eerdere incidenten in onder meer Lübeck, Lüneburg, Giessen, Göttingen en Nürnberg.

Is de Commissie bereid het geweld tegen de eurosceptische stroming publiekelijk, duidelijk en ondubbelzinnig te veroordelen? Waarom is dat nog niet gebeurd?

Antwoord van mevrouw Reding namens de Commissie
(6 november 2013)

De Europese Unie is gebaseerd op democratie en pluralisme. De Commissie is dan ook van mening dat er binnen onze democratie ruimte kan en moet zijn voor een verscheidenheid aan politieke standpunten, en dus ook van pro-Europese en eurosceptische stemmen. Wat betreft de specifieke vraag veroordeelt de Commissie alle vormen van geweld, zoals zij reeds bij verschillende gelegenheden heeft gedaan.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009643/13
to the Commission
Philip Claeys (NI)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Violent attacks on eurosceptic party in Germany

During the current election campaign Germany, a number of incidents occurred involving physical attacks on those participating in activities organised by the eurosceptic 'Alternative für Deutschland' party (AfD). In Bremen, AfD leader Bernd Lucke was pushed from the podium whilst delivering a speech and attacked with pepper spray, while another party member sustained a knife wound. A number of others also received pepper spray and tear gas in their faces. This was the latest in a series of such incidents involving physical violence against AfD members occurring in Lübeck, Lüneburg, Giessen, Göttingen and Nuremberg.

Is the Commission prepared to condemn violence against eurosceptics clearly, publicly and unequivocally? Why has it not yet done so?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission
(6 November 2013)

The European Union is based on democracy and pluralism, this is why the Commission takes the view that our democracy can and has to live with different opinions across the whole political spectrum, including pro-European and Eurosceptic voices. Concerning the specific question, the Commission, as it has expressed in different occasions, condemns all forms of violence.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης E-009645/13
προς την Επιτροπή
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(27 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Νέο κούρεμα του ελληνικού χρέους

Σε πρόσφατο άρθρο της, η γερμανική εφημερίδα «Die Welt» επαναφέρει στο προσκήνιο το ενδεχόμενο νέου κουρέματος του ελληνικού χρέους. Ως κύριος λόγος προβάλλεται η δύσκολη οικονομική κατάσταση της χώρας, η οποία βελτιώνεται με βραδύτερους ρυθμούς από ό,τι πίστευε η τρόικα και, ως εκ τούτου, η μείωση του χρέους γίνεται πιο αργά από ό,τι είχε σχεδιαστεί. Γίνεται επίσης αναφορά στο χρηματοδοτικό κενό που προβλέπει το ΔΝΤ, ύψους 4,4 δισ. για το 2014 και 6,5 δισ. για το 2015, προσθέτοντας ότι η άποψη του Ταμείου είναι ότι τα χρήματα αυτά θα πρέπει να προέλθουν από τους Ευρωπαίους, μέσω μιας νέας διαγραφής μέρους των απαιτήσεων τους.

Ερωτάται λοιπόν η Επιτροπή:

1. Πόσο πιθανό είναι το ενδεχόμενο νέου κουρέματος του ελληνικού χρέους και πότε υπολογίζεται να γίνει;

2. Σε ποιο βαθμό, κατά την άποψη της Επιτροπής, θα επηρεαστεί η απόφαση για νέο κούρεμα του ελληνικού χρέους από την έκβαση των γερμανικών εκλογών;

3. Σε περίπτωση νέας μείωσης του χρέους της Ελλάδας, ποιες θα είναι οι πιθανές επιπτώσεις στην Ευρωζώνη και ιδιαίτερα στις δοκιμαζόμενες υπόλοιπες χώρες του Ευρωπαϊκού Νότου;

4. Λαμβάνονται υπόψη οι εκτιμήσεις εμπειρογνωμόνων για ενδεχόμενο πρόκλησης «φαινομένου ντόμινο αβεβαιότητας» στην ευρωζώνη, με κίνδυνο να πληγούν οι επενδύσεις σε ολόκληρη την ΕΕ;

Απάντηση του κ. Rehn εξ ονόματος της Επιτροπής
(7 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Στο πλαίσιο του δεύτερου προγράμματος οικονομικής προσαρμογής για την Ελλάδα, σημειώνεται σημαντική πρόοδος όσον αφορά τη διασφάλιση της βιωσιμότητας του ελληνικού χρέους. Ο δείκτης χρέους προς το ΑΕΠ προβλέπεται να ακολουθήσει και πάλι πτωτική τροχιά το 2014 και να μειωθεί σε επίπεδα χαμηλότερα του 120% το 2021, με την παραδοχή ότι το πρόγραμμα οικονομικής προσαρμογής εξακολουθεί να υλοποιείται στο ακέραιο.

Τον Νοέμβριο του 2012, η Ευρωομάδα δήλωσε ότι τα κράτη μέλη της ζώνης του ευρώ θα εξετάσουν τη δυνατότητα για περαιτέρω μέτρα και βοήθεια, εάν κριθεί αναγκαίο, όταν η Ελλάδα καταλήξει να έχει ετήσιο πρωτογενές πλεόνασμα, υπό την προϋπόθεση της πλήρους εφαρμογής όλων των όρων που περιλαμβάνονται στο πρόγραμμα ([1]).

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/133857.pdf

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009645/13
to the Commission
Antigoni Papadopoulou (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Further haircut on Greek debt

A recent article appearing in the German magazine 'Die Welt' has yet again raised the possibility of a further haircut on Greek debt, ascribing this in the main to the economic difficulties besetting the country, where recovery is proving slower than the Troika initially forecast, with debt reduction in particular falling behind schedule. The IMF is now predicting shortfalls of

EUR 4.4 billion for 2014 and 6.5 billion for 2015, requiring a further debt write-down at the expense of European creditors.

In view of this:

1. What is the Commission's assessment regarding the probability of an additional haircut and how soon may it be expected?

2. To what extent does it anticipate that any decision on this matter will be affected by the outcome of the German elections?

3. What will be the likely implications for the euro area and in particular the beleaguered countries of southern Europe?

4. Is heed being given to warnings by experts regarding a 'domino effect of uncertainty' undermining investment throughout the EU?

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

In the context of the 2nd Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece, significant progress is being made towards securing the sustainability of the Greek debt. The debt-to-GDP ratio is forecast to resume a declining path in 2014, and should become lower than 120% by 2021, assuming that the economic adjustment programme continues to be fully implemented.

In November 2012, the Eurogroup stated that euro area Member States will consider further measures and assistance, if necessary, when Greece reaches an annual primary surplus, conditional on full implementation of all conditions contained in the programme ([1]).

([1]) http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/133857.pdf

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009646/13
aan de Raad
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Aantal gestelde schriftelijke vragen en de kosten daarvan

Dagelijks worden er vele vragen aan de Raad gesteld. Dit brengt aanzienlijke kosten met zich mee. Om inzicht te krijgen in het aantal schriftelijke vragen en de daarmee gemoeide kosten zou ik de Raad het volgende willen vragen:

1. Hoeveel schriftelijke vragen van de leden van het Europees Parlement zijn aan de Raad gesteld in 2012?

2. Wat kost het antwoorden van een schriftelijke vraag de Raad gemiddeld en hoeveel kosten zijn er in 2012 gemaakt om alle vragen te beantwoorden?

3. Hoe zijn de aantallen vragen verdeeld over de fracties van het Europees Parlement (hierbij de niet-ingeschrevenen als een fractie beschouwend)?

4. Hoeveel fte aan medewerkers was belast met het voorbereiden van antwoorden op vragen van Europarlementariërs?

5. Hoe vaak komt het voor dat dezelfde vragen door meerdere Europarlementariërs worden gesteld?

Antwoord
(28 oktober 2013)

1. In 2012 heeft het Europees Parlement zes vragen aan de voorzitter van de Europese Raad gesteld, en 218 aan de Raad.

2. Volgens de financiële regeling van de Raad worden de kosten niet op zodanige wijze per taak toegewezen dat de gemiddelde kostprijs van het beantwoorden van parlementaire vragen te berekenen is.

3. De Raad houdt geen statistieken bij van het aantal schriftelijke vragen dat per fractie door leden van het Europees Parlement wordt gesteld. De bedoelde gegevens kunnen echter misschien worden opgevraagd bij de diensten van het Europees Parlement.

4. Zie het antwoord op vraag 2.

5. De Raad houdt hierover geen statistieken bij. Wel is de ervaring dat leden van het Europees Parlement vaak gelijksoortige vragen richten tot de Raad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009646/13
to the Council
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Number of written questions tabled and their cost

Every day, many questions to the Council are tabled. This entails considerable costs. In order to establish how many written questions are tabled and the cost involved, I should like to put the following questions to the Council.

1. How many written questions to the Council did Members of the European Parliament table in 2012?

2. How much does it cost, on average, to answer a written question to the Council, and how much expenditure was incurred in 2012 in answering all the questions?

3. What is the breakdown of questions among the political groups in the European Parliament (if the non-attached Members are also defined as a group)?

4. How many staff (full-time equivalents) are employed in preparing answers to questions tabled by Members of the EP?

5. How often is the same question tabled by more than one Member of the EP?

Reply
(28 October 2013)

1. In 2012, the European Parliament tabled 6 questions to the President of the European Council, and 218 questions to the Council.

2. The Council's financial system does not allocate costs to such specific types of task in a way that would allow the average cost of processing replies to parliamentary questions to be determined.

3. The Council does not compile statistics on parliamentary written questions on the basis of the political group to which the MEPs belong. This information may however be available to the administration of the European Parliament.

4. See answer to question 2.

5. The Council does not compile statistics on this matter. However, experience shows that MEPs do indeed regularly table similar questions to the Council.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009647/13
aan de Commissie
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 augustus 2013)

Betreft: Aantal gestelde schriftelijke vragen en de kosten daarvan

Dagelijks worden er vele vragen aan de Europese Commissie gesteld. Dit brengt aanzienlijke kosten met zich mee. Om inzicht te krijgen in het aantal schriftelijke vragen en de daarmee gemoeide kosten zou ik de Commissie het volgende willen vragen:

1. Hoeveel schriftelijke vragen van de leden van het Europees Parlement zijn aan de Commissie gesteld in 2012?

2. Wat kost het antwoorden van een schriftelijke vraag de Commissie gemiddeld en hoeveel kosten zijn er in 2012 gemaakt om alle vragen te beantwoorden?

3. Hoe zijn de aantallen vragen verdeeld over de fracties van het Europees Parlement (hierbij de niet-ingeschrevenen als een fractie beschouwend)?

4. Hoeveel fte aan medewerkers was belast met het voorbereiden van antwoorden op vragen van Europarlementariërs?

5. Hoe vaak komt het voor dat dezelfde vragen door meerdere Europarlementariërs worden gesteld?

Antwoord van de heer Šefčovič namens de Commissie
(7 oktober 2013)

1. De leden van het Europees Parlement hebben in 2012 bij de Commissie 11 082 schriftelijke vragen ingediend.

2. Zoals vermeld in het antwoord op schriftelijke vraag E-7064/13, heeft de Commissie de kosten van het beantwoorden van schriftelijke vragen niet berekend.

3. Wanneer de schriftelijke vragen die door de fracties van 1 januari tot en met 31 augustus 2013 zijn ingediend, worden uitgesplitst, zien we de volgende verdeling: 35 % EVP, 17 % S & D, 11 % EFD, 9 % Ni, 8 % ECR, 7 % ALDE, 7 % GUE/NGL, en 6 % Groenen/EVA.

4. Bij het beantwoorden van vragen zijn veel ambtenaren betrokken, al naar gelang het betrokken onderwerp. De Commissie heeft het aantal voltijdsequivalenten niet berekend.

5. Er is een aanzienlijke overlapping, aangezien de leden van het parlement soortgelijke, of soms identieke vragen indienen. Voor meer details wordt het geachte Parlementslid verwezen naar het Parlement.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009647/13
to the Commission
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Number of written questions tabled and their cost

Every day, many questions to the Commission are tabled. This entails considerable costs. In order to establish how many written questions are tabled and the cost involved, I should like to put the following questions to the Commission.

1. How many written questions to the Commission did Members of the European Parliament table in 2012?

2. How much does it cost, on average, to answer a written question to the Commission, and how much expenditure was incurred in 2012 in answering all the questions?

3. What is the breakdown of questions among the political groups in the European Parliament (if the non-attached Members are also defined as a group)?

4. How many staff (full-time equivalents) are employed in preparing answers to questions tabled by Members of the EP?

5. How often is the same question tabled by more than one Member of the EP?

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the Commission
(7 October 2013)

1. The Members of the European Parliament submitted 11082 written questions to the Commission in 2012.

2. As stated in the reply to Written Question E-7064/13, the Commission has not calculated the cost involved in answering written questions.

3. The breakdown of written questions submitted by political groups from 1 January to 31 August 2013 is 35% EPP, 17% S&D, 11% EFD, 9% NI, 8% ECR, 7% ALDE, 7% GUE/NGL, and 6% Greens/EFA.

4. Many officials are involved in answering questions depending on the subject matter. The Commission has not calculated the number of full-time equivalents.

5. There is a considerable overlap of similar, sometimes identical, questions submitted by the Members of Parliament. For further details, the Honourable Member is referred to the Parliament.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009648/13
aan de Raad (Voorzitter Europese Raad)
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 augustus 2013)

Betreft: PCE/PEC — Aantal gestelde schriftelijke vragen en de kosten daarvan

Dagelijks worden er vele vragen aan de Europese Raad gesteld. Dit brengt aanzienlijke kosten met zich mee. Om inzicht te krijgen in het aantal schriftelijke vragen en de daarmee gemoeide kosten zou ik de Europese Raad het volgende willen vragen:

1. Hoeveel schriftelijke vragen van de leden van het Europees Parlement zijn aan de Europese Raad gesteld in 2012?

2. Wat kost het antwoorden van een schriftelijke vraag de Europese Raad gemiddeld en hoeveel kosten zijn er in 2012 gemaakt om alle vragen te beantwoorden?

3. Hoe zijn de aantallen vragen verdeeld over de fracties van het Europees Parlement (hierbij de niet-ingeschrevenen als een fractie beschouwend)?

4. Hoeveel fte aan medewerkers was belast met het voorbereiden van antwoorden op vragen van Europarlementariërs?

5. Hoe vaak komt het voor dat dezelfde vragen door meerdere Europarlementariërs worden gesteld?

Antwoord
(30 september 2013)

1. In 2012 heeft het Europees Parlement zes vragen aan de voorzitter van de Europese Raad gesteld, en 218 aan de Raad.

2. Volgens de financiële regeling van de Raad worden de kosten niet op zodanige wijze per taak toegewezen dat de gemiddelde kostprijs van het beantwoorden van parlementaire vragen te berekenen is.

3. De Raad houdt geen statistieken bij van het aantal schriftelijke vragen dat per fractie door leden van het Europees Parlement wordt gesteld. De bedoelde gegevens kunnen echter misschien worden opgevraagd bij de diensten van het Europees Parlement.

4. Zie het antwoord op vraag 2.

5. De Raad houdt hierover geen statistieken bij. Wel is de ervaring dat leden van het Europees Parlement vaak gelijksoortige vragen richten tot de Raad.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009648/13
to the Council (President of the European Council)
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: PCE/PEC — Number of written questions tabled and their cost

Every day, many questions to the Council are tabled. This entails considerable costs. In order to establish how many written questions are tabled and the cost involved, I should like to put the following questions to the Council.

1. How many written questions to the Council did Members of the European Parliament table in 2012?

2. How much does it cost, on average, to answer a written question to the Council, and how much expenditure was incurred in 2012 in answering all the questions?

3. What is the breakdown of questions among the political groups in the European Parliament (if the non-attached Members are also defined as a group)?

4. How many staff (full-time equivalents) are employed in preparing answers to questions tabled by Members of the EP?

5. How often is the same question tabled by more than one Member of the EP?

Reply
(30 September 2013)

1. In 2012, the European Parliament tabled six questions to the President of the European Council, and 218 questions to the Council.

2. The Council's financial system does not allocate costs to such specific types of task in a way that would allow the average cost of processing replies to parliamentary questions to be determined.

3. The Council does not compile statistics on parliamentary written questions on the basis of the political group to which the MEPs belong. This information may however be available to the administration of the European Parliament.

4. See answer to question 2.

5. The Council does not compile statistics on this matter. However, experience shows that MEPs do indeed regularly table similar questions to the Council.

(Nederlandse versie)

Vraag met verzoek om schriftelijk antwoord E-009649/13
aan de Commissie (Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger)
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 augustus 2013)

Betreft: VP/HR — Aantal gestelde schriftelijke vragen en de kosten daarvan

Dagelijks worden er vele vragen aan de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger gesteld. Dit brengt aanzienlijke kosten met zich mee. Om inzicht te krijgen in het aantal schriftelijke vragen en de daarmee gemoeide kosten zou ik de VV/HV het volgende willen vragen:

1. Hoeveel schriftelijke vragen werden in 2012 door de leden van het Europees Parlement aan de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger gesteld?

2. Wat kost het antwoorden van een schriftelijke vraag de Vicevoorzitter/Hoge Vertegenwoordiger gemiddeld en hoeveel kosten zijn er in 2012 gemaakt om alle vragen te beantwoorden?

3. Hoe zijn de aantallen vragen verdeeld over de fracties van het Europees Parlement (hierbij de niet-ingeschrevenen als een fractie beschouwend)?

4. Hoeveel fte aan medewerkers was belast met het voorbereiden van antwoorden op vragen van Europarlementariërs?

5. Hoe vaak komt het voor dat dezelfde vragen door meerdere Europarlementariërs worden gesteld?

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

1. Het Europees Parlement diende in 2012 1486 schriftelijke vragen bij de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter in, waarvan 514 vragen werden beantwoord door Catherine Ashton in haar hoedanigheid van hoge vertegenwoordiger en 972 vragen door vicevoorzitter Ashton namens de Commissie.

2. De kosten van het beantwoorden van een door een parlementslid gestelde schriftelijke vraag zijn niet berekend.

3. Het aantal schriftelijke vragen dat in 2012 door de hoge vertegenwoordiger/vicevoorzitter werd beantwoord, was op de volgende wijze over de fracties verdeeld: 26% EVP, 22% EFD, 13% ECR, 9% S & D, 9% ALDE, 9% NI, 8% GUE/NGL en 4% Groenen/EVA.

4. Het opstellen van antwoorden op vragen is een taak van de afdeling voor parlementaire aangelegenheden van de EDEO ([1]), die verantwoordelijk is voor de verdeling en de algemene, interne/externe coördinatie van schriftelijke vragen, alsmede de betrokken diensten van de EDEO, naargelang van het onderwerp. Het totale aantal voltijdequivalenten is niet berekend.

5. Er is een aanzienlijke overlapping van soortgelijke, of soms identieke, door het Parlement gestelde vragen. Voor meer details wordt het geachte Parlementslid verwezen naar de parlementaire dienst die de parlementaire vragen behandelt en wordt hij verzocht de online database te raadplegen die toegang biedt tot alle parlementaire vragen en antwoorden: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/nl/parliamentary-questions.html.

([1]) Europese Dienst voor extern optreden.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009649/13
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Daniël van der Stoep (NI)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: VP/HR — number of written questions tabled and their cost

Every day, many questions to the Vice-President/High Representative are tabled. This entails considerable costs. In order to establish how many written questions are tabled and the cost involved, I should like to put the following questions to the VP/HR.

1. How many written questions to the Vice-President/High Representative did Members of the European Parliament table in 2012?

2. How much does it cost, on average, to answer a written question to the Vice-President/High Representative, and how much expenditure was incurred in 2012 in answering all the questions?

3. What is the breakdown of questions among the political groups in the European Parliament (if the non-attached Members are also defined as a group)?

4. How many staff (full-time equivalents) are employed in preparing answers to questions tabled by Members of the EP?

5. How often is the same question tabled by more than one Member of the EP?

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

1. The European Parliament transmitted 1486 written questions to the High Representative/Vice-President in 2012, of which 514 questions were answered by Catherine Ashton in her capacity as High Representative and 972 questions were answered by Vice-President Ashton on behalf of the Commission.

2. The cost involved in answering a written question posed by a Member of Parliament has not been calculated.

3. The breakdown of written questions answered by the High Representative/Vice-President in 2012 was distributed among the political groups in the following way: 26% EPP, 22% EFD, 13% ECR, 9% S&D, 9% ALDE, 9% NI, 8% GUE/NGL, and 4% Greens/EFA.

4. Preparation of replies involves the EEAS ([1]) Parliamentary Affairs division which is responsible for the distribution and overall internal/external coordination of written questions as well as the relevant EEAS services depending on the subject matter. The total number of full-time equivalent has not been calculated.

5. There is a considerable overlap of similar, sometimes identical, questions submitted by Parliament. For further details, the Honourable Member is referred to the Parliament's service dealing with parliamentary questions, and is invited to consult the online database providing access to all Parliamentary questions and their replies: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/parliamentary-questions.html

([1]) European External Action Service.

(Ελληνική έκδοση)

Ερώτηση με αίτημα γραπτής απάντησης P-009650/13
προς το Συμβούλιο
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(27 Αυγούστου 2013)

Θέμα: Ενδεχόμενη χρησιμοποίηση των βρετανικών στρατιωτικών βάσεων στην Κύπρο για απογείωση μαχητικών αεροσκαφών

Τα τελευταία 24ωρα συζητείται έντονα η πιθανότητα επίθεσης στην Συρία χρησιμοποιώντας τις βρετανικές στρατιωτικές βάσεις της Κύπρου για την απογείωση μαχητικών αεροσκαφών.

Η χρησιμοποίηση των βρετανικών βάσεων για αεροπορικές επιθέσεις στο συριακό έδαφος αμφισβητεί την κυριαρχία της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας και παραβιάζει κατάφωρα τη συνθήκη εγκαθίδρυσής της.

Η Κύπρος έχει αποδείξει στο παρελθόν ότι αποτελεί σημαντικό παράγοντα εδραίωσης της ασφάλειας και της σταθερότητας στην περιοχή δεν θα πρέπει να εμπλακεί με οποιοδήποτε τρόπο στην ενδεχόμενη επέμβαση στο συριακό έδαφος.

Πώς τοποθετείται το Συμβούλιο επί του θέματος;

Απάντηση
(16 Οκτωβρίου 2013)

Το Συμβούλιο δεν έχει συζητήσει το συγκεκριμένο ζήτημα.

(English version)

Question for written answer P-009650/13
to the Council
Sophocles Sophocleous (S&D)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Possible use of British bases in Cyprus for launching airstrikes

Over the last 24 hours, the possibility of launching airstrikes against Syria from British bases in Cyprus has been the subject of intense deliberations.

Such an action would effectively challenge the sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus and be in open breach of its Treaty of Establishment.

Cyprus, which has in the past shown itself to be a bastion of security and stability in the region, should not in any way be implicated in any future intervention on Syrian territory.

What view does the Council take of this?

Reply
(16 October 2013)

The Council has not discussed this issue.

(Versione italiana)

Interrogazione con richiesta di risposta scritta E-009651/13
alla Commissione
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(27 agosto 2013)

Oggetto: Piattaforma Clever-hotels.com — insolvenza della società tedesca Navelar GmbH

Sul sito della piattaforma Clever-hotels.com viene annunciato il fallimento per insolvenza della società tedesca Navelar GmbH, proprietaria della stessa piattaforma.

Il sito permetteva di effettuare prenotazioni alberghiere a prezzi davvero vantaggiosi, passando anche attraverso altri portali del settore.

Sono stati quindi cancellati tutti gli ordini e alcuni clienti saranno costretti a dover pagare di nuovo la prenotazione, mentre altri potranno chiedere un eventuale rimborso solo dopo la liquidazione della società.

Può la Commissione rispondere ai seguenti quesiti:

— È a conoscenza della situazione qui descritta e di eventuali azioni dello Stato membro di appartenenza della società, la Germania, a difesa dei consumatori?

— Intende intraprendere azioni a difesa dei consumatori, sempre più spesso vittime incolpevoli di questo tipo di situazioni?

— In base alla recente revisione della direttiva 90/314/CE, come è intervenuta in relazione a questo tipo di servizi online?

Risposta di Viviane Reding a nome della Commissione
(23 ottobre 2013)

La Commissione ha appreso dalla stampa del fallimento della società tedesca Navelar GmbH e delle conseguenze a carico degli utenti della piattaforma Clever-hotels.com, e non è a conoscenza di eventuali azioni delle autorità tedesche al riguardo.

Il legislatore ha ritenuto necessario introdurre disposizioni a tutela del consumatore in caso di insolvenza già nella direttiva 1990/314/CEE concernente i viaggi, le vacanze e i circuiti «tutto compreso» ([1]), tenuto conto soprattutto dei rischi dei viaggi «tutto compreso» che sono per l'appunto una combinazione di servizi diversi. In caso di insolvenza di un operatore turistico o di un'agenzia di viaggio ad esempio, poiché il pacchetto turistico spesso include il trasporto occorrerà rimpatriare i viaggiatori rimasti bloccati. Spesso poi il pacchetto turistico comporta pagamenti anticipati consistenti.

Nella proposta del 9 luglio 2013 per una nuova direttiva sui viaggi tutto compreso ([2]), la Commissione estende la protezione in caso di insolvenza, che finora riguardava i soli pacchetti turistici preconfezionati, a quelli personalizzati anche quando sono distribuiti insieme via internet; per giunta, estende tale tutela anche ad altre combinazioni di servizi turistici, i cosiddetti «servizi turistici assistiti», spesso ugualmente prenotati su internet.

È tuttavia opportuno che l'onorevole deputato sappia che la Commissione per il momento non prevede proposte legislative per i casi di insolvenza dei siti di prenotazione online da cui i consumatori o chi viaggia per scopi professionali prenotano servizi turistici singoli, come il pernottamento in albergo.

([1]) GU n. L 158 del 27.6.90, pagg. 59-63.
([2]) Proposta di direttiva del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio relativa ai pacchetti turistici e ai servizi turistici assistiti, che modifica il regolamento (CE) n. 2006/2004 e la direttiva 2011/83/CE e che abroga la direttiva del Consiglio 90/314/CEE, COM (2013)512 definitivo.

(English version)

Question for written answer E-009651/13
to the Commission
Carlo Fidanza (PPE)
(27 August 2013)

Subject: Clever-hotels.com platform — insolvency of the German company Navelar GmbH

According to the website of the Clever-hotels.com platform, the German company Navelar GmbH, which is the owner of that platform, has gone bankrupt.

The site could be used to book hotels at what were really very low prices, and also gave access to other hotel reservation portals.

All bookings have been cancelled and some customers will have to pay the reservation costs all over again, which others will be able to ask for their money back only after the company has been wound up.

Can the Commission state:

— Whether it is aware of this situation and of any action taken by Germany, the company's home Member State, to protect consumers;

— Whether it will take steps to protect consumers, who are increasingly becoming innocent victims of this type of situation;

— What action has it taken, in the light of the recent revision of Directive 90/314/EC, with regard to online services of this type?

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

The Commission learnt about the insolvency of the German company Navelar GmbH and the impact on users of the Clever-hotels.com platform through the press. The Commission is, however, not aware of any action taken by the German authorities in this respect.

The legislator considered insolvency protection to be necessary under Directive 1990/314/EEC on package travel, package holidays and package tours ([1]), given the particular risks of package travel, including the fact that packages are a combination of different travel services. Since packages often contain a transport element, the insolvency of a tour operator or travel agent often triggers the need to repatriate stranded holiday-makers. Furthermore, packages often involve considerable pre-payments.

In its proposal of 9 July 2013 for a new directive on package travel ([2]), the Commission proposes to extend insolvency protection, which so far exists for pre-arranged packages, to customised packages, *inter alia* if they are put together online. Furthermore, the Commission proposes to extend this protection also to other combinations of travel services, so-called 'assisted travel arrangements', which are often booked online as well.

The Honourable Member needs to be informed however that the Commission is not currently considering any legislative proposals with regard to the insolvency of booking websites through which consumers or business travellers book individual travel services such as hotel accomodation.

([1]) OJ No L 158 of 27.6.90, pages 59 — 63.
([2]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on package travel and assisted travel arrangements, amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, Directive 2011/83/EC and repealing Council Directive 90/314/EEC, COM(2013) 512 final.

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